

A special mission for the military

MINISTRIES FOCUSED on service personnel meet to discuss goals.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Lewis Holston serves as a loadmaster on planes that drop paratroopers and cargo into combat zones.

On a recent six-month deployment to a remote hotspot, Holston — a deacon of the WindSong Church of Christ in North Little Rock, Ark. — searched for fellow Christians with whom to worship.

Dennis Saucier, director of the American Military Evangelizing Nations ministry, known as AMEN, connected the 26-year Air Force veteran with a few other members of Churches of Christ.

Two stateside Christians with military backgrounds — John Phillis of the Northeast Church of Christ in Albuquerque, N.M., and Stephen Paul Wolfe of the Edgemere Church

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY LEWIS HOLSTON

While flying on a training mission, Chief Master Sgt. Lewis Holston looks out the back of the plane.



Single father Neil Zierden, with son Brett, 7, and daughter Miranda, 9, prays before a recent weeknight meal.

Hope for single parents

A CHILDREN'S HOME that once focused exclusively on young ones expands its mission to serve entire families. 'We need to open our hearts and arms,' a leader says.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MOUNT DORA, Fla.

In an instant, Neil Zierden's world fell apart.

An accidental explosion at Firepoint Products Inc., the Florida business Zierden co-owned with his 40-year-old wife, Rhonda, killed her and an employee, George Harthman, 54.

Zierden was lost in his own grief and faced with raising the couple's two young children — Miranda, now 9, and Brett, 7 — on his own.

"We just didn't really know where to turn or what to do," Zierden said, recalling the aftermath of the



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Mount Dora Children's Home's single-parent program serves seven mothers, one father and 16 children.

May 7, 2016, tragedy. "I've never been a mom."

Enter Mount Dora Children's Home, which is associated with Churches of Christ.

"It was obvious that he was a

hurt man," social worker Johnnie Coley said. "So when he came to us, we brought him in. We loved him. We used all the resources that God has given us to help."

For decades, the children's home — founded in 1945 in this picturesque town of 13,000 about 35 miles northwest of Orlando — cared for boys and girls in traditional group-home settings. It still operates two such homes overseen by foster parents in this community with sprawling canopy oak trees.

However, frustration with helping children temporarily only to return them to dysfunctional households

See **SINGLE PARENTS**, Page 8



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War and fellowship in Georgia

ATLANTA **W**e really need to know each other better. So many of the divides in our society — racial, social, economic — disappear when we spend time with each other. I have been blessed — and my life has been enriched — by everyone who has shared with me their life's story.



Inside Story
The diversity we encounter is a gift from God. So it was at this year's National Lectureship, an annual gathering of predominantly African-American Churches of Christ. The West End, Camp Creek and Bouldercrest congregations in the Atlanta area sponsored this year's event. My wife Joy and I first attended the lectureship in 2009 in Jackson, Miss. We've returned many times since to be spiritually uplifted and to continue *The Christian Chronicle's* mission to connect with Christians across our fellowship. We want to share great stories of what they're doing for the Lord. Few church events are more meticulously planned, well-executed and inspiring than the National Lectureship. The seven-day program's theme was "This Means War: Effective
See **LECTURESHP**, Page 4



BOBBY ROSS JR.
Preachers listen to a speaker during the recent Austin Sermon Seminar in Texas.

For preachers, a textual feast

SERMON SEMINAR affords spiritual — and physical — food.

BY **BOBBY ROSS JR.** | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE
AUSTIN, Texas — Welcome to the Lone Star State capital, where major events include the South by Southwest Festival and the Keep Austin Weird Fest & 5K. A lesser-known annual festival: the Gourmet Preachers Tour, conducted during the Austin Sermon Seminar. The informal tour involves a dozen or so minister friends. It usually starts with Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que. Favorites such as Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen and Chuy's Tex-Mex follow. Don't forget nightly visits to Amy's Ice Creams. "We emphasize fellowship," said

Larry Roberts, minister for the Daugherty Street Church of Christ in Eastland, Texas. "A lot of it has to do with the psalm that talks about oil flowing down Aaron's beard, I think," quipped Greg Fleming, minister for the North A Church of Christ in Midland, Texas, referring to Psalm 133:2. Joking aside, it's not really the food — but rather the chance to feast on God's word — that keeps these preachers returning to Central Texas. For 36 years, the Austin Graduate School of Theology has hosted the Sermon Seminar.

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In Guatemala's young churches, elders abound

BY **ERIK TRYGGESTAD** | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

PATZITÉ, Guatemala
Nearly 50 *Iglesias de Cristo*, or Churches of Christ, meet in Guatemala's Quiché department, the heartland of the ancient Mayan empire. They worship in simple adobe buildings, assembled by hand on high mountaintops, at the end of winding dirt roads and on bustling city street corners, awash in diesel fumes. How many are led by elders and deacons? "Todas!" says Francisco Aguarré with a quick wave of his hand. All of them. In truth, says Kemmel Dunham, a medical missionary translating for Aguarré, there may be one or two Churches of Christ in Quiché (pronounced "Kee-CHAY") that don't yet have the leaders described in the
See **ELDERS**, Page 14



Aguarré



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

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"Brother Dave" Mellor, mission trips and church relations coordinator for Health Talents International, says hello to a young Guatemalan during a medical clinic hosted by the Las Trampas Church of Christ in the country's Quiché department.



LYNN McMILLON

Teens at the National Lectureship gather before a visit to the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta. The teens also participated in afternoon classes.



LYNN McMILLON

O.J. Shabazz, minister for the Harlem Church of Christ in New York, speaks on "Satan's Affliction with God's Permission" during the 2017 National Lectureship in Atlanta.

LECTURESHIP: Reclaiming 'broken churches, a broken brotherhood'

FROM PAGE 3

Strategies for Spiritual Warfare." The intent was "to bring awareness to the people of God regarding the schemes of Satan as he wages war against the Church of Christ and all of humanity," said Orpheus Heyward, minister for the West End Church of Christ, who co-hosted the lectureship with Camp Creek minister Howard Wright and Bouldercrest minister Kelvin E. Teamer.

Across our nation, Wright sees "broken hearts, broken health, broken friendships, broken dreams, broken churches, a broken brotherhood," the minister said.

"We must take back God's territory from Satan," he added, quoting the prophet Isaiah's ancient words as he called the church to proclaim the Good News to the poor, liberty

to the captives and to "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Among the lectureship participants were "Young Soldiers" who wore military style dog tags and carried camo backpacks as they learned about Atlanta's place in history. Each morning 100 or more teens took field trips to locales including the World of Coca-Cola and the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. In the afternoons they attended classes and a special youth worship service.

Oh yes, and they had choir practice and learned to sing together—which they did Wednesday night at the evening session. It was great. What a blessing for these youths to have time to spend with each other and share their faith.

The lectureship also featured a

new track of classes and activities, Tier 1, geared toward young adults. The track included classes focused on social issues from a Christian perspective, service projects and late-night activities and fellowship.

Of course, the National Lectureship had its renowned worship and preaching sessions three times per day. The passion of worship in these gatherings is deeply inspiring, and the lessons elevate the authority of Scripture. Praising our Father was a dominant theme in many songs.

Morning classes dealt with a range of subjects — from sharpening preaching skills to ministering to the addicted. David Wilson of the King's Church of Christ in Brooklyn, N.Y., taught preachers the significance of making sermons verifiably relevant, since listeners

nowadays often fact-check during the sermon. Along with other speakers, he stressed teaching from the Bible as God's Word, a noticeable theme in the lecture series.

The Elect Ladies' Luncheon on Wednesday included a dynamic and inspirational lesson from Mikki Taylor of *Essence* Magazine — regarded as a beauty authority for women of color. The lectureship also included practical classes for Christian women.

Beyond the classes, the field trips and the wonderful worship, the time spent meeting new people and visiting with friends was perhaps the greatest blessing. I love deepening old friendships and making new ones and am always thankful to know fellow Christians better.

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SPOTLIGHT

Happy 111th birthday!

AUSTIN, Texas — Richard Overton, America's oldest living World War II veteran, turned 111 years old on May 11.

His home congregation, the Church of Christ in Hyde Park, celebrated his birthday on the Sunday following his birthday. A special video presentation included the Gaithers singing "Happy Birthday" to him.

Overton was baptized in spring 2012 at age 106, Hyde Park deacon James Tackett noted.

For several years after his baptism, he regularly drove his pickup truck to worship and also continued to mow the lawns of some of his neighbors because, he said, they were too old to do it themselves.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JAMES TACKETT

Richard Overton blows out the candles on his cake

GEORGIA

DECATUR — When longtime Sunday school teacher Clara Redmond's class wrote then-President Barack Obama, she didn't know what to expect.

Redmond's Hillcrest Church of Christ class sent nearly 25 letters to the first black president in U.S. history — and to everyone's surprise, he wrote back, *The Champion* newspaper reported.

Redmond said a class discussion inspired her students to write Obama before he left office. The response included a letter and a signed portrait of the Obama family.

"Your generation gives me great hope for the future, and I trust you'll stay engaged in our democracy," said the note, addressed to "Mrs. Redmond's class" and signed by Obama.



HORACE HOLLAMAN, THE CHAMPION NEWSPAPER (DEKALB COUNTY, GA.)

A Sunday school class in Georgia wrote to former President Barack Obama — and he wrote back.

KANSAS

LEAVENWORTH — Army Col. Michael Waymon Summers, who preaches for the Leavenworth Church of Christ, recently retired as the chaplain for the Georgia National Guard.

A 24-year veteran, Summers was the third Church of Christ member to serve as a state chaplain. He holds a bachelor's degree in Bible from Freed-Hardeman University and a master's degree in theology from Harding School of Theology.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARD

Col. Michael Waymon Summers, with wife Morissa.

MAINE

FARMINGTON FALLS — Fellow New England Christians are rallying to help the Farmington Falls Church of Christ.

The church lost the use of its building after its furnace failed. Bids for repairs range from \$5,000 to \$7,000. The congregation has some funds saved and is looking into a loan to cover the rest.

"This is a good cause," said Charlie Harrison, minister for the Brunswick Church of Christ.

Contributions may be sent to: Farmington Falls Church of Christ in care of Bruce Rollins, General Delivery, Farmington Falls, ME 04940.

OKLAHOMA

KINGFISHER — The recent Mighty Men's Conference drew 217 men from six states, Kingfisher Church of Christ minister Steve Minor said.

"Mighty is designed to train, equip and inspire men to lead and train others to lead in their homes, churches and communities," Minor said. "The day was filled with excitement and conviction as men were challenged to be leaders."



BOB MANFRE

Preacher parachutes to church

SEWELL, N.J. — Dan Cooper, minister for the Pitman Road Church of Christ, took the scenic route to worship on a recent Sunday. Cooper rode in a "powered parachute" piloted by church deacon Aaron Pearl. "We flew about 30 minutes at an altitude between 500 and 1,500 feet," Cooper said. "We took off from a little airport with a grass runway and landed in the farmer's field next to our church building." Pearl earned his pilot's license recently and called that Saturday to invite Cooper for a ride Sunday. The minister agreed, but only if Pearl promised to get him to worship at least 30 minutes early.

'Pity granted'

A PARKING OFFICER – and minister – gets national press for his note of compassion.

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Writing tickets is something Jim Hellrood, a parking enforcement officer in Wausau, Wis., does every day.



Hellrood

"I'm a meter maid, that's what I am," he told *The Christian Chronicle*. He's also minister for the 45-member Mountainview Church of Christ. Recently, he came across a car that had been left in a metered lot overnight. It's a frequent sight in the lot, which is adjacent to three bars. A note on the car read, "Please take pity on me. I walked home ... safe choices."

"I didn't recognize the car. It's not like she does this every weekend," Hellrood said. He left a ticket that read, "PITY GRANTED JUST A WARNING."

The owner later shared the note with the police department. Soon, it went viral on Facebook and other social media.

CNN, CBS, Fox News, Huffington Post and numerous others have covered the story. Hellrood even got a message from a friend who learned that the story was in a South Korean newspaper.



PHOTO PROVIDED

A driver shows her note and the merciful ticket.

"This whole thing is much ado about nothing," Hellrood said. "It's frustrating because I work with these officers who risk their lives every day and, yet, I am the one making national news because I wrote a warning." As a Christian, Hellrood said he tries to offer mercy — even though the whole idea of mercy seems to conflict with his job. "When your job is writing tickets, that's a conflict right there," he said. "I work for a department that's all about giving people a chance."



Girls Gathering attendees pose for a photo. The North Davis Church of Christ in Arlington, Texas, hosted the 2017 event.

Creating space for teen girls

ARLINGTON, Texas

It's called the DFW Girls Gathering. The goal: "To create space for teen girls to connect with God in a culturally relevant, spiritually grounded and challenging way."

Since 2012, this annual event has brought together hundreds of young women and adult sponsors at Dallas-Fort Worth-area Churches of Christ.

The North Davis Church of Christ in Arlington hosted the recent sixth Girl Gathering, drawing an attendance of 220.

"Girls Gathering has been special to me because it is a creative weekend with experiences and teachings that emphasize the truth that young women are created in the image of God, pursued by his love and prepared for great works," said Crysty Kimberlin, youth minister for the Preston Road Church of Christ in Dallas.

"This is a truth that each of us hopes to continually convey to our own students on a regular basis," Kimberlin added. "However, not all churches have female youth ministers that are working full time to embed this gospel message in the identity of their young women."

Kim Lowe, family minister for youth at the GracePlace Church of Christ in Duncanville, Texas, said Girls Gathering allows female ministers to use their gifts "on a broader scale through the convention and learn from one another as we do so."

Meanwhile, the teens benefit from a spiritually transforming weekend that involves service and hearing from older Christian women on how they live out their faith, Lowe said.

Kimberlin, Lowe and Kera Hubbard, a former youth minister who leads a North Davis ministry serving area pregnant teens, have served on the Girls Gathering leadership team from the start.

"It was an incredible blessing for all of us to be able to work together to impact so many lives at the conference each year," Kera Hubbard said. "Lifelong friendships were made between students and adults as we all came together, in a uniquely feminine way, to honor, praise and worship God. It truly was our honor to be used by God to reach so many teen girls."

Past conference hosts include the Richardson East Church of Christ (2012), the Preston Road church (2013 and 2016), the Altamesa Church of Christ in Fort Worth (2014) and the GracePlace church (2015).



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JEFF HUBBARD
Since the first Girls Gathering event in 2012, Kim Lowe, Crysty Kimberlin and Kera Hubbard have served on the leadership team.

MILITARY: Three ministries meet

FROM PAGE 1
of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas — supplied songbooks and worship materials.

“The AMEN program is only as successful as the military member allows,” Holston said. “It is very easy to deploy and forget about everything but the mission.”

As Saucier points out, the U.S. Armed Forces represent a distinct subculture of American life, presenting opportunities — and challenges — for church leaders.

“As in any missionary endeavor, it is important to understand the culture you are trying to reach, just as Paul did when reaching out to either the Jewish or Gentile communities,” said Saucier, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel who served as a chaplain.

To help improve outreach to service personnel, three ministries associated with Churches of Christ recently convened a meeting to discuss each group’s mission, goals and methods for ministering to the Christian military community, organizers said.

The meeting at the Bear Valley Church of Christ in Denver included:

- **AMEN**, which is sponsored by the Manchester Church of Christ in Connecticut. The ministry connects military men and women with local congregations and organizes spiritual growth workshops.
- **Military Outreach and Encouragement**, known as MORE, which is sponsored by the Mayfair Church of Christ in Huntsville, Ala. Retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Ed Linebaugh directs the ministry, which works to build morale among service personnel.
- **Military Outreach**, a teaching ministry of the Bear Valley church. Retired Navy Chief Petty Officer Dick Brant leads the program, which sends teachers and teaching teams to military congregations worldwide.

“I don’t believe anything like this has happened before,” Saucier said of the meeting, “and we were looking



PHOTO PROVIDED
Retired Army Lt. Col. John Phillis at the Yokota Church of Christ, across the street from a Tokyo-area U.S. Air Force base.

for clarity on each ministry’s distinctiveness and possible duplication of effort. It was an opportunity to get to personally know the leaders of each ministry and to see where we might support each other’s efforts in caring for the military community.”

Phillis, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, preached full time in New Mexico after leaving the military and later worked with the Kaiserslautern Church of Christ in Germany.

Over the last year, Military Outreach assignments have taken Phillis all over the world. He spent five months in England and three months in Japan, preaching, teaching and encouraging military congregations.

In many cases, military members work full time — and overtime — and then scramble to come up with a Sunday sermon, Phillis noted.

“So having someone there to fill that role is really, I think, a relief,” he said. “But it’s also crucial in their maturing process.”

Saucier’s advice for Christians who want to benefit military members: Make sure young people leaving home to defend the nation’s freedom know the church will be there for them.

“Send us the names of these new recruits so we can assist them, or help us go where they are to preach and teach God’s word,” Saucier said. “This is what our military ministries are all about.”

Military ministries associated with Churches of Christ

American Military Evangelizing Nations (AMEN)
amenministry.info

Military Outreach and Encouragement (MORE)
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Kimetra Johnson (who goes by "Kim") and her children, George Banks III, 8, and Se'Niah Banks, 12, play a game and enjoy popcorn at the family's Mount Dora apartment.



Jarred, the 11-year-old son of Wendy Merrill, practices his martial-arts moves while a family friend, Samantha Paradis, sits on the steps outside the family's apartment.

SINGLE PARENTS: Trying to break the cycle of dysfunction

FROM PAGE 1

prompted the creation of a new program serving entire families.

On its campus not far from the town's specialty stores and antique shops, Mount Dora Children's Home equipped private homes and apartments to serve single parents and their children.

"Before, we would get the child from point A to point B, then the child would

go back home for the week-end or for an extended period of time at Christmas, and everything we had

worked for was just down the drain," said Chuck Shepherd, longtime director of the Florida children's home.

"We thought, 'Why not bring the entire family in, as opposed to just the child, and try to break that cycle?'" added Shepherd, also an elder of the Orange Avenue Church of Christ in nearby Eustis.

TAKING THE PRESSURE OFF

After six years in the retail industry, Wendy Merrill suffered a worker's compensation injury and

lost her job.

She and her two children — Jamie, 18, and Jarred, 11, who has autism — moved in with her parents. But then her father got laid off from his work.

That's when the family found Mount Dora Children's Home.

"We don't have to worry about the power getting shut off because I didn't work enough hours this week,"

said Merrill, who is pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of Central

Florida while working part time. "I've got a support system to help the kids. So that takes the pressure off."

The children receive free tuition at nearby Mount Dora Christian Academy, both now and after the family transitions out of the program. Jamie Merrill just finished her senior year and received a scholarship to attend Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala. Jarred Merrill is active in martial-arts programs.

Parents like Wendy Merrill comprise a fast-growing segment of the U.S. population. Since 1960, the proportion of children living with a single parent has tripled to 27 percent, the

Blessed be the Caregivers

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PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Victoria Llora, a Filipino immigrant, reflects on the journey that led her and her son to Mount Dora Children's Home.

U.S. Census Bureau reports. In 2016, that figure represented 20 million kids, more than half living in poverty.

Like Mount Dora, other children's homes associated with Churches of Christ have developed programs for single parents — including Potter Children's Home in Bowling Green, Ky., New Mexico Christian Children's Home in Portales, N.M., and Arms of Hope children's homes in Texas.

"Single parents are out there," said Coley, author of a book titled

"Parenting With Power." "They need the church, and we need to open our hearts and arms."

NO LONGER HUNGRY

Before coming to Mount Dora Children's Home, Victoria Llora worked at a hospital where she received a small food allowance.

The Filipino immigrant would eat a little and bring the rest home for her son, Jude, now 17.

Now, the children's home's pantry supplies mother and son with canned goods and non-perishables — allowing them to fit meat, cheese and milk into their grocery budget.

"I like it because it takes a big burden off my mom," Jude said as pasta boiled on the stove in their apartment. "Without this, we would probably be sleeping in the car or still not having any electricity or water."

"I love that he gets to go to a private school," his mother said.

In all, the Mount Dora program serves seven single mothers, one single father and 16 children.

Typically, single-parent families stay in the program for two years, but temporary extensions are possible.

As part of its services, the home offers counseling and mentoring for the families. Parents get help,



Brooke Hobgood

"It's the best thing that's ever happened to me. It's the best decision I ever made. They are wonderful here. I'm able to save money to be able to get back on my feet. It's just been a huge blessing. And now both girls go to school here. Lucy's in preschool, and Emma's going into second grade. ... Just in these few months, I've become so much stronger. I never in a million years thought I could be that way."



Neil Zierden

"Until the day I die, I'll be this woman's friend (referring to social worker Johnnie Coley). She taught me how to hug and hugged me when I needed loving. She just knew that I needed a big bear hug, and I'm still working on it because I'm not a big hugger. But I've become one, and I needed them. I needed a lot of hugs and prayer and a lot of guidance. Our kids and my family are truly blessed."



Kimetra Johnson

"We were given an opportunity of a lifetime to be a part of this program. It's stability for all of us in a Christian background. I'm still working on my education, still working full time and still trying to maintain a home life and two small ones. Sometimes, it's a lot. Like any parent, I get overwhelmed. But the program also allows counseling if you need it, and I can go and talk about different ways to do stuff."



Wendy Merrill

"It's made my faith stronger, and it's definitely made the kids' faith stronger. The biggest thing is, I can't say the three of us would have been so connected to each other and stable if it wasn't for the program. The children have a faith base, a direction, a moral compass. And in the world we live in, that's a very difficult thing to stabilize. I've had the support to be able to do that for them."

too, with goal setting, financial planning (including opening a savings account) and Bible study.

Kimetra Johnson is the mother of Se'Niah Banks, 12, and George Banks III, 8.

"We're blessed to have a roof over our head," Johnson said. "But it's not all fun and games. I've learned how to stay within my budget, and that was a big thing in coming here. I needed to make changes."

To qualify for the program, single parents must agree to certain conditions. Among them: No dating while living at Mount Dora Children's Home. The home's staff wants participants to focus on their children and improving family dynamics.

"I think that's actually a blessing in disguise," said Wendy Merrill, whose children have different fathers. "I'm one of those people that collect broken people. ... Through therapy, I'm learning that I have to force myself to step away from those kind of relationships."

Another requirement: The families must attend either the Mount Dora Church of Christ or the Orange Avenue congregation. The program aims to help lead families to Jesus Christ or — if they are Christians — inspire closer bonds with the Lord.



Jude Llorra, 17, works on his studies while his mother takes a break from making dinner at the family's apartment.

"Before, I wasn't attending church or doing devotionals," said Brooke Hobgood, mother of Emma, 7, and Lucy, 3. "Now every morning before I get out of bed, I have a devotional — just a little Scripture that I read — and then I pray. Those are little things that are huge to me."

Coley flashed a smile as she listened to Hobgood. The social worker didn't know about the devotionals.

"That's very exciting when you see the fruit bearing," Coley said. "It's a joyful thing."

AFTER THE TRAGEDY ... BLESSINGS

Neil and Rhonda Zierden were married for nearly 20 years before the explosion that claimed her life.

Besides helping her husband start their business, the mother of two worked as a registered nurse.

"She had the smile of an angel and had a huge heart for others," her obituary noted.

Since losing his wife a year ago, Neil Zierden has shed bucketfuls of tears. He knows his pain won't ever go away, at least not completely. But he finds comfort in the support his family has received.

Clothes in his children's sizes show up unexpectedly at his family's door. Piles of birthday and Christmas gifts arrive at just the right times.

An anonymous donor gifted the Zierdens with an all-expenses-paid visit to Walt Disney World.

"I'm not a crier. I'm a cop," said Zierden, a detective with the state Fire Marshal's Office. "But I get very emotional when people do things for me out of love."

A year ago, the family was "in shock and beat down," he recalled. That so many Christians have lifted up his family has helped the Zierdens regain their strength.

"Both Miranda and Brett have

more courage in their little fingers than most people have in their whole bodies," Zierden said. "They are beautiful, proud, strong kids."

"The mere fact that they got through this past school year and passed is a miracle," he added, as his children beamed. "But they not only passed, they excelled. I am very proud of both of them."

As for himself, Zierden said he has grown much closer to God.

Before he and the children eat a meal, they hold hands — that was Miranda's idea — and pray.

In the past, Zierden wasn't "a flag-waving Christian in church every time the doors were opened," he said.

But now?

"I don't have an issue with saying we are blessed by God to anybody, because that's the only way it could have happened," Zierden said. "It's just powerful."

"There are a lot of people that say a lot of things about religion, but they don't act that way outside Sunday," he added. "These people at Mount Dora are not just religious and spiritual on Sunday, it's a seven-day-a-week lifestyle. With the tragedy we've all been through, we are so blessed and so loved by so many."

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WIZARDS, ZOMBIES AND VAMPIRES dominate young adult literature. S.J. Dahlstrom adds cowboys, family and faith to the mix.

Tales of an honest-to-God cowboy

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Our children are being brought into a world of constant, flickering distraction and amusement. We should not forget that we have real adventure to offer them, if we can have the courage to turn off their machines and screens and take them outside."

So said S.J. Dahlstrom as he accepted the 2017 Western Heritage Award for his young adult novel "The Green Colt," the fourth book in "The Adventures of Wilder Good" series. The books celebrate the great outdoors, seen through the eyes of 12-year-old Wilder.

Elements of faith — including detailed descriptions tiny church buildings, coat racks loaded with cowboy hats — permeate Dahlstrom's writing. The real-life cowboy grew up in Churches of Christ and once served at Timothy Hill Children's Ranch, a church-supported ministry in New York. He and his family live in West Texas and worship with the Quaker Avenue Church of Christ in Lubbock.

In an interview with *The Christian Chronicle*, Dahlstrom talked about his desire to help children unplug from their devices and experience "dirt, trees and rocks ... real, authentic adventure."

You've been a cowboy, worked at a children's home. How did you make the jump to author?

I think a lot of people who make art on some level have had that little impulse for a long time. I always liked to write poems, but I didn't really try to start doing it as a professional until I met a great man, John R. Erickson, who writes the "Hank the Cowdog" series. He's a believer and a great guy. Most of the people in the Southwest probably have a "Hank the Cowdog" book on their shelf.

I met him about 12 or 13 years ago, and we developed a friendship. We both love cowboying. He was my mentor. He said, "That's great that you want to write books, but you're not a little genius. You're going to have to work." He taught me to get



Accepting an award at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, author S.J. Dahlstrom talks about "rattlesnakes and rivers ... dark nights, cold winters," urging young readers to "go outdoors and face the difficult beauty of the world."

up every day to write — and realize that the first million words you write are going to be garbage, but you've got to keep working.

About five years later, I had a manuscript that was decent and shopped that around — and just kind of built a career from there.

Tell us about Wilder Good. Does he reflect you on some level?

He's 12 years old. He has a mom and a dad and a little sister. They go to church three times a week — much like how I was raised. He spends time in the outdoors, so the first book is about him on a hunting trip with an older man, Gale, who's an elder at the church.

My oldest kid is 14, and I started writing these books, really, so they

would have these values and they would know what it was like to grow up without an iPhone in your hand, without killing 10,000 zombies every day on a video game.

These books aren't saying, "Stop playing video games," but they are role-modeling great experiences in the outdoors, *real* adventure.

"The Green Colt" has a vivid description of a small Church of Christ in the country. You can almost picture yourself there on a Sunday morning. Tell us about what went into that story.

I'm thrilled that you can see yourself there. I was raised in a small community in Roosevelt County, N.M., and went to the Floyd Church of Christ until the age of about 15.

We were there three times a week. I think it was about four families, maybe 35 people. It was a small white building. I didn't know anything else. My dad was the part-time preacher. He preached every other Sunday. I grew up leading singing on the front pew with my dad.

I think lots of Church of Christ kids grew up in these small churches. I appreciate the values I learned there. I try to pass those on to my kids, so they show up in the Wilder Good books — down to the baptistry with the lush mountain scene painted behind it, even though we were in the middle of brown-as-can-be West Texas and eastern New Mexico. That was my raising.

There's a distinct lack of magic wands or children hunting each other in these books. Was there a concern they wouldn't sell?

That's certainly accurate! The biggest genre in YA, young adult literature, is dystopian — kids killing kids and a lot of teen relationships and sexual pressure. You walk into Barnes & Noble and that's what you see. If you want to get successful really fast, that's what you need to write. I didn't want to do that.

I wanted to write books that I was raised on, like "Old Yeller," books with dogs and horses and real adventure, books with old people in them — with grandparents and kids learning from each other. I wanted to write books about family — something that's been taken out of most of young adult literature.

I didn't know if it was going to be successful or not. We're selling books. They're not "Hunger Games." They're not "Harry Potter." But they're doing well. And they are books I'm proud of — in the sense that I can let my mom read them.

I think there are a lot of people in art who make compromises to get their stuff out there. I'm proud that these stories aren't doing that.

Full-time Associate Minister

Echo Meadows Church of Christ is seeking a full-time associate minister that is well grounded in Scripture to work with our youth and families. We are located in Oregon, Ohio. Qualified candidates must possess a Bible degree from a Church of Christ affiliated college or university and have previous experience as a minister. We offer a competitive-salary package based upon education and experience and includes four-bedroom parsonage. Please submit a resume, cover letter, and three references for consideration. Also include two recent sermon samples (CD/DVD, flash drive or online link).

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Stoney Creek Church of Christ, Hamilton, Ontario, is seeking a full-time minister. We are a self-supporting, progressive congregation eager to reach the community. Candidates need in-depth Biblical knowledge, life-application, communication skills, and the ability to relate to people with diverse backgrounds. Candidates should submit a resume and three references with phone and email information to:

StoneyCreekMinisterSearch@outlook.com
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DAHLSTROM: Author on preaching vs. storytelling

FROM PAGE 11

Are the books finding an audience in big cities?

My publisher is in Philadelphia. They don't shoot a whole lot of deer in downtown Philadelphia. They don't hunt many elk, they don't rope many cattle, but they like the books. They get reviews by *The Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes*. Those aren't hunting or fishing magazines.

I think there are people who are beginning to say, "I'm not sure that was a good thing that I raised my kid on an iPad." So I think the books are finding their place. Millions of people everywhere hunt and go fishing. They want their kids to spend time at church — with elders and grandfathers and grandmothers.

Anything else you want say about faith and writing?

Preaching in the Churches of Christ has been the best preaching anywhere for many years. However, for the most part, I think we learn through something older than preaching — storytelling. The Wilder Good books don't preach at people, but there is a subtlety in the storytelling that shows how valuable faith is to this kid.

In the first book, when Wilder is about to shoot an elk — and it's this big and beautiful elk — he sits there and he stops and he thinks, "Is God OK with this?" He's growing up around people shooting animals and eating animals. He knows God exists. He sees this beautiful piece of creation, and he has to reprocess the right and wrong of that. What are his values about shooting and killing?

It's the same thing Peter thought about, perhaps, when God told him to "kill and eat" in Acts 10. It's the same thing Adam and Eve probably thought about the first time they killed an animal and ate it. Even though God had sanctioned that, it wasn't fruit.

Those values inform every piece of the storytelling. They are part of who I am, and without those values I wouldn't be honestly telling the story.

WEBSITE: www.wildergood.com

WHAT WE'RE READING: Aiden Laxon, age 9, shares thoughts on his favorite Wilder Good books, Page 31.

ALBANIA

DURRES — “What makes the church grow?” Christians in this Central European nation — along with believers from the U.S. and Italy — pondered that question during an annual retreat for Churches of Christ. About 135 people attended.

“The retreat was great, and it was the biggest so far,” said Shkelqim Kafexhiu, a minister in the

Albanian city of Durres. Among the participants were 15 members of the Adams Boulevard Church of Christ in Bartlesville, Okla. After the retreat the mission team taught Bible studies in the two congregations in Durres, using materials from World English Institute.

HONDURAS

OCOTEPEQUE — Bob Young spent a few days on the border of El Salvador and Honduras recently, preaching and teaching.

The longtime minister and missionary instructed students at the Border Bible Institute. The institute, supported by Monett, Mo.-based Doors Slammed Open Ministries, has campuses in the towns of Ocotepeque, Honduras, and San Ignacio, El Salvador. Young also preached for congregations in both locales.

“Border Bible Institute has excellent students — capable, alert, interested and serious,” Young said. “It was a joy to teach them, to interact with their questions and to spend time with them.”

INDIA

PUNADIPADU — A former Muslim named Sreekar, who converted to Christianity last year, shared his testimony with about 400 souls during a recent gospel meeting in this village near the Bay of Bengal. Minister Prabhu Kumar helped organize the event.

RWANDA

MUSANZE — A restoration movement is growing in this small African nation, said missionary Doyle Kee.

Kee, who lives in Switzerland and



GLENN LIBUT LEGASPE

Trusting — and obeying — in the Philippines

On the island of Leyte in the Philippines, minister Arnold Legaspe baptizes Kim Mercadal as Kenneth Mostasisa watches, holding a Bible and a hymnal open to the song “Trust and Obey.” Mercadal became the newest member of the Isabel Church of Christ, a congregation of about 30 souls on Leyte, the island where U.S. Gen. Douglas MacArthur made his historic landing in the campaign to retake the Philippines in World War II.

“The Isabel congregation was started three years ago as a result of gospel meetings, Bible studies, medical missions and relief efforts after Super Typhoon Yolanda,” said missionary Michael Stock. “It has always been our belief that, in order to teach the Gospel of Christ, we must first show the love of Christ.”

produces Bible studies for the French-speaking world, first encountered members of the Church of the Rock — a network of 12 congregations in rural Rwanda — in 2015 when some of the churches’ members signed up for Bible correspondence courses. Kee and other Christians, including Amou Akembe of Burundi, have traveled to Rwanda to study with and train church leaders.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Vocaliz’ sings praise songs in Geneva.

The network of churches has grown to 16, all of which “now want to be considered a part of the fellowship of Churches of Christ around the world,” Kee said. “The leaders spoke of all the members being baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.” The churches also take the Lord’s Supper weekly, he added.

SWITZERLAND

GENEVA — Christians sing in the streets of Geneva, Switzerland’s second-largest city, population 484,000.

Vocaliz’, a choral group from the Geneva Church of Christ, share a cappella hymns in their city’s historic squares. Recently 12 students from Harding University in Searcy, Ark., joined the vocal group during a month-long visit to Geneva. Together, they performed a combined public concert.

SPOTLIGHT

A site of human sacrifice redeemed

URUK OTONG, Nigeria — On land once used for human sacrifices, Nigerians learn about a human sacrifice that happened more than 2,000 years ago.

“My great-grandfather was a traditional ruler, a native doctor, a juju priest,” explained Aniefiok Akpan, minister for the Campus Church of Christ in the Nigerian village of Uruk Otong. The priest was in charge of “the most dreaded juju shrine of his time, where animal and human sacrifices were offered to pagan gods.”



Akpan

Three generations later — on that same land where blood was spilled — children learn about Jesus’ sacrifice, and Christians sing praises to God. In addition to the Campus church, the property includes a K-12 Christian school, Rhema Christian Academy, and a preacher-training program, World English Institute and School of Ministry. The school hosts its first annual workshop for elders and ministers in December.

Soon, a new church building “will be erected on the exact spot where the sacred tree of the native shrine once stood,” Akpan said.

World English Institute, or WEI, helps students improve their English through Bible-based studies. The ministry’s founder, Dick Ady, praised Akpan and his fellow Christians for “training preachers and WEI evangelists who will spread the good news about Christ throughout Nigeria and beyond.”



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Campus church worships on Sunday.

ELDERS: Churches 'can't put off' appointing leaders

FROM PAGE 3

New Testament books of 1 Timothy and Titus — godly, humble husbands and fathers who shepherd autonomous congregations.

But the percentage with elders is strikingly high for Central America, where mission work among Churches of Christ began in earnest a mere half-century ago.

In many Latin American churches, a sole minister — sometimes supported by U.S. dollars — leads the flock. In these churches, missions researchers warn, dependency can cause growth to stagnate. Developing indigenous leaders can take 20 years or more, ministry trainers tell *The Christian Chronicle*.

U.S. Christians who have worked in Quiché credit the Mayans' adherence to Scripture, their cultural disposition toward consensus and even a lack of U.S. influence as factors in the growth of elderships across the brotherhood.

Dunham and his wife, Dr. Lisa Dunham, live in the Quiché city of Chichicastenango and work with Health Talents International, a medical evangelism mission supported by Churches of Christ. They oversee a clinic outside the city and organize mobile medical trips among the churches spread



Kemmel Dunham collects a small fee for prescription medicines during a mobile medical clinic at the Patzité Church of Christ.

across central Guatemala.

The detail-driven, indigenous leadership of the Mayan Christians is a blessing, Kemmel Dunham says.

"Lisa and I ... the work that we're able to do is so easy," he says, "because the churches are so great."

FINDING STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

Aguarré is one of three elders of the 150-member Patzité *Iglesia de Cristo*. The church meets on his family's property — a steep hillside that can be seen from most of the town. When they built the auditorium 37 years ago, it was the biggest church building for miles, he says.

Smartly dressed in a sweater vest, sunglasses and a fedora, the 70-year-old sits in a small room of a sunlit courtyard. His wife and four of his seven daughters live here as well. In the courtyard, family members wash dishes after feeding a lunch of soup and corn-cake *tamalitos* to the Health Talents volunteers.

As the U.S. and Guatemalan medical workers see the last patients of the afternoon in the church building, Aguarré talks about his life before Jesus.

Like most Guatemalans, he grew up Catholic. He also drank a lot, and

it left him penniless. He visited various churches looking for help, but no one would invite him in.

His diet at the time was wine and river water, he says. One day a Christian man saw him at the river and confronted him. He needed Jesus. "I said, 'No, I'm still strong,'" he recalls, "but in my heart, (I said) yes."

He started attending a Church of Christ and was baptized. But his conversion, nearly 42 years ago, upset his staunchly Catholic community — especially when he started preaching a gospel different from what they taught. Neighbors accused him of stirring up trouble and ran him out of town. He took shelter among the Churches of Christ on Guatemala's Pacific coast.

He began working with Pat Hile, a missionary from the U.S., and became a circuit preacher, planting and encouraging new congregations.

PLANTING CHURCHES, SETTLING DISPUTES

Four decades later, Aguarré serves the Patzité church and assists two other, newly planted congregations in Quiché. He and a small group of fellow elders coordinate evangelistic efforts across the region. They recruit other Christians from cities

including Chichicastenango to help new churches grow. They help settle disputes within congregations.

"When you hear about conflicts happening, he's one of the first guys there," Kemmel Dunham says of Aguarré. The church elder also conducts workshops to encourage new congregations to appoint elders and deacons of their own, usually within two years of launching.

"They want to have some time to build a church up and evangelize," Aguarré says. But when it comes to appointing elders, "you can't put that off for too long. You're trying to find the guys that are going to take responsibility."

Kemmel Dunham describes Aguarré as "one of the drivers" behind the Quiché churches' organization — and the region's high percentage of elder-led congregations.

"In some ways, some would say that he's heavy handed," the medical missionary says, "but that's good."

CONFLICT 'WAS ACTUALLY A BLESSING'

Looking back, Aguarré sees the persecution he endured early in his Christian life as positive. It forced him to move outside his comfort zone, interact with multiple congregations



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

After a checkup, a mother and daughter walk downhill from the church building.



Luke Fletcher takes the blood pressure of a patient during the Patzité clinic.

and become more evangelistic.

In the same way, missionaries from the U.S. see the trials endured by Guatemala’s impoverished souls as contributing to church growth.

Most U.S. Christians who worked in Quiché were forced home during a guerrilla conflict here in the 1980s.

In retrospect, “this was actually a blessing for the Quiché churches,” says Roger McCown, a former missionary to the region who now serves as missions minister for the Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ in Austin, Texas.

Without U.S. support, Guatemalan churches took up the challenge to lead their own congregations, McCown says. Many built large houses of worship entirely with local money. Some congregations write on their walls the number of *quetzales*, Guatemala’s currency, pledged by each member — and how much they’ve contributed toward their pledges.

“For traditional Mayans, that which is given away is considered to be of little or no value,” McCown says. “I would challenge the leaders of U.S. churches to avoid creating the dependencies that plague congregations in other Latin American countries.”

Though elders may be plentiful in Quiché, churches still face struggles, adds Pancho Hobbes, another former missionary to the region, now minister for the Capitol Hill Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

“The Mayan brethren’s adher-

ing to such a scriptural title is one thing,” Hobbes says, “but actually implementing Christ-like shepherding is another matter, as we in U.S. churches know all too well.

“In the wider Hispanic world, by contrast, it’s their cultural heritage to be ruled by a *cacique* (chieftain), a traditional father figure, through his personal force of will. One observes this in Hispanic churches and politics.”

WHAT IS MEDICAL MISSIONS’ TRUE VALUE?

In Patzité, the Iglesia de Cristo at the top of the hill is no longer the biggest church building in town, Aguarre says. Charismatic denominations are sprouting across the region, and a massive church compound stands on a mountaintop across the valley.

But Churches of Christ are well-known here, thanks in part to Health Talents, the church elder adds. The ministry provides the underserved Mayan people with low-cost health care. (Patients pay a small fee for the medicines they receive.)

Perhaps more important, Aguarre says, is the interaction that Christians here witness between Health Talents’ workers and the people they serve.

Seeing U.S. and Guatemalan Christians work hand-in-hand, turning houses of worship into houses of healing, inspires the believers here to do likewise — to reach out to meet their neighbors’ needs as they share Jesus.

“That,” Aguarre says, “is real help.”



HERITAGE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Heritage Christian University is conducting a national search for its next President.

The university seeks in its next leader the values, skills, and knowledge to build upon its commitment to the advancement of churches of Christ by equipping servants through undergraduate and graduate programs and continuing education. The new president will continue HCU’s legacy of producing effective communicators, preachers, teachers, and missionaries for real-world ministry with a focus on evangelism and a commitment to scripture.

The new president must be a person of strong faith in Christ, evidenced by exemplary character, personal integrity, respect for scripture, love for souls, and service to the Lord’s church.

The Board of Directors has named a Presidential Search Committee that will seek broad input, identify and interview candidates, and make recommendations to the Board.

Interested parties should submit a resume and any relevant information on or before August 15, 2017, to Dale Kirkland, Heritage Search Committee Chair, at HCUPresidentialSearch@gmail.com.



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ERIK TRYGGESTAD

In the mists of metropolis, God reveals his beauty

BOGOTÁ, Colombia

This *isn't* the view most people come to Monserrate to see.

That would be 180 degrees behind me — the city of Bogotá. From here at 10,397 feet, you can see planes taking off from the airport and watch the sun set over this South American metropolis of 8 million souls.

It's impressive. There's little doubt.

There's a Catholic shrine here that a lot of folks come to visit. Inside you'll find *El Señor Caído*, The Fallen Lord. It's a small statue, dating back to the 1600s, that depicts a weak, emaciated

Jesus, lying on his side, struggling to rise. Perhaps it's a reference to the Catholic tradition that Christ fell three times on the way to his crucifixion. (Scripture doesn't tell us that — only that Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry Jesus' cross.)

My visit to Bogotá is the conclusion of a whirlwind trip across Latin America. I accompanied my wife, a pediatrician, on a medical mission trip to Guatemala before flying south to Colombia, where I visited a church-planting team in Cúcuta, a city on the Venezuelan border.

Pedro Villa (at left with me in the inset photo) graciously offered to host me on my stopover in Bogotá.

Road Notes



Erik Tryggestad

He's a fascinating guy — a native of Mexico who grew up in Texas after his dad was recruited to preach for some of the early Spanish-speaking Churches of Christ there. He's worked as a film producer and once was a missionary to Bogotá.

He's never forgotten his love for this city and its people, so last year he moved here. Now he works with the Northside Church of Christ, a small, middle-class congregation.

He sees potential for the churches of Colombia to be shining beacons of hope in busy, bustling cities where a lot of people acknowledge God but don't live out the truth of the Gospel.

Their lord, perhaps, is a fallen lord. Pedro thought I should see Monserrate before I left Bogotá, so we took a cable car to the top. In between

panoramic shots of the city, I noticed a rainbow in the mist behind me.

It got brighter — probably the most brilliant rainbow I've ever seen. It seemed so close. I could actually see through it. I could make out the trees on the mountainside, painted in brilliant yellow, indigo and red.

Most impressive. There's no doubt. We build massive cities that we can view, in awe, from the highest heights. We carve images of the divine based on our limited understanding and make pilgrimages to see them.

But these are hollow reflections, a chasing after the wind, compared to the glory our Creator reveals to us through his creation.

Boy, am I glad I turned around.

CONTACT: erik@christianchronicle.org



Dr. Lisa Dunham and medical missionaries arrive at Xepocol for Sunday worship.



Young women prepare laminated tags bearing the Sunday service's topic, "In search of my spiritual gift," for members and guests of the Xepocol Church of Christ.



In four-part harmony, a team of young men sings hymns as Tomas Chan (at front, not pictured) leads worship for the Xepocol church. The songs include contemporary songs such as "Me Gusta Estar en tu Casa," the Spanish version of "I Love to be in Your Presence."

When the youth group takes over

A SMALL, RURAL CHURCH in Central America challenges its young believers to take the lead in organizing a Sunday worship service.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

XEPCOL, Guatemala

It only looks like a church in the middle of nowhere.

It's deceptively high-tech. The meeting place of the Xepocol Church of Christ resembles most of the small, adobe buildings that dot the rural Guatemalan landscape. Beneath its roof of simple wood beams and clay shingles, the hand-painted words "Iglesia de Cristo" stand out against the bright yellow facade.

There's room only for two or three vehicles to park — after a Sunday morning drive over steep, dusty roads.

Inside, however, the floor is littered with cables that connect multiple microphones to speakers. As visiting biology students — here on a



Noé Chan preaches during the youth gathering about using spiritual gifts.

medical mission trip with Health Talents International — make their way inside the building, young Guatemalan men wave to them as

they test the connection between their laptop and the church's overhead projector. Young women pin full-color, computer-generated tags onto each guest with the day's theme: "*En búsqueda de mi don espiritual*" ("In search of my spiritual gift").

Christians from the city of Chichicastenango launched the church about 20 years ago. The growing number of converts here — a result of outreach by the local women — necessitated the birth of a new congregation, says Gaspar Chan, who grew up in Xepocol and now serves as one of the church's elders. Chan's father — once a follower of the traditional Mayan religion, converted when Gaspar Chan was 12 — was one of the Xepocol church's founders, along with Manuel Xirum.

The church has about 150 in attendance most Sundays. Chan, an evangelist and counselor for Health Talents, says he doesn't do as much preaching and coordinating here as he used to.

Why? "Because so many of the youths have taken over those duties," he says in Spanish as his Health Talents coworker, Dr. Lisa Dunham, translates.

The church has nine teams of worship leaders, Chan explains. Each is responsible for welcoming guests, preaching, leading singing and coordinating the Lord's Supper on a rotating basis. The young adults have their own



Gaspar Chan

group. In addition to assisting during worship, the youths host a monthly Sunday afternoon gathering before the church's main service.

That gathering includes hymns, led by a team of young men, complete with lyrics beamed from the overhead projector and displayed on a moving video background. Among the songs is "*Dios No Esta Muerto*," a Spanish version of the Newsboys' contemporary Christian hit "God's Not Dead." The youths produced the a cappella arrangement themselves. They practiced regularly — and relentlessly — to get it right.

"The key principle is organization," says Chan's nephew, Mauricio, a member of the youth team. "Every group has to have some leadership and organization. If you don't have

someone coordinating, it falls apart."

The team started singing together while doing construction work on the church building, says Tomás Chan, one of Gaspar Chan's four sons and the youth service's worship leader. Most of them couldn't read music or harmonize. They got help from another congregation, and Tomás Chan started learning chords.

"We realized we needed to pick up the pace," Tomás Chan says of the church's singing. "And now the church doesn't like just melody. They like to sing parts."

Young men also lead prayers and serve communion during the service. Another Chan brother, Noé, preaches from Romans 12, urging his fellow youths to follow the apostle Paul's

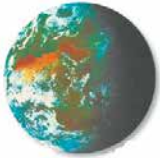
See **YOUTH GROUP**, Page 20



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Manuel Chan serves the Lord's Supper during Sunday worship in Xepocol. One of his brothers, Noé Chan, preached to his fellow youths about the need to serve God with all their hearts. "We can't present ourselves as a sacrifice if we're still holding on to ourselves," Noé Chan said.

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Raymond and Jane Johnson

Dedication to education — and an abiding love the Lord — are the themes that run throughout the 46-year marriage of Raymond and Jane Johnson. And for 26 of those years, they’ve supported The Christian Chronicle’s mission to inform, inspire and unite.

The couple met as college students at East Central University in Ada, Okla. After graduation, they worshiped with the Del City Church of Christ in Oklahoma. Raymond Johnson worked with the Oklahoma Legislative Council and his wife worked for the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

The couple then moved to Wilburton, Okla., to work for Eastern Oklahoma State College. Raymond Johnson later worked for the public education administration in Tulsa, Okla. Next came 25 years in the southern Oklahoma town of Tishomingo, where the couple worked at Murray State College for several years before Raymond Johnson moved to Southeastern Oklahoma State College in nearby Durant. He then came full circle, returning to — and eventually retiring from — East Central in

Ada. Jane Johnson retired from Murray State. Raymond Johnson, 70, served as an elder in Tishomingo for seven years — and another three in Ada. Their dedication to teaching doesn’t stop for weekends. Both have served as Bible class teachers.

How did you learn about *The Christian Chronicle*?

Raymond: I don’t remember the first time I read it, but I liked it immediately — to have a newspaper that was designed like a newspaper. To give you news throughout the brotherhood, not really focused on doctrinal issues but news, that was unique. It was an excellent publication and still is. I know the awards the Chronicle receives are outstanding. I’ve enjoyed the Chronicle and seen what’s happening across the brotherhood and have wanted to support it all along.

Why have you chosen to support the *Chronicle* all these years?

Jane: The Chronicle is a good work. Its articles keep the brotherhood informed, and it showcases what’s going on in areas that we probably wouldn’t know about otherwise.



To make a donation — or to learn how you can bless the *Chronicle* through our monthly Keepers program — contact Lynda Sheehan at (405) 425-5070.



After worship, as they wait for a large delivery of pizzas, biology students from Oklahoma Christian University introduce Guatemalan youths to a game called Ninja.

YOUTH GROUP: The present, not future, church

FROM PAGE 19

admonition to present themselves “as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” by using their talents.

“When Paul is writing this, it’s like he’s speaking to you directly,” Noé Chan preaches. “A lot of times we do the opposite of what God wants. ... We have to tell God, ‘Here I am.’”

“What would happen if all of us would work? How joyful it would be. What if we came to church not to sit, but to be active? I think then there would be a lot of fruit. And the church would grow spiritually and physically.”

Gaspar Chan says he’s seen positive changes in the church’s youth group, now about 30 strong, in recent years. They help the widows and young children in their community. Many youths in Guatemala

drop out of school to make money peddling souvenirs on the streets of Chichicastenango. But most of the church’s youths have completed high school. Noé Chan has studied physical therapy and now works for Health Talents.

The only problem, the church elder says with a chuckle, is that many of the congregation’s young women recently have married and moved away, leaving them in need of “*más señoritas*.”

“The youth are the present of the church — not the future of the church,” Gaspar Chan says. “It is the responsibility of the older people to leave room for the younger people to take on leadership positions. Otherwise, you’ll start losing youths. I’m so thankful that we haven’t lost any of our young people.”



Gaspar and Juana Chan, center, stand with members of their family and workers with Health Talents International after Sunday worship with the Xepocol Church of Christ.



Elliott Harris gets canine companionship as he recovers from a spinal cord bleed.



Members of the East Point Church of Christ youth group traveled from Kansas to visit Elliott Harris during his stay at Craig Hospital, a rehabilitation facility in Denver.



Ernie Harris takes the confessions of his sons, Elliott and Luke, before baptism.

After paralysis, a spiritual healing

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A young man’s decision to be baptized is, for most families, a cause for celebration.

For Elliott Harris’ family, it was terrifying.

“Elliott had been talking about getting baptized. He was just starting to think about it seriously before his incident,” Ernie Harris, Elliott’s father, told *The Christian Chronicle*.

That was two years ago. Elliott, an active member of the East Point Church of Christ youth group in Wichita, Kan., returned home from high school after tennis practice and developed an strange, intense headache. Within hours, he lost function on one side of his body.

His parents rushed him to the emergency room. From there, he was transferred to Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Mo. By the next day, he was on a ventilator. His family was in shock.

Doctors discovered that Elliott had a bleed inside his spinal cord — caused by what his dad described as a faulty blood vessel. It was an issue he likely had had since birth, but one they were never aware of, until now.

Elliott spent months in the hospital. The once-active teen’s life changed drastically. He’s now paralyzed and has a tracheotomy to assist his breathing.

And that is why, when Elliott told his parents he wanted to be



PHOTOS VIA VIDEO STILLS AND WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ELLIOTTHARRIS2017

Members of the East Point Church of Christ in Wichita, Kan., celebrate with Elliott Harris after his baptism. Harris’ brother, Luke, was baptized first and then joined the group of men who carried Elliott into the pool and immersed him.

baptized, they hesitated.

“He said, ‘Mom, it’s going to happen,’” Ernie Harris said.

If any water were to get in Elliott’s tracheotomy, just a few drops could have dire consequences. So his dad went to work, meeting with medical professionals to figure out a plan for the baptism that would keep his son safe.

The strategy was elaborate. Church members set up a large, inflatable pool in the auditorium that

would allow Elliott to be lowered on a stretcher by a group of volunteers. His family wrapped his tracheotomy opening with multiple layers of waterproof material and a cloth to soak up any water that might get through.

“We knew if we got him in the pool on a board, it was just one, two, three — straight down and up,” Ernie Harris said.

Paramedics were on hand for the baptism — just in case.

“I found out after the fact they

were somewhat uneasy when they figured out what was going on,” Ernie Harris said.

Elliott’s older brother, Luke Harris, asked to be baptized on the same day — a mere 48 hours before he left for training in the U.S. Navy. Luke Harris was baptized first, and after he rose from the water, he joined the group of Christian men who carried Elliott into the water and quickly immersed him.

“I thought it would work,” Ernie Harris said. “With a lot of prayers and the Good Lord watching over us, it worked.”

Elliott Harris, now 18, doesn’t let paralysis stop him from achieving his goals, his father said. The young Christian recently graduated from high school and plans to attend Wichita State University this fall.

His father marvels at his son’s courage and determination.

“How does somebody take what has happened to him and see it as, ‘I didn’t die. This is what I have. This is what I’ll work with?’” Ernie said.

His fellow Christians are equally impressed by the baptisms, said Michael Jones, minister for the East Point church.

“It was beautiful to see so many people working together to overcome the obstacles of Elliott being baptized,” Jones said. “Elliott wasn’t healed physically that day, but he was healed spiritually, and that is the healing that matters most.”

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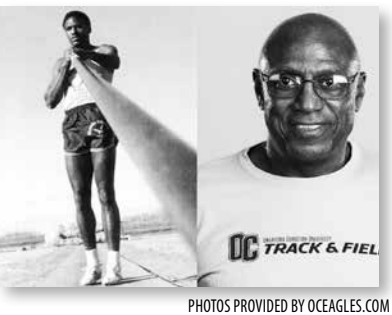
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NEWSMAKERS



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY OCEAGLES.COM
Jeff Bennett, then and now.

INDUCTED: Jeff Bennett, assistant track and field coach at Oklahoma Christian University, will be inducted Aug. 14 into the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame. Bennett, a deacon of the Edmond Church of Christ, finished fourth in the decathlon in the 1972 Olympics. He was a four-time NAIA All-American as a student-athlete at Oklahoma Christian.

NEW MINISTERS: Patrick L. Cannon, preaching minister for the Walnut Church of Christ in Texarkana, Texas. He succeeds his father, John H. Cannon Jr., who served in that role since 1999. **Gary Davenport**, preacher for the Northwest Church of Christ in Durant, Okla.



P. Cannon

NEW ELDERS: William Wang and Andy Ezisick, Metro Church of Christ in Adelaide, a suburb of Sydney, Australia. **Charles White**, Linder Road Church of Christ, Meridian, Idaho.

NEW DEACONS: Steve Jones and Mike Kish, Linder Road Church of Christ, Meridian, Idaho.

RETIRING: Don S. Dickerson Jr., preacher for the Gainesville Church of Christ in Florida. **Don Meredith**, head librarian, and his wife, **Evelyn Meredith**, library staff member, for Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn.

Milestones

Showcasing the moments of your life and the lives of loved ones.

Birthdays

111th: Richard Overton, May 11, Austin, Texas. **95th:** Eugene Perry, July 19, Beamsville, Ontario, Canada. **90th:** Ralph Scott Burcham, June 29, Edmond, Okla.

Anniversaries

Glen and Peggy Moore
65 years

Glen and Peggy were married on July 19, 1952, at Lueders, Texas, and will be celebrating 65 years together with family and friends on July 22 at the Sunset Church of Christ in Carlsbad, N.M.



They have five children, eight grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. The Moores have lived in Arlington, Fort Worth and El Paso, Texas, and currently live in Carlsbad, N.M. They have been loving, faithful and active members of the church, and they are always ready to give a helping hand to anyone who crosses their path. Congratulations, Glen and Peggy!

Memorials

Jack Lee Cooley
1932-2017

Celebration of life services for Jack Lee Cooley were held on Thursday, May 18, 2017, at the 4th and Jackson Church of Christ in Hugo, Okla., with Steve Harbison, Scott Dutton, and Roger Raper officiating. Jack passed away May 13, 2017, in

Bonham, Texas, at the age of 84. Jack and his twin sister, Janice, were born Oct. 22, 1932, in Powderly, Texas, to Joseph and Myrtle (Popham) Wharton. Both of their parents died before the twins were 18 months old. W.B. Cooley and his wife, Ella, adopted the twins, and the twins then took the Cooley name.

Jack had lived in Choctaw County most of his life and was a lifelong member of the 4th and Jackson Church of Christ. He attended Hugo High School and Central Christian College in Bartlesville, Okla. Jack was drafted into the United States Army in his sophomore year of college and was a combat veteran of the Korean War. After being discharged in 1955, he returned to Hugo and helped run the family business, the Hugo Steam Dry Cleaners and Laundry. He met the love of his life, Shirley Boone, and they married on July 20, 1956, in Hugo, Okla. He retired from the Frisco and Burlington Railroad Company where he worked as an engineer for nearly 35 years.

Jack was very involved in his community. He served as a board member for the Choctaw Historical Society from 1976 until his death. He served on the Choctaw Memorial Hospital board



for 13 years and was a member of the Chamber of Commerce. He served his church as a Bible class teacher, song leader, jail minister, and as one of the elders for many years.

Jack was very talented. He was a professional photographer and operated a studio; he was an excellent carpenter, and he operated a rental property business.

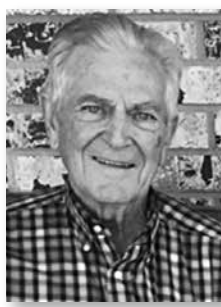
Jack was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Myrtle Wharton and W.B. and Ella Cooley; brothers, Horace, Joe, and Clifford Wharton;

sister, Aliene Wharton; daughter, Denise Schulz; and grandson, Nathan Schulz.

Jack leaves, to cherish his memory, his wife, Shirley, of the home; son, Jackie (Cyrisse) of Colorado City, Colo.; grandsons, Jason (Jennifer) Schulz of Calera, Okla., Ryan Cooley of Colorado Springs, Colo., and Shawn Cooley of Corvallis, Ore.; great-grandson, Jagger Schulz of Calera, Okla.; great-granddaughter, Ava Marie Schulz of Calera, Okla.; twin sister, Janice Smithson of Irving, Texas; sister, Cleo Moseley of Paris, Texas; nieces and nephews; and a host of friends.

Ernest Leon Eldridge
1936-2017

Ernest "Leon" Eldridge, 80, died May 18, 2017. He was born on June 12, 1936, in Liberal, Kan., son of Merle and Hazel Pennington Eldridge. He graduated from Hardesty High School in 1955. He was self-employed in electronics and



audio visual repair. He married Shirley Lafavers in 1955, and they had two daughters, Crystal Eldridge Loden and Jeanette Eldridge Zeller. They have four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. After Shirley's death, he married Carol Cooper Adams in 1995 and gained two more daughters; Lisa Adams and Lori Adams Hammond and seven grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his parents, his wife Shirley and his brother Verle Eldridge. He is survived by his wife Carol, his children and grandchildren, and his brothers Cleb Eldridge, Eldon Eldridge and Roy Cooper.

More Milestones, Page 24

Entries should be submitted to milestones@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5071. Rates and guidelines are available upon request (credit card preferred).

Milestones

William Harold Fletcher 1923-2017

Dr. William Harold Fletcher, age 93, legendary music and philosophy professor, of Edmond, Okla., died May 27, 2017. One of the longest tenured professors in the nation, Dr. Fletcher was born Dec. 4, 1923, in Hamlin, Texas. He and his beloved wife of 57 years, Mary Helon McAnulty, raised four loving children. She preceded him in death in 2001.

He received a bachelor's and master's in music from Hardin-Simmons University and a Ph.D. in the philosophy of education from The University of Oklahoma. Dr. Fletcher was the first and ultimately the longest-serving faculty member (1950-2014) at Oklahoma Christian University, Oklahoma City (originally Central Christian College, Bartlesville, Okla.).

He was a scholar, an intellectual, and an extraordinary teacher. At Oklahoma Christian, he received the Gaylord Chair of Distinguished Teaching and was inducted into the Master Teacher Hall of Fame. In 2005 the university established the Harold and Mary Helon Fletcher Center for Music to honor their influence.

In Oklahoma in the 1970s, Dr. Fletcher won a competition by the Oklahoma Heritage Society with "The Oklahoma Set," six songs about statehood, and in 2008 the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame inducted him as a member.

Harold Fletcher's greatest legacy was in the hearts of people. He loved and mentored students and friends without ceasing. His kindness, integrity and humanity were long remembered. In the 1960s, with Mary Helon's support, he became the most ardent advocate of civil rights at Oklahoma Christian.

He is survived by four children: Alicia (Bob) Burch, of Prairie Village,

Kan., Nancy Fletcher Snyder, Sylvia (Gary) Hurst, and John (Cynthia) Fletcher, all of Edmond; one sister, Marilyn (R.C.) Swaim, of Abilene, Texas; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; nieces, nephews, and countless friends. Harold Fletcher was a giant of a man, an icon, and a gift. We won't know his like again.



Helen B. Gross 1914 - 2017

Helen Baker Gross passed away peacefully with her niece by her side at Kindred Hospice in San Antonio, Texas, on Friday, April 21, 2017, at the age of 103. She was the youngest of 13 children, born to James Artemas and Sarah Alice Baker in Lockney, Texas, on Feb. 15, 1914. She was a life-long member of the Church of Christ.

After high school, Helen attended Lippert Business School in Plainview, Texas, where she met L.E. (Edward) Gross. They were married Dec. 26, 1936, and were blessed with one daughter, Elizabeth Alice (Beth) who passed away after a long illness at the age of 33.

In 1950 the family moved to Port Lavaca where Edward worked in the smelting section at the newly-built ALCOA plant in Point Comfort, Texas. Then in the late 1950s Ed and Helen began their business, Port Lavaca Real Estate and Maintenance. Helen continued running the rental portion of the business from her husband's death in 1980 until her health prevented her from doing so in 2016.

Helen was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, her daughter, her grandson, and her 12 brothers and sisters. She is survived by numerous nieces and nephews as well as numerous great-nieces and nephews and great-great-nieces and nephews living throughout the United States.



Ray Wayne Lovejoy 1933-2017

Ray Wayne Lovejoy, age 84, passed from this earth to his heavenly dwelling with a smile on his face on June 17, 2017. He was born to Ethel and William Lovejoy on Jan. 5, 1933, at their farmhouse in Tipton, Okla. They were quite surprised when the doctor announced that they were proud parents of not one but two baby boys! Ray considered being a twin one of God's greatest blessings. He and Roy were the youngest siblings of Merl, Glen, Loyd, and Floye.



Ray attended school in Tipton for 12 years. He took great pride in being a Tipton Tiger where he was a star football, basketball and baseball player. He was also voted "Best All-Around Guy" by his peers his senior year, which is the perfect description of his easygoing personality. His life was forever changed when he watched a young, beautiful girl named Carolyn Wright play basketball for the Wilson Wolverines. He gave her his heart on her 15th birthday when he kissed her goodnight. They married on May 25, 1952. For 63 years he was totally devoted to her for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health. This devotion was a shining light to family, friends and even strangers of what a marriage centered in Godly faith can be.

Ray Lovejoy loved the Lord, loved his country, loved his family, and loved people. After graduating from high school and getting married, he was drafted into the Army in February, 1953. He was trained to be a military policeman and took great pride in serving his country.

He went to work for Geologist in 1955. In 1964, he decided to go into the real estate business with a good friend in Lovington, N.M. He opened Lovejoy Real Estate in 1969. In Lovington, he was known to be an

honest businessman that would make a deal on a handshake. His office was open for business, but it was also open to anyone who just wanted to drop by for a coke and conversation. Ray loved to talk and never met a stranger. Many times that conversation became a counseling session where the person who "dropped by" usually left with a smile on his or her face, because Ray's eternally optimistic personality was contagious.

Ray became a Christian when he was in the Army, and his love for the Lord and the Bible was also contagious, which made him a great Bible school teacher. He faithfully served as an elder of the Church of Christ in Lovington, N.M., for 25 years and in Lubbock, Texas, for five years.

He gives "his Carolyn" all the credit for his Christian faith that he shared freely with anyone he met.

Ray's love for his wife was witnessed by many as he patiently cared for her daily as she fought Alzheimer's for 10 years. He was an amazing father and role model to Barry and Judy, and he cherished his role as "Papa" to his grandchildren: Dan, Jodie, Conrad, Meagan and Lee; and his great-grandchildren: Elijah, Kloe, Leo, Isaiah, Raz, and Crawford. He also was adored and called "Papa" by many college students from Oklahoma Christian University.

Ray is preceded in death by his parents, his brothers, his great-grandson Damon Ray, and his beloved wife Carolyn. He is survived by his sister, his son Barry (Kathi) Lovejoy from Lovington, N.M., and his daughter Judy (Alfred) Branch from Oklahoma City. He is also survived by his five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and many more loving relatives. He leaves behind numerous friends from his homes in Lovington, N.M., Lubbock, Texas, and Edmond, Okla.

Honor/Memorial Gifts

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in honor of Bobby Ross and in memory of Jack Lee Cooley.

Entries should be submitted to milestones@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5070. Rates and guidelines are available upon request (credit card preferred).

Shank to step down from Ohio Valley University presidency

VIENNA, W.Va. — Ohio Valley University President Harold Shank will step down at the end of the 2017-18 academic year.

Shank, a long-time minister and educator and a former reviews editor for *The Christian Chronicle*, assumed top post at the 550-student university in 2011. OVU is associated with Churches of Christ.

Shank will become chancellor of the university after his presidency, following the tradition established by former President E. Keith Stotts. Stotts will continue his tenure at



Shank

OVU as chancellor emeritus. In his new role, Shank will pursue university interests in church development and biblical scholarship and lead a variety of special projects. “The past few years show important progress in Christian higher education at Ohio Valley University, and I want to advance the school any way I can,” Shank said. “I’m continually impressed by the commitment of our constituencies and the success of our students.” The OVU board expressed appreciation for Shank’s leadership, noting that during his tenure the university achieved full 10-year accreditation, expanded its academic offerings and explored alternative means of financing for Christian higher ed.

NBA team names Christian college grad general manager

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

His name isn’t as recognizable to basketball fans as Danny Ainge or Pat Riley. But those who know Jon Horst said he’s the right man to lead the Milwaukee Bucks as general manager.

“It’s been a whirlwind, but I’m energized,” the 34-year-old Rochester College graduate said during a news conference announcing his promotion. Horst joined the staff of the National Basketball Association team in 2008.

Two years earlier, he earned a degree in sports management from Rochester, a 1,100-student school, north of Detroit, associated with Churches of Christ. Garth Pleasant, coached Horst when he played for Rochester’s basketball team.

Pleasant told *The Christian Chronicle* he was “happy, and not surprised” when he learned of Horst’s appointment.



Horst

During Horst’s years on the team, Rochester won the U.S. Collegiate Athletic Association National Championship in 2004 and 2005. “He always does what he’s supposed to do — and then he does more,” Pleasant said. “Jon didn’t play a whole lot for us, but, yet, Jon was looked upon by his teammates as a leader of the team.” “Never did somebody play so little but contribute so much to our program.” Beyond basketball, Horst is a man who lives out the lessons Jesus taught in his Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 5, Pleasant said. In a news release, Bucks owners Wes Edens, Marc Lasry and Jamie Dinan said they believe Horst will help them build the Bucks into a championship-caliber team. Pleasant said he has no doubt his former student will go far in his new role, describing him as “very unassuming,” the kind of person who “never calls attention to himself.” “But boy,” Pleasant added, “is he an achiever!”



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For more info about starting the program this September, contact Barbara Price at barbara.price@oc.edu or 405.425.5391. Enrollment will remain open until October 15.

New director, same AIM

ADVENTURES IN MISSIONS' *Cory Burns prays that the short-term program will have lasting Kingdom results.*

BY PAULA HARRINGTON | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

From the dusty West Texas city of Lubbock, more than 1,400 young Christians have set out to spread the Gospel to the farthest reaches of the globe.

Adventures in Missions, or AIM, an apprentice program of Lubbock-based Sunset International Bible Institute, provides college-age believers with about 600 hours of intense Bible study — spread across eight months. The program then sends students to serve Churches of Christ in domestic and international locales for two years.

“They want to know the Bible better; they want to build a closer relationship with God, and they want to build more confidence in teaching others about Jesus,” said Kris Smith, a former AIMer, about the top three reasons students choose the program. For 18 years Smith served as director of AIM before handing the reins to another former student in the program, Cory Burns.

The program started in 1973, when a group of 16 young Christians traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to assist missionaries there. Upon returning and sharing their stories, the program was born. In the past 44 years, AIM students have served in 47 countries.

Smith, who grew up in Lubbock, moved to the southern African nation of

Botswana at age 15 with his family. After training in the AIM program, he returned to southern Africa, serving as a missionary apprentice in the tiny nation of Lesotho. He followed



Cory Burns, left, a former student in AIM, succeeds his mentor, Kris Smith, as the program's director.



Since 1973, the Adventures in Missions program has sent more than 1,400 young Christians to serve churches in 47 countries.

previous AIM directors Jay Jarboe, Rex Boyles and Don Solomon.

Burns, a native of Clovis, N.M., grew up at the West 21st Street Church of Christ. He enrolled in AIM in 1996 and served as an apprentice in Moscow, working alongside missionaries Gary and Danita Jackson.

“It was amazing,” he said of the experience. “It was very difficult, but very fulfilling at the same time.



PHOTOS VIA WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/AIMSUNSET

“I was there a few years after communism fell. Lots of people were interested in studying the Bible. It was the time in my life that I had the most Bible studies going on.” In Russia, Burns had multiple, one-on-one Bible studies each day. He assisted teams from Let's Start Talking, another church-supported ministry that teaches non-native speakers to improve their English using the Bible.

“I remember our having a portable PVC baptistry in my kitchen,” Burns said. “It was fun seeing so many give their lives to the Lord.

“Gary and Danita really invested in me. They are a big part of why I am in ministry today. They are also where a lot of principles of being a good AIM coordinator comes from.”

After his time in Moscow, Burns moved to Guadalajara, Mexico, with his wife, Toni, and their young family in 2005. They worked with a network of house churches, alongside missionaries Chad and Nancy Schroeder, Joe and Elaine Pruett, Robert and Shelly Herrera, and Tim and Kim Rush. Mexican Christians Gerardo and Carola Garcia also assisted in the work, which including serving the homeless, micro-lending and ministering with the Hope Foundation, which helps people with diabetes.

“God blessed us to see churches started in several parts of the city,” said Burns, who returned with his family to the U.S. in 2014.

As he worked alongside Smith, training new generations of AIMers, Burns praised his mentor.

“If I only had two ways to describe Kris, I would say that he is full of wisdom and integrity,” Burns said.

“We have always said that God is the director of AIM, and we intend to prayerfully go where we feel he is leading us,” the new director added. “My prayer is that what each student accomplishes for the Kingdom in his or her short time in AIM is only a fraction of what he or she is accomplishing for the Kingdom 10 and 15 years from now.”

Kiera Kinnaird, a member of the 12th Street Church of Christ in Seagraves, Texas, and an AIMer serving in Mexico City, said that both Smith and Burns “played a huge role in my life, faith and life of faith.”

During her training in Lubbock, both men “poured into us love, encouragement, advice, experiences, discipline and a whole lot of Jesus,” Kinnaird said. “They did this all with humility, gentleness, care and laughter. Their families are no different.

“Our class was spoiled, to say the least, to have had the overlap of Kris and Cory. Words cannot express how excited I am for Cory to be taking the reins beginning with this next class in August.”



Kinnaird

WEBSITE: www.aimsunset.org.



AUSTINGRAD.EDU

In 2007, the school moved from near the University of Texas to north-central Austin.

Austin Graduate School of Theology

LOCATION: Austin, Texas.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Ranges between 90 and 110. The school serves students with backgrounds in Churches of Christ as well as those simply seeking accredited theological study, leaders said.

MISSION: "The Austin Graduate School of Theology is a seminary associated with Churches of Christ and in conversation with all who confess Jesus as Lord. Our mission is to promote knowledge, understanding and practice of the Christian faith by equipping Christians and churches for service in the Kingdom of God."

HISTORY: Launched as a Bible chair at the University of Texas in 1917, the program was expanded in 1975 with the offering of a bachelor's degree in biblical studies by arrangement with Abilene Christian University. That same year, the Bible chair was incorporated as the Institute for Christian Studies. In 1978, an undergraduate program in ministry was initiated for the purpose of training ministers, teachers and missionaries.

ACCREDITATION: Independent accreditation was granted in 1987. Since then, more than 200 students have earned an undergraduate degree. Those graduates serve throughout North America and five other continents. Graduate theological education was incorporated into the mission in 1992 when a master's degree was offered with ACU.

NAME CHANGE: In 2001, the Institute for Christian Studies launched its own graduate program and became the Austin Graduate School of Theology.

PROGRAMS: Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies degree completion (online), Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies (on campus) and Master of Arts in Theological Studies (on campus).

SOURCE: www.austingrad.edu

SERMON: 'Honoring the holy work of preaching'

FROM PAGE 3

"I love how the Sermon Seminar feeds both my mind and my soul as a minister," Clyde Slimp, preaching minister for the Westhill Church of Christ in Cleburne, Texas, said in an email. "It sharpens my ability to share God's word faithfully while also helping me consider how to preach it effectively."

"I also like the encouraging fellowship of everyone there, and how (President) Stan Reid and the Austin Grad faculty help put the heart back into ministers by honoring the holy work of preaching God's word to God's people," added Slimp, who has attended nine of the last 13 years and led worship at the recent four-day seminar.

Austin Grad traces its origins to the University Avenue Church of Christ's establishment of a Bible chair at the University of Texas in 1917.

The seminary, which offers a bachelor's degree in Christian studies and a master's degree in theological studies, plans a centennial celebration Oct. 19.

Reid spent 25 years in congregational ministry before assuming Austin Grad's top post in 2003. He began attending the Sermon Seminar before he joined the school's faculty.

"It's always had an emphasis on preaching biblical and expository sermons," Reid said of the seminar, which drew about 80 ministers this year. "We focus on the biblical text and try to help preachers get good research material that will help them develop biblical sermons."

'A THEOLOGICAL EXEGESIS'

Jim Eubanks, minister for the Dallas-area Forney Church of Christ, has preached for 47 years.

For the last 30 years, Eubanks

has made his way to the Austin Sermon Seminar.

"I come here for one reason," the 77-year-old preacher said, "because this is not an issue-oriented semi-



Reid

nar — it is a theological exegesis."

This year's topics and speakers included "Preaching from Job," taught by Rick Marrs of Pepperdine University;

"Preaching from Ezekiel," taught by Steve Cloer of the Southside Church of Christ in Fort Worth; "Preaching from 2 Timothy," taught by Reid; and "Christian Ministry in Digital Culture," taught by John Weaver of Abilene Christian University.

Often, Eubanks said, a single word or phrase by a seminar speaker will trigger a whole year's worth of additional Bible study when he returns home.

"I want to learn something that will help me go deeper," he said.

Richard Shields, minister for the Newland Street Church of Christ in Garden Grove, Calif., agreed: "They don't give sermons. ... They give tools and ideas for study and development."

REFRESHMENT AND NEW IDEAS

Roberts, one of the Gourmet Preachers Tour organizers, has completed 50 years of full-time ministry.

"I tell everybody that I come here every year to the Sermon Seminar because I'm still trying to learn how to preach," he said with a chuckle.

On a more serious note, he said, "We not only benefit from the classes, but we have discussions nearly everywhere we go together about various things that are brotherhood oriented and doctrinally oriented. You just go back with a lot of refreshment and new ideas."

As Fleming sees it, the seminar turns Austin into a sort of modern-day Jerusalem.

"You kind of get a sense maybe," Fleming said, "of what happened for Israel when you had the festivals and went to Jerusalem — just the time you spend together."



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Clark Tatum, bottom left, takes notes during the Austin Sermon Seminar. Tatum preaches for the 14th and Main Church of Christ in Big Spring, Texas.

EDITORIAL

Leave room for God's wrath

'You deserve it!'

That's what Darren Osborne, a 47-year-old man from Cardiff, Wales, yelled after he plowed into pedestrians near a mosque in north London, witnesses say.

One man died and nine people were hospitalized after the assault, which followed attacks by extremists near London Bridge and in the city of Manchester, England. Islamic State terrorists claimed responsibility for those atrocities. The mosque attack appears to be retaliation for the previous acts of terror in the United Kingdom.

We shudder to acknowledge it, but Osborne's words reflect a darkness that we secretly harbor as we watch report after report of Islamic terror in Europe.

They hate us. They seek to enslave us, to destroy us. Don't they deserve to die?

At times like this, we're thankful to serve a God who doesn't give us what we deserve.

"The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed," King David writes in Psalm 103. God is *"compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."*

"He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."

How, then, should we respond to injustice? The apostle Paul gives counsel in Romans 12:

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."

These words do not fade or lose their meaning with age. They are not subject to circumstance.

God's truth does not change.

The longer we live, the more time we spend in Scripture, the more we realize there truly is nothing new under the sun.

We mourn for the lives lost — for those deprived of days in which they might have encountered and been transformed by the life-giving power of the cross. We pray that their families may know the comfort of Christ and that the hardships they endure will point them to the Way.

As we wait for God's justice, we must do everything in our power to share his Gospel with this lost and dying world.

May God shine through us as he continues to deny us what we deserve.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

'It's our honor to pray'

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

— John 14:13, New International Version

LAS TRAMPAS, Guatemala

This was a short walk, unlike many others.

We were conducting a medical and dental clinic in the meeting place of the Las Trampas Iglesia de Cristo when some of the locals

invited us to visit Maria, an elderly lady who lives in a lush valley down the hill from the church building. She suffers from a chronic respiratory illness, one that has left her debilitated. Many women suffer from this due to cooking over an open fire for so many years.

When we visit patients in their homes, we make it clear that we don't charge money for prayer, as some groups in Guatemala do. It's our honor to pray, share the Gospel and be of service.

When we enter a house, we do so with respect. Many times I feel inadequate. We are their guests. I am sure that, in many situations, I am the only person from the United States that has ever entered their home.

In the Word



Sheri Kretzschmar

With Maria, we listened as she and her family told us about the struggles and difficulties she has had for many years. I examined her, gave her some medication and explained how to use it. She is a Christian, a member of the local congregation, so we know that she has a relationship with God.

We prayed that Maria would have peace and comfort during this time. We prayed that her family will have the strength to care for her. The medications will give some comfort, but greater comfort and peace will come from the Father. What strength and power there is in prayer. The God that created this universe listens and responds. We give him all the glory.

Each patient is different. The common factors are that we want to serve, God is always with us, and our prayers are answered.

SHERI KRETZSCHMAR is a registered nurse from Winston-Salem, N.C. She lives in Chichicastenango, Guatemala, and serves with Health Talents International. She blogs at sheriinguate.blogspot.com.

AS THE U.K. MOURNS victims of recent attacks, a British believer considers the causes of ‘cowardly, unjust’ acts – whether they’re labeled ‘terrorism’ or not.

‘Londoners have lived through much worse’

LONDON
On June 6, people across the United Kingdom observed a minute’s silence as they honored those affected by a terror attack in London three days earlier.
Patrick Boyns, a native Londoner and principal of the British Bible School in Corby, England, noted that the date of the observance was the 73rd anniversary of the invasion of Normandy by Allied forces during World War II.

On D-Day in 1944, an estimated 425,000 people were killed, wounded or went missing. At least 2,700 British troops were among the casualties.

Views
“Londoners have lived through much worse than this,” Boyns said of the June 3 attacks near London Bridge, which claimed seven lives.
After the recent attacks in London and Manchester, England, *The Christian Chronicle* reached out to members of Churches of Christ in the United Kingdom for reaction.

Following are additional thoughts from Boyns:

“As for reaction to the recent attacks, I can, of course, speak only for myself. I find much of the reporting of these things to be both sensational and probably counterproductive, to say nothing of what I see to be a good bit of inconsistency in much of the mainstream Western media, which seems to consider ‘terrorism’ as being more unacceptable — and perhaps more terrifying — for those living in more affluent societies than for those in the ‘less developed’ world.

“As I see it, Satan is very much at work throughout this world in all manner of ways. What we saw on June 3 in London was another example of wicked people committing murder and extreme violence against unarmed civilians going about their lives, seemingly posing no threat to those by whom they were attacked. As such it was cowardly, unjust and anything but honourable.

“I don’t fully understand why there seems to be an urgency to categorise certain acts as being acts of terror. Less than 24 hours earlier, a teenager was stabbed to death in Peckham, South London. It is not being treated as an act of terrorism. I read earlier today of a number of people being shot dead in Orlando, Fla., but that was not reported as a terrorist incident. I struggle to see much of a difference. At the end of the day,



PHOTO BY SUBHERWAL, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A display near Westminster Bridge in London urges love and hospitality after a terrorist attack in April. The United Kingdom has endured three terror attacks in as many months, including the May attack at a concert in Manchester and the June 3 attacks near London Bridge.

the root causes are always of the devil.

“But we live in a fallen and broken world, where none is better than another, and in spite of our most

‘In spite of our most noble efforts, all of us have done our bit to contribute one way or another to the carnage we call civilization. There are no innocent victims, save the one they nailed to a cross between two thieves all those years ago.’

noble efforts, all of us have done our bit to contribute one way or another to the carnage we call civilization. There are no innocent victims, save the one they nailed to a cross between two thieves all those years ago.

“I mourn for those murdered in Manchester and London. I mourn for those murdered in Peckham and Orlando. I mourn for the countless, nameless souls who are brutalized and forgotten, day in and day out, throughout the world since time began. But I also find comfort in the knowledge that all of this is but a shadow of a reality far more glorious than we will ever imagine in this life, and I will rejoice in the victorious hope we have in him who died but lives that we may never die.”

WEBSITE: britishbibleschool.com

FROM OUR READERS

To pass faith on to your kids, examine your convictions

(In response to our two-part Dialogue with David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, Page 11, May, and Page 23, June)

Parents must be convicted in their own faith. If they are not, they won’t teach their children — or be able to put a scriptural answer toward the questions their children are asking.

The only way we will ever become lights in this dark world is to individually take personal ownership of our Christianity. It’s a continual, deliberate relationship, flaws and all.

Once we realize what we signed up for, we will not be able to hide our lights under a bushel. Our faith will be freely given to our own children, as well as all those we meet, because we love the Lord so very much.



Travena Rogan

TRAVENA ROGAN is the author of “Traveling Toward Transformation” published by 21st Century Christian. She speaks at events for women across the nation. She and her family worship with the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ in Tennessee. Learn more at travenarogan.com.

I really enjoyed the article about my beloved brother, the Honorable Judge Raymond Myles (Page 1, June). His life was truly an example of how one person could make a tremendous impact on the lives of others.

I thank God for him, and thank *The Christian Chronicle* for the recognition.

Elaine Hinton | Chicago

Great report, Erik Tryggstad (“A rescue mission,” Page 1, June). It shows what a great need there is for the Venezuelan people — just for the basics of life. Few people even know how bad it really is. Thank God for what he is doing through the Misión Cúcuta Iglesia de Cristo and mission team. Much more humanitarian aid is needed.

Ron Freitas | Dallas

Great write-up, Bobby Ross (“Seeking redemption for a long, dark chapter,” Page 3, June). Thanks for this update — and major kudos to the folks there at Parkland in Dauphin for their tireless efforts to serve.

Paul Brazle | Antwerp, Belgium

Preacher Wanted

Enterprise Boulevard Church of Christ is searching for a full-time, energetic pulpit minister. Our area is fast growing and ripe for the harvest. Parsonage available.

Enterprise Boulevard Church of Christ
2801 Enterprise Blvd
Lake Charles, LA 70601
Fax: (337) 430-0093
office@blvdchurchofchrist.org

Pulpit Minister - Valdosta, Ga.

The **Central Avenue Church of Christ** is looking for a Pulpit Minister. We are located on I-75, and we are the last county in Georgia before you get to Florida. We want someone who is visionary in nature, who is a dynamic proclaimer of God's Word and who is committed to building and strengthening a congregation of 500 members (275 families). We are biblically sound yet progressive in methodology. We are seeking a minister committed to equipping a diverse body of believers for ministry and to proclaiming and interpreting God's Word to a rapidly changing world. Supporting the work are five elders, 16 deacons, two ministers, and two secretaries. We have a newly refurbished and well-maintained facility. If you would be interested in working and worshipping with us in South Georgia, please contact:

John Klimko, Jr.
Central Avenue Church of Christ
304 E Central Ave
Valdosta, GA 31601
(229) 242-6115
jklimko@cacoc.com

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(575) 533-6574

Minister Search

Minister wanted to grow with and help grow the church in Malakoff, Texas. We are a congregation of 65+ who serve Henderson County. We are searching for a man with a heart for the lost and one who desires to share the saving message of Christ throughout our community and county. If you desire to be considered for this position, please submit your resume, contact information, salary requirements, three professional references, and two of your most recent recorded sermons on DVD, thumb/flash drive or website link to:

Malakoff Church of Christ
Attn: Preacher Selection Committee
PO Box 395
Malakoff, Texas 75148



Brown Library

Dr. Mark McCallon, Associate Dean for Library Information Systems
ACU Box 29208, Abilene, Texas 79699-9208

ACU's **Brown Library** invites applications for a research and instruction librarian. Requirements of the job include promoting and supporting digital scholarship and scholarly communication among faculty and students. Information about Brown Library is available at acu.edu/library.

See acu.edu/academics/provost/positions.html for a complete description of this position. In a letter to the appropriate dean or chair, applicants should address their qualifications for the position. They should include in the application a statement of how faith informs their teaching; a discussion of their spiritual journey; a curriculum vitae; transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work; and names, addresses and phone numbers of five references. Review of applicants will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Nominations of and applications from qualified women and minorities are especially encouraged. ACU is affiliated with the fellowship of the Churches of Christ. All applicants must be professing Christians and be active, faithful members of a congregation of the Churches of Christ and deeply committed to service in Christian higher education. The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. ACU does not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities.

170261-0717

Pulpit Minister

The **Southwest Church of Christ** in Ada, Okla., has an opening for a pulpit minister. Our beloved minister of 16 years is retiring at the end of this year. We are looking for an experienced preacher who is involved in the local community, who has demonstrated the ability to spur spiritual growth as well as attendance growth, and is married to a wife who will actively support the work of the church. Southwest's Sunday attendance averages 330 and we have seven elders. Ada has a population of 17,000. Learn more at:

www.swcocada.com
If interested, please send resume to:
swcocada@cableone.net

Full-Time Ministry Opportunity!

We are looking for a doctrinally sound man who is capable of relating to people and inspiring them to love God and their neighbor. Prefer a candidate that has completed a program of biblical studies at a Christian college/school of preaching. Skill set: strong work ethic and the ability to teach, preach and communicate effectively. If you are looking for a congregation that is self-supporting, has elders and deacons, provides housing (and utilities), and provides the opportunity to use your God-given abilities to preach the word, you need to consider Dexter! Please send resume and recent sermon (CD/DVD/link) to:

Dexter Church of Christ, Attn: Steve Sewell
8700 Jackson Rd., Dexter, MI 48130
slsewell012@gmail.com

Full-Time Children's Minister

College Avenue Church of Christ
1817 N College Avenue
El Dorado, AR 71730
www.cacoc.org

Kent Jobe, Sr. Pulpit minister
(870) 862-1552
cacocministersearch@gmail.com

A full job description can be found online on FaceBook by searching: (College Avenue Church of Christ, El Dorado, Arkansas) or, on our website: www.cacoc.org.

Minister Search

Park Central Church of Christ in Port Arthur, Texas, is seeking an experienced, motivated, full-time minister. Must have a love for evangelism and people and be ready to direct outreach programs. We are a diverse congregation of 95.

Park Central Church of Christ
3901 Jimmy Johnson Blvd.
Port Arthur, Texas 77642
(409) 727-6255

Collinsville Church of Christ
80th Anniversary/Homecoming

Saturday, August 26

Singing and Visitation

Sunday, August 27

Worship, lunch and special activities

Collinsville Church of Christ
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Collinsville, OK, 74021

Please call (918) 371-4296 if you have any questions. Hope you can join us!

Full-Time Minister

The elders of Holly Lake Church of Christ are searching for a full-time minister. We are a congregation of 70 members; mostly retired couples and widows. We are looking for an individual interested in building and strengthening the congregation through local outreach, who holds to Biblical truths and is able to effectively communicate those truths for the edification of the congregation and growth of the church.

Send resume, salary requirements and sample of recent sermons by CD, URL, or URL in Dropbox to:

Holly Lake Church of Christ
3173 S FM 2869, Hawkins, Texas 75765
search@hollylakechurchofchrist.org
(903) 613-2050

Full-Time Pulpit Minister

Candidate should have an in-depth knowledge of God's Word, hold fast to Biblical truths and be able to effectively communicate those truths for the edification of the congregation and growth of the church. A bachelor's degree or higher is an asset, and the candidate should be a Bible scholar and well-read.

Salary and benefits are commensurate with experience and education. Please submit your resume, DVDs of two sermons, and a concise one- or two-page statement that characterizes your current ministry efforts and style to:

Central Church of Christ
801 East Airline Road, Victoria, TX 77901
danmarshall44@yahoo.com

Volume on race will challenge, encourage, aggravate readers

Churches of Christ, known as part of the Restoration Movement, should be at the vanguard of restoring a biblical, racial ethos in America.

Sadly, we often aren't. But there's hope. That's a sentiment you'll find frequently in **"Reconciliation Reconsidered: Advancing The National Conversation On Race In Churches Of Christ"** by Tanya Smith Brice.

There is a race problem in America. Regardless of how much head-in-the-ground ostrich-ism we demonstrate — or how much millennial angst we rage in limited characters on ubiquitous social media outlets — the problem persists, even in the church.

"Reconciliation Reconsidered" is what I call grown-folks reading. Those who are in need of Pollyanna posturing concerning issues of race will possibly be challenged beyond their emotional capacity. But those who are open to this volume's ideas will find themselves challenged, encouraged, hopeful and maybe even a little aggravated.

Brice — a Church of Christ member, longtime church researcher and current dean of the School of Health and Human Services at Benedict College in South Carolina — has compiled a collection of essays authored by an eclectic group of ages, races, ethnicities, genders, academic accomplishments and writing styles. Together, they make the case for a continued conversation nationally in Churches of Christ.

Their hope is a measured, Christ-centered, systematic restoration of the New Testament reconciliation motif in our contemporary context.

"Reconciliation takes time," Brice writes. "It will not happen in quick fashion. Most importantly, it cannot happen without Christ."

This volume is filled with revelations. For example, Douglas A. Foster gives a poignant retelling of the Schrader Lane Church of Christ Race Relations Workshop in the sad wake of the Martin Luther King Jr. assassination in 1968. John Mark Taylor, meanwhile, exposes the racist underpinnings that

led a baptized believer like Hazel Bryan to launch into an n-word-filled tirade at Elizabeth Eckford for daring to integrate the heretofore all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Ark.

Jerry Taylor, an associate professor at Abilene Christian University in Texas and a leader of the Racial Unity Leadership Summit, offers these masterful, prophetic words:

"Christians will be accused of hypocrisy as long as our high-sounding rhetoric about love and diversity is perfectly contradicted by the visible racial bias that exist in our churches and Christian universities. The Stone- Campbell churches in

America, with their emphasis on 'restoration,' should lead in the process of 'restoring' civility of all Christians within the religious community."

Discussion questions accompany each essay to facilitate conversation. They help make this volume an ideal study for classes, groups or seminars on reconciliation or social justice. In fairness, the authors of each essay have their own biases and bents, and the discussion questions reflect this. My suggestion is to use their questions as a basis for asking additional questions to expand the conversation.

Understand that many of the essayists aren't simply academics, but also active participants in social justice. Lawrence Rodgers, for example, was a boots-on-the-ground first responder to the Baltimore tragedy. Stanley Talberts was a front-line protester in New York as people marched for equal rights. Several others are similarly qualified — not only for their authoritative opinions, but also for what they have personally witnessed. This adds an organic realness to the reading.

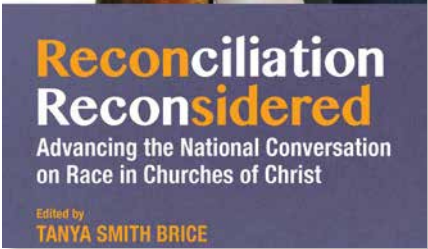
"Reconciliation Reconsidered" is a must-read for those seeking to advance the work of restoration in Churches of Christ.

FATE HAGOOD III is senior minister for the Metropolitan Church of Christ, which has campuses in the California cities of Carson and Rancho Cucamonga. He is a graduate of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas.

In Print



Fate Hagood III



Tanya Smith Brice, editor. **"Reconciliation Reconsidered: Advancing the National Conversation on Race in Churches of Christ."** Abilene, Texas. ACU Press, 2016. 220 pages. \$19.99.

Great series celebrates the great outdoors

If you're looking for summer reading ideas, **"The Adventures of Wilder Good"** series by S. J. Dahlstrom should be at the top of your list.

The series, now in its fourth book, holds all the action you could want in a Western adventure. The main character, Wilder Good, is a 12-year-old boy who enjoys hunting, fishing and all that the outdoors offers. It is through these explorations that Wilder learns about himself and how to become a man.

The author includes great details in each book that make it easy for the reader to feel like they are a part of the adventure.

My favorite book in the series is the second one, **"Texas Grit,"** because Wilder spends a week with his grandfather on his Texas ranch. Wilder is nervous — at first — to be so far away from his parents in Colorado. He also thought his papa was a mean old man.

However, once he gets there and spends time getting to know his grandfather, Wilder is sad to leave. Papa not only teaches Wilder how to ride a horse, brand a cow and hunt deer, but he also spends time showing Wilder how to be a good man. I felt like I could relate to Wilder in this book because of his close relationship with his papa and his love for exploring the outdoors.

I enjoyed all "The Adventures of Wilder Good" books and would recommend this series for readers ages 10 and up.

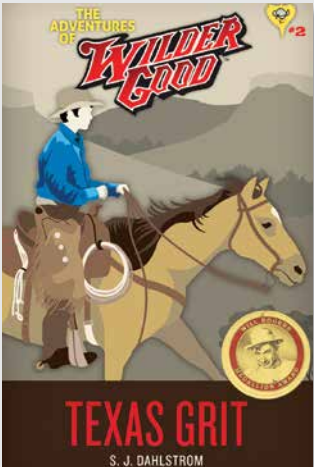
AIDAN LAXSON, 11, and his family worship with the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. In addition to reading, he enjoys watching basketball (rooting for the Oklahoma City Thunder), baseball and eating doughnuts.

What are you reading? Contact erik@christianchronicle.org.

What we're reading



Aidan Laxson



S.J. Dahlstrom. **Texas Grit: The Adventures of Wilder Good #2.** Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2014. 141 pages.

**Youth Minister
Borger, Texas**

Borger Church of Christ is looking for a youth minister. Please send your resume and a video of a recent sermon to: **borgerchurch@gmail.com**.

**Borger Church of Christ
1100 Bulldog Blvd
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The Grove, Oklahoma, Church of Christ seeks a full-time minister who passionately desires to preach, teach and equip members for service to God. We are a congregation of 80+ members who are strongly committed to grow. The ideal candidate will have an in-depth knowledge of God's word, hold fast to biblical truths and be able to effectively communicate those truths for the edification of the saints and growth of the church. He and his family should be strong in the faith and active in church ministries and should have studied in a biblical school, college or university affiliated with the Church of Christ. He and his family must be willing to relocate to Grove, Okla.

If you desire to be considered for this position, please submit your resume, contact information, salary requirements, three professional references and two of your most recent recorded sermons (preferably in front of a congregation) on DVD/thumb or flash drive (formatted for Windows) to:

**The Grove Church of Christ, Attn: Minister Search Committee
1001 S Grand Ave, Grove, OK 74344**

For further info: grovecoc@sbcglobal.net or (918) 786-2495 *Deadline July 31, 2017*

Servant Seeking a Position

I am a passionate, people-focused professional seeking a church, Christian ministry, or a humanitarian aid position. I have Bachelor's degrees in Bible and Family Life. I have experience in pulpit ministry (praying, preaching, teaching, equipping) and the social services field (tangible action concerning those hurting, marginalized, and abandoned). Referring to the "Colors" personality, I am "Blue". I provide hospitality, respect, and hope. I teach Restoration principles, and I have vested interest in the future of Christ's church. My only desire is to glorify God through gifts and experience. Let's make a meaningful difference together.

Mike Pratt, (918) 384-9649

Preacher Wanted

A small, conservative, rural congregation with limited resources needs a preacher who is sound in the faith to replace the retiring preacher. Send resume, three recorded sermons and salary needs to:

**Church of Christ
PO Box 315
Allen, OK 74825**

Full-Time Minister Search - Aberdeen, Maryland

We are a congregation of 110+, with elders, deacons, and a family-elder minister. Upon successful integration into the congregation, the current minister will retire from full-time preaching. We are seeking a man with a number of years preaching experience who loves the Lord and will come to love the family of God in Aberdeen by teaching, preaching, and counseling. Our congregation is adjacent to the Aberdeen Proving Ground and is located in Harford County, Md., near the Chesapeake Bay, approximately midway between Philadelphia, Pa., and Washington, D.C. Aberdeen has good schools and a small-town atmosphere. We offer a competitive salary based on experience, education and training. If interested please send cover letter with your resume, references, contact information and two sermons (DVD or flash drive), or indicate where your sermons are posted on the internet.

**Church of Christ of Aberdeen
90 Mt. Royal Ave, Aberdeen, MD 21001
aberdeencoc@verizon.net, aberdeencoc.org, (410) 272-5450**

Full or Part-Time Minister - Prescott Valley, Arizona

The Prescott Valley Church of Christ in Prescott Valley, Ariz., is looking for a full or part-time minister. Prescott Valley is in the beautiful mountains of Northern Arizona with a mild climate in both the winter and summer months. We are a congregation of around 25 members with the potential for growth. We are a **caring congregation** who truly has a **great love for one another**, our **community** and our **faith**. Presently, we can provide some salary as our resources are limited, but with growth, benefits could be forthcoming.

Our ideal candidate is either a retired or semi-retired person who could devote time and energy to building the congregation and especially creating and using social media platforms to attract a younger congregants. Prescott Valley is a city of around 40,000. Please email your resume and a paragraph describing the strengths you will bring to our congregation to:

**Mark Green
kramred@hotmail.com**

Please include references from your current and/or previous congregations.

Youth & Family Minister

Owasso Church of Christ in Oklahoma, is looking for a minister to lead young people to conversion through baptism and growing their faith. Minister will connect with young people and partner with families with a common goal of serving God and growing in the likeness of Christ. Spiritual growth, development, and fellowship, which establish the foundation of faith-filled lives, must be a priority. For job description, qualifications, salary and benefits, please contact:

**Randall Rhodes
randallrho@gmail.com**

July 2-8, July 9-15, July 16-22
Black Mesa Bible Camp. Kenton, Okla., bmbc.us.

July 5-8 Florida State Youth for Christ Conference. Boca Raton, Fla., fsy4cc.org.

July 9-12 47th Annual Caribbean Lectureship. Nassau, Bahamas, caribbeanlectureship.com.

July 10 Greater Houston Youth Devotional. Houston, info@mcoc.org.

July 15 70th Celebration, Columbia Christian Schools. Portland, Ore., columbiachristian.com.

July 18-21 Abundant Living GrandCamp. Searcy, Ark., abundantlivingseniors.com.

July 20-23 Angel Fire Bible Symposium. Angel Fire, N.M., angelfirebiblesymposium.com.

July 21-22 Central Texas Bible Teachers' Workshop. Austin, Texas, crccaustin.org/ctbtw.

July 21-22 Worship Leaders' Conference. Abilene, Texas, singingschool.org.

July 22-28 Tahoe Family Encampment. South Lake Tahoe, Calif., tahoefamilyencampment.com.

July 23-28 The Singing School at ACU. Abilene, Texas, singingschool.org.

July 24-28 40th Annual Youth Conference. Statesboro, Ga., youthforchrist82@yahoo.com.

July 24-28 Global Reunion 2017. Edmond, Okla., www.intermissionministry.org.

July 29-Aug 3 Crusade for Christ. Charlotte, N.C., churchofchristcrusade.org.

Aug. 7-10 Respite: Renewal for Missionaries on Home Assignment. Emory, Texas, mrnet.org/events.

Aug. 12-13 Back to School Bash. Garden City, Kan., scott7stewart@gmail.com.

Aug. 13-17 49th Annual Florida State Lectureship. Orlando, Fla., floridastatelectureship.com.

Aug. 26 50th Anniversary, Camp Manatawny. Douglassville, Pa., manatawny.org.

Aug. 26-27 80th Anniversary / Homecoming, Collinsville Church of Christ. Collinsville, Okla., (918) 371-4296.

Sep. 5-8 National Christian Camping Workshop. Las Vegas, naccamps.org.

FULL CALENDAR: www.christianchronicle.org



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An aggressive song leader and lifelong student, Harold Fletcher taught us to think

OKLAHOMA CITY

He led with both hands. W. Harold Fletcher, who died May 27 at age 93, was the most aggressive song leader I had ever encountered. He was the first faculty member hired for the junior college, started by Oklahoma church members, that became Oklahoma Christian University. He started teaching music there in 1950 — and retired 64 years later.

I was a freshman at OC, then called Central Christian College in Bartlesville, Okla., and Harold led opening chapel. The songs were traditional, but he refused to let them be monotonous. He didn't let worshipers merely go through the motions. He made us think — made us involve heart and spirit.

I never had the courage to sing in his chorus, but one term I kept the hour open so that I could study in the back of the auditorium where they rehearsed.

Harold pushed his singers to feel the time and express the sentiments. He made them repeat a difficult phrase 10, 20 times until he was sure it was the best they could do. He and Mary Helon, who accompanied the chorus in rehearsals, were perfectionists.

I did take a course from Harold — music appreciation. I had no knowledge of classical music, but I had curiosity. He helped me learn about the sections of the orchestra, the sounds of the instruments. He showed me what to listen for in some of the great compositions.

One day he was teaching about the use of patterns and motifs in music. The classroom had an expensive, imported rug with a patterned design. As he was using the rug as an illustration, he suddenly realized

that there was a flaw in the design. His observation was *that* astute.

Later we were colleagues at the college. I had coffee with him after chapel. He had great curiosity about almost everything. He pushed me to read more than literature and history.

Insight



Bailey McBride

He was a man of great faith, but he had the courage to honestly examine his doubts, analyzing and testing to see how far logic could take him.

I was assigned to work with Harold in developing a music major. Every meeting began with Harold saying, "We can't have a major: we do not have the resources." Gradually he began to talk about what would be needed for faculty, instructional materials and assistance.

It took us two years, but we framed a plan. Harold helped recruit and develop faculty members to make the program work.

He never stopped studying. He knew eras of music and was very effective in relating them to history, politics, and philosophy. He was a master teacher about ideas.

"I don't know how to do it, but your goal should be to teach them to think," he said of the capstone course he once taught. "Make them read, read, read" was his theme. Then ask them what they think.

Harold was a friend and mentor for most of my teaching career. He was a powerful influence on students and faculty. Most importantly, he was a truth seeker, and he was willing to walk alone in the interest of truth.



ABBY BELLOW

Harold Fletcher sits at his home piano. He retired on his 91st birthday, Dec. 4, 2014, as the oldest active professor in the United States.

CONTACT: bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

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Kevin Chambers; VP Engineering
(615) 594-2769
kchambers@worldchristian.org



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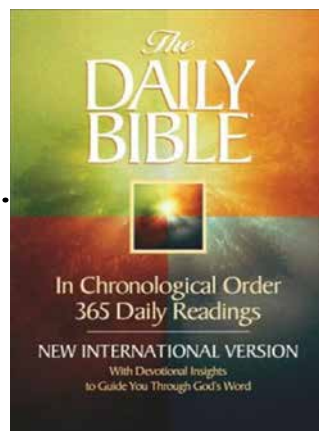
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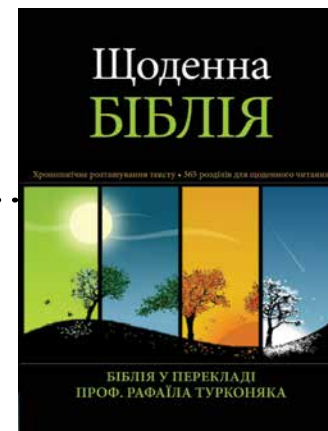
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