

# AG NEWS

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

## THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY RUTHIE EDGERLY OBERG

When Assemblies of God missionary Sidney Goodwin (1936-1963) arrived in Ghana, West Africa, it was a homecoming. Raised by missionary parents Homer and Thelma Goodwin, Sidney grew up in Ghana. After studying in the United States, he returned shortly before Christmas of 1962 as a missionary, bringing his wife, Sandra, and their 3-year-old daughter, Gwenda.

Upon his return, the entire Goodwin family was invited to a "welcome home" service and outdoor Christmas revival.

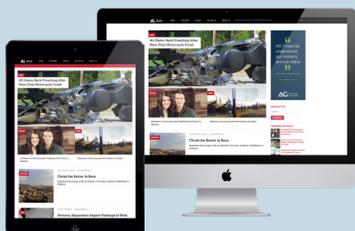
Just before the evening service started, Sidney went to check on the portable light plant. Suddenly, there was a flash of light. Homer rushed to find that the portable generator had exploded and Sidney in flames.

Sidney was rushed to the hospital with burns over 60 percent of his body. On Jan. 1, 1963, he entered heaven. He was buried on the edge of the AG Mission plot in Bawku where he had played as a child.

Twelve years after Sidney's death, Sandra and Gwenda returned to Ghana for the dedication of a memorial library at the North Ghana Bible School in his honor. Story after story was shared of students who had knelt at his grave and dedicated their lives to continue the work he had begun.

Read the report on Sidney's homegoing on page 8 of the Feb. 17, 1963, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at [s2.ag.org/feb171963](http://s2.ag.org/feb171963).

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## KEEPING FAITH AFTER AMPUTATIONS

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## KEEPING FAITH AFTER AMPUTATIONS

BY GINGER KOLBABA

Kaylene Murphy doesn't remember the moment the five-foot slab of rock gave way, amputating her left leg and crushing her left hand. In fact, she remembers little of the accident that forever changed her life on June 30, 2018.

Murphy, 32, and her boyfriend, Josh Baker, were climbing at Natural Bridge about 60 miles east of Bozeman, where Murphy works as a U.S. missionary associate discipleship coordinator with the Chi Alpha Campus Ministries chapter at Montana State University.

Baker took the lead, while Murphy served as the belayer, the person who climbs second and keeps friction on the rope to ensure the first climber doesn't fall. About 40 feet up, as Baker placed his hand in a secure crevasse, the giant slab broke away and careened to the ground — directly hitting Murphy. The rock's force caused immense damage to her body: it amputated her leg just

below the knee; smashed her hand; broke her back in multiple places; fractured her nose, sternum, scapula, collarbone, and ribs; punctured a lung; dissected an artery in her neck; and injured part of her brain.

Murphy was airlifted to a hospital in Billings, where medical staff worked to save her life. Doctors ended up amputating more of her leg, above the knee, as well as her hand. For three weeks, staff kept her sedated, unsure of her cognitive condition because of the brain injury and the ministrokes she continued to have due to the dissected artery in her neck.

But Murphy's mother, Crystal Christison, refused to consider negative possibilities for her daughter.

"I never thought she'd be paralyzed, I never thought she'd be a vegetable," says Christison. "The same power that raised Jesus from the dead lives in us."

Christison called on her relatives and

## INCORPORATING TEENS IN THE BODY

BY MARY J. YERKES

After serving almost a quarter century in youth ministry — including 19 at the same church — Ben Rivera became lead pastor of New Beginnings Church in Jamison, Pennsylvania — a body with no active youth ministry.

Since arriving in 2017, Rivera, his wife, Kristi, and son Benjamin have worked to inaugurate a youth ministry at the church. Today, students are giving through Speed the Light, attending PennDel Ministry Network youth conventions, and ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In 2015, Rivera had been comfortably ensconced at Praise Assembly in Newark, Delaware. But Rivera says God began impressing upon him and his wife about the need to go to New Beginnings.

"Church revitalization wasn't in our vocabulary," says Rivera, 48. He started out slowly, built relationships with teens, and instituted a monthly hangout, such as a pizza party or game night.

"I wanted to help the teens understand that although I'm the lead pastor, I'm also their pastor," says Rivera. "The vision is to create a multigenerational worship experience."

He introduced STL to the church, and adults and youth raised more than \$2,000 that first year.

Last summer, Ben and Kristi's 22-year-old son, Benjamin, stepped into the role of youth pastor at New Beginnings. At a recent youth ice-skating activity he organized, nearly 60 kids from the community showed up; most had never been to youth group. One of the regular attendees had invited friends from her sixth-grade class.

New Beginnings, which has an average of 75 regular churchgoers, now has 20 students going to youth group on a weekly basis. Students are involved in various ministries of the church, including praying for people at the altar to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

### 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."



## INHERITING A PASSION TO REACH KIDS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Bill and Becky Harness started serving in children's ministry in their 20s at West Memphis First Assembly for a decade. Later, with young daughter Heather in tow, Bill and Becky embarked on full-time children's evangelism for eight years, often booked at churches three years in advance. Typically, Bill preached a Sunday morning service and conducted a crusade Sunday night through Wednesday night. Harness developed a goofy character named KarateMan.

Eventually, Harness returned to West Memphis First Assembly as a paid children's pastor and associate pastor, posts he held for another decade.

When the West Memphis lead pastorate position opened in 2014, Harness, at 53, became lead pastor for the first time.

"Some of the best lead pastors have been children's pastors," Harness says. "We know how to keep it brief, we use object lessons, and we talk at a fifth-grade level."

The board in 2015 voted to hire Heather as part-time children's pastor. She will move into the post full time after graduating from Southwestern Assemblies of God University in May. Heather grew up working puppet characters and serving in praise and worship in children's crusades.

"My parents made ministry attractive to me," says Heather, 25. "They didn't pressure me to participate." She has implemented the same ministry philosophy as her father.

"Dad always taught me there is nothing more important than a prayer time of response at the altar," Heather says. "Dad always said if you don't have an altar time basically you're telling the Holy Spirit, *Sorry, you don't fit in our schedule.*"

Heather also has added a new twist to ministry. Grandparents are invited to participate in a children's service once a month (teaching an object lesson, for example) to help bridge the generation gap.

## CONVOY OF HOPE EFFORTS CONTINUE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Already in 2019, Convoy of Hope has been involved in relief around the world, including additional efforts in Lebanon. Currently, the compassion ministry is providing aid to Syrian refugees and at-risk Lebanese citizens who have been facing harsh winter weather as well as devastating flooding.

Convoy of Hope, now in its 25th year, has been active in Lebanon since 2014. The organization has worked with local partners in Lebanon to provide resources such as food, heaters, hygiene kits, coats, and more. In 2016, it implemented an emergency-based feeding program in Lebanon that now regularly serves more than 1,000 Lebanese and Syrian refugee children in urban areas and camps.

The compassion organization has also been active in responding to needs in the Philippines following the impact of tropical cyclone Usman. The slow-moving storm killed at least 126 people and displaced tens of thousands more, as the heavy rains led to severe flooding and landslides just days before the new year.

In addition to these new responses, Convoy of Hope is still actively sending relief and recovery resources to people in need, including victims of the California fires, Hurricane Florence in North Carolina, Hurricane Michael in Florida, flooding in India and Myanmar, and the crises in Venezuela.

## SEU BASEBALL TO FACE PROS

BY PRISCILLA BURR

Southeastern University's (SEU) baseball team, the defending Avista-NAIA World Series champions, will be taking on its toughest opponent yet. The team will face the Detroit Tigers on Feb. 22, at Publix Field at Joker Marchant in Lakeland, Florida, for the first game of the 2019 spring training season. This marks the first time the Fire will face a major league club.

"We're blessed just to get the opportunity to get out there and play," said SEU baseball coach Adrian Dinkel. "A lot of our guys have hopes and dreams to play at that level and they'll get to see firsthand what that's like. It's something they'll remember for the rest of their lives, and it'll be exciting for our coaching staff and our student body as well."

In 2018, just six collegiate programs, all of which are NCAA members had the opportunity to face a major league baseball team during spring training.

"Winning a national championship is a memory you'll never forget," said Ron Meyers, director of Florida Operations for the Tigers, "but I promise you, when you step on this field and go against the Detroit Tigers, your knees are going to be shaking, your heart is going to be pumping, and you're going to have a lot of fun."

Southeastern went 59-7 last season, going 8-0 in the NAIA post season, to claim the NAIA national championship.



## CENTER FOR THE BLIND RELOCATES

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

The AG National Center for the Blind closed its Springfield, Missouri, offices Feb. 1 and will relocate to Waupaca, Wisconsin, under the auspices of Special Touch Ministry.

Paul Weingartner served as director of the Center for the Blind for the past quarter century. Charlie T. Chivers, who co-founded Special Touch in 1982 with his wife, Debbie, now will manage the Center for the Blind. Special Touch Ministry, which became part of U.S. Missions in 1990, assists those with physical and intellectual disabilities.

In the short term, equipment will move to Wisconsin by the end of March. Down the road, Chivers must determine what technologies are best suited to carry on the ministry, find workers to operate the equipment and who can visually read braille, plus hire a full-time director, who will be based in Waupaca. Rather than AG employees, workers will be U.S. missionaries or missionary associates who raise their own support.

In addition, the Center for the Blind no longer will need to pay rent for its

facilities. A new structure will be erected, with U.S. Missions backing, on the same lot where Special Touch is located.

The AG is the only evangelical denomination offering substantial resources to the blind. Ministry to or donations for the disabled and blind aren't on the radar of many Christians. Financial challenges have existed for a long time for the low-profile Center for the Blind. Chivers expects to engage AG congregations in becoming more involved.

A commonality between Special Touch Ministry and Center for the Blind is that both work with people who often feel unwelcome at church worship services. As such, ministry to the two groups is a vast mission field. Nearly two-thirds of those served by the Center for the Blind have no church affiliation.

"We can equip the Church, but the Church must compel those who are disenfranchised and marginalized in society to come in," Chivers says. "We can't be ignoring this people group."

friends, as well as Murphy's church family, Bozeman Christian Center, to pray. Not only did Murphy survive, she retained her cognitive abilities.

After two months of hospitalization, followed by three months of rehabilitation, Murphy is now staying at her mother's home in Helena, continuing outpatient therapy to recover and build her strength. Baker has postponed his graduate studies and has moved to Helena to help care for his girlfriend.

Murphy has a prosthetic leg and hand and has relearned how to do many activities once taken for granted, such as dressing herself and buttering toast.

She says her faith has made all the difference in her recovery. Before the

accident, she consistently read her Bible, prayed, and journaled. Now she's using what she experienced in those times to draw strength. Murphy calls it a spiritual bank system.

"All those times of praying and worshipping that God used to refine me, teaching me about trust and love, made deposits into my spirit," she says. "Since the accident, I'm able to draw on that."

Murphy continues her therapy, knowing she still has a lot to overcome, including recovering full vision in her left eye. But she is keeping her sights on returning to her work at Chi Alpha — where she has been on staff for a decade — by the fall.

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## BEYOND THE FOUR WALLS

BY PETER K. JOHNSON

Launching Essence Place in West Hartford, Connecticut, in March 2018 has tested the faith and perseverance of lead pastors Brad and Christan Causey, both 35.

In sync with spiritually frigid New England, Connecticut is comprised of a 23 percent population claiming no religion. West Hartford residents paint a bleaker picture: an estimated 44 percent have no affiliation with any faith.

Sensing God's call to this needy area, the Causeys left secure senior staff positions after serving eight years at Evangel Assembly in Wilbraham, Massachusetts.

Working with the Church Multiplication Network, they landed in West Hartford in 2017, helped by a launch team of a dozen adults. They

moved to West Hartford to connect with those in the affluent, multiethnic city of 63,000. Christan even worked at a local Starbucks for a while.

"God led me there to learn more about pastoring outside the four walls of the church," she says.

Essence Place rents space in the strategically located Charter Oak International Academy. The new state-of-the-art building allows for growth and opportunities for community events.

The launch team blitzed the neighborhood with personal invitations and doorknob hangers for the official opening. Regular attendance now averages 50 committed worshippers. Many stay connected online. Other groups meet weekly in homes.