

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

When missionary Mary Weems Chapman (1857-1927) felt God's call to return to India, her family told her she was too old. But she persevered and became the first Assemblies of God missionary to South India. Mary was known for her advocacy of ministry to girl prostitutes and the "untouchables" — members of India's lowest social caste.

Mary and her husband, George, were pioneer leaders in the Pentecost Bands, a Free Methodist missions organization, and founded the Free Methodist work in Monrovia, Liberia, in 1889.

Whether George died or something else happened is unknown, but Mary moved to India in about 1900 as a single woman to work at a Pentecostal

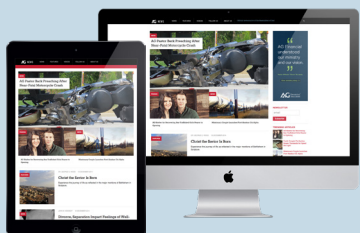
Rescue Home. There she plucked young girls out of prostitution and provided education and spiritual help.

She returned to the United States around 1909. As she was approaching 60, she felt led to return to India. She arrived in 1915 and established a missionary base near Bangalore. In 1917, she affiliated with the Assemblies of God and became the Fellowship's first missionary in South India.

After 10 years of ministry under the AG banner, Mary Weems Chapman died on Nov. 27, 1927.

Read Mary's article, "Ministering to the Untouchables," on page 11 of the April 18, 1925, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/april181925.

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AG[®] NEWS

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HE HAS DONE IT!
(PAGE 3)

**HIKING, HORSES,
AND HEALING**

**BUSINESS INSPIRATION
AT CHURCH**

**CARRYING ON
AFTER GRIEF**



HIKING, HORSES, AND HEALING

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

MORROW, Arkansas — The environs of Teen Challenge Adventure Ranch, a picturesque 31 acres in the Ozark Mountains of rural northwest Arkansas, are just what troubled boys need to get into shape, physically and spiritually.

"These are difficult minors," says Darren J. Reynolds, who is executive director. "These adolescents don't want to be here. They think it's everyone else's fault."

There are 33 students from across the U.S. and 48 staff members, 14 of them working in direct care. Boys ages 14 to 18 typically stay at least nine months in a tightly structured schedule. Residents begin with a 90-day intensive treatment program and then transfer to an academic boarding school, studying online. On-site teachers provide tutoring for course work.

Students primarily live at the ranch because of substance abuse and behavioral problems, although the overriding factor for some is trauma, anxiety, or depression. Chapel services are held on site at least every other day.

"The presence of God at Adventure Ranch is undeniable," says Kristy

Segress, whose son Chaz graduated from the program in October 2018. "It's apparent that everyone working there is led by the Spirit of God."

As is the case with most parents, Kristy, a Baptist, found out about Adventure Ranch on the internet. Often students have never heard of Teen Challenge or even the Assemblies of God.

Almost immediately after moving in, boys embark on a three-day hike in the mountains. It's part of the center's overall adventure-based learning formula that features camping, backpacking, rappelling, canoeing, swimming, and spelunking. The property also includes a certified ropes course in which students learn the importance of teamwork, goals, and perseverance.

The outdoor emphasis is one of the reasons Kristy chose to send Chaz to Adventure Ranch.

"Chaz had mastered lying and manipulation, almost as if he were two different people," remembers Kristy of Rogers, Arkansas. "He was a sweet kid we wanted to believe, but he would tell us bold-faced lies that shattered our trust in him."

OPTIMISM IN THE MIDST OF ADDICTION

BY IAN RICHARDSON

When Eddie Pinter stepped into Hope Church in La Grange, Illinois, more than four years ago, it changed his life in a way that years of rehabilitation programs could not.

By age 26, Pinter had spent a dozen years battling drug and alcohol addiction. But one night, lying in a dark alley after taking cocaine, he decided he'd had enough. Looking for a way out, he took the advice of his stepmother and decided to give the church's Celebrate Recovery group a shot.

Pinter, 30, has been clean since November 2014. He plays guitar on the church's worship team and serves as a group leader for the church's Celebrate Recovery program, where he hopes to use his testimony to inspire others on their own journeys out of addiction.

He had found a card that his stepmother, Cheryl, who attended Hope Church, slipped him with information for the church's Celebrate

Recovery group. As he began attending church and committed his life to Christ, he says something finally clicked.

Celebrate Recovery ministry leader Bruce Stefancich says Pinter came in determined to get clean and progressed quickly through the steps of the program.

"It's almost a complete 180-degree turn," Stefancich says.

Pinter joined the church worship team. He also helps lead worship at Celebrate Recovery meetings.

Pinter now manages a local Starbucks. As a Celebrate Recovery group leader, he hopes to help others to find the same strength he did four years ago.

"There have been multiple times throughout my life that I should've died, that I should've just been another statistic," he says. "But God's always been there."

THE ABCs OF SALVATION

ACCEPT that you are a sinner, and God's punishment for your sin is death and separation from God forever.

BELIEVE that Jesus paid God's price for your sin when He died on the cross.

CONFESS "Jesus, I believe You are who the Bible and history declares You are – the Son of God. I humble myself and surrender to You. Forgive me. Make me spiritually whole. Change my life. Amen."



HE HAS DONE IT!

BY JEREMY STEIN

Jeremy Stein, the content and development coordinator for the AG Center for Holy Lands Studies (CHLS), examines one of the most misunderstood statements in the Bible.

The act of crucifixion was by no definition of the word *human*. For the greatest effect, the victim was placed naked upon a fixed beam at a place right outside the city gates — the place of highest foot traffic. The victim's body would be affixed to the cross by nails through the heels and between the ulna and the radius bones in the arms. Life slowly left the body through any mix of asphyxiation, cardiac rupture, acidosis heart failure, or hypovolemic shock.

At the ninth hour, as Jesus is on the Cross, He says one of the most remarkable and misunderstood statements made by any man: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Throughout time, many have seen this as a statement of God rejecting Jesus because he bore the sins of mankind (Hebrews 9:28).

But God never abandoned Jesus! In reality, Jesus is using a technique common in Judaism. He recalls Psalm

22 as a whole by stating the opening line ("My God, my God . . .") to His audience. As Judaism was an oral culture and memorization of Scripture was expected, the audience would have immediately jumped in their memory to the entirety of David's words in Psalm 22. With this technique, what is not said is the main point. Though Psalm 22 begins with David's cries of anguish to the Lord, it concludes with the Lord's great victory in the situation:

"Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help . . . Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!" (Psalms 22:23b, 24, 30, 31).

Jesus on the Cross is proclaiming the glory of God and salvation for humanity. For us, the great victory in Jesus' situation is that we have found freedom from the effects of sin and death. As the final verse of Psalm 22 emphasizes, *He has done it!*

CARRYING ON AFTER GRIEF

BY PETER K. JOHNSON

Three days before 55-year-old Linda "Loni" Dobbins died on July 16, 2018, she was still texting encouraging messages to adherents of Bellshire Assembly in Nashville, Tennessee. Within a short time she lapsed into a drug-induced coma to ease the excruciating pain from her prolonged bout with terminal stomach cancer.

Her husband of almost 30 years, Scott Dobbins, Bellshire's lead pastor, stayed glued to her bedside in hospice care. The couple joined Bellshire in 2001, with Scott working as a bivocational pastor for the first decade. Loni led the children's and women's ministries, and became executive pastor in 2016.

Dobbins, 55, became his wife's main caregiver soon after her initial diagnosis in 2016. Despite a prognosis of imminent death, Loni lingered for 18 months in constant pain. Chemotherapy treatments weakened her.

"While we prayed for a miracle that didn't come, God sustained us with a peace I can't explain," Dobbins says. "I never felt forsaken or angry at God."

Physically and emotionally drained after his wife's death, Scott took six weeks off from his pastoral duties.

"God spoke to my heart that it was not the end," Dobbins says. "My next season is using our story to help other people, telling them that God will see you through the biggest gut punch of your life."

CLAIMED FOR GOD'S PURPOSE

BY KRISTEL RINGER ORTIZ

Eva Barlow stood on the threshold of a small building in Managua, Nicaragua. The rafters were termite-riddled, the floor was littered with rubbish, and there were no windows or bathroom facilities.

As Eva looked inside, she heard the quiet voice of God — *This will be a deaf school.*

"We decided to pray around the building," Eva and her husband, Matt, say. "We simply claimed it for the Lord and for His purpose."

The Barlows moved to Nicaragua in 1994. For a year, Matt (who is deaf) and Eva (who is hearing), prayed for God's direction to help the deaf. That's when God birthed the vision for a school for the deaf.

In 1995, the Barlows discovered the dilapidated building. With much help, the building was purchased and then completely renovated in 1997.

"Students' worlds were totally changing, and they were hungry to receive Jesus and follow Him in water baptism," Matt says.

A dorm and a preschool were added. Later, the Barlows were approved to open the first deaf high school in Nicaragua.

Since the high school's first graduation in 2010, students have been accepted in universities and various professions, establishing themselves as points of light for other members of the deaf community in Nicaragua and beyond.



LAY LEADERS HEED THE CALL

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Three years ago, Atlantic 1st Assembly of God began to hold weekly meetings of Celebrate Recovery in the southeast Iowa town. Garry and Melissa Burch lead the Thursday night ministry, which attracts 30 to 45 regulars. Many attendees are from other congregations and they help provide a free meal before the gatherings. Some who show up have no church background, but have made a salvation decision in group sessions.

"We welcome anyone who is dealing with any issue, not just drugs and alcohol," says Garry, a 42-year-old freelance web developer. Burch spent 15 years in prison and also had a pornography addiction for more than two decades. He has been sober from drugs, alcohol, and porn for 3½ years.

"I chose the world for many years," Burch says. "But God can take a mess and make a miracle."

Melissa, a 38-year-old hair stylist, got right with the Lord first and then Gary did the same. Their daughter, Samie

Theis, followed. Melissa is involved in youth ministry at the church.

Samie's husband, Jake Theis, 27, moved to Atlantic three years ago to work as an Iowa Department of Natural Resources environmental specialist. Soon after arriving in town, he encountered Melissa, who at the time worked as a barista.

Melissa boldly asked Jake a question. "Do you love Jesus?" Melissa inquired.

The interrogation startled the nominally religious Jake.

"I know about Jesus," replied Jake, who mentioned he wanted to find a church to attend. Melissa suggested he could have a personal relationship with Christ if he came to Atlantic 1st, where Jake ended up making a salvation commitment.

Jake and Samie, who have been married 10 months, see ministry as a natural outlet of being disciplined. Samie, 22, is involved in children's ministry while Jake works with teens and men. Both also assist at Celebrate Recovery.

At 17, Chaz had been expelled from New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell for smoking marijuana, drinking alcohol, and possessing a gun. A judge ordered Chaz to drug rehabilitation.

Few drug-addicted teens are physically fit. They tend to be sedentary smokers and/or drinkers.

"Outdoor adventure can be a big shock to the system," says Justin J. Smith, the fit 47-year-old program director. "It's not punishment; we don't take them on a death march. We just show them the therapeutic elements of God's nature."

Smith pioneered the outdoor adventure program soon after he arrived

in 1996. Six years later, Adventure Ranch added rock climbing and rappelling to the outdoor list of opportunities.

Every day, residents must participate in an hour CrossFit gym workout. Smith is a level 1 instructor for the high-intensity routines. As a part of group activities, boys participate in equine therapy, learning everything from better handling stress to developing empathy for others.

Chaz Segress is wrapping up a six-month stint as a missionary at Teen Challenge Costa Rica.

"The whole perception of how Chaz sees the world changed because Jesus changed his heart," Kristy says.

BUSINESS INSPIRATION AT CHURCH

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

For the past three years Jere Stille, chief financial officer of Boeing South Carolina, has joined other high-level business leaders to teach at the annual Inspire Conference of Eastridge Church in Issaquah, Washington, which draws ministers and businesspeople from around the Seattle area.

Stille has led sessions on career-building, managing effective teams, and achieving work-life balance. Other speakers at the one-day conference have included an executive vice president for Starbucks, a retired two-star admiral with the Coast Guard, a senior designer for Nike, the head of customer experience with JP Morgan Chase bank, an engineering manager at Microsoft, and a retired Navy SEAL. Nearly all attend Eastridge.

"It's phenomenal what businesspeople bring to the table," says Steve M. Jamison, pastor of Eastridge's multisite congregation of 3,000. "There are quality people who have not compromised themselves to get to the top of major corporations, and are in key leadership positions."

Inspire now draws 500 attendees from two dozen churches.

Stille, who also serves as an elder at Eastridge, runs into employees at Boeing who attended the conference and appreciated the insights he shared.

"This has been a high mark for us as a church," Stille says. "We've seen the fruit of it in growth in the church, and with the conference getting additional momentum."