

Young man with autism has a heart for homeless

CALIFORNIA CHURCH MEMBER *overcomes fears
as he leads ministry that serves the needy.*

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

CAMARILLO, Calif.

A few miles from the Camarillo Church of Christ, a man with a backpack and a bicycle squats at a busy intersection.

Chris Kibbe, who describes himself as between jobs and homeless, holds a cardboard sign.

"Spare a little kindness," the handwritten message begs. "God bless."

Not long ago, many members of the Camarillo church — which meets in a palm-tree-shaded building just off the Ventura Freeway — might have averted their eyes and driven right past Kibbe.

But now — thanks to a packet ministry started by Luke McAllister, a 20-year-old church member with autism — the congregation is equipped and eager to help.

"It's easy to become blind to things," preacher Alan Beard said. "But in the same

way that if you have a watering can, you look for flowers to water — if you have a packet, you look for someone who's thirsty or needs a quick meal or a couple of dollars."

"Luke's Packet Ministry" offers snacks, cash — and hope — to downtrodden souls.

"I think that's great," said Kibbe, 49. "Lots of people are down on their luck and could use some help."

A PURPOSE FOR LUKE

In his effort to help others, Luke McAllister has found a transforming purpose for his own life.

"I started to meet people that made me think I did not have it so bad," wrote McAllister, who has a mostly nonverbal form of autism and battles severe anxiety and panic attacks.

"I have been given an incredible support system, and it scares me to think

See **LUKE**, Page 6



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Luke McAllister, with his parents, Dena and Ted, at Sunday worship.



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Dayse Lopes carries the Olympic torch near the end of its three-month journey across Brazil.

Golden opportunities to glorify God

RIO DE JANEIRO — As the 2016 Summer Olympics came to a close, members of Churches of Christ left Brazil with fond memories — and medals.

Brazilian Christian Dayse Lopes carried the Olympic torch on its journey to Maracana Stadium. Lopes and her family worship with a Church of Christ in Niteroi, across Guanabara Bay from Rio.

In the Olympics Aquatic Stadium, Caeleb Dressel won gold medals in the men's 4x100-meter freestyle and 4x100-meter medley relays with teammates Michael Phelps, Ryan Held and Nathan Adrian.

Dressel, a student at the University of Florida, worships with the Campus Church of Christ in Gainesville, Fla.



Gold medalist Caeleb Dressel swims "to inspire people and show them where I find my happiness with what God's given me," he says.

MORE FROM RIO, Page 13



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Is your church prepared for an active shooter?

MIDWEST CITY, Okla.

It's a scenario we've heard too often — an active shooter enters a school, a nightclub, a movie theater, a crowd of protesters. Innocent lives are targeted. Police officers are preyed upon.

Inside Story



Chellie Ison

And it's extremely difficult to predict such scenarios, law enforcement officials say. Nonetheless, members of the Eastside Church of Christ in

Midwest City take a proactive approach, training not only their leaders and members but other congregations in how to respond should tragedy strike their fellowship.

Herman Hagan is a former sheriff's deputy. He now works as a security officer for the congregation. His experience in law enforcement helped him develop safety protocols and checklists focused on recognizing any potential threats.

Those protocols include checking the parking lot for anything or anyone suspicious, monitoring the halls and lobby during worship services or Bible class and reporting anything that seems suspicious.

Hagan recently invited churches across the area to a seminar led by local police, the sheriff, FBI and homeland security officials.

Kurt Stoner is with the FBI in Oklahoma. He was one of the main speakers at

See **SHOOTER**, Page 4



STEVE RINGLING

A dance of welcome in American Samoa

Christians perform a *maulu'ulu*, a slow, traditional Samoan dance that tells old stories of village life, in front of a waterfall on the South Pacific island of Tutuila in American Samoa. The members of the Nu'uuli Church of Christ — Valelia Brown Vaitai, Joan Vaamauga Ligoligo, Faapisa Vaitai, Betty Soli and Ruth Soli — welcomed a mission team from the Twin City Church of Christ in Festus, Mo., who came to American Samoa to help host a weekend Camp Alofa for youths from the island's churches and friends.

SPECIAL REPORTS from the Samoan islands, Pages 17-20

Amid massive biker rally, Bible camp thrives

DEEP IN THE BLACK HILLS National Forest, Christians from the Dakotas and beyond renew ties and enjoy fellowship.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

DEADWOOD, S.D.

Revving engines of Harleys, Yamahas and Kawasakis are the first clue you're getting close to Black Hills Bible Camp.

For a half-century, the youth and family camp has brought together members of Churches of Christ during the same week as the world-famous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

"It's a little piece of heaven," said Dustri Brown, 33, who met her future husband, Lance, at the Bible camp when she was 9 and he was 8. "You're singing and praising God. The worldly things don't matter. It's the joy of being together with fellow Christians."

Each August, the motorcycle rally attracts an estimated 500,000 people to the southwestern region of South Dakota — and thousands of bikers cruise U.S. Highway 385 near the turnoff for the camp.

About 15 minutes south of Deadwood — around the time you see a green sign that says Mount Rushmore is 39 miles away — you reach a gravel road shrouded by yellow pines that stretch 80 to 100 feet high.

Four miles of bumpy twists and turns inside the Black Hills National Forest lead you past an outdoor swimming hole, over a little bridge and — finally — to the kitchen, the chapel



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Kylie Tucker, right, and other campers pray during a morning devotional at Black Hills Bible Camp.

See **BLACK HILLS**, Page 24

SHOOTER: What about 'turn the other cheek?'

FROM PAGE 3
the event — one he said was vital, even for churches.
“Active shooters or mass killings seem to happen in just about any setting, unfortunately,” Stone said. “Any time there’s a large gathering of any kind, it’s going to be a target.”
Dozens of congregations sent

representatives to the seminar. Church leaders listened intently to the speakers, hoping to walk away with a plan for keeping their congregations safe.

Kenneth Williamson, a member of the East Side Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, said his goal was to “take bits and pieces” from the meeting “and come up with criteria to make us a safer congregation.”

Churches of Christ weren’t the only congregations that benefited from the meeting. Greg Mikes attended from the Sunnyside Baptist Church in Midwest City. “We just want to make sure we take care of making our place a safe atmosphere,” Mikes said.

Active shooter scenarios are something churches should prepare for in the same way they prepare for other emergencies, Hagan told the

attendees.
“I was talking to a guy last Friday who said, ‘But the Bible says turn the other cheek,’” he said. “I asked, ‘Have you got a storm shelter?’ He said, ‘Yeah.’ ‘Have you got a fire alarm?’ He said, ‘Yeah.’”
Hagan replied, “You lock your doors when you leave, but you’re telling me

we don’t need to do anything to protect yourself and your Christian family?”
Law enforcement officials echo Hagan’s thoughts, saying that in today’s world we need to be prepared for any emergency.

“This is Oklahoma. We educate our kids (from an early age

on) what happens when we have a tornado,” Stoner said. “We have fire drills, and I think this is going to be one of those things we have to do with them.”

While such violence is not something anyone wants to prepare for, seminars like this are becoming more necessary. As Stoner noted, church leaders being proactive to gain this type of knowledge ultimately could save lives.

CONTACT: chellie@christianchronicle.org



Churches prepare for worst-case scenarios:

Go online to see Chellie Ison’s video report on church security at www.christianchronicle.org and look for more exclusive video stories from *The Christian Chronicle*.



OLAF GROWALD

Racial unity stressed at Texas service

Church members hug during a recent unity service organized by two Churches of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas. The Southside Church of Christ hosted the special Sunday night assembly in cooperation with the Richmond Avenue Church of Christ.

SEE MORE PHOTOS AND SPECIAL COVERAGE on race and the church beginning on Page 14. Plus, see our devotional “A fishing trip to racial harmony” on Page 27 and a Views piece by Jerry Taylor, “Serve, protect, love: In the Bible, a uniformed officer teaches us to wield authority with respect,” on Page 28.



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www.christianchronicle.org
Phone: (405) 425-5070; Fax (405) 425-5076
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facebook.com/ChristianChronicle
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President and CEO: Lynn A McMillon
lynn.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org
Editor: Erik Tryggstad
erik@christianchronicle.org

Chief Correspondent: Bobby Ross Jr.
bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org
Digital Media Reporter: Chellie Ison
chellie@christianchronicle.org
Advertising Manager: Tonya Patton
tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org
Administrative Assistant: Lynda Sheehan
lynda.sheehan@christianchronicle.org
Administrative Assistant: Joy McMillon
joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org
Administrative Assistant: Melinda Wilson
melinda.wilson@christianchronicle.org
Editor Emeritus: Bailey McBride
bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

TO SUBSCRIBE: See www.christianchronicle.org, email joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5070.

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SPOTLIGHT

'Camp is so much fun'

PARAGOULD, Ark. — Members of the Seventh and Mueller Church of Christ donated money to send 26 children to Crowley's Ridge Youth Camp.

"This is something we feel is really special for these kids to be able to do," church member Adam Eades told the *Paragould Daily Press*. "Most of these kids would not otherwise have the opportunity to do something like this during the summer."

Devante Battles, 10, enjoyed his first camp experience.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Youth minister Chris Petty helps Jo Jo Summitt, 7, down a zipline at camp.

"This camp is so much fun because we get to cooperate with our friends," he told the newspaper. "We get to go to the zipline and go swimming, and we make new friends here. I love it."

NOLAN RUTTER

Caught you! Missouri boy reads his Bible before Sunday school

Lucas Austin just couldn't wait for Sunday school to start at the Clinton Church of Christ in Missouri. "His grandpa, Karl, was very touched by this, and I offered to record it for posterity," said minister Nolan Rutter, who snapped the photo of Lucas reading his Bible.

COLORADO

WINDSOR — Kelli Hughett and Jennifer Willenbrecht, longtime members of the Windsor Church of Christ, desire to encourage women in their faithful walk with the Lord.

They started Oil In My Lamp Ministries and produce free video content updated daily on social media.

For more information, see www.oilinmylampministries.blogspot.com.



Jennifer Willenbrecht and Kelli Hughett

KENTUCKY

FARMINGTON — Gov. Matt Bevin recently presented the Farmington Church of Christ with the Faith-Based Service Award.

Jennifer Morris, family resource coordinator at Farmington Elementary School, nominated the church for the honor.

The congregation was recognized for helping with numerous community and school events, including a back-to-school night, a fall festival and a tutoring program.

MICHIGAN

OTISVILLE — With flames shooting out of the roof and smoke billowing into the sky, firefighters rushed to the Otisville Church of Christ on a recent Wednesday afternoon.

Now, as firefighters investigate



PHOTO PROVIDED

The front doors are charred after the fire.

the blaze's cause, church members try to process.

"We're going to get through this together," minister Jeremy Hoover said. "We're going to rebuild the building, but in the meantime we are still the church."

For more details, search for "Otisville Church of Christ" at www.christianchronicle.org.

WISCONSIN

MILWAUKEE — After riots broke out in Milwaukee, members of the Northtown Church of Christ helped clean up the streets.

The recent violence followed the shooting of Sylville Smith, a 23-year-old black man, by a police officer. The officer also is black, authorities said.

Within the past year, the Northtown church — which has a mix of black and white members — has hosted roundtable discussions to help members better understand each other and learn how to overcome racism, minister Alex Clayton said.

"Social injustice is real. Racism is real. Oppression is real," Clayton told *The Christian Chronicle*.

To read more of the interview, search for "Northtown Church of Christ" at www.christianchronicle.org.



Luke McAllister, 20, watches a "Winnie the Pooh" cartoon on his iPad while his sister, Elisa, listens during an interview at the family's California home. "My beautiful sister," Luke wrote when he posted a picture of the two of them on Facebook. "I adore her."



Luke McAllister keeps supplies for the packets in large plastic tubs.

LUKE: 'If I can ease a scared soul, my trials are not so bad'

FROM PAGE 1
about traveling alone in this world, but that is the reality for so many," the 20-year-old added. "If I can ease a scared soul, my trials are not so bad."

A typical Sunday finds McAllister seated between his parents, Ted and Dena, at the 100-member Camarillo church, about 50 miles west of Los Angeles.

Fellow church members have known Luke McAllister since he was 3. So they don't flinch if he makes an occasional noise — described by his mother as a "small vocalization" — during the sermon.

"They pray for him all the time, and they finally started saving the back row for us so that Luke could be near the door," Dena McAllister said. "If he felt like he needed to leave and go walk around the building a couple of times and come back in or whatever, he could do that."

At his home congregation, Luke McAllister is recognized not for his neurodevelopmental disorder but for

his heart for serving the needy and homeless.

Last year, he started assembling and distributing quart-size Ziploc bags full of items such as hazelnut spread, granola bars, travel-size tissues and small bottles of water — plus encouraging notes with inspiring Bible verses.

What began as a family outreach quickly grew into a congregational ministry — led by Luke McAllister.

And soon, the idea spread to other churches, including the Conejo Valley Church of Christ in nearby Thousand Oaks, Calif.

"Luke's concern for others is exemplary for all of us," said Carolyn Tyler, a 44-year member of the Camarillo church. "He really sets an example."

NO LONGER SILENT

Luke McAllister uses a 9-by-12-inch alphabet board and sometimes the keyboard on his iPad to spell out words and sentences.

Even then, expressing the thoughts in his brain in a way that other people — including his family — can under-

stand them can be a major challenge.

"Luke hasn't been typing that long in this manner, so it's still a growing skill," said Dena McAllister, who has a graduate degree in education but has devoted herself to her son's 24/7 care. "We still appreciate every word he says because it takes work. ... For so long he had to be silent."

When his older sister, Elisa, 23, now a senior at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., left for college, he made clear how much he missed her.

"It was the first time he probably really started typing about his emotions," his mother said.

Besides caring for their son, the McAllisters — who met as freshmen at Oklahoma Christian University in 1979 — worry about aging parents who are in their 80s and 90s and live 1,400 miles away in Oklahoma.

"We love Luke, but I'm feeling really pulled right now," Dena McAllister said.

'I CAN'T SPEAK ... BUT I CAN LISTEN'

In a written profile of himself, Luke McAllister cited his desire to be helpful to others and fulfill God's purpose for his life.

"I can't speak in sentences, but I can listen," he wrote.

He described himself as intelligent with a good sense of humor. He said

he enjoys listening to music, horseback riding, biking, jigsaw puzzles, Mexican food and learning about science and history.

He has a dog named Buddy.

"Luke really likes walking his dog," Dena McAllister said. "That's part of what makes him feel better and get some exercise and get out in nature."

Because of his autism, social interactions are extremely difficult for Luke McAllister.

As his family visited with *The Christian Chronicle*, he kept his head down and focused on "Winnie the Pooh" and "Gilligan's Island" episodes that he watches on his iPad.

"That's part of his calming strategy," said his mother, who assured the *Chronicle* her son hadn't missed a single word of the interview.

'HOW CAN WE HELP?'

Most weekends, Luke McAllister goes with his father to Trader Joe's neighborhood grocery.

That shopping center is where beggars at street corners first caught his attention.

"How can we help?" Luke McAllister asked before coming up with his idea.

"Luke designed the ingredients to be able to be in a car," said Ted McAllister, an associate profes-

Blessed be the Caregivers
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SEE PAST FEATURES including our profile of a pitcher who received a heart transplant and our story on a ministry that houses Mayo Clinic patients. Find "Caregivers" under the "Series" tab at www.christianchronicle.org.



Parker Beard, 14; Dawson Morrow, 12; and Emerson Beard, 11, assemble items for “Luke’s Packet Ministry” at the Camarillo Church of Christ, 50 miles west of Los Angeles.



Luke McAllister stands by a wall in the Camarillo Church of Christ auditorium as members greet each other after a Sunday morning assembly of the Southern California church.

sor of public policy at Pepperdine University. “Even though the water might get hot, nothing is going to melt. So he was very purposeful about what would go in it.”

At first, the McAllisters handled the outreach effort on their own. But then church leaders heard about it and asked Luke McAllister to involve the entire congregation. “When that happened, Luke said, ‘Well, I’ve got to write a speech to introduce it,’” Dena McAllister recalled. “We were kind of blown away that he wanted to try that.”

To give such a speech — which he typed on his iPad and played out loud as his father stood beside him — Luke McAllister had to overcome fears.

“The most purposeful I’ve ever seen him to do something was for this,” Ted McAllister said. “It takes a lot of effort on his part to do this ... yet it’s the one thing that he has been relentless about.”

In the short presentation, Luke McAllister quoted Scriptures on blessings and compassion and explained his motivation.

“I care greatly for the homeless,” he told the congregation. “I care for individuals I see in immediate need. I care intensely about individuals in need who are directionless.”

Some of Luke McAllister’s word choices — such as “directionless” — fascinated his parents.

“My theory — which I think Luke

has confirmed to me if I’m reading him correctly — is that because it’s so labor intensive for him to put together words, he almost chooses a poetic way of expressing things,” Dena McAllister said. “He uses words much more precisely than most people do.”

Luke McAllister encouraged members to grab a few packets in the church lobby each Sunday and distribute them during the week.

“Scripture is reminding me I have a lot to give,” he said. “The Good Samaritan story in the book of Luke reminds everyone to stop and help.”

‘A SENSE OF IDENTITY’

The church’s youth group helps assemble the packets — putting the snack items and two \$1 bills inside

each Ziploc bag.

Also included: a hand-size note featuring Scriptures such as “*Give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures forever*” (Psalm 136:26).

The note explains that the packet “was prepared by Luke, a young man with autism, and other members of the Church of Christ.”

Henry Price, a member of the Camarillo church, said he always felt empathy for the homeless but never knew how to help.

“I have given out many of Luke’s packets over the last year or so, usually to people who panhandle on street corners,” said Price, a professor of music at Pepperdine. “They are always thankful. If there is an opportunity, I tell them about Luke.”

In all, church members have distributed more than 1,200 packets.

Tara Morrow, whose 12-year-old son, Dawson, helps put together the packets, said her family carries three or four in their car.

“I like the conversations at the dinner table about how this could affect people,” she said. “Even just someone knowing in their heart that someone cares for them at that moment ... maybe that could spark something.”

Morrow said she loves watching Luke McAllister lead the undertaking.

“It’s made him one of the ministers here instead of one we just minister to,” she said.

By putting Luke McAllister in charge, the church made him feel like a valuable part of the congregation.

“Not only did he find a role to play, but he found a role that’s rather central to the cohesiveness of our little church,” Ted McAllister said. “It gives us a sense of identity.”

While autism is not something the McAllisters would have chosen for their son, they believe God has used the disorder to serve a higher purpose.

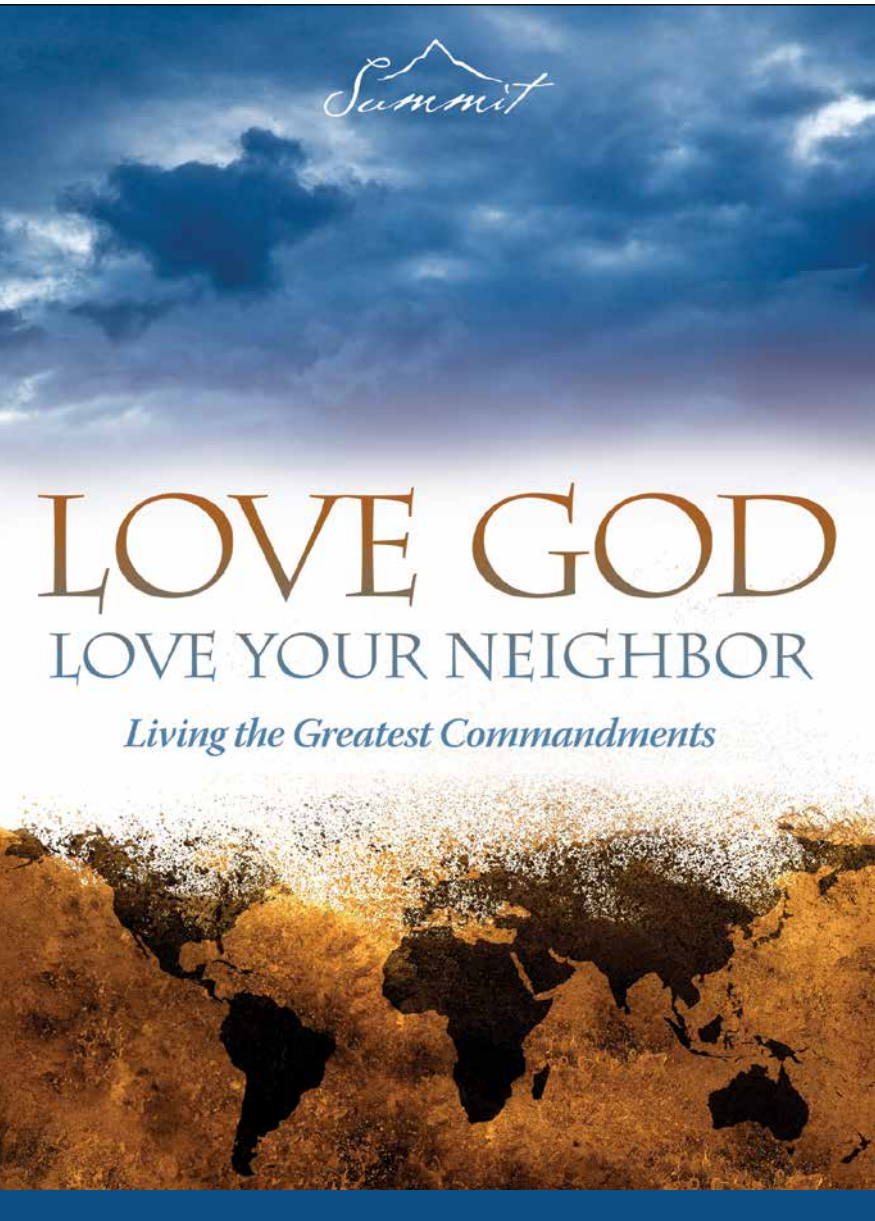
“Autism is part of why he was really heard and why people are really listening to this idea,” Dena McAllister said. “And that is really wonderful that God has used it this way.”



Chris Kibbe, who describes himself as between jobs and homeless, holds a sign asking for help near a busy shopping mall. He praised Luke McAllister’s desire to help needy people.

PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

SEE A VIDEO of Camarillo Church of Christ teens putting together packets for the ministry led by Luke McAllister at www.christianchronicle.org.



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In Louisiana, Christians watch as their home floods

BY CHELLIE ISON AND ERIK TRYGGESTAD
THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

"All the neighbors said, 'It will be fine. We've never had water here,'" Melanie Chelette, a member of the Goodwood Church of Christ in Baton Rouge, La., told *The Christian Chronicle*.

But it wasn't fine. As recent floods inundated southern Louisiana, Chelette, her husband and two sons watched as water seeped under their front door and filled their living room. The family moved what they could to the second floor, trying to save as much as possible. But soon, they knew they had to leave.

Across Louisiana — some parts of which received 30 inches of rain in just a few days — floods claimed at least 13 lives and damaged more than 60,600 homes. Some 30,000 people were rescued from the rising waters.

A friend of the Chellettes came to get them — pulling into their driveway in a boat. Two days passed before the water subsided enough for the family to return. The water line was about 2 feet high on the walls. Dirt and debris covered everything.

"There's just a film, a slimy film, everywhere," Melanie Chelette said.

Across the region, churches report losses. At least 75 members of the South Baton Rouge Church of Christ are coping with damage from the floods, minister Mark Hadley said.

While some only have minor water damage, others have lost everything. "Although there's a lot of sadness ... people are being really kind and generous and gracious toward each other," Hadley said. "It kind of brings out a deep joy. We're sad and heartbroken, but at the same time (we're) seeing the way everyone is

working together to pull through. It's a powerful and beautiful thing."

Multiple church-supported disaster assistance groups are mobilizing to help the victims, including WFR Relief Ministries, an outreach of the White's Ferry Road Church of Christ in the north Louisiana city of West Monroe.

That part of the state experienced record flooding in March.

"At this time extraction is the main priority," Zac Stephens, media manager for WFR Relief, said as floodwaters continued to rise in southern Louisiana. The ministry concentrated on "only sending those with the capabilities of safely providing rescue to those in need. Too many times untrained people with good intentions try to help

and become secondary victims."

At the same time, the ministry prepared to help in the months-long task of cleaning up and providing victims with housing, food and water.

Other church-supported ministries, including Disaster Assistance CoC, Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team and Christian Relief Fund, are working with congregations in the flood zone.

Providing these relief groups with food, cleaning supplies and other essentials are ministries including Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort. The Nashville, Tenn.-based ministry sent truckloads of relief to congregations including the Riverside Church of Christ in Lafayette, La., the Gonzales Church of Christ, the Jennings Church of Christ, the Pear Ridge Church of Christ in Hammond, La., and the Goodwood and South Baton Rouge churches.

SEE UPDATES and find links to ministries collecting funds for relief at www.christianchronicle.org.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MELANIE CHELETTE

Melanie Chelette's sons watch as floodwaters invade their home in Baton Rouge. See the video at www.christianchronicle.org.



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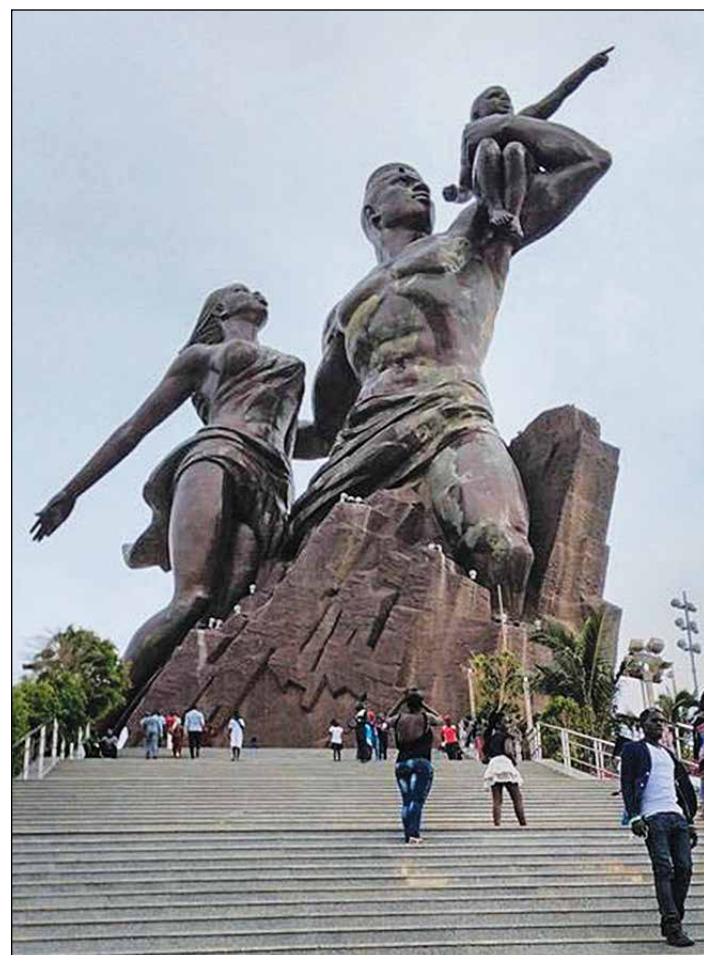
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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LAWRENCE ODURO

Celebrating rebirth in Africa

In the shadow of the African Renaissance Monument, a 160-foot statue outside the West African city of Dakar, Senegal, Christians gathered to discuss their continent's rebirth through the Gospel. Members of Churches of Christ from more than 10 nations attended the seventh Africans Claiming Africa for Christ conference, discussing African-led evangelistic efforts.

Arnold Dzah, a native of Ghana, serves in Dakar and has helped plant new congregations in predominantly Muslim Senegal. The next conference is scheduled for 2020 in Swaziland.



Christians from Ghana, Nigeria and other parts of Africa review notes.

ANGOLA

HUAMBO — Children in Africa need Vacation Bible School too.

That's what members of the Westover Hills Church of Christ in Austin, Texas, provided during a visit to this southern African nation, where Danny and Katie Reese, workers the church supports, serve on a mission team.

The Westover members taught children at an Angola-wide missionary retreat, Katie Reese said.

"As a mother of small children, sending our kids to such a well-crafted VBS program was one of the highlights of the retreat," she said. "The Westover team also really enjoyed hearing stories of God's work from missionaries all over Angola."

HONDURAS

SANTA ROSA DE COPÁN — In Matthew 13:9, Jesus said, "He who has ears, let him hear." Mission UpReach, a ministry supported by Churches of Christ, works to teach the Gospel to those who cannot hear. The mission's deaf ministry uses bright-green buses with "Iglesia de Cristo" (Church of Christ) on the front to draw individuals and families of this 27,753-soul community in to church.

In a recent newsletter, workers with the ministry detail their efforts to teach Honduran sign language (*Lengua de Señas Hondureñas*, or LESHO) to a young woman named Suri in the neighborhood of Barrio



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A worker with Mission Upreach teaches sign language in Honduras.

Belén. As a result, Suri's parents and three of their children were baptized.

THAILAND

KHON KAEN — Businessmen, a university student and a retiree are among the participants in a weekend ministry training program launched by missionaries Kim and Rebecca Voraritskul.

The new program is an alternative to intensive programs that require students to sacrifice two years in training with little expectation of working full-time as a preacher, the Voraritskuls wrote in a recent newsletter. The missionaries will help pay for the student's bus fare and gas to reach the program, plus meals during the training. The cost per month is roughly the same as supporting a full-time student, they wrote.

SPOTLIGHT

In Haiti, an unintended milestone

CAP-HAITIEN, Haiti — Eight Christian women on an eight-day mission trip from the U.S. helped distribute 800 pounds of food, 100 pounds of toys, 1,800 pairs of shoes and 2,700 pounds of medical supplies in this Caribbean nation.

Another number — 20 — was particularly meaningful for team member Sheryl Murrah. That's how many years Murrah, a member of the Sugar Creek Church of Christ in Charlotte, N.C., has participated in missions in Haiti.

"I didn't realize that it had been 20 years until Julsain Blanc, a Haitian minister and graduate from the Center for Biblical Training in Galman-du-Platt, reminded me," Murrah said.

"But the driving force is all about God."



Murrah

The women hosted three Ladies' Day programs. One participant spoke the native language, Creole, as she addressed the Haitian women.

The team visited a prison, a hospital, 19 churches that operate orphanages and schools, the Victory for Haiti Foundation and the Center for Biblical Training, a school that produces ministers for Churches of Christ.

"We would like to thank the Haitian Christian Foundation for allowing us to stay at the center," Murrah said. "It was a blessing to be in the midst of God-fearing and loving brethren." Because of donations made to the mission trip, "thousands were able to have a meal for several days," she added.

In addition to Murrah and her daughter, Angel, team members included Veralisa Hunter, Sierra Woollard, Lydia De Mesa Matias, Terri Baskin, Aleice Allen and Diane Allen.



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PHOTO PROVIDED BY JILL NICHOLS

The Nichols family made the short trip from their home in Niteroi to the Rio Olympics.

As the world watched Rio, Christians celebrated ‘a flame that stopped the war’

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

As the Olympic torch made its way from Greece to Rio de Janeiro, it passed through the hands of Dayse Lopes, a Church of Christ member in Niteroi, Brazil. She was chosen for the honor as part of a contest hosted by Nissan Brazil. The car company was looking for torch runners who had overcome adversity, she said. “My story is that I could not be a biological mother, so I decided to adopt,” Lopes told *The Christian Chronicle*. Being a part of something so big, so special, is difficult to explain, she added. “(To carry) a flame that stopped the war is something very exciting,” she said, referencing the Olympic truce, a tradition dating back to the ancient Olympics in the eighth century B.C. To allow athletes and spectators to travel safely to the games, wars would cease for periods of up to three months. In 1998, the

International Olympic Committee renewed the tradition and called on the nations of the world to lay down arms during the games. Lopes’ congregation, the Igreja O Caminho (Portuguese for “Church of the Way”) meets in Niteroi, just seven miles away from the games in Rio. Brent and Jill Nichols, missionaries who serve the congregation, made the short trip several times to watch Olympic events with their sons, Titus and Jack. The Lamar Avenue Church of Christ in Paris, Texas, sponsors their work. The family attended events including basketball, swimming, soccer and beach volleyball. The games give Christians the chance to be a part of something that brings cultures together in a world where there’s so much that typically divides, Jill Nichols said. “It’s been so exciting to cheer for our country, our host country, and to meet people from everywhere,” she said.

Swimmer ‘soars on wings like eagles’

Like another athlete from the University of Florida, Tim Tebow, Olympic swimmer Caeleb Dressel scrawls Scripture references across his face before meets. The 19-year-old’s favorite is Isaiah 40:31: “But those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles,” he said in an interview with *Baptist Press*. Dressel worships with the Campus Church of Christ in Gainesville, Fla.



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In Texas, joining hands in unity

PHOTOS BY OLAF GROWALD | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

In light of violence and racial tensions nationwide, the Southside Church of Christ and the Richmond Avenue Church of Christ — both in Fort Worth, Texas — organized a special unity service. The recent Sunday night assembly at the Southside church building drew worshipers from 20 area congregations. Southside minister Steve Cloer described the assembly as “as an attempt to demonstrate the power of the gospel to unite people above races and backgrounds.” The gathering, he said, made for a “very hopeful, inspiring and worshipful night.” The emotion of the night was captured in black-and-white photographs that show Christians of all races bowing in prayer and joining hands with fellow Christians in a dramatic display of unity.



Open letters on race call for meaningful engagement

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

‘We can — and must — do better.’
So reads an open letter to members of Churches of Christ signed by 77 ministers, scholars and thought leaders within the fellowship. The letter is a response to recent, ethnically charged violence in cities including Dallas, Baton Rouge, La., and Milwaukee. “We believe that the choice before us is clear,” the letter’s writers — William Lofton Turner, Tanya Brice, Sandra Parham, David Fleer, Mark Hamilton, Richard T. Hughes, Don McLaughlin and John York — said in a statement to *The Christian Chronicle*. “We can allow the racism that abounds in America’s popular culture to set the agenda for the church or we can allow the biblical

vision to determine what we believe, how we feel and how we act. And, the biblical text is clear: racism is a sin. It violates Jesus’ command to love our neighbors as ourselves.” The letter recounts statements and actions of Churches of Christ in decades past — some supporting segregation and others opposing it. It also addresses current issues in race relations, including the Black Lives Matter movement, and calls for believers black and white to spend time in meaningful dialogue that leads to understanding. “I am convinced that racial justice and reconciliation are central to the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” said Eric Gentry, associate preaching minister



Gentry

for the Highland Church of Christ in Cordova, Tenn., who signed the letter. “While social pressure tempts us to remain bystanders, this letter calls us who share in the Gospel to ensure that black lives matter in the Kingdom of God.” Fate Hagood, minister for the Metropolitan Church of Christ in Carson, Calif., said he has experienced strong, cross-cultural relationships — and strong, racially charged insensitivity — within the fellowship. “There’s a peculiar dichotomy between our traditional rhetoric of unity and oneness and the reality of our disjointed fellowship, especially concerning race relations,” said Hagood, who signed the letter. “I



Hagood

signed the letter in hopes that our reality can begin to match our rhetoric.” The *Chronicle* received another open letter on race relations written by church members Harold Shank, president of Ohio Valley University in Vienna, W.Va., and Robert L. Solomon, assistant vice provost in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at The Ohio State University. “As we study the holy Scriptures and the ministry of Jesus, we see a story of love, compassion, inclusion, mercy, equity and equality,” Shank and Solomon write. “We see a story of serving those on the margins of society and reaching the forgotten with the Gospel of truth. It makes perfect sense that Christians should be champions of equality and fairness, rather than passive observers.”

READ THE LETTERS at www.christianchronicle.org.

WHEN BLACK AND WHITE churches got together in Houston, preconceptions about each other dissolved, their ministers say.

'We realized we're all just people'

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

As shootings and protests heighten racial tensions across the U.S., Churches of Christ in the nation's fourth most populous city, Houston, strive to break down barriers of ethnicity — thanks in part to the actions of ministers such as Gary Smith and David Duncan.

The two met for the first time over lunch in 2006. Duncan, a former missionary to Brazil, had just moved to Houston to serve the Memorial Church of Christ, a 1,000-member, predominantly white church. Smith has worked with the Fifth Ward Church of Christ — a 1,250-member, predominantly black congregation that meets 20 minutes west of the Memorial church — since 1990.

The ministers talked about how to bring the two churches closer together. Members began visiting each other's congregation.

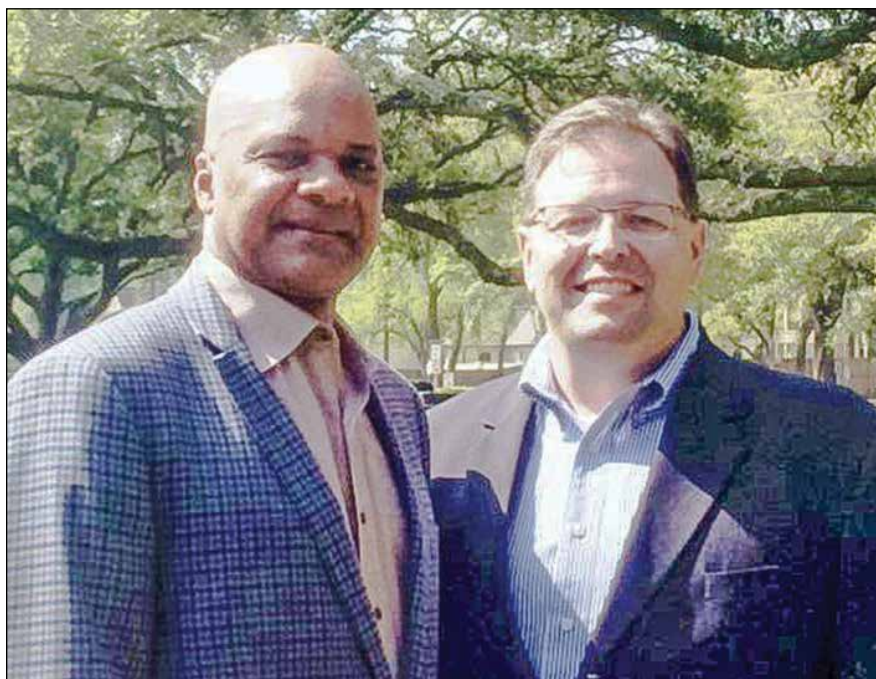
Eventually, they launched the Campaign for Christ, a soul-winning gospel meeting, evangelism and community service effort that takes place every two years. The most recent campaign was Aug. 20-21. Launched in 2010, the campaign now involves more than 50 area congregations — black, white and Hispanic.

What have your congregations done to get to know each other?

Smith: Twice a year we exchange fellowships. Our entire congregation meets with the Memorial congregation, and I preach. Then the Memorial church comes to us and fellowships at the Fifth Ward church, and David preaches.

Fifth Ward has a day when we give out all the food for Thanksgiving meals to families. We've had families from Memorial go and help distribute those meals. We have a big marriage retreat that couples from both churches attend. We try to complement each other.

Duncan: And every other year we have the Campaign for Christ. There are evenings of singing and preaching and a Day of Good Works. We hand out backpacks and do blood-pressure checks. For



ANDRE BERRY

Ministers Gary Smith and David Duncan strive to show cross-cultural unity to Houston.

those who may need an immigration attorney, we have attorneys on site to help with that. There's a place to donate blood. We provide a number of free counseling services to the community. Elders and counselors are available to pray and teach individuals the Gospel on that same day.

So that's a huge day. In the past four years we've assisted 2,000 to 3,000 non-members during that Day of Good Works.

What preconceived ideas that members of the two churches had about each other have proven to be false?

Smith: I can give a humorous one. I think maybe even before David came here, our congregation fellowshipped with Memorial on one or two occasions. Being a predominately African-American congregation and going to Memorial, we thought we were going to deal with the elite — those in the high-income bracket. And though our members did not say

it out loud, I think it was one of the preconceived ideas many had.

Instead, we found the Memorial members to be so down-to-earth and amenable — and that was a very pleasant surprise for us.

Duncan: When we visited Fifth Ward, some of our members thought (though no one said it) that we were going to a poor part of the city. I can remember people saying that night as they picked up the church bulletin, "Wow, look how high their budget is."

Sometimes we assume if one is white they are wealthy and if one is black they are poor.

We realized we're all just people.

What other hurdles have you encountered in these cross-cultural efforts?

Smith: Acknowledging differences in our worship styles. I told David he would hear a lot of "amens" at Fifth Ward, and David told me I wouldn't hear them at Memorial.

When we go to worship on Sunday

evenings, many of our members still have suits and ties on. And David told us, "Listen, our folks are going to dress in jeans or whatever they have on." In times past that might have been an issue with some of our members, but not now.

We stress to our members that the Christians from Memorial are our guests. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We're not judging, prejudging or trying to make demands on anybody. We're going to be hospitable. David and I communicate about these things, and we're comfortable saying to each other, "This is what we can expect, so let's lead by example."

Duncan: I think there are always hurdles, but I feel that visiting each other's congregations has gone over fairly smoothly.

The difficulty has been trying to take this to more congregations in the city. I think what I've learned and seen is that many of the black preachers are very straightforward and direct, and many of the white preachers are more indirect.

Describe some key benefits that your congregations have gained from these efforts.

Smith: Education is one of the key benefits. I know of some other congregations who have also started sharing fellowships and are learning about each other.

With regard to the Campaign for Christ, I originally said that I didn't want to get involved unless we could include more diversity in the planning part of the campaign.

I think that, as a result of Memorial and Fifth Ward already having an ongoing fellowship, more congregations of different races — white, black and Hispanic — have gotten involved in the campaign. That probably wouldn't have happened had we just said, "We're going to call a meeting, and we want everybody to

See **UNITY**, Page 16



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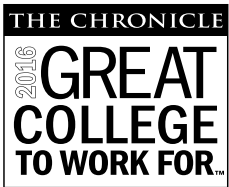
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UNITY: 'We can
work together'

FROM PAGE 15

come." Instead, we said, "Listen, we can work together. We can do this. We can plan it together, and we can come together."

That has been a great benefit.

Duncan: Another benefit is experiencing real moments of joy when nationally there is a lot of bad news. We experience this joy not only in the moment but also when we look back. When something bad is happening in the news and we can't think of anything good to say about it, we *can* say something like, "Wasn't that fun the last time we got with Fifth Ward?" And we'll smile and recall a memory that's centered on the Lord and the church — a moment when we were united in Christ.

Working in a multiracial, multigenerational effort is difficult. At the same time, there's nothing that has greater value or looks more like the body of Christ than a multiracial, multigenerational event.

In view of recent national events, what do you suggest as constructive ways Christians can address tensions between races and law enforcement?

Duncan: Police and citizens must get to know each other in non-threatening settings, and the church can be a catalyst for such events.

Memorial recently hosted a lunch for first responders where members could visit with them in a relaxed atmosphere.

On the Sunday after the Dallas tragedy, Gary sent a video to Memorial to be shown at the beginning of our service, and I sent one to Fifth Ward that was shown there to declare our love and solidarity.

Smith: We are planning an open-forum dialogue session with the peace officers of our community and all ethnic groups.

My suggestion is for Christians to make the first move to demonstrate support, tolerance and a willingness to dialogue with all races.

WEBSITE: www.houstonchurchesofchrist.org



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Erik Tryggestad preached for the Vaimoso Church of Christ, far left, in Samoa before flying to American Samoa, where he preached for the Lupelele Church of Christ, far right.

How to travel backward through time

CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE EDITOR preaches sermons 24 hours apart — on the same Sunday — thanks to the International Date Line.

TAFUNA, American Samoa

'So ... are you gonna take communion again?" That's the most common question I got after my plane landed at the Pago Pago International Airport — 23-and-a-half hours before it took off.

Thirty minutes earlier — and a day later — I boarded a Polynesian Airlines flight in Apia, the capital of the Independent State of Samoa, and flew east to the island of Tutuila in American Samoa. Legally, it's an "unincorporated and unorganized" U.S. territory. You'll find it on the back of certain quarters from 2009. I had to show my passport to get in.

Back in Apia, when it was tomorrow (this *will* make sense in a minute, promise), I conducted Bible class and preached during Sunday worship with the Vaimoso Church of Christ, a group of Samoan souls who treated me like

family. Their minister, Mika Laufile, and his wife, Rosa, treated me to a tour of the city and dishes of bread-fruit and fish in coconut milk. (Read more about the Laufile family on Page 20.)

I enjoyed an amazing potluck under the church's palm-shaded pavilion. Then one of the members, a cab driver, took me to the Fagali'i Airport. On the way, he told me how the power of the Gospel and the dedication of his Christian family delivered him from despair and alcoholism — a bit disconcerting to hear from a guy behind the wheel but also inspiring.

At the airport, I checked my bag and cleared immigration — a lady with a handwritten ledger and a stamp — just as boarding began.

Unfortunately, this was not my flight but the flight that was scheduled for an hour earlier. I had to wait for the plane to go to Pago Pago and come back to get me. It wasn't long, however, before I was buckled in for the journey backward through time — in a twin-engine Otter turboprop.

Somewhere over the Pacific Ocean I crossed the International Date Line,

the imaginary divider that denotes where one day ends and the next one begins. It's a bit arbitrary, with hooks and curves to keep various Polynesian countries on the same day.

Samoa, in fact, was on the other side until its government decided to move the line — partly to get on the same schedule as its trading partners, including China. As a result, Friday, Dec. 30, 2011, never happened in Samoa. They jumped from Thursday to Saturday. This wasn't nearly as confusing as Sept. 7, 2009, when, to make it easier for tourists from Australia and New Zealand, Samoan drivers all had to switch to the "British" side of the road.

When my plane touched down in Pago Pago, it was Saturday afternoon. David Willis, an elder of the Lupelele Church of Christ, picked me up. He showed me and a mission team from Missouri around the island before treating us to a dinner of more bread-fruit and backyard burgers.

"I'm going to bed," I told them. "I'm pretty tired because I had to get up early tomorrow."

A few hours later it was Sunday — again. Before I preached for the Lupelele church, Willis presided over the Lord's Supper. Noting my "Do I take it again?" quandary, he talked about the unique nature of the Samoan islands. In Apia, 18 hours ahead of my home church in Oklahoma, our brothers and sisters are among the first to take the bread and fruit of the vine — emblems of our Savior's body and blood. And here in American Samoa, six hours behind Oklahoma, we are among the last to share in this memorial feast.

Between those times, the sun passes over the great expanse of Christianity — those huddled in secret, risking persecution, and those packed into megachurches with multiple Sunday services. Sinners battling addictions, saved by grace.

Yes, I took the bread and cup again, and I prayed for all the souls — in places and numbers beyond my comprehension — with whom we commune.

CONTACT: erik@christianchronicle.org

Road Notes



Erik Tryggestad

Samoa

POPULATION: 197,773. **LANGUAGES:** Samoan, English. **RELIGION:** 57.4 percent Protestant, 19.4 percent Catholic, 15.2 percent Mormon, 7.2 percent other Christian groups, 0.8 percent other. **HISTORY:** A former German protectorate, Samoa gained independence in 1962. **CHURCHES OF CHRIST:** Native Samoan Luaao Soli started a congregation after his conversion in American Samoa. Robert Martin, Randy English and other missionaries work with churches in Samoa.



SAMOA
(18 hours ahead of Oklahoma)



Apia

DEPART: 3 p.m. Sunday

AMERICAN SAMOA
(6 hours behind Oklahoma)



ARRIVE: 3:30 p.m. Saturday

International Date Line

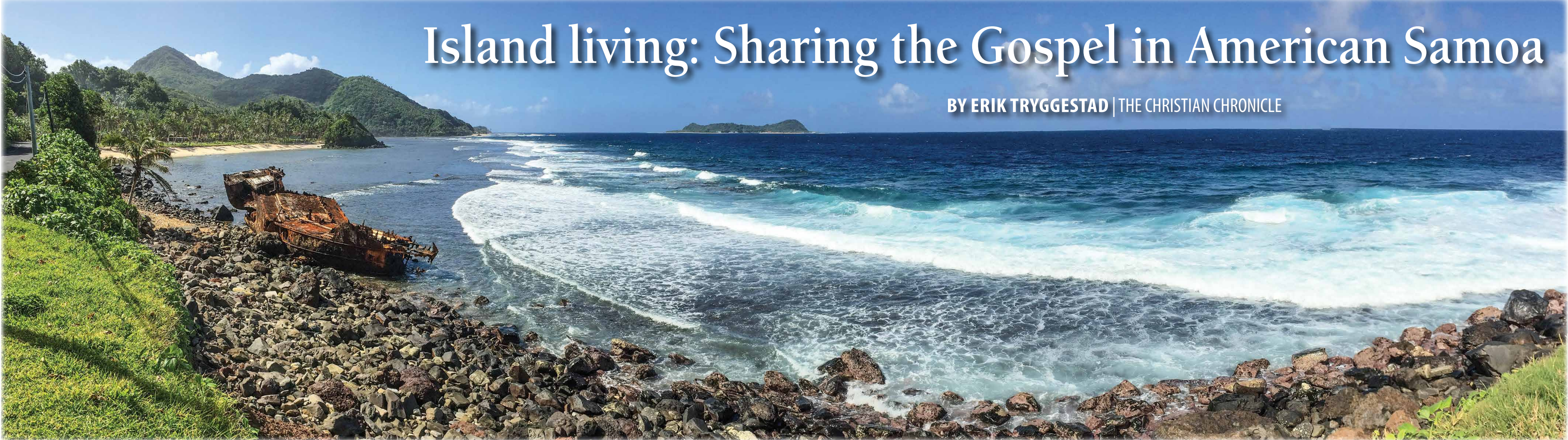


American Samoa

POPULATION: 55,165. **LANGUAGES:** Samoan, English, Tongan and various Polynesian. **RELIGION:** 98.3 various Christian groups, 1.7 percent other. **HISTORY:** In 1899 a treaty divided the Samoan archipelago between Germany and the U.S., which occupied the harbor of Pago Pago a year later. **CHURCHES OF CHRIST:** Missionaries helped plant the first congregations in the 1960s. Now the territory has four congregations with a combined membership of about 250.

Island living: Sharing the Gospel in American Samoa

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE



The remains of a Korean fishing boat, shipwrecked in the 1970s, sits near the mouth of Faga'itua Bay near the eastern edge of the island of Tutuila, the largest of the five islands and two coral atolls that comprise the U.S. territory of American Samoa. In the distance is the island of Aunu'u, accessible only by boat. Beyond are the islands of Ofu, Olosega and Manu'a.



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD
Joseph Siaulaiga, 18, leads hymns in Samoan during Sunday worship at the Lupelele Church of Christ.

ILI'ILI, American Samoa
Trade winds pound the surf against the rusting wreckage of a decades-old fishing boat in this sultry, South Pacific paradise. Nearby, a simple Samoan village sits off a paved road that winds between palmed-line beaches and lush, green mountains. At its center rises the majestic dome of a *fale tele* — a round, open-air meeting house where the community's elders share stories, songs and dances passed from generation to generation. A few turns down the road, a sign reads "United States Postal Service." Not far away is a McDonald's — and a stadium for high school football games. This is, after all, American Samoa, an unincorporated U.S. territory of about 55,000 souls. Nearly 2,500 miles from Hawaii and 4,800 miles from Los Angeles, it is the southernmost U.S. soil — and the nation's only territory south of the equator. Like many Polynesian locales — including its western neighbor, the independent

nation of Samoa — American Samoa is heavily Christianized. Church is a family affair. Nearly everyone goes — women in colorful *puleatasi* dresses and men in sandals, wraparounds with pockets known as *ie faitagas* and floral print shirts. Only Mormon men, it seems, opt for button-down long sleeves and ties. Among the plethora of faith groups on the island meet four Churches of Christ with a combined membership of about 250. Recently, church members and a few visitors gathered for the annual South Pacific Lectures, hosted by the Lupelele Church of Christ in the village of Ili'ili, to hear sermons on the theme "You Matter to God." In a culture where church attendance is a custom, Churches of Christ "strive to instill the idea that we are Christians every day — not just on Sunday," said David Willis, an elder of the Lupelele



Willis

congregation. Twelve years ago he and his wife, Danna, moved here for what they thought would be a four- or five-year mission to serve the church and foster local leadership. "American Samoa went from being a mission field to being our home," David Willis said. "We have fallen in love with the people and the islands." They serve a multinational mix of believers, including James Aho, a native of Tonga who works in construction and struggled with alcohol before he encountered Robert Martin, a missionary from Churches of Christ, and was baptized in the 1980s. More recently, in January 2015, Karen Dizon and her family were baptized. A native of the Philippines, Dizon taught the Willis' youngest son, Dylan, at a private school on the island launched by members of Churches of Christ.



Jackson

"I like the way they treated the people," Dizon said of her first Sunday worship with the Lupelele church. Suria Jackson came from neighboring Samoa and was baptized in 2008. Lupelele members know their Bible and can give reasons for their faith, she said. That appeals to her. And, as a mother of three, "I want my children to go in the right path," she said. Reaching young people with the Gospel is important, said Luaao Soli Jr., youth minister for another congregation, the Nu'uuli Church of Christ. After high school, many leave the island for college or military service. Those that stay struggle to find jobs. Alcohol, gangs and sex are temptations. Each year, Churches of Christ host a weeklong Camp Alofa (the Samoan word for love) that energizes the youths and often results in baptisms, Soli said. This summer four members of the Twin City Church of Christ in Festus, Mo., traveled to American Samoa to help conduct the camp. The church's minister,



Grace Ringling visits children outside the meeting place of the Nu'uuli Church of Christ.

Patrick Adam, is a Samoan native. Steve Ringling, on his fifth visit to American Samoa, said, "I see the smiles and the laughter, but I also feel the struggles and pain in dealing with everyday life on the island. ... "This year we feel as though we got a lot closer to the teens by placing ourselves closer to their families, their culture and their everyday lives." The team — Ringling, his daughters Izze and Grace and Jordan Nichols — arrived a week before camp to spend time with the youths at their homes. "I love how much they smile and laugh," said Izze Ringling, a college

freshman on her first trip to the island. Seeing their simple homes was humbling, she added. As she worked with the teens, she hoped to "show them God's love — and what it means to love other people." Missionaries and visitors come and go, said Tia Misa, another elder of the Lupelele church and a native of Samoa. He hopes that the visits inspire native believers to take leadership roles in Churches of Christ. In a place where everyone, it seems, goes to church, Christians must be able to speak about their faith with clarity and authority as they engage their communities, Misa said. When they hear the Gospel proclaimed — compared to what they hear every Sunday — the people of American Samoa "will find something unique in the teaching of Christ," Misa said, "rather than the teaching of men."



Misa



A family shares a hymnal as the Vaimoso Church of Christ sings Samoan-language songs of praise before Sunday morning Bible class. More members arrive as the class begins.

Samoans are missionaries to their homeland

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

APIA, Samoa

Beams of sunlight poke between the wooden boards of Mika and Rosa Laufili's simple island home. In the open doorway, where the light is brightest, Rosa Laufili sits on a mat of woven reeds with an open Bible, composition books filled with handwritten notes and multiple copies of "The Voice of Truth International" magazine. She teaches women's Bible studies and her husband preaches for the Vaimoso Church of Christ, a congregation of about 70 members in the capital city of the South Pacific nation of Samoa. They are missionaries to

their own people — both natives of Samoa who moved to neighboring American Samoa years ago and met a *palagi* (Samoan for foreigner) named Robert Martin who taught them the Gospel. Mika Laufili grew up attending various churches but wasn't "getting it" when it came to faith and obedience, he said. "I thank the Lord for letting me see the truth," he said. After their baptisms, the Laufilis spent 19 years in American Samoa, raising their family, before moving to Hawaii, where they worshiped with the Kailua Church of Christ. Mika Laufili felt a stirring to return to his homeland. The Church of Christ here was stagnating, he learned, and members struggled with addictions. He wanted to help rekindle the congregation. At first, his wife didn't want

**From the EAST**
Matthew 8:11

SEE EXCLUSIVE VIDEOS from the Samoan islands and more stories from Asia and the South Pacific at christianchronicle.org.



In their home, Rosa and Mika Laufili finish a Samoan-style lunch.

to leave her comfortable bank job in Hawaii. "I thought of putting it off until retirement," she said of moving to Apia. She prayed, asking God that "if this is for us," to open doors and make it possible. He did. "It was amazing," Rosa Laufili said. The couple found a place to live and means of support. They bought a bus, which runs

in April 2014 — and his wife, Roberta, a month later. "There is no other place where I will find eternal life, no other body," said Paulo Mose, who grew up in a Methodist home but didn't take his faith seriously before he met the Laufilis. The church also is growing spiritually, Mika Laufili said, with members taking an interest in leadership roles and committing to live by the words they read in Scripture. "The reward we get is the maturity of the church," he said. "That shows us God is with the work in Vaimoso." As they approach the end of their five-year commitment, 66-year-old Mika and 61-year-old Rosa Laufili ponder the future. Do they return to Hawaii and their children, stay and help the church grow or plant a new one in another part of Samoa? "So you pray for us, brother," Rosa asks her fellow Christians, "and see what we do here."

NEWSMAKERS



PHOTO PROVIDED BY KRISTI JONES, LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

Randy Steger, founder of Healing Hands International, receives the Kopio Award from Lipscomb University.

AWARDED: Healing Hands International received the Kopio Award during Lipscomb University's 89th annual lecture-ship, Summer Celebration, in Nashville, Tenn. The award honors those who exemplify tireless service in ministry. Healing Hands, a humanitarian relief nonprofit supported by Churches of Christ, celebrates 25 years of service.

APPOINTED: Laura Delgado, Phyllis Hildreth and Linda Peek Schacht, Lipscomb University employees, to the Council on Gender Equity by Nashville Mayor Megan Barry.

NAMED: Jessica Findley, assistant coach for Oklahoma Christian University's women's basketball team in Oklahoma City. **Todd Kempton**, Lads to Leaders national staff. Kempton is the organization's



first full-time Texas-based employee. **Jake Mitchell**, assistant coach for Faulkner University's women's basketball team in Montgomery, Ala. **Neil Reynolds**, pathways director for Kairos Church Planting, based in Portland, Ore.

NEW MINISTERS: **Rico Brown**, minister for the Virginia Avenue Church of Christ in Chester, W.Va.

Tim Burroughs, pulpit minister for the North Main Church of Christ in Weatherford, Texas.

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

Birthdays

101st: F. Ray Duncan, Sun City, Calif. **99th:** Bernice Crudup, Sun City, Calif. **93rd:** Doretha Fitzhugh, Houston. **90th:** Bill Humble, Amarillo, Texas.

Anniversaries



70th: Billy and Verna Gray, Tipton, Okla.



50th: Harvey and Mildred Wosika, Newkirk, Okla. *(See a video of Harvey surprising Mildred with a love song at www.christianchronicle.org.)*

75th: A.F. and Doretha Fitzhugh, Houston. **60th:** Joe and Rosemary Capshaw, Boerne, Texas.

Memorials

C.E. "Doc" Cornutt
1949 – 2016

C.E. "Doc" Cornutt, of Dallas, went to be with his Father on May 28, 2016, after bravely facing frontal lobe dementia for eight years.

He left behind his loving wife of more than 45 years, Linda Core Cornutt, three children and five grandchildren, who all admired and loved him deeply. He also left behind a sister, Molly Goodwin, and brother, Jim.

Doc was born April 18, 1949, in

Pampa, Texas, the son of Jim and Dona Cornutt. Doc graduated magna cum laude from Pampa High School and Abilene Christian University. He was later named to Pampa High School's Hall of Fame.

He served on the board and as chairman of the board for Dallas Christian Schools and Abilene Christian University. After graduating from Abilene Christian, Doc received his CPA and was a senior accountant for Arthur Anderson and Co., and then he began a more than 40-year association with Hunt Consolidated. He served as vice president of the Hunt-related development company, Woodbine Development, chief financial officer of Hunt Oil Company, chairman of Hunt Refinery, president of Hunt Realty and Hunt Financial Corp; and finally as chairman and CEO of Argent Property Company. He was involved in Dallas, serving United Way, Leadership Dallas, the Strategic Issues Committee of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Advisory Board for the City of Dallas. He was chairman of the board of directors for Goodwill Industries of Dallas and was



on the executive board of the Dallas Summer Musicals. He also served on the boards of Centre National Bank, Chase National Bank Dallas and Amegy Bank. His most valued and enjoyable time was spent with his family in Wyoming and Montana, fishing, hiking and riding horses.

Doc and Linda have been members at Skillman Avenue Church of Christ in Dallas for more than 45 years, where Doc served as a Bible teacher, deacon and elder and was involved with the Skillman youth activities.

His life showed that he loved the Lord first, his family second, and that he had the best of servant hearts.

Bob Harrison
1949 – 2016

Robert (Bob) E. Harrison was born to Winston and Dorothy Harrison on April 10, 1949, in Lipan, Texas. He died in Oklahoma City on July 26, 2016, surrounded by family and friends.

When his mother Dorothy died, she left behind Bob and his older siblings, Jim and Lois. His father, Winston, then married a widow with a son, Wayne. Zelma Farley Harrison became the mother who raised him.

Bob married Rosemary Wilson on Aug. 5, 1972. To this marriage were born Angela and Tiffany. Rosemary died in 1987. After her death, Bob married a widow, Sally Cox Jenkins. Sally had twins, Jeff and Leanne. Bob and Sally then became parents of four.

During these years Bob was a minister at various churches throughout Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas. When no preaching job was to be found, he would throw papers or work at Wal-Mart or at a grocery store. Basically, he was willing to work any job to feed his family.

Bob graduated with a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma Christian College and later went on to receive master's and doctorate degrees. With all his education, he preached in a simple way so that even a young child could get something from his sermon. Twenty minute sermons were his rule.

Bob wrote many tracts to benefit the church during his career. He authored two books, "Givers God Loves" in 1981 and "Don't Stumble Over the Rocks on your Way to Heaven" in 2008.

Bob was a one of the founding members of *The Christian Chronicle's* board of trustees and served the

continued on page 22



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

Milestones

continued from page 21
newspaper for Churches of Christ dutifully, demonstrating a deep love for Christian journalism. He also served on the board of Christian Homes of Abilene. He maintained many friendships from his time teaching at Fort Worth Christian in the 1970s.

With more than 45 years of preaching and teaching, Bob amassed an extensive book collection that will be donated to the Oklahoma Christian University Beam Library's Restoration Movement History Collection and general collection. His family is thankful that the books Bob loved will be put to good use.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents and his brother Wayne, along with his in-laws Jack and Sarah Wilson and Claude and Mary Ellen Cox. He was also preceded in death by his brothers-in-law Robert, Kelly, Joe, and

Michael, and by his daughter-in-law, Melinda. Bob is survived by his wife Sally, their four children, grandchildren Christopher, Zackary, Avery, Kaylee, Annie, Nicholas and Caleb, and his siblings Lois and Jim, along with their spouses Leroy and SueAnn. He is also survived by sisters-in-law Sherry, Peggy, Cherry, Mary Lou, Diana and Janis, brothers-in-law Johnny and Stan, and many nieces and nephews.

Dr. Virgil R. Trout, 89,
Ardmore, Okla.,
Aug. 16.

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in honor of Barbara S. Lyons and in memory of Woodrow Childs.



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K-12 SCHOOLS

WESTBURY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HOUSTON — Students at Westbury Christian collected more than \$8,000 in coins to help orphans in two of the Western Hemisphere's most economically disadvantaged countries — Honduras and Haiti. Bible teacher Steve Hawley organized the drive.

Mission Lazarus, a church-supported ministry that helps impoverished children and families in Honduras, will receive three-quarters of the funds. The remainder will support the work of Hope for Haiti's Children, also supported by Churches of Christ.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

HENDERSON, Tenn. — As a new school year begins, Freed-Hardeman's Graduate School of Theology offers two new degrees. Professor Justin Rogers will oversee a Master of Arts in Old Testament — a fully online program — and Ryan Fraser will direct a Master of Arts degree in pastoral care and counseling.

ROCHESTER COLLEGE

JINJA, Uganda — About a dozen students and two faculty from the Rochester Hills, Mich., college traveled to this East African city to work with Kibo Group International. The

church-supported ministry helps Ugandans in development activities such as digging and repairing water wells, forest replantation health and hygiene training and women's empowerment.

The trip is experiential, said Rochester spokeswoman Cayce Kosch. The students learn as they witness the Kibo staff's interactions with the people of Uganda. Among the nonprofit's goals are teaching Ugandans self-sustainable practices that will improve their lives and point them to Jesus.

SOUTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

TERRELL, Texas — Administrators of this 150-student college — the only historically black college associated with Churches of Christ — will give of their own time and finances to provide 250 scholarships with the goal of doubling Southwestern's enrollment.

"Unfortunately, most of our students are not financially able to attend the college, even many who want to major in ministry," the administrators wrote in a recent appeal. Though tuition is slightly less than \$13,000 per year, "even the Pell Grant covers less than half the amount students need for two semesters."

To contribute, or for more information, write to SwCC, P.O. Box 10, Terrell, TX 75160 or call (972) 524-3341, Ext. 122.

CHURCH PLANTING

GREAT CITIES MISSIONS

OKLAHOMA CITY — About 130 Christians representing 12 church-planting teams gathered on the campus of Oklahoma Christian University for a reunion hosted by Great Cities Missions, a church-supported ministry that seeks to establish a congregation in every major city of the Latin world.

"The reunion reminded me that we are all part of a fraternity of sorts that very few people will ever participate in or fully understand," said Executive Director Kelley Grant, a former missionary to Chile. "The time that each of us spent serving God in Latin America has changed us in ways that are hard to fully comprehend."



LEWIS SHORT

A decade of service to a third culture

Nearly 100 children and parents representing no fewer than 38 nations gathered on the campus of Oklahoma Christian University for the 11th Global Reunion, a camp designed for Third Culture Kids, or TCKs. The Reunion helps TCKs — the children of missionaries, military personnel or international businesspeople who grow up in a culture different from that of their parents — adjust to life when their families return to a home the children have never known.

"The transition, it was tough, absolutely tough," said Charlie Hancock, right, who was born in New Orleans and moved with his family to Tokyo when he was a year old. Seventeen years later, they returned to the U.S. "I didn't understand the social interactions in America. I feel like I kind of fire-hosed people with information right off the bat. I thought that's how you make relationships, you just talk about your background, let it all out. But in the U.S., it's a little different. It starts with small talk."

Hancock came to the reunion as a camper a few years ago and now serves as a facilitator for the event.

"It saved my life, literally," Hancock said of the Global Reunion. "I know a couple of others that would say the same. It goes to that extent."



PHOTO PROVIDED

Rochester student Rory McAllister visits children in a Ugandan village.

SEE AN EXCLUSIVE VIDEO and expanded story at www.christianchronicle.org.

BLACK HILLS: South Dakota camp got its start in 1968



William Lewis reads his Bible during a quiet moment at Black Hills Bible Camp.

FROM PAGE 3

and the wooden cabins that serve as the weeklong home for nearly 200 Christians from the Dakotas and nine other states.

From the campers, you hear conflicting stories about why Black Hills Bible Camp always coincides with the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

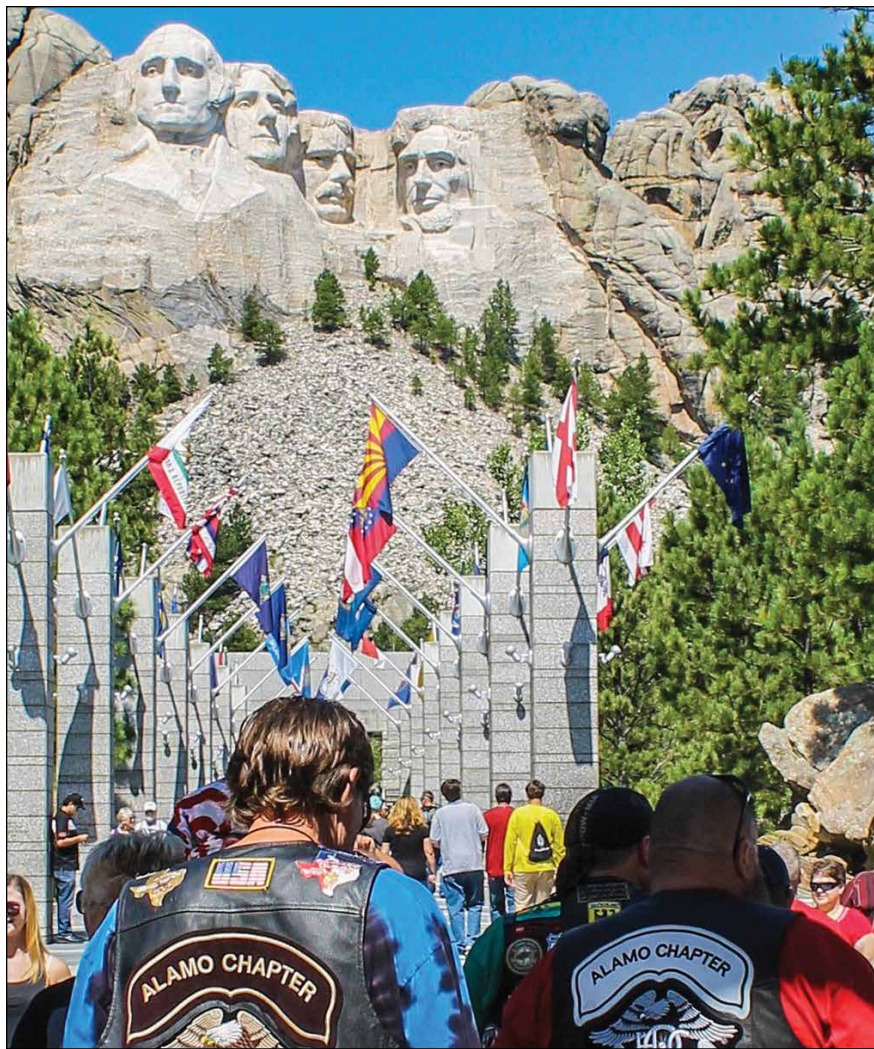
Some say the camp started as a way to provide a wholesome activity for young Christians during a time of drinking and debauchery. Others say it's simply a convenient week for church members — young and old — to get away.

"This is just a crazy week. You get nothing done anyway," Jerry Savage said of the motorcycle activity that deluges this mostly rural state where normally you can drive for hours and see nothing but cattle, sunflowers and golden fields.

Savage helped direct Black Hills Bible Camp for more than a dozen years while serving as minister for the Northern Hills Church of Christ in nearby Spearfish, S.D.

While living in the area, Savage and his wife, La Von, rented out their home to tattooed, leather-jacket-clad bikers while at camp. The Northern Hills church, meanwhile, opened its doors to Jesus-loving bikers.

"You see them, and you think Hells Angels," Savage said. "But really, they're lawyers and doctors and guys just wanting to live a little



Bikers visit Mount Rushmore, the iconic national memorial where the faces of four U.S. presidents are carved into granite, during the recent Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

differently for the week."

Now, Savage preaches for the League Street Church of Christ in Sulphur Springs, Texas. But he and his wife still make a regular pilgrimage to the Black Hills — drawn by close-knit Christians who keep the faith despite serving in mostly small, isolated congregations.

"These people are really strong spiritually," he said. "They are really dedicated. You've got to be, up here."

WILDFIRES AND MOUNTAIN LIONS

At the campground, the roar of the motorcycles fades into a soft rumble.

Much easier to hear is the sound of the rushing wind through the pine needles and the voices of Christians who gather inside the chapel — and

outside at a fire pit — to sing praises to God.

"I heard a weird, howling noise down at the campfire last year," said Austin Powers, 29, Dustri Brown's younger brother and a longtime camp attendee who now brings his wife, Breann, and 6-year-old son, Riley. "Maybe it was Bigfoot. Or it could have been crazy bikers in the woods."

Overnight, fire watch volunteers are necessary because of drought conditions and the need to warn campers if a spark erupts. While taking her turn at that duty, Rose Volden said she can see deer eyes glowing and hear owls hooting.

"There are mountain lions out here," said Volden, a member of the 41st Street Church of Christ in Sioux



Steve Tucker, pictured with wife Rachel, serves as the camp board's president.

Falls, S.D., on the other side of the state. "I don't want to meet one."

Holden and fellow camper Norma Hamm serve as bunkhouse inspectors, making sure beds are made and floors swept in the young people's living spaces. They give awards for the cleanest cabins and make up silly songs to keep the mood light.

Volden was baptized at Black Hills Bible Camp in 1998 — the first year she came at the invitation of a friend, Betty Johnson, a fellow member of the 41st Street church. Volden studied the Bible with minister Randy Hayes, a longtime Black Hills camper from Imperial, Neb., and was immersed under the stars.

If enough rain falls to ease wildfire concerns, camp leaders light a bonfire for the late-night singing.

No one worries about a cell phone ringing during the praise time. That's because phone service disappears along the gravel road.

"It's cool weather and no distractions," said Frank Powers, 79, grandfather of Dustri Brown and Austin Powers and the oldest of four generations of his Kansas family who make the camp their second home. "You see all your friends that show up again, and you've got a whole year to catch up on."

Black Hills Bible Camp began in 1968. The first year, attendance totaled 116. Campers paid \$15.50 each to spend a week at Camp Old

“It’s just really beautiful to hear all the singing and voices coming together.”

— Brianna Huot, 17-year-old camper from the Vermillion Church of Christ in South Dakota



Campers gather for a morning devotional at Black Hills Bible Camp. The daily schedule includes times for praise and worship, Bible study, games, swimming and relaxation.

Broadaxe in Nemo, S.D. (This year, the price tag was \$170.)

In 1972, the event moved to Camp Mallo in Four Corners, Wyo. Mallo served as the campground for three-plus decades, except for 1978 to 1980 when a fire caused by lightning burned down the main lodge. During those three years, Cedar Canyon Camp in Rapid City, S.D., housed the Bible camp. The number of campers hit 271 in 1996. (This year, attendance was closer to 175.)

In 2005, organizers began leasing the current campsite from an organization called Kinship Mountain Ministries. This year marked the 11th year at the Kinship site — and the 49th year overall. Next summer, a golden anniversary celebration/reunion with the theme “Come Home” is planned.

Albert Harty, who wears black suspenders and a John Deere cap, serves as Black Hills Bible Camp’s historian.

Harty first came to the Bible camp in 1972 after a minister named Phil Potter introduced him to Jesus. Potter, who preached for the Sturgis Church of Christ, directed the camp in its early years and enlisted Harty’s help.

“When I was a new Christian, this was the most important event outside of worship and fellowship of the church I had been involved in,” said Harty, who works in construction and preaches for the eight-member Twin Cities Church of Christ in nearby Lead, S.D.

PANCAKES, EGGS — AND BIBLE TALK

By 7:25 a.m., the kitchen crew is already busy at work, flipping 350 pancakes and cracking open 24 dozen eggs. Debra Hardison, a Northern Hills church member, pours glasses of orange juice, grape juice and water.

For Hardison, Black Hills Bible Camp has been a tradition since 1983. Her three children, now adults, grew up at the camp.

“When you’re out here and there’s not a lot of churches around — not a lot of Christian kids — this is what they need,” she said.

Todd and Jennifer Alpers have brought their children — Luke, 17; Sam, 15; and Anna, 10 — for the last nine years. For Todd Alpers, a member of the Stafford Church of Christ in Kansas, the best part is casual time spent visiting with fellow Christians.

“It’s a life-changing experience just to share everybody’s stories. Everybody is sitting around with their Bible open,” said Alpers, who loves discussing the Scriptures with campers such as Calvin Chapman, preacher for the Church of Christ in Faith, S.D.

At 8 a.m., camp director Silas Fitzsimmons rings the bell by the kitchen. That signals that it’s time for the devotional before breakfast.

“The thing that is unique is that it’s both a youth camp and a family camp. It’s intergenerational,” said Fitzsimmons, campus minister for the Northern Hills church. “You have all



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Lance and Dustri Brown, with daughters Evahri and Eyiah, first met as children attending Black Hills Bible Camp.

these students doing activities, and the adults are right there with them.”

‘YOU SEE JESUS ALL OVER THE CAMP’

Steve Tucker, the camp board’s president, said he likes the secluded atmosphere.

Tucker and his wife, Rachel, own a farm along the Nebraska-Colorado border and drive 30-plus miles to worship with the Ogallala Church of Christ in Nebraska. They have four children: Michael, 20; Tyler, 13; Kylie, 12; and Trevyn, 8. The entire family looks forward to camp.

“You see people laughing like they’ve never laughed before,” Steve Tucker said. “You see people serving like they’ve never served before.

... You see Jesus all over the camp — all the time.”

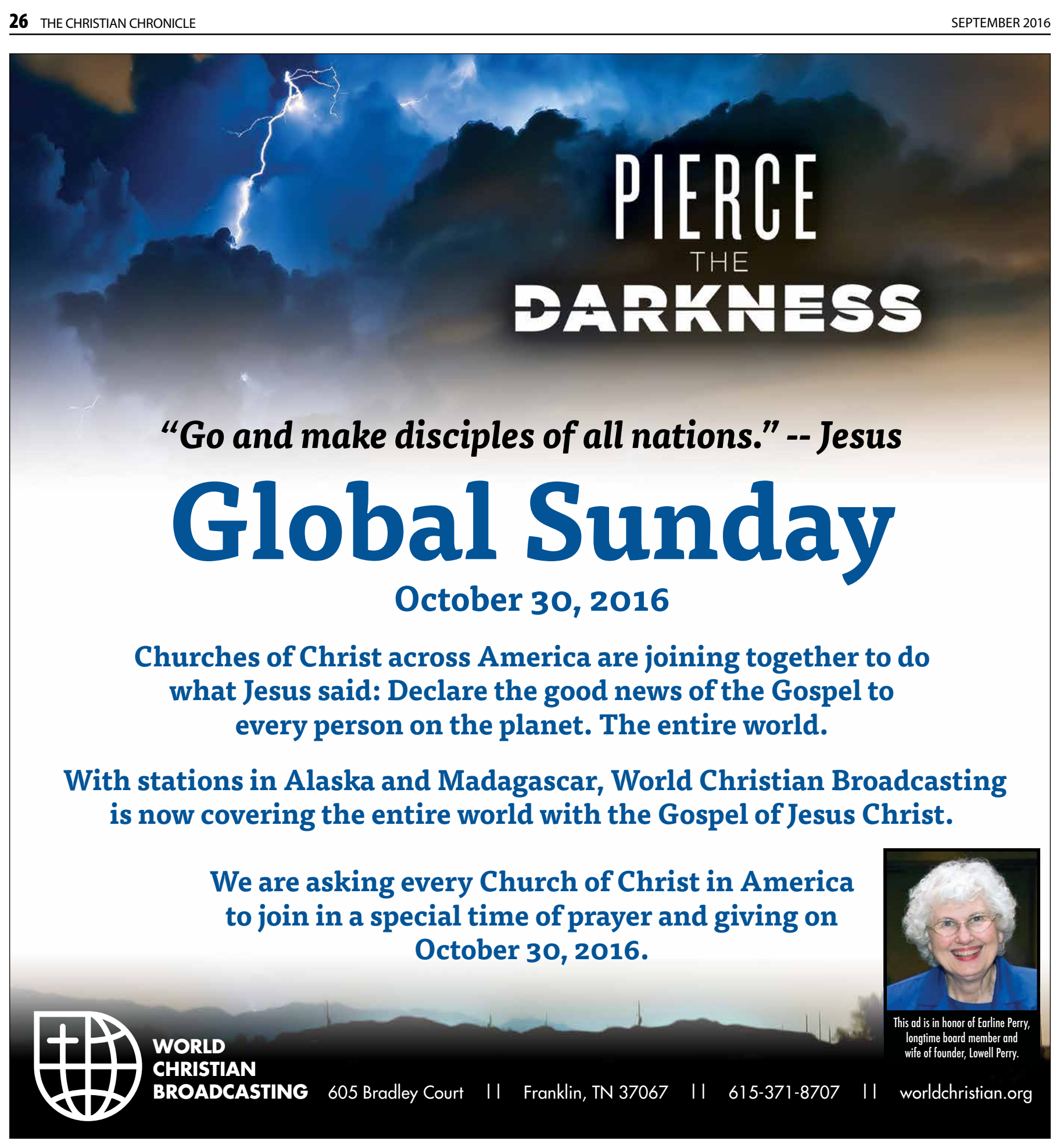
Caleb Renken, 15, a member of the Sioux Center Church of Christ in Iowa, said he enjoys the “flour war” at the end of camp as well as the opportunities to sing crazy, wacky songs throughout the week. “I love it here,” Renken said. “It’s hard to put it into words. ... You can express yourself spiritually and emotionally without being judged by anyone.”

Brianna Huot, 17, a member of the Vermillion Church of Christ in South Dakota, said she likes the camp’s zipline and the morning chapel assembly. “You get to know people and make new friends,” Huot said. “From my perspective, it’s just really beautiful to hear all the singing and voices coming together.”

Year after year, Harty witnesses the spiritual growth of children who enjoy games, crafts, swimming and, yes, lots of Bible study and worship. He has watched many grow up and return with their own children and even their grandchildren. Each summer brings new baptisms in the camp pond.

“It’s absolutely an encouraging and unifying event,” Harty said. “We all get together and renew our Christian ties and friendships. There is nothing that has kept me from serving and attending the Bible camp.”

SEE A VIDEO of singing at Black Hills Bible Camp at www.christianchronicle.org. Learn more about the camp at www.blackhillsbiblecamp.org.



PIERCE THE DARKNESS

“Go and make disciples of all nations.” -- Jesus

Global Sunday

October 30, 2016

Churches of Christ across America are joining together to do what Jesus said: Declare the good news of the Gospel to every person on the planet. The entire world.

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EDITORIAL

A prayer of repentance

Extremism, hatred, fear, mistrust and bigotry seem to surround us daily, threatening our attitude toward others.

In this climate of racial and ethnic tension, now is the time to let our light shine. In that spirit, The Christian Chronicle calls all of us to fall on our knees before God, confess our sins and become what he wants us to be. May this action lead us to purer hearts, void of ungodly attitudes toward others. We offer this prayer:

Dearest loving Father, you are the great I Am, creator of the universe, savior of our souls. You have made all 324 million of us in the U.S. and 7.4 billion of us worldwide in your image. We marvel at the incredible diversity of every aspect of your creation — the countless varieties of life. You call us to fall at the feet of Jesus, your son. We are servants in your universe, and we serve because, without you, we are sheep without a shepherd.

Father, may we learn to love as you do. Give us the spiritual and moral strength to remove the bias and scorn we have chosen to embrace from our families, communities, and, sadly, sometimes from our religious teachers, in order for each of us to be more like you, respecting and caring for all people.

We confess our sins of self-righteousness and superiority over other people whom you have created, just as you have created us.

Lord, may each of us reach into the dark depths of our hearts and draw out every vestige of hate, resentment and prejudice so we can love others as you love. May our spirituality grow from mere external relationships into the depths of our soul so that we live the words you spoke to Samuel, *“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*

Help us father, for we, like Peter before Cornelius, have so much to learn about respecting others. You do not show favoritism but accept people from every nation who fear you and do what is right. May we draw closer to those who don’t look, live or share our culture by learning more about one another at a genuine, intimate level.

We commit ourselves to justice, fairness and compassion to all people regardless of who they are or how they differ from us. May we ever seek to live the love of Jesus in all of our relations with others.

Help us to seek ways to be kind and respectful to all people. As you spoke through Paul, *“As I have opportunity, may I do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers.”*

Through your son Jesus who died for all, Amen.

A fishing trip to racial harmony

“One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

— Proverbs 18:24, New International Version

NINETY SIX, S.C.

You’ve got to go where the fish are,” Clarence Sanders said as we headed across Lake Greenwood in his boat. “And the fish are likely under that bridge.”

My father-in-law, Raymond Climer, and I sat in the back of the boat. As we passed under the first beam, I looked like Neo dodging bullets in “The Matrix” movie. As we approached the second beam, I squeezed into the gap between the two seats and placed my head on the tackle box, reminding myself that fishing is fun.

Clarence and Raymond love fishing. They fish together almost weekly.

Raymond, an 81-year-old white man, was born in Roellen, Tenn., and attended Freed-Hardeman University. He served in the Army for two years but spent most of his life preaching for Churches of Christ in Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and the Carolinas. He also served as a missionary, primarily in India.

Clarence, a 61-year-old black man, was born in Whitmire, S.C. He taught physical education and coached baseball and football. A talented pitcher, he was drafted by the Chicago Cubs but chose not to accept their offer because they wanted to use him as a relief pitcher, he said. While pitching for South Carolina State, his roommate on the road was Donnie Shell — later a member of the Pittsburgh Steelers’ famed “Steel Curtain” defense of the 1970s.

Now Clarence and Raymond both live in South Carolina, a state where racially charged violence claimed innocent lives last year, followed by a controversy over a Confederate flag displayed in front of the state Capitol.

But Raymond and Clarence are not just good friends, they are *best* friends. For the past 15 years, they have formed a bond that is as deep and strong as any you will ever run across. Like an old married couple, they anticipate each other’s actions and finish each other’s sentences.

How did this happen? For one thing, they are brothers in Christ. They worship with the Union Church of Christ, where Raymond serves as an elder. They share a love for God and their fellow man. Acts 10:34 tells us that God does not show partiality, and Galatians 3:28 reminds us that we are all one in Christ Jesus. While many of us read and understand these verses, Raymond and Clarence take them to heart.

In the Word



Steve Johnson

They also share a passion for fishing. When they are together under the bridge reeling in fish, all is right in the universe.

Speaking of fish, we hauled in 27 of them under the bridge that morning — and engaged in friendly banter about the relative sizes of our catches. Clarence goes for volume, I learned, while Raymond prefers hooking “the big one.”

I learned about the time Clarence made a prank phone call to Raymond, disguising his voice and asking Raymond to marry him and his girlfriend “because

that girl loves me a lot!” Raymond politely refused. I also learned about the time there was a water moccasin on the shore near the boat and Clarence asked Raymond to kill it. Raymond swung his paddle wildly — and Clarence was sure his friend would either fall out of the boat

or smack him in the face. The snake wasn’t phased a bit, Clarence said.

The realist in me says we will always have racial problems in this country, just like we’ll always have crime and poverty. But I do believe race relations can improve. It begins with individual relationships like the one between Raymond and Clarence. They overlook whatever might divide them and share a friendship for the ages — the

kind each of us should get to experience at least once in our lives.

A lot of good things can happen under a bridge on Lake Greenwood in the middle of South Carolina. Not all of them involve fishing.

STEVE JOHNSON and his wife, Janet, worked with youth groups for two decades, and he served as a part-time youth minister for the Bell Shoals Church of Christ in Brandon, Fla. In 2015 the couple sold their home, bought a recreational vehicle and set out on a cross-country journey. They blog at www.bigsteveandliljan.com.



Clarence Sanders and Raymond Climer show off one of their catches during a fishing trip on Lake Greenwood.

Serve, protect, love: In the Bible, a uniformed officer teaches us to wield authority with respect

ABILENE, Texas

Centurions weren't well-liked in the days of the New Testament. Many Jews saw these law enforcement officers as representatives of the repressive Roman Empire — enemies.

That's why it's surprising when, in Luke 7:1-10, Jesus receives a personal request from a centurion. One of his servants is sick and about to die, and the centurion seeks divine healing.

Jewish militants likely would view this as an enemy's request. But reading the Sermon on the Mount and musing over Jesus' prayer on the cross for his enemies lets us know how our Savior will respond to this request.

In Luke's narrative, the centurion is not portrayed as an oppressor. He acts as if Jewish lives matter. The Jewish elders, in fact, experience an authentic relationship with the centurion that enables them to earnestly plead with Jesus on his behalf.

"This man deserves to have you do this," the elders tell Jesus, in Luke 7:4, "because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue."

They see this officer as a friend to be supported — not as an enemy to be resisted.

The centurion used his authority to personally engage in repairing what the Roman imperialistic system of expansion had destroyed in Israel. He displayed understanding of — and closeness to — the Jewish people.

Fast forward to May 24, 2016, when FBI Director James Coney addressed the Race and Law Enforcement Conference at the historic 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. Coney cited civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. in the context of racial tensions today.

"I think Dr. King would tell us to have open hearts, open minds and to see each other more clearly, because it is hard to hate up close," Coney said. "It's hard to hate somebody you know, somebody whose life you understand."

His statement reminds me of Philippians 4:4-6, as paraphrased in The Message: "Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them."

In addition to loving the Jews, the centurion displays a humble awareness of his imperfections. Later in Luke's account, he sends friends to say to Jesus, "Lord, don't trouble yourself for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you." (Luke 7:6-7)

As people of faith grapple with recent police shootings that have resulted in protests and acts of further violence, I proudly applaud the Chief of Police here in Abilene, Stan Standridge, for the powerful statement he made on July 10 during a prayer vigil.

Chief Standridge read 1 John 1:8-10: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us."

Views



Jerry Taylor

He went on to say, "Folks I'm here to tell you today that some American police officers have sinned against the very people that they vowed to serve and to protect. On behalf of American law enforcement, we have made some wrong decisions. In some cases we have made criminal decisions."

"We need your forgiveness. We are not without sin. The Scripture says none of us are without sin. We need your grace. The men

and women who wear the uniform need your grace. Our profession is extremely difficult. We will make mistakes. We need your grace."

"What does grace look like? Authentic relationship. That is what we desire — authentic relationship."

The chief is correct.

No American officeholder, president, uniformed police officer, military commander or citizen should be treated with the veneration of infallibility.

Law enforcement plays such a crucial role in our society that we cannot allow it to become infected by those who would transmit the disease of racism and criminality.

In 2006, the FBI released a report titled "White Supremacist Infiltration of Law Enforcement." These groups pose a threat to the public, to elected officials — even to law enforcement itself, the report concluded. A civil society cannot continue to ignore these cancerous cells of hatred, sometimes called "ghost skins"

— people who avoid overt displays of racism to blend into society, quietly advancing white supremacy. If this sickness remains untreated, it will metastasize and endanger the health of the whole country.

This is all the more reason why we should ask for federal, state and local policies that require police recruits to undergo a thorough screening and vetting process before they are accepted into the ranks of law enforcement.

We need more people like the centurion — people who are humble, aware of their own imperfections, people who seek to know, to understand and to love those they serve.

JERRY TAYLOR is an associate professor in the College of Bible, Ministry and Missions at Abilene Christian University in Texas. He is a longtime minister for Churches of Christ and an author of "Courageous Compassion: A Prophetic Homiletic in Service to the Church." He is a leader of the Racial Unity Leadership Summit, a program that brings Christians together to work for racial reconciliation in Churches of Christ.

FROM OUR READERS

ICOC, Church of Christ find unity in Germany

It was inspiring to read the "Road Notes" about the International Churches of Christ REACH conference and our mutual faith in God and Jesus Christ (Page 8, August).

I thought I would inform you of recent events in our church here in Munich, Germany.

After years of building relationships, studying the Scriptures together, praying, fasting — and then with some more prayer and fasting — the ICOC congregation and mainline Church of Christ joined together and became one church.

We have been one church for two years now, and it is amazing. The whole process has been very faith-building and called us all higher in our convictions and relationships with God and each other. Most importantly, though, it continues to help us in our understanding of God's love and wonderful grace.



Renée Herdt

RENÉE HERDT is a church member in Munich, Germany.

I just read the piece on the ICOC and appreciated it very much. Thank you for writing it. I have long been inspired by the evangelistic spirit of those in the ICOC and have wished for such a spirit to move in us.

Perhaps this piece will help to accomplish that. And thanks for the plane illustration. Very transparent of you and encouraging to me.

Kerry Holton | Denver

Church's service to refugees in Greece inspires study

A few days ago I searched the word "aliens" in the Bible. God had a lot to say about how we treat aliens, sojourners, etc. (See "Will terror in Europe halt ministry," Page 1, and Dialogue, Page 21, August.)

These people in Greece are following God's will, and we need to think seriously about our attitudes about this subject. I will keep this church in my prayers.

Jenifer Hosch | Crowley, Texas



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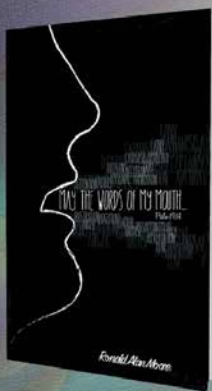
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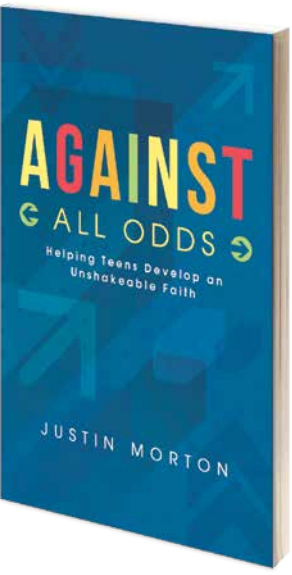
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Justin Morton chooses 13 characters from the Bible and looks at how they stood strong in their faith. When Peter felt like giving up, he forged a deeper faith. And Hagar, when facing rejection, developed a strong faith in God. Each of these examples has lessons for young adults to learn from in their daily struggles in developing a new faith or building a stronger foundation in Christianity. *Against All Odds* helps give your teen an unshakeable faith in modern times where countless distractions may cause them to fall away. For classroom or personal study. G56662.

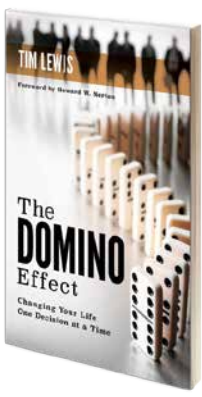
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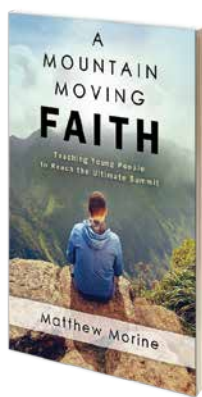
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Our longings can bring us closer to God

A box of Kleenex, a highlighter and time to process what you're reading — those are my recommendations for anyone reading Sheila Walsh's new book, **"The Longing in Me: How Everything You Crave Leads to the Heart of God."**

It's also a good idea to follow along with the story of David in your Bible as you read.

Walsh, a Scottish-born author, lecturer and singer has produced multiple best-sellers, including the "Gigi: God's Little Princess" series. Her latest work helps women look at the desires in our hearts and understand how our longings can lead to positive outcomes rather than outcomes that hurt us.

Walsh identifies 10 longings — the longing to be chosen, to be protected, to have things as they used to be, to name a few — and looks at each one through the story of David in Scripture as well as through her own experiences. She is very open and vulnerable about her life, including

the heartbreak of her first marriage, and makes it easier for us to be honest with ourselves as well.

The story that Sheila tells of her own life is a bit hard to follow as it skips around quite a bit. But the actual timeline and flow of events is not as important as the meat of each chapter, in which she identifies the cravings in King David's life and relates those desires to how we can draw closer to God.

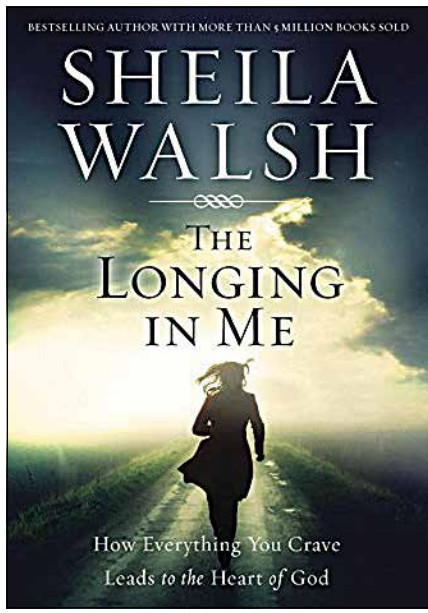
I have worked in social work for 13 years, concentrating on foster care and interacting with children and teens who have suffered abuse and neglect. The longings Walsh identifies are cravings that I see in the children I serve each day. They want control and stability. If they cannot control where they live or who they live with, they attempt to exert control over other aspects of their lives — what and when they eat, for example.

Often, kids who are in foster care through no fault of their own will try to make things right or take blame on themselves in an effort to protect their parents. This is similar to the need that we, as adults, have to make things right instead of leaving things in a place of uncertainty or discord.

In Print



Shiloh Jones



★★★★☆
Sheila Walsh. **The Longing in Me: How Everything You Crave Leads to the Heart of God.** Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2016. 208 pages. \$22.99.

"What I'm learning," Walsh writes, "is that if I don't understand why I respond a certain way in a particular set of circumstances, I'll do it again and again. The human heart longs for closure and understanding. In many

ways it looks to right the wrongs of our childhood so we feel more in control of situations over which we had no control as children."

So many of the kids that I work with and see each day do not know God. If they know that the longings in their hearts are from God and are designed to lead them to God, this could change their lives.

Reading Walsh's story and learning how she discovered the truth — that God could fulfill her needs like no one else — provide a great example of the transformative power of Christ.

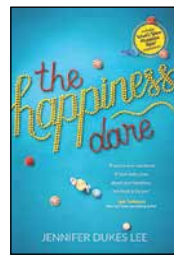
"The Longing in Me" will give you a new glimpse into this well-known Christian author. The book also will show you parts of your own life that you may not have seen clearly before. And perhaps you'll see areas of your life that need to be reevaluated and handed over to God.

SHILOH JONES is a social worker in Denver and placement coordinator for an agency that licenses foster families and works to find matches between families and kids needing safe and stable homes. Her husband, Josh, is youth minister for the University Church of Christ in Denver. They have two daughters and a box turtle named Turnip that they "rescued" from a freeway in Oklahoma.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Jennifer Dukes Lee. **The Happiness Dare: Pursuing Your Heart's Deepest, Holiest, and Most Vulnerable Desire.** Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2016. 291 pages. \$15.99.



"God, do you want me to be happy?" Lee, a former newspaper reporter, tackles the question many believers ask in their pursuit of happiness. Using her own journey to find happiness that is holy and fulfilling as a guide, Lee helps readers find a happiness "sweet spot" and reveals what people can do in five minutes per day to be happier.

FOR HUSBANDS

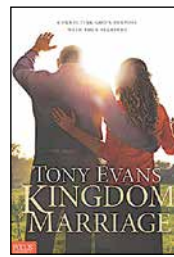
Aubrey Johnson, Cecil May Jr., Lonnie Jones and Ben Hayes. **The Best Husband Ever: The Challenge of Loving Like Jesus.** Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Company, 2016. 118 pages. \$9.99.



Four respected scholars and ministers among Churches of Christ — representing four generations — offer Bible-based advice for husbands as they care for their wives. This sacred obligation too often gets pushed to the bottom of a husband's commitments, they write. The key to improving your marriage is improving yourself, the authors add.

MARRIAGE

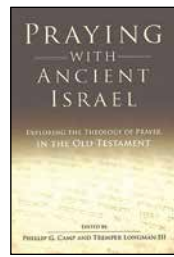
Tony Evans. **Kingdom Marriage: Connecting God's Purpose with Your Pleasure.** Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2016. 172 pages. \$19.99.



Renowned minister and Dallas Mavericks chaplain Evans discusses the simple-yet-difficult truths behind making a marriage last in a world of divorce and insincere commitments. This Focus on the Family book's 13 chapters cover what it means to be married and how to make an earthly marriage into a Kingdom marriage. Couples will discover the hope, challenge, and guidance God's Word provides for their journey together.

PRAYER

Phillip G. Camp and Tremper Longman III. **Praying with Ancient Israel: Exploring the Theology of Prayer in the Old Testament.** Abilene, Texas: Leafwood Publishers, 2015. 178 pages. \$19.99.



The pages of the Old Testament reveal that prayer stands at the heart of ancient Israel's relationship with God, write Camp and Longman, Bible professors at Lipscomb University and Westmont College, respectively. Each chapter contains practical suggestions for how Christians can use the Old Testament to cultivate their own prayer life.

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Sept. 9-11 National Ministers' Wives Conference. Little Rock, Ark. (870) 665-2500, www.ministerswivesconference.com.

Sept. 12 Colors of Honduras — Predisan. (678) 800-2512, lfletcher@predisan.org, www.predisan.org/dallas.

Sept. 16-18 Midwest Women's Conference. Indianapolis. www.mwccc2016.com.

Sept. 18-20 ACU Summit. Abilene, Texas. (325) 674-2000, acu.edu/summit.

Sept. 20-23 National Christian Camping Workshop. Michigan Christian Youth Camp, Attica, Mich. www.naccamps.org.

Sept. 21-25 Old Fashioned Tent Revival and Homecoming. Poteau Church of Christ, Oklahoma. (918) 647-4873, twobibles@gmail.com.

Sept. 23-25 100th Anniversary. Church of Christ in Tulare, Calif. (559) 967-0913, jpcoppngr@aol.com.

Sept. 25 83rd Anniversary. California Avenue Church of Christ, Bakersfield, Calif. (661) 496-0475, isonnyjr@gmail.com, www.theordsway.com/bakerst.

Sept. 25-28 Harding Lectureship. Searcy, Ark. (501) 279-4449, lectureship@harding.edu.

Sept. 27 Is God "A Moral Monster?" Hosted by Warren Apologetics Center at Ohio State University. (304) 295-3300.

Oct. 4-7 Abundant Living Retreat. Branson, Mo. (501) 279-4055, gowen@harding.edu, www.abundantliving seniors.com.

Oct. 8-15 SPLASH. Retreat for singles. Orlando, Fla. cocsplashers@gmail.com, www.cocsplashers.weebly.com.

Oct. 9 75th Anniversary. Britton Road Church of Christ, Oklahoma City. (405) 843-0300, www.brittonroad.org.

Oct. 13-15 40th Annual Midwest Lectureship. Bloomington, Ill. (309) 820-1400, www.midwestlectureship.net.

Oct. 15-16 60th Anniversary. San Jose Church of Christ, Jacksonville, Fla. (904) 737-2333, Ext. 5.

Oct. 27 CenterPeace, PeaceMaker Conference. Highland Oaks Church of Christ, Dallas, Texas. centerpeaceinc@gmail.com, www.centerpeaceinc.net.

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Children/Young-Family Minister

The **Mount Comfort Church of Christ**, located in northwest Arkansas, is searching for a Children/Young-Family Minister to work with K-6th grade children and their families.

The primary concern is to lead, develop and organize the children's ministry. He will help to equip children and their parents to grow spiritually, ultimately leading to a strong outreach ministry in our community. A competitive salary is offered.

Please send resume including references to:
lisa@mcchurchofchrist.org

Applications will be accepted through Oct. 1, 2016.

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 are looking for 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 six elders, 12 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.
(229) 242-6115
jklimko@cacoc.com

Central Avenue Church of Christ
304 E Central Ave
Valdosta, GA 31601

Preacher of the Gospel

The Walsenburg Church of Christ is currently looking for a preacher/evangelist that is excited about sharing God's message of love, grace and reconciliation through his son Jesus. The candidate for this position should possess excellent communication skills, work within a collaborative atmosphere and relate the Good News to both young and old. Responsibilities for this full-time minister position include preaching, training and developing the capacity of church members to share the gospel. We prefer a candidate who is sound in the word and has at least 3 – 5 years' experience. Applicants should have experience working with people of various backgrounds in a rural environment. The Walsenburg Church of Christ is located in Walsenburg, Colo., and is about 90 miles south of Colorado Springs.

Walsenburg Church of Christ
416 Walsen Ave., Walsenburg, CO 81089

Dennis (719) 890-0275, dennis.hoyt@gmail.com or Stan (719) 859-0548, Queen_mum16@hotmail.com

Evangelist Search - Tunkhannock, PA

Fifty Christians have been engaged in a summer long campaign in Wyoming County, Pennsylvania. Work in fraternal relationship with the **Antioch Initiative (aicoc.org)** dedicated to ongoing multiple church-plantings in the U.S.

Get information and/or submit resume to

Elmore Church of Christ elders at:
jpgavis0699@gmail.com
(334) 300-6987
or
Don Myers at:
dmyers@faulkner.edu

Join the team!

Full-Time Minister

Oxford Hills Church of Christ

is seeking a full-time minister in local congregation of 80 members. Located in western foothills of Maine. We have two elders, three deacons. Preferred married. Salary low 40's.

Contact:

Rusty Brackett (207) 743-6229
Arthur Turner (207) 743-6863

Minister Search

The **Inyokern Church of Christ** serving the small desert city of Ridgecrest, Calif., and the surrounding area, is seeking a minister. We are a diverse congregation that has an average attendance of 65 people. We desire a candidate with previous preaching and ministry experience.

Send resumes to:

Inyokern Church of Christ
Attn: Donald Blachly
PO Box 1795
Ridgecrest, CA 93556-1795
(760) 793-2841, blach00@yahoo.com

Family and Youth Minister

The Northwest Church of Christ in St. Petersburg, Fla., has an opening for a Family and Youth Minister. Our average Sunday morning attendance is 500. Our congregation is progressive, with an eldership that is empowering and supportive of ministers. We are looking for a man that is passionate about ministry to parents and teens. Our expectations in family/youth ministry are a little different. We have made major strides to include the whole family in our approach to growing the next generations of believers. Our families are aware they possess the primary responsibility to pass down faith in their home; we like making family involvement a priority. We are looking for someone to hit the ground running and to establish their own vision for the future of our families of teens at Northwest. Applicants should have a firm knowledge of scripture, a degree in Bible and Religion/Youth and Family Ministry or equivalent, and the ability to minister and lead a large group. Candidates should be highly relational, organized, and comfortable doing ministry within a secular context. Having the ability to lead worship is a plus. Previous ministry experience is preferable.

6355 38th Ave N, St. Petersburg, FL 33710, (727) 804-6108, dustin.burtron@gmail.com

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The King of Prussia Church of Christ is seeking a full-time minister with a heart-felt desire to advance God's Kingdom.

He should possess:

- A deep desire to see God's Word actively applied in all aspects of our lives as we minister to each other and our community at large;
- A passion for ministering based on the foundational scriptures of hope, faith, and love; and
- A dynamic focus for evangelistic activities, especially around the family.

We are located outside of Philadelphia in the historic Valley Forge area. Our vibrant fellowship of 120 members reflects the diversity of the area; members are highly engaged and first and foremost strive to be a loving family to all. We desire to bring God glory through worship, teaching and training one another, providing a nurturing and friendly family environment and reflecting the presence of Christ in our lives.

Please send your resume to:

kopcocsearch@gmail.com

After 20 years of isolation, a believer lets go of pain and judgment, returns to fellowship

VIENNA, Austria

Charles "Chuck" Schneider is a man of great character and leadership. A strong Christian, he grew up in Michigan during the Cold War and became convinced that the best way to serve God was to smuggle Bible behind the Iron Curtain. He went to Canada and studied at a language school run by a native of Yugoslavia — then a satellite of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the school had to close (Chuck was its only student) so he moved to Tallahassee, Fla., where he studied and worked at a crisis center before moving to Vienna in 1986.

Here, he serves the Danube Church of Christ alongside Bart Rybinski and Bobby Stanic. The mission team of Jake and Amanda Haskew and Will and Holly Kooi have turned leadership of this vibrant congregation over to these three men.

During my summer visit to Europe, I got to know more of their stories.

After he arrived in Vienna, Chuck toured the printing facility of Eastern European Mission — a church-supported nonprofit that, at the time, produced tiny New Testaments and stuffed them into spare tires for their journey into the Soviet empire. His tour guide, dressed in native Austrian garb, was a lovely young woman named Karina. They married three years later.

After a brief visit to Bosnia, where he was overwhelmed by the poverty he saw, Chuck returned to Vienna and began working for EEM. He volunteered for an English-language suicide prevention service run by Befrienders International. He remodeled their program for training volunteers. Ten years later, he became director of Befrienders' Vienna branch.

He seemed to be on course for a life of ministry — the life he desired when he was back in Michigan.

But, below the surface, there were problems. Chuck learned that he didn't have the necessary permit to work legally for EEM and that his status in Austria could be in jeopardy. Thankfully, through his volunteer work at Befrienders he met

Insight



Bailey McBride

people who helped him get a job with the International Atomic Energy agency in Vienna. Nonetheless, Chuck said that his experiences with Christians were, increasingly, leaving him and Karina disillusioned with ministry. He also endured teasing about being a "Jesus freak." For two decades, he and his wife disconnected from other Christians.

"I regret the self-imposed isolation during that 20-year period," Chuck told me. "I think it was a mistake to allow my judgmental attitude drive me away from fellowship. My trust in the Lord was so weak that I felt vulnerable and wounded by the behavior of others."

He read Scripture regularly and resolved to let go of his pain. Finally, he and Karina returned to the fellowship.

Since then, "Chuck has quickly become a pillar of our congregation," said one of his fellow church leaders, Bart Rybinski, who now serves as vice president for European operations for EEM. "His wisdom, empathy for those in need and commitment to serving Jesus are inspiring and encouraging to all of us."

"All of us admire his commitment to reading God's Word on a daily basis and striving to follow it in his daily life, as well as his efforts to reach out to his friends and coworkers."

"It's hard to imagine our small congregation without Chuck!"



BAILEY MCBRIDE

Chuck Schneider participates in a March for Jesus in Vienna.

CONTACT: bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org



Residential Counselor Job Opening

Couples needed for live-in positions as residential counselors, providing front-line treatment and care for up to eight adolescent males, ages 13-18. Good interpersonal, team and conflict resolution skills are required. Must be willing to undergo extensive training in behavior management techniques in a therapeutic environment. Must be able to adapt to a two-weeks-on-one-week-off schedule. Residential counselors are part of an interdisciplinary team consisting of case managers, credentialed counselors and support staff.

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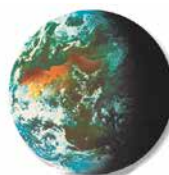
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Bikers and Bibles

South Dakota camp brings Christians together the same week as massive motorcycle rally. **3**



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