

AG NEWS

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THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY RUTHIS EDGERLY OBERG

Bernice Lee (1879-1958), was one of the many single women who played a vital role in spreading the gospel in the early days of the Assemblies of God. As a missionary, Lee served the lepers of India for nearly 30 years.

Born in Benson, Illinois, Lee graduated from high school and became a schoolteacher. When she heard the Pentecostal message in 1907, she immediately accepted it.

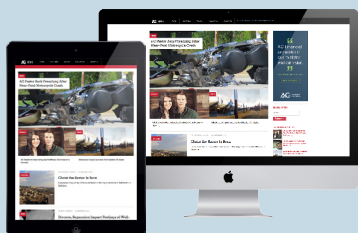
Lee left her school teaching position and became an evangelist after the infilling of the Spirit, but she felt a call to broader fields across the ocean. E. N. Bell (later the first general chairman of the Assemblies of God) ordained her

in 1910 as a missionary to North India. By 1913, she and another single lady, Edith Baugh, were providing leadership to a leper colony at Uska Bazar, India. In 1915, they founded another leper colony 140 miles away at Chupra.

In 1921, Lee joined the newly formed Assemblies of God as a fully appointed missionary and continued to serve in India until 1940. After returning to the U.S., she continued to write and support missions until her death in 1958.



Read Bernice Lee's article, "The Leper Work at Uska Bazar," on page 5 of the Nov. 23, 1929, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/nov231929.

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FROM FIGHTING TO FAITH-FILLED

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

Eleven years ago, Jimmy R. Phillips made a living the hard way — by fighting on the mixed martial arts circuit, using every inch and ounce of his 6-foot, 6-inch, 280-pound frame. Despite success at mixed martial arts, his marriage and life were falling apart.

“I was chasing that lifestyle rather than spending time with my wife,” Phillips says. “I was at bars, enjoying the notoriety — and alcohol and drugs.”

Phillips had survived a rough upbringing in New Mexico and Arizona, surrounded by hard living, anger, and fighting as a way of life. He excelled in the violent sport for seven years.

He trained three times a day and kept fighting, despite broken ribs, fingers, and toes. After a day of drinking alcohol that accompanied strife at the lake with his family, Phillips fell asleep at the wheel of the car while driving home. At 65 miles per hour, the vehicle ran into a mountainside, flipped more than 10

times, ejected Jimmy, and injured his wife, Andrea, and daughter.

“For the first time in my life I understood there was a God,” he says. “There was no reason we should have stayed alive.”

Soon after, Phillips took the family to Desert Springs Church in Chandler, Arizona. He surrendered his life to Jesus.

“I must have cried for two weeks straight,” Phillips says. “I felt all this love, and all this stuff lifted off me. I stopped drinking, smoking, and fighting in that moment. I almost didn’t know how to process it. Life was a lot happier than it had ever been.”

He and his son, Logan, were baptized on the same day together, as were Andrea and their daughter, Katherine. Andrea had struggled with many of the same addictions and anger issues as Jimmy. She had stayed married to Jimmy partly because of her commitment, but also because she was in survival mode.

ARSON SUSPECTED IN ARKANSAS CHURCH FIRE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Southside Assembly of God, a church of about 30 congregants, in Booneville, Arkansas, was burglarized and then evidently set on fire November 14, in what 80-year-old Pastor Manuel Mann is calling a total loss.

Booneville, a town of about 3,800, has been home to Southside AG since Mann founded it in 1983.

According to Mann, his wife, Betty, had just returned from the store when she noticed smoke coming from the church. She reported the fire and then hurried to move the car she had parked by the church.

“Just as she moved the car, the whole side of the church blew out, sending glass and debris everywhere. It just missed her,” says Manuel Mann. “I’m so thankful she managed to get out of harm’s way and that no one was harmed or killed.”

Police later informed Mann that three young men were arrested on Wednesday following the report of the fire. The young men had been reported

entering a vacant house — police investigated and found items stolen from Southside Assembly.

“I know that good will come out of this,” Mann says. “I’ve already had a



number of people come by with tears, telling me how the church had been a help to them and the community so many times.”

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.”



LISTENING IN "WITCH CITY"

BY ROBERT MIMS

In the self-proclaimed "Witch City" of Salem, Massachusetts, the Halloween season and the occult are marketing gold for opportunistic shop owners and serious neo-pagans alike.

But it's not just true witches and warlocks who are among the tens of thousands of costumed tourists trekking the town's Essex Street in October. So are adherents of Remix Church, an AG congregation pastored by Guy and Tana Miller. Remix Church is focused on caring outreach rather than confrontation.

"We welcome people, no matter what costume they have on," Tana says.

Remix Church's approach is to offer hot chocolate and coffee to chilled revelers, to engage in board games at tables, to freshen smartphones at a bank of charging stations, or just to engage in friendly conversation.

Remix, a congregation planted six years ago by Calvary Christian Church in Lynnfield, has a prime location for its gentle, yet effective outreach. It is attached to the Witch City Mall. Remix Church also is a mere 150 yards

away from Salem's Witch Museum. Consequently, the Millers acknowledge Salem can be a tough environment to share Christ, at least in traditional evangelical ways.

Despite its 17th century Puritan roots, the 43,100 residents of Salem today are hardly resolute heirs of that Christian faith legacy. There is indeed an aura of the dark arts over the area, especially before Halloween.

"Everything changes overnight in October," Guy says. "Then, we definitely are infused with all manner of witchcraft, psychic activity, tarot card readers, and just lots of 'different' kinds of people."

When the Millers arrived in Salem in 2012, the city had been without a lasting AG church for more than 40 years. The Millers have made it a point to get involved in Salem's civic associations that help Remix build bridges, respect, and friendships.

"We decided when we came here that we didn't want to be known for what we are 'against,' but to be known for what we love: God, people, and Salem," Guy says.

PROJECT RESCUE SPAIN EXPANDS

BY JONATHAN BARRATT

In 2010, Spain had the second-highest number of victims of human trafficking in the European Union, after Italy. Most victims of sex trafficking in Spain come from other countries.

Project Rescue, an Assemblies of God ministry to victims of human trafficking, has 13 affiliated ministry sites in eight countries, including Spain.

Fiona Bellshaw, wife of the Spain AG General Superintendent Juan Carlos Escobar, is the national director of Project Rescue Spain. She began outreach on the streets of Madrid, but shifted to the detention center, which made it easier to help victims of trafficking secure asylum.

In 2014, Project Rescue established its first Project Rescue home in Europe in Madrid. Trafficking survivors received medical care, counseling and other forms of therapy, language education, education scholarships to universities and trade schools, vocational training, and most importantly, introductions to Jesus.

Other churches leaders wanted similar ministries in their communities. As a result, two new Project Rescue ministries launched in the cities of Cordoba and Valladolid.

In 2017, two more ministry centers were launched in the province of Galicia and the city of Alicante. Fiona believes these new ministries can become locations to serve survivors with children.

CALLING ON ALL THE COMMUNITY

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Most everybody in Willmar, Minnesota, recognizes H. Paul McCullough. His contact with the public goes beyond his role as community outreach pastor at Willmar AG.

Although he has been on staff at the church for 29 years, for the past five years since he went part time, McCullough has acted as a "community chaplain" throughout Willmar. He wears multiple chaplain hats, most of them in a volunteer role, including the fire department, police department, and ambulance service.

Every Monday, McCullough strolls through the city's law enforcement center, distributing a one-page self-penned devotional on workers' desks. He provides grief counseling and comfort to housemates of deceased residents and their families, as well as to staff members.

During summers, McCullough spends Thursday nights at the KRA Speedway. He talks to the drivers and crews in the pits and delivers the invocation before races.

In one of his most unusual gigs, McCullough serves as a railroad chaplain, working with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and Canada Pacific Railway. He travels around the region when there is a train fatality involving a vehicle or pedestrian, offering condolences to the family of the deceased and attending the funeral service.



SISTERS STRONG AT DESTINY

BY CHRISTINE TEMPLE

Rosalinda Trujillo felt desperate when she stumbled upon Destiny Church. In many ways, she says it saved her life. She had just moved with her children to a condo in Rocklin, California, after the breakup of her 24-year marriage.

"I felt like I needed to worship and to talk to God," Trujillo says. She called Destiny, just a seven-minute drive from her house, and learned about a Bible study and worship going on that night.

"Right when I sat down, the leader started talking about being single, meeting men in the world, and how they can be deceiving," she says. Since that August evening over four years ago, Trujillo says she hasn't missed a single Bible study. She said God's word to her has led to immeasurable blessings.

"Each study helps me see life differently and people in my life differently," she says.

Destiny Women's Pastor Denise Johnson Ryan coordinates the twice-weekly Bible studies. The Wednesday evening midweek study brings together

over 550 women, each in circles of eight.

Ryan says the small groups share commonalities, whether that's a Spanish-speaking group, a gathering for single moms, an octet of nurses, or a cluster of newly married women. Ryan wanted to make sure Destiny Women reached single moms, like Trujillo.

"Single moms and their children are the widows and orphans of the 21st century," Ryan asserts. "We have seen God do some miraculous things as we ministered to these families."

Ryan says the Bible studies can be a powerful outreach tool, as people initially may feel more comfortable meeting with a small group of women than in a church service.

"We say we're Sisters Strong," she says of the ministry. "That means that we understand that we are family in Christ."

Trujillo is now a table leader with the Bible study ministry. She believes the church helped her realize her full potential.

"Our entire family dynamic changed," Phillips says. "My wife and I fell in love. Our marriage was restored."

Then Phillips felt a tug into ministry.

"His life began to radically transform," says Brad W. Davis, lead pastor of Desert Springs Church. "He had a gift of evangelism and talked to everybody — his old buddies, people he worked with. It was amazing to watch."

Soon, Davis invited Phillips to lead the church's men's ministry. Today, he's the associate pastor overseeing all assimilation, community groups, baptisms, local missions, and outreaches such as homeless ministry and prison

ministry.

"His heart is so tender to the things of God now," Davis says. "That's a work of the Holy Spirit, to take a heart so filled with rage and make it soft to the things of God."

Phillips says not a day goes by that he doesn't remember his previous lifestyle, although he has no stomach for watching mixed martial arts anymore.

"I have a lot of scars and injuries, and my body feels the effects," he says. "But I don't recognize myself when I look back. The fire that drives me is I want everybody to experience Christ."

ADDRESSING URBAN CORE NEEDS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

W. Ruth Turner worked as a municipal civil engineer for Kansas City, Missouri, for 22 years before sensing God calling her into full-time ministry. Turner birthed a faith-based organization called From Glory 2 Glory that started as a prayer center.

"We have a burden to impact the urban core," says Turner. "One of our primary targets is the black male. There is so much black-on-black homicide in the urban core."

Turner's ministry takes a threefold approach in dealing with multifaceted spiritual, social, and economic problems. Many difficulties in the city stem from drug addiction, alcoholism, and poverty, she says.

"We help them identify their life purpose and direction from God,"

Turner says. "We facilitate the development of a plan for success, including leadership skills, community, and hope."

Turner believes African-American males relate to her well because so many grew up in caring single-mother homes. It also helps that she worked for more than two decades in a profession dominated by men.

In addition, Turner serves as lead pastor of a small inner-city AG congregation, GreaterWorks Empowerment Church. Turner and other leaders in the church recently completed training of four quarterly cohorts of the Acts 2 Journey designed to help local church leaders better impact their vicinity.