

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARREN J. RODGERS

"Has the 20th century Pentecostal revival reached the zenith of its spirituality and usefulness, and is it now doomed to fade as a potent force from the modern spiritual scene; or do greater glories still lie ahead?"

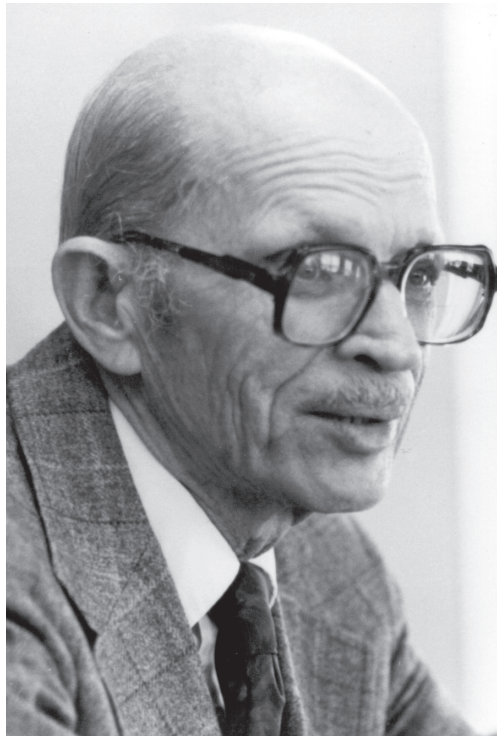
That question was posed by Assemblies of God missions leader Melvin Hodges in 1957. Hodges noted that previous Protestant revival movements "lost their fervor and one by one settled down to take their places in the ecclesiastical world as yet another denomination."

"We dare not ignore the lessons of history," Hodges warned. He identified three characteristics of a declining revival movement: 1) a diminishing hunger for God; 2) a lack of concern for holiness; and 3) the loss of the sense of mission and destiny.

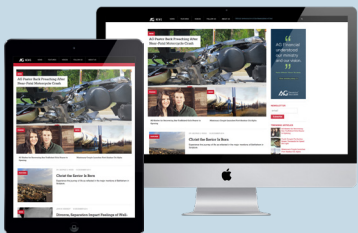
While spiritual decline over time is likely, Hodges says it is not inevitable. He admonished readers to rediscover the deep spirituality common among early Pentecostals: "Let hunger for God be reawakened in our hearts. May a walk in holiness, worthy of our vocation,

be our goal, and let us consecrate ourselves anew to the fulfilling of our world destiny in the plan of God."

Read Hodges' article, "Danger Signals", on pages 4 and 5 of the Sept. 29, 1957, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/sept291957.




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SUNDAY, SEPT. 30, 2018

AG NEWS

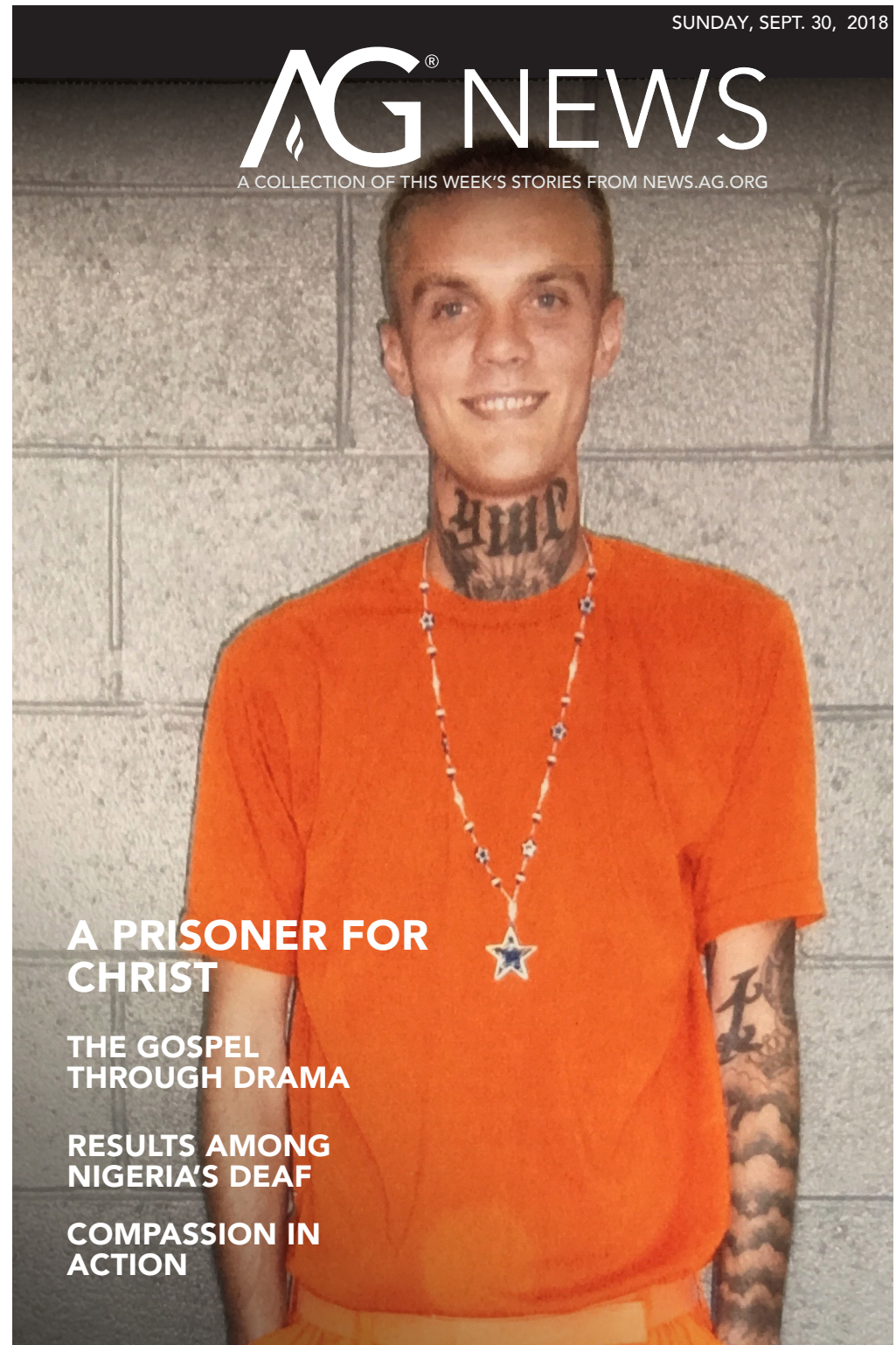
A COLLECTION OF THIS WEEK'S STORIES FROM NEWS.AG.ORG

A PRISONER FOR CHRIST

THE GOSPEL THROUGH DRAMA

RESULTS AMONG NIGERIA'S DEAF

COMPASSION IN ACTION





A PRISONER FOR CHRIST

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Zakary Chase Howard dropped out of college after a year, developed a dependency on marijuana, and got a tattoo on his neck with large letters of YWF — signifying his new life philosophy of “young, wild, and free.”

In April 2015, the unemployed 21-year-old Zak agreed to accompany an acquaintance, Richard Anthony Burns, to make a drug delivery in the hopes of scoring some free weed. Their casual relationship revolved around only one activity: smoking pot.

But when the third party, 18-year-old Matthew Christensen, drove up to an undeveloped lot behind an elementary school, Burns pulled a 22-gauge rifle hidden in his jacket and shot Christensen seven times. A frightened Zak subsequently decided to accompany Burns in Christensen's stolen car.

“I was in a state of shock,” Zak tells AG News. “After seeing someone shot in front of me, I was in fear of my own life at this point.”

Throughout the next couple of days, Zak grappled with whether to reveal the horrific ordeal to his parents. He kept silent.

After an evening church service, Zak arrived home with his parents, Stefanie and Keith, pastor of Buckeye First Assembly in the far west Phoenix suburb.

A dozen officers with the local SWAT team surrounded the vehicle, holding assault rifles and hollering orders not to move. In jail early the next morning, Zak rededicated his life to the Lord.

“There would be mornings I would wake up with almost a sick feeling when I remembered what our new ‘normal’ was,” Stefanie remembers. “God’s strength was my only hope.”

Even though Zakary didn’t know the victim, didn’t participate in the robbery, didn’t conspire to commit the murder, and didn’t touch the trigger, prosecutors argued his complicity could result in a first-degree murder conviction — which potentially carried

CHI ALPHA SURGES IN MINNESOTA

BY IAN RICHARDSON

When Steph J. Peterson held her first Chi Alpha planning meeting at Winona State University a decade ago, the group numbered 10 students — barely enough to qualify as a campus club.

Her daunting task focused on restarting the Winona State Chi Alpha chapter, one that had included as many as 200 students on the Minnesota campus. But after the departure of previous leadership, membership had dwindled to a solitary student. This September, Peterson counted more than 200 students at the kickoff service for the new semester.

Minnesota Chi Alpha Director Mike F. Amiot, 47, says last year several chapters experienced large gains, including Winona State, University of Minnesota-Duluth, and Bemidji State University. In 2017, Minnesota Chi Alpha counted 467 salvations, 102 water baptisms, and 40 healings statewide.

Consistency has paid off, where Peterson now has a dozen full- and part-time staff members, as well as 45 student leaders.

Peterson says recent factors in the



growth have included a move of Chi Alpha meetings from an off-campus church, which brought the meetings closer to students and may appeal to those hesitant to walk inside a church.

The chapter has increased visibility on the campus at large after being asked two years ago to partner with school staff to put on welcome week activities for 1,600 incoming first-year students.

This year, the university included a line for Chi Alpha in its budget, providing the group \$4,000 for its work on the campus welcome activities. Peterson says a Chi Alpha chapter receiving school money is unprecedented.

Sept. 30 is Chi Alpha Day in the Assemblies of God.

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.”



RESULTS AMONG NIGERIA'S DEAF

BY DAN VAN VEEN

In the Deaf culture in Nigeria, he's known as Chief Nwannedinamba 1 of Enugu Ngwo. Others know him as Kevin Babin, U.S. missionary with Intercultural Ministries and the national field representative for AG Deaf Culture Ministries.

Babin was given the lengthy chieftain title on his first trip to Nigeria in 2006 during an unexpected mountain-top ceremony.

Recently Babin returned from speaking at the 2018 National Deaf Retreat in Nigeria held at the Evangel Camp in Okpoto, Sept. 7-10. Approximately 400 to 500 Deaf people gathered for the "Show Me Your Glory" retreat.

The response to Babin's opening salvation message, Karla's (Babin's wife) message on healing, and the message on the infilling of the Holy Spirit by AG ministers Mike and Sandy Benintende resulted in 100 people accepting Christ, 100 more being filled with the Holy

Spirit, and others rejoicing throughout the week for a variety of healings.

"When the Holy Spirit moves, some Deaf will still use their voice and speak in other tongues and others have responded with something called 'signed glossolalia' — their hand movements are clearly different," Babin explains. "It can seem complicated, but the important thing is that they are living for and walking with God and that the Holy Spirit is active in their lives."

Georgian Ugah, the national director of AGCare Compassion Ministries for AG Nigeria, agrees. "God moved in various ways, touching the lives of my Deaf people," she states. "We enjoyed God's presence. His glory really came down."

"In 2007, there were only three AG pastors to the Deaf in Nigeria," Babin says. "Today, there are more than 25 preaching points for the Deaf in the country." Babin believes that number will only continue to grow.

COMPASSION IN ACTION

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Assemblies of God churches are teaming with compassion organizations, including Convoy of Hope, to assist Hurricane Florence victims, but the road to recovery will be long as many homes and businesses remain flooded or are heavily damaged and many roads remain closed due to flooding or sections being washed out.

John Watford, pastor of Cornerstone Church in New Bern and, the North Carolina AG Disaster Relief coordinator, says that so far they are aware of 10 to 12 AG churches that have experienced damage due to the hurricane. AG churches in South Carolina have also been damaged.

However, AG churches throughout the area are responding to victims' needs, teaming with other churches and agencies to provide food, shelter, medical attention, clean-up assistance, and whatever else may be needed.

According to a Convoy of Hope news release, the compassion organization has already distributed more than 828,000 pounds of relief supplies, served more than 43,000 individuals, mobilized more than 1,600 volunteers, partnered with 16 churches and partner organizations, and has begun a clean-up campaign to help remove trees and storm debris from properties.

Those interested helping with the North Carolina disaster relief efforts, see the Cornerstone Church website at: nbcornerstone.com/Disasterrelief.

SERVING REFUGEES IN 'LITTLE ARABIA'

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

In a part of Anaheim, California, known as "Little Arabia," U.S. missionary Steve Arnold serves refugees who have experienced life's traumas in their homeland.

"Refugees and asylum-seekers come from all walks of life, from professionals to the uneducated, some fluent in English and some not," says Arnold. "Many have experienced horrific things and are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. For American Christians to befriend them, and give them a sense that they're loved and someone cares about them, can make a huge difference."

The ministry Arnold helps, Voice of Refugees, helps a number of people from Afghanistan, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. Refugees are those forcibly displaced because of persecution in which they must leave and not return to their homeland. Asylum-seekers have come into the U.S. through normal means and are seeking asylum while here. A third group comes on special immigrant visas, set up for people from Iraq and Afghanistan who served with the U.S. military or diplomatic corps there.

Every month, Arnold and the ministry serve around 100 families. They welcome newcomers, provide transportation when the need is urgent, offer English instruction, and help the new arrivals locate furniture for their apartments, learn to drive, and create job résumés.



BIKING THE LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

BY JOEL KILPATRICK

The New Mexico Ministry Network held its seventh annual, five-day Bike for the Light fundraiser in September, raising \$85,415 this year for Speed the Light to purchase vehicles for missionaries. Over seven years, the 500-mile ride across the Land of Enchantment has raised more than \$300,000 for STL.

"Most people who ride have never done anything like this, just like me," says New Mexico Ministry Network Superintendent Micheal E. Dickenson, 66, who has ridden in the event each year. "We have youth pastors, pastors, and individuals in churches across New Mexico who have caught the dream."

The ride starts at the Colorado boundary line, at around 7,500 feet in elevation, and ends at the Texas boundary line, at around 3,000 feet. The group, which included anywhere from 17 to 40 participants this year, depending on the day, mostly follows four-lane state highways.

The idea originated from a conversation between Dickenson and his sons, Jeral, pastor of CooperRidge Church in Farmington, and Jason, pastor of Harvest Church in Albuquerque, about how to raise money for STL. Every rider raises money from friends, family, and co-workers, which goes to STL.

A primary beneficiary is Rural Compassion, which will receive its third donated vehicle as a result of this year's Bike for the Light. The van will be used to take supplies into small communities. Bike for the Light funds also have purchased vehicles for Adult & Teen Challenge and missionaries supported by the ministry network.

A support crew of two vans and trailers that carry food, water, drink mixes, first aid supplies — and spare tires and tubes — make the ride possible. Most nights when the riders roll into their destination, a local church group has dinner waiting for them.

the death penalty. In a plea bargain, Zakary confessed to second-degree murder. His 18-year sentence includes no possibility of early release.

At Zak's sentencing, Keith told the Christensen family that the Howards mourn their loss. Zak apologized through his attorney to Matthew's mother for his part in the tragedy.

"I pray for the Christensen family often," Zak says. "The whole thing grieves the deepest part of me."

Zak ended up at Lewis prison in Buckeye, where his parents visit him for eight hours either Saturday or Sunday, plus four hours on Monday. So do Stefanie's parents, Jerry and Mamie Roberts, who make the 50-mile drive from Sun City West.

Jerry spent 22 years as an AG world

missionary and now serves as pastoral care director for the 70 churches of the Phoenix-based Hispanic Southwest District. Mamie volunteers with Prisoners of Hope, a Global University program.

Unlike many inmates, Zak exudes gratitude, contentment, and gladness. He conducts a Bible study in the prison yard and regularly counsels other convicts in his pod. While incarcerated, Zak has led 17 other inmates to salvation in Jesus — everyone from a Mexican gang leader to a white supremacist tattooed with images of swastikas and Adolf Hitler. Zak has no intention of removing his own prominent tattoos.

"God uses them now to give me access and credibility to the people I minister to in here," Zak says.

THE GOSPEL THROUGH DRAMA

BY ALICE HORNE

Brenda Lillie, AGWM missionary, has been in the entertainment industry for 30 years. A graduate of Emerson College in Boston with a bachelor's degree in theatre, She is also a licensed AG minister.

Lillie left her role as a professional stage manager in 2005 to begin working in the public schools and church community of her hometown, Winchendon, Massachusetts. At her church, Cornerstone Church, she formed a drama ministry for youth and adults.

In 2011, Lillie began serving as a missionary associate in the Netherlands. She worked with missionary Judith

Mensch and helped to create KIDZARK Productions, a theatrical company designed to help children learn biblical and moral principles through drama.

Lillie became a career missionary under special assignment in 2014. She developed StageLife Theater as a touring theater ministry whose performances are designed to introduce a community to the church and the life-changing love of Jesus Christ.

StageLife Theater is based in Zaandam, 11 miles north of Amsterdam. Lillie and her team write a productions' story and music, sew the costumes and hold auditions. Salvations occur regularly through the ministry.