



## THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

In 1950, an AG congregation of lepers in New Hope Town, Liberia, caught the vision of missions and desired to help those who were less fortunate than themselves. On Christmas Eve, they took up an offering of \$2.65, which they sent to the Leper Home of Uska Bazaar in North India.

AG missionary Florence Steidel (1897-1962), explained that the offering was quite generous, given the meager wages earned by the lepers (7 to 10 cents per day).

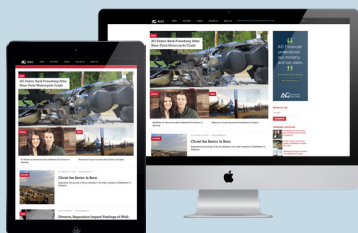
Steidel had founded New Hope Town in 1947 with \$100 and the help of lepers. Tribal chiefs gave her 350 acres of land to build a town for people with the skin-eating disease. Steidel rallied those

with leprosy to work alongside her. From 1947 until 1962, she oversaw the construction of 70 permanent buildings and six main streets.

She also established a school to train those with leprosy to become carpenters, weavers, brick makers, and clinic workers. They also planted 2,500 rubber trees, which helped the town to become economically self-sufficient. After only four years of establishing New Hope Town, its residents were already giving of their very limited resources to help others.


Read Steidel's article, "I Still Have Strong," on page 9 of the March 4, 1951, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at [s2.ag.org/mar41951](http://s2.ag.org/mar41951).

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SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2019

# AG NEWS

A COLLECTION OF THIS WEEK'S STORIES FROM [NEWS.AG.ORG](http://news.ag.org)



**BUS STOP PASTOR**

**CAKE BAKER WINS AGAIN**

**KIDS AND TEENS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**COH RESPONDS TO TORNADOES**





## BUS STOP PASTOR

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

THOUSAND OAKS, California — On a cold, clear-blue morning at a public bus terminal in Thousand Oaks, overlooking the busy 101 Freeway that connects Los Angeles with Santa Barbara and beyond, David R. Jeffery, 55, is handing out coffee and cookies to people who know him well.

Jeffery, pastor of Freedom Church Assembly of God, has come here every Friday 6 to 9 a.m. for eight years and set up a sewing table stacked with homemade chocolate chip cookies and mobile carafes of coffee. Drivers, riders, and homeless people greet him by name. Many consider him their pastor.

Today, a new person introduces himself: Mohammed, a university student recently immigrated from Pakistan, who wears professional-looking clothes and an out-of-place Green Lantern backpack. While waiting for the bus that will take him to a job interview, Mohammed speaks eagerly with Jeffery about matters of faith. Before he leaves,

Jeffery prays for Mohammed's job interview to go well.

People who pass through the bus stop — minimum wage workers, students, homeless people, and no small number of special needs people traveling together by bus to their jobs — expect to see Jeffery every week.

"These are normal people struggling to make ends meet, and those living on the street," Jeffery says.

The bus stop patrons are essentially Jeffery's second congregation. He has counseled bus riders' children by phone, conducted a funeral for a homeless man, visited some of the contacts in prison, and prayed weekly with many. People began calling the church office asking to "talk to my pastor from the bus stop."

Jeffery believes the purpose of the outreach is to connect him with those who need an encounter with God. So Friday mornings bring waves of passengers and drivers arriving at regular intervals to hug Jeffery, catch up for a

## TEEN GIRLS FIND NEW PURPOSE

BY CINDY J. THOMAS

Columbus Girls Academy is a Christian boarding school for girls dealing with life-controlling emotional or social issues. A ministry of Teen Challenge, the school is located on the boundary line between Seale, Alabama, and Columbus, Georgia.

Some girls have suffered abuse, social difficulty, or bullying. Others need a safe place to recover from family dysfunction or trauma.

Students at CGA can enroll for a 15-month residential program. To minister to girls ages 12–17, CGA necessarily includes academics. Students attend class through Alpha Omega online from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Classes are accredited by AdvancED. Graduating seniors are well-prepared for college options and can transition directly into Liberty University.

The beautiful lakeside campus contains a variety of sports facilities, including a basketball court, softball/soccer field, sand volleyball area, fitness room, and swimming pool. Girls are encouraged to study the arts and enter

National Fine Arts competition through area AG churches. An equine program will begin in April, incorporating the physical exercise of riding and the therapeutic benefits of connecting with animals and learning to care for them.

For the first few weeks after a girl arrives, the only family contact is with a counselor; the new enrollee is encouraged to connect with other students and staff while adapting to a daily routine. A mentor program connects the new arrival with a senior student to ensure positive peer interaction. After that, parent/daughter communication is reintroduced through mail and phone calls. Parents attend weekend events every other month. Parent weekends include group sessions with other parents plus individual counseling, with and without the girl present. Parents also spend time with their daughter as a family enjoying area activities, plus a movie night with other families. After about a year in the program, a six-day visit home helps the student start preparing to return to her familial setting.

### 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."



## KIDS AND TEENS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

BY DAN VAN VEEN

It was her first Sunday as children's pastor at New Life Church in Renton, Washington, and her heart was already broken. It was 2016, and Chelsey Jones, had just seen a family with an 8-year-old boy who had special needs leave because the church didn't have a class for him.

"I was uncertain what to do," Jones, now 25, admits. "But right then, the Spirit of God began speaking to me — church should be a place for *anybody* to come."

Out of that conviction, God led Jones to establish The Bridge — a Sunday morning ministry for children ages birth through 6th grade who have special needs. Each week, specially trained volunteers teach the children about Jesus and God's love for them.

At first, only two children attended. But then, Jones took a chance.

"I ran across a ministry event called Night to Shine, put on by the Tim Tebow Foundation," she says. "Other churches were doing it and I thought,

*Why can't we?"*

Night to Shine is for teens with special needs, not children, but the event has resulted in unanticipated blessings.

Following weeks of prayer and preparation, guests arrive. Guests can take limo rides and literally have the red-carpet treatment. Inside there is a beauty room for the girls and shoeshine for the boys, a karaoke room, a dinner, a photo booth, music, a special video message from Tim Tebow, and much more.

"Every single guest receives a crown as a king or queen," Jones says. "Our guests are treated like celebrities."

Last year, 230 guests attended. This year, 375 teens with special needs attended along with 600 volunteers.

"People who aren't believers come to this event, experience the presence of God, witness what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus, and the Spirit of the Lord touches them, changes them," Jones says.

## COH RESPONDS TO TORNADOES

BY AG NEWS

Convoy of Hope's Disaster Services Team deployed March 3 from Springfield, Missouri, and made their way to Lee County, Alabama, after a devastating outbreak of tornadoes swept through Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina.

According to reports, at least 23 people were killed in Lee County, Alabama. The National Weather Service has determined the first tornado to impact Lee County was an EF4 rated storm (166 to 200 mph wind speeds) and at least a half-mile wide.

Convoy of Hope's Disaster Services Team met with local Lee County officials and partners to further develop Convoy's response strategy, says Jeff Nene, Convoy of Hope's national spokesperson. "We have sent a tractor-trailer load of supplies to help the community with immediate needs and we have additional personnel and equipment on standby ready to depart."

The response to this outbreak follows Convoy of Hope's response to the EF-3 tornado that struck Columbus, Mississippi, on Feb. 23 leaving one person dead, hundreds of buildings damaged or destroyed, and a community in need. By the morning of Feb. 24, Convoy of Hope had deployed a team equipped with cleanup supplies, chainsaws, and heavy equipment to aid those affected, staging its disaster response from The Assembly (AG) church in Columbus.

## AN INNER-CITY FORCE FOR GOOD

BY ERIC TIAN SAY

An AG congregation and its parachurch ministry are helping thousands of men and women who have been sidetracked by addiction or homelessness to get back on their feet in inner-city Los Angeles.

For more than 25 years, Inglewood Community Church (ICC) and Christ-Centered Ministries (CCM) in the California city have worked hand in hand to develop housing projects and support programs to help the downtrodden transition into mainstream society.

Pastor Troy F. Vaughn has used his housing, construction, and public funding skills to benefit the city's addiction recovery needs. Vaughn is a catalyst in providing multiunit housing, paid for with grants, to shelter people who otherwise would have no viable long-term solutions. Vaughn, 55, endured a seven-year drug addiction in the 1980s.

CCM has been involved in awarding \$8 million in contracts and \$500,000 in private donations, in partnerships with churches, parachurch organizations, and businesses. CCM has developed 11 properties that each house 20 people. CCM has provided a way for people to safely transition from homelessness, incarceration, and institutionalization into stable and affordable housing. Many ICC members volunteer in the recovery homes and raise funds for special projects.





Frank Davis (left) helped Danielle Poulson-Jones (second from left) and Judy and Scott McChrystal get their chaplaincy careers going.

## INVESTING IN INTERN CHAPLAINS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Frank W. Davis, 71, has been the only full-time pastor at Tampa Assembly of God in Springfield, Missouri, since 1978. But over the years, he's had plenty of help from Central Bible College, Evangelical University, and Assemblies of God Theological Seminary students headed to the chaplaincy. Through internships, Davis has provided the forum for 15 prospective chaplains to fulfill a two-year prerequisite to be on a church staff.

Interns at Tampa AG gained practical experience by learning about everything from church administration to taking care of the church grounds.

Scott McChrystal, current military representative and endorser for AG Chaplaincy Ministries, served an internship at Tampa AG. McChrystal's 15-20 weekly hours of ministry included not only leading worship, but also nursing home visitation every Sunday afternoon and preaching an occasional sermon.

"He taught me what a genuine man of God in a pastoral position looked like," McChrystal says. He says the grace and patience demonstrated by Davis

and his wife, Nancy, helped him and his wife of 46 years, Judy.

"We often emphasized the importance of healthy marriage with chaplain candidates," Davis says. "It's difficult to keep a strong marriage when you're unsure when and where you will be relocated."

Danielle Poulson-Jones, an Air Force reserve captain chaplain, in 2017 finished an internship at Tampa AG, which included pastoring youth, teaching Bible studies, and coordinating missions conventions.

"I still call him often with ministry concerns, even doctrinal questions," says Poulson-Jones, who also is commuter coordinator at Evangelical University.

"He gave me every opportunity as a young female," says Poulson-Jones, 36. "He gave me authority to make decisions and made me feel like my opinion mattered."

Poulson-Jones in her duties as a chaplain reservist, primarily at Whiteman Air Force Base outside Knob Noster, Missouri, supports active duty chaplains.

moment, request prayer, and move on with coffee and treat in hand.

Jeffery functions more as a pastor than an evangelist at the bus stop. Many riders are on their way to the nearby court in Ventura, sometimes for jury duty and sometimes to appear. Others have job interviews and medical appointments.

"I pray 30-second prayers with people every single week," Jeffery says. "I have far more spiritual conversations at the bus stop than I would sitting in my office." In eight years, almost no one has turned down an offer for prayer.

"People share their hurts and stories," Jeffery says. "They ask for prayer, for

advice. I've been in their homes and hospitals. These are not projects, these are my friends. People will come see me at the bus stop that won't go to church."

Nobody is allowed to donate money at the bus stop table, though at the church people donate specifically for this ministry. David's wife, Kim, 53, wakes up at 5 a.m. before work on Fridays to prepare nine carafes of coffee. David bakes seven dozen cookies every Thursday night. The table is stocked with half and half, sugar, and fruit.

"You don't need a lot of training to do this," Jeffery says. "You just need to show up every week."

## CAKE BAKER WINS AGAIN

BY AG NEWS

The Colorado Civil Rights Commission dismissed its most recent charges on him against Christian cake baker Jack C. Phillips. Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys had filed a federal lawsuit, *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Elenis*, on behalf of the Lakewood, Colorado, baker after the state began to prosecute him. The suit came even after last June's U.S. Supreme Court's 7-2 ruling in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* in which justices determined that Phillips couldn't be forced to bake a specialty cake celebrating the marriage of two homosexual men.

"The state of Colorado is dismissing its case against Jack, stopping its six-and-a-half years of hostility toward

him for his beliefs," says Kristen K. Waggoner, senior vice president of ADF, which is based in Scottsdale, Arizona. "Tolerance and respect for good-faith differences of opinion are essential in a diverse society like ours. But the state's demonstrated and ongoing hostility toward Jack because of his beliefs is undeniable."

Waggoner argued on behalf of Phillips at the U.S. Supreme Court last year. She grew up in the Assemblies of God and is the daughter of Clint M. Behrends, superintendent of the AG-affiliated Cedar Park Christian Schools in Bothell, Washington.

"I simply can't celebrate events or express messages that conflict with my religious beliefs," Phillips says.