



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

Walter J. Higgins (1884-1960) was a charter member of the Assemblies of God. When the Hot Springs, Arkansas, convention was held in April 1914, he attended as a pastor from Essex, Missouri.

Higgins helped establish 13 churches in Missouri, one of them being in Canalou. He reported that 100 souls were converted during the time he ministered there, although he endured a whipping for the sake of the gospel.

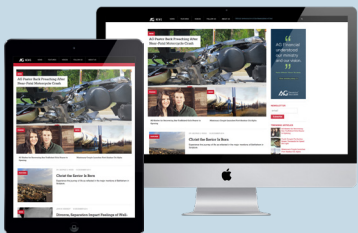
After leaving Canalou, Higgins evangelized and pastored churches in 18 states. In Alton, Illinois, Higgins recalls the time a 3-year-old child was sick and died with a doctor present. The family asked Higgins to come

and pray. Higgins said that after he prayed, the child "opened its eyes and coughed, and the doctor said he had never seen a person survive after being dead." The doctor attributed it to prayer.

In an interview in the *Pentecostal Evangel*, Higgins told of God's miraculous healing power — the blind receiving sight, diseases cured, the deaf hearing, and demons cast out as well as the time God provided food through a locked door for his family.


Read the article, "Recollections of a Pioneer Pentecostal Preacher," on pages 6-7 of the May 1, 1943, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/may11943.

Read the full versions of these stories on news.ag.org



NEWS FOR, ABOUT, AND FROM
THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

CONNECT WITH US ON

 FACEBOOK  TWITTER

 RSS AND OUR WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER

VISIT [NEWS.AG.ORG](http://news.ag.org) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2018

AG | NEWS

A COLLECTION OF THIS WEEK'S STORIES FROM NEWS.AG.ORG

CALLED BEFORE THE COURT

GOD'S TIMING IS THE BEST TIMING

REVIVAL ONE BLOCK AT A TIME

VOLUNTEERS MEET FOOD NEEDS





CALLED BEFORE THE COURT

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

An attorney raised in the Assemblies of God is at the forefront of the most anticipated free speech case before the U.S. Supreme Court this year.

Kristen K. Waggoner argued the appeal in *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* before the high court. A decision is expected near the end of the court's term next month.

Waggoner 45, is senior vice president of the U.S. legal division of Alliance Defending Freedom. She is the daughter of La Vonne and Clint M. Behrends, superintendent of Cedar Park Christian Schools, part of Cedar Park AG in Bothell, Washington.

"The best gift my parents gave me was raising me in an environment where the biblical principles taught at home were also taught in my Assemblies of God school and church," Waggoner says.

Waggoner had a life-changing experience at an AG summer camp as a 13-year-old girl. At the camp, Waggoner sensed a calling from God to defend religious freedom. She wrote down the impressions, and keeps them framed in her bedroom.

Waggoner went on to attend

Northwest University and Regent University School of Law. She joined ADF full time in 2013 and oversees all the organization's U.S. legal and communications work.

Her highest profile case to date is defending baker Jack C. Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood, Colorado.

"I don't create custom designs for events or messages that conflict with my conscience," Phillips says.

Before the U.S. Supreme Court last December, Waggoner provided poised and reasoned responses to questions from combative liberal justices. Some justices opined that the baker's refusal would create a hardship for the gay couple who couldn't find anyone else to accommodate them.

Nevertheless, Waggoner is optimistic for a favorable ruling.

The key to the outcome could be Justice Anthony Kennedy, who has written every major gay rights ruling issued by the U.S. Supreme Court. Kennedy seemed concerned that the baker's convictions had been ignored in the debate.

"It seems to me that the state in its position here has been neither tolerant

VOLUNTEERS MEET FOOD NEEDS

BY DEAN MERRILL

Plateau Valley AG in Collbran, Colorado, has just one staff pastor. Sunday morning attendance runs in the 40s. The entire annual church budget is less than \$70,000.

Yet in this remote ranching town, Pastor Joshua Yaffe and at least 20 volunteers are busy every Friday afternoon handing out canned goods, fresh produce, breads, meats, and other items to long lines of needy people. Some recipients are elderly, some are physically handicapped, some are single moms with kids in tow, some are those without transportation to get to the next-closest food bank, 30 miles away.

And before getting groceries, the church serves a hot meal for everyone. The giveaway is preceded by live worship and a devotional time.

"Jesus was all about meeting people's needs, spiritually but also physically," says Yaffe.

The food giveaway starts at 4 p.m., with people waiting for the church doors to open. Between 35 and 40



boxes of food are disbursed each Friday, with no questions asked, no forms to fill out, no requirements to show proof of need. The church proceeds, even though some local businesspeople complain that the distribution attracts "undesirables."

"Who are we to judge whether someone is hungry or not?" asks deacon Ken Roberts. "If someone is scamming us, that's up to God."

Over the course of 2017, the church spent 30 percent of its budget on this ministry, dispensing more than 200,000 pounds of food to 330 individuals, plus 140 families. Plateau Valley AG also runs an after-school program, which includes sending a food pack home with the children.

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."



GOD'S TIMING IS THE BEST TIMING

BY DAN VAN VEEN

When God called Bob and Jennifer Strygulec to volunteer with the Fenton, Michigan, Freedom Center church's food pantry and baby closet ministries about 10 years ago, it was clearly a great ministry for meeting needs of those struggling to make ends meet.

But the Strygulecs felt that God had something more for the ministry — God even gave them a vision for it. However, even though they knew what God wanted, they had to come to grips with *when* He wanted them to start doing it.

Bob says he and Jennifer waited on God's direction and provision for seven years. As they prayerfully waited, they became convinced that God wanted the center to focus on developing relationships and providing people with life skills. Bob also became a minister, receiving his AG credentials in 2016.

Finally, in September 2016, the couple quit their jobs and entered full-time ministry, launching the Center of Hope.

It was a choppy first year, but in January 2017, God spoke — not to the Strygulecs, but to Dena Wiegand, the wife of The Freedom Center's senior pastor, Jim Wiegand. She believed that

God wanted the church to give — not sell — the Strygulecs the church's office building. Jim agreed. The building was a converted three-bedroom ranch-style home.

The patience and faith of the Strygulecs and the willingness of the church to empower them has resulted in God's will coming to pass in His timing.

The gifting of the property enabled the Strygulecs to have the resources to turn the property into the new Center of Hope home — a separate 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization that offers multiple life resources and relationship opportunities — the heartbeat of what God desired for the ministry.

Resources include a literacy learning center, child passenger safety certified technicians, pregnancy resource center, emergency assistance, counseling room, crisis pregnancy center, life skills classes, job skills mentoring, and life groups, not to mention a new 1,500-square-foot food pantry — the largest free choice food pantry in the county.

The ministry has grown to include 44 partnerships with the community and about 50 people from four different churches volunteering to staff it.

PRAYER WATCH 24 HOURS A DAY

BY GUYLA ARMSTRONG

Brian D. Alarid, pastor of Passion Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, knew there had to be a way to encourage pastors and congregants to participate in a sustainable model of 24/7 prayer without becoming burned out.

"The command in Scripture is clear — pray without ceasing," says Alarid. "The Early Church modeled 24/7 prayer. They all joined together constantly in prayer."

In September 2016, Alarid reached out to a handful of pastors in Albuquerque to gather for prayer. More than 200 pastors and leaders responded, birthing New Mexico Prays. There are now 92 churches in 26 cities covering the Land of Enchantment 24/7 in prayer.

"I have been in Albuquerque for 38 years and I've never seen pastors come together for anything like this," says New Mexico Ministry Network Superintendent Micheal Dickenson. "It is changing the climate."

Alarid now has his sights set on a national awakening. Alarid helped organize America Prays in October 2017 in Washington, D.C. Over 350 churches have adopted a monthly day of prayer. The organization is developing prayer networks in all 50 states, partnering with pastors at the city level, and providing prayer resources for Christians.

The goal is for 40,000 churches to be praying for spiritual awakening in the U.S.

CHURCH OBTAINS BARGAIN PROPERTY

BY ANA ELLIOTT

In 2015, Pastor Dan L. Ross of Fenton, Missouri, spent much of his free time asking the Lord for a larger building for the congregation he pastored. Ross wanted to outline a plan of growth for two campuses — one in Fenton and one in nearby Hillsboro. But he didn't have a location large enough to accommodate them.

Ross called Jack L. Walters, a friend who owned a 30,000-square foot building in High Ridge, Missouri, that primarily hosted Christian camps. Walters had a buyer willing to pay the appraised \$2.9 million price for the 77-acre property, but he sensed the Lord telling him to sell it to Ross instead.

Walters agreed to sell to Ross for a fraction of the appraised cost: \$670,000. A few days later, Ross received another call from Walters, who had learned he had an inoperable brain tumor.

Ross got to work utilizing the new property almost immediately. The church hosted a back-to-school event attended by over 1,200 during which 800 backpacks full of school supplies as well as 125 free haircuts were given away. Subsequently, camps have been hosted, plus relationships built with the local police, fire department, and chamber of commerce.

Today, New Hope Fellowship is firmly planted in High Ridge, Missouri, with more than enough room to continue to grow and blossom as a rural church.



REVIVAL ONE BLOCK AT A TIME

BY PETER K. JOHNSON

Planting an inner-city congregation was no cakewalk for Joey Furjanic, lead pastor of The Block Church and his wife, Lauren. They took a risk moving to Philadelphia in 2013. Previously, Furjanic enjoyed a fruitful ministry as a youth pastor overseeing nine locations for a large Illinois church. Yet he sensed God calling him back to the city of his birth.

The couple saved enough to survive for one year and leased a row house in South Philadelphia. The Furjanics discovered that the new rental payments would eat up their savings quicker than anticipated. Prayer and many calls yielded nine friends from five states who bunked with them at different times during the first year.

The next hurdle involved finding a location for launching the new plant. Eventually, The Block Church found rented space in a catering hall in Port Richmond, a blue-collar neighborhood four miles from the city center's historical district.

Although the Furjanics connected

with neighbors, none of them showed up for preview services. Tight street parking and infrequent Sunday public transportation overshadowed the official launch in September 2014. Furjanic and his team invited their own families and friends, expecting only 100 people.

When additional hundreds arrived from the community, hallelujahs prevailed.

From a nail-biting start, the ministry has expanded to three locations attracting 800 congregants at six Sunday worship services and a new plant in Dallas. So far, 764 people have come to faith in Jesus and 204 have been baptized. The church runs creative outreaches, such as block parties with bounce houses and free food, as well as theatrical productions.

The Block Church reflects a diverse congregation of various socio-economic, ethnic, racial, and age categories.

"We want to see revival in our city one block at a time," Furjanic says.

nor respectful of Mr. Phillips' religious beliefs," Kennedy remarked during the proceedings.

Waggoner says if the court rules against the 61-year-old Phillips it would be an unprecedented blow to religious liberty and free speech.

"Tolerance is a two-way street," Waggoner tells AG News. "If we want freedom for ourselves, then we have to protect freedom for those with whom we disagree."

If Phillips prevails in his case, Waggoner expects a potent cultural backlash. She anticipates that Phillips and ADF will be portrayed in the

media as gay bashers. Waggoner notes that Phillips has employed gays.

"The gravest offense to the First Amendment would be to compel a person who believes that marriage is sacred, to give voice to a different view of marriage and require them to celebrate that marriage," Waggoner told justices at the court.

Meanwhile, Waggoner's father is grateful that his daughter has followed her calling.

"She is truly operating in her gifts and living out her faith in her vocation," Behrends says. "The Assemblies of God formed who she is."

PERPETUATING PENTECOST, SUNDAY, MAY 20

BY AG NEWS STAFF

"Perpetuating Pentecost" is one of the key priorities that Doug Clay has identified for his tenure as general superintendent. This Pentecost Sunday comes with a special request from Clay.

"I encourage each Assemblies of God church to believe this Pentecost Sunday for the Holy Spirit to move powerfully in their community," says Clay.

In an effort to resource the local churches for Pentecost Sunday (May 20), the AG national office has produced multiple videos of first-person accounts of the Holy Spirit at work in churches, communities, and individual lives.

The videos feature captivating stories from seven Assemblies of God

ministers: Daniel De Leon, Wilfredo De Jesús, Beth Grant, Samuel Huddleston, Rob Ketterling, Rod Loy, and Terry Yancey. The same seven leaders share in additional videos how they were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Each of the 14 videos run from about a minute to as long as two and a half minutes. In addition, an eight-minute video, featuring Assistant General Superintendent Alton Garrison, clearly explains what the baptism in the Holy Spirit is all about.

Other free resources include an email header, a presentation slide, and a bulletin cover. The Pentecost Sunday resources are also available in Spanish. To download resources for free, see pentecostsunday.ag.org.