



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN RODGERS

"Why a General Council? Is there any real need for some form of organization in a movement inspired by the Holy Ghost?" J. Roswell Flower posed this question in the Aug. 12, 1951, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel*.

Flower, himself an early Pentecostal pioneer and one of the founders of the Assemblies of God, was well-qualified to address this question. He noted that many early Pentecostals rejected "organization of any kind," recalling one pioneer, asserted: "All we need to do is walk in the Spirit."

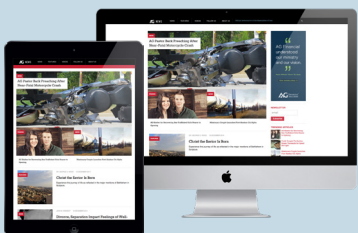
According to Flower, whether Pentecostals should organize is an "old question" that has arisen numerous times. However, he believed

that history had vindicated the value of organization and pointed to the success of AG missions efforts around the world.

Flower wrote: "The missionary cause has been promoted until now there are literally hundreds of thousands of saved and Holy Ghost-baptized believers with some in almost every country on earth. It is too late to accept the adage that organization is of the devil when we have a concrete example of what a simple, cooperative organization can do and has done."



Read Flower's entire article, "Why a General Council?" on pages 6, 7, and 14 of the Aug. 12, 1951, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.

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AG NEWS

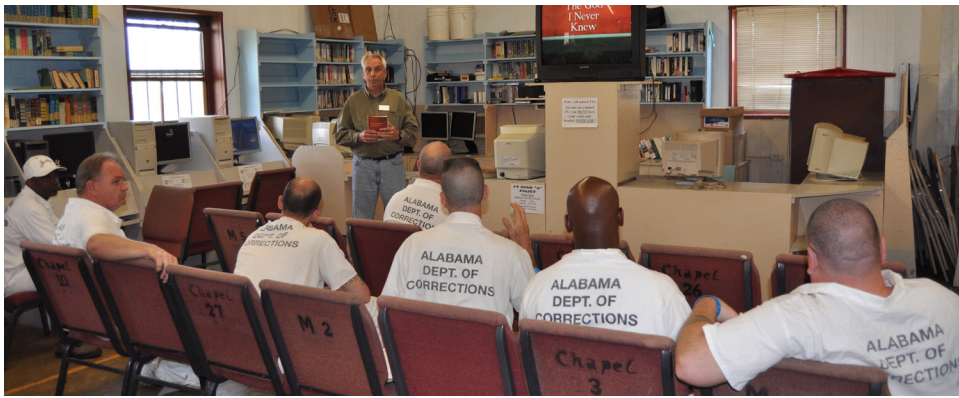
A COLLECTION OF THIS WEEK'S STORIES FROM [NEWS.AG.ORG](http://news.ag.org)

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BACK TO PRISON, FOR A DIFFERENT REASON

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Frank D. Gossett spends 40 hours a week at Bullock Correctional Facility in Alabama as a volunteer Assemblies of God chaplain, preaching, teaching, serving Communion, counseling, baptizing, and delivering notifications to prisoners about the death of a relative.

For a five-year stretch starting in 2005, Gossett spent 168 hours a week at Bullock, involuntarily. A life of drinking alcohol started at 8 and he began using illicit drugs at 11. At one point in early adulthood, Gossett spent \$300 a day for cocaine.

"I was a drug addict for 40 years," says Gossett, 61. "I stole from my family and others just to support my habit. Sometimes I would even physically hurt people."

But in 2008, while at Bullock, Gossett accepted Jesus as Savior at the invitation of fellow inmate Robert Whitson, himself serving two life terms. Whitson, freed in 2012 after 23 years incarcerated, says he had been sentenced as a habitual offender under the state's three-time loser law. Now 50, Whitson is working for

an Alabama ministry called Royal Pines Recovery Center.

Although originally sentenced to 25 years, Gossett had to serve only one-fifth of the time at the facility in Union Springs, which houses 1,550 prisoners.

"God opened the doors for me to be qualified for early release," Gossett says. He entered a halfway house, operated by the We Care Program. In 2013, Gossett received a full pardon. He became an endorsed U.S. Missions chaplain in 2017 and has formed his own ministry, Breaking Every Chain.

Two years after his release, Gossett started ministering at Holman Correctional Facility and had the opportunity to minister to some with whom he served time.

At Bullock, Gossett assists U.S. Missions correctional chaplain Stephen O. Walker, who helped disciple him with curricula after his conversion. Gossett graduated with a biblical diploma from the Montgomery-based Liberty Theological Seminaries International program that Walker established

PINT-SIZED PRAYERS ANSWERED

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Little Arianna* was overwhelmed with sadness when she arrived at Camp GC — the kids' camp for families attending General Council, July 31 through Aug. 4, in Orlando, Florida. The weight of the depression she was experiencing never seemed to go away.

Caleb's eyes hurt and were swollen and red. No matter what he did, the irritation continued.

Then there was Daryl. He had injured his ankle and it hurt to walk.

At Camp GC, part of each day was spent in the Missions Experience, where kids interacted with missionaries, and the Prayer Experience, where kids learned about prayer.

"This week, many kids witnessed [the power of prayer] in their own lives and in the lives of kids around them," states Patti Chapman, Camp GC director.

Heather Marble, children's pastor for Life Church Assembly of God, Roscoe, Illinois, oversaw the Prayer Experience. It offered different stations for kids to pray over different issues.

Marble recalls Arianna praying for God to take away her sadness and fear.

The prayer room had an inflatable raft where kids told God what they needed and wrote it on the raft.

"We had talked about leaving [the need] on the raft and not carrying it with you, because you gave it to God," Marble says. "She wrote on the raft and when she got up, she said she felt so free and the weight she felt on her was let go."

The Missions Experience was overseen by Tessa Honnen, a VictoryKIDS team member at Victory Life Church, Fruita, Colorado.

"We had missionary Amy Singleton come talk to the children," Honnen says. "She felt like she needed to pray for children with physical pain." Singleton asked Caleb to put his hands over his eyes. When she finished praying, his eyes were no longer red or puffy and the pain was gone.

"Amy told Daryl to put his hands on his ankle as she prayed," Honnen says. "When she finished praying, she asked him to walk and run around the room." He did — pain free!

*Children's names changed for privacy.

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."



FINDING FOOD FOR FAMISHED KIDS

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

Randy L. Valimont remembers being shocked after learning that two preteen boys had walked nearly six miles to a Christmas event at Griffin First Assembly because of hunger.

"We looked into the situation and found that a lot of kids are on a government plan of getting free breakfast and lunch at school, and those are the only meals they get that day," says Valimont. "When they leave school on Friday and come back Monday, that's the first time they eat again. That was a wake-up call that there were people in our city who weren't eating on a regular basis."

The church worked with a public school to address the problem, and that led Griffin First to spearhead an effort through the Spalding County Collaborative of congregations and nonprofits. The entity created a novel and effective solution: each week a team of volunteers assembles bags full of shelf-stable foods and snacks that kids pick up at the school office on Fridays so

they don't go hungry over the weekend. Today, the donation-driven program feeds hundreds of children each week through public schools.

Schools identify kids in need. Each week the collaborative's volunteers, which include many former teachers and educators, pack bags with nonperishable goods such as microwavable meals, granola bars, juice boxes, and apple sauce.

They deliver the bags to schools on Friday, and students pick up their bags from the principal's office and take them home.

Instead of placing the food in backpacks, which might draw unwanted attention to children receiving aid, volunteers bundle the food in nondescript grocery bags, which can be stuffed into regular school backpacks.

The church raises funds to purchase food because donated items often are not shelf-stable, nutritious, or easy for children to open and prepare. Each bag contains the same dozen items.

COMMAND CHANGE FOR CHAPLAINCY

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

The new military representative for U.S. Missions' Chaplaincy Ministries is eager to recruit people to a career he found rewarding. James T. Denley took over the post July 15, just as he retired from his 28-year active duty service as a U.S. Navy chaplain. Denley hopes many credentialed AG ministers will consider the possibility of the military as a vocation.

"Military chaplaincy is a place for those who have a compassionate heart to reach the unchurched," says Denley, 60.

Denley proved to be ahead of the curve in recognizing potential mental health hazards of the profession. In 2008 he received the Association of Professional Chaplains highest honor, the Anton Boisen Award, for pioneering techniques in improving the quality of pastoral care for Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard personnel.

Denley served as command chaplain of the *USS Mississippi* and went on four overseas tours, to the Philippines, Italy, Kuwait, and Iraq. His staff assignments included the Navy Surgeon General's Office, the Navy Chief of Chaplains Office, Marine Corps Forces Command, and Navy Medicine East. He deployed in 2010, assigned to U.S. Forces Iraq.

Denley succeeds Scott McChrystal, who served as the AG's national military representative for the past 14 years. Denley and his wife, Sue, have been married 38 years and have one daughter, Bethany Skvortsova.

WANTED: CHURCH PLANTERS

BY KRISTEL RINGER ORTIZ

Though each of AGWM's six geographical regions has its own unique challenges and ministry goals, the urgent need for qualified church planters and leaders is common to all.

Without adequate witness, discipleship, and training from believers who have themselves been adequately disciplined and trained, the unreached around the world will have little or no chance of hearing about Jesus.

Those who do hear, but are not disciplined, may give up on a lifelong relationship with the Lord. Even as Christ-followers, if they do not grow in their own faith and biblical understanding, they will be unable to witness to, disciple, and train those around them.

AGWM is committed to creating indigenous, self-propagating/replicating bodies of believers worldwide. This calls for every individual to be given the chance to have a vibrant relationship with Jesus and receive adequate training to lead others into the same kind of relationship. Missionaries begin the process, with the goal of turning leadership over to well-trained indigenous believers as quickly as possible.

Needs and methods differ, but one common denominator remains: For the light of Christ to continue reaching around the world, thriving groups of believers must be established, sustained and perpetuated through individual and collective discipleship.



A NEW HEART FOR GOD

BY GINGER KOLBABA

Born with the rare hypoplastic left heart syndrome, Jessica R. Fletcher underwent experimental heart surgery at the Cleveland Clinic when she was five days old. Since no baby had ever survived this type of delicate surgery before Jessica's 1983 birth, she had a slim chance of survival.

"Doctors encouraged us not to get our hopes up," says Jessica's mother, Ruthie, an ordained AG minister. Ruthie and her husband, Larry, also an ordained minister, took the prognosis to the Great Physician.

"All we could do was pray, so we prayed," says Larry, who has served for 34 years as lead pastor at LifeWay Church in New Philadelphia, Ohio.

Day-by-day Jessica slowly grew stronger, stunning the medical community. Doctors released her to go home, but they expected her to live a few years, at most. They also had concerns that she would suffer

significant learning disabilities.

"We chose to focus on believing God had a plan for Jessica," Ruthie says.

Though Jessica needed three more heart surgeries by age 21, her health exceeded expectations. Jessica graduated from the University of Valley Forge and became children's pastor at Victory AG in Newcomerstown, Ohio.

But her heart struggled again in January 2019. After 36 years, her congenital birth defect had destroyed her heart. If she hoped to survive, she needed a new one.

Jessica and her family once again returned to prayer for wisdom. On May 18, 2019, a heart became available. The surgery went well.

Today, for the first time, Jessica has a whole heart and is doing better than her doctors expected. Though she's still in recovery, she plans to return to her work at Victory AG in the fall.

through Alabama Prison Ministries in 1990.

Intense faith-based courses are designed to teach inmates structure and responsibility, so they won't return to a life of crime. In addition to extensive classes about the Bible and scriptural principles, men also learn everything from how to handle money to how to be a devoted spouse.

"I didn't expect to get one of my inmates back to help me," says Walker, 68. "Frank is an excellent counselor and he's been leading men to Christ."

Because of Gossett's background, Walker says his assistant is able to determine whether an inmate is

genuinely interested in turning his life around or not.

Gossett met his wife, Kathryn Ann, in 2010 at church, where they both worked for Celebrate Recovery. Initially, their relationship stemmed from Frank seeking someone to help his ministry with computer-related skills. But it blossomed from there.

"I watched this man walk the talk that he talked," Kathryn says. "I knew this man consulted God before making any kind of decision." The couple wed in 2013.

Ironically, Kathryn retired after 25 years of working for the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles.

FAST-TRACKING FOR MISSIONS

BY PAUL K. LOGSDON

From its inception, the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) of Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri, has had a strategic partnership with AG World Missions.

The AGTS/AGWM relationship is a two-way street. On one side, for 46 years, missions personnel have served on the AGTS faculty, and on the other, the seminary has been a major provider of new AG missionaries.

Greg Mundis, executive director of AGWM, and Tim Hager, dean of the seminary and vice president of Evangel University, recently reaffirmed the process of the partnership where missionary personnel are approved and assigned to AGTS for faculty roles.

Missionary associates (MAs), are the largest group that feed into the system

and eventually become appointed AG general missionaries. Evangel has been the largest provider of MAs to AGWM for more than a decade.

In light of this, the AGTS intercultural program for bachelor's level students at Evangel has developed a system for fast-tracking students into AGWM by way of the Missionary (MAPS) and Missionary Associate (MA) programs.

Shepherding students through the process is Sandy Friesen, professor of intercultural studies at Evangel who also oversees the AGWM Missionaries in Residence program at the undergrad level.

"The consolidated Evangel, CBC, and AGTS, make up about 33% of all AGWM missionaries from AG schools," Hagar says.