

7 Reasons the AG's Centennial Celebration Inspired My Heart

General Superintendent George Wood said the goal of the Assemblies of God Centennial in Springfield, Missouri, last week was to be a celebration, a revival and to establish a strong vision for missions for the Fellowship for the next 100 years.

For me it was all this and more. The conference's speakers, from around the world including a pastor from Iraq, inspired me. The worship and the altar calls touched me. The effective use of multimedia in the services and the attention to detail wowed me. I'll even admit that I enjoyed one evening where they sang the songs I grew up with such as "All Hail The Power of Jesus Name" or Doris Akers' "There's a Sweet Sweet Spirit in this Place," "I'll Fly Away" and many others.

I've written a lot recently online and in print about the Assemblies of God. But after coming home, I wanted to give this short report of seven reasons the AG100 event touched my heart:

- In a world where secularism seems to be gaining ground and the church seems to be on the retreat, it seemed that the Assemblies of God is growing (a new church begins every 39 minutes) and has vision for the future. There even seems to be new life in the headquarters where the staff seems to have more of an attitude of service and focus on the vision to be the greatest evangelism force the world has ever known.
- I was particularly impressed by an initiative coming out of the youth department called The Human Right emphasizes the need not only to fight for "human rights" in the traditional humanitarian sense, but for the "ultimate human right"—everyone has to hear the gospel.

- We had a booth and gave out copies of the special anniversary issue we did in August. If you missed that story, you can click here to read it. It is long—over 5000 words. But it gives a Time-magazine type of journalistic look at the Assemblies. Like any other writer, I was able to only evaluate what is going on from my personal perspective of being fourth generation AG and as an observer of the of the denomination as a journalist for more than half it's existence.
- The opportunity to connect with some key Assemblies leaders like Doug Clay, the General Treasurer, Sol Arledge, the headquarters' COO, and Dr. Carol Taylor the new president of Evangel University.
- The chance to meet old friends such as David Grant (missionary to India) and friends of my parents going back to the 1940s such as missionary Doris Johnson (who at age 83 is still a missionary to Brazil)
- An opportunity to connect with ministries we've covered such as Convoy of Hope and my longtime friend Hal Donaldson, one of its founders
- A chance to make new friends like John Lindell, pastor of the largest church in Springfield—James River Church—and to attend a dynamic service.

On a personal note, my trip to Springfield was a homecoming. I spent my first six years in Springfield and this was my first extended visit in decades. I even attended a 3 ½-hour service at the church my father formerly pastored. It is now home to a Spanish Pentecostal Church called Mano del Cielo (Hand of Heaven).

I posted photos and videos of my visit on my Facebook page if you'd like to see more. Visit to sign up. I also have several clips from the Spanish service.

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