

# THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

Prominent Chinese scholar Wang Yun Wu (1888-1979) abandoned atheism in 1924 after he witnessed the miraculous healing of his sister's eyesight. His story was recounted by W. W. Simpson (1869-1961), pioneer Assemblies of God missionary to China.

Wang's sister, Mrs. Ching attended a series of services where many were healed or baptized in the Holy Spirit. Not only was she baptized in the Holy Spirit, but God also corrected her eyesight! For 10 years she had been dependent upon her eyeglasses for daily life and for her writing duties at a large publishing house where her brother, Wang, served as editor-in-chief.

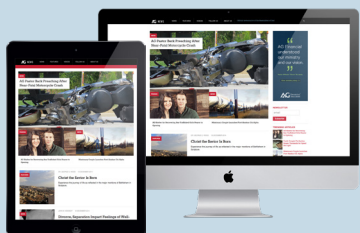
Wang, who was reared a strict Confucianist, and had studied many Western philosophies, had no explanation for his sister's healing. Wang began the day a Confucian atheist and ended the day convinced of the deity of Christ. Wang went on to become a noted scholar who opposed the communists during the Chinese



revolution, later serving as vice premier of the Republic of China (Taiwan) from 1958 to 1963.

Find a link to W. W. Simpson's entire article, "A Confucian Atheist Convinced of the Deity of Christ," from the May 2, 1931, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* in the full version of this story online at [www.news.ag.org](http://www.news.ag.org).

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SUNDAY, MAY 5 2018

# AG<sup>®</sup> NEWS

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

**SMALL CHURCH  
PUNDIT KARL  
VATERS**

**AG ADHERENTS  
KILLED IN  
BURKINA FASO**

**FOCUSING ON JESUS  
INSTEAD OF DRUGS**

**EASTER RELAUNCH  
BOOSTS CHURCH**



## SMALL CHURCH PUNDIT KARL VATERS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

In his 26 years at Cornerstone Christian Fellowship in Fountain Valley, California, Karl A. Vaters has always felt God calling him to shepherd the relatively small church, where the regular crowd numbers 180.

Early on, Vaters, 59, searched for materials that could help him do well in that role. He couldn't find any. He began collecting tidbits of information and sharing it with his congregants and other small church pastors on a website. NewSmallChurch.com reassures, connects, and equips small church ministry leaders. He ended up writing *The Grasshopper Myth*, which resonated with small church pastors around the country. Vaters started a blog, Pivot, which gained traction immediately and found a home at the *Christianity Today* website.

His extensive writings have made Vaters, a third-generation AG pastor, a small church expert. That takes in a lot of churchgoers.

"Ninety percent of the churches in

the world are under 200," Vaters says. "Fully half the Christians in the world attend a small church. Small churches have always been and will always be the most common, most resilient, and most adaptable expression of the body of Christ."

While scads of church growth seminars in the past generation have minimized or even disdained the relevance of the small church, it's a term Vaters embraces as a valuable contributor to the kingdom of God.

"If we ignore or under resource small churches, we're going against the apostle Paul's body analogy," Vaters declares. "The hand telling the foot, *I don't need you*, is a dangerous statement."

Some small church leaders have gotten a complex in the shadows of megachurches that stress the importance of expected numerical increase. Church growth seminars, often led by large church pastors, have left small church pastors

## AFRICA KIDS WELCOMED IN KENTUCKY

BY ONEYA OKUWOBİ

Last October, a teacher from the local public school visited Shively Worship Center in Louisville, Kentucky, and brought a group of 35 children who lived nearby. Pastor Beth A. Arp and associate pastor Tronda Graham sprang into action, creating both a Thursday evening and a Sunday morning program for the children who have immigrated from the Congo, Uganda, and Tanzania.

On Thursdays, the children eat dinner at the church and participate in a lesson afterward. Various women who attend the church help buy and prepare the food.

Graham, who is African-American, created and leads a program for the 9- to 16-year-old girls: POWER. Its mission is to teach the core values of positivity, originality, wholeness, excellence, and respect. The foundational Scripture is Acts 1:8, focusing on making witnesses.

"They can go back into their sphere of influence knowing that they have

an identity and it comes from Christ, despite what other people have said to them," Graham says.

Because they are African immigrants, some of the children have been bullied at school.

"They just want someplace that they can feel loved and they belong," Arp says. This care and attention is reaping positive benefits."

Graham notes that some of the African children have long been expected to act like adults because they are responsible to care for younger siblings.

"When they come here, they're so excited to be children, to be able to have fun," Graham says.

"Immigrants are in our own backyard and our churches need to be a place of refuge," Arp says. "Children are looking for safe places; they are looking for people who are going to love them. Our churches need to be that sanctuary."

### 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."





## FOCUSING ON JESUS INSTEAD OF DRUGS

BY GINGER KOLBABA

Brandon McNair rarely felt unsafe growing up on a dead-end street surrounded by Section 8 apartments in Aurora, Illinois. However, looking back, McNair, 32, recognizes how police chasing teens down streets, drive-by shootings, and living next door to a Latino King gang leader made life more challenging for him than the average youth.

At 16, he began selling both cocaine and marijuana for the Latin Kings. At 19, McNair — while a college student — transported drugs from Chicago to sell in Wisconsin and Minnesota. McNair began working an additional full-time job to support his drug addiction, which cost \$1,000 to \$1,500 a week.

McNair's girlfriend, Angie, became pregnant with their daughter, Gia, when they both were 21. McNair hid his addiction from Angie, who deployed overseas with the U.S. Army for a year. Another two years passed before McNair sought help through a multitude of drug rehabilitation centers. He repeatedly relapsed.

By the time their son, Kayden,

was born, 28-year-old Angie had lost patience with her now-husband. After another relapse, Brandon found himself in a face-to-face intervention with Chicago Teen Challenge leader Juan Martinez and several pastors from Calvary Español, an AG congregation in Naperville. Brandon agreed to admit himself to a 14-month Teen Challenge rehabilitation program.

A strict daily schedule included work details such as landscaping, painting, and cleaning Soldier Field as well as Chicago Speedway.

Today, Brandon has been sober for almost three years and works as director of outreach ministries at Calvary Español. Brandon recently graduated from the AG Illinois School of Ministry and now operates a pantry that feeds and clothes the homeless. He also works with Mutual Ground, helping outfit at-risk women with professional attire for interviews.

Additionally, Brandon helps operate a Northern Illinois Food Bank mobile pantry to feed children. He and his wife also run a couples counseling ministry.

## EASTER RELAUNCH BOOSTS CHURCH

BY REBECCA BURTRAM

This Easter, over 200 people attended the first official service of the relaunched Station Church, pastored by Joel and Brittany Bolduc in Hornell, New York. The Bolducs came to Hornell in 2016 to pastor New Life Church. The congregation of 35 dwindled to 12 — half from his family. However, God gave Joel peace about allowing the church to die.

First Assembly North Little Rock in Arkansas is providing oversight to the New York congregation due to a series of divine meetings.

One evening a woman came to the Bolducs' home and handed them a gift of \$2,500. A week later a friend gave them an additional \$1,500. The two gifts equaled the exact amount the couple needed to attend General Council that year, where Joel met First Assembly NLR pastor Rod Loy at an event for young pastors. This meeting opened the door for the Bolducs to be mentored and supported during a time when they had felt detached and alone.

Station Church functions as a campus of First NLR, receiving monthly funds for outreach and leadership team professional development through meetings and shared sermons.

"Investing in the next generation is a core value for me," Loy says. "Partnering with smaller churches is something that really resonates with our board and leadership team."

## YOUTH PASTOR'S WALK OF FAITH

MARY J. YERKES

Jaydee Anderson has been youth pastor at Faith Assembly Crossville in Tennessee for 11 years, initially using a wheelchair due to a series of strokes. Doctors told her she never would walk again.

Three tumors on her spine further compromised her health and mobility. She also has battled acute leukemia for many years.

In 2015, while accompanying students to the Tennessee Youth Camp, Anderson, 60, had a powerful encounter with God. A woman, whom she had never met, declared, "The Lord told me you have two secret desires, and He is going to fulfill them." Immediately afterward, a man, another stranger, came up and said, "All you have to do is stand."

"I had never told anybody my secret desires," says Anderson. "The first was to walk, and the second was to dance before the Lord."

In faith, she decided to stand. She began to sway back and forth in time to the music, in her own way, dancing. Back home later, Anderson sensed the Lord telling her if she took the first step, He would carry her the rest of the way.

Before long, she transitioned from a walker to a cane. Over time, she exchanged her cane for a rollator, a walker with wheels. Eventually, Anderson walked four miles a day. God also has healed her from diabetes. Her doctor says there is no further need for insulin.



## ACTS OF GOD COME AFTER HURRICANE

BY DEANN ALFORD

After Hurricane Harvey lifted a chunk of the roof from Primera Asamblea De Dios in Corpus Christi, Texas, pastor Robert Sáenz tallied up a repair estimate at \$92,000. Meanwhile, with a tarp covering the gaping hole, he and congregants put out buckets to catch the leaks elsewhere in the building after the August 2017 storm.

Fundraising letters Sáenz wrote raised about half that amount. But by November, when Norman Knoodle, the U.S. MAPS field missionary for Texas visited the church, he recognized damage beyond Sáenz's layman's assessment.

"I didn't know half of what I needed until Knoodle got there," says Sáenz.

The entire soaked second floor needed to be razed. Mold plagued the whole building, which meant the wallboard needed to be ripped out. Even the sanctuary had to be gutted. Knoodle's educated eye set the timeline for repairs on the uninsured structure at two years. The repair estimate: \$1.5 million — more than 15 times over what Sáenz expected — an amount well beyond the financial

means of the congregation of 65.

But immediately the Lord began to provide. U.S. MAPS and Convoy of Hope's Day of Outreach donated supplies, workers, and money to Primera Asamblea, which is part of the Texas Gulf Hispanic District.

Primera Asamblea has its new roof. Missions teams from AG churches across the U.S. have converged on the church to help demolish the second floor, rip out the ruined interiors, and restore and rebuild the campus. U.S. MAPS crews — including electricians, plumbers, carpenters, and painters — stayed in RVs and the gym while they gutted and restored the sanctuary and renovated the foyer, kitchen, and restrooms, providing some \$750,000 in labor. Sáenz says the church needs another \$30,000 to finish.

Sáenz has shared wallboard, insulation, and roofing materials with other storm-battered churches.

"It's overwhelming how the body of Christ is coming together because of Harvey," Sáenz says. "God put the right people, the key people on my path to help."

flummoxed because most of the principles taught aren't applicable to them. Vaters suggests small church pastors can learn the most by conversing with those leading similarly sized congregations. Rather than emphasizing the need to grow larger, small church pastors are better off focusing on making whatever size congregation they oversee healthy, according to Vaters.

Vaters believes some people worship and minister best in a small church environment because they prefer the intimacy of a smaller group setting where they can know everyone else and likewise be known. Vaters has become an encourager to a multitude of small church pastors who toil in the ministry trenches without many or any accolades.

"Every denomination is a denomination of an overwhelming number of small churches and just a handful of big ones," Vaters observes. The AG is typical. Around one-third of the Fellowship's congregations have under 50 regular attendees. About 57 percent are less than 100 and approximately three in four average below 200 weekly worshippers.

Yet Vaters believes Pentecostal churches have an advantage over others.

"Understanding the empowerment of the Holy Spirit makes the priesthood of all believers a great benefit," says Vaters, who has been an ordained AG minister since 1983. "A huge part of what makes a denomination healthy and effective is participation of the entire body."

## AG ADHERENTS KILLED IN BURKINA FASO

BY DOUG CLAY

At noon on April 28, a gunman arrived at an AG church in northern Burkina Faso. Within a matter of minutes, six people had lost their lives, including pastor Peter Ouedraogo. This follows an equally horrific attack on a Pentecostal church and Catholic churches on Easter in Sri Lanka.

Please prayer for the AG of Burkina Faso to experience "the peace which passes understanding" in the coming days. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give them a sense of His close presence as they grieve and that they will be shining examples of the love of Christ in the coming days.

Pray for the safety of churches

throughout the world as violence against places of worship continues to escalate. Pray that acts of terror would be thwarted and that God will be glorified through His Church.

Pray for the salvation of those seeking evil against the Church, that God would turn their hearts to Him and use them to proclaim the gospel.

Pray that a great spiritual awakening will sweep across the globe.

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).*