

Brazil Assemblies of God Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Nearly 30,000 people gathered in the rain on Nov. 15 at Pacaembu Municipal Stadium in Sao Paulo for the final service of a weeklong celebration commemorating 100 years of Assemblies of God ministry in the nation. Fellowship leaders, pastors, laypersons and national and local government officials came to honor the past and plan for the future.

Dr. George Wood, general superintendent of the U.S. AG, was the evening speaker. Using the account of Jesus feeding the 5,000 as his text, he spoke on how God's work grows. "Wherever God is at work, the task always seems too big and the resources too small," he said. "But the Lord takes the little we have and meets the needs of many."

The service also focused on the first Pentecostal missionaries—Gunnar Vingren and Daniel Berg. Shortly after arriving in Chicago, these Swedish immigrants were baptized in the Holy Spirit and sensed God's call to Brazil. Arriving in 1910, they established a fellowship on June 18, 1911, in the home of Celina de Albuquerque, the first Brazilian baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Other celebration services were held during the week at Belenzinho Assembly of God, pastored by Brazil General Superintendent José Wellington. Dick Nicholson, the U.S. AG World Missions regional director for Latin America/Caribbean, was one of the special guest speakers.

Greg Mundis, executive director for AG World Missions, says: "We rejoice with our millions of brothers and sisters in Brazil celebrating 100 years of the Holy Spirit's moving throughout the nation. The prevailing belief among our Brazilian AG churches that 'every believer is an evangelist'

has been a model for the world to follow.”

“One thing Brazilians do is evangelize,” agrees Nicholson. “They are amazing personal evangelists! And they plant churches. We have well over 20 million Assemblies of God people in Brazil. It’s very inspiring to see people who are really passionate about God and the church.”

District, citywide and national centennial events have been ongoing during the past two years. More than 90,000 people attended a June 11 evangelistic event in Belem where more than 2,000 people accepted Christ as Savior.

“We think that there are really tremendous days ahead [for Brazil],” Nicholson says. “Brazil is a joy to behold.”

“A secular journalist once said, ‘There are three things you will find in any town or village in Brazil: Coca-Cola, a Singer sewing machine and an Assemblies of God church,’” says missionary Mark Lemos. “The centennial celebrations were only a transition point for greater things that God will do in Brazil.”