

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

Fifty years ago this week the Assemblies of God released a book called *The Wellsprings of the Pentecostal Movement*. The author, David Womack, compared the Pentecostal movement to a tree, carefully examining the deep roots of Pentecostalism.

Womack saw the tree today threatened by two grave dangers — people with a limited knowledge of Church history and people who have been overinfluenced by non-Pentecostal concepts.

He declared “The most dangerous problems facing the Pentecostal Movement are not those of external forces ... but the slow decay from within.” He stressed that if Jesus and His apostles intended for the New Testament patterns to be the standard for the Church in all ages, then the Pentecostal movement should make every effort to uphold those patterns.

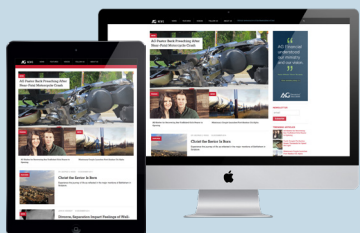
According to Womack, the Day of Pentecost established several precedents, including that “the infilling of the Holy Spirit ... was to be for the



whole Church.” Womack collaborated with the Committee on Advance to evaluate the life and role of the church. The book, which continues to shape the mission of the church, was an outgrowth of the committee.

Read more about *The Wellsprings of the Pentecostal Movement* on pages 10, 11, and 21 of the Aug. 25, 1968, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/aug251968.

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AG NEWS

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

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PREPARING FOR HARVEST

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Following Hurricane Maria that struck Puerto Rico in September, it took 11 months to fully restore power, an estimated 300,000 people left the island, businesses closed as insurance claims failed, and recently the government acknowledged the death toll exceeded 1,400 instead of under 100.

Iván De la Torre, the AG district superintendent for the Puerto Rico district, says the disaster has had a far-reaching impact on the churches, pastors, and congregants.

"One hundred churches were damaged by Hurricane Maria," De la Torre says, "and of those, 40 were completely destroyed. Up to now, only 12 of those churches have been rebuilt."

The district and churches are facing significant financial challenges. And what's rarely talked about is the far-ranging post-traumatic stress people are experiencing at all levels.

But the future for the Assemblies of God in Puerto Rico and its impact upon countless lives looks bright.

"The first six months after the hurricane, with Convoy of Hope, we

touched the lives of 150,000 families, or about half a million people, and distributed about eight million meals to families," De la Torre says.

AG endorsed chaplains arrived in December, holding Resilience conferences for pastors to help them process their losses and give them the tools to recover. This December, the chaplains are returning to Puerto Rico to hold follow-up conferences.

What's more, work teams are hearing of the needs and are coming to Puerto Rico to assist the district and churches in rebuilding.

"We have enough lodging and transportation available for two groups every week," De la Torre says. Humberto Pizarro is in charge of logistics for groups.

Starting in December, Convoy of Hope will host at least five regional outreaches over the next year in each of Puerto Rico's five districts that are evangelistic in nature.

Also, to help fund ministries and pay off debts, under De la Torre's leadership, the district office is growing

COMMISSION GAINS WOMEN VOICES

BY DAN VAN VEEN

The Commission on Ethnicity meets annually to bring focus to the growing ethnicity of the Assemblies of God. General Superintendent Doug Clay, chairman of the Commission on Ethnicity, moved to make sure the women's perspective was well represented in the commission.

Connecting with Scott Temple, the director of AG Office of Ethnic Relations, and Dennis Rivera, the director of AG Office of Hispanic Relations, Clay asked them to each recommend a woman to serve a two-year appointment.

Yoriko Yabuki, the director of Japanese Women's Ministries in the U.S. Japanese Fellowship, was Temple's recommendation to serve as the representative for women of the Language/Ethnic Fellowships.

Rivera's choice for representative of the women of Hispanic districts was Silvia Carrizo. Carrizo has served as the secretary/treasurer of the Southern Pacific District Council since 2012.

Carrizo understands the importance of her role. She explains that in the

Hispanic districts, there is now a growing minority of women credential holders, and a possible majority in women lay people.

"My plan is to listen," she explains. "In order to plan for the future, we need to listen to their needs." Another goal for Carrizo is to communicate to the women of Hispanic districts, at all levels, that they are welcome in the AG Fellowship.

Yabuki, who is a D.Min candidate through the AG Theological Seminary, says that as she prayed about her role, the Holy Spirit gave her a nudge.

"My D.Min project was on the four cultural challenges Japanese women face in getting involved in leadership and ministry," Yabuki says, which include shame, isolation, avoidance of "standing out," and the value of women is perceived as less.

Yabuki's desire is to use the materials to assist the 22 Language/Ethnic Fellowship presidents in achieving their vision for seeing more women in leadership and ministry positions.

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."



A CALL TO HEALING

BY ASHLEY B. GRANT

In order to grow the congregation of Life Community Church, church planters Jamey and Kelley Bridges spread a wide net in Columbia, Illinois, a community of 10,300.

The couple met in the youth group of GCFirst Assembly of God in Granite City, Illinois, which is a St. Louis suburb. They wed after high school, and Jamey attended Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. He worked as youth pastor for 10 years at GCFirst AG.

Jamey and Kelley Bridges served on staff at Destiny Church in St. Louis until 2010, when they felt called to return to the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. In May 2009, a Columbia family friend that Jamey and Kelley had known from Destiny Church was murdered, along with her two young sons.

"We knew we had to be in the community and pour ourselves into it," Bridges says. "We felt like Jesus was calling us to be a vessel of healing."

The couple planted Life Community Church, with the goal of building

relationships. Around two dozen friends and relatives helped the couple to launch the new congregation 20 miles downriver from St. Louis.

Bridges continually sought out ways to get into the community and into the public schools. Eventually he became the head soccer coach at the local high school. That has contributed to the gradual growth of the congregation.

Columbia School District Superintendent Beth Horner notes that Bridges is sponsor of the school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which has grown exponentially under his leadership.

Now, more than 300 people attend the church weekly, including many young families. Life Community Church outgrew its original facilities. After meeting in a car dealership temporarily, the congregation has moved to the site of a former Baptist church.

"I want to pursue the unchurched," says Bridges. "Church starts well before someone walks into a building."

SEU ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP

BY PRISCILLA BURR

Southeastern University (SEU) in Lakeland, Florida, will introduce its first international partnership this fall in East Africa, through The Christian Hall at Watoto Church in Kampala, Uganda. This local church-based partnership will provide Christ-centered online degree programs in business and leadership for East Africa.

"We are excited for this partnership and look forward to welcoming people from East Africa into our SEU community," said Dr. Kent Ingle, SEU president. "Our goal is to continue to partner with local churches in order to provide an innovative delivery of Christian higher education around the world."

SEU is working with Watoto Church in Uganda to support the Hall. Planted during a civil war in 1984, Watoto Church has placed thousands of orphans into families, empowered women to reach their communities, rescued babies and former child soldiers, and sent children's choirs across six continents. The church currently has 12 campuses across Uganda, and in Juba, South Sudan.

The program at Watoto Church will serve as a model for other global education initiatives for the university.

This fall's programs include a Bachelor of Business Administration, a Bachelor of Science in Business and Professional Leadership, and a Graduate Certificate in Organizational Leadership.

DISABILITIES MEET GOOD BUSINESS

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Recently, My Healthy Church (MHC), a resource arm for the Assemblies of God, needed a job done that they simply didn't have the workers to do — hand-stuffing fliers into 40,000 Ranger Derby car kits. MHC turned to SWI Industrial Solutions.

It was the right call. SWI's competitive bid, quality guarantee, and turnaround time were what MHC wanted.

SWI Industrial Solutions workforce, with the exception of supervisors, is made up of men and women with disabilities.

"We do simple assembly and packaging," says Robin Murphy, SWI production manager. "For example, if you buy a bottle of barbecue sauce, it might have a hang tag with a coupon on it — it's possible we put that hang tag on there."

Murphy says the company employs 185 verified disabled workers in its Springfield, Missouri, facility.

"The SWI organization has been a lifesaver," says Amy Pargo, AG Product Sourcing specialist. She says the experience has led MHC to bid two more jobs out to SWI.

"It's exciting to be able to work with a company that adds so much to the lives of people with disabilities in our community," Pargo says. "SWI is not only great to work with, they do a great job."



YOUTH TRAINING GROUND

BY GUYLA ARMSTRONG

Long before 42-year-old Shane A. Hawkins knew he would become a church planter, the Lord began to train him for the task.

At age 19, he started attending a small church in Pekin, Illinois, with his then-girlfriend (now-wife) Amy. He became an assistant in a Sunday School class of five students. By 21, Hawkins was the church's youth director. That small class had bloomed into a youth group of 80 students.

As a part-time youth pastor, Hawkins continued his day job working as a road construction foreman. When the opportunity to become full-time youth director at his home church, North Parkway Assembly of God in Pekin, presented itself, Hawkins left concrete work behind. After seven years as youth director, Shane and Amy sensed the Lord calling them to plant a church.

Hawkins returned to his previous construction job and continues to be bivocational during summers while he pastors City Church in Pekin, which launched in 2015. The couple, now

parents of five boys, work together at the church. In October 2016, City Church purchased the building where Hawkins had invested 11 years earlier in youth ministry. Less than two years later, attendance is 240 and growing.

City Church has a strong evangelistic approach, which features creative community outreach and ministry projects — ranging from raising money helping to provide prom dresses for high schoolers to serving food at the Salvation Army. Adherents also volunteer to operate the grill for the concessions at local football games.

Isaac Carrington has been friends with Hawkins since high school and serves as the church's financial coordinator. He attributes much of the growth of City Church to community involvement. Carrington says many attendees have never been part of a church before.

"It is a complete 180 — not overnight — but it is amazing to see lives change from beginning to end," Carrington says.

crops using hydroponics: planting seeds in foam mats and the seedlings grow to maturity in PVC pipes using nutritified water.

Using this method, lettuce is ready to harvest in 30 days. Currently the district has three 40-by-60-foot canopy systems capable of growing 100 different types of plants.

"We are already selling fresh produce to grocers," De la Torre says, "and they want more, a lot more."

The district wants to increase the number of canopy systems it operates to six, with a goal of 18 canopies on the district office grounds alone. Every six canopy systems (\$3,500 each) produces \$10,000 worth of crops a month.

However, De la Torre recognizes that in order for the future to be fully

realized the district needs to get on solid financial ground quickly: "Due to the hurricane we haven't been able to make all of our loan payments, so we've recently created Project Nehemiah."

Through the Project Nehemiah campaign, De la Torre is reaching out to districts, churches, and individuals to help the district raise \$300,000 — already 25 districts have pledged (and 13 have already given) their support — so it can afford to consolidate and refinance \$3 million in loans.

"We're not looking to live off of handouts," De la Torre states. "This is a one-time request. Our goal is to be self-sufficient and pay our own way — and more."

**To contact the district to learn how to help, email info@cadpr.org.*

AG CHURCH DESTROYED BY FIRE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Fair Oaks Assembly of God in McCrory, Arkansas, burned to the ground early Saturday morning. The church was in the midst of a building program when the fire destroyed the existing and new structures.

Rodney Eldridge, senior pastor of Fair Oaks AG for the past 21 years, says that sometime late Friday night a fire broke out. "That's all we know. The ATF is currently here investigating," he says.

Located about 80 miles northeast of Little Rock, the church was adding a new 700-seat sanctuary. "The exterior of the new sanctuary was about 95 percent complete," Eldridge says. "Both the main building and the new addition

were destroyed . . . there's nothing left."

Although there have been offers to Fair Oaks AG to use other buildings, Eldridge says that they will use the shop located on the back of their property, where the congregation, which averages about 130, gathered on Sunday.

Both buildings that burned had insurance, but for now, until the ATF finishes its investigation and declares its findings, the church waits. AG Disaster Relief for Churches has already reached out to provide an application for assistance.

"Prayer for this congregation," Eldridge requests, "that we can continue the vision that God gave us."