

PHOTO PROVIDED BY JUAN FLORES

After Ecuador earthquake, Christians pray and serve

In the South American nation of Ecuador, a team of Christians prays for healing after a 7.8-magnitude earthquake claimed more than 350 lives. Members and elders of the Ibarra Church of Christ in Ecuador traveled with relief supplies to the coastal city of Esmeraldas. Operation Ecuador and other church-supported ministries, including Healing Hands International, are providing relief. "It will take a while for these areas to recover completely," said Joshua Marcum of Operation Ecuador, "but we pray our efforts can help and be done in the name of the Lord."

SEE EXPANDED COVERAGE and find links to donate to relief at www.christianchronicle.org.

He pitches with heart – a brand new one

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

GODDARD, Kan. — It's a picture-perfect afternoon for baseball as Josh Oakley steps to the mound: blue sky, soft breeze and 71 degrees.

Fifteen family members — two parents, four grandparents, three of Oakley's five older sisters and six nieces and nephews — cheer as the high school senior delivers his first pitch.

The Eisenhower Tiger's white-and-baby-blue jersey — with No. 10 on the back — covers a foot-long scar down his chest.

That scar helps explain what makes this start so remarkable:

Less than six months earlier, Darrell and DeVona Oakley's youngest child — their only son — received a new heart.

"It's an absolute gift from God to still be able to play this game," said Josh Oakley, 18, a member of the Northside Church of Christ in Wichita, about 15 miles east of this suburban community of 4,600.

When the Kansas City Royals began their World Series-winning postseason run this past October, Josh Oakley lay unconscious at Children's Mercy Hospital in that same Missouri city. His family feared they just might lose him.

See **TRANSPLANT**, Page 10



KRISTA PRINDLE

Heart transplant recipient Josh Oakley pitches for the Eisenhower Tigers.

Will spread of Zika take bite out of Gospel?

VIRUS LINKED TO birth defects in Latin America calls mission-minded Christians to prayer and precaution.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Cris Gomes has the slightly peculiar habit of inspecting mosquitos after she swats them.

So when the missionary in Brazil got word that a certain type of mosquito was spreading Zika — a virus that could be linked to birth defects — she didn't worry. Of the countless pests she had vanquished during eight years of ministry in the northeastern city of Natal, she had never seen one like that.

Then she found out she was pregnant. Less than a week later, she killed a mosquito at the church building.

"It was *that* mosquito," she said. "And so, of course, I freaked out."

As the virus spread across South and Central America, high-profile athletes including U.S. soccer star Hope Solo expressed uncertainty about competing in the Olympics this August in Rio de Janeiro.

More recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed a link between Zika and microcephaly — babies born with smaller-than-normal heads — and other serious brain anomalies.

A few Churches of Christ have revised or canceled plans to participate in mission trips to the region this summer, including one headed to Recife, Brazil — a city heavily impacted by Zika — said another missionary, Randy Short.

Other congregations are continuing with mission plans, Short said.

With their first child due in October, Gomes and her husband, Franciney, are prayerful but calm.



Gomes

See **ZIKA**, Page 14

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On Christian journalists and #blacklivesmatter

ABILENE, Texas

The question hung in the air — just like one of those famous paintings that hangs on a wall in an art museum, blocked off by a rope. You dare not cross.

And in this moment, standing in front of 30-plus students at Abilene Christian

University on a Friday night, no one crossed this line either.

Not a single person raised a hand to answer the question, “What is the Black Lives Matter movement?”

As a broadcast journalist in Birmingham, Ala., that question is particularly important.

Abilene Christian, my alma mater, invited me back to co-teach a short course on Race and the Media with Farron Salley, also an ACU alum and an award-winning television reporter in Tulsa, Okla.

We wanted to know what this group of college students — millennials, all of them — knew about the Black Lives Matter movement and its role in media. More importantly, we wanted to ponder, with the students, the role of Christian journalists as we cover this movement and try to make sense of it.

We all had a lot to learn. Black Lives Matter originated shortly after the 2012 shooting death of Trayvon Martin, a black 17-year-old, by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch

See **JOURNALISTS**, Page 4

Inside Story



Wendell Edwards



JAMES NORED

Stan Granberg, center, sings “How Great Is Our God” with Matt and Melissa Raines and their son, Dawson. Not pictured are the Raineses’ daughters, Makayla and Leanna.

Coming soon: worship at the movie theater

CALIFORNIA CHURCH planters embrace their Church of Christ heritage but say ‘franchising’ a traditional approach won’t reach lost souls.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

TORRANCE, Calif.

When EPIC Church launches in this Los Angeles-area city of 150,000 souls in August, it won’t meet in a building with wooden pews or a steeple.

Rather, church planters hope to connect with postmodern seekers by conducting services in a movie theater in one of America’s largest shopping malls — perhaps while the expected summer blockbuster “Ben-Hur” plays next door.

“What better place to tell the story of restoration than the temple of our culture?” said lead planter Matt Raines, 38, who previously served as senior minister for the Chula Vista

Church of Christ near San Diego.

“It’s the Agora — the marketplace of this little part of the world,” added fellow planter Jeff Brimberry, 23, who grew up in the Westover Hills Church of Christ in Austin, Texas, where his father, Don, serves as an elder.

EPIC — sponsored by Kairos, a church-planting ministry associated with Churches of Christ — will emphasize the importance of baptism and celebrate the Lord’s Supper weekly.

“There’s a reason those two pieces are still here 2,000 years later,” Raines said.

But even though the church planters stress their love and appreciation for their heritage, they don’t intend to “franchise” a traditional Church of Christ.

See **CHURCH PLANTS**, Page 8

Should women preach in mixed-gender worship?

YOUNG CHRISTIANS tackle a tough question during debates at annual Lads to Leaders conventions.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

“The New Testament only authorizes males to preach in the mixed-gender assemblies of the New Testament church.”

Standing before a room full of young women, mothers and a panel of female judges at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Ashley Cleveland and Kara Green opened their Bibles and argued the point. They referenced Paul’s words in 1 Timothy, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man,” and the example the apostle gives from the order of creation.

Moments later, they argued the complete opposite, citing words from Acts, “your sons and daughters will prophesy,” and Paul’s testimony in Galatians, “nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

The high school sophomores, ages 15 and 16, were among the 420 students who competed in debates during the recent Lads to Leaders conventions. The annual gatherings, hosted in six venues across the U.S. and one in the Philippines, brought together more than 25,000 youths from Churches of Christ.

Like most of the fellowship’s 12,300 congregations in the U.S., the Prattville Church of Christ in Alabama,

See **WOMEN**, Page 24



PHOTO PROVIDED

Ashley Cleveland and Kara Green at the Lads to Leaders convention in Atlanta.

JOURNALISTS: Does 'Black Lives Matter' mean other lives don't?

FROM PAGE 3

commander for a gated community in Florida.

The tensions sparked by the case escalated with the 2014 shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and grew from there. Now #blacklivesmatter is a social media tag for a movement that showcases how black lives — mostly young black men — are cut short. And when it comes to accountability — an arrest, indictment or a conviction — too many times justice seems to be denied.

As the tag started trending on social media, so did the response “all lives matter.” In the course at ACU, we determined that this is a given. People of faith should value all life.

But does the Black Lives Matter movement imply that other lives don't?

I brought up Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook. In February, he scolded employees for what he called several recent instances of people crossing out “Black Lives Matter” on the famous signature walls at the company's New York headquarters — the real-life equivalent of Facebook's virtual walls — and writing “all lives matter” instead.

Multiple media reported on Zuckerberg's response, posted on a company announcement page: “‘Black Lives Matter’ doesn't mean other lives don't. It's simply asking that the black community also achieves the justice they deserve.”

The ACU students delved into stories that continue to stir the movement. They split into teams,

Race and policing highlight Faulkner's Fred Gray symposium

“All Lives Matter? The Constitutional Role of Race in Policing” was the topic of the recent Fred Gray Civil Rights Symposium hosted by Faulkner University's law school in Montgomery, Ala. Gray, an attorney who defended Rosa Parks and argued in other high-profile cases of the civil right movement, is a longtime elder and minister for Churches of Christ.

“We still have serious problems with proper training of law enforcement officials, because many of these instances that have occurred,” Gray said at the symposium, referencing recent, racially charged shootings by police in states across the U.S.

Rob McFarland, an associate dean of Faulkner's law school, said, “The topics discussed at this symposium address directly real issues concerning our nation.”

See www.christianchronicle.org for more on race and Churches of Christ, including Lynn McMillon's Dialogue with Gray, “On Ferguson, faith and the fight for equality.” Also, see “The broken soul of Baltimore,” Bobby Ross Jr.'s report on Christians in the riot-torn city after the death of Freddie Gray in police custody.

The Society of Professional Journalists' Oklahoma Pro Chapter recently honored Ross' story from Baltimore with a first-place award for diversity coverage.



FAULKNER UNIVERSITY

Fred Gray speaks during the Faulkner Law event.

researched the cases, highlighted the role of the media and the Black Lives Matter movement, interviewed their peers and wrote a public relations response. They presented the results in class.

“I found this very disturbing,” said senior Daniel Block, whose group profiled the Tamir Rice case in Cleveland. He was a 12-year-old shot by a police officer who mistook Tamir's pellet gun for the real thing. “It just seems (that) in most — if not all — of the cases no one was

held responsible.”

By the end of the course, it was clear: Covering this movement and these cases requires a sense of understanding. We must recognize that everyone yearns for validation. And sometimes, when it doesn't come through traditional avenues, people pave their own path.

Our role as Christian journalists remains the same no matter what we cover. Look for the objective, compassionate story and tell both sides fairly. We just have to make

sure we understand the narrative.

I think Robert Case, director of the World Journalism Institute, said it pretty well in a speech to a group of students in 2012: “The dominant role for the journalist who is a Christian is an unrelenting striver for verifiable truth.”

Jesus said it even better.

“I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” (John 18:37)

Most of the students in our course didn't understand the Black Lives Matter movement going into the weekend, said Doug Mendenhall, assistant professor and journalist in residence at ACU. With input from two Christians in broadcast media, “the students really got a chance to see how this movement helped bring a perspective to life,” he added.

The class ended on a Sunday afternoon — almost the way it started — with questions. Oprah Winfrey, on the final episode of her talk show, shared with her audience what she's learned after 4,300 episodes and more than 30,000 interviews. The three questions people most need answered are:

“Do you see me? Do you hear me? Does what I say matter to you?”

I pray that future generations of Christians in media will understand those questions — and that they'll be willing to quickly raise their hands and answer yes.

WENDELL EDWARDS co-anchors the morning news for WBMA, ABC 33/40 in Birmingham, Ala. He and his family attend the Riverchase Church of Christ in Birmingham.



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Phone: (405) 425-5070; Fax (405) 425-5076

Mail: P.O. Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100

Delivery: 2501 E. Memorial Road, Edmond, OK 73013



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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

Advertising Manager: Tonya Patton

tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org

Reviews Editor: Kimberly Mauck

kim.mauck@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

Editorial Assistant: Laura Akins

laura.akins@christianchronicle.org

Editor Emeritus: Bailey McBride

bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

Editorial Intern: Katie Jones

TO SUBSCRIBE: See www.christianchronicle.org,

email joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org

or call (405) 425-5070.

LETTERS: letters@christianchronicle.org

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY RICARDO BARRERA

Spanish-speaking Christians in Chicago area focus on evangelism at areawide assembly

Some of the 320 Spanish-speaking Christians and visitors who gathered for a recent area-wide service at the Elgin Church of Christ in Illinois pose for a group photo. With the theme "Follow Me," the Chicago-area church members sang hymns focused on the need, reward

and responsibility of Christians to share the good news of Jesus, Elgin minister Ricardo Barrera said. "We also prepared all participants in how to evangelize," Barrera said. "We had many visitors from the Elgin area who received a clear message of the Gospel as well."

ARIZONA

TUCSON — A four-hour drive north to an Apache reservation gave teens from Tucson the opportunity to show Christ's love in a weekend of sledding and serving others.

Mountain Avenue Church of Christ youth group members worked with other churches in Show Low, Ariz. They packed food boxes for needy families, created a rock path to a church for the rainy and snowy seasons, hosted a Vacation Bible School and took children sledding.



JESSICA KNAPP

Will Thompson works on the construction project.

"I am so proud of the teens for their work in reaching out to the kids on the reservation and for actively living out their faith by seeking to serve others," said Jessica Knapp, who works with the youth at Mountain Avenue. "It was a weekend of hard work, but I think the teens did a great job."

NORTH DAKOTA

BISMARCK — Walter and Cindy Clark, who have served the Bismarck Church of Christ for 10 years, were recognized recently with the Fields Are Ripe Award.

The award, given by York College in Nebraska, recognizes York College graduates who have dedicated themselves to serving small churches in the upper Midwest. Frank Wheeler, chairman of York's Bible department, presented the honor.

The couple's sons, Cory and Caleb, and daughter, Caris, also graduated from York.

The Clarks received a check for \$1,000. They intend to use it to help pay for travel later this year to South Africa, where Caris and Cory will be working with the organization Orphan's Justice.

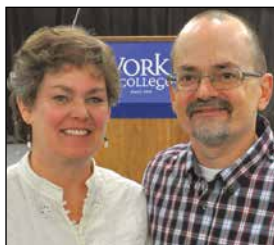


PHOTO PROVIDED BY YORK COLLEGE

Walter and Cindy Clark were honored by York.

VERMONT

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Church of Christ hosted its first "Spring Sing" on May 1.

More than 100 people from 10 Churches of Christ in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont attended, minister Jay Huntley said. "Yes, the singing was excellent," Huntley said.

VIRGINIA

NEWPORT NEWS — For years, the Denbigh Church of Christ has helped with an interfaith homeless program called PORT.

But this year, the congregation decided to step up its involvement and become a host church, associate ministry Roger Brown said.

"For one week, we opened our doors every night to bring in the homeless for a hot meal, shower, warm sleeping accommodations and breakfast the next morning," Brown said.

Housing assistance, clothing and a variety of other services were offered, too.

"What greater way to celebrate Christ than to serve his children of lesser means?" Brown asked.

SPOTLIGHT

ElderLink links leaders

INDIANAPOLIS — The inaugural ElderLink Midwest — hosted by the North Central Church of Christ — drew 234 attendees.

ElderLink, a ministry of Abilene Christian University in Texas, seeks to equip, encourage and link leaders of Churches of Christ.

ElderLink events are conducted in various locations across the nation. For more information, see www.acu.edu/elderlink or email elderlink@acu.edu.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY RENEE PAUL

Worship leader Joey Kincheloe leads singing at ElderLink Midwest.

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President Barack Obama sips filtered water from Flint, Mich., following a roundtable on the city’s water crisis. At right is Church of Christ minister Rigel Dawson.

Obama listens to minister’s concerns on Flint water crisis

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A Church of Christ minister whose Flint, Mich., congregation has been active in helping victims of the city’s lead-contaminated water crisis met recently with President Barack Obama.

Rigel Dawson, who preaches for the North Central Church of Christ, was one of nine people invited to join a roundtable with the president.

Obama visited the troubled Michigan community to assess the water crisis and discuss the federal response after receiving a letter from an 8-year-old girl named Mari Copeny, a Flint resident.

The president spent an hour and 15 minutes with Dawson’s group. “He really heard us out,” Dawson said. “Everyone got to share their story and let him know how they’re feeling. “Part of my point to him was, ‘I hear a lot of people talking about what happened to us,’” the minister added. “I said, ‘It didn’t happen to us. It was done to us.’”

Later, while giving a speech at Northwestern High School in Flint,

Obama recalled part of what Dawson told him: “In one of the roundtables, I was listening to somebody — I think it was a pastor who told me, you know, it made us feel like we didn’t count. And you can’t have a democracy where people feel like they don’t count, where people feel like they’re not heard.”

For Rigel Dawson and his wife, Qiana, rashes on their two young children were the first indication something was wrong, as *The Christian Chronicle* reported in a March front-page story.

A trip to the doctor turned up no answers. But like thousands in the one-time automak-

ing hub that in recent decades has battled high crime, unemployment and urban decay, the Dawsons soon identified the culprit: the water flowing from their home’s faucets.

Since then, Flint’s lead-contaminated water has put the majority-black city — where 42 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level — in the national spotlight.



Rigel Dawson shows a photo he took of orange tap water at the North Central Church of Christ in Flint.

BOBBY ROSS JR.

WHERE WE’VE BEEN

New England Lectureship



Church members sing hymns during the New England Lectureship.

PHOTOS BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

TAUNTON, Mass.

In a part of the country where Churches of Christ are small and separated by great distances, more than 300 souls from 16 congregations in nine states gathered for the annual New England Lectureship.

Massachusetts churches — Roxbury, Lawrence, Blue Hill, Melrose, Fall River and Milton — sponsored the event. Their goal: “To help promote the Church of Christ in a positive light and to show that Christians in this part of

the country are about the Father’s business,” organizers said.

“Add to Your Faith” was this year’s theme, taken from 2 Peter 1:5-8. Maurice Davis, minister for the Church of Christ in Milton, served as director.

The lectureship included special classes for women and youths. After evening preaching sessions, attendees enjoyed singing from the New England Lectureship Chorus composed of church members from multiple congregations.

WEBSITE: www.newenglandlectureship.org



The youth class at the 2016 New England Lectureship in Massachusetts.

EXPANDED STORY: www.christianchronicle.org

CHURCH PLANTS: 'Our theology ... is dynamic and capable'

FROM PAGE 3

They must, as they see it, be open to new approaches to reach a new generation with the good news of Jesus.

"It takes a kingdom to reach the lost," said Raines, whose family worships with the Hilltop Community Church of Christ in El Segundo, north of Torrance, while developing EPIC Church. "Our guiding ethic is to do what makes sense in our West Coast context. I hope our way doesn't feel like an indictment to traditional churches."

The new church will minister to people to whom existing congregations have difficulty relating, said Scott Lambert, national network director for Kairos and an elder of the Hilltop Community church.

EPIC is an acronym that stands for "experiencing" the story of restoration, "participating" in missional communities, "inspiring" personal and community transformation and "cultivating" a church-planting movement.

Unlike a more conventional name — such as one tied to a street or geographic location — EPIC reflects the true heart of the church, said Matt Raines' wife, Melissa, whose family moved to this Pacific Coast city last summer to begin planting seeds for the new congregation.

"If your name doesn't say something about you," the 38-year-old mother of three said, "I think a lot of people feel like there is some disconnectedness."

21ST CENTURY CHURCHES

Over the last decade, Kairos has organized 35 church-planting projects and teams in 12 states and five countries besides the U.S., according to executive director Stan Granberg:



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Enjoying a meal at the Black Bear Diner are, from left, Scott Lambert, Kairos national network director, and church planters Melissa Raines, Matt Raines and Jeff Brimberry.

- **Seventeen churches** — from the Agape Church of Christ in Portland, Ore., to Ethos Church in Nashville, Tenn., to The Feast Church in Providence, R.I. — remain active.

- **Nine church plants** did not launch or later closed.

- **And nine** — including EPIC Church — are in the launch phase.

What has Kairos learned? "Our theology at its core is dynamic and capable to sustain a church-planting movement," Granberg said of Churches of Christ. "(But) when we allow our heritage to settle into an expression of a particular era, it does not work well."

Since 2003, Churches of Christ

nationally have suffered a net loss of about 71 congregations per year, according to data compiled by 21st Century Christian, the Nashville, Tenn.-based publisher of "Churches of Christ in the United States."

The total number of U.S. congregations fell to 12,300 in 2015 — down 6.5 percent in a dozen years.

"In general, churches rooted in and practicing 20th century church models are not doing well in our 21st century culture," said Granberg, a former missionary to Kenya who is supported by the Southwest Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Ark.

Unlike most Churches of Christ, about 60 percent of Kairos church

plants use instrumental music in worship. "Most of our younger generations do not accept the theological support we have used for a cappella," Granberg said.

Moreover, some Kairos church plants allow women to pray and read Scriptures during the public assembly, he acknowledged.

Every generation must reevaluate what practices may hinder others from turning to God, said Tod Vogt, executive director of Texas-based Mission Alive, another church-planting ministry associated with Churches of Christ.

"Changing the name, adding instruments and allowing women broader roles are not the most significant changes the North American church needs to make to engage the culture," Vogt said. "If so, churches doing these things would be far more effective than they are."

"The greater challenge ... comes from deeper cultural attitudes and practices such as individuality, consumerism, narcissism and competition. These will only be addressed through an intentional focus on discipleship and mission."

TRADITIONAL VS. NONTRADITIONAL

Minister Dale Jenkins left an established congregation 10 years ago to help plant the Spring Meadows Church of Christ in Spring Hill, Tenn., a fast-growing bedroom community south of Nashville.

Jenkins describes the 450-member Spring Meadows church as "living proof" that a congregation can thrive without compromising long-held doctrines.

The Tennessee preacher said he

Old story
New Century
First in a series

IN FUTURE ISSUES, *The Christian Chronicle* will explore the pros and cons of various approaches to reaching a changing society with a changeless message — from multisite church models to discipling focused on small-group house churches.

KAIROS

Website: www.kairoschurchplanting.org

EPIC Church: www.epictorrance.com

Has organized 35 church-planting teams in Arizona, California, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas and Washington state, plus Angola, Australia, Canada, Guatemala and Panama.

MISSION ALIVE

Website: www.missionalive.org

Has planted about 30 churches — as far east

as Virginia, Georgia and Alabama; as far north as Chicago and Regina, Saskatchewan; and as far west as California and Oregon. However, the majority of church plants have been in Texas, where the ministry is based.

ANTIOCH INSTITUTE

Website: www.aicoc.org

Planted a church in Sayre, Pa., in 2014 and will launch a second one in Tuckahoe, Pa., in June. Plans call for two additional churches to be planted in northeastern Pennsylvania.

SUNSET CHURCH OF CHRIST

Website: www.sunsetchurchofchrist.org

The Springfield, Mo., congregation sent off groups of its own members to start the Nixa church in 2000, the Brookline church in 2005 and the Willard church in 2010.

SPRING MEADOWS CHURCH OF CHRIST

Website: www.smcoc.net

The Spring Hill, Tenn., congregation was planted in 2006.

“It’s not a bait-and-switch kind of relationship building. It’s more of a witness if we continue that relationship.”

— Melissa Raines, church planter with EPIC Church in Torrance, Calif.

sees a need for Churches of Christ to plant more churches and “re-vision” others to meet the needs of changing communities, but he voices concerns about some approaches.

“Some churches doing the planting seem to want to plant churches that are not Churches of Christ but more akin to an interdenominational fellowship,” Jenkins said. “On the other hand, some want to so micromanage the plant that they stunt their growth and effectiveness.”

In Springfield, Mo., the Sunset Church of Christ has planted three churches since 2000 — each time sending out between 50 and 150 of its own members to start a new area congregation.

“None of these plants could be described as nontraditional even though they are not clones of Sunset,” said Sunset minister Joe Bright, whose congregation has grown back to its original 600 members while the church plants flourish.

The Elmore Church of Christ in Alabama oversees a church-planting movement called the Antioch Initiative — with a goal of starting congregations in four northeastern Pennsylvania counties with no known Churches of Christ.

“An evangelist who is mighty in the Word to teach God’s eternal truth in a plant is an essential element in its infancy,” said Don Myers, minister for the 140-member Elmore church, north of Montgomery.

However, the Alabama congregation won’t attempt to impose its will on autonomous congregations planted in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, Myers said.

“We do not want to support a work, make their decisions for them, do all their evangelizing or teach them proof text answers to doctrinal questions,” said Myers, who teaches Bible at Faulkner University in Montgomery. “Such could later render them 20-year-old spiritual babies who do not evan-

gelize and cannot interpret the Bible themselves.”

Myers advocates a focus on people, not properties; on discipleship, not spectatorship; and on the concept that every Christian is a missionary and a priest of God.

“Jesus gave the Great Commission that mandated discipleship,” he said. “It was not the great suggestion.”

GOING WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE

Back in Torrance, developing relationships with non-Christians — many of whom never have heard the gospel story — is a major focus.

The church planters endeavor to introduce Jesus to the estimated 90 percent of area residents who don’t attend any church — be it the Raineses’ favorite waitress at the Black Bear Diner or “the hippie drum circle dude” who invited Brimberry to a Zen meditation.

“We are facilitating an encounter with people who don’t know they have a problem,” Matt Raines said.

But it’s crucial that the relationships be authentic, Melissa Raines said, and not tied to whether a person accepts Christ.

“It’s not a bait-and-switch kind of relationship building,” she said. “It’s more of a witness if we continue that relationship than if we just end it because we are pursuing someone else.”

For EPIC Church, the Sunday experience will include brushing shoulders with patrons at the Del Amo Fashion Center — a shopping mall with more than 200 stores.

After worship, church members will head straight from the AMC theater into a food court filled with lost souls.

That’s appropriate, said Brimberry, an Abilene Christian University Bible graduate whose multiple tattoos often serve as a conversation starter.

“We’ll be surrounded,” he said, “by the people that we’ve just learned Jesus loves.”



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DEVONA OAKLEY

Six days after receiving a new heart, Josh Oakley wanted to play cards. His sister Michelle Leibham and grandfather Duane Earles oblige his request. "This is a very interesting story about the power of prayer and the ultimate answer by God," Earles said.



DEVONA OAKLEY

Josh Oakley walks with his physical therapist two weeks after his surgery.

TRANSPLANT: A gift from God — in the form of a heart

FROM PAGE 1

"I'd already accepted that God was going to take him, and I was preparing myself to have to feel what he felt by giving up his son," Darrell Oakley said.

Since he was a young boy, Josh Oakley always has loved baseball — and God.

From an early age, he learned from his parents and sisters the importance of faith and dependence on Jesus.

As the teen battled for his life, he and his loved ones clung to that faith. "We had thousands of people praying for him," DeVona Oakley said while watching her son pitch again, the smell of concession-stand popcorn wafting through the air. "We truly believe that's the only reason he's still here, let alone playing baseball."

'SOMETHING WAS REALLY WRONG'

For Josh Oakley, the first signs of trouble came during baseball season last year. He'd be pitching and suddenly run out of gas.

"The coach asked us if he had low blood sugar because they noticed that he'd just kind of fade out and be tired," his mother said.

The family started sending extra snacks, but a doctor tested his blood sugar and found a normal level.

Someone else wondered if the teen's coughing and fatigue might be signs of asthma. However, another trip to the doctor ruled out that possibility.

In mid-July, Duane and Donna Earles — Josh Oakley's maternal grandparents and longtime members of the Poplar

Avenue Church of Christ in Wichita — celebrated their 60th anniversary.

They took 36 relatives, including their grandson, with them to Cancun, Mexico.

Soon after returning from Mexico, Josh Oakley joined the Northside church's youth group on its annual "teen camp" trip to Colorado. But he couldn't stay awake.

"They kept texting me and saying, 'He's just asleep in the cabin,'" DeVona Oakley recalled.

He was supposed to pitch the morning after the youth group's return, but he coughed all night and kept his mother awake.

"Mom, we're supposed to be going!" he told her at 7:30 a.m. "You're not going," she replied.

He didn't argue. "That's when I knew something was really wrong," his mother said,

"because he never passed up going to pitch."

A SHOCKING X-RAY

The next day, DeVona Oakley — a middle school registrar — had to work.

But Darrell Oakley, who owns a lawn care business, took his son to the doctor. Again.

"Don't leave until they find out what's wrong with him," DeVona Oakley told her husband.

Finally, a chest X-ray revealed the problem.

"Mom, my heart's twice the size it should be," Josh Oakley said when he called his mom with the diagnosis.

"You're kidding," she replied. He wasn't.

The family scheduled an appointment with a cardiologist for three days later. But when his condition quickly worsened before then, they took him to Wichita's Wesley Medical Center.

A resident named Dr. Chris Cassidy looked at Josh Oakley's heart with a sonogram — the kind used to see developing babies.

The teen's heart was pumping at about 10 percent of a normal level and dangerously close to shutting down.

"Of course, Dr. Cassidy didn't tell us any of that, but you could tell on his face that something was wrong,"

DeVona Oakley said. "We heard him on the phone, and he kind of lit a fire under the cardiologist who had gone home for the day.

"He is the first doctor," she said of Cassidy, "that God used to save Josh's life."

The Wichita specialists determined that Josh Oakley, then 17, needed to be airlifted immediately to Children's Mercy.

His mother flew with him, and they arrived at the Kansas City hospital — 200 miles northeast of Wichita — about 2:30 a.m. on a Wednesday in early August.

"His heart was big and dilated like a balloon and not squeezing well," said Dr. Aliessa Barnes, Children's Mercy's medical director for pediatric cardiac transplantation. "So we started him on continuous medication through his veins to help his heart squeeze."

The rest of the family — including Josh Oakley's five sisters, all married and at least eight years older than he is — rushed to be by his side.

"The first thing that struck me was what a close, amazing family they are," Barnes said. "With his five sisters, I think he has six moms."

At the time, four of those sisters — Jennifer Douglas, 33; Krista Prindle, 31; Kayla Skiles, 29; and Michelle Leibham, 26 — lived in

 Blessed be the
Caregivers

Fourth in a series



RICHARD EARLES

Heart transplant recipient Josh Oakley, top center in red, poses with his extended family — including his parents, sisters, brothers-in-law, nieces and nephews.

the Wichita area and attended the Northside church. (Skiles later moved to the Phoenix area, where she is a member of the West Olive Church of Christ in Peoria, Ariz.)

Josh Oakley's oldest sister — Jessica Coleman, 34, a member of the Woodland Oaks Church of Christ in The Woodlands, Texas — did not let distance keep her away.

"My husband and I woke our kids and got in the car and drove through the night from Houston," Coleman said. "We all had to be together — for Josh, for my parents and for each other.

"I cannot imagine a family going through what Josh and our entire family have ... without having each other and our strong faith in a mighty God!" she wrote in a message to *The Christian Chronicle*.

'WE ALMOST LOST HIM'

Doctors put a breathing tube down Josh Oakley's throat to reduce the stress on his heart.

Later, when they couldn't stabilize him, they turned to a heart and lung bypass machine known as ECMO, which stands for "extra corporeal membrane oxygenation."

For long-term survival, though, he needed a new heart.

Hundreds of believers joined the "Prayers for Josh Oakley" Facebook page and begged God to save his life.

In late October, doctors contemplated replacing Josh Oakley's ECMO with a mechanical heart —

or in medical terms, a ventricular assist device (VAD). That short-term solution could extend his life but would delay a possible transplant by two months, the family was told.

As that decision loomed, the young man's condition kept deteriorating. While awaiting a heart donor, he lay sedated for weeks.

"We almost lost him on a Sunday night," his mother said. But that Monday came the answer to the family's prayers: a healthy human heart matching Josh Oakley's body size and blood type.

Darrell and DeVona Oakley felt at peace as the transplant team — led by surgeon Dr. Jim St. Louis — rolled him into the operating room that Tuesday.

They trusted in God.

"God is faithful," said Darrell Oakley, his voice cracking. "Even if that meant taking my son, that's what I believe. But he did not take my son."

SHE SEES 'MIRACLES EVERY DAY'

Dr. Barnes is in the "miracle" business. Every heart transplant, as she sees it, falls into that category.

First, a donor or donor's family —



KRISTA PRINDLE

Josh Oakley shakes hands with elder Brent Groves as leaders of the Northside Church of Christ in Wichita, Kan., congratulate him during the church's Senior Sunday presentation.

often in the midst of huge personal tragedy — decides to give a stranger a vital organ, Barnes said. "I have no words," she said, "to thank the people who help us have these amazing kids like Josh on earth continuing to do good things."

After identifying a donor, surgeons blessed with God-given talents transplant that organ — in this case, a heart — into another human being, she said.

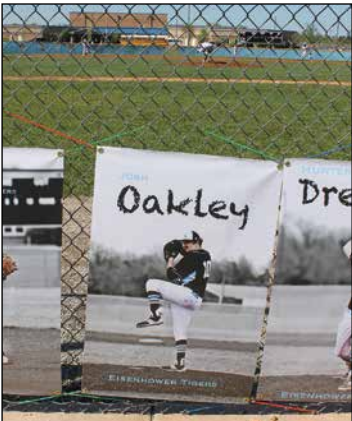
"I am in awe at the fact that I truly see miracles every day," said Barnes, who is a Christian. "I truly believe that God works through us as the physicians to help people."

Throughout his ordeal, Josh Oakley asked the same question: "Can I play baseball again?"

Yes, Barnes told him, a heart transplant will allow you to play the game you love again.

After taking time to recover, she explained, you'll feel like new again. You'll just need to take your medicine and guard against complications — such as infections or the body rejecting the heart or even cancer.

"A transplant is wonderful and amazing," the doctor said. "The whole point is, I don't want to do a transplant and keep him in a bubble."



BOBBY ROSS JR.

A picture of Josh Oakley hangs on the fence at the Eisenhower High baseball field in Goddard, Kan.

No, she wanted him back on the pitching mound.

Before the surgery, Josh Oakley recalls throwing fastballs in the upper 80s.

"Now I'm barely touching 80," the righty said. "I'm living with off-speed stuff. It seems to be working."

He's still rebuilding his muscles, and his diminished velocity shows it. Nonetheless, he throws 72 pitches in four-plus strong innings.

His coach, Cary Dinkel, pats him on the back as he exits with a 7-2 lead.

"He's picked right up where he left off," Dinkel said of the pitcher, who plans to attend Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., on a baseball scholarship. "I'm mind blown by what he's been able to do. It is a miracle."

There's that word again.

Josh Oakley's family raves about the doctors and nurses at Children's Mercy. They voice extreme gratitude for the Ronald McDonald House, which during his recovery provided comfort, lodging and meals. They never fail to mention all those who lifted up their son and brother in prayer or offered personal encouragement, including then-Royals pitcher Jeremy Guthrie.

But they have no doubt where credit for his amazing journey truly belongs.

"It's God," DeVona Oakley said. "It's all God."

The final score ends up 10-4. Josh Oakley earns the win.

But give God credit for the save.

SPOTLIGHT

20 years of ministry
... and a plane crash

FORT PORTAL, Uganda — A missionary family has endured malaria, persecution and even a plane crash during 20 years of service in this East African nation.

Jeff and Cheryl Cash and their children, Kinley, Alex, Isaac and Silas, have helped change lives in Fort Portal, a city of about 46,000 souls. The ministry has grown to more than three dozen village churches.

On Aug. 23, 2014, that work was jeopardized when a small plane Jeff Cash was piloting crashed as he took church leaders to a conference in Arua, Uganda. The missionary pilot and all of the passengers survived.

"The crash landing was violent," Cheryl Cash recalled in a blog post. "Jeff would carry the images long. But he knew, and I knew. We would not be defeated."

The Cashes launched a faith-based nonprofit, Where He Leads Inc., which includes Sewing Hope, a program that teaches Ugandans to sew and manage their money following biblical principles. They also oversee Camp Saaka, the venue for an annual Faith Quest Uganda event for young Christians.

Through the nonprofit, the couple is launching a Christian Fire Brigade to serve their community.

The Glenwood Church of Christ in Tyler, Texas, supports the Cashes. In a recent tribute, church member Joanna Neel wrote that the missionaries "remind us that God is bigger than wars, continents, oceans, our fears or our failures."

WEBSITE: www.whereheleads.com



PHOTO PROVIDED

Jeff Cash prepares for a baptism in Uganda.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY GEORGE FUNK

Believers preach as Gospel Chariots roll through Africa

Evangelist Aubrey Malire preaches under a tent in Kwanzama, a village in Malawi near the border with Mozambique. The gospel meeting was one stop during Gospel Chariot Ministries' eight-month journey to seven countries in southern Africa. The ministry, overseen by South African minister George Funk, sends red "chariot" trucks across the continent. Each contains tents, sound systems and plenty of World Bible School correspondence courses. In all, 12 Gospel Chariots visit 19 African countries, Funk said.

WEBSITE: gospelchariot.blogspot.com

AUSTRALIA

BARJARG — Fishing, food and fellowship were highlights of a recent autumn camp at Lake Nillahcootie in the southern Australian state of Victoria. Eighty-four Christians from 16 Churches of Christ — spread across five Australian states and New Zealand — attended.

Trevor Major, who preaches for the South Auckland Church of Christ in New Zealand, spoke on "Stories of Faith" — lessons

believers can learn from successes and failures in church history.

"This was the 41st time for the camp," said Bret Christensen, minister for the Southeast Church of Christ in Melbourne, Australia, adding that the gathering "continues to be a time of spiritual refreshment, encouragement and renewal of bonds of fellowship between brothers and sisters in Christ."

SLOVAKIA

BRATISLAVA — Christians in this Central European city, just east of Vienna, Austria, are "becoming more and more loving and generous" through small-group Bible studies, minister Roman Halamicek said.

The Christians study the Gospel of Mark, in which "we see the emphasis that Jesus doesn't want his followers to spread the news that he is the Messiah until they truly under-

stand what they're claiming about him," said Halamicek, who ministers for a small Church of Christ in the former Soviet nation. The home Bible studies focus on a deeper understanding of Christ, he said.

ZAMBIA

LUSAKA — About 27 years ago, Kennedy Mukuka enrolled in World Bible School to improve his English.

"The Lord used those courses to convert me," he said.

Recently the missionary and deacon of the Lusaka Central Church of Christ received 20 pounds of the correspondence ministry's introductory lessons to distribute in Zambian schools and colleges. Mukuka, who travels his home country training church leaders to evangelize, launched an outreach ministry with seven members of the Lusaka Central church.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Christians canoe on Lake Nillahcootie.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY WORLD CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING

About 100 people gather at World Christian Broadcasting's headquarters in Franklin, Tenn., for the launch of Madagascar World Voice, a new shortwave radio station.

After a decade of perseverance, Madagascar World Voice debuts

More than 10 years of trials and tribulations battered World Christian Broadcasting's efforts to set up a radio antenna in Madagascar. The list of hindrances to the \$12 million project included cyclones, manufacturing delays, vandalism, economic downturns and a coup d'état on the island nation, east of Africa's mainland, said the nonprofit's president, Charles Caudill. But workers with the international Christian shortwave broadcaster — supported by Churches of Christ and individual Christians — pushed past the discouragement and progressed in setting the generators, transmitters and antennas in working order. Finally, on March 27, Madagascar World Voice debuted on the airwaves, joining its sister station KNLS, which broadcasts faith-based programming from Anchor Point, Alaska. "It's exciting to think about the opportunity we now have to let more people know that God loves and cares about them," Caudill said. Both stations utilize shortwave frequencies, used to send information long distances using a process called skywave or skip propagation. Radio waves are broadcast from

an antenna and are reflected or refracted back to Earth from the ionosphere, allowing communication around the curvature of the planet. Madagascar World Voice broadcasts 13 hours a day in Arabic, English, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Spanish. Its transmitters reach Africa, India and the Middle East, as well as most of Europe and the Americas. Combined with KNLS, which reaches Russia, China and the Pacific Rim, World Christian Broadcasting reaches a potential audience of 3 billion souls, Caudill said. Each language service produces a daily, one-hour, magazine-style program with Gospel teaching segments, news features and music, — broadcast on radio and Internet. Caudill praised the work and perseverance of the nonprofit's staff, including Kevin Chambers, vice president of engineering and the architect of Madagascar World Voice. Chambers' "brilliance, perseverance, relationship building and hard, hard work have all been needed as the construction continued for those 10 years," Caudill said.

WEBSITE: worldchristian.org

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ZIKA: 'We're not going to let fear determine what we're doing'

FROM PAGE 1

"We chose to take a risk," Cris Gomes said, noting that a health agency had recommended waiting two years to have children. By then, she and her husband reasoned, the risk could be even worse. "We decided we're not going to let fear determine what we're doing."

Thus far her doctor appointments have revealed no abnormalities.

Though her close encounter with *Aedes aegypti* — a mosquito that spreads Zika — was scary, the mother-to-be puts her faith in a power greater than biology.

"Our approach is, God's given us a baby, and we're grateful," she said. "The baby that we get is the baby that we love."

AN UNUSUAL VIRUS

Zika is one of the strangest illnesses to surface "ever since we got kicked out of Eden," Stephen Wolf said, referencing the fall of man and the introduction of death and decay, as told in the book of Genesis.

"This virus is doing things that I did not expect to see, ever," said Wolf, a lieutenant colonel and medical squadron commander in the U.S. Air Force who worships with the Edgemere Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas. He has a master's degree in entomology, the study of insects, from Auburn University and a master's degree in ministry from Harding University in Searcy, Ark. Over the past 20 years, he has assisted in the Air Force's efforts to assess risks and recommend protective measures for troops sent around the world.

An outbreak of Zika caught the medical world's attention in 2007 on the South Pacific island of Yap, part of Micronesia, Wolf said, although this disease has been known since shortly after World War II.

"It's a very mild mosquito-borne disease," he said, but it can be "horrific for unborn babies."

The virus has been active in Central America since 2013, said



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LEE FLETCHER

Dr. Amanda Madrid of Predisan Health Ministries talks to a reporter from an Atlanta TV station about the threat and impact of the Zika virus in Central America.

Dr. Amanda Madrid, CEO and medical director of Predisan Health Ministries. Based in Catacamas, Honduras, the ministry associated with Churches of Christ has treated hundreds of Zika patients. On Feb. 2, Honduras' president declared an epidemiological emergency.

Joint and muscle pain, rashes, itching and headaches are common symptoms, Madrid said. Some patients become ill and miss work. Others experience Guillain-Barré syndrome, which causes muscle weakness and temporary paralysis.

Some people infected with Zika, however, exhibit no symptoms at all. Unlike many "vector-borne" diseases spread by insects, the virus also can be transmitted sexually.

Women infected during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy seem to be at the greatest risk for birth defects, Madrid said. However, many women who have the virus give birth to healthy babies.

HEALTHCARE FOR A FALLEN WORLD

Predisan, which recently celebrated 30 years of ministry, operates

a network of facilities including a medical center, substance abuse recovery program and clinics in the Honduran state of Olancho.

The ministry has a birthing center in the town of Dulce Nombre de Culmí, where healthcare workers deliver about 500 babies per year. Occasionally, they see cases of microcephaly, usually in stillborn babies.

Losing a child for any reason can be a challenge for a mother's faith — and for the medical mission's workers who attempt to introduce her to Christ, Madrid said.

"In the most rural, remote areas of Honduras, people still attribute birth defects to witchcraft," she said, "or to situations related to nature like movements of the moon and the sun."

How do physicians of faith respond?

"We live in a fallen world," Madrid said. "To me, this is an opportunity to serve — to show God's love in action through healthcare — but also to teach people about our responsibility in taking care of our environment and assuming co-responsibility for our health."

PRECAUTIONS AND PRAYER

Though risk exists, "we do not need to have a spirit of timidity when it comes to vector-borne diseases preventing us from spreading the Gospel," Wolf said.

As some U.S. churches sponsor mission trips south this summer, pregnant women or couples trying to have children might want to stay home, he said. Others should prepare for travel in the tropics by purchasing insect repellent with DEET, a compound effective against mosquitos, ticks and other insects. Doing so can help prevent other viruses, including dengue and chikungunya, also transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitos.

Cris Gomes takes anti-mosquito precautions as she works as part of a team in Natal, where she oversees an English outreach ministry.

She spent part of her first trimester in the U.S. In months when most Brazilians slept with their windows open, she kept hers shut and ran the air conditioner instead.

She hasn't canceled any activities, but goes to the church building — located in a part of town she calls a "hotbed" of mosquito activity — only when she has to. "One of my teammates who's so sweet, when she knows I'm coming, she drowns the place in bleach," Gomes said.

Her parents, Bob and Donna Carpenter, once served as missionaries in Brazil's capital, Brasilia.

While they are concerned about the health of their future grandchild, they trust their daughter's judgment — and God's provision.

"We know that Cris is taking all the necessary precautions and has a very competent and caring doctor," Donna Carpenter said.

News of the virus has affected Cris Gomes' prayer life — in a good way, she said. Though she does what she can, she realizes that she and her unborn child are completely dependent on God, "the one caring for both of us."

"I also get to remind myself of the incredible community of prayer warriors that I'm a member of," she said, noting the support she receives from her congregation.

"Our church is family. We're very blessed to be where we are."



Wolf

LONGTIME MINISTER Arnelious Crenshaw follows a Paul/Timothy model as he prepares his successor

No shoes to fill, but steps to follow

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

For Arnelious Crenshaw, the time has come to pass the baton.

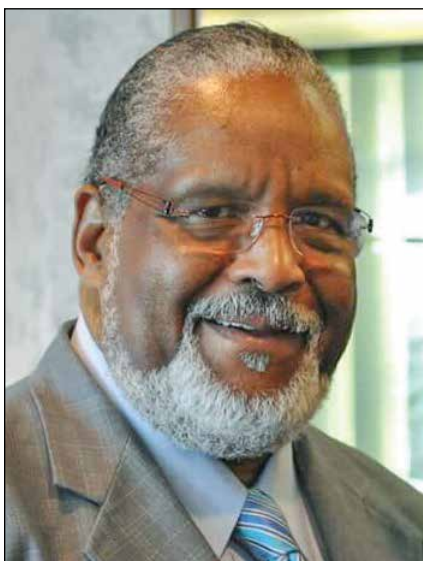
The beloved minister, who has preached for the Northeast Church of Christ in Oklahoma City for 32 years, is an accomplished author, speaker and organizer of efforts to improve underserved communities on the local and national level.

Earlier this year, as the minister was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor, Christians who had heard him speak at gospel events across the nation offered fervent prayers for healing. But Crenshaw began preparing for his transition from the pulpit long before the diagnosis. Dwayne Case, the church's family life minister, has trained under Crenshaw's guidance — for 10 years.

The two men follow in the steps of Paul and Timothy, whose model of mentorship appears in the epistles of the New Testament. It's a model used by many predominantly black Churches of Christ, partly because past segregation — even in universities associated with the fellowship — made it difficult to receive ministry training. Renowned evangelist Marshall Keeble also was an advocate of long-term mentorship.

Case, who grew up in the Spanish Town Church of Christ on the island of Jamaica, moved to the U.S. at age 23 and earned a bachelor's from Southwestern Christian College, a historically black college in Terrell, Texas. He earned a master's in family life from Oklahoma Christian University and soon will earn U.S. citizenship.

Crenshaw, who also studied at Oklahoma Christian and the University of Tulsa, was mentored himself by Clyde Muse and A.C. Christman Sr. In addition to Case, Crenshaw has served as a mentor for ministers including Vernon Taylor of the Southlake Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Ga.; Wesley Leonard of the Southside Church of Christ in Orlando, Fla.; and David Wilson of the Kings Church of Christ in New York.



WWW.NECOC.ORG

For 10 years, Arnelious Crenshaw, left, has served as a mentor for Dwayne Case.

What Scriptures guide your mentoring model?

Crenshaw: Matthew 4:23: *"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."*

Jesus had a three-dimensional public ministry: teaching, preaching and healing.

Matthew 4:15 refers to "Galilee of the Gentiles." Though Jesus taught in the synagogues, his intent was to teach everyone — Jews and Gentiles. In the New Testament, teaching usually means instruction in the faith, whereas preaching is proclamation of the Gospel to the non-Christian world.

I've always said that good preaching is just really good teaching. Teaching and preaching need to happen when you're a minister. We teach principle, and we preach with passion. You've got to bring out the passion in your preaching. Sometimes, you have to tell the story with passion!

The third part of Jesus' ministry involved healing. There is a contrast in the healing of Jesus' ministry and

the healing of ministry today. Our healing involves helping people to have a better life. At Northeast we minister primarily to a community that has required a lot of healing over the years due to systemic social inadequacies. This reality gave birth to an entity called Central Urban Development, Inc., the economic development component of the Northeast Church of Christ.

So teaching, preaching and healing people is the focus of ministry I am teaching Dwayne.

What specifically have you done to prepare Dwayne for ministry?

Crenshaw: I've tried to model for Dwayne the importance of teaching, preaching and healing so that my mentorship has been evident in my approach to ministry. I've taught him that you must teach, preach and be concerned about the community.

What challenges have you faced to make this work?

Crenshaw: The biggest challenge has been to keep my passion for this approach in context because brother Case may not decide, as

my successor, to do it this way. It's difficult, but it's a part of transition, and I will have to give him the right to bring to fruition that which he can be passionate about.

That's the biggest challenge. He may see it totally different, and I've got to be OK with that.

Dwayne, how are you preparing to follow a longtime minister?

Case: I've always been fascinated with Joshua and Timothy's preparation. Both men sat at the feet of great leaders. Joshua aligned and acquainted himself with God's promises by becoming Moses' assistant (Exodus 24:13). While Moses communed with God, Joshua was in the middle serving Moses and serving the people. In the New Testament, Paul refers to the young evangelist Timothy as his son. He tells the church in Philippi that there is no like-minded person who cares for the church as Timothy does. These two young men give me a confident assurance that I am on the right path.

I am grateful for the formal training I have received at Southwestern Christian and Oklahoma Christian. My continual, informal preparation from conferences, lectureships and a growing reading list does not compare to my preparation from mentorship by brother Crenshaw and other men such as Leslie George Goode of Jamaica, David Wilson of Brooklyn, Timothy Daniels of Houston and Richard Barclay of Atlanta.

How will you be yourself and also incorporate what brother Crenshaw has taught you?

Case: It is understandable that a mentee will imitate certain mannerisms or character traits of his or her mentor. I find this to be true because there are certain phrases, pastoral practices and mannerisms I do like brother Crenshaw.

See **MENTOR**, Page 16

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PHOTOS PROVIDED

Dwayne Case, left, and Arnelious Crenshaw preach for the Northeast Church of Christ.

MENTOR: Standing on the shoulders of servants

FROM PAGE 15

I am humbled that such a quintessential man of God is willing to share with me the highs and lows of ministry. I remember being impressed by brother Crenshaw's style of preaching — it's called expository preaching — and deciding that I wanted to be mentored by brother Crenshaw in biblical exposition.

However, before that could happen the Lord tempered my skills and fortitude by sending me to David Wilson, Richard Barclay and Timothy Daniels. I thank God for preparing such a great storyteller as brother Crenshaw — and for allowing our lives to collide at the intersection of purpose.

However, my focus is not on whether I say or do things like brother Crenshaw but rather on God's vision for his church. I appreciate that Joshua and Timothy maintained their identities, but God was with them and their predecessors.

God has been with brother Crenshaw, and I have faith that he will be with me in my ministry. Brother Crenshaw has taught me, "I'm not giving you shoes to fill, but steps to follow."

What do you see as your preaching mandate?

Case: I see my preaching mandate being the same as those who have come before me. What we have come to call the ministerial charge reverberates in my spirit, to fulfill my King's commission (2 Timothy 4:2).

With my formal training in family

life ministry, Titus 2 will be the platform I seek to build on the ministry vision and mission, to positively impact the lives of people through evangelism, benevolence, edification and ministry — a charge that was laid by brother Crenshaw and brother Thomas O. Jackson before him.

I intend to proclaim sound teaching and develop healthy families, which in turn will produce a healthy church.

How has the church been prepared for this change?

Case: The congregation has been going through an intentional transition process for the past 10 years. Brother Crenshaw, as a remarkable visionary guided by the Holy Spirit, started to share with me, key leaders and the church the eventual passing of the baton.

The process involved not only brother Crenshaw casting vision in meetings, classes and preaching, but also allowing the church to see me serve. The congregation was able to see me succeed and fail in ministry (and) put up with my immaturity in handling the Scriptures in Bible class and preaching.

Because of brother Crenshaw's influence, the congregation has received and loved me. And as we run together with me reaching behind and him reaching forward with the baton, those men on whose shoulders we stand are cheering us on to continue God's legacy.

WEBSITE: www.necoc.org



In the village of Kvean, Cambodia, Mit Vikraman and fellow Christians sing "Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord!" with children during the 10th Angkor of Faith.

In Asia, 'a fellowship of difference'

A NEW GENERATION of Christ-followers seeks to dispel disunity as they serve at 10th Angkor of Faith

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

SIEM REAP, Cambodia

'Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth." Pharrell Williams' summertime anthem, "Happy," pulsates from an open-air nightclub. On the crowded dance floor, sweaty European backpackers writhe to the beat.

In this Southeast Asian city, tourists flock by day to the largest religious monument in the world — Angkor Wat, centuries-old temples dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu.

At night, they're here on Siem Reap's Pub Street, weaving between booths

selling fruit smoothies and pan-fried scorpions. Drivers of motorized rickshaws called *tuk-tuks* offer hushed promises of "hashish" and "boom-boom." Cambodia, still recovering from war and the reign of the despotic Khmer Rouge, is a hub of sex trafficking, human rights groups report.

Christian youths are here as well, attending an annual rally called Angkor of Faith. After an evening devotional in the lobby of their hotel (whose owners kindly moved a Buddha statue to accommodate them), the veteran participants lead first-timers through the maze of souls to their favorite gelato place.

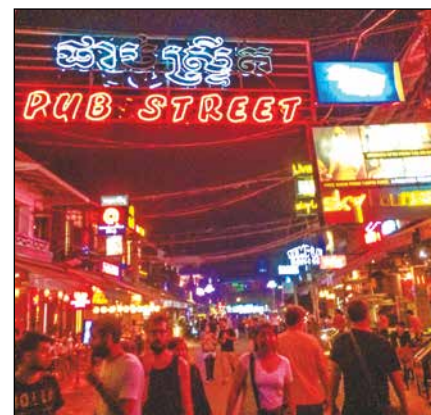
And a few of them try the scorpions.

The youths, who represent Churches of Christ across Southeast Asia and as far away as the U.S. and England, experienced a much different truth hours earlier — a truth few tourists here ever see.

The Christians spent the afternoon in a Cambodian village, where they fed, sang songs and danced with children. Then they shampooed and deloused the children's hair.

"We also teach them how to cut their nails and brush their teeth," said John Lim, 20, a member of the Pasir Panjang Church of Christ in Singapore. The goal is "basically just to help them improve their lives a little bit."

CONTINUED



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD, DAVE HOGAN AND TOMMY CHIA

Tourists who travel to Cambodia to see the historic Angkor Wat temples spend their evenings on a packed Pub Street.

Kingdom of Cambodia

POPULATION: 15.7 million; **LANGUAGES:** Khmer (official) 96.3 percent; **RELIGION:** 96.9 percent Buddhist, 1.9 percent Muslim, 0.4 percent Christian, 0.8 percent other (2008 estimates).



HISTORY: Once home of the Angkor Empire, which reached its zenith between the 10th and 13th centuries, Cambodia was part of French Indochina and gained independence in 1953. In 1975, the communist Khmer Rouge captured the capital and evacuated all cities and towns.

At least 1.5 million Cambodians died from execution, forced hardships or starvation during the Khmer Rouge regime. After invasion by Vietnam and 13 years of civil war, stability returned. The city of Siem Reap now is a growing tourist destination for those visiting the Angkor Wat temples.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST: Cambodian refugees in neighboring Thailand were taught by evangelist Wanat Hun and others. In 1992, 15 refugee families planted a church in Siem Reap. Missionaries serve in Phnom Penh and other parts of the country. Medical ministries including the Ship of Life help spread the Gospel.

ANGKOR OF FAITH: Launched in 2007, the conference is organized by church members in Southeast Asia. Organizers for the 10th gathering included Faith and Kendon Murrell, Mit Vikraman and Sue Ann Mak of Singapore.



SOURCES: CIA World Factbook, “Churches of Christ Around the World” by Mac Lynn, interviews. Maps via Wikimedia Commons.



Theary Sy, in ball cap at left, helps a Cambodian child mimic animal noises as other kids guess the animal — and their parents watch.

CONTINUED

Growing up in fast-paced, competitive Singapore, “I thank God that I’ve been able to see that life is a lot more than grades,” Lim said. The week-long trip to Cambodia benefits young believers “who haven’t had a milestone experience to really anchor their faith.”

‘STEPPING STONES TO GREATER UNITY’

Part youth rally and part mission trip, Angkor of Faith also builds unity among a new generation of believers — many of whom grew up in Churches of Christ after their parents were baptized by missionaries.

In some Southeast Asian cities, division has plagued Churches of Christ. Members have disputed doctrine and fought over rights to church property.

“Previously, from what my parents have said, churches used to be kind of isolated from each other,” Lim said.

Events such as Angkor of Faith and the annual Asian Mission Forum — next scheduled for late July in Malaysia — are “stepping stones to greater unity,” he said. “If things keep going as they are right now, I really think that we’re going to see a lot more sharing and integration.”

Unity was the theme of morning devotionals at the event, led by Wade Hodges, senior minister for the Preston Road Church of Christ in Dallas.

“I think this is the most diversity I’ve ever seen in a church,” he said as he surveyed the hotel lobby filled with 126 souls from 13 countries.

“Our culture has taught us that it’s OK to treat people from different

cultures differently,” Hodges said. Two millennia ago, the apostle Paul wrote letters to young churches in Galatia and Ephesus, urging them to be “not a church of the same” but “a fellowship of difference.”

“It is the diversity in the church,” Hodges said, “that reveals the power of the Gospel to a divided world.”

HEART-SOFTENING IN CAMBODIAN VILLAGES

“It is very hot — *way* hotter than it is in Singapore,” said Gladys Chen, 17, who somehow mustered the energy to jump and wave her arms as she sang

“Today is the day, You have made. I will rejoice and be glad in it” with the village kids in 99-degree heat.

“Just seeing the joy in the kids’ faces, I guess, just keeps us going,” said Chen, who worships with the Moulmein

Bay Sareephan
Chiang Mai, Thailand

Angkor of Faith is one way Sareephan gives back to his community. Baptized 10 years ago in Thailand, he runs Bay’s Café, a coffee shop in Chiang Mai that follows what he calls a “missions-as-business” model. Profits from the business help ministry efforts. The shop also provides a safe place to talk about faith.

Minea Loun
Siem Reap, Cambodia

“She is an indomitable force that gets anything and everything done.” That’s how Faith Murrell describes Loun, a member of the Siem Reap Church of Christ who organized buses and *tuk-tuks* and handled much of the logistics for Angkor of Faith 10. “We could not have done this without Minea,” Murrell said.

Faith Murrell
Singapore

Murrell, a member of the Moulmein Church of Christ, is “the dedicated, super-stressed, detailed planner (and perfectionist) who has given so many hours to help pull Angkor of Faith 10 together, and has been the backbone of our organizing team,” said her husband, Kendon, who also served on the team.

Church of Christ in Singapore.

Kids were the inspiration for Angkor of Faith. More than a decade ago, when Siem Reap was the site of the Asian Mission Forum, missionaries wanted to find a way to serve the children they saw peddling souvenirs and begging for coins from tourists at Angkor Wat.

Several of those children, now grown, assist as the visitors feed and play games with the children. This year, instead of bringing them to Siem Reap, the participants took buses to two of the children’s home villages.

There, meters away from spirit houses — mailbox-size shrines where Cambodians offer fruits and cola to appease protective spirits — the young Christians hosted what they called a “mini-Vacation Bible School.”

With an ever-present smile, Theary Sy spoke to the children in their native Khmer language as the foreigners tried to help them improve their English with an animal guessing game.

She roared, barked, “moo-ed” and cackled with delight as the children yelled “Lion!” “Dog!” and “Cow!”

The Cambodian Christian grew up in a village outside the capital, Phnom Penh, and used to sew and sell vegetables to survive.

“My house was smaller than this,” she said, pointing up at one of the humble wood dwellings on stilts. She became a Christian after meeting missionaries in Phnom Penh and “seeing the love that they have.”

Now, she hopes the village children

she serves — and their parents — will find what she’s found in Christ.

“I pray this will lighten their hearts, soften their hearts and that, hopefully, they will see the love to God,” Sy said.

An increasing number of Cambodians take oversight roles in Angkor of Faith. In one village, students from the International Bible School of Siem Reap, a program supported by Churches of Christ, and a few of the children dressed up in costume and presented a skit in Khmer about the life of Joseph from the Old Testament.

“They were paying attention,” said Piseth Rin, a graduate and teacher at the Bible school who asked questions after the performance.

In a country where people pay homage to multiple spirits, “what’s most difficult is to show them the true God,” he said. Showing their children the love of Christ is a good first step — something “I can learn from the brothers and sisters overseas.”

That spirit of unity, despite doctrinal differences, keeps Don Buo coming

back to Angkor of Faith.

It also keeps him young. “I’m not young anymore. I’m 43,” said the Bible college instructor and song leader from the island of Cebu in the Philippines. “Serving with the young people somehow makes me feel young.”

“Within the Philippines there is division,” he added, “and I know that’s the same in other countries as well.

“But being in an environment like this ... we all put down our differences and we serve as one.

“That, to me, is amazing.”



After an afternoon of games and face-painting in a Cambodian village, a preaching student loads supplies.



Katherine Gould and Erik Tryggestad attempt to remove nits from a 9-year-old’s hair.

Of lice and men: Can a week of ‘voluntourism’ make a difference?

SIEM REAP, Cambodia

‘Seven reasons why your two-week trip to Haiti doesn’t matter” was the headline that flashed across my Facebook feed.

Luckily, I was on a one-week trip to Cambodia, so no worries, right?

I thumbed through the piece as I waited for the morning devotional to start at Angkor of Faith, a gathering of young Christians from Southeast Asia. I had circled the world to be here, along with students from Oklahoma Christian University.

To be fair, the article was about secular service trips — not mission trips — though both often get mocked as “voluntourism.” They’re expensive. They do little lasting good and actually can do harm by creating dependence, the author of the article argued.

I’ve read it all before, in books such as “**When Helping Hurts.**”

“*This trip is different,*” I thought to myself. I have seen it unify and energize the next generation of Asia’s Churches of Christ. It transforms lives.

Joel Osborne, a missionary in Japan, visited Oklahoma a few months ago and talked about a previous Angkor of Faith. An atheist student from Ibaraki Christian University and head of the school’s karate team went on that trip

and broke down in tears as he combed the lice from a Cambodian child’s hair.

(“Pfffft. *Big baby,*” I joked in my mind, fully aware that this dude could pulverize me if he wanted to.)

Back in Cambodia, after the devotional, we rode to the village of Kvean. We ate, sang and danced with the village kids and set up hygiene

stations for teeth-brushing and hair-washing.

We were light on delousers and heavy on kids, so I grabbed a cup of water and a plastic lice comb.

Katherine Gould, a missionary who has served in China, showed me how to scrape the nits — lice eggs — out with our fingernails and smush them. The combs

weren’t cutting it.

Sharon Welch, a missionary in Cambodia’s capital, Phnom Penh, brought one of the girls, age 9, back to us. She had been through the process but still had nits.

Katherine and I went to work. I combed through the girl’s hair, searching for nits the same way I search for tangles in my 8-year-old daughter’s hair nearly every night.

The tiny white nits were everywhere — everywhere. They wouldn’t yield to the comb or my fingernails.

What I was doing didn’t matter.

Road Notes



Erik Tryggestad

A man named Ouch seeks healing for Cambodia

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

KVEAN, Cambodia

Phanat Ouch used to think about becoming a physician. “Dr. Ouch. Probably wouldn’t get many patients, right?” he jokes. Nearby, fellow Christians from across Southeast Asia lay a giant tarp on the ground for children to sit on in this humble Cambodian village near Siem Reap, home of the majestic Angkor Wat temples. The Christians, participants in a week-long mission named Angkor of Faith, bring the children steaming plates of rice, chicken and green beans.

In Cambodia, Ouch is a common surname, he explains.

And his life could have been much like that of the impoverished kids he serves here. He was born in 1981 in a Thailand refugee camp. His parents remarried after losing their first spouses to the Khmer Rouge, the communist regime that murdered 1.5 million Cambodians in locations including the infamous “Killing Fields.”

The family got refugee status from the United Nations and moved to Austin, Texas. He grew up American, attending high school and pursuing a career in finance. He played basketball with friends.

Thoughts of returning to his parents’ homeland — or becoming a Christian — rarely crossed his mind.

That changed when he saw “The



PHOTO PROVIDED

Phanat Ouch with his wife, Chakriya, and their children, Katesana and Javan.

Passion of the Christ,” Mel Gibson’s 2004 film portrayal of Jesus’ crucifixion. The graphic scenes of Christ’s death left him asking, “What happened after that?”

A coworker suggested, “Why not read the Bible?”

He did, and he started visiting churches. At the Southwest Church of Christ in Austin, he found believers who could open their Bibles and help him find answers.

In 2005 he was baptized. He enrolled in Southwest School of Bible Studies, overseen by the church’s elders.

Two years later, Ouch was a missionary to a homeland he never knew. He began working with the Siem Reap Church of Christ alongside minister Chann Lork.

The two men also teach in the International Bible Institute of Siem Reap, an extension school of Denver-based Bear Valley Bible Institute International.

In Siem Reap, Ouch met and married his wife, Chakriya. They have a 6-year-old daughter, Katesana, and a 3-year-old son, Javan. Ouch also plays on Cambodia’s national basketball team in the Southeast Asian Games, held every two years.

In 2010 Ouch helped launch Hannah’s Hope Children’s Home in conjunction with members of the Woodland Oaks Church of Christ in The Woodlands, Texas. A couple from the church adopted two Cambodian girls and wanted to do something to help other children in the Siem Reap area. The home serves 45 children with 12 full-time staff.

Katherine Gould, a missionary who has served in China and Southeast Asia, visited the Siem Reap Church of Christ in 2011 after attending her first Angkor of Faith conference, organized by Christians from Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and other Southeast Asian nations.

At the Siem Reap church, “I quickly felt right at home when I surprisingly

met a Cambodian minister who grew up in my home state of Texas,” Gould says. “We quickly bonded over our mutual love for Dr. Pepper.”

After that meeting, the Siem Reap church’s members and ministry school students began attending the annual Angkor of Faith, with Ouch serving as the event’s keynoter in 2014. Now the Siem Reap Christians help organize trips to serve in rural villages during the conference.

This year, Angkor of Faith’s organizers handed oversight duties to Ouch and his Cambodian brethren for future outreach projects.

“His heart for Cambodia keeps him there,” Gould says of Ouch.

Reaching lost souls in his re-adopted homeland is a challenge, Ouch says. The Khmer Rouge nearly wiped out an entire generation of leaders and intellectuals. The result, some researchers theorize, is a moral vacuum. Now the average age here is 24, and the country is a hub for human trafficking and sexual slavery.

“If you want to change the country you have to change individually — by the Gospel,” Ouch says. “And I think that’s how people change from not wanting a lot of stuff to being content, not being corrupted or greedy or anything like that.”

“So it starts with learning who God is — they don’t even know what the Bible is over here, most of them. A lot of Christian evidence is needed and a lot of just showing that there is a true God and he can change your life. He can make a difference.”

WEBSITE: www.hannahshopechildrenhome.org

From the
EAST
Matthew 8:11

SEE MORE STORIES from
Churches of Christ in Asia
and the South Pacific at
www.christianchronicle.org.

LICE: When our efforts seem futile, can we find cause to ‘Shout Hallelujah?’

FROM PAGE 19

“Poor baby. Poor, poor baby,” I kept saying, over and over. I didn’t know what else to do. Too many nits, too many problems. Soon we would have to leave, and the eggs would hatch.

The lice would come back.

Now I was the big baby. Luckily, in 99-degree heat it’s tough to distinguish tears from sweat.

Tonight was my turn to lead

worship. How could I sing “Shout Hallelujah” and “They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love” after spending the day in a futile fight against Cambodia’s problems?

Caught up in my own “voluntourism,” I took my eyes off the Cross. The writer of that article was right. If this was just a service trip, what was the point?

Back at the hotel, I shared these

thoughts between songs. I told the young Christians that whatever we do — no matter how much we put into it — means nothing if we take God out of it, if we bury his role as the transformer, the giver of the increase.

Just two days earlier, we saw that increase as a Cambodian waitress some of the campaigners met last year gave her life to Jesus in baptism.

And that karate guy from Joel

Osborne’s story? He’s now a brother in Christ, too.

Yeah, the lice will come back, but that little girl’s entire village watched us try to get them out. Who knows what fruit that will yield?

We’ll never save Cambodia.

But maybe God can use Cambodia to save us.

CONTACT: erik@christianchronicle.org

NEWSMAKERS

AWARDED: Oklahoma Christian University students at the Southwest Model Arab League in Commerce, Texas: **Angelica Hickerson** and **Sean Vandyke**, outstanding delegates, Joint Defense Council; **Pricilla Cisneros** and **Cody Milner**, outstanding delegates, Political Affairs; **Joshua Gage** and **Meagan McKinley**, outstanding delegates, Economic Affairs; **Wesley Duncan** and **Alexis Farrell**, outstanding delegates, Social Affairs; and **Nicholas Jensen** and **Karli Otey**, outstanding delegates, Palestinian Affairs.

NAMED: New staff at Greater Atlanta Christian School in Norcross, Ga.: **Brian Dolinger**, junior high principal and K-12 science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) advancement officer; **Charles Edwards**, senior high principal; **Scott Harsh**, academic vice president; **Brad Schultz**, elementary principal and chief innovation officer; and **Josh Thomason**, vice president of finance and operations. **Allen Henderson**, director of the STEM Center at Harding University in Searcy, Ark. **Hall Ratcliffe**, referral relations manager for the Capstone Treatment Center in Searcy.

NEW MINISTERS: **Kevin Knight**, youth and family minister for the Broken Arrow Church of Christ in Oklahoma. **Daniel Roberts**, youth minister for the Saturn Road Church of Christ in Garland, Texas.



Edwards



Harsh



Henderson



Roberts



ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
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College of Arts and Sciences

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The **Department of Art and Design** invites applications for a nine-month, tenure-track position as assistant or associate professor beginning Fall 2016 to serve as program director and teach in its CIDA-accredited interior design program. Candidates are expected to have a terminal degree in interior design or architecture. Proficiency in computer design technology and demonstrated potential for teaching and scholarly endeavors is expected. Applicants must have strong communication skills and interest in the development of students. Preference will be given to applicants who have professional design experience, involvement in professional organizations, and who are NCIDQ credentialed. A portfolio of student and/or professional work may be requested. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/art and blogs.acu.edu/artanddesign.

The **Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice** invites applications for a tenure-track position in criminal justice beginning Fall 2016, offering excellent opportunities to contribute to the growing criminal justice program at ACU. The department and its pre-law program have a history of teaching, scholarship and service spanning more than 40 years. A master's degree in criminal justice or a related field is required, and a terminal degree is desired. Applicants should have strong skills in teaching, scholarship and mentoring students. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/politicalscience.

School of Information Technology and Computing

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The **School of Information Technology and Computing (SITC)** invites applicants for an instructor or tenure-track faculty position beginning Fall 2016. SITC is a growing academic unit within the College of Business Administration and offers majors in computer science, digital entertainment technology (DET), information systems and information technology. The undergraduate computer science / computing theory and information technology programs are accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET. The DET is an interdisciplinary major catering to students interested in game design, film production and animation. ACU's program was recently ranked 27th in the *Princeton Review's* top 50 game design programs in the nation. The SITC invites applications from faculty who can contribute to any of its programs, with preference for those who have specific expertise related to digital entertainment and information technology. Faculty responsibilities include engaging with undergraduate students and colleagues in teaching, research and service. A terminal degree in a field related to the teaching discipline is preferred; a master's degree is acceptable if combined with significant professional experience and commitment to ongoing professional development. Information about the school is available at acu.edu/sitc.

See acu.edu/academics/provost/positions.html for complete descriptions of these positions. In a letter to the appropriate dean or chair, applicants should address their qualifications for the position. They should include in the application a statement of how faith informs their teaching; a discussion of their spiritual journey; a curriculum vita; transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work; and names, addresses and phone numbers of five references. Review of applicants will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Nominations of and applications from qualified women and minorities are especially encouraged.

ACU is affiliated with the fellowship of the Churches of Christ. All applicants must be professing Christians and be active, faithful members of a congregation of the Churches of Christ and deeply committed to service in Christian higher education. The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. ACU does not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities.

K-12 CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

GREATER ATLANTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL NORCROSS, GA. — Packages of toilet paper pile around Greater Atlanta Christian student Kendall Robinson, who welcomes the donations for her “Love Rolls” campaign.

Robinson heard a shelter client at an Atlanta food bank describe how he rationed one roll of toilet paper per month, and she sprang into action to help others.

The Love Rolls campaign encourages hotels, businesses and people to donate toilet paper, which is collected on the campus. An estimated 1,000 rolls were expected to add to Robinson’s campaign.

HIGHER EDUCATION

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

ABILENE, Texas — Best-selling author Max Lucado visited his alma mater April 25 for a benefit dinner celebrating Friends of ACU Library’s 50th anniversary.

“I love Abilene Christian,” the 1977 graduate said. “Scarcely a week passes by when I don’t tell some story about how my life was changed during my days as a student.”

Lucado chose ACU’s Brown Library to house the Max Lucado Collection — a compilation of his manuscripts, journals, artwork and personal correspondence from his time as a missionary, evangelist and writer.

The benefit dinner proceeds went toward initial processing costs for the collection.

LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Young Christian entrepreneurs at Lipscomb learn how to take their business degree to the mission field and turn profits into inspiration and hope.

Rob Touchstone, co-founder of The Well Coffeehouse in Nashville, leads the campus’ missional entrepreneurship program, which funded two recent mission trips to Morant Bay, Jamaica.

About 25 students participated in the mission trips and helped develop business models, scout potential locations and raise seed money through class projects.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LUBBOCK CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Lubbock Christian students plant trees on Arbor Day

In celebration of National Arbor Day recently and honoring God’s creation, students at Lubbock Christian University plant a tree. In all, the LCU community planted 12 trees of varying species. “We seek to be good stewards of all that God has entrusted us with, and that includes a commitment to environmental sustainability,” LCU President Tim Perrin said. “We affirm that ‘God made the world and everything in it.’”

OHIO VALLEY UNIVERSITY

VIENNA, W.Va. — Coal can be a clean alternative energy source, OVU leaders say. The university will soon become the beneficiary of a commercial-scale alternative clean energy training center.

“The project will create an alternative revenue source ... to assist in funding strategic initiatives, provide internships and increase endowments for various scholarships and facilities enhancements,” said Jeff Dimick, OVU’s executive vice president.

The facility will use about 600 tons of coal per day, officials said.

“The site will produce primarily mixed alcohols (ethanol and methanol) along with other energy-related byproducts through patented processes utilizing coal as the primary feedstock,” said Marcus Wiley, chairman of TCG Global LLC of Englewood, Colo., and a principal of the OVU venture.

SPOTLIGHT

She’s ‘Waiting On the Sun to Rise’

Growing up, Anna Catherine DeHart volunteered at a children’s home in Paragould, Ark.

Her youth group from the Shady Acres Church of Christ in Sikeston, Mo., made repeat trips to Children’s Homes Inc.

DeHart thought about her experience when she saw the YouTube video “ReMoved,” showcasing a 9-year-old foster child.

Inspired, DeHart and her friend Kristina Kidd wrote “Waiting On the Sun to Rise.”

DeHart used the song to make her first video and donated the proceeds to Children’s Homes Inc. Besides raising money, DeHart said she hopes the song encourages more people to become foster parents or volunteer time to help abused and neglected children.

It breaks her heart, she said, “to see kids who need love and don’t receive love.”

To watch the video and get information on how to help, see www.christianchronicle.org.



JAMIE HOLCOMB PHOTOGRAPHY

Anna Catherine DeHart

Best in Class – again

CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE NAMED top newspaper by Associated Church Press

ST. LOUIS

For the second year in a row, *The Christian Chronicle* earned top honors in the “Best of the Church Press” contest sponsored by the Associated Church Press.

The *Chronicle* captured the first-place Award of Excellence in the prestigious “Best in Class” category for national and international newspapers.

“I wouldn’t change a thing,” one judge commented. “Cover photos are thoughtful and exciting. Writing is vivid and descriptive yet provides clarity and excellent content. Overall, it’s the perfect combination of great photography and engaging writing within a beautiful layout.”

The *Anglican Journal* received the second-place Award of Merit, and the *Reporter*, which covers the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, claimed honorable mention.

Winners were announced recently at the ACP’s national convention in St. Louis. The meeting coincided with the 100th anniversary of the ACP, the oldest interdenominational religious press association in North America.

In all, the *Chronicle* — an Oklahoma City-based international newspaper for Churches of Christ with 260,000 monthly print readers — received eight awards for content published in 2015.

Since 2007, the newspaper has won 73 national ACP awards and been recognized in the Best in Class contest for 10 consecutive years. This is the fourth time the *Chronicle* received first-place honors in the category, winning previously in 2009, 2013 and 2015.

Named on the Best in Class citation were Lynn McMillon, president/CEO; Erik Tryggestad, editor;

Bobby Ross Jr., chief correspondent; Tonya Patton, advertising manager; Kimberly Mauck, reviews editor; Lynda Sheehan, administrative assistant; Joy McMillon, administrative assistant; Laura Akins, editorial assistant; Matthew Ware, advertising assistant; and Katie Jones, intern.

Other first-place awards received by the *Chronicle*:

- **Feature article:** “From daughter to caretaker” by Ross — the behind-the-scenes story of how caring for her aging parents drew one Christian woman closer to them and God.

- **News story:** “Peace in the Valley” by Tryggestad — a report from war-torn Ukraine about uprooted Churches of Christ and members’ faith.

- **Theme issue, section or series:** “God at work in U.S.” by Ross — a package analyzing the latest numbers on Churches of Christ and featuring quotes from all 50 states. The entry also included a Dialogue interview by McMillon and Tryggestad and guest submissions by Wyane Atkinson and K. Rex Butts.

Second-place awards honored Tryggestad’s in-depth reporting from Haiti on the aftermath of missionary Roberta Edwards’ shooting death and Ross’ news story on Baltimore church leaders working to bring renewal to a city where riots erupted after 25-year-old Freddie Gray’s death in police custody. “From daughter to caretaker” also earned a second-place award for personally useful article.

Akins received honorable mention for first-person account (short format) for her column on a mother-child reunion shaping her view of foster care.

READ WINNING STORIES: christianchronicle.org



The front page of the December 2015 print edition of *The Christian Chronicle*.

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WOMEN: Preaching debate 'isn't about inequality'

FROM PAGE 3

where Green and Cleveland attend, allows only men to preach during its Sunday services. Cleveland said that preparing for this year's debate forced her to "dig into Scripture" and ask, "Why do we really believe this?"

Green, the daughter of the church's youth minister, said the experience also "opened my eyes to see what other people think and to be more understanding of what they believe."

AN EDGE-OF-THEIR-SEATS DEBATE

The debates were one of 18 events, including song leading, signing for the hearing-impaired and Bible bowls, at the annual conventions. Designed for ages 12 to 20, the debates have focused on the use of instrumental music in worship and other oft-disputed topics among Churches of Christ.

"Our purpose is for them to have a deeper study of the Scriptures," said Roy Johnson, executive director of Lads to Leaders, a ministry founded by Jack Zorn in 1968 to develop youths into Christian leaders. Johnson, one of Zorn's first students, now serves as a minister and elder of the Hollins Church of Christ in Alabama.

"We did a debate on baptism about four years ago," Johnson said, "and several in the audience asked to be baptized after they watched."

Young men and women participate in separate debates. In teams of two, they make speeches supporting and refuting a resolution statement given to them nearly a year in advance. After a short break, they give rebuttals to what they've heard from other teams. Each debate lasts about 40 minutes.

"I think the debate is the most challenging event in all of Lads to Leaders," said Glenn Colley, minister for the West Huntsville Church of Christ in Alabama, who moderated the men's debate at this year's convention in Nashville, Tenn. "The students have to think on their feet. I see teenagers sitting on the edge

of their seats, poring over these passages — each word — to know just what the truth is. It's super."

Michael Benavides, 15, spent about three months preparing for this year's debate. Though he grew up in the West Huntsville church, "I really didn't understand the whole point of roles in worship," he said.

He studied 1 Corinthians 14, in which the apostle Paul states that "women should remain silent in the churches." He examined the context of the chapter, devoted to orderly worship and the disciplined use of spiritual gifts in a young congregation. He also sought out passages about prominent women in the early church, including Priscilla and Phoebe. His two older sisters in college, who participated in previous debates, helped him prepare his arguments.

"After doing this debate, you see that it isn't about inequality," Benavides said. Men and women "all have the same ability to go to heaven, to truly show God the love we have for him and to show the love he has for other people."

Though only a handful of Churches of Christ have women preachers, the topic is important, said Lisa Missildine, a member of the Prattville church who helped judge the women's debate in Atlanta.

Increasingly, "women are in a lot of leadership positions in the work world," she said. "All those things are great, but you have to look at what the Bible teaches, what kind of roles God wants women to have."

The debate allowed young Christians "to hear a wide range of ideas," Missildine said, "and yet come to their own decision (as to) 'What does the Bible say about it?'"

USING AND PERFECTING THEIR GIFTS

The debate judges, participants and parents who spoke to *The Christian Chronicle* all said they support the resolution statement of this year's debate — that the New Testament does not authorize

women to preach in mixed-gender assemblies.

But the debates exposed them to arguments against the resolution, said Charlotte JeBailey, a member of the Concord Street Church of Christ in Orlando, Fla., whose 15-year-old daughter competed in the women's debate at the Orlando convention.

Most jarring to JeBailey was a statement by one team — in their argument against the resolution — that the Bible is sexist in its treatment of women. Rarely, if ever, is such a statement heard in church pews, JeBailey said, but it is one she has heard elsewhere.

"I think the church is under attack," she said, noting changing trends in American society. "It's important that we talk about subjects that are kind of touchy in current culture."

Kara Green and Ashley Cleveland, who took home a first-place award in the Atlanta debate, said they've heard questions from their high school classmates about why women don't preach at their church's services.

After participating in the debate, Green hopes to "just try to listen to them and see where they're coming from so I can get an understanding," she said. "Then I would tell them about what I believe."

Cleveland added, "My response would be, 'Why don't we have a Bible study about this?'"

JeBailey said she's thankful for the opportunities Lads to Leaders gives young women to speak in all-female assemblies and to develop their God-given talents.

"People get turned off by hearing 'you're not allowed' as opposed to 'this is part of God's plan,'" she said. "We have to do a better job of painting how everybody has individual gifts, and then use them and perfect them."

Too often young women see their roles in the church as less important than those of men, Missildine said.

"Getting up in front of people is not a determiner of how much you love God or how much you serve God," she said. "The greatest leader of all got down and washed people's feet."

Christian women on preaching, puzzling and pleasing God

Like thousands of other teenage Christians, Sara Barton loved her experience in Lads to Leaders in the 1980s.

Barton, who grew up in a Church of Christ in Arkansas and was a missionary in Uganda, now serves as chaplain for Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif. In her book, **"A Woman Called: Piecing Together the Ministry Puzzle,"** she describes her faith journey, her study of Scripture, the roles of women in public assemblies and her desire for unity in spite of differing views concerning women and church life.

The website www.wherethespiritleads.org lists about 65 Churches of Christ in the U.S. as gender-inclusive. Women read Scripture, offer communion devotionals and lead prayers. Of those, 32 report that they are willing to invite women to preach. Wiley Clarkson, the site's administrator, told *The Christian Chronicle* he believes there are more gender-inclusive churches that don't wish to be listed.

As churches debate the issue, the *Chronicle* asked Christian women what they tell their daughters about the role of women in church.

Though their views vary, most of the respondents, including Sarah Gigstad of the Northwest Church of Christ in Westminster, Colo., stressed the need for obedience to God and church elders. "It is my role as a Christian woman to obey God through the ways he has asked me to worship him," she said, "to be active in singing praises to the Lord, to bow in prayer alongside my brothers and sisters, to have ears to hear the Word."

RELATED VIEWS, Pages 27-28.



Johnson



Missildine



Gigstad

In West Africa, a woman leads in providing Christian education

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Patriarchy in an entrenched part of African life. Male children are prized, and women often are shunned if they bear only daughters, writes Godess Bvukutwa, a Zimbabwean activist, in the online journal *This is Africa*.

In the West African nation of Cameroon, women’s dependency on their male family members can leave them lacking resources — from education to food and drinkable water, human rights groups report.

Forju Mary Forbin is working to change her country’s fortunes — empowering girls and boys with education and the Gospel.

Baptized in 1975 after studying the Bible with missionaries Windle and Barbara Kee, she earned a bachelor’s in social work

from Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City and a master’s in criminal justice from the University of Central Oklahoma. She returned to Cameroon and worked as a prison administrator, retiring in 2007.

In 2005 she launched Baird Memorial College in the town of Buea. Beginning with 12 students and four teachers, the Christian school has grown to 168 students in grades 5 through 12 served by 32 staff.

During a visit to Oklahoma, she spoke with *The Christian Chronicle* about the school and her life in Africa.

• **The school’s purpose:** “Our vision is to take these children from pre-elementary to university,” she said. “The Bible is taught during the morning and night devotions, mid-week Bible class, daily chapel, Sunday worship in the college church and as a class subject in all levels. There are about three to five baptisms every month.”

In addition to saving lost souls, Christian education benefits the school’s graduates, she said, because

“their values will be different from the predominant values in the society.”

• **On evangelism and Churches of Christ:** “People are very open to hear about the church,” Forbin said. “When they hear, they ask, ‘Where have you been?’ People are so frustrated with all the doctrines they have heard, and when they hear of some-

thing that is true and it’s in the Bible and you can show them, they begin to wonder where we have been all these years.”

• **On serving as a school administrator in a male-dominated society:** “It is very, very, very, very difficult. That is putting it lightly,” Forbin said.

Education has helped, she added. Forbin brought in a church leader from neighboring Nigeria for in-service sessions for faculty. Tamu Blakeney, a Church of Christ mem-

ber and counselor from Arizona, has assisted in staff-training initiatives.

“The Lord sent me somebody,” Forbin said of Blakeney.

• **On women’s roles in Churches of Christ in Cameroon:** “Women in West Africa teach children and teach other women,” she said, adding that many lack the resources and training to teach effectively.

“Barbara Kee was able to acquire some knowledge and go to Cameroon,” Forbin said. “She taught women and she taught me. When she was leaving she handed the baton to me and I continued.”

Because of her education, Forbin is able to host seminars and lecture-ships at the school, she said. She counsels youths. She also helps financially support preachers in Cameroon, following the model of the women who supported Jesus and his disciples, described in Luke 8.

Her country’s patriarchal traditions remain a challenge, she said, “but what the Lord has empowered me to do as a women is a lot!”



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Forju Mary Forbin founded a Christian school in her native Cameroon.



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CHURCHES MAY DEBATE *gender roles but must encourage and energize women in the mission of Christ*

'As good stewards of God's varied grace'

As I speak to Churches of Christ across the country, it is obvious that in many places wonderful options for women are opening up. Thousands actively serve the Lord — in traditional ways as well as some new ones.

I also still run into capable, well-educated and spiritual women who struggle with depression and feel discouraged due to the lack of opportunities and attitudes of leaders of their churches. Rightly or wrongly, they perceive an unloving atmosphere where they are under-challenged and unappreciated.

They fear even trying to initiate

Views



Joy McMillon

a conversation on the subject of women's role in the congregation. To do so would be to put them at great personal risk of being labeled a troublemaker.

Churches of Christ reflect a spectrum of beliefs and practices

when it comes to women's functions in the church — as we do on other challenging questions. Some allow women to serve communion, to sing on praise teams and even to preach sermons. Others believe that Scripture forbids these practices.

I leave that controversial, complex discussion for other forums. I would simply like to share a few thoughts on my own journey as a woman in the Churches of Christ and humbly offer some thoughts for congregations seeking to help all believers best use their talents.

Growing up in the church, I fell in love with Jesus.

I was inspired to serve the Lord with all my heart, soul and mind. I eagerly participated in our informal youth group, took part in service projects and summer Bible camps. I looked forward to



MARK YEAKLEY

During the recent Women Walking With God conference, Christian women enter a drawing to win a journaling Bible with original artwork by a member of the Northside Church of Christ in Wichita, Kan. About 1,500 women attended the conference, sponsored by Northside, which featured inspirational speakers, singing and fellowship.

graduating from a Christian college, marrying a Christian and finding a place of service in my congregation.

I also discovered certain unspoken messages for women in the church.

We were supposed to attend baby and bridal showers, staff the nursery, teach children's Bible classes and bring food to grieving families. We were not to speak in adult Bible studies. We would best serve in the background.

My husband would study the Bible. It wasn't necessary for me because I would be busy taking care of my highest calling — being a mother.

Although I gladly became involved in many of these activities, I longed for and quietly pursued my own study of Scripture. I found I loved it just like I love Jesus and the church.

Yet I sometimes struggled with the feeling that the church's focus seemed to be more on what women *could not* do rather than what they *could*.

Then, in the mid-to-late-1980s, our church's elders made a concerted effort to give more people an opportunity to serve. They appointed nine spiritually minded men as ministry directors.

Church involvement mushroomed, and soon attendance grew. A few years later the elders established a formal women's ministry and selected me as director.

Our church now has 30 ministries. Women lead three of them: a women's ministry, a medical clinic and a care and counseling ministry. Three more have women as co-leaders, and most

of the rest have large numbers of women involved. Five women serve on the church staff, and more than 100 have served regularly as leaders in women's ministry.

More than 200 women have trained as small-group leaders for women's Bible classes. Our church mentors young women, some of whom serve as two-year missionary apprentices around the world.

Churches, may I encourage you to survey the general mood of women in your congregation? Are they happy, fulfilled, frustrated, perhaps even fearful? Ask for input from women of all ages.

Are respect and appreciation for women's contributions evident in your church's culture? Is your organizational structure unnecessarily keeping women from contributing to the mission of the congregation in a meaningful way?

Women have so many creative ideas, thoughts and suggestions that can go unheard. If you don't have one, please consider beginning a women's ministry and appointing a leader who will work under your supervision. Give the ministry a budget. I believe you soon will see many more women becoming involved. If you have such a women's ministry, continually survey its members about curriculum, special programs, fellowship and outreach.

I implore you to make every effort to encourage and energize women in the mission of Christ in your congregation. Both genders are part of the priesthood of believers — the full body of Christ — and both are charged with using their spiritual gifts as well as understanding and respecting the relationship God wills between men and women.

I pray that we all strive to emulate the words we find in 1 Peter 4:10: *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."*

CONTACT: joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org

Christian women across the nation respond to this open-ended question from The Christian Chronicle

What do we tell our daughters about the proper role of women in church?

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

If your daughter (or granddaughter, niece or favorite little girl at church) asked you about the proper role of women in church life, how would you respond?"

We asked members of Churches of Christ across the nation to weigh in. A cross section of responses:

Linda Linscomb

Manchester Church of Christ | New Hampshire

Women play a vital part in ministry, as seen often in Scriptures, and we should strive to encourage *all*, regardless of age.

Young girls are constantly watching and mirroring the Christian women in their lives — especially in the church. The Bible tells us what is expected of women. However, often times we read into it a "negative" connotation, or culturally oriented, and therefore use this as a reason not to reach out and minister to others.

We are taught that a woman is not to take leadership *in*

the church. God chose men to be in positions of leadership. And men are to submit to Christ. Satan tempts men *and* women to rebel against the roles God has assigned to them.

We are taught to teach the younger women, show hospitality, wash feet, take care of widows, reach out to others, pray with and for our sisters, evangelize, teach others, be good examples to the young women and girls in our lives — not just our families, but also our church families.

Andrea D Lorick

Inner City Church of Christ | Baltimore

In our congregation, we have made a concerted effort to involve our young girls in learning how to pray for others, to teach and encourage others. Our diversity in gifts leads to diversity in ministry.

Women use their God-given gifts in

so many ways. As teachers of the toddler and early learners classes, they introduce God's words to the next generation of Christians. Women also give comfort and aid to the other



forgotten generation of the church — the elderly. It is sisters who visit the sick, lonely or just the forgotten in our pews.

The real question is not "What is a woman's role in the church?" but "What will she do with the gifts she was given?"

Claire Davidson Frederick

Woodmont Hills Church of Christ | Nashville, Tenn.

I would tell her (and I have told my own daughter) that our life as a church is an outgrowth of what God is doing via the in-breaking Kingdom of God. I would tell her that the proper role for all people in the church is to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20) and teach the Good News of how God is making all things new through Jesus Christ (Revelation 21:5).

I would tell her that when the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost that it was not poured out according to gender, but that God's spiritual gifting cuts across racial, ethnic, class and gender boundaries (Acts 2:17-18, Joel 2:28-29, Galatians 3:28, Col. 3:11). I would encourage her to then discern her role in the Kingdom based on her spiritual gifting and to pursue her calling to the glory of God (Ephesians 4:11-13).

I would also let her know that churches are congregationally autonomous and have a variety of ways of applying Scripture within their local contexts, such that her gifts for leading, speaking and teaching will be more welcome in some congregations



than in others. I have served as a minister (from December 2011 to March 2015) and am currently a member of the Woodmont Hills church.

Norita Cox

The Crossings Church of Christ | Wentzville, Mo.

I would tell my daughter and granddaughters that, as I have studied the Bible, my view of the biblical role of women in church life has changed in the past 45 years.

As a young girl in the Church of Christ, I was more

aware of what I could not do than what I could. It was made clear that the Bible taught that I could teach young children under the "age of accountability" and an occasional ladies class, if offered. In other words, as long as I was talking to a child or woman and not a man, my words were acceptable and valuable.

There are verses (Titus 1:5-9, for example) that clearly limit my role as a female leader in the church. I cannot be an elder or evangelist. But there also are verses (Judges 4:4, Romans 16:1, 1 Timothy 3:11, Acts 21:9) that expand my role. Women in the early church were recognized as deaconesses and prophets. What is clear to me is that the Bible is not as clear on this topic as I was taught.

I want my daughter and granddaughters to understand how my heritage as "a member of the church" was a blessing in numerous ways but that it also hindered me as a follower of Christ in some areas. I would share the fear I experienced when their dad asked me to pray aloud at the dinner table and how foolish that fear makes me feel looking back.

I would explain that passing communion from side to side is an act of service — and so is passing it from front to back. I would tell them of men leading singing exclusively —



until they couldn't find the note or tune and were forced to ask a sister in the second row to start the song.

I would challenge them to trust Christ over culture and follow truth over tradition. I would let them know how blessed they are to be a part of a church that values them as a priceless gift while remaining committed to the limits and freedom that God has placed upon them in the Scriptures.

My daughter works beside her husband in our teen ministry, and my daughter-in-law beside my son who is our campus minister. Both are strong, supportive, godly wives who bless their husbands, the church and the lost.

Nora Delgado Ramirez

Southside Church of Christ | Fort Worth, Texas

First, I would go to the Bible and read what Paul said in 1 Timothy 2:9-12. He spoke of the conduct of women during worship.

Women were to adorn themselves in modest apparel and not to teach or usurp authority over men. Women were not forbidden to teach completely, however. They could teach women and children (1 Timothy 5:14 and Titus 2:4).

I would ask young women, "What is your passion?" Look at your church. What are women doing in service to our church family? There are many activities — ladies' Bible classes, mentors

for younger women, newly married couples and new mothers, baby showers, babysitting, tutoring programs. This is where we use our talents!

We are the daughters of God. We were chosen to present to this fallen world morality, a sense of home, happiness, honesty, and most of all to present our lives in full devotion to God.

God has raised womanhood to the noble heights he intended us to be.





In Berlin, a multinational group in the Connections library celebrates the arrival of Bibles in Arabic and Farsi provided by Eastern European Mission. The library and café are places Christians and spiritual seekers can find “a warm smile, great cup of coffee and a relaxed atmosphere,” said director Larry Lewis. Refugees from the Middle East served by Connections are now conducting weekly Bible studies in both languages, Lewis said.

Refugees aren't in Europe by chance. It's destiny.

“For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return there without saturating the earth and making it germinate and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat, so my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do.”
— Isaiah 55:10-11, Holman Christian Standard Bible

VIENNA, Austria
Have you ever thought about all the things that had to fall perfectly into place for you to come into a relationship with the Father?
It's not chance. It's destiny — even if it's something as simple as your parents coming together so you could be born. It is a miracle, a declaration of love, the Father saying “I want you.” He has chased each one of us down. That is the central story of the Bible.
There are many people who have to overcome huge obstacles just for the right to hear the message of God. Since August, many of those people have made their way to Europe. What an opportunity — the chance for them to discover God's Word, to hear him singing over us, to see how his hand has prepared our way.
Those of us in Europe now have the chance to share Jesus with people who were in places not easily accessible to missionaries.
I am so thankful to play a role — no matter how small — to help people from around the world have their own Bible. Christians here have been doing this for 60 years. Across Eastern Europe,

we witness the mighty hand of God and his work to save those in need of him.
Now we are able to empower ministries and missionaries on the front lines as they work with refugees from the Middle East. Through gifts from Churches of Christ and individual Christians we are giving out Bibles in Farsi. It is so exciting. We are working on Arabic Bibles as well. It thrills my heart when people come by to get them. I know what a special gift and unique opportunity it is.
I will never forget the first time I gave a Bible to a child who had never had one. We both cried. It was moving. Years later, I still cry pretty much every time I give someone a Bible. It's a special moment for the disheartened and displaced — and for those who share with them.
I am thankful we have a God who desires a relationship with us. I am impacted by the love and kindness of those who donate the time and resources to provide these gifts to those in need.
Please take some time to think about and pray for the many people around the world who need Jesus. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to any paths you are standing near. Ask him to give you discernment and strength to help someone along their road to him.
TAMIKA RYBINSKI and her husband, Bart, live and worship with their three children in Austria and work with Eastern European Mission (www.eem.org). This devotional originally appeared on the blog “Creating a Great Day.” Read more at creatingagreatday.com.

In the Word



Tamika Rybinski

EDITORIAL

Give life — become an organ donor

God loves a cheerful giver. The Bible tells us to store up treasures in heaven.
Both principles apply, we believe, to Christians signing up to be organ donors.
On Page 1, we share the inspiring story of Josh Oakley, a Kansas church member pitching again for his high school baseball team after receiving a new heart.
For Oakley to live, somebody with a healthy heart had to die. May God comfort that person's loved ones. And may God bless them for the decision to “give life” under what had to be traumatic circumstances.
Krista Prindle, one of Oakley's five older sisters, said her family never really considered the importance of organ donations — until her brother got sick.
“We encourage everyone to be on an organ donation list,” Prindle said. “And if anything ever comes up, please consider donating your family's organs because it is truly lifesaving.”
On its organdonor.gov website, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers guidance on becoming a donor. Getting started involves registering with your state donor registry, if available, and/or designating your decision on your driver's license. But talk to your family, too, so there's no doubt about your wishes.
God loves a cheerful giver. Even in death, let's give life.

TO OUR READERS

Thanks for the great reviews

This month is Kimberly Mauck's last as reviews editor for *The Christian Chronicle*, though you'll likely still see her name on occasional feature articles and columns. For the past five years, Mauck, a member of the Northwest Church of Christ in Durant, Okla., has served in this demanding post, consistently producing top-notch, award-winning content.
Laura Akins, the *Chronicle's* editorial assistant and a member of the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, will serve as our new reviews editor. Contact laura.akins@christianchronicle.org.



Mauck



Akins

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We also salute a growing group of monthly supporters giving on our website from California (2), Colorado, and Pennsylvania.

The Trinity: Not a ‘big deal’ in Churches of Christ?

‘One thing I like about your church is that you don’t make a big deal about the deity of Christ.”

I was taken aback when I heard those words, spoken by a visitor to our congregation several years back as we talked about distinctive beliefs and practices.

I definitely *do* believe Jesus is a fully divine member of the Holy Trinity, but the conversation illustrated an important truth in Churches of Christ: outsiders often misunderstand our beliefs on the Trinity.

As I read Kelly Carter’s **“The Trinity in the Stone-Campbell Movement: Restoring the Heart of Christian Faith,”** I became more and more convinced that this outsider indeed made a profound observation: our brotherhood has made a peripheral issue of one that should be at the center of our faith.

Carter, who has decades of ministry experience and a doctorate in theology, is uniquely qualified to write this book. He is a congregationally-based theologian whose work demonstrates a heartfelt devotion to Churches of Christ and a passionate desire to see our fellowship flourish.

Carter’s thesis is that we in the Restoration movement have a long-standing avoidance of explicit teaching about the triune nature of God. This problem can be traced directly back to the writings of

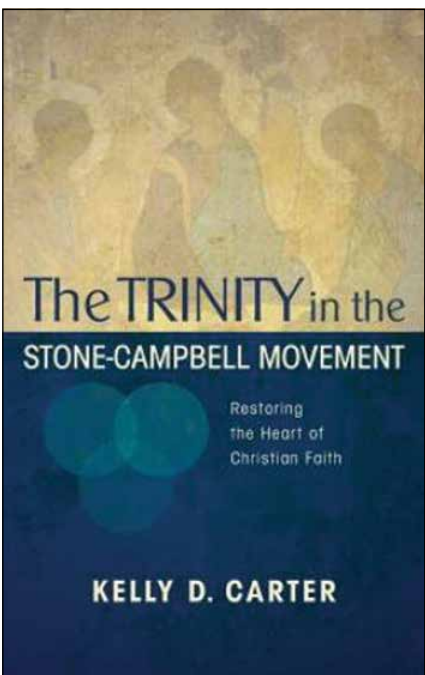
Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone, who laid the foundation for our tepid Trinitarianism. In Carter’s view, we must correct this theological weakness, and in so doing we will be enriched as a people and better able to navigate the identity issues that currently face us.

The seven-chapter book is balanced between descriptive and prescriptive material. The historical heart of the book is chapters two through four, where Carter expertly analyzes the writings of the founders and contextualizes their conclusions. Carter demonstrates that the Campbells were very much in line with an orthodox understanding of the Trinity.

The typical approach of Alexander Campbell was to argue for the doctrine of the Trinity without actually using the non-biblical verbiage (such as “trinity”) that characterized the historic debates and led to unnecessary division among Christians.

Stone, however, is a different story: he contended that Jesus was “not the only true God.” For him, the idea of co-eternal Father and Son was illogical and unbiblical, whereas Campbell understood it as a mystery that corresponds well with biblical revelation. Campbell was concerned about Stone’s belief and sought to clarify his meaning, but ultimately did not consider it a point that should keep the two movements apart.

Ironically, since Campbell was



★★★★★

Kelly D. Carter, **The Trinity in the Stone-Campbell Movement: Restoring the Heart of Christian Faith.** Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 2015. 272 pages. \$29.99.

genuinely devoted to the full deity of Christ — and wrote eloquently and passionately about it — this willingness to combine forces with someone with a seemingly deficient Christology may have sent a message to later generations that this issue ultimately was not a “big deal.”

Carter goes on to marshal historical evidence for a general neglect of the doctrine, as seen in the scant attention given to the Trinity since

1850 in Restoration movement literature. He believes that most adherents in Churches of Christ are indeed Trinitarians but have simply overlooked the doctrine and remained aloof from discussion of its importance.

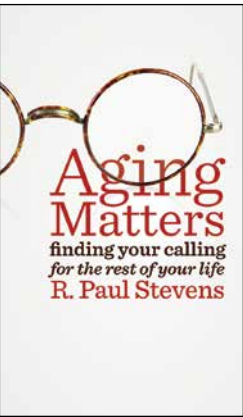
But, according to Carter, the time is now ripe for us to embrace a restored and robust Trinitarianism, and he provides an ambitious 10-point proposal for how we can make it happen.

Carter outlines ways that biblical scholars and theologians, college administrators, journal and newspaper editors, lectureship organizers, church educational directors and other congregational leaders all have a role to play in restoring the Trinity to its rightful place in our theology.

“The Trinity in the Stone-Campbell Movement” is a thoughtful, stimulating read that is historically informative and worthy of serious attention. Its sometimes wordy style and the complexity of the subject will make it a challenge for the average reader, but those who tackle the book will be greatly rewarded. They will understand better their theological heritage and, in the process, be personally enriched by meditating deeply on a subject that truly is at the heart of Christian faith.

DARREN WILLIAMSON is preaching minister for the Keizer Church of Christ in Oregon. He is an adjunct instructor at George Fox University and director of the Campbell Institute for Theological Education, a ministry offering accredited courses in Bible to college students in Oregon’s Willamette Valley.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY



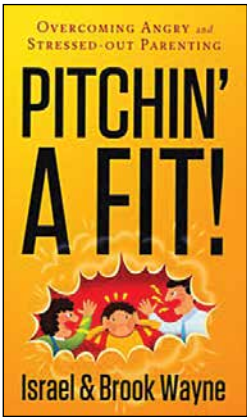
SENIORS MINISTRY

R. Paul Stevens. **Aging Matters: Finding Your Calling for the Rest of Your Life.** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2016. 160 pages. \$16.

For Christians, a late-life retirement of leisure is just not an option, contends Stevens, a theology and leadership professor in Canada.

Rather, retirement should be a turning point — into mentoring, legacy-building and continued productivity, he argues.

Each of this book’s nine chapters ends with selected Bible readings and group discussion questions, making it suitable for Bible classes for seniors and small-group studies.



PARENTING

Israel and Brook Wayne. **Pitchin’ A Fit! Overcoming Angry and Stressed-Out Parenting.** Green Forest, Ark.: New Leaf Publishing Group, 2016. 192 pages. \$12.99.

Husband-and-wife authors Israel and Brook Wayne are parents to nine children, whom they homeschool.

They base their book on three essential truths. Anger and stress are common in homes with children, they write. Both are sins, but they can be overcome through God’s Word.

This book helps parents understand their anger triggers and gives advice for correcting and affirming children with patience and peace.

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

Birthdays

100th: John Kelsoe Sr., Birmingham, Ala. **96th: A.F. Fitzhugh,** Houston, Texas.

Anniversaries

**Chester and Sharon
James
50 years**

Chester and Sharon (Moody) James celebrated 50 years of marriage on Jan. 29, 2016. They were married in the Church of Christ, Kingman, Kan.

They met at Oklahoma Christian College in 1963. Chester graduated from Derby High School in Kansas in 1963. He attended OC one year and returned to Kansas to graduate from Wichita State University in Kansas. He also has a master's in business administration from Webster University, St. Louis. Sharon graduated from Kingman High School in 1962, OC in 1966 and received a master's in education from



Wichita State University. Chester served in the U.S. Air Force and retired from Boeing Airplane Company as a manufacturing consultant. Sharon is retired after teaching fifth grade in Kingman for 25 years.

Chester and Sharon worship with the Kingman Church of Christ, where Chester is an elder. They both teach classes and are involved in the Wednesday night children's ministry, which includes a weekly supper and Bible classes for children from the community. They also volunteer for several community organizations.

They continue to live on a farm close to Kingman, where they have an Angus cow/calf operation. Their children include Deborah (Steve) Gibbs, Edmond, Okla.; Sarah (Matt) Walker, Coppell, Texas; and Richard (Rachel) James, Wichita, Kan. Their

grandchildren are Bethany, Courtney and Audrey Gibbs; Katie and Tuck Walker; and Abbey and Jackson James. Their children all attended Christian colleges as well as their two college-age granddaughters. Chester and Sharon's address is 3672 NE 20 St, Kingman, KS 67068. Their email is sjames@hughes.net.

70th: Frand and Abbie Barthel, Bixby, Okla. **70th: Jim and Betty Trotter,** Raytown, Mo. **60th: Bob and Lou Hester,** Ada, Okla.

Memorials

**Bessie Mae Pryor
1923 – 2016**

Bessie Mae Ledbetter Pryor, 92, died peacefully April 8, 2016, at her home with her loved ones at her side in Searcy, Ark. She was carried into heaven to be surrounded by her Lord, Jesus Christ and a host of dear family and friends. Bessie Mae was born May 27, 1923, in Shelbyville, Tenn., to John T. and Bessie Mae (McClanahan) Ledbetter, and lived there with her siblings, John and Laura, until she attended David Lipscomb, then a junior college in Nashville, Tenn., where she was honored as "Miss Lipscomb 1944."

In 1945, she transferred to Harding College in Searcy, where she was active in Phi Delta Social Club, serving as its first president. She edited the 1946 "Petit Jean" yearbook, and was crowned 1946 Petit Jean Queen. She played in the band as well. After graduating in May 1946, she married her faculty and yearbook advisor, Joseph E. Pryor, in August of that year.

She taught Home Economics at Harding for two years. She also worked as J.D. Bales' secretary and for an attorney in Searcy until she and her husband adopted their children: Beverly Jo Pryor of Clarksville, Tenn.; Joe Byron (Jody,



deceased); and Susan Pryor Hodges of Searcy. Bessie Mae was the ultimate homemaker and hostess.

Her beloved family was at the heart of all she did, followed closely by a broader Christian/Harding family. In addition to cooking three meals a day every day, she hosted countless groups, large and small, on a regular, weekly basis.

She sponsored the Regina Social Club for 40 years and opened the doors of her home to groups including the TNT men's club, the "Petit Jean" staff, Alpha Chi and the Friendship Home Extension & Greenskeepers Garden Club friends.

She served as past president of the Searcy Council of Garden Clubs, Home Extension Club, Garden Club, Associated Women for Harding and was Northeast District Director of Arkansas Federation of Garden Clubs. She was a Brownie Scout leader for 10 years. An active servant at the College Church of Christ, she taught the 2-year-olds for more years than anyone kept a record.

In 2006 she received the National Council of AWH Worthy Woman Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. She loved gardening and had a huge, productive garden along with her in-laws, Lonnie and Queetro Pryor, of Searcy. She spent countless hours canning, freezing and storing food for her family and friends. Creative in all she did, Bessie Mae was an avid flower arranger, becoming a certified judge and teacher of flower arranging. She loved ceramics, stained glass, sewing and producing crafts of all kinds. Every presentation of her food was as beautiful to look upon as it was delicious. She was famous for her "Bessie Mae" yeast rolls and her hot spiced tea. Her gracious style and warm hospitality made all feel valued and loved.

Throughout her years, she mentored and counseled countless numbers of young women and men. She directed and catered countless numbers of weddings in the area. She loved children and animals, putting up with countless pets through the years including beloved dogs and

continued

May 23-26 35th Annual Sermon Seminar. Austin Graduate School of Theology, Texas. Contact Renee' Kennell, (512) 476-2772, www.sermonseminar.com.

May 28-30 Southside Church of Christ Homecoming. Orlando, Fla. (407) 296-0155, sscorlando@outlook.com.

May 29 Campaign For Christ Rally. Memorial Church of Christ, Houston. (713) 464-0271, bbaugh@thearray.org.

June 6-9 National Hispanic English Youth Conference. Lubbock, Texas. (806) 720-7219, terriwarren@lcu.edu, www.lcucamps.com.

June 7-9 Abundant Living Seniors Ministry Conference. Searcy, Ark. (501) 279-4055, gowen@harding.edu.

June 8-10 43rd National Jail-Prison Ministry Workshop. Corpus Christi, Texas. (361) 855-3372, www.nlbm.org.

June 10-12 The Church of Christ United in Psalms Hymns and Spiritual Songs. Nashville, Tenn. Gerald McClain, (678) 412-5745.

June 12-15 Homecoming Reunion and Gospel Meeting. Church of Christ in Westfield. Houston. (281) 323-3928, stevemgfts@gmail.com.

June 17-18 Northeastern States Men's Retreat. "God's Man in a World of Addiction." Kent School, Kent, Conn. (203) 374-3715, www.cocmensretreat.com.

June 22-24 Florida State Youth for Christ. "Empire." Orlando, Fla. theyouthconference.com.

June 24-26 60th Anniversary, Church of Christ at Pearl Harbor. (808) 422-7033. cocatph@gmail.com, www.cocph.org.

June 25-26 60th Anniversary, Southside Church of Christ. Los Angeles. (323) 752-9206, www.southsidechurchofchristla.org.

June 25-July 1 Foundations. Memphis School of Preaching. office@msop.org.

June 30-July 3 Equip Conference. Orange Avenue Church of Christ. Orlando, Fla. (352) 357-6616, office@myoacoc.org.

July 7-9 FaithBuilders. Puyallup, Wash. (253) 845-6312, office@faithbuildersnw.com, www.FaithBuildersnw.com.

FULL CALENDAR: www.christianchronicle.org

Full-Time Minister

The **Church of Christ in Lake Orion Mich.**, is searching for a full-time minister. Duties would include preaching, teaching, visiting and outreach.

Lake Orion is a growing community in northern Oakland County with excellent schools. We are an active congregation with an average Sunday attendance of between 80 and 125 members.

If interested please contact:

Randy McClure
(248) 310-4456
rmcclore1958@gmail.com

Pulpit Minister

We are a 50+ congregation located in the Tehachapi Valley on the south end of the Sierra Nevada Range. The elders are seeking a minister who will accept a housing and financial package which will complement his retirement income.

Applicants may contact Bill Willingham at:

wowillingham46@yahoo.com
(661) 342-6985

Tehachapi Church of Christ
401 South Mill St
Tehachapi, California 93561

Westside Church of Christ is seeking a full-time pulpit minister. We are seeking a Spirit-filled, Bible-based individual who is able to work as part of our leadership team which includes two elders and two deacons.

Send your resume with references and an audio or videotape of a recent sermon to:

Westside Church of Christ
Attn: Brother Carlos L. Woody,
Chair of the Minister Search Committee
960 Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Blvd
Daytona Beach, FL 32114
(386) 527-6218
carloswoody7@gmail.com

Full-Time Minister Wanted

The Sheridan Church of Christ is currently looking for a minister with a deep-seated desire to cultivate and nurture faith, hope, and obedience through love. The first requirement is that he be a faithful Christian who is sound in the Word.

Additional skills and traits can be found at:
www.christianchronicle.org/classifieds.

Please send three references, links to recent sermons and your resume to:
PO Box 245 Sheridan, AR 72015

www.sheridancofc.org
SheridanARministerSearch@gmail.com

Milestones continued

Betty L. Taylor
1932 – 2016

Betty Lou Taylor passed from this life on March 11, 2016.

Mrs. Taylor was born to Orville and Agnes Baxter on Jan. 7, 1932, in Pekin, Ind. She was married to Harold G. Taylor, an evangelist, on May 30, 1953. They enjoyed one another in wedded bliss for 62 years. To that union were born three children: Teresa Scott (husband John) of Burleson, Texas; Greg Taylor (wife Paula) of Argyle, Texas; and Brad Taylor (wife Cathy) of Abilene, Texas. Her extended family includes seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Taylor, as a preacher's wife, shared Harold's ministry. As a devoted wife, traveling companion, church secretary at the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, and by practicing hospitality, she captured a true servant's heart.

Funeral services were conducted on Tuesday, March 15, 2016, at the Lewisville Church of Christ in Texas.

Interment was at Restland Memorial Park, Dallas, Texas.



Nena Brannan, 94,
Albuquerque, N.M.,
April 7.



Lucy M. McInnes,
97, Anaheim, Calif.

Wilson E. "Buddy" Ramsey, 90,
Pearl, Ill., March 6. **Glover Harvey Shipp, 88,** Austin, Texas, April 20.

Thank You

On April 16, 2015, Joyce McBride passed from this life and was "born to eternal life." Her death left a great void in the lives of her family and her community.

Her community friends and a community of Christian friends — at Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City and around the world — reached out to the family with love, understanding and support. More than 1,400 attended her memorial service; 200 of her students and former students quoted Psalm 23 as a tribute to her. Hundreds sent flowers; the family was provided food for weeks. Prayers for comfort and consolations were abundant, all family members received many cards, letters and phone calls. Friends gave gifts in her honor to the Memorial Road church, *The Christian Chronicle*, World Bible School, "Search for the Lord's Way," Lilyfield Christian Adoption and Foster Care, Westview Boys Home, the Harpeth Hills Church of Christ in Brentwood, Tenn., and Ohio Valley University in Vienna, W.Va.

The family in its disorientation has not adequately expressed its gratitude for the prayers, the love, the kindnesses and memorial gifts. In this way the family wants to express its thanks and deep appreciation for all the godly kindnesses extended.

*Bailey McBride
Phil and Melissa McBride Roe,
Patrick and Lynette McBride Brown
and Ashlyn,
Michael and Karen Cloud McBride
and Brady, Connor and Garrett
Joe and Jennifer Roe Thurman
Luke and Rachel Varno Roe with
Emma
James and Savanna Roe Millikan
with Amos
Josh and Kailey Brown King*

Memorial/Honor Gifts

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in honor of Dr. Richard Mock and in memory of Ona Belle Groves.

Jody's endless collection of snakes!

She loved to be in nature, to play games (Rook & Spinner), to laugh and have fun, to celebrate birthdays, holidays and family. She was great at helping all make memories that will last a lifetime. She loved to love others, cook and care for others when they needed extra care. She was generous to share all that she had with any in need.

Bessie Mae was well-traveled. She and Joe loved to drive; they traveled by car across the U.S. installing Alpha Chi chapters in many states. In 1985 they drove from Arkansas to Alaska and back, just to say they did it! Joe also taught at Harding's campus in Florence, Italy; the two of them enjoyed traveling that semester across Europe, Israel and Egypt. Upon Joe's retirement, they traveled to China, returning home by way of Mexico.

Bessie Mae loved greatly — children, animals, nature and people. She cared for her beloved Joe the last 12 years of his life after he became ill. They were blessed with 60 years of adventure and laughter. It was one more beautiful example she left of faithful love.

In her final years, Bessie Mae read through the Bible annually, created silk arrangements for The Checkerboard Shop, was active in Red Hat Society, volunteered at White County Hospital and could even be seen on walks across Harding campus tidying up the grounds.

After 92 grand years, Bessie Mae leaves behind two daughters, Beverly Jo and Susan, and a granddaughter, Audrey, who could make her smile like no one else could, even in her final days. She also leaves many Ledbetter and Ingram nieces and nephews and hosts of those blessed to call her friend. Her family wishes to publicly thank our recent caregivers, Vickie Bailey-Bird, Jenny Wortham, Dena McDaniel and Alicia Kendrick for their precious care of Bessie Mae.

Gifts of love in her honor are welcomed anywhere, but especially to Harding's Dr. Joe and Bessie Mae Pryor Scholarship Fund.

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

Two books every minister should have!
The Funeral and Wedding Handbook
and
The Great Omission



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Remembering Glover Shipp – a man
who ‘broadened and sweetened our world’

Journalist, editor, songwriter,
artist, teacher, preacher,
personal evangelist, linguist.
Visionary.

All of these describe our friend
Glover Shipp, who served *The
Christian Chronicle* from 1989 to
2001. Shipp, 88, died April 20. The
Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ in
Austin, Texas, where he spent his final
years, hosted a celebration of his life.

I first heard of Glover when a
colleague at Oklahoma Christian
University came from a World
Mission Workshop and announced
that he was resigning to go to Belo
Horizonte, Brazil, to learn how to
do mission work from Glover, who
served on a team there.

I learned more about this remark-
able man as missionaries who
visited him in Brazil returned with
his artwork. My house had at least
four of his ink drawings of scenes of
life from the villages of Brazil. Each
showed great attention to detail.

When Howard Norton, a renowned
preacher, professor and also a
former missionary to Brazil, began
editing the *Chronicle* after it came
to Oklahoma Christian in the early
1980s, he brought in
Glover to serve as
managing editor. Glover
barely got moved into
his office before he was
facing a press dead-
line. Eventually, he was
named an elder of the
Edmond Church of
Christ in Oklahoma.

He used an advisory
group of preachers and
church leaders to gain
ideas for stories. He
asked Lindy Adams to
join the staff and concen-
trate of national news. They worked
as a team. Glover relied heavily on
Lindy's national news reporting as he
concentrate on international news.

Lindy described Glover as “incred-
ibly diligent and hard-working, totally
dedicated to God and service to the
church and missions worldwide.” He
“possessed an interest in countless
interesting and arcane subjects.

“We loved Glover,” Lindy said. “He

broadened and sweetened our world.”

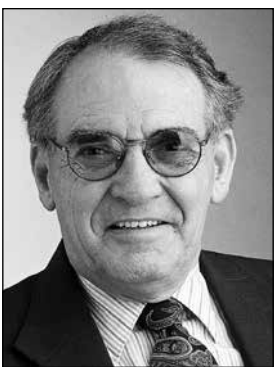
Glover and Howard were eager
to promote missions in Latin
America. I remember hearing their
discussions about the importance
of balanced coverage. Churches
of Christ in the U.S. had focused



Bailey McBride

evangelistic efforts
in Europe in the
decades after World
War II. Both men
had pioneered work
in Portuguese-
speaking Brazil and
helped shift our
mission focus to
include the lands to
our south.

Howard was in
Brazil when he learned of Glover's
death. Teaching a class in the city of
Recife, he said a young man there was
visibly shaken because he “had grown
up hearing about the great missionary
team to Belo Horizonte that had
arrived in 1967 and had done so
much to preach the Gospel and estab-
lish churches in that part of Brazil,”
Howard said. “Glover had been a
major player in the formation, work
and continuing impact of that team.”



THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Glover Shipp: 1927-2016

When I became
the *Chronicle's* editor
in 1996, Glover was
gracious and supportive.

He prayed for me
to have the wisdom
to guide the paper to
strengthen the kingdom.
I was deeply moved by
his kindness.

I agree with Howard's
assessment of Glover
as a true Renaissance
man, “a lifelong learner
and scholar, a man for
all seasons whose motto

seemed always to be ‘Here am I!
Send me.’”

All of us at the *Chronicle* extend
our sympathies and prayers to his
wife, Marjorie, whom he dearly
loved, and his children, of whom he
was immensely proud.

Most of all, he loved the Lord and
the Lord's church.

CONTACT: bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

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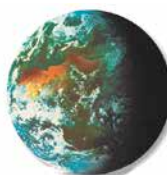
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No steeple

Southern California church will meet in a movie theater at a crowded shopping mall. **3**



INSIDE

CALENDAR.....32	MILESTONES....32, 33
CURRENTS.....17	NATIONAL.....5
DIALOGUE.....15	OPINION.....27
INSIGHT.....34	PARTNERS.....22
INTERNATIONAL 12	PEOPLE.....20
IN THE WORD.....29	REVIEWS 31



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