



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, the newly formed Soviet Union launched a campaign to eradicate Christianity within its borders. Clergy were imprisoned or murdered, churches were demolished or converted to other uses, and an intensive propaganda campaign sought to convince people that Christianity was a harmful superstition.


The Pentecostal movement found fertile soil in Russia. Early evangelists brought the Pentecostal movement to Russia a decade before the 1917 revolution.

Following the revolution, communist government officials persecuted the Orthodox church and soon targeted

other churches, including Baptists, Mennonites, Seventh Day Adventists, and Pentecostals.

Laws forbade Christians from holding church services, providing religious instruction to their children, or sharing the gospel. If Christians practiced their faith, they were subject to fines, imprisonment, or exile to Siberia.

Gustav H. Schmidt, a pioneer AG missionary, wrote three articles in 1934 describing the suffering endured by Pentecostals in the Soviet Union.

Read Schmidt's series in the following issues of the Pentecostal Evangel online at s2.ag.org/july211934, s2.ag.org/july281934, and s2.ag.org/august41934. 



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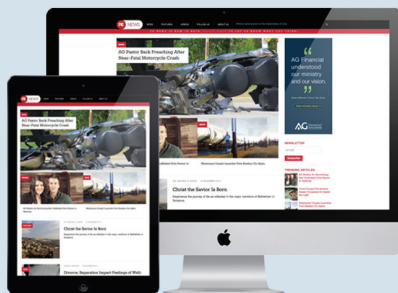
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DEALING WITH THE OPIOID RAGE

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

A collarbone injury ended the collegiate football career of Kristopher J. McFadden Sr., but more importantly, it started his drug addiction.

A 30-day supply of the painkillers Vicodin and Percocet provided a temporary escape. But by the time the prescriptions expired, McFadden’s brain chemistry had been altered, leading to his craving for more. Unable to afford pharmaceuticals on the black market, McFadden turned to a less expensive, but more potent, drug — heroin.

“In a twisted way, heroin became the logical next step for me to maintain my well-being,” McFadden says. It also prompted a three-year journey fraught with legal troubles and jail confinement.

McFadden’s messed-up life at the turn of the century is now being repeated with more frequency by others across the U.S., and not just among young athletes.

“The epidemic is increasing, and it’s expanded into different demographics,” says the 35-year-old McFadden, who

became president and CEO of the Teen Challenge Training Center in Rehrersburg, Pennsylvania, last year.

Physicians overprescribing the drugs to alleviate moderate back pain, arthritis, migraines, dental surgery aftereffects, and broken bones have ignited many cases of dangerous enslavement to opioids. The National Institute of Health estimates there are 5.1 million painkiller abusers.

“A little legal pill looks a lot more legitimate than a bag of illegal heroin,” McFadden says. “But prescription pain meds led me to heroin.”

Because a dose of heroin is typically three or four times less expensive than a painkilling pill, many end up looking in unsavory places.

“It’s common for drug abusers to hear a voice inside saying, *If you don’t take this, you’re going to die,*” says Joseph S. Batluck Sr., president of Teen Challenge International, U.S.A. in Ozark, Missouri. “They want to survive.”

For most folks, once the medical treatment runs out, it’s impossible to

HISPANIC DISTRICT HOLDS UNUSUAL “WOMEN-ONLY” ORDINATION

BY SOUTHERN LATIN DISTRICT

As a relatively new AG district, the Southern Latin District celebrated its third District Council on June 3, 2016, in an incredible way. This year, they received eight ordination candidates — all of whom were women!



District Superintendent David Zayas was surprised when he learned early in the year that all applicants for ordination were women. “This will go down as a historical moment within our district and possibly across the nation that an ordination ceremony does not include any men,” Zayas says. “It speaks volumes of how God is impressing upon the women of this Fellowship to step into their calling.”

All of the women receiving ordination share active ministry with their spouses in their respective churches. Some of them have had the opportunity to minister abroad as well.

“I think for each of us, the most meaningful part of this ceremony was that we had the incredible blessing of being anointed by our husbands,” says Nancy Zayas, wife of District Superintendent Zayas.

For one of the ordained, Diana Mercado, not only was her husband with her, but her father, Rev. Ruben Quiros Sr., who is a retired minister, was also able to stand on the altar with her and anoint her.

“Each one of these are incredible godly women who serve with passion in their churches,” Nancy Zayas says. “They are anointed preachers, teachers, and leaders within our district, and I am humbled to have been given the blessing to stand with them on the altar.”

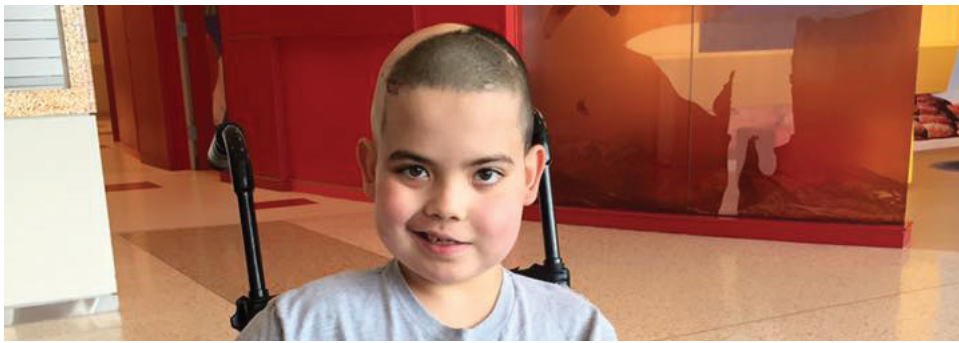
Pictured (L-R): Nancy Zayas, Claritza Rivera, Blanca Deal, Lisa DeJesus, Maria Manzanera, Veronica Varas, Diana Mercado, Annie Montalvo

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.”



SOCIAL MEDIA RALLIES PRAYER FOR BOY

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Seven-year-old Dominic was a good kid. But for Dominic and his parents, Ken and Kira Liples of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, the “good” life was about to be tested.

On March 7, 2016, Kira noticed Dominic’s left arm seemed weak. After school, the arm was worse, he was limping, and his smile was crooked. They headed for the ER.

The news stunned them. Dominic had anaplastic astrocytoma — an aggressive brain cancer rarely found in children.

“This is a cancer that does not go away,” Kira says. Life for the Liples suddenly went from organized chaos to survival mode. But they are no strangers to challenges. For nearly six years, they have cared for their younger son Ciarlo (CHAR-lo), who has spina bifida and is paralyzed from the waist down.

“Ken and Kira believe . . . the only real cure for Dominic is a miracle from the Lord,” says Randy Eliason, senior pastor at Calvary Church (AG) in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, where Ken

is director of the church’s daycare and preschool.

Kira began posting on Facebook. The community held a prayer vigil. Businesses posted “Pray for Dominic” signs. The news media picked up the story. People were appealing to God on Dominic’s behalf!


Dominic has even received prayer messages and visits from members of all the Philadelphia professional sports franchises.

But doctors recently expressed concern that the cancer is more aggressive than they thought.

“Prayer is all I ask for, because it’s the only thing that will help,” Kira says.

It’s rare when a child makes a spiritual impact upon adults. But in the case of Dominic, a boy who is bravely facing death with a shaved head and a crooked smile, people are listening, responding, praying.

When asked if he could tell the world just one thing, Dominic responded, “That I love Jesus!”

And that’s what matters. 


AG POSITION ON ALCOHOL REAFFIRMED

Last week, members of the Assemblies of God’s General Presbytery — the Fellowship’s second-highest policymaking body — convened in Louisville, Kentucky, for their annual meeting.

Among items discussed in the proceedings was the Assemblies of God’s position on abstinence from alcohol. The Fellowship’s long-held stance on avoiding alcohol was adopted as a position paper by the General Presbytery in 1985.

“We’ve seen the devastation alcohol can bring on individual lives and families,” said George O. Wood, general superintendent. “We knew our position of abstinence needed to be strengthened and reaffirmed.”

The newly adopted paper was introduced by the Assemblies of God’s Commission on Doctrinal Purity after a thorough review of the topic. Considerable attention was given to the various warnings Scripture gives about consuming alcoholic beverages.

After presenting arguments from Scripture, history, and science, the paper concludes, “Therefore the Assemblies of God reaffirms its position of abstinence from alcoholic beverages. This position should be proclaimed boldly and clearly throughout our Fellowship, yet humbly and lovingly in faithful ministry to all.” 

A HEAD FOR MEMORIZATION


BY DARLA KNOTH

No other quizzer in the history of Assemblies of God Teen Bible Quiz (TBQ) has come close to the accomplishments of Abby Rogers, 19, of Kirkland, Washington. Rogers finished her first year this spring at Northwest University as an English major. She concluded her quiz career before enrolling at Northwest last fall.

Rogers holds several records as a Teen Bible Quiz participant. She earned the title of top individual scorer (during team competition) at the national Bible Quiz Finals tournament every year from 2010 through 2015. For four years, she won the individual tournament (where individual quizzers compete) at nationals.

In 2010, her team from Victorious Life Church in Wesley Chapel, Florida, won the national Bible Quiz championship when Rogers was in seventh grade. In the next two years, Victorious Life Church placed in the top four teams nationally. When Rogers moved to Washington, her team from Cedar Park Assembly in Bothell placed in the top four from 2013-15.

Those who know Rogers understand winning competitions isn’t what drives her. Rogers views Scripture memorization as more than a game.

“I now have mental access to Scripture that furnishes me with a biblical worldview,” Rogers says. “The Bible becomes a filter for my entire life.” 



MEGA SPORTS CAMPS SEE BIG RESPONSES

BY DAN VAN VEEN

When a church offers MEGA Sports Camp for a fraction of the cost of a typical sports camp (sometimes even free), it catches families' attention.

But what excites churches is that through MEGA Sports Camps, an incredible percentage of kids are giving or rededicating their lives to Christ!

Corey Sullenger, children's pastor at North Ridge Church (AG) in Marshfield, Wisconsin, where attendance runs about 400, reports that every day, about 200 kids attended their June MEGA Sports Camp.

Sullenger says nearly 70 percent of the kids attending the camp were not from the church and 42 of the kids wrote down that they didn't attend a church at all. He says 47 kids made first-time decisions for Christ and 38 rededicated their lives to Christ.


"It's just amazing, watching how this works," Sullenger says. "The lessons the kids are learning in the sports skills tie together with the Bible story so well. Kids are constantly learning, listening to

the Bible."

Steve Davis, children's pastor at Painesville (Ohio) Assembly of God, with an attendance of about 400, says about 95 kids attended their June MEGA Sports Camp. More than 40 kids made decisions for Christ and several new families attended for the first time as a result of the camp.

"It's a very dynamic discipleship and equipping tool," Davis says about MEGA Sports Camp.

Recently, River Oaks Community Church (ROCC) in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, conducted a MEGA Sports Camp. Not only did hundreds of kids attend, but ROCC reported 254 salvation decisions!

"The message sticks with kids because they come to understand what the lessons are all about and put them into action," Sullenger says. "When they leave, it's something they take with them and tell their friends — and family — about!" 


afford the high nonprescription per-pill cost of opioids. In the past generation, a host of the most powerful narcotics ever created came into existence, including OxyContin and Vicodin. Eighty percent of heroin addicts say they started out on prescription painkillers, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

McFadden landed at a Western Pennsylvania Teen Challenge center near Pittsburgh, where he became a Christian in 2007. As part of his efforts to make amends, he apologized to his ex-girlfriend for treating her so poorly during high school. That mistreatment included pressuring Toni Davis to get an abortion.

In their first face-to-face meeting in

nine years, McFadden learned that Davis had also become a Christian. In fact, Davis served as an abstinence educator for a pregnancy care center, talking to students about the mistakes she made as a teen.

Six months after their reunion, McFadden and Davis wed in 2009. They now have four children, Isaac, Ayriana, Isabella, and Kris Jr. McFadden has obtained bachelor's and master's degrees.

Today, with nine years of sobriety and an intact marriage, McFadden has been spared the long-term trauma many other former addicts have experienced. He is the first graduate of the Teen Challenge Training Center to become its president and CEO. 

OVERCOMING SUSPICIONS IN ALASKA

BY KEN WALKER

Nathaniel Olemaun hopes to become a missionary to Alaskan Natives in Barrow. A student at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, the Chi Alpha member is preparing for his future discipleship assignment by forming a small group during the fall semester.

"Alaskan Natives trust a Native more than other people," says Olemaun, a member of the Inupiaq people. "I already know the community and how people will react."

The plan to spread the gospel across rural and isolated Alaska by training students to become bivocational missionaries stems from University of Alaska-Fairbanks Chi Alpha

Director Paul Burkhart's eight years of experience as an Assemblies of God world missionary in Southeast Asia.

"When we looked at where indigenous people gathered in Alaska, we saw that the idea of establishing ministries in hub cities and mobilizing people to go back to their villages was the same methodology we could use here," says Burkhart, now an AG U.S. missionary.

A primary reason for Burkhart's plan to mobilize Alaskan Natives in outreach is the suspicion the state's first peoples have toward outsiders. Still, since 2014, more than 100 salvation decisions have occurred through Chi Alpha chapters. 