



## THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

Alice Reynolds Flower (1890-1991) is a shining example of motherhood. Known as "Mother Flower," she lived a godly example in front of her six children.

In 1952, Flower wrote about Hannah, the mother of Samuel in the Old Testament. As a young boy, Samuel went to live with Eli the high priest. The Bible says, "Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year . . ." (1 Samuel 2:19).

Flower said the business of coat-making did not end with Hannah — mothers are still called upon to sew spiritual coats for their children. The first coat is a "coat of prayer" followed by modeling "coats of consistent living," such as beginning each morning with

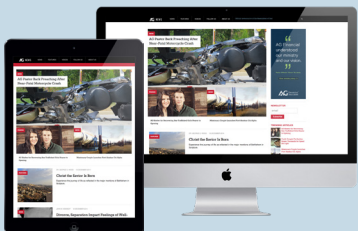
God's Word and prayer.

The "coat of discipline" is also essential. She shared that, "No home is beautiful or happy without obedience, respect, honesty and cooperation." One more coat that is essential is "understanding love."

Flower's admonition is for mothers to pray daily and diligently for their children, live a consistent Christian life, study the Word of God, offer guidance and training, and hem all of this in love and understanding.

Read more in "The Business of Coat-Making" on pages 3-4, 22 of the May 11, 1952, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at [s2.ag.org/may111952](http://s2.ag.org/may111952).

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SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2019

# AG NEWS

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



**A SINGLE-MINDED  
PURPOSE**

**DISPLACED MOM GETS  
EASTER SURPRISE**

**RELUCTANT HOMETOWN  
CALLING EMBRACED**

**EMBARKING ON A  
SPIRITUAL SURGE**



## A SINGLE-MINDED PURPOSE

BY ERIC TIAN SAY

Tamara De Los Santos was far from flourishing after she lost her job, vehicle, and custody of her children due to drug addiction.

After she completed a drug rehabilitation program, the 32-year-old single mother from Hobbs, New Mexico, was reunited with her 9-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter. She then heard about Flourish Single Mom Care, which equips churches to minister to single mothers and their children.

"I didn't know anyone even cared about people like us," De Los Santos says. "As soon as I entered the building I began to feel beautiful and accepted. These are things I hadn't felt in years."

De Los Santos says Flourish helped her to connect with other single moms and to hear their struggles. She felt encouraged after realizing many others struggled as she did.

"As a single mom, it's common to be rejected or judged by others," De Los Santos says. "Flourish made me realize that my God is a forgiving God and He 2

hasn't rejected me."

In 2015, Maribel Miller and her husband, Carl, who are U.S. missionaries with Missionary Church Planters & Developers, launched the Springfield, Missouri-based Flourish Single Mom Care.

Stan L. Welch, executive secretary and missions director of the Assemblies of God Southern Missouri District, says Flourish has been a blessing to many.

"Flourish is meeting one of the greatest needs today," Welch says.

The Millers' work reaching out to single mothers is an offshoot of a ministry they had to street children of Mexico City when they served as Assemblies Of God world missionaries.

"We realized that to help street kids, we also had to care for their parents, because 99 percent of these children came from fatherless homes," says Miller, 48.

There are 10 million single mother-led families in the U.S., according to the U.S Census Bureau. Roughly two-thirds

But what makes the response to Micah's love and caring at the school even more impacting is that he is not highly verbal. Sentences are typically short and at times cryptic — sometimes only having meaning to himself and perhaps family members. However, that doesn't stop his love for others from beaming through. Teachers and students have no problems interpreting his actions, facial expressions, and innocent joy in his eyes as nothing short of expressions of unconditional love.

Even though he's not verbally proficient, Micah has become well known for cheering from the sidelines for the school teams and giving high-fives wherever he goes — including at prom.

"He doesn't have the inhibitions that typical 18-year-olds have," Joe explains. "He has no cares or worries, he feels no peer pressure. He loves others and put others before himself — he's always just who he is. This story is one of how love overcomes so many obstacles and speaks louder than words."

However, having ASD means that Micah can react to things such as noise, crowds, surprises, and even attention, causing him to seek solitude to reduce

the "sensory input" he's receiving. When Micah was announced as king, everyone cheered and the spotlight was on him — friends stepped up and stepped in for the king-queen dance.

Joe, a U.S. missionary with Intercultural Ministries, and his wife, Jen, the co-founders of Ability Tree — a multisite ministry geared toward meeting the needs of families with children with autism and other disabilities — note that God has been working in Micah's life this past year, beginning with a first-time trip to church camp.

"Since camp, Micah has grown in his relationships with his peers in youth group and has become a regular part of Life group on Wednesday and Sunday nights," Joe says.

Megan, who mentions that Micah can often be seen praying for people at the altar at the conclusion of services, says that he has helped her grow as a person. "I would just encourage people to be intentional about creating relationships with the people around them, whoever they are — don't make judgements about people, just get to know them."

Micah wholeheartedly agrees — high-five!

### 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."





## RELUCTANT HOMETOWN CALLING EMBRACED

BY GINGER KOLBABA

Great Bend, a city of less than 16,000 in the center of Kansas, has a rehabilitation home for sex-trafficked victims, drug and alcohol addicts, and others who struggle with trauma or difficult issues.

"Central Kansas has the same issues as big cities, just on a smaller scale," Kimberly Kay Becker says. A native of Great Bend and a victim of sexual, physical, and mental abuse herself, Becker had struggled with the consequences, suffering from an eating disorder for 17 years, a struggle that nearly took her life.

Becker made First Assembly of God in Great Bend her home church in 2010. After she became an ordained AG minister, she felt God saying her mission field would be her hometown.

"I didn't want to stay in Great Bend!" recalls Becker, 50. "These people knew my past." But God impressed upon her that because everyone knew about her

past troubles, her ministry would be more impactful.

Initially she became director of a soup kitchen and shelter, located in an old, large, three-story school. In 2013, she established the Central Kansas Dream Center.

Today the Central Kansas Dream Center has six full-time employees. It serves more than 400 people a week through a number of faith-based ministries, including a women and children's shelter; a nine-month, intensive in-house discipleship program; a yearlong residential treatment program for trafficking victims; a program to help teens who have aged out of foster care; a soup kitchen; and Kingdom Kloset, a boutique that provides clothing, linens, and household items. The Dream Center is continuing to grow, with remodeling on the third floor to create a medical clinic and more housing facilities nearly finished.

## EMBARKING ON A SPIRITUAL SURGE

BY IAN RICHARDSON

Journey Church in Rapid City, South Dakota, has launched an evangelism campaign to reach the city's neighborhoods and neediest areas. Through "Rapid City Surge," pastor James D. Moore is encouraging the church's attendees to get to know their immediate vicinities, pray over them, and evangelize block by block.

"Begin baking cookies and take them to your neighbors," Moore advises. "Have a garage sale. Get to know your neighbors and pray for them."

Moore sees parallels between this evangelism strategy and his previous work in the military. Before entering the ministry, he spent 10 years working as a special agent with the Army Criminal Investigation Command and as a bodyguard at the Pentagon. He patterned the evangelistic surge after the Iraq War "surge" campaign that set up substations where smaller military units built relationships in neighborhoods.

Journey Church has about 200 adherents who live throughout the city. Moore says he has encouraged churchgoers to "stake out their substations" by writing down names of people to pray for and connect with. In April, the church held its first call to prayer on Facebook Live, where attendees prayed for their neighbors from their living rooms.

The pastor also gained a perspective of the city by spending three years as a police crime scene investigator.

## RESPONDING TO CULTURAL SHIFTS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Michael L. Robertson, 39, has led The Church of New Beginnings in Storm Lake, Iowa, for two years. It's his first senior pastorate, and he is determined that the church keep up with changing demographics.

While predominantly white residents lived there two decades ago, the growing community of 10,770 now has a majority Hispanic population. Hundreds of Latinos from Central and South America have moved to Storm Lake for jobs at a Tyson Foods hog slaughterhouse, meatpacking plant, and turkey processing facility.

"As culture changes, we must change, too," Robertson says. "We must intentionally be multiethnic."

A baby dedication of infant Kyrin Chanthavysouk had been scheduled for the March 10 service, but a two-inch layer of ice forced cancellation. Instead, Robertson made a home visit where relatives had gathered for the occasion. It marked the first time Robertson consecrated a child to the Lord.

Kyrin's father, Cola, started attending The Church of New Beginnings last September at the invitation of his in-laws. He immediately bonded with Robertson, in part because of the similarities of their families. Chanthavysouk, the son of Laotian and Thai refugees, spent years wandering spiritually, including time as a Buddhist and surviving a suicide attempt before committing his life to the Lord.



## MICAH BUTLER: AN UNIMPOSING KING, AN UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Standing 5-foot-5 and tipping the scales at around 110 pounds, senior Micah Butler is not an imposing figure. He's not athletically built or gifted. He doesn't have movie-star good looks or the telltale bankroll that might otherwise draw people into his circle. And forget about being a smooth or commanding communicator. In other words, at first glance, Micah Butler doesn't seem to have whatever it is that makes a high school student popular and admired.

Instead, Micah has autism spectrum disorder (ASD). He is cognitively impaired, has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), struggles to communicate complete thoughts, and has a number of physical coordination challenges that would seem to make him easy to dismiss — easier to forget.

Just don't tell that to his fellow 2019 classmates at Siloam Springs High School. These Arkansas seniors have a vastly different opinion when it comes to Micah Butler. On April 13, the class elected Micah to be its prom king. To

them, Micah is anything but forgettable. Although he may not be a star athlete or gifted student, he epitomizes what many hope one day to be.

"Micah loves God and loves his neighbor better than pretty much anybody I know," says Joe Butler, Micah's father. "He loves his classmates and cares for them and they loved him back by giving him this honor."

"He truly loves everyone, regardless of who they are or their outward appearance," agrees Megan Jackson, a junior and Micah's prom date. "He's unapologetically himself. He doesn't care about what others' opinions are, and that's refreshing."

Megan, who is on The Assembly's worship team, where the Butlers also attend, says she has gotten to know Micah over the past three years and he's become one of her best friends.

"I don't see him as someone who has disabilities," she says. "He simply makes the most of his life from where he is — always encouraging other people and always making them smile." *(Cont. on page 7)*

of single moms do not actively attend church. Less than 1 percent of the 300,000 evangelical churches nationwide have some official form of outreach to single moms. The Flourish ministry is based on James 1:27, which gives the imperative to care for widows in distress.

"Single moms are the modern-day widows," Miller says. "Flourish serves widows, single moms, divorced moms, women who are separated, teen single moms, grandmothers who are raising their grandchildren alone, mothers whose husbands are incarcerated or have been deported, and military single moms whose husbands are deployed."

The ministry offers a four-hour training in English or Spanish for churches, as

well as follow-up support, resources, and networking with agencies.

When a single mom attends a Flourish group, she can expect a once-a-month gathering with a full meal for her and her children, Bible teachings, fun activities for youth, spiritual growth, social parenting guidance, financial stewardship training, and emotional health support.

There are also multiple special events, including the annual Flourish Single Mom's Christmas Banquet, back-to-school drives, spa days for the single mothers to relax and be pampered, and movie nights. Flourish is expanding beyond the Midwest to other parts of the country as well as overseas.

## DISPLACED MOM GETS EASTER SURPRISE

BY IAN RICHARDSON

On April 3, Rose Olivero and her family lost everything when their apartment complex in Schenectady, New York, caught fire.

"It was the first time that I really felt just desperate," says Olivero, a 33-year-old single mother who works two jobs. Less than three weeks later, on Easter, the church Olivero attends presented her with an unexpected blessing: a check for \$10,000. The congregation of Redemption Church in Schenectady gave money to help the family cover expenses.

Lead pastor Jason L. Cooper announced the need and the congregation of 150 responded immediately with a \$5,000 offering. People approached him after the service

to say they also wanted to donate. He decided to allow another week to see how much more would come in.

On Easter morning, he called Olivero onto the stage in the middle of the service and handed her the check. Olivero began attending Redemption Church about a month before the fire. She says she and her five kids, who range in age from 3 to 10 years old, quickly felt at home there. Olivero had recently rededicated her life to Christ.

The Sunday after Easter, Olivero's 3-year-old twins were dedicated at the church. Olivero's family moved into a new apartment May 3. She says church members have continued to help her by donating clothes and supplies.