

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

Born in Australia to English parents, Florence Murcutt (1868-1935) was raised in the Jewish faith. But as a young woman she read the Bible, cover to cover, in six weeks. She accepted Christ as the Messiah and became active in Christian circles.

In 1900, Murcutt immigrated to America and graduated in 1907 from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania (now Drexel University College of Medicine) and became a surgeon.

Murcutt's life was forever altered when she attended a Pentecostal camp meeting in Portland, Oregon, where she knelt at the altar and yielded herself fully to God's purposes for her life.

Later baptized in the Holy Spirit, she devoted the rest of her life to missionary work. She was ordained as an AG missionary on June 18, 1915, and served with Alice Luce and Henry C. Ball as a missionary to Mexicans.

In 1926, she helped Luce to establish a Spanish-language department of Berean Bible Institute in San Diego, which was the foundation for Latin American Bible

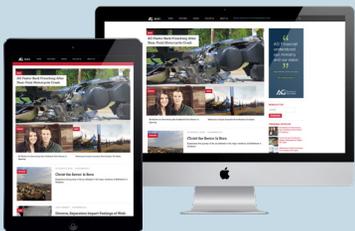


Institute in La Puente, California.

Murcutt, although largely an unheralded Pentecostal pioneer, had a testimony that reads like an adventure novel.

Read Murcutt's article, "A Retrospect of the Lord's Leadings," on pages 7 and 9 of the Jan. 30, 1932, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/jan301932.

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SUNDAY, FEB. 3, 2019

AG NEWS

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

**FAITHFUL IN LITTLE,
FRUITFUL IN MUCH**

**AOP IMPACTING A
CONTINENT**

**CARRYING ON THE
CHAPLAIN TRADITION**

RACIAL RIFT RECONCILED





FAITHFUL IN LITTLE, FRUITFUL IN MUCH

BY MARY J. YERKES

Leroy M. Aufenkamp has been toiling as pastor of New Life Assembly of God, a small church in rural Drayton, North Dakota, for more than 38 years. The town near the Canadian border has a population of around 780, and falling.

On more than one occasion, Aufenkamp preached after only one congregant showed up. Today, the church averages 35 attendees on any given Sunday. Aufenkamp, 67, has no plans to retire.

"I don't consider being a long-term pastor anything great," Aufenkamp says. "But if I can reach more people for Jesus and bring them into the Kingdom, then it's good."

Previous pastors at New Life, formerly known as Fleece Assembly of God, for most of its 85 years, averaged less than three years in the pulpit. But Aufenkamp has stayed the course, his longevity and faithfulness earning him the respect of townspeople.

"Most people would be discouraged and possibly look for greener pastures," says Andrew Duncklee, a 71-year-old church board member. "But pastor Leroy felt a calling here and stuck to it."

Known around town as the "community pastor," he is a regular fixture at the local hospital, visiting not only his own congregants but anyone who needs a friend. He is careful not to step on other ministerial toes.

"He counseled with a family before the death of one of their grandparents," notes Duncklee. "Even though the family was Catholic, they wanted pastor Leroy to be part of the service along with the Catholic priest."

The fruit of his life and ministry is clear, but life in a rural farming community hasn't always been easy.

Over the years, Aufenkamp picked up odd jobs to support his wife, Bev, 62, and their four children. He spent 23 years doing fieldwork and driving tractors for

WAYS TO PRAY ABOUT ABORTION

BY DOUG CLAY

Like so many, I am deeply concerned by passage of the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) by the State of New York — especially on the 46th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*.

The AG values life from conception to death. We believe that humans are the highest form of God's creative activity and the focus of His love. We view the destruction of a human life created in the image of God, even in the womb, as an act of evil. Especially heinous in the RHA are provisions that extend the scope of abortion to later terms and the removal of the requirement for a physician to be present.

As a parent and grandparent, I'm grieved for the precious, innocent unborn lives that will be lost as a result of this legislation. As a Christian, my spirit is grieved to see the moral degradation this represents in our society.

Will you join me in prayer during this vital juncture in our nation's history?

Pray for a spiritual awakening in our nation.

Pray for expectant mothers who may be face horrific circumstances. Pray that God will bring peace to the anxieties and fears they may face. Pray that the Church will rise up to address needs young mothers face.

Pray that America will repent of injustice on behalf of the most vulnerable among us.

Pray that abortionists will come to know Christ as Savior.

Pray that abortion facilities will close.

Pray that the hearts of lawmakers and judges will be awakened to the value of human life from conception to death.

Pray for churches to continue providing life-sustaining alternatives, including foster or adoptive care.

Pray for those considering abortions to have Divine encounters that will give them hope for their future.

Pray for women who have been the victims of abortionists, that they will experience spiritual, emotional, and physical healing.

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."



CARRYING ON THE CHAPLAIN TRADITION

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Following in the footsteps of his father, Harold, in a military chaplaincy career came naturally for Kristian L. Carlson, who moved nine times before reaching adulthood.

"As I observed my parents inviting people to their home, extending themselves to others, my dad preaching, my mom leading youth group, it became obvious that Jesus is our only hope and joy — and people need Him," Carlson says.

Carlson's father retired as an Army colonel chaplain in 2005 after a 26-year career. The following year, Kristian was commissioned as a Navy chaplain candidate. Carlson met his Chilean wife, Damaris, at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary.

On his first tour of duty, Carlson served in Okinawa, Japan. Kristian and Damaris co-pastored Faith Community Church, a chapel for Marines.

Capt. Glen Wood, also an AG chaplain, served as Carlson's supervisory chaplain in Okinawa. Wood says by the

time Carlson left three years later he had turned a struggling congregation with a handful of attendees into a thriving church.

"Everybody on the base viewed him as their pastor, even if they didn't come to church," recalls Wood, who is now stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. "He truly did pastor that whole community."

After relocating to San Diego in 2015, Carlson deployed on the *USS Bunker Hill*, a guided-missile cruiser. He spent 330 days at sea during the next three years, including extended periods in the Persian Gulf and Asian Pacific. Carlson missed the birth of his son, Isak, in December 2017.

Damaris, meanwhile, is serving as women's pastor at City View Church in San Diego.

Although he has received classroom training on everything from marital strife to post-traumatic stress disorder, ultimately Carlson — who is awaiting his next deployment — says biblical theology is most important.

RACIAL RIFT RECONCILED

BY ONEYA OKUWOBİ

Julius A.R. Lancaster, who launched I Am Church last September in Columbus, Ohio, comes from a long line of ministers.

"My whole family line is pastors and preachers and missionaries and evangelists," says Lancaster, 42. Despite this heritage, when Lancaster received the call to ministry he had just started a four-year detention.

"I decided I was going to live a life on my own and veer away from what I knew to be right," Lancaster recalls.

After his release, for seven years Lancaster served as an elder at a Columbus African-American Pentecostal church. Lancaster then met Greg A. Ford, pastor of One Church. Ford paid for Lancaster to attend Church Multiplication Network (CMN) Launch training, which introduced Lancaster to the AG in a new way.

Lancaster grew up in the Church of God in Christ, the largest African-American Pentecostal denomination in the U.S. When the AG began in 1914, the Fellowship consisted mainly of white ministers. Despite the racial harmony that existed at the Azusa Street Revival in the early 20th century, a rift developed between white Pentecostals and black Pentecostals that only began to heal in the 1990s.

Lancaster started I Am Church as a parent-affiliated church of another Columbus-area body, C3 Church.

BRIDGING GAPS IN FLAT ROCK

BY CINDY J. THOMAS

Ryan P. Nissley didn't see himself as a church planter. A licensed minister, he had been youth and worship pastor for 18 years at New Hope Assembly in Taylor, Michigan.

In 2015, Ryan became concerned about the number of young people drifting from faith after leaving home to attend college. Some returned to church years later, often with questions or regrets after missing valuable years of discipleship.

Nissley wondered if God wanted to use his youth pastor experience to bridge that gap for young adults and families.

Today, Nissley, 39, is lead pastor of Grace Church Michigan, meeting at Flat Rock Community Center, 15 minutes from Taylor in the downriver area of metro Detroit. The church averages 170 in attendance on Sundays.

"We want to connect with those who aren't currently going to church," Nissley says. "We're asking what the needs are."

Early on, the church started connect groups emphasizing relationships and prayer. A prayer group meets each Wednesday at the Nissley home.

"Kids and youth have been a priority from day one," says Nissley. His son Caleb, 16, plays on the church worship team and leads worship for the youth group. The church is bridging that young adult gap, with most attendees under 40 years old.



FAMILY STAYS COMMITTED TO CHURCH

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Rob McCully says not much has changed in Bigelow since he moved to the forested hills of the close-knit central Arkansas community as a child more than 40 years ago. There still are many poor families, and drug use remains a problem.

Yet one constant is Today's Family Church, the AG congregation that McCully has been a part of for 17 years. McCully, 50, is a deacon and Sunday School teacher with his wife, Tina, in the town of 330.

Today's Family always has been a caring church. The McCullys experienced the generosity of fellow churchgoers when they went through prolonged crises involving their family. Although Job McCully now is a junior at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, he endured years of health traumas after being diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia at the age of 4 in 2002. A year later, Job developed

a rare lung disease, bronchiolitis obliterans. At 9, Job received a double lung transplant.

Through the series of life-threatening adversities, members of Today's Family Church held fundraisers to help the McCullys pay for medical bills. In 2008, the family received a new residence thanks to ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* after an inspection revealed unsafe amounts of mold in their previous dwelling.

Job still attends TFC and he hopes to become a missionary in Japan. Rob McCully and his 23-year-old daughter, Nicole Thomas, both are active in ministry at TFC.

Thomas, despite attending the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and being a Medical Corps ensign in the U.S. Navy in Little Rock, is worship director at TFC with her husband, James. She makes the 40-mile commute every Sunday.

local farms from April to October, picking up jobs where and when he could. For 17 years, he secured employment at a local apartment building vacuuming, keeping the grounds mowed, and functioning as the local handyman. For 35 years every October, he helped haul in the sugar beet harvest, an abundant crop in the area.

"I would put my sermon together in my head while driving the tractor and then write it out on a Saturday night," says Aufenkamp. "Sunday I would put together the Sunday night sermon, and Sunday night after church, I would write a column for the local newspaper."

At an age when most men are thinking about retirement — if they

haven't stopped working already — Aufenkamp intensified prayers about the church making a bigger impact in the community. Attendance had dwindled to around 20 people, but Aufenkamp thought remodeling the church might help attract newcomers.

Through mostly volunteer efforts, church members removed pews, replaced the nearly 50-year-old carpet, and began serving cookies and coffee before and after services. LifeChurch, an AG church in Williston, North Dakota, bought two TV screens and a computer for the church.

New people began trickling in before the renovation, but more came upon completion.

AOP IMPACTING A CONTINENT

BY KRISTEL RINGER ORTIZ

In Notsé, Togo, a crowd of nearly 500 people — including many Muslims — gathered in 2018 for the distribution of heavy-duty water filters and buckets by the Africa Oasis Project (AOP), an Assemblies of God World Missions initiative that is responding to Africa's ongoing water crisis.

As in many other villages across Africa, waterborne parasites and illnesses such as typhoid, cholera, salmonella, and diarrhea bring death to children and other vulnerable individuals.

"The difference between the filtered and unfiltered well water was shocking," says AOP team leader Mark Alexander. "The crowd began to cheer and clap, telling us they did not realize just how

filthy the water they had been drinking actually was."

"These filters will last for years," says Alexander, who along with his wife, Vickie, has served with AOP for 25 years. "In addition, the gift of Living Water will last for eternity."

In Mozambique, the Alexanders' fellow AOP team leaders, Steve and Glenda Evans, experienced similar joy.

In partnership with Joel and Adrienne Charest, AGWM missionaries to Mozambique, the Evanses oversaw the drilling of a well beside a church in a remote, predominantly Islamic village.

"The joyful pastor told us no water had ever before flowed in their village," says Steve Evans. "Buckets were given to 100 new believers that day."