

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

Arthur F. Berg (1896-1983), a pioneer Assemblies of God missionary and pastor, was born in an era when children were expected to be seen and not heard. However, early Pentecostal services — featuring testimonies, lively sermons, and peppy gospel songs — were often very accessible to young people. Countless people — both young and old — surrendered their lives to Christ in early Pentecostal services.

So it was with Berg. When he was 14, he experienced the Holy Spirit's permeating presence during a revival with Pentecostal leader William Durham and he (and dozens of other children) committed his life to Christ.

"The convicting power and pull of the Holy Spirit was so strong, so irresistible," Berg recalled, "that I found myself at the altar weeping and praying my way through to a definite experience of old-fashioned salvation." He went on to experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

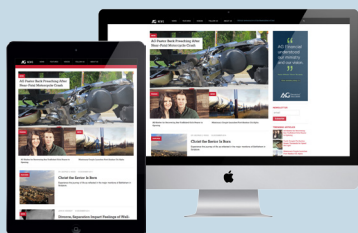
He was ordained by the AG in 1919, and he and his wife, Anna, served as



missionaries in Belgian Congo from 1922 to 1926, and for the next 33 years they pastored congregations in South Dakota. He also assisted in starting the World Missions Plan, a program that encouraged AG churches to support home and world missions.

Read the article, "How a Boy Received the Baptism," on pages 24-25 of the June 9, 1968, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/june91968.

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SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2018

AG NEWS

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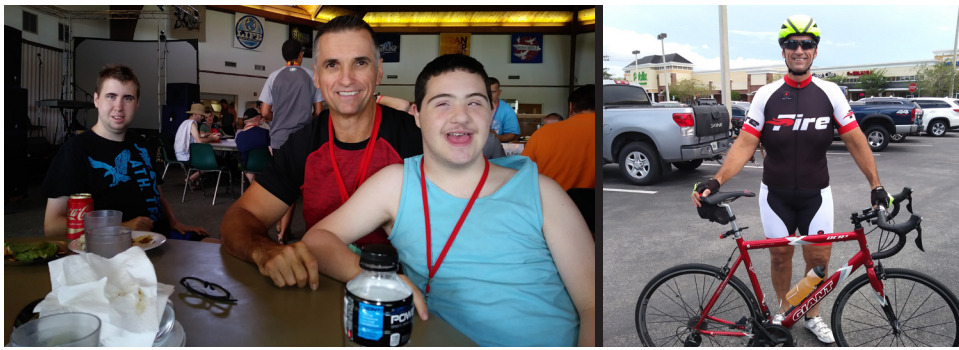


**SPECIAL TOUCH
SPECIAL JOURNEY**

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SPECIAL TOUCH SPECIAL JOURNEY

BY DEANN ALFORD

Two years ago, U.S. missionary associate Matthew Espina, 44, bought a serious road bike for a church-planting ride fundraiser. Now he's organizing a cross-country journey from Dade City, Florida, to the Waupaca, Wisconsin, headquarters of Special Touch, an AG ministry to the disabled.

The Aug. 20-Sept. 3 ride is designed to raise funds and awareness for the ministry founded in 1982 that provides support to the disabled and their families through local chapters, as well as five-day Get Away camps for those with special needs. Espina welcomes experienced cyclists to join him for all or part of the 1,200-mile ride.

U.S. Missions Intercultural Ministries Senior Director Wayne Huffman says many people don't understand how to relate to people with disabilities.

"It's a unique culture, a people group in the United States with a certain mindset," Huffman says. "It takes individuals called by God with specialized training to be able to enter that world and share the gospel in

a way that is culturally relevant and understandable by them."

Huffman notes that the disabled are marginalized.

"This is a new way to get funding and bring awareness to the fact that the disabled in the United States have the right to hear the gospel," Huffman says.

Espina's own journey to minister to the disabled began a decade ago when he served as a caregiver at the Florida Get Away camp. Caregiving entailed being among the first up in the morning and the last to go to bed. He showered, bathed, fed, and brushed the teeth of grown men.

"Being a caregiver, especially for those with physical disabilities, requires a setting aside of oneself and one's personal needs," Espina says. "I felt the Lord speak to me at the altar saying this is where He wanted me."

Espina's home church, Harvest AG in Lakeland, Florida, started a service for children with disabilities, of which he is pastor. This year, he began pastoring a service for adults with

DOUBLE CHURCH PLANTER

BY IAN RICHARDSON

Mabel R. Nieto, 68, pastors two congregations in Perry, Iowa, where 40 percent of the 7,900 residents are Hispanic. Nieto moved to Perry 20 years ago to start Fuente de Vida Asamblea de Dios with just five attendees. It has since grown to 120.

Three years ago, she planted a second church, Nueva Vida Asamblea de Dios, to reach those unable to attend traditional Sunday morning services because of work schedules. That congregation now numbers around 65.

The granddaughter of Mexican immigrants, Nieto grew up speaking both English and Spanish in her Corpus Christi, Texas, home and attended Christ Mission College to pursue a ministry career.

In 1998, while serving at Bethel AG, an English-speaking church in Corpus Christi, Nieto felt a call to travel more than 1,100 miles north to Iowa. The opportunity came via a phone call from the AG Office of Hispanic Relations.

"I took it as God calling, and I

came," she says. In the beginning, the church met in the basement of the building owned by Perry's English-speaking AG church, New Day Assembly. Nieto encouraged the five adherents' children to invite their friends to attend Sunday School classes with them. Nieto also helped translate at local children's clinics and the local hospital. Some of those families started attending.

A strong Girls Ministries program and vacation Bible school at the church continued to attract more families. Soon, the church outgrew its space.

Fuente de Vida purchased its own building in 1999. In 2013, when New Day Assembly moved to a new facility, Fuente de Vida bought the building, which offered a more spacious place to hold services.

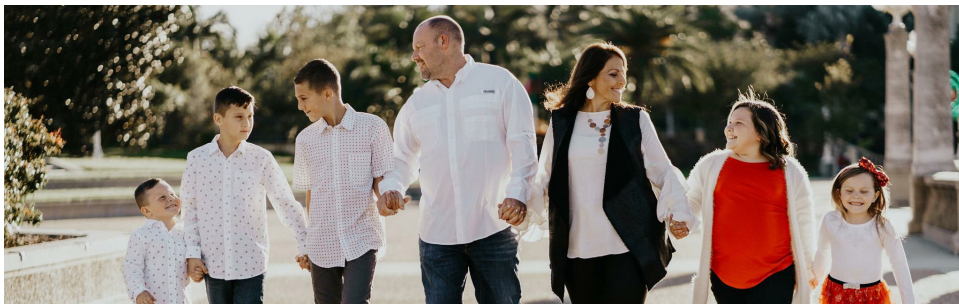
The next year, Nieto decided to plant the second church in the former Fuente de Vida building. The church holds services at different times to reach locals whose jobs require Sunday morning shifts.

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 CAMP ADOPTION

BY DAN VAN VEEN

When Sydney Morrow, the Children's Ministries director for the Peninsular-Florida district arrived at kids camp in July 2016 with her husband, Robbie, they never dreamed what God had in store.

Morrow, who also serves as children's pastor at Harvest AG in Lakeland, was feeling the stress of directing the camps and 900 kids between them. But each night, when she collapsed into bed around 1 a.m., Robbie, who is the associate pastor at Harvest AG, wanted to talk. Not just any talk — he wanted to adopt two boys attending the camp!

"I was overwhelmed with the responsibilities of camp," Sydney admits. "I just couldn't process it."

Robbie had learned the two boys were about to be abandoned. The couple who had adopted them three years ago, were "unadopting" them.

"The Holy Spirit pretty much nailed me," Robbie says about his response to the story. "The Lord was saying this [adoption] is what I want you to do right now."

For Sydney, the thought had no appeal. "Robbie had heard from the

Lord. I hadn't. I had fear," she admits.

But when her 8-year-old daughter, Taylor, said she thought the Lord wanted them to adopt Jude, then 9, and Liam, then 8, it gave her pause.

Convicted, but not convinced, Sydney took a step of obedience.

"I had to literally say, 'OK, Lord, I trust that You have spoken to my husband. I don't feel it right now, but I believe You put my husband as the head of this home . . . that You spoke to him.' When I did that, the confirmation came almost immediately."

In August 2016, the adoption process began. God provided the right lawyer and friends to help cover the costs as well as a highly supportive church family. On Nov. 13, 2017, they officially became a family of seven.

As Sydney reflects on all that God has done for the family, the challenges and opportunities He continues to guide them through, and especially the two new voices now calling for "Mom" and "Dad" in their household, she says she may be busier than ever, but now she's overwhelmed by God's blessings.

THE AG CENTENNIAL IN SPRINGFIELD

BY GLENN W. GOHR AND DARRIN J. RODGERS

The Assemblies of God relocated its national offices and publishing house to Springfield, Missouri, 100 years ago. The 1918 decision resulted in Springfield becoming a ministry hub.

Looking back at the history of the Pentecostal movement in Springfield, early AG leaders saw the hand of God.

In 1907, James and Lillie Corum and their children lived in a Springfield farmhouse. But when the children's aunt and uncle, Rachel and Joseph Sizelove, visited, the family had a taste of Pentecost. One child recalled Rachel's face "aglow" and "she was speaking in a heavenly language" when she entered the house.

The Sizeloves had become active (and were baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1906) in the Los Angeles Azusa Street Mission. In May 1907, Rachel visited her siblings and mother to tell them about her experience. Three weeks later, Lillie Corum became the first known Springfieldian to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Corum family later formed the nucleus of the first Pentecostal congregation in Springfield (now Central AG).

In 1918 the AG national offices, then located in St. Louis, needed a larger place. Leaders visited Springfield and found the ideal building, but the sale price was \$3,200 — \$200 too much. Amazingly, local businessmen pitched in the money.



Two events seemed to prophesy the move to Springfield.

First, in 1913, Rachel Sizelove again visited the Corums. While in prayer, she saw a vision of a sparkling fountain that deluged all the land with living water. She said the Lord spoke to her: "I'm going to do a mighty work in Springfield that will astound the world."

Then, in 1915, Fred and Paul Corum and three other boys cut across White City Park. The boys decided to pray and claim the land for God.

At the 1945 General Council, the Assemblies of God fellowship approved purchasing the old White City Park to build a new publishing plant (completed 1949) and office building (completed 1962). A six-story distribution center was added in 1972, followed by a shipping warehouse in 1980.

When Rachel Sizelove visited the Corums in 1907, she could not have imagined that she was helping to lay the foundation for the countless ministries of the Assemblies of God.



THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD FAILED

BY DAN VAN VEEN

For two years, U.S. missionaries Isaac and Jaime Olivarez worked intensely on growing their new church plant, Urban Outreach Denver. But it seemed no matter what they did, coming to UO Denver on Sundays was not a priority for residents.

The Olivarezes felt called to inner-city ministry and were approved as U.S. missionaries with Missionary Church Planters and Developers to the neighborhood of Five Points in Denver — an area that drug dealers, prostitutes, and gang members call home.

"It's not that we didn't have people coming on Sundays," Jaime observes. "But all the people coming were from outside of the people group we were trying to reach — we were basically preaching to our volunteers."

"I felt like a failure," Isaac admits.

But then God gave the couple a revelation. What is church? A gathering of people who are ministered to through the Word of God and personal interaction. It was a moment of clarity.

Since May 2013, Isaac and Jaime have hosted Thursday night meals for local residents, which include drug users and dealers, prostitutes,

alcoholics, the homeless, and even some gang members. At those meals, Isaac presents a brief gospel message and during the meal, the message is the topic of table discussion.

"It's a relaxed evening as we always make more than enough food, so people are in no hurry to eat," Isaac explains.

The couple also admits that they have had to "unlearn" their preconceived ideas of what church is and how they defined "success." In fact, Sunday isn't even a part of their church's equation any longer — Thursday and, more recently added, Monday evenings are their times to gather together — having ended Sunday services about two years ago.

Dinner church has also caught national attention as they were invited to share the theology at The Fresh Expressions National Gathering held in Washington, D.C., earlier this year.

"It has completely reinvigorated and revolutionized my faith," Isaac says of dinner church. "Really, our Christian bubble was shattered five years ago when we came here."

And for both Isaac and Jaime, they wouldn't have it any other way.

intellectual disabilities who are unable to comprehend the main service.

In addition, Espina trains adults to help disabled children and conducts seminars for churches to launch ministries to those with special needs. Now he's raising support to pastor the disabled full time, which will include visiting more churches, evangelizing group homes, and starting support groups for caregiver parents of disabled children who feel isolated at church.

A support mini-bus providing food and supplies will accompany the cyclists each leg of the journey. To keep the ride to two weeks, Espina and

the group will bike 115-120 miles per day, around six hours daily, stopping at prearranged spots so people can join along the way. Every night of the ride will feature a group devotional and prayer time.

Participants will raise funds for their lodging in hotels along the route. The group can travel on the bus on bad weather days as well as on challenging mountain segments. The cyclists will arrive in Wisconsin on Sept. 1 for a charity fun ride with people with disabilities. Each participant will have a sponsorship page to allow donors to give online.

MORE ON THE MINISTRY PLATE

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Jack L. Harper is pastor of CrossRoads Church of Antioch, an AG congregation in the Nashville area. His wife, Sheila L. Harper, heads the global abortion recovery ministry SaveOne. Despite these full-time ministry pursuits, the couple recently accepted new departmental leadership roles for the Tennessee Ministry Network.

Jack became director of Covenant of the Brotherhood, the network's men's ministry, in 2016. Last year, Sheila took over as head of Tennessee Girls Ministry and began assisting the women's ministry as well by holding My Sister's Keeper events across the Volunteer State.

Sheila started an abortion-recovery course in 2002, based on a 146-page Bible-based curriculum she wrote. In 2005, She developed a separate

study for men. Now there are 205 official SaveOne chapters in 19 countries. Sheila's *SaveOne: A Guide to Emotional Healing after Abortion* is available in 15 languages and is being translated into five more.

In March, Sheila had an opportunity to address the annual conference of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. Although many speakers represented a pro-abortion viewpoint, Sheila, in her three-minute window, told how abortion became the most regrettable mistake of her life, how Jesus forgave her of that decision to end her baby's life, and how SaveOne classes are helping women recover from their pain.

"An organization doesn't grow globally to this size if it's not needed," Sheila says.