

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY RUTHIE EDGERLY OBERG

Over a 50-year period, Thomas F. Zimmerman's (1912-1991) leadership in the Assemblies of God greatly increased the influence of the Pentecostal movement in the evangelical world, as well as in the broader American religious landscape.

In 1933, Zimmerman, then the associate pastor at the Apostolic Faith Mission in Indianapolis, married Elizabeth Price. Following the death of their 9-month-old son in 1935, the couple devoted themselves to full-time ministry. Thomas was ordained by the AG in 1936. They took a small congregation in Harrodsburg, Indiana, which grew to 250 in two years.

In 1942, AG leaders invited Zimmerman to attend the organizational meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals in St. Louis. In 1944, he provided leadership to the founding of the National Religious Broadcasters.

That same year, Central Assembly in Springfield, Missouri, called Zimmerman as its pastor. He served as secretary-treasurer of the Southern Missouri District from 1949-1951. He was elected

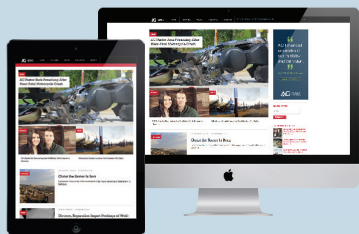


as an assistant general superintendent at the 1953 General Council. In 1959, Zimmerman was elected general superintendent, serving for 26 years.

Zimmerman was regarded as a "Pentecostal statesman," bringing the Pentecostal movement and the AG more visibility and influence in the religious world.

Read more about the 1959 General Council on page 4 of the Oct. 4, 1959, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/oct41959.

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SUNDAY, OCT 7, 2018

AG NEWS

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

**INDONESIA BATTERED
BY DOUBLE DISASTER,
AG RESPONDS**

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AT CONFERENCE**

**CANCER DOESN'T
DETER LAUNCH**

**H.U.G.S. FOR
CHILDREN**





INDONESIA BATTERED BY DOUBLE DISASTER, AG RESPONDS

BY KRISTEL RINGER ORTIZ

The Indonesian island of Sulawesi was impacted by a monstrous earthquake and tsunami on Friday, Sept. 28. The magnitude 7.5 quake cut off power to the tsunami alert system, leaving residents totally without warning when the resulting 20-foot-high tsunami broke upon the island.

Thousands have lost their homes, and more than 1,400 lost their lives. The death toll is expected to rise sharply, as rescuers struggle to search for hundreds of missing in the hardest-hit areas. It is reported that cries for help could be heard from under a hotel in the city of Palu until Sunday night. The tsunami waves that struck Palu are estimated to have traveled at up to nearly 500 miles per hour. Approximately 1,200 inmates escaped from three prisons across Sulawesi. Area hospitals are overwhelmed.

The Indonesia Assemblies of God, AGWM, and Convoy of Hope have joined hands in their swift response to this overwhelming tragedy. AGWM Advancement Director Randy Hurst

provides the following information:

- The Indonesia AG has 31 churches in Central Sulawesi. Four churches we know of are destroyed, four have minor damage, and the status of 23 remains unknown.
- The Indonesia AG has already sent the first truckload of relief supplies to affected communities, and it has arrived in Palu.
- Tragically, 180 Christian students were having a retreat at a school which was hit badly by the tsunami, and 100 are still unaccounted for — including the daughter of an Assemblies of God pastor. Please pray for the family of the missing girl and for the many others affected by this major disaster.
- The AG missionary in Indonesia who is closest to the disaster is attempting an overland 18-hour trip to reach the affected area.
- A team from Convoy of Hope arrived in Indonesia on Thursday to help with assessment of needs.
- The government is restricting access to the area, even by

H.U.G.S. FOR CHILDREN

BY ASHLEY B. GRANT

Inside the cool turquoise rooms of a single-story brick building in Cleburne, Texas, the lives of young and old are being transformed by the simple power of hope.

In 2017, three significant deaths within the congregation — all involving or directly impacting children — profoundly impacted Bethel Temple AG.

After extensive training, Elaine Preston, a longtime Bethel Temple member who lost her husband at the age of 30 when their daughter was only 3 years old, started a ministry called Helping Understanding Grief Services (H.U.G.S.).

"My dream was to keep families from having to search for child-friendly grief resources like I had to," says Preston, now 53. Preston and a team of volunteers launched several grief groups in March 2018.

"Immediately we saw kids and adults becoming involved, opening up, and receiving the hope that only Christ can

offer us in our times of suffering," she says.

Preston and the H.U.G.S. team have held multiple groups, including the Shift curriculum for kids, a spouse grief share, and Gone Too Soon, a grief share group for women who have experienced miscarriage or infant loss.

Additionally, Preston's team has connected with nursing homes and assisted living centers in the area. The volunteers are able to take their support programs into those facilities to help elderly adults process the loss of spouses, other relatives, and friends.

Preston also has connected with several funeral homes around the area. These relationships have allowed her to provide children and teens with stuffed animals and journals as they begin the healing process of dealing with the loss of a parent, grandparent, or other significant person in their lives.

Already in its first seven months, H.U.G.S. has ministered to 20 individuals.

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."



CYBERCHURCH FOR GAMERS SHIFTS

BY DEANN ALFORD

Matt Souza's launch of GodSquad Church, the world's first cyberchurch for video gamers as an unreached people group, was part of an even bigger vision inspired by Acts 2:46: a "Local Area Network" (LAN) center. The center will include a game-oriented "courtyard" hangout open daily for fellowship and as a community outreach and the church's broadcast location.

This year's SquadCon, held in a rented venue over three days in August in Richmond, Virginia, where Souza is now based, offered a glimpse of such a church. At this second physical gathering of congregants from the cyberchurch, 75 in-person attendees, most of whom had never before met apart from a computer screen, took part in worship, heard sermons, and connected in small groups. With a nod toward the love of gaming that unites the community, attendees played on-site laser tag. The livestream broadcasts SquadCon events for the online audience. Seven were water baptized.

GodSquad Church sermons

employ familiar game-related topics and illustrations that connect with viewers. A recent example is "You are not a Luigi," with references to the unappreciated Super Mario Bros game sidekick. Sermons archived on the church's YouTube channel, and Souza's livestreams archived on his Twitch.tv channel, generate more views per week than the live services. Souza's personal livestream brings in an average of 4,500 people a week.

Since the 2016 launch of GodSquad Church, now part of Potomac Ministry Network, 750 individuals have decided to follow Christ, yet Souza began to ask *Am I building a crowd or building a community?* His conclusion caused a shift in focus and approach.

"People were getting saved left and right, but then fell off the wagon" because of insufficient follow-up and discipleship, says Souza, 27, whose online name is PastorSouZy. Souza and his team still share the gospel daily on their personal livestreams on which they play games and interact with viewers.

WOMEN'S DETOX PROGRAM UNVEILED

BY STEVE THURSTON

Pennsylvania Adult & Teen Challenge (PATC) an addiction treatment and recovery facility in Rehrersburg, launched a new program to expand its detoxification program to women.

"This expansion effort comes amid a national epidemic," says Kris McFadden Sr., president and CEO of PATC. "The women's detox program addresses two organizational initiatives: increased capacity to serve women and treatment that helps patients with withdrawal management.

The expansion dramatically increases treatment options of substance abuse services that PATC provides to women in need of treatment. Additionally, the treatment facility also offers several other affordable options for families seeking treatment for a loved one suffering from addiction issues. The center provides highly specialized services by offering a medically monitored inpatient detoxification program, an inpatient treatment program for short-term rehabilitation, an outpatient treatment program, and a long-term residential faith-centered program.

The medically monitored women's detox unit employs specialty-trained, certified medical professionals overseeing all aspects of the withdrawal management process.

Teen Challenge is a ministry of AG U.S. Missions.

MIXING IN THE MELTING POT

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Don Yoshida Jr. remembers as a child being intrigued by the rituals his maternal grandmother participated in at Shinto shrines in Japan. He witnessed her paying homage to divinities she believed were embodied in animals, the sky, trees, mountains, the country's emperor, or deceased relatives. At a Shinto site, his grandmother tossed coins into a collection box before departing.

Yoshida spent five years in Japan when his father was stationed in the U.S. Army. At the age of 10, Yoshida returned to Hawaii, where he had been born. At vacation Bible school at Bethany AG in Aiea, Hawaii, Yoshida heard the gospel for the first time. He later became youth pastor at the church and married his wife, Diana.

In 1988, Yoshida planted Church in the City in Honolulu. In 1999, that church merged with Bethany in Aiea when Yoshida became senior pastor there. Yoshida is in his 10th year as secretary of the AG Hawaii District. For the past year, he also has been vice president of the AG's Japanese Fellowship.

Hawaii has the largest ratio of Asian Americans and multiracial Americans in the U.S. Yoshida's heritage, including familiarity with Shintoism and Buddhism, helps him relate to various groups. The fact that he speaks Japanese and that his wife is Anglo likewise makes it easier for him to relate to others.

CANCER DOESN'T DETER LAUNCH

BY ROBERT E. MIMS

Pastors Stephen and Priscilla Perumalla admit that giving up the wide-open spaces and easy-going ways of Texas for the teeming streets of New York City represented a culture shock.

But that seemed easy, compared to Stephen's two bouts with cancer that nearly derailed their call to plant an AG church in Hamilton Heights, an ethnically diverse and economically challenged Upper Manhattan neighborhood.

The now 36-year-old received his first diagnosis of testicular cancer in 2014, not long after wrapping up youth/young adult pastor's duties at The Grace Place in Arlington. Surgeons successfully removed the tumor.

The Perumallas and their children, then-5-year-old Boston and his 3-year-old sister Aviah, moved to New York with plans to launch The Grace Place NYC before the end of 2016.

His quarterly follow-up appointments went well, but his oncologist called in June 2016 with disturbing news: cancer had returned in one of Stephen's lymph nodes. The physician recommended immediate chemotherapy. Assured that after a couple weeks of treatment Stephen would recover most of his energy, the Perumallas decided to proceed — but not without their faith first being shaken to its core.

The ensuing rounds of chemo proved horrific. Stephen's life-threatening reactions put him in the hospital several times over the ensuing weeks.



Maintaining faith in their calling became a long, torturous marathon.

The experience only caused the Perumallas to turn more resolutely to their shared faith. Isolation had occurred before. As ethnic minorities in the U.S. — he is the child of immigrants from India, she is of Mexican heritage — they already had bucked the supposed "norm."

Today, Stephen is once more in vibrant health. Meeting in the auditorium of P.S. 153, Adam Clayton Powell Elementary School, The Grace Place NYC recently marked its second anniversary. The flock of about 40 worshippers reflects its diverse community: Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, African-Americans, Asians, and Anglos.

humanitarian organizations. Because we already have people on the ground, we are able to minister to fellow believers in the AG churches. As well, through those churches, desperately needy people will be served in surrounding communities.

"I urgently appeal to the churches of the U.S. Assemblies of God and anyone who gets these communications to fervently pray for the Indonesia Assemblies of God, our missionaries serving there, and for the Convoy personnel who are helping with assessment," says AGWM Executive Director Greg Mundis. "All these need God's guidance and strength in these tragic circumstances."

On Wednesday, a volcano erupted on the same Indonesian island that

was struck by the 7.5 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tsunami five days earlier. Mount Soputan, located on the far northeastern end of Sulawesi island (North Sulawesi province), reportedly spewed ash nearly 20,000 feet into the sky. The eruption prompted local authorities to issue warnings of potential lava flows and ash clouds, while evacuation orders for those living within a few miles of Mount Soputan were reported given. A government volcanologists believes the volcanic eruption could possibly be linked to the earlier earthquake. Indonesia is located on the Ring of Fire, which is home to 75 percent of the world's volcanoes and 90 percent of its earthquakes.

HISTORY MARKED AT CONFERENCE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

For the first time in nearly 50 years, three consecutive AG USA general superintendents — Doug Clay, George O. Wood, and Thomas Trask — were brought together to speak at an event.

The general superintendents spoke at the 5-Hour Synergy: The Power of Spiritual Shadowing conference held Sept. 27 at Brightmoor Christian Church in Novi, Michigan, and livestreamed on the AG USA Facebook page.

Clay took the stage first, speaking on integrity. "Character always trumps charisma in spiritual leadership," he stated. He asked leaders: "If everyone I lead lived their life the way I'm living, would we accomplish our mission?"

Wood spoke about the people whose

words shadowed him. Reflecting on his parents impact and citing examples from his college and pastoral years, Wood shared how words, spoken and written, had influenced his life.

Following a break, the Q&A session found the trio urging leaders to be intentional about discipleship, to encourage young people to be receptive to God's call into full-time ministry, and for the AG to remain Bible-centered and doctrinally pure.

Trask offered the concluding message. "I challenge you to become a person of prayer," he told leaders. "Nothing of any significance is going to happen in the kingdom of God if it's not prayed through and prayed over."