



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time" (Isaiah 60:22). Alice Luce, an educator and missionary to Spanish speakers along the U.S.-Mexican border, referred to this verse in 1927 when describing the burgeoning Hispanic work in the AG.

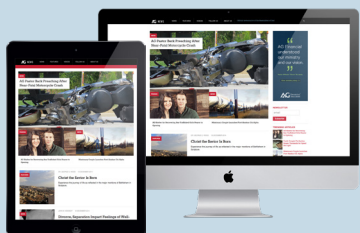
Luce tallied the existence of over 100 Spanish-speaking congregations that served between 2,000 and 3,000 converts. Two Spanish language Bible schools were begun in 1926, one by Henry C. Ball in Texas and another by Luce in California. These two schools, now known as Christ Mission College (San Antonio) and LABI College (La Puente, California), continue to train Spanish-speaking ministers.

Luce believed that Mexico was the United States' Samaria. She also viewed Hispanic ministry as very fruitful, affordable, and remarkable as Hispanic churches quickly became indigenous.

When Luce quoted Isaiah 60:22, she implied that the growing Spanish-speaking constituency in the Assemblies of God would become "a strong nation." Her prediction came true. In 2017, 23.2% of Assemblies of God adherents (744,297 people) in the United States were Hispanic.

Read the entire article by Alice E. Luce, "The Latin-American Pentecostal Work," on pages 6 and 7 of the June 25, 1927, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/june251927.

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SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2019

AG[®] NEWS

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

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STILL MINISTERING AT 89

BY CINDY J. THOMAS

On May 14, relatives, pastors, chaplains, professors, ministry volunteers, and even a prison warden and a few ex-convicts threw a surprise party for Priscilla Edwards. They came to celebrate with Edwards, 89, retiring after 16 years of faithfully teaching Living Free classes at Ozark Correctional Center (OCC) in Fordland, Missouri.

Priscilla Edwards ministered alongside her husband, Ernest, for many years at churches they pastored in New Jersey and New York. While in the Rochester area, she worked at the local Salvation Army, teaching 12-step classes. Edwards, who obtained her ministerial credentials in 1952, taught a Christian growth series as part of a radio ministry.

In 1995, Ernest died. After settling family matters, Edwards moved into a home with her daughter and son-in-law, eventually moving with them to Springfield, Missouri, where the 73-year-old widow looked for a place to volunteer. She found it at Ozark Correctional Center. Edwards began speaking occasionally in open chapel. Then, drawing on her experience with

12-step and discipleship classes, she began teaching weekly Living Free classes.

Former inmates call "Grammy" a great fit.

"She vibes well with the guys, communicates well," says David Manning, now on staff at Springfield's Freedom City Church. "I never felt judged by her." Manning credits Edwards with helping him cope during incarceration when his mother was diagnosed with cancer.

Zachary Rogers, another former inmate, directs Freedom City's Branson campus. After he accepted Christ as Savior through OCC's chaplain ministry, he found inspiration from Edwards's steadfast determination to bring Living Free to the inmates each week.

"I was a little concerned when she couldn't drive there on dark, stormy, winter evenings," Rogers says. "But as soon as the weather improved enough for her to see to drive, there she was. We were so glad to see her."

John Alarid, a former heroin addict who now is lead pastor at Freedom City

TEEN CHALLENGE FIGHTS OPIOIDS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

New Teen Challenge International U.S.A. President Gary W. Blackard believes education is the key to fighting the opioid epidemic. As such, the addiction recovery ministry, a department of U.S. Missions, is developing a new curriculum designed to instruct not only addicts, but also relatives and friends who must deal with the aftermath.

"In order to battle addiction, we have to bring awareness of what addiction is," says Blackard.

A new biblically based student curriculum track called "Breaking Free: Exposing the Nature of Addiction," will be published in July as the first in a series of six workbooks to be published by the end of the year. This is the first addiction education track of its kind for Adult & Teen Challenge. Wendy Buttacy, who in March became the Adult & Teen Challenge chief

learning officer, is writing the studies.

"The goal is to dive deeper into the root causes of addiction, showing how it affects us emotionally, relationally, spiritually, and mentally," says Buttacy. The curriculum provides hopeful solutions of how Jesus can provide freedom from compulsive cravings.

The new addiction education curriculum includes a six-week "Personal Study for New Life In Christ" for each of what eventually will be 40 tracks.

The materials can be used in classes at the 256 U.S. Adult & Teen Challenge centers, in one-on-one counseling situations, in a church small group setting, or for individual instruction. The first study covers the nature of addiction and spells out how it affects the family unit. The second manual addresses confronting denial. The third focuses on grief and addiction.

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."



COUPLE ADOPTS HALF A DOZEN

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

The destiny of Troy Morken and his five siblings changed when volunteers from Evangel Assembly of God in Bismarck, North Dakota, placed a flyer on the family's front door inviting them to a children's outreach at the church in 1985.

Arvid and Nancy Morken had been looking for a church where their six adopted children could receive spiritual instruction. The Morkens went to the special evening gatherings and 10-year-old Troy subsequently accepted Jesus as their Savior.

Troy and his older sister, Tonya, then 13, becoming a part of the puppet team ministry at Evangel AG.

"We thought the best way to build a family would be through adoption," says Arvid, 74. The first two children, Tonya Keller, now 46, and Troy, 43, had been born in the region. Scott, 41, and Kailee Murphy, 39, are from Seoul, South Korea. Dustin, 39, and Joel, 37, came from Bogotá, Colombia.

"My wife kept looking for more kids," Arvid remembers. "We finally

stopped after six."

Troy came into the Morken home at two weeks of age. He felt called to full-time ministry at 13 and joined the National Guard at 17. As a U.S. Missions chaplain, Troy has deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Kuwait. In June, he returned to Germany, where he served earlier for three years as a brigade chaplain.

Having four ethnic minority children in one of the whitest regions of the country stood out. Often they would be the only nonwhite kids in class. Bismarck is still over 92 percent white.

Arvid and Nancy commemorated their children on two special days a year, taking them out to eat on both their birthday and adoption day.

"Our adoption was never a secret," Troy says. "My parents really celebrated adoption."

Arvid worked as a banker for 20 years, then owned and operated a flower shop for two decades. Nancy spent 30 years as a nurse before retiring.

BRAESWOOD AG — JBO CHAMPIONS

BY DAN VAN VEEN

The Chosen Ones of Braeswood Assembly of God in Houston finished with an 8-1 round-robin record in the final day of quizzing to win the 34th annual National Junior Bible Quiz (JBQ) Festival held at Victory Worship Center in Tucson, Arizona, June 6-8.

This marks the third time in five years that a JBQ team from Braeswood AG has claimed the national JBQ title.

The Chosen Ones, coached by Grace Ukonu and Seyi Akanbi, were led by Brandon Ukonu with 2,315 points followed by Iyanu Akanbi, 1,180 points; Jaden Ukonu, 955 points; and Jason Ukonu, 190 points.

Good News Church of Omaha, Nebraska, came in second with a 7-2 record and More Than Conquerors of Freedom Church in Tallahassee, Florida, finished third at 6-3. Braeswood AG's second team, Gideon's Army, finished sixth. Five of the top 10 teams were from the South Texas district.

The tournament's top three individual scorers were Samuel Biruduganti of Calvary Church in Naperville, Illinois, with 2,850 points for Naperville S; Shaylee Powell, also of Calvary Church, with 2,845 points for Naperville M; and Elijah Stewart of Freedom Church in Tallahassee, with 2,780 points for More Than Conquerors.

The 2020 National JBQ Festival will be held in Naperville, Illinois, June 11-13.

NEW CONNECTIONS FOR ARIZONA YOUTH

BY WILL RINCÓN

The Ignite School of Ministry in Phoenix is a newly established branch that enables the AG Southwest District to connect with youth in a new way. Led by pastor Azael Núñez and his wife, Yaneidy Sepulveda, Ignite has become a destination for those in search of education — and the Lord. Ignite is in partnership with the SAGU American Indian College.

In June 2017, Azael and Yaneidy started a pilot summer internship program in the Arizona capital. Within two weeks, they signed up 15 students between the ages of 13-18 for a month of discipleship. By the end of the summer internship, Azael and Yaneidy became directors of the new branch of Ignite School of Ministry.

Mark and Lisa Vega founded Ignite in 2006 in Gainesville, Florida, with the intent of giving young people an opportunity to encounter God. Ignite now offers multiple ministerial bachelor and associate degrees, with 1,300 students already graduating.

Ignite holds classes at SAGU American Indian College, which has over 100 students. In March, 30 students attended a mission trip to the Dominican Republic, visiting five cities and ministering to 2,000 children at school assemblies. In the fall, Núñez plans to open the Ignite Ministerial Institute, the first Bible school for the Southwest District.



ONE BRISKET AT A TIME

BY MARY J. YERKES

Through the ministry of Life 360, in Springfield, Missouri, Brenda L. Castaldo pours her life into others one brisket at a time. She prepares meals for Life360 and community events, feeding those who have a need both inside and outside the church.

In 2010, at the age of 46, Castaldo's life shifted dramatically when she learned she had breast cancer. After watching her mother suffer a painful death from the same disease at 55, Castaldo decided to aggressively fight her cancer with radiation and high-intensity chemo treatments. The side effects from treatments debilitated her. They left a metallic taste in her mouth, particularly distressing her because of her involvement in cooking.

Although Castaldo is now cancer free and again can taste the food she prepares, she suffers with heart problems and neuropathy in her hands

as a result of her treatments.

In 2017, Castaldo began experiencing a new set of troubling symptoms. She lost her balance and took a couple of hard falls. Hearing in her right ear also started to fail. After seeing a neurosurgeon and undergoing a series of tests, Castaldo learned she had a benign brain tumor, located next to her brain stem and behind her right ear. Her surgery, which took over 10 hours, left her with partial facial paralysis and the inability to close her right eye. Besides unbearable pain, her eye tended to close when she grew tired, and she couldn't reopen it.

"My brain surgery affected me more physically than my breast cancer," says Castaldo, the mother of seven children. Despite her physical challenges, she continues to do what she loves: cooking and serving others through her culinary calling.

Church, says Edwards proves it doesn't necessarily take a criminal background to minister to inmates.

"When she walks into chapel, she commands respect," Alarid says.

Edwards has had her share of struggles, including the loss of her 37-year-old son Mark to cerebral vasculitis. She brings a grandmother's love to the inmates, knowing each is somebody's son who made bad choices.

Although the May celebration was tagged a retirement party, Edwards isn't through serving. She will continue doing open chapel once a month. Jennifer Counts, a member of the James River Church team who assisted in recent months, is conducting the weekly classes

for a smooth transition.

Edwards has overcome several health troubles, including breast cancer as well as lymphoma more than a decade ago. She says she has been cancer-free since asking for prayer for healing at a James River Church service. She stays active in Silver Sneakers classes at the local YMCA. She reads the Bible with a visually impaired friend and volunteers at Living Free at Freedom City Church. Residents of the church's Men's Hope Home are required to attend the program, so those formerly at OCC appreciate the continuity.

At 89, Edwards plans to continue serving as long as the Lord gives strength and opportunities.

TRAINING AIR FORCE JROTC STUDENTS

BY GRACE JICHA

Southeastern University (SEU) in Lakeland, Florida, became one of 11 universities in the U.S. to be awarded a contract with the U.S. Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) Flight Academy program. Conducted at universities across the nation, the AFJROTC Flight Academy, Chief of Staff Private Pilot Scholarship program is an eight-week summer aviation training course that allows high school students to complete a Private Pilot's Certification.

"Southeastern University is pleased to partner with the AFJROTC Flight Academy," said Joe Childs, director of aviation programs. "Through this program we are able to introduce potential students to Southeastern and also play an important part in solving

the critical [military and commercial] pilot shortage."

The Flight Academy also encourages diversity within the aviation industry as women make up less than 6% of pilots and minorities represent less than 10%. The 125,000 cadets enrolled in AFJROTC is the Air Force's most diverse program.

Southeastern welcomed its first group of eight JROTC students on June 3. They will stay on campus as they train for their Private Pilot's Certification and earn six college credits. Out of 10,000 applicants, only 150 received the \$20,000 scholarship.

Students who successfully complete the Flight Academy program will be awarded their Private Pilot's Certification.