



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

Fifty-three years ago, the community of Lorain, Ohio, was in the midst of a significant demographic shift. Thousands of immigrants from Cuba and Puerto Rico relocated to Lorain to work in the steel mills, and the African-American community was growing. Racial tensions existed in the historically white town of 60,000, as residents grappled with these social changes.

Keith Smith, an Assemblies of God pastor in Lorain, saw the changes in his community as an opportunity to share the gospel and bring reconciliation. He led his church, Broadway Assembly of God, to seek out the newcomers and minister to their needs.

The church began a Spanish-speaking ministry under the leadership of S. Reyes Nodal, an AG pastor born

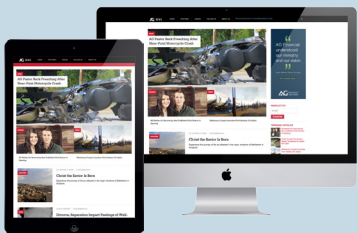
in Mexico. Nodal's ministry grew and became Templo Betel, the first Spanish-speaking AG church in Ohio.

Broadway AG asked a Church of God in Christ pastor, Robert E. Burel, to lead an outreach to African-Americans. Under Burel's leadership, a new congregation, Beulah Assembly, formed and met in Broadway AG's building.

Broadway AG grew even as it planted churches in its own community. Sunday School attendance grew from 200 to over 600. The church built a new building and gave its old building to Templo Betel.

Read "Mother Church Triples" on page 15 of the Aug. 8, 1965, *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/aug81965.

Read the full versions of these stories on news.ag.org



NEWS FOR, ABOUT, AND FROM
THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

CONNECT WITH US ON

FACEBOOK TWITTER

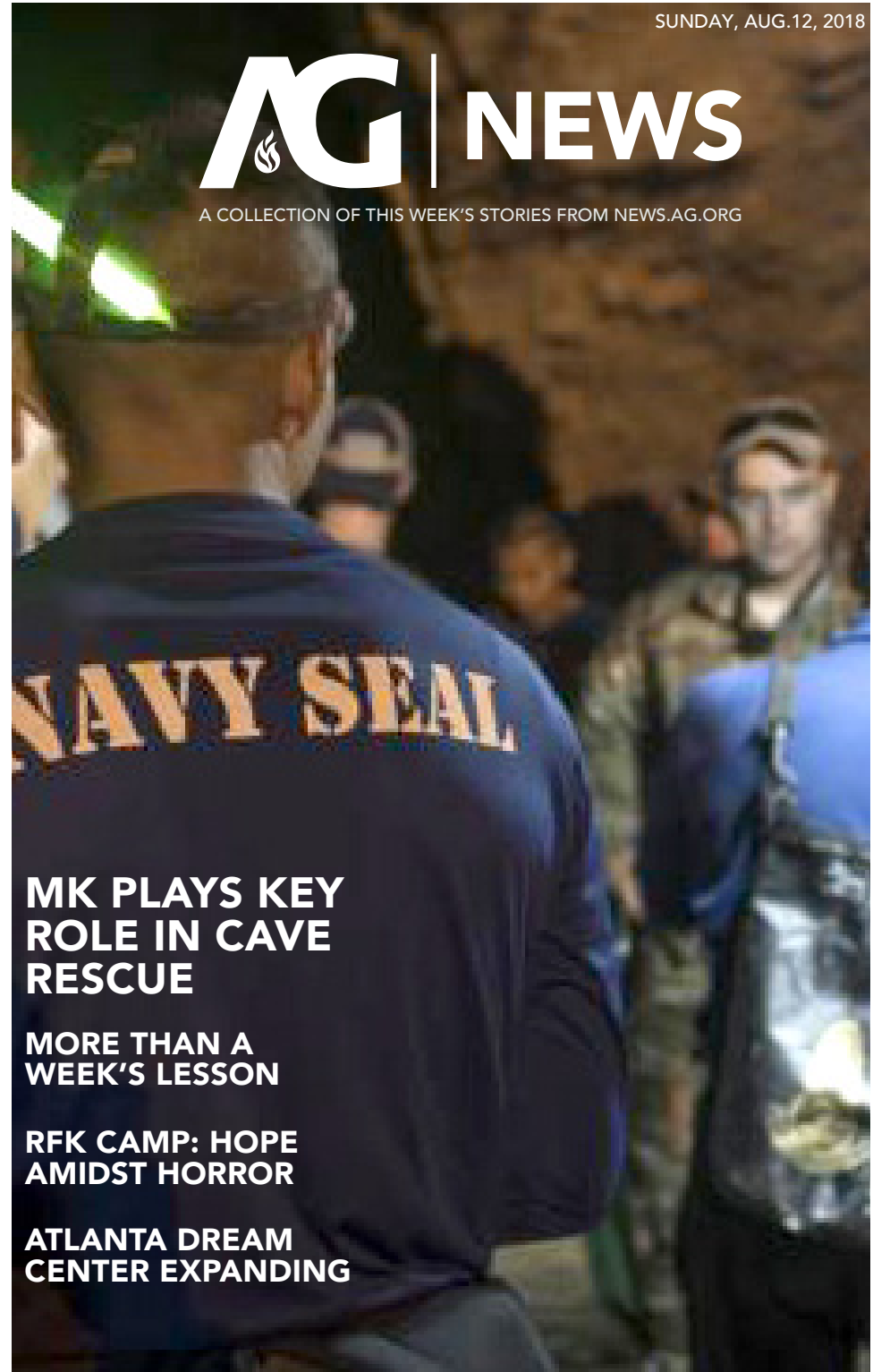
RSS AND OUR WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER

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

SUNDAY, AUG. 12, 2018

AG | NEWS

A COLLECTION OF THIS WEEK'S STORIES FROM [NEWS.AG.ORG](http://news.ag.org)



MK PLAYS KEY ROLE IN CAVE RESCUE

MORE THAN A WEEK'S LESSON

RFK CAMP: HOPE AMIDST HORROR

ATLANTA DREAM CENTER EXPANDING



MK PLAYS KEY ROLE IN CAVE RESCUE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

When a Thai soccer team and its coach got trapped inside a cave by flood waters in northern Thailand in June, it became world news. Over 18 days, heroes — both out front and behind the scenes — were made, but key leaders agree, the miraculous success of the rescue has “divine intervention” written all over it.

A few days after the soccer team was trapped, Master Sgt. Derek Anderson, a 15-year U.S. Air Force veteran and Air Force Special Tactics pararescueman stationed in Okinawa, Japan, was told his unit was to go support the Thai government in an “advise and assist” role to the rescue effort.

Anderson, 33, is used to challenges. The son of Tim and Debbie Anderson who are appointed as AG missionaries to Ecuador, Derek grew up seeking adventure and excitement, which wasn’t hard to find in the jungles and mountains of Ecuador.

But even with all the military training and jungle experiences, Anderson, who was the senior enlisted leader for the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command rescue

team and one of the rescue operations primary planners, says he’s never run into a challenge like this.

British cave divers, after days of laying lines in order to find their way into and back out of the cave, located the team — 10 days after they had disappeared and nearly two miles inside of the cave — alive.

“While talking to the divers from Britain, they told me it was one of the five most dangerous caves they’ve ever been in,” Anderson says. “The water was cold, flowing quickly, and muddy — zero visibility — with deep recesses and narrow passages. It was a difficult journey for anyone but expert cave divers. There was no way boys who may not even know how to swim could dive out of there . . . we considered it our last resort.”

During a visit to the cave, the British divers and Thai Navy SEALs brought in MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) and an oxygen sensor. The sensor registered 15 to 16 percent oxygen. When Anderson learned that at below 19.5 percent oxygen level New York

ATLANTA DREAM CENTER EXPANDING

BY IAN RICHARDSON

Atlanta Dream Center founder Paul Palmer had never held a check for a quarter million dollars before. But on a Sunday morning last December, another area church handed the Dream Center \$274,000 — nearly 80 percent of what it needed to purchase a new women’s crisis safe home, which is expected to open in October.

The grant, from Victory World Church in Norcross, Georgia, will combine with two other financial gifts to allow the Dream Center to buy a former Adult & Teen Challenge property for its Out of Darkness ministry, which rescues sex trafficking victims from the streets and helps them through the recovery process. Other donations include a \$50,000 grant through Perimeter Church in Atlanta and \$26,000 from the Georgia AG.

The Atlanta Dream Center, which opened in 2003, reaches out to homeless men and women, at-risk children, and sex trafficking victims. The Dream Center’s Out of Darkness ministry helped 200 women escape sex trafficking last year.



Once women come off the streets, the Dream Center welcomes them into the safe home to provide a space to regain their day-night schedules, detox from drugs and alcohol, and complete any next steps such as blood work or identification in the treatment process. As such, it’s become one of only a few such safe houses in America.

Jeff A. Shaw, the Dream Center’s executive director, says the current safe house has a capacity of six women, but often needs to find alternate accommodations on nights when occupancy is full.

The new home sits on 8-plus acres and will provide a dozen beds. The larger campus includes outbuildings that will allow space for arts and crafts, a fitness center, and a prayer chapel.

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.”



MORE THAN A WEEK'S LESSON

BY DEANN ALFORD

A decade ago, one thing about typical summer vacation Bible school bothered Maricela H. Hernandez, so much that she decided to do something about it.

"Vacation to me means the whole time you're off from school," says Hernandez, associate pastor of Family Christian Assembly in Peñitas, Texas, two miles from the Mexico border. In the Texas Rio Grande Valley, summer break lasts all of June and July. It's a prime opportunity for children in the community's hardscrabble working-class neighborhoods to learn that Jesus loves them. And with 44 percent of Hidalgo County children living below the federal poverty level, they need access to meal programs those two long months.

Hernandez asked the Lord to help the church do something for the children while they're on vacation.

Family Christian Assembly partners with rotating teams from AG churches and other congregations on short-term mission trips for the summerlong

VBS tailored to low-income families. Meals, sports, crafts, and Bible classes serving 100 to 120 children are provided each day. Kids come to faith in Christ, become part of the church, and get equipped for ministry. And as most VBS participants are from large families where older children often act as caregivers for younger siblings, this VBS offers care for babies so their brothers and sisters can take part.

"The first thing God provided was the food," says Hernandez, who also is secretary-treasurer for the Texas Gulf Hispanic District. "The school district worried these children wouldn't be eating and knocked on our door asking if we would open our facility all summer to offer a place where our children would be fed." Daily, the school kitchen cooks breakfast and lunch.

Hernandez visits families, both church and unchurched, learning needs, offering prayer, and asking parents' permission for their kids under 18 to attend the VBS. A church bus picks up the children.

TEEN GIRL LEAVES TRAUMA BEHIND

BY MARY YERKES

When 17-year-old Tabitha Carmen Acang of Memphis, Tennessee, stands behind a microphone and begins strumming her guitar and singing, a tangible sense of God's presence fills the room.

But a few years ago, Tabitha self-harmed and considered suicide because of insecurities. Tabitha battled alopecia, a disease that causes hair loss. She struggled throughout childhood to fit in. Her parents, hoping to ease her emotional pain, bought her a wig. But the wig fell off when Tabitha participated in certain activities, isolating her further. Tabitha cut her wrists and the inside of her thighs.

Concerned, Brent Parker, Tabitha's youth pastor from Living Oaks in Memphis, urged Tabitha to attend Tennessee Youth Camp. There, at age 12, Tabitha sensed God's call to become a worship leader.

A few months after attending camp for the second time, she joined the worship team at her church. Invitations to lead worship in other churches and at women's retreats poured in.

During camp the following year, Tabitha felt set free from suicidal thoughts and desires to harm herself.

In 2017, Tabitha received an Award of Merit for Worship Leading Solo at the National Fine Arts Festival. She also accepted a request to lead a worship set at a Tennessee Council event.

RFK CAMP: HOPE AMID HORROR

BY MISTY ELLIOTT

Bryan and Misty Elliot are AGWM missionaries in Wales serving as church planters and directors of Royal Family Kids Camp UK.

Royal Family Kids (RFK) Camp is a five-day summer camp for children (ages 6-12) from the foster system who have experienced abuse and neglect.

Children who attend Royal Family Kids Camps have been discarded and treated as if they matter to no one. But at Royal Family camps volunteers spend a week to treat our campers like royalty and show them they matter and are loved, not only by camp sponsors but also by the God who created them.

We were Chi Alpha directors at Kansas State University in Manhattan when God called us to plant churches in Wales. We began to dream about starting RFK out of the churches we would plant in the United Kingdom.

We moved to Wales in 2011 and planted Capital City Church in the capital city of Cardiff.

We began to lay the groundwork for Royal Family Kids UK in 2015. It was slow going. We continued to pray. Doors began to open. We began to see miraculous provision.

In August 2016, 45 volunteers from served 22 children at our first RFK Camp — the first in the UK and Europe.

This Aug. 12-17, 65 adults will serve nearly 50 children from local councils across South Wales.

PICK UP YOUR MAT AND WALK

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY



HOUSTON — Hispanic leader Samuel Rodriguez urged listeners to reject past constraints and lay claim to God's promises at a combined service of Hispanic Centennial and National Youth Ministries Fine Arts festival attendees Aug. 2 in Houston.

"The future of American Christianity lies primarily in the hands of this emerging generation and the Latino demographic," said Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. His primary text focused on the man healed at the Pool of Bethesda after 38 years of being an invalid (John 5). As a sermon illustration, an 18-year-old lay prone on a mat on the platform until

the end of the message.

"The enemy will paralyze us if we are not certain about our identity," said Rodriguez, 48. Rodriguez, lead pastor of New Season Christian Worship Center in Sacramento, California, asked the audience to demonstrate faith by standing up and making declarations to be rid of past failures and to anticipate future blessings, symbolically flinging a mat off their shoulders. Rodriguez pronounced the grip of repeated failure, depression, chaos, sin, anxiety, and strife to be over.

"Paralysis will end today and forever more!" Rodriguez said. "Stand up, pick up your mat, start walking."

Rodriguez brought Joyce Smith of suburban St. Louis on stage, to explain how her son, John, died in 2015 — for over an hour. Smith explained how she yelled in a hospital, asking the Holy Spirit to resurrect her son. A heartbeat began immediately on a monitor.

Only then did Rodriguez reveal the identity of the man on the mat on stage: John Smith.

"There is a purpose for my life and this generation," said John Smith, adopted from Guatemala as a youth through ChildHope.

Breakthrough, a motion picture depicting the miracle will open on Easter weekend next year. Rodriguez is executive producer.

firefighters are required to use air tanks, he knew the team's time was running out.

With no other access to the cave found, drilling no longer an option, oxygen levels potentially lowering, and a new storm system coming, key leaders, including Anderson, met and developed a plan — a plan that included bringing in an expert cave diver who was also an anesthesiologist — Dr. Richard "Harry" Harris.

The British cave divers explained that it was imperative that the boys be sedated — if the boys were alert and panicked in the murky depths of the cave, they would likely drown and potentially take a diver with them.

The Thai prime minister approved the plan as it appeared to be the only viable option, slim as it was.

As Harris made his way to the boys, the rescue team rehearsed the attempt on dry ground and later at a swimming pool. Everyone knew if even the slightest thing went wrong, people would likely die.

As the rescue began, divers took turns holding a boy with one hand and the guide line with the other. Other rescue divers, pre-positioned in the cave, acted as a safety system as the divers with the sedated boys made their way through the intricate underwater passages.

Despite all the opportunities for failure, the first day was a stunning success that no one fully expected.

The next two rescues went just as perfectly as the first . . . , but to illustrate how close the attempt was to failure, just as soon as the coach and the last four boys made it to the mouth of the cave, an interior water pump failed, causing dry chambers to quickly flood, with the remaining rescue workers escaping with just seconds to



spare. Heavy rains began the next day.

As the world celebrated the Thai Navy SEALs for their ability to lead and assemble an international rescue effort, a small collection of rescuers, including Anderson and a handful of other U.S., Australian, and British divers, agreed that this was no ordinary rescue.

"We all felt that there had to be supernatural intervention to have this outcome," Anderson says. "For me, I absolutely know there was divine intervention . . . God had His hand on this operation."

Photos by U.S. Air Force Capt. Jessica Tait.