

# AG NEWS

A COLLECTION OF THIS WEEK'S STORIES FROM NEWS.AG.ORG



## THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

An annual retreat for AG servicemen (and now servicewomen) in Europe has been held in Germany for the last 62 years. This yearly event has done much to encourage military personnel and their families stationed in Europe.

The retreat was started so that AG military personnel serving in Europe would have an annual retreat of their own, since they would not be able to attend a retreat in the U.S. while serving overseas. Organized by the Commission on Chaplains, the Berean Missionary Fellowship (BMF), and the Chaplain Liaison Officers, the retreat was set up to offer spiritual support to servicemen and channel funds into missions projects in Europe.

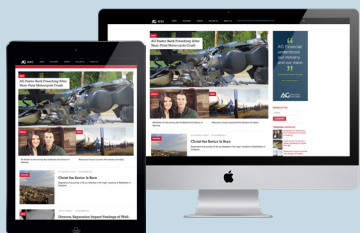
At the 12th annual retreat held in

1968, as reported in the *Pentecostal Evangel*, over 450 AG servicemen and their families attend Missionaries and other denominational personnel currently on assignment in Europe also attended the spiritual emphasis retreat.

The retreat theme, "Christ Is Lord," became the "personal testimony of many who gave their hearts to Christ before the week ended," it was reported. "Others made new consecrations, and several were filled with the Holy Spirit," the article continued.

Read more in "Spiritual Tone Prevails at Servicemen's Retreat" on page 30 of the April 27, 1969, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at [s2.ag.org/april271969](http://s2.ag.org/april271969).

Read the full versions of these stories on [news.ag.org](http://news.ag.org)



NEWS FOR, ABOUT, AND FROM THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

CONNECT WITH US ON

FACEBOOK TWITTER

RSS AND OUR WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER

VISIT [NEWS.AG.ORG](http://NEWS.AG.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

## ARDUOUS MEDICAL LESSONS

## PRAY FOR SRI LANKA

## CHURCHES UNITE TO AID FLOOD VICTIMS

## SHARING ABOUT PAST DEPRESSIONS





## ARDUOUS MEDICAL LESSONS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Margo L. Carl went to a hospital emergency room one morning in February 2013 after awakening with double vision. Four days and a battery of medical tests later, a neurologist diagnosed Carl with both a meningioma brain tumor and multiple sclerosis.

The neurosurgeon told Carl the tumor needed to be removed — but such an operation must wait until symptoms of her MS subsided.

“I told the doctor to wait as long as possible,” recalls Carl, who is a financial specialist with AG World Missions. “I was afraid to have the surgery.”

Carl, husband Joe, co-workers, and friends from Life360 Church in Republic, Missouri all prayed for her healing. Over the course of a year, quarterly CT scans and MRIs showed the lesions on Carl’s brain shrinking until they disappeared altogether.

In August 2014, Carl’s physician officially removed multiple sclerosis findings from her medical records.

While the Lord healed Carl of MS, the

tumor didn’t dissipate. In March 2014, Carl underwent a craniotomy. In a nine-hour operation, medical personnel used specialized tools to temporarily remove the bone flap and extract the tumor.

Carl recovered remarkably well, and after only three days of hospitalization she went home. Other than losing her sense of taste and smell because of a removed nerve, Carl sustained no ill-effects. She returned to work in 5½ weeks.

“When it was all over, I wondered why some people are healed of physical illness and others are not,” Carl says. “Or, in my case, why was my MS miraculously healed yet God didn’t shrink the tumor when we asked Him to?”

Still, Carl believes God working through skilled and wise medical professionals — plus her amazing recovery — are just as wondrous as the MS healing.

The Carls have experienced medical breakthroughs on more than one

## NEW MAGAZINE PROVIDES INTRODUCTION TO PENTECOSTALISM

BY DAN VAN VEEN

What does it mean to be Pentecostal? It’s one of the key questions most people visiting an Assemblies of God church have. But it’s not just visitors who are uncertain — friends, family, and even some of those individuals already in the pew are often unsure of what Pentecostalism is all about.

With its ongoing focus on biblical engagement, the AG national office is helping people understand what it means to be Pentecostal with a new, undated booklet — *Pentecostals*. Featuring a magazine format, *Pentecostals* offers readers a clear explanation of living Holy Spirit-empowered lives as well as present-day examples of the Holy Spirit at work in people’s lives.

“When people learn the biblical foundation that the Assemblies of God — the largest Pentecostal church in the world — is built upon, it’s eye-opening,” states Doug Clay, general superintendent of the U.S. Assemblies of God. “The *Pentecostals* booklet

answers the questions people have about Pentecostalism.”

The 40-page booklet includes testimony stories, FAQs about spiritual gifts, a series of articles by AG executive leadership on topics such as Spirit baptism and Spirit-empowered living, statistics about the growth of the Pentecostal movement worldwide, how to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and more.

Readily recognized as a Pentecost Sunday resource, the *Pentecostals* booklet is also a valuable tool throughout the year for new members classes, Sunday School, or small group studies, as a gift for visitors, and even as part of an outreach effort.

“I truly believe that one of the key reasons the Assemblies of God has experienced God’s favor,” Clay observes, “is because we give license to the Holy Spirit to work, as He desires, in and through our daily lives for God’s glory.”

See [s2.ag.org/pent](http://s2.ag.org/pent) to learn more.

### 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.”



## CHURCHES UNITE TO AID FLOOD VICTIMS

BY DAN VAN VEEN

The devastation left by floodwaters created by melting ice and a “bomb” cyclone that struck the Midwest in March remains widespread. Nebraska, in particular, suffered heavy losses.

Yet, providing help has met with an unexpected challenge.

Richard Nakai, the youth pastor at Bellevue (Nebraska) Christian Center (BCC) for the past eight years, says that the Monday morning after the weekend flooding, the church opened its doors as a relief distribution center. He and volunteers soon discovered that people were reluctant to accept help.

“So many times we heard people ask for just one of some item when it was clear they could use far more,” Nakai says. “They were afraid that if they took more than one or two items, others might not receive the help they needed.”

Nebraska District Superintendent Bob Wine isn’t surprised. He says that there’s a sense of self-sufficiency and “taking care of their own” during times of trouble in Nebraska — being the helper, rather than the helped. Even he has had some difficulty learning if churches sustained damage due to the flooding.

Nakai says that their answer was to

place a trained volunteer with each person or family as they came in. In this way, volunteers eased fears of “taking too much.”

BCC, which averages about 900 in attendance and has been led by pastors Gary and Laurie Hoyt for the past 30 years, raised \$15,000 to assist flood victims. The church, located just south of Omaha, was also a source of hundreds of volunteers and an untold number of donated clothing and food items.

However, what has really stood out to Nakai is how the churches — including other AG congregations — have ignored denominational differences to work together.

While BCC was serving as a distribution center, others churches were serving as shelters, cooking and providing hot meals, gathering furniture items to give to victims, housing clean-up teams, paying for laundry, and the list goes on.

After BCC partnered with the Salvation Army to provide a unified, multiagency resource for victims on April 3, volunteers are now also being directed to Convoy of Hope to assist with clean up.

## SHARING ABOUT PAST DEPRESSION

BY DEANN ALFORD

For years, Susan Bailey juggled demanding roles as Tennessee pastor’s wife, mother, and a medical records transcriptionist working from home.

At night, the daily stressors kept her worried and sleepless. But the final straw happened when the new family dog whined day and night, refused training, and repeatedly soiled the floor. It took Susan hours longer a day to finish her job because of dealing with the dog.

“Everybody has pressure in life, small or big,” says Susan, 64. “One thing won’t likely cause a problem, but combined with all the others can cause a breaking point.”

But by the time the Baileys rehomed the dog, insomnia plagued Susan. Nor could she eat; she dropped to 90 pounds. She found she couldn’t read the Word or pray. She had to quit her job.

During an 11-day hospital stay in a psychiatric ward, a pastor friend shared his own story that changed her perspective. She took his advice and chose a Scripture to quote out loud: 2 Timothy 1:7.

“We can either hide these things in the closet, or bring it into the open,” Bailey says.

Within two months, she was functional again. Five months later, she went back to work.

Today, 16 years on, she uses her platform as the Tennessee Ministry Network superintendent’s wife speaking about her depression.

## RURAL HOPE RESTORATION

BY PETER K. JOHNSON

Iberia First Assembly of God (IFA) formed The Well Rural Resource, a nonprofit that offers Christlike hope for needy families in the Missouri community of 740.

“The size of our town and the size of our church should not limit the size of our vision,” says Pastor Chip Sanders, who notes many rural community residents are embedded in a cycle of generational poverty, broken marriages, and addiction. A good share of grandparents and even great-grandparents barely survive on meager Social Security checks while raising youngsters.

As the local volunteer fire department’s unofficial chaplain, he offers prayer and spiritual support during tragedies. Listening and learning about the community prompted Sanders to start a nonprofit organization, The Well, in 2016 to generate funds for practical needs. He connected with partners who helped with startup expenses.

Last June, the ministry assumed the mortgage of a 9,500-square-foot building in the town center. The Well oversees a range of programs: community services, a thrift store, food pantry, and diaper bank.

The Well plans on launching a self-serve laundry, coffee shop, and summer youth programs. The organization also is raising funds for office space for dental, medical, and mental health services by partnering with a rural medical clinic.



## DEALING WITH A BRAZILIAN INFLUX

BY ROBERT E. MIMS

Matthew Splittgerber, pastor of the Cape Cod's Martha's Vineyard Assembly of God, appreciates the recent influx of industrious, committed Pentecostal Christian immigrants from Brazil who pack Sunday services beyond the sanctuary's intended capacity.

The sanctuary legally holds 100, but additional seats are set up in the foyer and in the basement. The congregation of 70 has swollen to 135. Today, 40 percent of the parishioners are Brazilians, often recruited to fill jobs in the tourist industry.

"These immigrants are unbelievably hardworking people," Splittgerber says. "During summers, a lot of our regular attenders pick up a second or even third job. But if they are not working, they are at church."

Consequently, Vineyard AG had developed into a multiethnic congregation that is becoming bilingual, with Portuguese incorporated into services.

Splittgerber says the goal of taking capacity up to 190 seats in 2020 may seem modest, but in Martha's Vineyard it will be expensive. Accessible only by

boat or by air, the cost of living on the 20.5-mile-long island is a whopping 60 percent higher than the national average. More specific to Vineyard Assembly's expansion dreams, the island's isolation and transportation challenges (all construction materials, equipment, and other supplies will have to come in by ferry) make even the limited work planned into a big-ticket item.

The church's fundraising campaign for the work has been dubbed the Million-Dollar Miracle.

"We're certainly not looking at building a megachurch, but just what will meet our needs on the island," explains Splittgerber. "We're at capacity and we don't want to reach a point where our growth plateaus due to limited facilities."

Splittgerber is counting on the interim period to allow time for recruiting and training workers and staff from among the newcomers to allow something unattainable now: offer multiple services on Sundays.

"We know we will fill up again fairly quickly," the pastor says. "We'd like to see that happen."

occasion. Their only child, Jessica, was born 16 weeks premature at 1 pound, 6 ounces, and given less than a 5 percent chance of survival. Now, at 26, Jessica, despite early developmental and educational delays, is a student at an Oklahoma Bible college.

Jessica returned to the school in January after a year of medical setbacks related to Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a neurological disorder. Although she is wearing leg braces, Jessica is back on campus to finish her third year of biblical studies.

Starting in January 2018, Jessica spent 7½ weeks hospitalized, paralyzed in her face, legs, and feet. She had to learn how to eat, walk, and write again via occupational and physical therapy.

Margo took off work 7 months to help Jessica recover.

In October 2016, Margo and Joe went on a Life360 - sponsored trip, which confirmed a calling to full-time mission work. She and Joe — who works for a security systems company — have been appointed as missionary associates (MA) working with Live Dead, an AGWM church-planting movement among unreached people groups. They expect to have their budget raised by the end of the year. Margo has been cleared medically.

"We didn't expect to become MAs at this point in our lives," Carl says. "I can see God's hand in preparing us for the work He has yet for us to do."

## PRAY FOR SRI LANKA

BY AGWM COMMUNICATIONS

A series of Easter suicide bombings have killed at least 359 people and injured about 500. A church and three hotels were attack sites in Colombo, the capital. Two other churches were targeted in two cities on opposite sides of the island nation.

The majority of victims were among crowds gathered to celebrate Easter at two Catholic and one Pentecostal church.

"The evangelical and Pentecostal churches stand together in solidarity with the Catholic Church in this time of tragedy and share their pain and sorrow as the whole Body of Christ is suffering," says a trusted church leader with the AG

in Sri Lanka. He has confirmed there are currently no AG worshippers identified among the victims.

"The Church must be strong in [facing] opposition and suffering," the leader says, "because we believe that Sri Lanka is destined for revival."

The leader has asked for prayer along three lines: (1) Pray that peace and calm will be restored to the region. (2) Pray for government officials and law enforcement to have wisdom to prevent any further agitation or religious animosity among the island's multifaith population. (3) Pray for the Church to be united in tragedy, and that such unity will be a witness to Sri Lanka.