



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

Fifty-five years ago, General Superintendent Thomas F. Zimmerman shared an encouraging word to the readers of the *Pentecostal Evangel* in anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the Assemblies of God. His article, "Our Fiftieth Year," told of the significance of the Pentecostal revival which took place at the turn of the 20th century as well as the influence of the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, which greatly impacted the world.

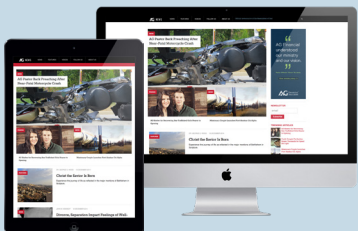
"The founding fathers of our Movement laid a foundation strong and sure," Zimmerman stated. He acknowledged that the AG has an illustrious history, but he tempered this by saying, "We must not glory too much

in the past lest we forget our situation today and the work that is yet to be done."

Zimmerman listed four areas to focus on in the new year: 1) Pray for a renewed Pentecost in personal lives; 2) Recognize the urgency of saving the lost; 3) Equip ourselves to win the lost through prayer, reading the Scriptures, and training; and 4) Be diligent to do the work of the Kingdom. These same principles apply today as we reflect on the now 105-year anniversary of the Assemblies of God.

Read "Our Fiftieth Year" on pages 3-4 of the Jan. 5, 1964, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/jan51964.

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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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women's recovery and discipleship program.

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SECOND ACT OF GRACE

THE IMPACT OF AN INVITATION

CHURCH PLANT GIFTED A NEW HOME

HOBBY MORPHS INTO MINISTRY





SECOND ACT OF GRACE

BY ALLY HENNY

In March 2018, Grace House Women's Center opened in Indianapolis as a long-term Adult & Teen Challenge residential program for women. The Christ-centered program is intended to help women dealing with life-controlling issues by focusing on discipleship and recovery. Lavonne Y. Savage, Grace House's executive director, has firsthand knowledge how such an environment can be life-changing.

Savage, 52, graduated from a Teen Challenge program in Missouri more than 20 years ago. She grew up in a dysfunctional family and felt a sense of abandonment during her formative years, having been sexually molested by multiple family members.

"By the time I was 14, I knew how to proposition a man for sex," says Savage. She became a sex worker at age 15, an alcoholic by 17, and a crack addict at 21.

Savage's crack addiction became so

severe that her trafficker put her in the Teen Challenge program. He hoped she would return working for him after getting clean, but God had other plans. During her time in Teen Challenge, Savage experienced the saving and delivering power of God from frequent dreams that tormented her with temptations to use drugs.

She began to sense a call to ministry, so she moved to Los Angeles after graduating from Teen Challenge and entered Teen Challenge Ministry Institute. There she developed a desire to minister to people living on the streets. After graduating from TCMI, she started Beans and Rice and Jesus Christ, a ministry to the homeless in downtown L.A.

Savage's life began to spiral out of control when she escaped from an abusive marriage. Instead of turning to God for healing and strength, she

ORPHAN CARE IS CORE VALUE

BY ASHLEY B. GRANT

When lead pastors Darryl and Faith Wootton came to Spirit Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, in 2003, the 75 regular attendees had no idea that in the next 15 years over 300 orphans would be ministered to inside the church walls.

The Woottons, who have adopted two children through Highlands Maternity Home, have long had a heart for adoption. When elected as lead pastors, they knew that they wanted orphan care to be a core value of the church.

To emphasize the importance of this value, the body decided that in order to become a member of Spirit Church, one must foster, adopt, or support foster/adoptive parents in some way.

The Woottons, both 48, led the charge on this initiative by obtaining their license so that they could provide temporary respite for foster parents in the church in need of a short break, especially those who had been fostering before the Woottons arrived.

Mark and Pam Ramsey, neighbors

to the Woottons, say that after years of fostering and adopting two children, they decided to start attending Spirit Church because they desperately needed reinforcement to keep going.

"We've found a tremendous amount of support," says Mark Ramsey. "They even pay for our foster children to attend church camp every year."

The church has attracted numerous foster and adoptive families from the community as well as those who want to serve this demographic in some way.

This church of now 700 regular attendees has expanded its reach into the community as well. Spirit Church offers several yearly events such as a foster parents day out for the entire county and a "day of hope," which supplies kids in care and their families free clothes, medical screenings, haircuts, and groceries.

"Not everyone has to foster or adopt," Mark Ramsey says. "The Woottons only ask that people do what God has called them to do."

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."



CHURCH PLANT GIFTED A NEW HOME

BY DAN VAN VEEN

It was an unimaginable Christmas for Highland Church in Plover, Wisconsin, and its year-old church plant, North Point City Church in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Just a few days before Christmas, they were gifted a church building valued at more than \$250,000, with only closing fees to pay!

For several years, Highland Church pastor Nathan Schroeder had been praying about planting a church in nearby Stevens Point.

Chris Mancl was an associate pastor for four years in Brainerd, Minnesota, but he and his wife, Tracie, felt God calling them to plant a church in Wisconsin. When Schroeder and Mancl met in 2016, they quickly knew it was God-inspired. Mancl was chosen to plant a church in Stevens Point.

After forming a launch team, Mancl began looking for a place to meet, but doors kept closing.

Mancl laughs at the memory of suggesting they try funeral homes. "My wife and the launch team weren't super crazy about that idea," he admits.

Finally, after months of searching, in an unexpected surprise, the local convent was open to leasing space to

them for the new church.

North Point City Church launched on Nov. 5, 2017, and now averages about 40 in weekly attendance.

When a local real estate agent called Mancl and told him about a church coming on the market, he and some team members toured the property, but the price tag was out of reach — \$259,000.

The real estate agent came back with a reduced price of \$200,000. Schroeder and Mancl agreed it was a great offer, but still too much.

About a week later, the church's pastor walked into Highland and asked Schroeder, "What would you say if you got the church just for Realtor fees and closing costs?"

The Highland board met that night. On Sunday, the congregation voted its approval.

"Nathan texted me the number [\$10,035], and I thought, *Did he miss a zero? This has gotta be a typo or something!*" Mancl says.

On Dec. 21 the paperwork was signed and today North Point City Church *miraculously* has a new home.

HOBBY MORPHS INTO MINISTRY

BY ASHLEY B. GRANT

Although she began painting in high school, Virginia "Jenny" Young of Decatur, Alabama, lost touch with an outlet she once loved as her ministry grew as an endorsed AG chaplain.

But she began relearning the craft, obtained her art teacher certification at the Bob Ross Instructional Campus, and reached out to a local Hobby Lobby for space to hold her first oil painting class.

"It very quickly turned from a hobby to a ministry," Young says. "Painting helps people open up and share their struggles, and I get to be there to minister to them in their hurt."

In only six months, Young saw the need to add a second class in another spot. From there, Young's classes continued to grow until she had spread to five various locations each weekend.

"God is giving me the chance to reach people who would never normally be in church," she says. "Many teachers are struggling to fill their classes and I am struggling to fit people in."

Young, 60, says she has had the opportunity to share her faith and has seen numerous people accept the Lord.

Recently, Young received recognition for her work when CBS purchased one of her paintings to use as a prop in an upcoming *Magnum P.I.* episode.

Young's husband, Ron, helps her set up and tear down — and minister. He connects with the men and she connects with the women in the classes.

HONORING PILLARS, BRANCHING OUT

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

When a church bus picked up 13-year-old Troy H. Jones in 1980 for the first time, nobody foresaw that 25 years later he would become the lead pastor at the same church and help renew its 90-year mission to reach the lost.

Today, New Life Church in Renton, Washington, where Jones is lead pastor, is the 14th fastest-growing congregation in the U.S.

"The men of the church became my spiritual fathers," says Jones, who came from a broken home and didn't know his real father. He had a succession of stepfathers.

He dived into Bible Quiz and memorized half the New Testament in high school. His met his future wife, Jana, through Bible Quiz, and he attended Northwest University. A week after graduating, he joined New Life's staff as youth pastor. Fifteen years after that, he became lead pastor, when 1,500 people attended.

New Life now draws 5,000 people to 16 services in four locations on weekends. The secret sauce, Jones says, has been honoring the pillars of the church while reaching new families.

New Life also provides "Softer Sundays" for elderly members in another meeting room on campus. The popular and specialized worship service features lower volume, traditional hymns, and the same teaching message live by video.



GOING WITH THE FLOW

BY ERIC TIAN SAY

The coast was far from clear for Michael Janetis to plant a church in the Florida Panhandle. The strongest storm on record hit the region right after his initial strategy session.

Subsequently, he instead focused more on helping the displaced to recover from Hurricane Michael, which made landfall last Oct. 10 near Mexico Beach with 155 mph winds and a strong storm surge.

"Day after day following Hurricane Michael, pastor Michael took countless supplies to Panama City, helped people in need, brought hope back to many homes, and preached the gospel," says Yuriy Mayba, pastor of Impulse Church in Miramar Beach, Florida. "I believe he will do great things here, where God has called him."

In July 2018, Janetis, his wife, Jaime, and their three children moved to Destin, intending to launch a congregation. He is building a team to plant Oceans Church, a parent-affiliated congregation of The Waters Church in

Sartell, Minnesota, where Janetis spent five years as worship leader.

During the first interest party, 61 people from Destin showed up. Less than a week later, Hurricane Michael made landfall. Janetis pushed pause on the church planting to become the hands and feet of Jesus.

"Some of the 61 people who came to our first launch meeting assembled and we began to take daily trips into Panama City with many resources such as food, hygiene and sanitary products, baby supplies, and fuel to give out to those stranded," he says.

Besides meeting physical needs, the team offered spiritual help.

Members set up a ministry tent on the side of a road in Panama City where people waited in line for over five hours to get gasoline. Janetis and helpers served 400 packed lunches and gave away more than 100 gallons of gasoline.

The launch date for Oceans Church is March 31.

started using drugs again. This time, her addiction landed her in jail. Being incarcerated forced Savage to get clean, but she still felt empty inside. Realizing that she needed to surrender control of her life to God, she sought a restoration process through the Assemblies of God.

"I began to release, surrender, and get honest with myself," she says.

After going through restoration, she started working for Teen Challenge. In 2017, almost a decade after her restoration, Savage was invited to become executive director of Grace House.

"You don't often find people who will give you so much grace," says Beverly L. Seitz, a Teen Challenge graduate who came to Grace House in June and now serves as an intern. Through Savage's

mentorship, Seitz has been able to get her life back on track.

"The key thing that we do is point women to Jesus," says Jennifer L. Baca, program director at Grace House.

Currently, 11 students are in the program, ranging in age from 19 to 62. They deal with a variety of life-controlling issues, including substance abuse, depression, and eating disorders. The women — many of whom live there as an alternative to incarceration or just after being released — participate in discipleship classes, mentorship, work therapy, and other programs that are designed to help them function in society.

"My payoff is when I see one of the women succeed," says Savage.

THE IMPACT OF AN INVITATION

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Josh L. Johnson returned to Arkansas in 2015 after his fifth overseas military tour of duty in six years. He settled into a nightly routine of drinking a fifth of whiskey. Four of the military assignments had been to Afghanistan, where Johnson worked as a jet engine aircraft mechanic specialist.

Every time Johnson came back to Little Rock Air Force Base would be a rough period of adjustment with his wife, Ashley, and son, Kayden. When Johnson returned three years ago, his father-in-law, Tom Bostian, asked if he could take the then-5-year-old Kayden to a local AG church in nearby Jacksonville.

Although he considered himself

an atheist, Johnson didn't raise any objection. Ashley hadn't been to church in years.

Johnson engaged in woodworking as a hobby, and Bostian commissioned him to make a picture frame as a gift for the church's associate pastor. He asked Johnson to deliver it on a Wednesday night — just before Bible study. Johnson sat through the study and started attending services regularly; so did Ashley.

"At the time I was a bad alcoholic," recalls Johnson, 30. "But I enjoyed hanging out with church people more than my drinking buddies." At an altar invitation two years ago, Johnson accepted Jesus as Savior.