



## THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

Emile Chastagner (1882-1956) was born in New York City, the son of French immigrants. By the age of 21, he became an atheist, unable to reconcile the existence of both suffering and God.

After only two and a half years of marriage, Chastagner's wife was diagnosed with a terminal illness. She became bedridden and experienced intense pain. Books by two Christian authors, Edward P. Roe and Carrie Judd Montgomery, caused the Chastagners to reconsider their atheism.

After carefully studying the Bible, the Chastagners decided to follow Christ. They joined a small Pentecostal church. Chastagner's wife lived for another seven years and, even though she was

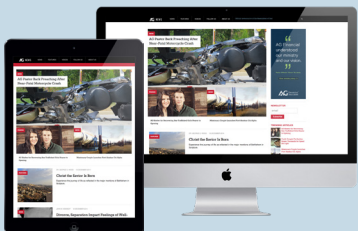
sick, had an active ministry of praying for the sick.

Five weeks after his wife's death, Chastagner was called to missions. He enrolled at Southern California Bible College (now Vanguard University) to study to become a missionary.

Chastagner, fluent in French, felt called to the Mossi people in French West Africa. While in college, he met Minnie Moore, who also felt called to missions. They married and set sail for Africa, where they served as AG missionaries for 16 years.


Read Chastagner's article, "An Atheist Who Became a Missionary," on pages 1 and 10-11 of the Aug. 27, 1932, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at [s2.ag.org/aug271932a](https://s2.ag.org/aug271932a).

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SUNDAY, SEPT. 1, 2019

# AG<sup>®</sup> NEWS

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

## CLIMBING MOUNTAINS FOR SPEED THE LIGHT

### RESPONDING TO A CHILDHOOD CALL

### RESTORING TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

### SEU ENROLLMENT CONTINUES CLIMB





## CLIMBING MOUNTAINS FOR STL

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Pasocha, Rumiñahui, Corazón, Illiniza, Cotopaxi. For those unfamiliar with the Andes Mountains, the first three are dormant volcanoes in Ecuador, South America. The last two are active volcanoes in Ecuador. Recently, 15-year-old Drew Marbut climbed them all with the goal of raising \$4,000 for Speed the Light.

Drew is the son of missionaries Joil and Leah Marbut, who serve in the jungles of Ecuador in Sucúa.

"We were returning from a missionary meeting in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, going through the Andes Mountains," recalls Drew, "and God put it on my heart to climb some of them for Speed the Light."

"It was kind of scary, honestly . . . those are big mountains — man mountains," Leah says.

The mountains ranged from Pasocha at 13,780 feet to the final one, Cotopaxi, at 19,347 feet, and one of the world's highest active volcanoes.

"Every day Drew went out with a

low-oxygen mask on to train," Leah says. "He started out with a backpack with 10 pounds of rice in it and, over time, worked it up until he was hiking with 50 pounds on his back."

Following months of training, the climbs took place in late May and early June. Drew and Joil drove to the Andes, acclimated for about a week, and then took on the first two mountains.

"We climbed up and down Pasocha one day, took a rest day and then climbed Rumiñahui (15,489 feet)," Drew says.

A week later, they took on the final three mountains. Things got interesting.

They climbed Corazón (15,715 feet) first, then took a rest day before the next and substantially higher climb.

"Illiniza (17,218 feet) was pretty cold, colder than the previous climbs," Drew says. ". . . the wind was blowing so hard that it knocked me down a couple of times."

Following Illiniza, Joil was not well. He knew that he could not climb up

## CHURCH REPLANTING IN THE INNER CITY

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

Highpoint Church in Aurora, Colorado, almost ceased to exist in 2008 when the recession stalled its building program and dried up financing — causing forfeiture of a rent-back option on the property the church had sold.

"The new building was literally boarded up for 30 months and we had to move into a local high school. Attendance went from 1,000 to 240," says Gene Roncone, who served as pastor for 17 years.

The church's resurrection only took place after the congregation's leaders did something seemingly counterintuitive: began investing time and money in the most impoverished area of their city, a neighborhood plagued by poverty, crime, homelessness, prostitution, and gangs.

Highpoint rented a building downtown and created essentially

an urban campus to serve homeless people and at-risk school kids, many of whom slept on couches, in the back of cars, or in motels.

The church created a Sunday morning children's church and served free hot breakfasts, and staffed camping trips for kids who had never been outside of the city. Highpoint donated more than 2,000 winter coats, 1,000 pairs of winter boots, and 3,000 books for kids.

As the outreach flourished, financial miracles broke out and helped Highpoint to finish its new building. Roncone, recently elected superintendent of the Rocky Mountain Ministry Network, is encouraging historic and suburban churches to plant campuses and conduct outreaches in blighted areas.

"We had 100 homeless and at-risk kids, but it wasn't a church; it was an outreach," Roncone says.

### 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."





## RESTORING TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

Phoenix Dream Center has become a national leader in rescuing and restoring sex-trafficked women by using groundbreaking techniques that increase successful outcomes.

Phoenix Dream Center's Executive Director Brian D. Steele and wife, Skye, CEO of partner organization StreetLight USA, initially led efforts to create programs to receive rescued girls, but found that "run rates" — the percentage of girls that flee — are high.

They realized that because the Dream Center occupies a hotel in downtown Phoenix, the rooms reminded some girls of places in which they had been victimized.

The Steeles decided to experiment by creating "Dream Rooms" — spaces so nice that rescued girls would want to stay. They invited local luxury home contractors and builders to participate in room renovation competitions, spending \$100,000 per room to outfit them for rescued women.

"We theorized that affecting the environmental factors would help the

girls feel more comfortable, and give them a desire to be there," Steele says.

The Steeles pioneered the new field of trauma-informed care for human trafficking victims. Trauma-informed rooms use specific textures, lighting, layout, and sounds to interrupt traumatic thoughts and give residents a sense of power, comfort, and safety.

"It's called neuro-sensory modulation," Steele says. "The philosophy is that the brain is in a loop from trauma, and girls are always thinking about running. We want to interrupt that cycle whenever we can. And we want everything to feel special."

The Steeles worked with experts in the emerging field to choose everything — artwork, bedding, the feel of the floor and couches, and the lighting — with traumatized brains in mind.

After implementing innovations, the Dream Center's dropout and recidivism rate fell from 30 percent to 10 percent. The ministry has since built a trauma-informed medical center and trauma-informed high school.

## SEU ENROLLMENT CONTINUES CLIMB

BY PRISCILLA BURR

When students return to Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida, for the fall semester, they will be attending classes at 150 campuses in 40 states across the nation. The university will welcome nearly 1,000 more students compared to last year's enrollment when classes start.

The fall semester will mark yet another record-breaking year of enrollment for the university with an anticipated total enrollment of more than 9,500 students. Last year's enrollment was 8,759. Nearly 3,000 students will be taking classes on the Lakeland campus.

Southeastern's growth is mainly due to the increase of extension site campuses nationwide and dual enrollment students. This fall the university will open 37 new extension sites with a total enrollment of close to 2,800 students at all of the sites. Additionally, almost 1,900 students will be enrolled in classes online and nearly 2,300 students will be dual-enrolled.

Several new degree programs were added for the fall semester, including bachelor degrees in biochemistry, biochemistry with a research concentration, kinesiology with a pre-athletic training track and more degree offerings. The biology/pre-med major was also revised to be a bachelor of science degree in biology with four different tracks of study: dentistry, medical sciences, veterinary, and pharmacy.

## BILINGUAL SPANISH MASTER'S OFFERED

BY ERIN HEDLUN

The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary of Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri, has designed a Bilingual Spanish Master of Leadership & Ministry degree in recognition of the growing constituency of Hispanic ministry leaders within the AG fellowship.

Currently, 23 percent of AG adherents are Hispanic.

The goal of the degree program is to further educate and equip these ministers and missionaries with relevant and practical advanced training.

"AGTS has a solid history of developing church leaders for the 21st century," says Tim Hager, dean of AGTS. "Equipping the next generation of Hispanic leaders for powerful and effective ministry is a strategic initiative inspired by the Holy Spirit."

The bilingual degree program launches this fall, with a cohort of AG Hispanic district leaders among its first participants. An entirely online course delivery allows increased access and the ability for students to study anytime, anywhere.

"We are focused on continuing to expand the bilingual degree programs offered through AGTS," Hager says. "It is our hope that this focus supports increasingly diverse global ministry efforts, specifically those of our AG world missionaries serving in Central and South America."



## LEADING WITH THE LEFT TOGETHER

BY RACHEL ELLIS

Emileigh Beth Rogers approached her husband, Jacob, to help her co-author a blog aimed at ministering to dual-military couples, giving them an opportunity to “Lead with the Left” together.

Emileigh, commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Air Force in May 2018, is now working as a public affairs officer. Jacob was commissioned as a first lieutenant and fully appointed Air Force reserve chaplain on March 31. They are stationed at Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho.

The couple dealt with hurtful comments from church members, friends, and relatives about deciding to work as a dual military and dual credentialed minister team. Emileigh says she couldn’t find a lot of online information or support for women in the military, male spouses, or dual military couples.

“A lot of military blogs were just

very spouse-oriented or filled with cursing,” says Jacob, an endorsed AG chaplain. “Either the military wife or the hardcore military member, and nary the two shall meet. We saw this gap where we thought we could be this spiritual voice not only about marriage, not only dual military, but what the life of a strong marriage in the context of being built on a relationship with Jesus looks like.”

Leading with the Left launched in February 2017. The blog’s name refers to the military practice of marching with the left foot first to keep everyone in sync.

“It helps us connect with those who are the minority fringe, male spouses or females in the military or dual military couples,” she says.

Emileigh says the blog helps bridge the divide between military and civilian life for those not in active service.

Cotopaxi, which is more than 2,000 feet higher than Illiniza. They decided that Drew would go on with their guide.

“There was a group of 18 men from all around the world who had flown here to make this climb,” Drew says. “We started our ascent at about 11 p.m. using our headlamps.”

“I was definitely on my knees all night that night,” Leah affirms.

On their way up Cotopaxi, freezing rain covered the climbers in ice and made the footing treacherous. The temperature dropped to -4 F with sustained winds of 60 mph (windchill -39 F).

Everyone turned back except Drew and his guide. But within 30 minutes of the summit, both of Drew’s crampons, which provide secure footing, broke.

They had to turn back.

“I think the crampons breaking was a God thing — He was protecting us from making a big mistake — that was the coldest I’ve ever been in my life,” Drew says, then laughs, “I had an icicle growing off my nose, but I couldn’t even feel it!”

Even though he just missed making the summit, Drew raised \$7,100 for Speed the Light.

“We have Speed the Light vehicles; we’ve been on the receiving end,” Leah says. “Because of Speed the Light, we’ve been able to go to the difficult places; Drew wanted to help other missionaries also go to the difficult places — he did what he did not for personal gain, but for missions and for God. I’m proud of his heart for that.”

## RESPONDING TO A CHILDHOOD CALL

BY IAN RICHARDSON

When Jerry J. Newswander was 9, his sister Nancy died of a heart defect. She was 4 months old. Newswander remembers the difficulty of grappling with a sibling’s death at such a young age. As he grew older, the moment inspired him to pursue a career helping others nearing the end of their lives.

Newswander has developed that calling over 47 years. In 2010, he became a U.S. Missions chaplain working in hospice care after spending nearly four decades pastoring churches. He now works with Care Initiatives Hospice in West Des Moines, Iowa, as a spiritual care and bereavement counselor.

“When people hear the word hospice, they think about death,” Newswander says. “But our focus is on quality of life. God has called me to put my energies into people who are in the last stages of life, helping them to address issues that people just don’t want to talk about.”

Newswander spent 38 years pastoring nine churches in four states. Throughout his career, Newswander often served as worship leader or sang solos in church. He finds that singing to or with patients pacifies them.

“Singing has a medicinal effect,” he says. It’s also a way for him to share the gospel.