

PENTECOST:



INTERNATIONAL REPORT

A Communications Service of the International Pentecostal Press Association

Divine impact on the capital of Europe

A report on Impact Brussels 2006

July 26-29, 2006, will long be remembered in the history of open-air evangelism in Belgium and in the hearts of hundreds of young people who came from all over Europe (12 countries were represented) on the occasion of Impact Brussels 2006, an outreach launched and sponsored by PEF (Pentecostal European Fellowship).

Morning and evening plenary sessions, held at La Nouvelle Jerusalem African church, inspired and equipped participants for the afternoon open-air activities. PEF Chairman Ingolf Ellssel (Germany), French Evangelist Franck Alexandre and Assemblies of God missionary Rev. Terry Hoggard developed aspects of the main theme, namely the urgent need to re-evangelize Europe.

The main goal of this initiative was to mobilize Christians in Belgium and from across Europe and get them outside the walls of the church buildings, encouraging them to bring the message of the gospel where it belongs — in the streets and on the city squares.

Thanks to an effective mobile podium, and to an unusual stretch of warm and sunny weather, hundreds of Christians were able to spread from one square to another

in the heart of Brussels, the capital of Belgium and of key European institutions. Every afternoon, from Place de la Monnaie to Place de la Bourse and Place Agora, joyful young evangelists brought a message of hope through music, drama, social action and literature distribution.

Local believers, pastors and churches got excited as they saw

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what God can do when His people work in unity. Throughout the months of preparation God answered prayers, opened doors, provided volunteers and funds, and solved legal issues. Every hindrance turned out to be a blessing and an opportunity for the gospel.

Saturday, July 29, marked the climax of Impact Brussels. For five hours Place Ste. Catherine, another well-known square in the center of Brussels, saw people gradually fill the area and take an interest in the ongoing open-air activities.

About 80 people returned decision cards, indicating they accepted Jesus as their Savior. Local churches are coordinating follow-up ministry.

Only eternity will reveal the full impact of this outreach, which also reached some city authorities who attended the open-air events. Christians and local churches were encouraged to carry on this kind of evangelism not only in Brussels, but also in other major cities of Belgium, a country where the evangelical presence is quite weak. Please pray that the seed of the gospel will continue to spread and grow in many hearts.

It was difficult for the teams of young missionaries to conclude their ministry after Impact Brussels and go back to their countries. New friendships were born. Most importantly, team members shared the joy of proclaiming the wonderful Name of Jesus, the Hope of Belgium and Europe.

In September 2007, PEF will be involved in Impact Oslo, a joint effort in conjunction with Azusa Europe, the Pentecostal European Centennial organized by the Pentecostal Norwegian Movement.

— Rev. Daniel Costanza
PEF Coordinator

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New AG church Web service proves successful

In June, the General Council of the U.S. Assemblies of God launched an innovative and free Web hosting service for its churches called "AGChurches.org." The service was implemented to serve the local church — helping it reach out to a technically advanced world without the financial stress of Web hosting fees.

The Information Technology Group (ITG) at the AG national headquarters is partnering with districts, churches and pastors to build a bridge of communication between the church and community with fresh and up-to-date Web sites.

"In just seven weeks' time, 330 sites have been launched," says AG Churches Web Services Project Coordinator Tim Laffoon. "Our goal from the very beginning has been to make this software tool effective and easy to use for our local churches."

The uncomplicated system has allowed many churches to attain a professional online presence in a matter of days with the assistance of several step-by-step videos and experienced ITG staff. The management system is simple enough to use that churches with little to no experience do not need to hire a Web developer. The multilayered system can also be as complex and customizable as desired.

The content management system allows a church to choose from several template options for a professional look, and gives designated church staff freedom to

edit/control the content and layout of its Web pages. Along with customizable page options such as events, photo gallery, prayer requests, news and much more, churches may also choose to use information provided by district and national offices — such as the General Council calendar or news services.

Possibilities continue to expand as technologies develop and churches experiment with

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options. One church has begun a bilingual Spanish/English site.

Feedback from churches has been instrumental in allowing the ITG to assess the quality of its support system and discuss potential services to offer in the future. Following are comments from users on the service:

"We are so pleased with our site. It was built in seven days' time. Because of the tutorials, I can hand it off to capable people. Within days of launching our new site, I got an e-mail. This e-mail led to a phone conversation and likely a new family in our church."

— Pastor Keith Howard
First Assembly of God
Buckeye, Arizona

"This Web site service was a life saver. I had been handed the responsibility of our current Web site and struggled with the Front Page design. It was difficult to understand, very limited in what we could do and you were completely on your own regarding help. Thank you for this service."

— Ron Wicks
Webmaster, Westside AG
Davenport, Iowa

"We have wanted to have a Web site for years but couldn't justify the monetary investment. Thanks to the AG Web Service, our church is online and at no cost. Setting up the Web site couldn't have been easier. The support/technical staff is right there to answer any questions — down to the smallest detail. Thanks for this service!"

—Trudy Hankins
Gateway AG
Welch, Oklahoma
<http://gateway-ag.org/>

"We are excited about the outstanding response we have had," Laffoon states. "I anticipate many churches without current sites will see the advantages of an Internet presence and follow suit."

For more information on the service or to read additional testimonials, see what other churches have done, or view a Web site demo, visit <http://agchurches.org/>. For details on beginning a church Web site, e-mail questions or comments to support@agchurches.org.

— Caroline Foster
AG News

Evangelism and the Pentecostal/Charismatic revival

Evangelism has been the first priority from the very outset of the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. The historical self-image in the “Pentecostal/Charismatic story” is that we were raised up by God to be an instrument of revival and evangelism in the world. Traditionally, therefore, it has been felt that to be Pentecostal/Charismatic is to be an evangelistic witness. Pentecostals see aggressive evangelism in the pages of the New Testament and due to our high regard for the Bible and our literal interpretation of Scripture we interpret the Pentecostal experience as a mandate for evangelism in its various forms and methods.

For Pentecostals, evangelism is defined as the act of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit with the intention that individuals will be persuaded to put their trust in Christ for salvation and serve Him in the fellowship of a local church.

Pentecostal evangelism rejects the liberal tenets of universalism that say the work of evangelism is simply to inform people that they are already saved. Neither do Pentecostals believe that proclaiming only for the sake of giving objective information is sufficient. Pentecostal evangelism involves the good news of deliverance over against the bad news that humanity is spiritually dead and bound in the oppression of sin. Pentecostal

evangelism, therefore, calls for a confrontation; it is the conveyance of truth-as-encounter. The Pentecostal witness preaches for a verdict and expects results.

This is the sense in which Jesus announces His mission of evangelism under the anointing of the Holy Spirit:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the

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oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18,19, NIV).

There is a persuasiveness and aggressiveness in Pentecostal evangelism characterized by the preaching of the apostle Paul as he seeks to persuade King Agrippa to become a believer. Paul indicates that he has been rescued in order to rescue others through evangelism. God’s commission to him is central to his evangelistic testimony:

“I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the

power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me” (Acts 26:17,18).

Pentecostals see their evangelistic outreach as more than the mere extension of a religious movement or recruitment to a particular ideology or experience. From the outset of the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movement there was a sense of divine destiny, the participation with God in a new work for the last days, an involvement in the purposes of God for the world.

Pentecostals see redemption as the central purpose of God in Scripture and evangelism as the comprehensive method for fulfilling that purpose. They have been aggressively obedient to the Great Commission passages in the Gospels. Acts 1:8 could be claimed as the golden text for their style of evangelism: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.”

The connection of the “power” to the evangelistic task is quite clear: only the coming of the power of the Holy Spirit to those who are witnesses for Christ makes the work of evangelism possible.

— Grant McClung
Condensed from “People of Persuasion:
Evangelism and the Pentecostal/
Charismatic Revival”
To read the full text visit
www.lausanneworldpulse.com

Rev. Dr. Thomas Mathews with Christ

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Mathews, founder of *Cross & Crown*, a magazine published by Native Missionary Movement of India, went to be with the Lord on November 23, 2005.

In the words of Glory Philip, Dr. Mathews “went upstairs to sleep, asking [his hosts in Delhi] to wake him at 6 a.m. as they together had to catch the 7:20 a.m. train for Amritsar (Punjab). He slept but did not wake up to the cares and pressures of this world as the Lord called him to His home.”

Dr. Mathews was not only a missions leader and Indian Pentecostal pastor, but he also founded Filadelfia Bible College and initiated children’s homes and schools. He served for at least 20 years on the Advisory Board of the International Pentecostal Press Association.

The November 05-March 06 issue of *Cross & Crown* was dedicated wholly to his memory. A worldwide outpouring of grief and respect for Dr. Mathews at his memorial service on November 27, 2005, was a testament to his love for the masses and his service to God. His ministry transcended regional and religious boundaries. His was a life that

made a difference, and his legacy will continue through the lives of those he trained and released into ministry.

Historic Assembly held in Indianapolis, marks century

Delegates to the 71st Church of God General Assembly gathered in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 24-29 to celebrate 100 years of ministry and growth.

This year’s Assembly marked 100 years since the first delegation of 21 people gathered for two days in January 1906 in the wintry mountains of North Carolina. During this year’s Assembly week commemorations of that historic weekend included a feature in the daily newspaper, *General Assembly Today*, and a large display in the exhibit hall showcasing 100 years of General Assemblies.

Speakers at the evening worship services included national evangelist Jacqueline Smith, the first woman to be a featured evening speaker at a General Assembly, World Missions Director Roland Vaughan, Eliezer Bonilla and General Overseer G. Dennis McGuire.

Delegates elected church leadership for the 2006-2008 term. Visit www.churchofgod.cc for a complete list of leaders elect-

ed and appointed at the General Assembly, news releases, downloadable versions of the daily newspaper, adopted resolutions, short video reports on events, Council sessions and other activities.

— Cameron Fisher
Church of God Evangel

Assemblies of God UK World Missions offers CoMission

CoMission, the new flagship World Ministries publication of the Assemblies of God UK, incorporates *In Touch* and *Incare News* to offer readers a wide selection of missions news and ministry opportunities. The July/September 2006 lead feature, says Editor Harry Wake, will give “some insight into what motivates, or indeed cultivates, the mission heart in different people.”

A visit to www.worldministries.co.uk offers a broader view of the AOG’s ministries around the world that ties well with the new publication.

The Fellowship’s overall Web presence, at www.aog.org.uk, has been revamped and connects visitors with church leadership, departments and key information in a personally engaging manner.

“We are at the beginning of a new day for the Assemblies of God,” the site promises.

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