

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

Gerrit R. Polman (1868-1932) is regarded as the Pentecostal movement's founder in the Netherlands.

Influenced by reports of revivals in Wales and at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, Polman and his small congregation in Amsterdam identified with the Pentecostal movement in 1907.

Polman wrote a historical account of Dutch Pentecostalism, which was published in the *Pentecostal Evangel*. He recounted testimonies of how in one city, "The sick were healed, demons cast out, souls saved, and other manifestations of the power of God were given." This pattern was repeated, with some variations, in cities and villages throughout the nation.

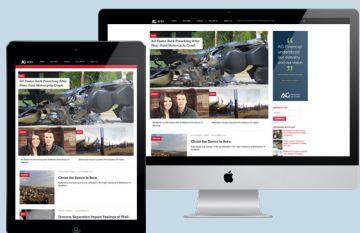
According to Polman, people who experienced God's power were transformed. He wrote, "What a wonderful change it brings in our lives when the Holy Spirit comes in, in Pentecostal power; how it changed our conduct, our hearts, and lives; what a fellowship in the Spirit with our risen Lord!"



Polman gave praise to God for "the unity in the Spirit" that existed among Dutch Pentecostals. A similar vision for Pentecostal unity, grounded in God's Word and for the purpose of worldwide evangelization, also energized the AG founders in 1914.



Read Polman's article, "The Pentecostal Work in Holland," on pages 2-3 of the May 29, 1926, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/may291926.

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AG NEWS

A COLLECTION OF THIS WEEK'S STORIES FROM news.ag.org



A FOREVER FAMILY AFTER 17 TRIES

WORLD-SHAKING PRAYER IN DESERT

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO VBS

ECLECTIC EATERY OFFERS SWEET JOY



A FOREVER FAMILY AFTER 17 TRIES

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Removed from her biological family's home at the age of 5, Joclynn Jeanette Weir bounced around 17 foster homes before landing with the Weirs in Nixa, Missouri, in November 2017. The couple officially adopted her Feb. 26 with the help of Cherish Kids, a ministry of James River Church based in Ozark.

From the ages of 2 to 4 Joclynn's mother trafficked her as a child prostitute to earn income in exchange for drugs.

"I was bitter and angry for a long time," says Joclynn, now 15. "All I wanted was a home and someone to love me."

Will and Lisa never had considered foster care before. Joclynn came into their lives after they saw the effervescent girl at church.

"We've assured Joclynn that we'll never leave her or forsake her, just as God will neither leave or forsake any of us," says Will, 56, a trucker driver.

The Weirs, who have attended Nixa

First Assembly of God for more than a quarter century, have one other child, 27-year-old Shelby Bettis of Wilmore, Kentucky.

The Weirs admit to being clueless about the plight of orphans before connecting with Cherish Kids. The ministry, started a decade ago, has assisted finding foster and adoptive homes for more than 5,000 children. Cherish Kids arranged for Joclynn's surprise adoption ceremony to take place at James River Church.

Around 500 people who attend the four James River Church campuses are actively involved in foster care, respite care, or adoption. Cherish Kids has two full-time employees and 10 key volunteers.

"The local church is the answer to come alongside families in helping orphans," says Cathi Keene, James River Church director of outreach.

Cherish Kids is embarking on an ambitious effort to impact kids in need of a home beyond southwest Missouri.

THE JOY OF THE LORD IS HER STRENGTH

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Christian recording artist Jeff Deyo described God-given joy as a supernatural hope that is beyond understanding, especially in the light of extreme challenges.

Donna Lott is a personification of that definition.

"She always had a smile on her face," says Donna's daughter Ashley, 26. "We've prayed together, things that would make us cry, but God would help her to laugh, to see the good in all of it."

Angie Jennings, wife of Florida City First AG senior pastor Jeff Jennings, agrees. "How to describe Donna? Giving joyfully! She always has a smile."

Yet it would seem to be easier for Lott to be bitter.

In 1984, Lott gave birth to Dennis, affectionately called "Huey." But at birth, Huey's neck was separated from his spine. He became a quadriplegic with severe brain damage, never to walk or speak.

In 1995, Donna and her husband, now the parents of two children, divorced. She remains single.

For the next 20 years, Donna was

Huey's main caretaker while she also raised Ashley. "Huey never had a bed sore," Donna says, tellingly. "He was sunshine in my life."

Huey died in 2015. Needing to find a job, Donna returned to school at the age of 55 in 2016 to become a certified state nursing assistant.

And to go along with these and other challenges, over the next three years, Donna had bouts with uterine, skin, and blood cancer.

"God has given me the strength and courage for my daily walk for years," she explains with an upbeat voice.

But Lott doesn't claim perfection. "I'm able to see the people in the church who need prayer (for emotional pain)." However she wasn't using the gift in church.

"I stopped running [from His call] and God has done so much for me," she says.

Often she is led to pray for people who have not gone to the altar for prayer. But repeatedly the Holy Spirit prays through her about the exact issue the person was experiencing.

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."



AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO VBS

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

Impact Ministries, an AG church in Wheatland, Wyoming, is turning vacation Bible school into living history, transporting families back to 1860 with Old West-style buildings and period actors. The goal is to reinvent VBS for a new generation.

"Bringing living history has changed our outlook on VBS," says Jeremy M. Haroldson, 33, pastor of the 7-year-old congregation in the town of 3,500.

Last year, Impact asked children and leaders to dress up as the New Testament characters such as the apostle Paul and Philemon that they were learning about.

That led to the idea for Frontier Nights, a living history experience complete with an Old West town, tents, a troupe of re-enactors, and a Friday night hoedown. Children's minister Charity A. Haroldson, Jeremy's 19-year-old sister, is planning the event.

Frontier Nights will take place in late June on the church's 16-acre property. Families will walk through the Old West town station by station and watch scenes of living history, plus participate

in games of the era, such as apple bobbing and gunny sack races. There will be horses, goats, and chickens, and the setting will be authentic-looking, down to the canvas tents, costumes, and artificially aged wood and metal props. Friday night will feature live fiddle, mandolin, and banjo music by lantern light and camp fire.

Running through the two-day experience will be storylines that weave historical situations and people, such as trappers, gold prospectors, and pioneers, with their invented spiritual journeys. In one scenario, a non-Christian fur trapper argues with an itinerant preacher. In the end, the trapper comes around to the minister's message.

Frontier Nights will culminate with a Sunday-morning service at the property in the frontier setting — what church would have looked like in the 1860s on the prairie.

"Our goal is to bring families into our fellowship and speak to the parents as well as kids about the love of Jesus," Jeremy says.

ECLECTIC EATERY OFFERS SWEET JOY

BY REBECCA BURTRAM

In a season of transition and unknowns, Wendy Schulz dreamed about a place of joy and peace for her family. Today her dream is a reality, as she owns and operates Sweet Joy Shoppe, an eclectic eatery, store, and ministry hub in Atlantic, a southwestern Iowa town of 6,900.

Wendy and her husband, Daniel, initially opened a small coffee and gelato shop. As time and money allowed, the business grew to be far more. The shop now also sells books, games, and food. It hosts a discipleship course for women, a Celebrate Recovery step study, and multiple Bible study groups from churches in the community. Schulz attends 1st Assembly of God in Atlantic.

The Shine course is geared to young women interested in gaining an introductory understanding of the Bible and building a relationship with Jesus. Schulz invites mature Christians to share their testimonies with the group. Schulz views the shop as an extension of the Church.

"Sweet Joy is a neutral space that allows us to minister beyond denominational lines with ease," says Schulz, who is earning her ministry credentials through the Iowa Ministry Network School of Ministry.

Recently her family purchased a farm, which they use as a resource to provide healthy, natural food options to customers. The shop also generates income for victims of human trafficking.

CHURCH GROWS THROUGH FEEDING

BY ASHLEY GRANT

The El Cajon campus of Newbreak Church in San Diego initially increased through traditional church growth methods. However, in 2016, campus pastor Eric M. Rountree shifted the focus to reaching the marginalized through food outreaches.

The El Cajon campus currently averages 400 regular weekly attendees. The parent church wrote \$30,000 into the next year's missions budget to build an industrial kitchen. Hope Center launched at the campus in December 2017.

That month, the El Cajon campus hosted its first food outreach: a Christmas meal for 250 people who recently had been homeless before moving to the community's transitional living center.

For 2018, Newbreak set a goal to feed 10,000 people for its first year of outreaches. By the end of the year, the church had fed more than 110,000 individuals.

Along with its two traditional Sunday morning services, Newbreak and its community partners offer grab-and-go meals Monday through Friday, dollar dinners on Tuesdays (which allow entire families to come eat for only \$1), grocery distribution on Fridays, Saturday picnics specifically for the homeless, and a health and wellness fair one Saturday every other month.

Newbreak has started "dinner church" on Thursdays to attract those who would not normally step through the doors of a worship facility.



RESCUING FROM INNER-CITY CLUTCHES

BY ERIC TIAN SAY

A parachurch ministry has facilitated hundreds of people in accepting Christ while bringing hope to low-income San Antonio residents who live in the Texas city's highest violent crime area. Launched almost 30 years ago, AGORA Ministries has been encouraging, empowering, educating, and mentoring disadvantaged children, as well as at-risk youth, with the gospel.

Fabian Martinez, 20, and his two brothers didn't have enough food growing up in the inner city, where they saw gang violence, drug activity, and other negative influences. At the age of 12, Martinez and one of his brothers began catching an AGORA bus as part of the ministry's Saturday outreach.

"As we got older, we started going to their youth program and I got saved," he recounts. "AGORA believed in me and made me feel accepted."

Martinez is now a kid's pastor with AGORA and also serves at the

ministry's food pantry.

"The Lord caught me with AGORA before the inner city could," he says. "Now I am in a position to help others avoid the situation I was in and help them change their outcome."

AGORA Ministries Executive Director Jason A. Brooks says Martinez is just one of hundreds saved by Jesus and rescued in the 78207 zip code of San Antonio. The impoverished area has 13 percent unemployment and nearly 60 percent of residents have less than a ninth grade education.

"I have seen not just commitments, but miraculous change," explains Brooks, 44, an AG U.S. missionary.

Hundreds of mission team campers are comprised of youth group members from across the country who come to AGORA in the summer for the ministry's street camp. The youths serve in the inner city by feeding the homeless, painting houses, and doing beautification lawn projects.

Cherish Kids is launching a network throughout the Show Me State. Keene says every Christian can do something to help, whether practical, prayerful, or financial.

"It's important for people of faith to speak into the lives of foster children," Keene says. "We've seen a better retention rate in the church because God helps kids through trauma."

Keene notes that half of the homeless people in the U.S. have aged out of the foster system, a transition period often accompanied by post-traumatic stress disorder or reactive attachment disorder. Nearly two-thirds of boys are incarcerated after they age out while three-fourths of girls have a

premarital pregnancy, she says.

A recent emphasis of Cherish Kids is raising awareness of the need to find a stable home for teenagers such as Joclynn. Those who have been in multiple homes during childhood have a better shot at succeeding in adult life if they have just a couple of years staying with a permanent family, Keene says.

Lisa Weir agrees that Christians are a vital part of the solution. Her daughter is an example of what a difference a loving family can make.

"God has great things in store for Joclynn," says Lisa, "She has a passionate heart for people. Her story is going to impact many people as God directs her path."

WORLD-SHAKING PRAYER IN DESERT

BY KENNETH WALKER

Situated on a mountain overlooking Phoenix, the Prayer Pavilion at Dream City Church includes a 250-seat chapel. Until last fall, people had gathered for 11 years there for weekly praise and prayer services. When the turnouts outgrew the chapel, pastor Luke Barnett invited Saeed K. Hosseini, who has been the church's prayer pastor since 2001, to move the meetings to the main sanctuary and made them the church's midweek service.

Via the internet, the meetings are live streamed worldwide, with services archived for viewing later. In addition to live worship, both Saeed and his wife, Cynthia, speak during the gatherings, which are held on Tuesdays.

The Pavilion is also home to the

Global 365 Prayer Network, which maintains relationships with 100,000 prayer partners in more than 60 nations. Viewers of its online streaming programs span such far-flung locales as Guatemala and South Korea.

According to Hosseini, over the past 12 years, more than 3,200 people have been healed of cancer through the prayer ministry and one of its divisions, Team Up Against Cancer. The group has more than a dozen core group members who visit area hospitals to pray with patients and 100-plus intercessors.

Retired businessman David J. Bryant chairs this effort. "Somebody, someplace in the world is praying for people on this list 24/7," Bryant says.