One hundred years ago, the summer of 1916 was bloody. The Great War (World War I) had been raging for two years. Nearly every nation in Europe was embroiled in conflict.

During the war years, the Pentecostal Evangel was filled with warnings against confusing the Christian faith with national identities. British pastor Leonard Newby responded to several difficult questions arising from the war.

Newby related a question: “Is it not an awful thing for one Christian nation to be fighting another Christian nation?” Newby disagreed with the assumption that a nation could be Christian. He wrote, “There is not, and never has been, such a company of people as a CHRISTIAN NATION, and never will be until the Lord comes.”

Rather, he explained, “The people of God who form the mystical body of Jesus Christ are a small company of people scattered among the nations.”

Newby also responded to the question, “Does not this war show the failure of Christianity?” It did not, Newby stated, explaining, “Christianity is one thing, civilization is quite another.”

Read Leonard Newby’s article, “Light on this Present Crisis,” on pages 6, 7, and 9 of the July 1, 1916, issue of the Pentecostal Evangel online at s2.ag.org/july11916.

Read the full versions of these stories on PENews.org

News for, about, and from the Assemblies of God

Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, RSS

And our weekly e-newsletter. Visit PENews.org for more information.
One of the largest unreached people groups may be just outside the door of your church, Assemblies of God U.S. missionary Charlie Chivers contends, and yet it’s a group that passes under the radar of many congregations.

The disabled hail from every culture, says Chivers, who heads Special Touch Ministry, an AG-affiliated ministry reaching out to the disabled and their families.

“The disabled are a subculture within those cultures,” Chivers says. “Churches should become intentional about disability ministry and not reactionary.”

“A lot of people who have special needs have never really had a presentation of the gospel for themselves,” says AG Georgia District Superintendent Rick D. Collins. “Many of them don’t feel at home in our churches and they struggle. The vision is that the ‘fields are white unto harvest,’ and many who are found there are using crutches, wheelchairs, and have disabilities.”

For the past two years, the Georgia district has sponsored weeklong camps for disabled people. Chivers says the Wisconsin-based Special Touch Ministry’s emphasis includes the National Summer Get Away program, which is a faith-based retreat/vacation/camping experience offered in 10 states.

The Get Away program helped spark a profound change in one young adult’s life. James R. Sherman-Evans lives in Tomah, Wisconsin, and as a child was diagnosed with severe autism.

“In the beginning, he was nonverbal, he would not acknowledge your presence,” his biological aunt and adoptive mother, Becky, explains.

Years of work in school and through the Special Touch Ministry’s programs changed that. “Today, [he is a] social person, talks, is very friendly and outgoing, and very helpful to people,” Becky says. 😊

Even though studies consistently show that cohabitation is damaging to a long-term relationship, most couples now view the living arrangement as a normal prelude to marriage.

A new Barna Group study shows that two-thirds of U.S. adults consider living together while unmarried as a “good idea.” The report indicates that regular churchgoers are nearly as likely as the unchurched to move in together prior to matrimony.

According to the Barna Group, the number one reason Americans consider cohabitation beneficial — cited by 84 percent of those who favor it — is to “test compatibility.”

Yet Glenn T. Stanton, director of Family Formation Studies at Focus on the Family, notes that no secular research shows that cohabitation is advantageous for couples who later marry.

“No research consistently shows that cohabitation improves or enhances any measure of personal or relational well-being,” says Stanton, author of the book The Ring Makes All the Difference. “There are few things couples do of their own free will that harm their future chances of marital and relational success more than live together.”

Stanton notes various secular studies illustrate that cohabitation before marriage causes couples to be more controlling, leads to higher levels of domestic violence and adultery, results in men doing fewer household chores, and raises the risk of divorce. Women tend to suffer the most in living together, in emotional, physical, and spiritual ways, says Stanton, who is based in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

For the minority who view cohabitation unfavorably, the chief reasons are religious views (34 percent) and the belief that couples shouldn’t engage in sexual intercourse before marriage (28 percent).

Unsurprisingly, the Barna findings show that while 88 percent of Americans with no faith support cohabitation, only 41 percent of

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.”
Torres, who met with Delatte on Tuesday, says the church, which appeared to be sitting in the middle of a river, suffered heavy damage to its basement and fellowship hall. He is unsure if the church’s insurance will cover the loss.

Raffa has heard of one related fatality due to the flooding — the uncle of a minister’s wife. “It’s very tragic,” Raffa says. “He was a former soldier, a survivor of the [World War II] Normandy Invasion. He was in his 90s.”

Convoy of Hope, the disaster relief and compassion affiliate of the AG, will work with its local partners to deliver and distribute relief in the form of flood buckets, cleaning supplies, food, and water. In addition, AMN Superintendent David Dillon is taking an offering from the AMN Church Emergency Fund to help Laurel Creek AG meet clean-up expenses, and Assistant Superintendent John Jordan has delivered donations to a relief center.

In a note sent to network churches, Dillon responded to requests to help: “The best way to [help] at the moment would be to receive a special offering this Sunday for Convoy of Hope. . . . to help the vast number of people in that portion of our network whose lives have been drastically impacted by this weather catastrophe and to whom we can tangibly demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ.”

Registration for those attending from North America is $100 per person. Learn more by visiting the PWC website: www.24pwc.org.

In early June, thousands of Indian believers gathered in Chennai to celebrate 100 years of Assemblies of God ministry in their country.

As the Fellowship marked its centennial, members noted the ministry of individuals like Pastor A.C. Samuel, Mark and Hulda Buntain, Pastor Solomon Wasker, and David and Beth Grant, and the roles they played in establishing, growing, and serving the Assemblies of God in India.

The Assemblies of God has experienced consistent growth and increased acceptance in India. To honor the centennial celebration, the Indian Postal Service issued a commemorative postage stamp recognizing the legacy of the India AG.

Since its beginning in 1916, AG India has planted more than 5,200 recognized churches and 6,000 house churches. The fellowship has sent out over 600 missionaries and trained more than 8,000 leaders, including over 2,500 trained ministers today.

“All over India, the power of God is really moving,” said David Mohan, general superintendent of Assemblies of God India. “God is doing a great work, and we are seeing a move of God and revival in this nation. Let us join together to train more workers!”
In portions of Africa, Assemblies of God missionaries use dirt bikes to traverse rugged trails that lead to remote mountain villages. They travel with one purpose in mind — to share the gospel with villagers.

In this particular region of Africa, the village people are often very receptive to the gospel message, and it is not uncommon for villagers to choose to pray with the missionaries and accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. These new converts are encouraged to start Bible studies and attend the AG church in the valley.

After one particularly arduous journey into the mountains, the missionaries returned to the valley and were thrilled to see a group of teenagers from one of the villages they had recently visited. These new converts had walked for miles to get to the valley from their mountain village. They explained to the missionary, “You encouraged us to have Bible studies, but no one owns a Bible in our village.”

Thanks to Light for the Lost (the AG ministry that focuses on resourcing ministries and missionaries with evangelism tools), the missionaries were able to provide each of the teens with their very own Bible to read, study, and grow in Christ.

Barna found that cohabitation opinions tend to mirror reality: two-thirds of U.S. adults have lived together before a wedding ceremony.

An unexpected conclusion in the study is that 62 percent of those who have attended a church service in the past week lived together without benefit of clergy before marrying.

Stanton says cultural shifts plus a lack of scriptural instruction have eroded sincerely held religious beliefs.

“It comes down to not so much a loosening of morals but rather a lack of any understanding of theology of sexual domestic relationships,” Stanton says. “That is what drives people to think there isn’t anything wrong with it.”

Because cohabitation is so prevalent, even to the point of becoming an expected rite of passage to adulthood, Roxanne Stone, editor in chief at the Ventura, California-based Barna Group, says pastors may need to devise reasons beyond “it’s wrong” to reverse the trend.

“When everyone in their circles and everyone on television is living together, young people will begin to see it as benign,” Stone says. “Religious leaders will need to promote the countercultural trend celebrating reasons to wait.”