



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN RDGERS

An estimated 800,000 to 1,500,000 ethnic Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire (present-day Turkey) were systematically rounded up and killed by Ottoman authorities between 1915 and 1918. Right in the midst of the conflict was Maria A. Gerber (1858-1917), an early Pentecostal missionary who had established an orphanage in Turkey for Armenian victims.

Born in Switzerland, Gerber was raised by Mennonite parents. When she was 12, she committed her life to Christ and was subsequently healed of several incurable diseases.

In 1891, wanting to become a missionary, Gerber attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Gerber and a friend, Rose Lambert, felt God calling

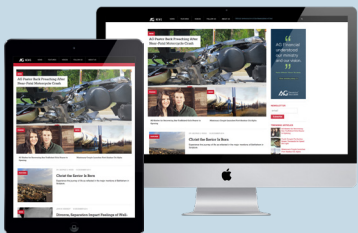
them to minister to the Armenian widows and orphans.

The women arrived in Turkey in 1898 and began working with the Armenians. In 1904, with the help of wealthy benefactors, they constructed a series of buildings to house hundreds of orphans and widows. Zion Orphans' Home, located near Caesarea, became a hub of relief work and ministry.

The Assemblies of God supported Gerber's missions efforts, and numerous letters by Gerber were published in the *Pentecostal Evangel*.



Read one of Gerber's articles, "Great Results Seen in Answer to Prayer," on page 4 of the Dec. 4, 1915, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at 2s.ag.org/dec1915.

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AG[®] NEWS

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

REVIVAL FOR A NEW GENERATION

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TEEN CHALLENGE CENTER TO REOPEN



REVIVAL FOR A NEW GENERATION

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

Forty years ago, Bruce and Linda Stefanik, now both 62, came to Christ as hitchhiking hippies during the Jesus movement. Today, they lead Church on the Hill, a suburban Salem, Oregon, congregation that is reaching a new generation of young people: millennials.

"Millennials are people of vision," Bruce says. "They care, they're passionate about issues we need to be passionate about. They have a lot of creative, great ideas."

A purposeless Bruce drove down Interstate 5 in northern California with Linda in 1978.

"I was spiritually hungry for something," he says, recalling the day they stopped in the small town of Mt. Shasta for gas and food — and experienced a redirection of their lives.

A woman they had never met approached them in a gas station parking lot and spoke a word from the

Lord: "Someone's been praying for you," she said. "You're running from God. Don't leave this place until you decide to serve Him or not. God sent me here to tell you He has a call on your life." She handed them a New Testament and walked away.

Overcome by what they now realize was the Holy Spirit, Bruce walked to a nearby phone booth, called the first contractor in the Yellow Pages, and started working in the town the next day. Obeying the woman's admonition, they waited to hear from God again.

Within days, another Christian invited them to a Christian rock concert in a park. That led them to Christian Life Center, an AG church in nearby Dunsmuir, which they attended for five years. For the next 16 years, they served as full-time missionaries, mostly in Latin America.

In 2001, they moved to Oregon and

AG HAS FASTEST-GROWING CHURCH

BY KEN WALKER

Outreach magazine recently named LifePoint Church of Clarksville, Tennessee, as the nation's fastest-growing congregation.

"It was a surprise — humbling and exciting," says lead pastor Mike R. Burnette of the magazine's ranking. "But we don't want that to define us."

Since reaching nearly 2,000 in Sunday attendance two years ago, the AG church has more than doubled again, thanks in part to baptizing hundreds of converts. This year's highest Sunday attendance hit 4,550 on Nov. 4.

This growth necessitated the opening of a second Clarksville campus in September 2017 (as well as another affiliated church 70 miles away in Smyrna that opened in January).

The LifePoint North Clarksville campus meets in a middle school on the other side of Clarksville, which is just south of Fort Campbell in Kentucky. Approximately 60 percent of its members come from the Army base, which straddles the two states.

Newcomers are encouraged to get involved in LifePoint's four-week growth track, which starts with an explanation of the spiritual journey in knowing God and concludes with an invitation to serve.

"Of those churches that are fast growing in the Assemblies and elsewhere, there is a consistent commitment to outreach and not preservation," Burnette says. "They have local missions and outreach. They're growing with new conversions, not just transfer growth."

Although the central campus on Rossview Road and the North Clarksville campus are on opposite sides of the metro area, the home-based life groups that meet during the week come from both locations. On Wednesday night, students from the branch campus join the student ministry on Rossview Road.

LifePoint North is seeing stirring results among the 300 people who gather at the middle school. More than 20 conversions have occurred in the past year.

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."



ALASKA QUAKE DAMAGES AG MINISTRIES

BY DAN VAN VEEN

The 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck Alaska on Nov. 30, with an epicenter seven miles north of Anchorage, caused structural damage to two Assemblies of God churches and seriously damaged the Alaska Ministry Network's campgrounds. However, no serious injuries were reported.

King's Way Ministry Center in Eagle River, pastored by Lance Smith, and Calvary Church in Anchorage, pastored by Mark Glover, both experienced structural damage.

Smith, whose church also has a Pre-K3 through 12 school, says that the earthquake struck while children were in the classrooms around 8:30 a.m. (sunrise is about 9:50 a.m.) and lasted for about 90 seconds. "The children," Smith explains, "took cover under their desks and then we evacuated the buildings . . . and got the children home."

The most severe damage occurred in the church; the balcony had visibly pulled away from the side walls. Damage to items being shaken off walls, shelves, and other resting spots was also widespread.

Services were held on Sunday at Calvary Church, but Glover says the

foundation on the south side of the church fractured and destabilized material underneath the pad.

"However, the sanctuary sits on separate foundational piers and didn't experience structural damage," Glover says, but the quake did tear light fixtures out of the ceiling.

Calvary Church is assisting community members with food and in finding shelter. "This is a great opportunity to show people the love of God and provide for the community," Glover states.

Alaska Network Superintendent Bill Welch explains the network's campground is located near the earthquake's epicenter. At the time of the quake, more than 40 children and adults were at the camp for an MK-PK retreat. Only one minor injury was reported.

Pastor Barry Orzalli, the camp director, says that four buildings were knocked off their foundations, septic and water lines were severed, a two-story double-fireplace crumbled, and extensive damage was done to equipment inside of the buildings, especially the kitchen area.

TEEN CHALLENGE CENTER TO REOPEN

BY CINDY J. THOMAS

A new 15-bed Teen Challenge residential center will open in Nashville next June. A previous Nashville facility closed. To ensure the success of the new center, a launch team has spent much of 2018 planning and building support. A kickoff event featured former baseball player Darryl Strawberry. A capital campaign raised funds to outfit and operate the new center, which will join the Memphis facility.

Justin and Sarah Hosford will become executive directors of the Nashville center. Justin, 39, is a graduate of Memphis Adult & Teen Challenge and has served on staff there for four years. Sarah also serves at the Memphis center.

The Nashville facility will be an induction center — a first stop, crisis-management complex. New students spend an average of 12 weeks learning the basics of faith-based addiction recovery before moving to a longer residential program such as the one in Memphis.

The Hosfords met at a recovery group and became friends, then began dating and were married last year. Sarah joined the group seeking healing and support after a previous abusive marriage ended. Justin attended the same group for re-entry support after completing the program at Memphis, following nearly 20 years of addiction, primarily to alcohol.

HISPANIC PASTORS REACH COMMUNITY

BY WILL RINCÓN

Ramón and María Sánchez are working to make sure everyone in Greenwood, South Carolina, has an opportunity to hear about Christ.

In 2007, they established Iglesia Cristiana Misionera Asambleas de Dios, with Ramón as pastor and María as co-pastor. After traveling the 450-mile distance from Orlando, Florida, three times a week for six months, they moved permanently to Greenwood.

The church had 18 parishioners when they first arrived, but now there are 84 adult adherents who bring 47 children with them. After 11 years, the church has celebrated 34 weddings and expanded ministry with the addition of a new building for worship thanks to an anonymous donation of \$100,000 in 2012.

María does volunteer ministry a few days a week at the Leath Correctional Institution nearby, as well as volunteer work at a local nursing home. She also operates support groups for women and children who are victims of abuse.

Ramón works with congregants waiting for family members to get visa applications approved so they can be reunited in Greenwood.

Iglesia Cristiana Misionera Asambleas de Dios also offers support through the unique platform of Radio TV Impacto. Live broadcasts discuss marriage, children, and other family issues, pointing to healing of troubles with guidance from God.



THANKSGIVING — WITH A FEW TWISTS

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, has approximately 9,000 international graduate and undergraduate students. Many of those students have never celebrated Thanksgiving or had the opportunity to experience an American Thanksgiving meal.

However, the Chi Alpha Campus Ministry at Purdue, along with the help of Connection Point Church and River City Church in West Lafayette, worked together to help hundreds of international students experience a Thanksgiving to remember.

According to Tiffany Patterson, U.S. missionary associate and the Chi Alpha interim director at Purdue, every year the Chi Alpha group of about 100 students works to invite international students to a large-scale Thanksgiving dinner.

For the third-consecutive year, the meal, which was held on Nov. 17, was hosted in the expansive lobby/foyer of Connection Point Church.

"We had between 300 and 350 international students and volunteers attend the dinner this year — the most we've ever had," Patterson says.

The selection of Saturday for Thanksgiving may seem odd, but it made

it easier for volunteers and proved to be a practical blessing to the students.

"During the week of Thanksgiving, the school's cafeteria is closed," Patterson explains. "So we not only prepare a Thanksgiving meal, we purposely make extra and supply carryout containers. We then encourage the students to take home as much food as they want to help get them through the week."

Zach Maddox, pastor of Connection Point Church, explains that he and his wife, Shellie, were missionaries for 10 years before coming to Indiana.

"We do all that we can to team with Chi Alpha to help reach international students for Christ," he says.

The church also helped purchase the food, provide volunteers, and even make the food. Between Connection Point Church and River City Church, pastored by Robby Bradford — also a former missionary — they baked 20 turkeys and the sides for the event.

The menu includes turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, and either pumpkin or apple pie. Every table also has at least one Chi Alpha leader to help create discussion and forge friendships.

Bruce joined the staff of Church on the Hill. The congregation had dwindled to 75 people on Sunday mornings. The Stefaniks began dreaming of another Jesus movement.

"This generation is hungry for authenticity," Bruce says.

The church has grown in part by drawing unreached people and those disillusioned with religious systems. The north and south campuses, 12 miles apart, attract 1,200 people, plus 300 kids, each Sunday. Half the attendees are in their 20s and 30s.

Stefanik's teaching style is distinct, as he and Executive Pastor Jason Treadwell sit at a coffee-table on the platform and team-teach a topic in an unscripted, conversational style.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS STOCKING

BY PAUL K. LOGSDON

Students, faculty, and staff from Evangel University recently donated enough food and gifts to fill 136 stockings and cards for the local soldiers that deployed to the Middle East last summer as part of the 935th Aviation Support Unit of the Missouri National Guard.

"We just wanted to express appreciation for our soldiers," said Sheri Phillips, vice president for Student Development at Evangel. "Each one will receive a filled Christmas stocking from the Evangel community reminding him or her that we are thankful for their sacrifice and their service."

Nine boxes full of snacks, games, books, puzzles, and other gifts were packaged by staff and veterans affiliated

When millennials tell Bruce the world of today is crazier than it has ever been, he reminds them of the social and political turmoil of the 1960s and '70s — and what God did in the midst of it.

"We thought the world was falling apart," he says, "and God's answer was, 'I'm sending a revival.'"

Church on the Hill also operates a Christian school with 500 kids in kindergarten through 12th grade. Bruce and Linda have two children, both millennials. In his office, Bruce keeps the New Testament the stranger gave him that day in Mt. Shasta.

"Psalm 78 says that one generation shall tell the next of the glorious deeds of the Lord," Bruce says. "My job is to tell the next generation."

with Evangel. The packages have been shipped and are scheduled to arrive on Dec. 14.

"Having been deployed myself in distant lands over the Christmas season," states Scott McChrystal, military representative and endorser for U.S. Missions Chaplaincy Ministries, "I can tell you firsthand how this effort brings joy to the minds, hearts, and faces of our military men and women who are away from home during Christmas."

This was a community effort as students, faculty and staff all got involved writing notes, filling stockings, and donating funds to assure that the soldiers would have a little taste of home.