



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

1968 was a year of social and political unrest. American race riots, the war in Vietnam, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy grabbed the world's attention. Cultural uncertainty and rumblings of revolution were on many minds.

Assemblies of God leader Charles Scott expressed concern that "we have permitted ourselves to become blind to the grave dangers that are gnawing at the very vitals of America."

At a time when many were drawn toward political solutions and extremes, Scott instead recognized that the nation's woes, at their root, were spiritual. He recommended a spiritual solution to the problems enveloping the nation.

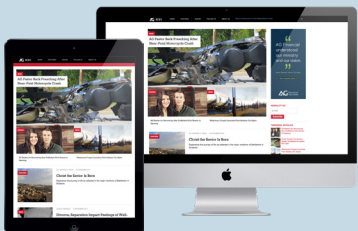
How should Christians work to

spiritually rebuild America? According to Scott, Christians should dedicate themselves to worshipping God — corporately as families and churches, and also individually. He described the need to rebuild family, church, and private altars.

"True patriots," Scott suggested, are people who seek "to destroy corruption, intemperance, wickedness, and selfishness" in their own lives. Others, seeing their example of humility and faith, would turn toward God, and America would then be strong and "a blessing in the earth."

Read Charles Scott's article, "America Must Choose!" on pages 2-3 of the March 24, 1968, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/mar241968.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2019

AG NEWS

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



A LONG, PAINFUL MIRACLE JOURNEY

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TEEN CHALLENGE OPENS NEW CENTER



A LONG, PAINFUL MIRACLE JOURNEY

BY CINDY J. THOMAS

Andy and Sharon Knoll talk about their daughters, Cheyenne, 11, and Hannah, 4, with the love and pride of any parents. But for the Osborne, Kansas, couple, their journey to parenthood is also a story of redemption, God's faithfulness, and the power of prayer.

Married in 1994, the Knolls couldn't conceive children biologically. Sharon struggled with anorexia, and, as a result, her monthly menstrual cycles became irregular and finally stopped. After several years, the Knolls decided to pursue adoption. Cheyenne joined the family as a newborn in 2007.

About a year after the adoption, Sharon sought more medical tests to determine if there might be any possibility of her being able to conceive naturally. Her doctor returned with grim news: Sharon's ovaries had "shriveled like raisins."

Sharon didn't give up. In 2010, still battling anorexia, she visited a Christian

therapist. As therapy progressed, she began to feel release from the physical and mental bondage of the eating disorder, and in 2011, her menstrual periods resumed. Although a physician prescribed a pharmaceutical to regulate her cycles, Sharon felt God's prompting to instead pray for complete healing, including a healthy pregnancy and delivery.

The church the Knolls attend, Osborne First Assembly, conducts regular Friday prayer group meetings. One night late in 2011, Sharon sat near the altar when Andy's aunt Carleen Knoll began a prophetic Spirit-led prayer over her. Sharon told her husband, "Something's happened."

The next morning during Sharon's prayer time, she sensed God explaining that she would undergo a process in which He would replace her withered organs with new ones. About 10 months after the altar experience,

FUELING UP WITH GOD

BY MARY J. YERKES

Claremore Assembly of God is teaming with First United Methodist Church in the Oklahoma city to renovate a gas station that has been vacant for two years. The facility, slated to open Sunday, will house the Amplified Millennial Project (AMP), a ministry to young adults. Located across the street from Rogers State University, the site will host Sunday night services. During the week, students can study, drink coffee, and do their laundry for free at the site.

Jeff L. Losornio is spearheading the effort. Losornio sports a mohawk and favors brightly colored clothes, which he believes makes him more relatable to college-age students.

"People are willing to listen to what I have to say because I'm flawed," says Losornio, 50. "In Christ, we don't have to be worthy; we just have to be willing."

Losornio wants to help young adults avoid mistakes he's made in life, and he believes providing them with a safe place to hang out and hear the gospel will help solidify their faith in early adulthood.

The former gas station is owned by one of the congregants who attends the Methodist church. After a series of conversations between David F. Mewbourne, lead pastor of Claremore AG, and the Methodist minister, the two churches agreed to partner to renovate the dormant facility for the AMP ministry.

AMP has been meeting in the Family Life Center, a converted gym behind the main building of Claremore AG. The AMP service, held every Sunday night after the church's regular evening service, opens with a meal at 7:30, followed by worship and a message at 8. Losornio does most of the preaching.

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."



SUICIDE EMBITTERS GRANDFATHER

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Sonny Finkenbinder was not a pleasant man. But on Oct. 25, 2018, his world went from acidic to bitter rage. His 15-year-old grandson, who had always treated him with kindness, inexplicably committed suicide.

"I blamed everybody for his death — I blamed the devil and I even blamed God," says Finkenbinder, who is 74.

Already known for his anger issues, Finkenbinder's rage now seethed just below the surface.

Chuck Kish, the lead pastor of Bethel Assembly of God in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, never met Finkenbinder prior to Oct. 25. But that day Kish was called upon as a chaplain with the Cumberland Goodwill EMS.

Kish couldn't help but notice the anger that boiled in Finkenbinder, who was among several family members at the scene. Kish did his best to comfort the inconsolable.

"Several weeks later, I get a call from Sonny," Kish says. *"He wants to know if we can meet. I agree."*

It was Dec. 13 when Finkenbinder approached Kish's booth at the Panera restaurant. Kish could tell by Finkenbinder's countenance that he was

really upset. The men started chatting, but then everything changed.

As Kish looked on in wonder, Finkenbinder's face changed; the seething anger in his eyes was replaced by a look of confusion and surprise.

"Pastor Chuck, he was just talking and one thing led to another and the next thing you know, this power came over me, grabbed me on the inside, and took everything [the anger, pain, and bitterness] out of the top of my head," Finkenbinder says. *"I knew this was Jesus; I knew it was the Holy Ghost, I knew that's what happened."*

Moments later, Kish led Finkenbinder in rededicating his life to Christ.

Since that day, Sonny's renewed commitment to Christ hasn't faded, and he and wife, Karen, are faithful attenders at Bethel. He is quick to point out that he's far from perfect and makes plenty of mistakes, but God has removed the grief from his heart and replaced it with an unexplainable joy.

"Life is just much better with Christ Jesus in our home," Karen says. *"It's three-sided now — my husband and me and the Lord. I don't know how else to say it, it's just nice."*

TEEN CHALLENGE OPENS NEW CENTER

BY RACHEL ELLIS

John K. Johnson, director of the newly opened Tri-State Teen Challenge in Grantsville, Maryland, spent the past 13 years as lead pastor of Keyser Assembly of God in West Virginia and figured he would continue. But John W. Yoder, president of the Tri-State Teen Challenge board, considered the 58-year-old Johnson the ideal executive director because of his heart for hurting people.

The center referred applicants to residential programs, held food and clothing drives, and conducted prison ministry before going to inactive status a couple of years ago. The center lost its building to an urban renewal project. The board wanted to resurrect the center as a residential facility, but needed another building.

New Hope Christian Fellowship, a small congregation needing assistance to maintain its 18,000 square-foot facility, offered to lease the building to Tri-State Teen Challenge for shared use in Grantsville, 25 miles from the original Cumberland location.

The residential program is designed to assist up to 20 men at a time who are trying to stay clean from alcohol, opioids, and other addictions. Johnson says the 12-month residential program will focus on intense daily Bible studies, chapel services, peer counseling, job training, and finances. The tri-state area the center will serve Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

COMMUNITY IMPACT FELT IMMEDIATELY

BY WILLIAM RINCÓN

Casa de Amor y Fe has impacted Lakeland, Florida, since its first service in 2014. More than 1,300 now attend the five weekly services, led by pastors Roberto Orellana and Waleska Ramos-Orellana.

As a Latin Grammy-nominated singer, Roberto spent 20 years as a traveling evangelical musician before the couple settled down to plant a Hispanic church in Lakeland. While most services are in Spanish (with a translator), Friday services are held entirely in English.

With the support of the Church Multiplication Network, Roberto and Waleska have established 41 ministries within the church. One of their biggest missions is to help the homeless, working with a local Hope Counseling Center to provide meals, baths, and clothes twice a month. By connecting with other ministries, Casa de Amor y Fe is also able to provide free food after some services, giving away over 450 chickens and turkeys during the holidays.

The church also has a program called Explosive Evangelism, a type of street ministry that directly helps immigrants with free food, clothing, and haircuts. Outreaches are accompanied by live audio worship and clowns entertaining kids. Recently, the Lakeland police force partnered with Casa de Amor y Fe by donating toys.



PASTOR BATMAN SCULPTS IN SNOW

BY ROBERT E. MIMS

On a snowy Saturday morning in January, Alan Wolfard, pastor of Bloomfield Assembly in New Mexico, went outside with his 7-year-old daughter, Ellyana, and 4-year-old son, Kai, to build a snowman. Kai asked for a Batman snow creation.

With the help of his family, Wolfard turned three hours of work packing and carving an 8-foot-high mound of snow into a glistening, icy sculpture. Word-of-mouth from passersby spread the news quickly. KRQE News in Albuquerque dispatched a camera crew, which telecast images from the lawn. The story of "Pastor Batman" went viral on social media.

In his nearly 20 years at Bloomfield Assembly Wolfard, his wife Sheila, and ministry staff have had a heart for serving in the community. That commitment has included providing teachers, bus drivers, janitors, cafeteria workers, and other staff with welcome-back-to-school gift bags. Bloomfield Assembly also has supplied new

shoes and socks to hundreds of needy students and donated time to help spruce up campus properties. Additionally, Wolfard has volunteered his artistic talents to design, paint, and build sets for local high school theater productions.

Wolfard's frozen, bigger-than-life tribute to Batman also attracted the attention of the Bloomfield Police Department, which gave its official certificate of appreciation "for his community spirit and crime fighting prowess."

As the snowstorms continued, so did Wolfard's sculptures, including Ellyana's request for Wonder Woman. More recently, Clifford the Big Red Dog appeared.

Community goodwill aside, Bloomfield Assembly, which had averaged about 150 worshippers on Sundays, experienced a swell in attendance in the wake of the snow art phenomenon.

Sharon became pregnant. However, she later miscarried. Despite Sharon's disappointment, her doctor found encouragement that she had been able to conceive and that tests showed her ovaries looked normal again.

Another pregnancy occurred, but then another miscarriage. Sharon found it difficult to remain positive. At church, Sharon cried out at the altar about her hurt. Andy also wondered whether to risk another pregnancy. But after pouring out her heart to the Lord, Sharon felt peace and told Andy, "If I give up now, I'll be calling God a liar."

In August 2013, Sharon, then almost 41, became pregnant a third time. The Knolls prayed daily for a healthy child.

As the due date approached, Sharon's doctor ordered an ultrasound. The

examination revealed the umbilical cord wrapped around the baby's neck, not once, but three times. Sharon underwent an emergency Caesarean section.

Hannah is now a healthy 4-year-old girl, whom doctors describe as a miracle.

Cheyenne loves having a sister. In spite of their age difference, the girls share a special bond of divine intervention. Cheyenne was born with high levels of marijuana in her system due to her birth mother's drug use. Although she briefly went through withdrawal, she didn't show any long-term complications.

Sharon says Hannah's birth quieted doubters and encouraged those weary praying for her. She marvels at how God used the entire process to bring about redemption from her painful past.

COH RESPONDS TO HISTORIC FLOODING

BY JESSICA BLAKE

Convoy of Hope's U.S. Disaster Services Team responded to historic flooding in the Midwest over the weekend. Convoy, the Assemblies of God partner in compassion ministry, sent two truckloads of water to Nebraska on Saturday, March 16, and two more truckloads on Monday.

More than 150,000 pounds of bottled water will be distributed in multiple communities throughout Nebraska. Fresh drinking water continues to be the number-one need due to compromised waters systems.

The severe flooding in Nebraska and surrounding areas is partially due to the "bomb cyclone" that moved through

the Midwest. Heavy rains, snowmelt, and ice jams in the river systems have all contributed to the severity of the flooding. The Convoy of Hope Disaster Services team is coordinating with churches and emergency management officials on how to best coordinate relief.

"Unfortunately, we cannot predict when a disaster will hit," says Jeff Nene, Convoy of Hope's national spokesperson, "but we are prepared to respond and fulfill immediate needs when possible — even when it stretches our team and resources."

To follow Convoy's response, visit convoyofhope.org.