

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY WILLIAM MOLENAR

E. S. Williams was AG general superintendent during the Great Depression and through World War II.

In a 1934 New Year's article, Williams noted, "It is a time for the Church, the bride of Christ, to trim afresh her lamps, to replenish her vessels with spiritual oil, to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble and defile us."

Ernest Swing Williams (1885-1981), a participant in the Azusa Street revival in 1906 and ordained with the AG in 1914, served as he general superintendent between 1929 and 1949. During his tenure he brought great stability to the U.S. AG Fellowship during difficult times.

To begin the New Year right, Williams pointed out the need for reconciliation in relationships. He also mentioned the need for the teaching of sound doctrine and going back to the Bible. Williams cast vision for the Assemblies of God to advance evangelism at home, as well as in the

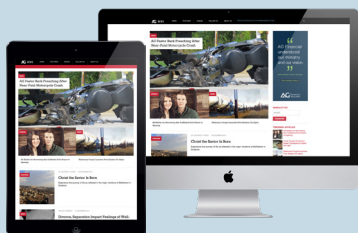


foreign fields for the coming year.

In his closing remarks, he urges, "May the New Year take us leagues ahead of where we have ever been before."

Read the article, "Looking Toward the New Year," on pages 1, 6, and 7 of the Dec. 29, 1934, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at <http://s2.ag.org/dec291934>.

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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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REVERSING A LEGACY

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Leo George Miller's earliest memories involve trying to restrain his drunken father from beating his mother. Although his parents divorced when he was a young boy, as a teenager Miller followed down the path of alcohol abuse, plus using and selling drugs.

While hitchhiking with a friend near Dallas, a motorist picked up the pair and convinced them to help him hold up a convenience store.

"We planned to rob a store near a motel and run back to our rented room, eliminating the need for a getaway vehicle," Miller recalls. "What a great plan!"

However, as the robbery took place, an unmarked police vehicle pulled into the parking lot. The clerk inside the business started hollering for the

officers to help when he saw their uniforms as they got out of the car. Miller fled with a whopping \$122 and made it to the motel, where he met the driver behind the scheme. But police found the motel key in the pocket of his captured hitchhiking buddy, so figuring out Miller's whereabouts didn't take long. Officers stormed the room through the door, shotguns pointing at Miller's head.

Although this represented Miller's 10th time behind bars, he never had faced an adult felony charge before. Miller received a 10-year prison sentence for armed robbery.

God provided a cell partner and then a second who repeatedly told Miller about Jesus. Miller hoped his third cellmate wouldn't be so vocal.

"It seemed more like a Bible college

CHURCH RISES FROM THE ASHES

JOHN W. KENNEDY

It's been nearly a year since Nashville First Assembly burned to the ground. It may take almost another year before a new church building is ready for occupancy in the southwest Arkansas community. After tussling with the company that had insured the church, First Assembly finally received a check for the expected amount in November.

Ever since the blaze destroyed the brick and wood complex Jan. 12, Nashville First Assembly has been meeting in the multipurpose room of a Missionary Baptist Church four miles away. Although grateful for the generosity offered by the other congregation, complete with chairs and a sound system, Pastor Terry G. Goff is expectantly awaiting the day when Nashville First will return to its own property.

The conflagration occurred on a cold and windy morning. The structure burned rapidly in an electrical fire caused by undetermined origin. Everything in the church office, including all records and Goff's

personal library collected in more than 30 years of ministry, quickly went up in flames.

Although ground has been broken for a new 16,000-square-foot facility, construction likely will take most of 2019. The church won't need to incur any debt.

"We're in a time of new beginnings," says Goff, who has been pastor going on a decade. "The fire has made us significantly stronger."

Goff has been pushing others in the church to minister outside the four walls — a concept perhaps easier to accomplish when no physical walls remain.

Goff hopes to change a religious mindset prevalent in the area that once a person is baptized, he or she doesn't need to worry about personal conduct. Some people have left Nashville First Assembly after Goff suggested they marry instead of live together, or that heavy drinking isn't really appropriate behavior for a follower of Christ.

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."



AFRICAN-AMERICAN TRAILBLAZER

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

When Gloria D. Young went through AG World Missions pre-field missionary training she looked around the conference in 2006 and didn't see anyone else who looked like her. Such obstacles hadn't deterred Young before. She relinquished a good-paying job with tremendous benefits as a letter carrier in Daly City, California, to become a youth pastor at Good News Fellowship in Daly City and Church on the Hill in Vallejo. She eventually began leading the singles ministry at Christian Life Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

From there, she went to Vienna Christian Center in Austria to assist the African Black Fellowship. Young built friendships — inside and outside the church — and led the African fellowship for a decade. She taught a United Nations women's Bible study and ministered to trafficked women in brothels. Young organized a team of women from the church to knock on doors and asked the prostitutes, all from outside Austria, to attend church

and the Bible study.

Over the years Young — as a woman, African-American, and single person — has learned to acclimatize to other more dominant cultures.

"Being an African-American missionary, I sometimes have to put my culture on the shelf to adapt to others," Young says.

Young's new assignment is with a coffeehouse ministry in Berlin. The German-speaking Young will assist the staff of Reset Charlottenburg, where she will lead worship, preach, and disciple new Christians. Young also will be involved in Pink Door Berlin, a faith-based organization that supports sexually exploited women who want to leave prostitution.

Young is blessed that toay more people look like her in AGWM circles. Now there are 15 African-American AGWM missionaries.

"I was afraid no one would be behind me, but now I feel good about it," Young says.

PREPARED FOR THE HARD PLACES

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Four years ago, Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, U.S.A., a ministry of U.S. Missions, was launched at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks (UAF) by Paul Burkhardt, U.S. missionary with Chi Alpha and state director, and his team.

Having spent nine years as AGWM missionaries to the tropics of Southeast Asia, Burkhardt and his wife, Crystal, didn't initially understand God's call to Alaska. However, when they arrived they found people much like they had just left — isolated, forgotten, and in desperate need of their God.

The Burkhardts have a passion for raising up missionaries to reach people in the hard places of the world.

"We have discovered a people uniquely suited to go into the hard places — the university students here in Alaska," Paul Burkhardt states. "The disciple makers we are training are indigenous believers from one of the toughest places on Earth, and God is calling them."

There are two Chi Alpha groups associated with the University of Alaska that Burkhardt oversees — Fairbanks and Anchorage. The two locations total about 400 students in the weekly small groups; over 300 attend the weekly combined service, where their sensitivity for missions and personal understanding of sacrifice is made evident.

"Every fall, we take an offering for a missionary or missionary couple who

are ministering in a hard place — often a dangerous place," explains Burkhardt.



Burkhardt says that small groups leaders emphasize sacrificial giving, asking each student to consider giving at least \$50. This year, in just three weeks, the UAF Chi Alpha groups reached a record \$10,000 for a missionary couple headed to a difficult part of the world. Meanwhile, the Chi Alpha based in Anchorage raised \$3,000 for a missionary to Africa.

Another astounding figure Burkhardt reports is last year nearly 100 students participated in missions trips around the world. This year, already 90 have committed to raise the funds to go.

"I believe these students have a heart for the hard places because they personally know what the hard place is like," Burkhardt says. "What initially made little sense to us a few years ago, God has transformed into a vision to reach the world."

BICYCLES FOR CHRISTMAS

BY DAN VAN VEEN

What did you get for Christmas this year? For many of more than 700 children in the Pollok/Lufkin, Texas, area, instead of making up a story or admitting they didn't get a Christmas present, they can say, "A bicycle!"

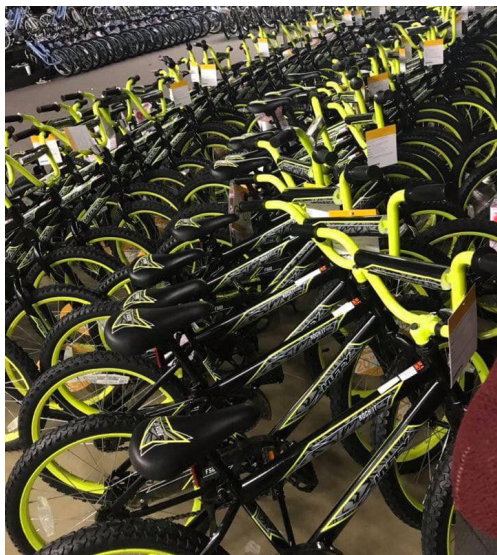
Pastor Josh Poage and the congregation at Clawson Assembly of God, which averages about 400 on Sundays, promised to give away 500 bicycles to the first 500 families who registered for the bicycle giveaway and came to the Dec. 16th service. However, when over 700 children showed up, many with at least one parent, the church didn't blink.

"We had the children register by age groups," explains Michelle McAdams, the Connect director for the church. "Once the bikes for an age level were gone, we issued the remaining children an orange wristband — which was basically a voucher for a free bike that we will order and get to them."

McAdams says that bike giveaway benefited those in need during the Christmas season. On Wednesdays, the church sends buses into Lufkin to pick up kids — sometimes hundreds. Many, if not most, come from difficult circumstances.

"The parents were so grateful," McAdams said. "So many told me that their children wouldn't have had any presents this year if it wasn't for this."

Valentin and Samantha Hernandez's four children, ages 13, 12, 11 and 7,



each received a new bike for Christmas through the giveaway.

"During this time of year, things get hard with four kids, but this [the giveaway] gave my kids something to look forward to — they were so excited," Hernandez says.

Prior to the giveaway, Poage's message to the 1,460 in attendance was "Jesus — Savior of the World."

"Dozens of people came forward to the altar call," McAdams says. "And I have the stacks of response cards here ready to follow up with them."

As the church has given, God has blessed the church. "God has blessed every part of our church, sending us the people we need when we needed them and the resources we need when we needed them," McAdams says. "He has blessed us in every area — blessed us beyond measure!"

than a prison," Miller remembers. "As I entered my new cell, I saw my new partner sitting on the bunk reading a Bible!" The other inmate couldn't read very well, and he said the words aloud, slowly, in order to gain understanding.

"He only read one chapter each night, but it took him an eternity to finish," Miller says. One evening, Miller suggested he read the chapter for the other inmate so he wouldn't have to listen to the Scripture reading drag on and on. The cellmate asked Miller what one of the passages from the Gospel of John meant.

"As I tried to explain it to him, God began to work in my heart," Miller says. When the other prisoner went free a week later, he left his Bible behind. Miller sought God's help.

"I immediately felt Him enter my life, as if someone had lifted a great weight from my shoulders," Miller says. He began attending prison church, and 1½ years later, the parole board miraculously granted his release from prison. He paroled to Calvary Commission, a ministry in Lindale, Texas, that provides a discipleship atmosphere for new parolees. Ministry founders Joe and Charlotte Fauss, who are U.S. missionaries with Chaplaincy Ministries, mentored Miller.

In 1979, Miller married his wife, Terry, who had lived with Joe and Charlotte for six years after enrolling in U.S. Missions Teen Challenge at age 15. The Millers served as early leaders at Calvary Commission, Leo as operations director and Terry as secretary.

"Those 10 years spent with Calvary Commission served as a foundation in our lives," Miller says.

In 1987, after becoming an ordained Assemblies of God minister, Miller pioneered All Generations Church in Lockhart, at the time the largest community in the North Texas District without an AG church. More than three decades after starting the church, Miller, at 61, is still pastor in Lockhart, a city of 13,500 about 30 miles south of Austin known as the filming site of such movies as *Secondhand Lions* and *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*?

"Ministry at times has been difficult," Miller says. "We have a real heart for broken people, accepting them where they're at, but realizing that God wants to take them to a better place."

"Leo is a son in the Lord," says the 78-year-old Joe Fauss. "We immediately recognized him as a leader who could handle a lot and he has been steadfast through the years."

Miller's testimony is part of a new book Fauss has written, *Caution: Watch Your Step*.

"I am amazed as I look back and consider the depths from where I came: a family heritage without Christ, with many generations of sin and hopelessness," Miller says.

The Millers have six daughters and three sons, ranging in age from 18 to 37, and most of them are involved in worship at All Generations. The church is reflective of the diverse demographics of the community.