

Minister: God hurts with Charleston

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Race. It's a topic talked about in church parking lots, but rarely inside the church building, said Bobby Green Jr.

But race was the topic that Green, minister for the Charleston Metropolitan Church of Christ in South Carolina, discussed with fellow believers during a recent Wednesday night Bible study.

Green, who serves the 250-member, predominantly black congregation, had just returned from the Racial Unity Leadership Summit in Abilene, Texas.

He shared what he learned during his time with fellow church leaders — white and black — as they pondered and prayed for unity in the pews.

Eight miles south, at the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, a white gunman opened fire during another Wednesday night Bible study, slaying nine parishioners, including the church's preacher.

The next day, police arrested 21-year-old Dylann Roof, who told them that he intended to spark a "race war."

"It's been challenging. It devastated
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RACE AND THE CHURCH

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TED PARKS

Charleston minister Bobby Green Jr. speaks during a Racial Unity Leadership Summit at the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas.

BOBBY ROSS JR.



Christ's love for prisoners — it's better than a pardon

Volunteer Gwen Coker leans against her husband, Bob, as attendees sing "Mighty to Save" during the 42nd annual National Jail and Prison Ministry Workshop, hosted by the Highland Church of Christ in Cordova, Tenn. "The one thing even greater than a pardon or a jailbreak is a welcome," Highland preacher Chris Altrock said, urging attendees to share Christ's love with prisoners.

See **CURRENTS**, Page 17

Church members killed, worship halls burned in Nigeria

DESPITE BRUTAL ATTACKS in the north by terrorist group Boko Haram, Christians are committed to spreading the Gospel among the ruins, missionary says.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

The Christians of northern Nigeria worship in a war zone.

Boko Haram, a militant Islamist group, has killed thousands of Nigerians and kidnapped hundreds more. Last year the terrorist group abducted nearly 300 girls from a boarding school in the town of Chibok.

Sixteen Churches of Christ, with a combined membership of more than 1,200 souls, met in the Chibok area in the years before Boko Haram's insurgency, accord-

ing to a report prepared by three Nigerian ministers. Now only five congregations continue to meet. At least one minister has died, and many Christians have taken refuge in other Nigerian states or the neighboring nation of Cameroon.

"Most of our houses were burnt down," wrote the ministers, Joshua Yaga, Amos Kari and Luka Kyari. "Our farm products, including our animals, were burnt or carried away. Most of our worship halls were burnt down and some of our brethren were killed."

See **NIGERIA**, Page 15

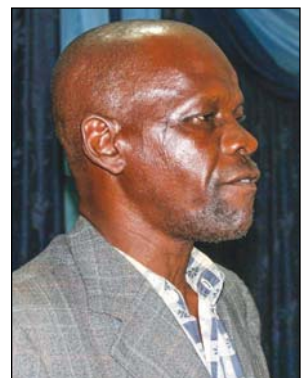


PHOTO PROVIDED BY STEVE WORLEY

Joshua Yaga, a church member in Chibok, Nigeria, speaks about Boko Haram.

Academic Excellence

From Classroom
to
Rainforest

As a supplement to spring biology and photography courses, students recently spent two weeks in Costa Rica under the direction of Dr. Brian Butterfield, professor of biology, and Jud Davis, assistant professor of photography. The trek allowed them to move from the classroom to the rainforest and replace textbooks with lagoons. Based near Boca Tapada, Costa Rica, the learning environment included 1,250 acres of tropical rainforest. Photography students spent time with residents and focused on architecture, culture and daily agricultural life. While trekking through the rainforest, science students researched turtles and other fauna native to the San Carlos River. Hands-on learning opportunities like this make Freed-Hardeman a university

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Longing for the last visitor's card

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.

I hesitated too long. So time ended up making a decision for me. The collection plate passed by and there I was, sitting in the middle of the row, in the middle of church, at the tail end of the offering and I still couldn't make up my mind.

Inside Story



Wendell Edwards

Should I really still fill out a visitor's card on my third visit? I shouldn't sweat the small things. But that

very simple, if not facetious, question really is a precursor to a much a larger one. In a new city with a new job, how do you pick a new body of Christ, a new church?

I've been in the Birmingham area for about two months. So far I've visited four different Churches of Christ at least twice each. Right now I'm getting to the point where it feels like I'm just church hopping.

You may know the feeling — you're hopping around getting to meet everybody but in the end not really, truly knowing anybody.

Truth is, it's hard to pick a new congregation — in my case, for two main reasons:

First, I tend to compare what I've left to what I've got right in front of me. And at times, that's not fair. Each church has its own strengths and plusses — and areas that need improvement. I can't just compare one to the other

See **VISITOR**, Page 4



Abby deSteiguer from the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City works on a painting project during the Wichita Work Camp.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MARK YEAKLEY

Teens show off the paint stains on their hands during the eighth annual Wichita Work Camp, hosted by the Northside Church of Christ in Kansas' largest city.

Painting for Jesus

AT WORK CAMPS across the nation, teens put their faith into action

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

WICHITA, Kan.

Teens from Churches of Christ sure know how to paint the town.

From West Virginia to Texas, dozens of annual summer work camps bring together young Christians to scrape and paint houses.

Here in Kansas' largest city, 200 teens and 60 adults participated in the recent eighth annual Wichita Work Camp, organized by the Northside Church of Christ.

"We're not here doing work to show

ourselves off," said Colton Quall, 17, a member of the Central Church of Christ in Topeka, Kan., two hours northeast of Wichita. "We're here to be servants for God."

A dozen congregations in Arkansas, Kansas and Oklahoma sent youth groups to Wichita. Teams came, too, from Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City and York College in Nebraska.

"It's a lot of work, definitely," said Laura Weber, 16, a member of the Northside church. "You don't really

See **WORK CAMP**, Page 8

'Excited and grateful for new role'

MANHATTAN CHURCH MEMBER Lester Holt moves into NBC's top news anchor role. 'Lester's faith is solid,' says a former elder of the New York congregation that Holt attends.

NEW YORK — Lester Holt's anchor gig with "NBC Nightly News" is no longer temporary.

When NBC suspended anchor Brian Williams in February for making misleading statements, Holt was tabbed to fill in.

But on June 18, the network announced that Holt — a longtime member of the Manhattan Church of Christ — would become the permanent anchor.

"Promised my family I wouldn't think about work while on vacation," Holt posted on

Twitter. "Just got the OK to break that promise. Excited and grateful for new role."

Fellow Christians praise Holt's character and journalistic integrity. "Lester's faith is solid," said Dave Swearingen, a former elder of the Manhattan church.

In a 2009 interview, Holt said, "I know a lot of people in this business who are people of faith — maybe not this specific faith that I share, but people who believe in God and follow their faith. So I don't find it hard."



BRIAN NICKLAUS.

Lester Holt visits with *The Christian Chronicle* during a 2009 interview.

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VIDEO STILL VIA YOUTUBE

A quartet of quadruplets?

Not really. Kaoma Chende of Niles, Mich., uses a stationary camera to film himself singing four different parts of a hymn at four different locations in the same room. Then he combines the video — and the music — for one-man, one-room, four-part harmony.

Chende, a native of the southern African nation of Zambia, says he wants to share and spread love through music, by God's grace. See our **"Voices-only Wednesday"** online feature to find videos of Chende singing classic hymns a cappella, including "Near to the Heart of God," "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus," "Oh How He Loves You and Me" and "His Name is Wonderful," plus devotional favorites including "Soon and Very Soon."

Also, find links to our stories from this and previous editions and web-exclusive interviews and features. See our award-winning series, "One Nación Under God," discussing the challenges and opportunities to reach Hispanics in the U.S. with the Gospel.

Use your smartphone, tablet or desktop to read the latest headlines from *The Christian Chronicle* and sign up for our weekly email newsletter.



VISITOR: The spiritual burden of church shopping

FROM PAGE 3

without the benefit of time.

And second, I can't make this decision alone. My wife and daughters have yet to make the move, and I would be remiss to choose for them. This should be something we decide as a family, with my wife and I, of course, having the final say.

Choosing a church is just — if not more — important as choosing our next home. The congregation we choose will help us praise the Lord, nurture our faith and Christian life and teach our daughters the glory and wonders of Jesus Christ.

And most paramount, we get a chance to serve — to teach a Bible class, lead a Bible study, lead a song service, to show our children that service is about giving yourself and your time. And in a new congrega-

tion, the energy we exude, the love we share, will come right back to us.

This decision carries the weight, that at times seems heavy as the Cross itself. That may seem extreme, but in reality, the spiritual welfare of my family is a stake.

So for now, I will continue to visit and pray and get to know the church and its people. And when my family gets here, we'll visit some more, knowing one day we'll make a choice and place membership.

I long for that day — when filling out that visitor's card won't even be a question.

WENDELL EDWARDS co-anchors the morning news for WBMA, ABC 33/40 in Birmingham, Ala. He formerly served as a deacon of the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. He and his wife, Mekio, have two daughters.

JULY 2015

ARKANSAS

ASHDOWN — Record-breaking floods in the central U.S. claimed the life of Dugan Ward, 28, a member of the Ashdown Church of Christ.

Ward and his parents, Steve and Dee Dee Ward, got in a boat May 27 and went to a water-covered pasture on the Red River to check on their property, the *Texarkana Gazette* reported.



Dugan Ward

The river's current pushed the family into a cluster of pecan trees and trapped the boat's motor in the pasture land's fence. The current then capsized the boat.

Rescue workers found Steve and Dee Dee Ward May 28, clinging to a fence gate. On June 7, authorities discovered Dugan Ward's body. To read Ward's obituary and see how to help his wife, Katie, with expenses, visit www.christianchronicle.org.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON — About 1,800 women gathered for this year's 30th anniversary of the Church of Christ Ladies Lectureship Retreat.

The Mid-Atlantic Fellowship of the Churches of Christ served as the local host for the retreat in the nation's capital. The Country Club Church of Christ in Fayetteville, N.C., sponsors the annual event.

"This is the largest event of ladies in the Churches of Christ," said Glynda Mayo Hall, one of the local organizers and a member of the Fairfax Church of Christ in Virginia.

GEORGIA

DONALSONVILLE — Fourteen high school youth group members from the Central Church of Christ in Moore, Okla., traveled 900-plus miles this summer to work with the Donalsonville Church of Christ.

The group, led by youth minister Casey Haynes, helped organize a Vacation Bible School for the congregation of about 25 to 30.

"They have door-knocked over 700 houses, led us in worship Sunday, worked on a back building at our church to be a teen room and mowed lawns for elderly in the



VIDEO STILL VIA YOUTUBE

Like a good neighbor, worship minister is there for Coneheads



PHOTO PROVIDED BY BRENT ALLEN

The Coneheads, also known as comedy legends Dan Aykroyd, Jane Curtin and Laraine Newman, call for help from State Farm agent Brent Allen after the "microwave cooking device" breaks in their space station in a recent ad for the insurance company. When he's not helping customers file claims — or being magically whisked away from planet Earth — Allen serves as worship minister for the Westover Hills Church of Christ in Austin, Texas. He's a graduate of Harding University in Searcy, Ark.

"It was wonderful and so rewarding working with Dan and Jane," Allen told *The Christian Chronicle* in a quick message from the church camp where he was assisting. "It was so interesting seeing the process and realizing how much work it is to get a 30-second commercial. I pray God will use this for his plans."

SEE THE COMMERCIAL at www.christianchronicle.org

community," said Wes Baldwin, the Donalsonville church's minister.

"As a congregation, we only have six kids under the age of 12," Baldwin added. "But with their help, we have averaged over 30 kids a night at VBS."

NEW YORK

BRENTWOOD — With help from Herald of Truth, Churches of Christ from Brooklyn to the East End sponsored a recent six-day outreach campaign and gospel meeting on Long Island.

The opening night of the "Hope for Life" event drew a crowd of more than 450, said Derek Peterson, one of the organizers.

"I know there are plenty of churches down south that have 500-plus in attendance on a Sunday as a normal thing," Peterson said. "However, up north ... to have this many people from churches all

over was truly an act of God."

Lessons and singing were done both in English and Spanish, with real-time translating.

"Hope for Life is still having an impact on many," said Pedro Gelabert, evangelist for the Long Island Church of Christ. "God has stirred up a revival!"

WASHINGTON

BELLEVUE — Elders and members from area congregations helped the Bellevue Church of Christ celebrate the recent opening of its new fellowship hall.

"The hall has a lodge look and can accommodate over 200 people," said Tim Tow, deacon for communications. "We've hosted our first wedding and a prison ministry banquet and intend to use the fellowship hall to further reach out to the community."

SPOTLIGHT

Jones retiring

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — David Jones Jr., minister for the Schrader Lane Church of Christ, is retiring after 53 years of service.

Jones helped build the former Jefferson Street Church of Christ from 140 members to Schrader Lane's current 1,300.

He has conducted more than 750 gospel meetings, workshops and seminars domestically and globally. To read *The Christian Chronicle's* 2012 profile of Jones' half-century of ministry at Schrader Lane, visit www.christianchronicle.org.



Jones

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Summer camp

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

NORMAN, Okla.
4'm singin' for the Lord, just singin' for the Lord. What a glorious feeling, I'm happy again. Thumbs up! Elbows in! Knees together! Ah tootsie tah, ah tootsie tah, ah tootsie tah tah!"

Boys flung themselves across the stage — sometimes staying upright — as they sang the song during skit night at Inside Out Camp.

During the four-day experience at Norman's Camp Rock Creek, children learned about seeing God's fingerprints in the plants and animals around them — including a few wild turkeys and more than a few mosquitos after Oklahoma's recent, unprecedented rainfall.

(They also learned how to sing while sticking out their tongues.) Across the nation, Churches of Christ treated young believers to

sports, crafts, games and studies of God's Word during annual Bible camps. The results, directors said, were lifelong memories and decisions to follow Christ.

In Macon, Ga., Camp Canaan, hosted by the Thomaston Road Church of Christ, resulted in a baptism.

At the Northwestern Ohio Christian Youth Camp near McCutchenville, the 90-year-old campsite itself is filled with reminders of God's providence. "One of our directors met

his wife at camp," said church member Julie O'Shelski, "and now his children and grandchildren come to camp. As an anniversary gift, he purchased a gazebo and placed it in the spot they first started talking."

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? A gospel meeting? A lectureship? What did you like? What could have been better? Email erik@christianchronicle.org or share your experiences at www.christianchronicle.org.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

At Inside Out Camp in Norman, Okla., nobody gets seconds until everyone gets through the food line.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

NORMAN, Okla.: Children sing silly songs and play games during "Wild Thing" as they wait for dinner after an afternoon of swimming, games and crafts at Inside Out Camp.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JULIE O'SHELSKI

MCCUTCHENVILLE, Ohio: A fire pit devotional at Northwestern Ohio Christian Youth Camp.



PHOTO PROVIDED

MACON, Ga.: Children decorate placemats during craft time at Camp Canaan.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

LAS VEGAS, N.M.: Members of the youth group of the Western Hills Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas, pause for a photo during their session at Camp Blue Haven.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY DOUG WALLEN

Rob Robinson, minister for the Thomaston Road Church of Christ in Macon, Ga., speaks to teens about grace during a Bible class at Camp Canaan.



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WORK CAMP: Younger generation wants to 'go and do'

FROM PAGE 3

get a lot of breaks. But when you do, there's a lot of talk about God, and you get to meet a lot of people who share the same faith as you, which is really amazing."

Besides putting fresh coats on houses, the painters saved the city of Wichita thousands of dollars by covering gang graffiti under bridges and sprucing up playground equipment at a park, said Toby Levering, the camp's director.

"The goal is to get teenagers to take on Jesus' call to be a servant," said Levering, a former youth minister who now preaches for the Northside church.

Like a number of work camps across the nation, the Wichita effort — which this summer required 200 gallons of paint — traces its roots to the Memphis Work Camp in Tennessee.

"I believe there are close to 20 work camps that have branched off from the one in Memphis, including ours," said Ryan Ice, coordinator of the 17-year-old Mid-Ohio Valley



Weber



Clemens

Work Camp and youth minister for the Grand Central Church of Christ in Vienna, W.Va.

In the 26-year history of the Memphis Work Camp, volunteers have painted 781 homes, director Buster Clemens said.

"We think our students learn a great deal about service and being Christ-like and also about culture and relating to people who are not like us as far as socioeconomic differences, racial differences and different areas of town," said Clemens, youth minister for the Highland Church of Christ in Cordova, Tenn., east of Memphis.

More than 300 teens painted 22 houses in Memphis this summer.

"We don't just paint homes," said Garrett Roberts, 18, from the Church of Christ at Trenton Crossing in Clarksville, Tenn. "We paint God's love on the city of Memphis."

Ansley Roberts, Garrett's 16-year-old sister, said the change of atmosphere benefits her.

"You're in a part of town you might not normally be in, around people you may not normally hang out with," she said. "Still, you accomplish something pretty amazing together because you've got a common goal: serving God by serving people."

Elsewhere, 65 teens and 25 adults painted nine houses in Columbus, Ohio.

This summer marked the 11th year of the Central Ohio Work Camp, said Adam Metz, minister for the Alum Creek Church of Christ in Lewis Center, Ohio, north of Columbus.

"Unfortunately, the Churches of Christ have not been very active in the city, and this has marked a small step forward," Metz said. "The planning board has worked hard, with varying levels of success, to maintain relationships with our homeowners from year to year."

The goal: "solidifying relationships for future ministry opportunities."

Back in Wichita, campers gather each day at 8 a.m. and start work by 9.



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Stephanie Langley snaps a picture as a Wichita Work Camp crew celebrates the completion of a painting project by jumping in the air.

Crews labor in the sun through midafternoon, then break for recreational activities such as bowling and visiting the zoo. Dinner is at 6 p.m., followed by a devotional at 7.

The work camp approach seems to appeal to the younger generation, Levering said.

"They want to put into practice what

they see played out in Scriptures," he said. "They don't just want to learn about it. They want to go and do."

As Northside member Noah Clothier, 13, put it, "I feel pretty good about doing nice things for other people to get them to know about God and possibly put Christ on in baptism."



GARRETT ROBERTS

Working up high during the Memphis Work Camp, Garrett Roberts, 18, uses a selfie stick to take a photo of himself and teens painting below him.



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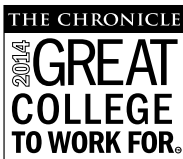
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CHARLESTON: Church members need 'permission to grieve'

FROM PAGE 3

the church," Green told *The Christian Chronicle* just days after the massacre. Some members of the Charleston Metropolitan church had friends — even relatives — among the "Emmanuel nine."

The minister changed the topic of his Sunday morning sermon from the Father's Day lesson he had prepared. Church members — almost frozen in a state of shock — needed "permission to grieve," he said. They also needed to acknowledge the severity of what happened instead of attempting to "swallow it up and move on," he added.

"You can't change what you don't acknowledge," Green said.

Most of all, they needed to hear that God loves them — and he understands.

Green focused on the Old Testament account of Moses and the burning bush in Exodus 3. God had seen the oppression of his people in Egypt, he assured Moses, "for I know their sorrows."

"God wanted Moses to know that he hurt with him," Green said. And the Almighty promised to deliver his people, through the wilderness, to a better place.

The congregation is still processing the tragic, racially charged events in its community, including the April 4 shooting death of an apparently unarmed black man by a white police officer in nearby North Charleston.

To bring about healing, Charleston's black community "needs to build up pride in who we are," Green said. "One thing we struggle with is self-hatred ... because of the conditions. We need to appreciate our own cultural contributions to our community — even if they're not appreciated by others.

"As a church, our vision is to produce a community that loves God, loves our neighbors and loves ourselves. Nothing else matters."



PHOTOS BY TED PARKS

Chris Dowdy of Paul Quinn College in Dallas addresses participants at the Racial Unity Leadership Summit in Abilene, Texas.

Fighting injustice with shared silence

SUMMIT ENCOURAGES MEDITATION, *active listening to bridge the rift between black and white*

BY TED PARKS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ABILENE, Texas

How do Christians respond to centuries of slavery, decades of Jim Crow laws and the almost daily revelations of race-related violence in America?

With 24 hours of silence.

Organizers of the Racial Unity Leadership Summit — a program bringing together leaders to work for racial reconciliation in Churches of Christ — met for a planning session at a Texas retreat center a year ago.

Before discussing specific times and topics for the summits, the latest of which took place recently at the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, they observed silence from 6 p.m. one day until 6 p.m. the next.

"Of course, your cell phones and all your technology were to be put away," said Eric Wilson, spiritual director for the summit and executive minister for the Sycamore View Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn. "Everybody just had very individual kinds of prayer and meditation, walking the grounds, being in silence."

The minister underscored the importance of contemplation and

other traditional spiritual disciplines.

Instead of praying "OK, God, here's the deal. ... We're going to do this racial unity thing. So please help us. In Jesus' name, amen," Wilson said, the participants asked open-ended questions, such as "God, what would you have us do? Who do we have to be in order to make this work?"

'A CONTEMPLATIVE COMMUNITY'

The Abilene gathering — attended by about 150 people, black and white — was the sixth unity summit.

The first took place in September 2013 at Abilene Christian University, followed by meetings in Atlanta, Nashville, Tenn., Memphis and Los Angeles. ACU Bible professor Jerry Taylor began providing leadership for the development of the summits during a one-year break from teaching responsibilities.

"It is understood that faculty who take that amount of time off will work on something they're passionate about," Taylor said. "It started there and has just taken on a life of its own."

Organizers encourage participants to use contemplative practices — including fasting, silence, meditation, study and active listening — to foster

spiritual and racial unity.

"When blacks and whites become partners in a contemplative community, they can experience together the transformation of their conscious and subconscious minds," Taylor wrote on the ACU website www.char.is. "It is when people sit together in silence that they give their souls the opportunity to communicate with one another in a spiritual language that is not of this world."

RECOGNIZING EVIL AS EVIL

While grounded in ancient Christian practices, speakers at the Abilene summit addressed complex issues plaguing church and society.

"Within the African-American community, there is a deep sense of racial inferiority," said Bobby Green Jr., minister for the Charleston Metropolitan Church of Christ in South Carolina. "And most of it stems from ... slavery and the effects afterwards."

Dating the arrival of the first slaves in 1619, then jumping to the end of the Civil War in 1865, Green added up 246 years of slavery. After that came a century of Jim Crow legislation, halted by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"Only an eighth of the period of history that we've been in this



Wilson



Taylor



Greg Powell and Prentice Ashford listen to speakers during the unity summit. About 150 people — black and white — attended the sixth summit in Abilene, Texas.

country have we really been free on paper,” Green said.

During the summit, Jarrod Robinson, preaching minister for Abilene’s Southern Hills Church of Christ, interviewed Green and Lawrence Rodgers, ministering evangelist for the Westside Church of Christ in Baltimore.

“Most people know on the ground in Baltimore that the problem is the system,” said Rodgers, whose city experienced violent protests after the April 19 death of 25-year-old Freddie Gray, who died in police custody.

Even if individuals despise his skin color, Rodgers said, he expects fair treatment in society.

“We don’t have to sit around and sing *Kum ba ya*,” Rodgers said of those who discriminate against blacks. “But the system that I pay taxes into, I want the system to protect me like it protects other people.”

The Baltimore minister believes that Christians need to view social ills through a theological lens, recognizing evil as evil.

“We have to be willing to say that what happened to Native Americans was dead wrong, and it was an evil action done by people who might

have been evil,” Rodgers said. “We have to be willing to say that the American slave trade was absolutely wrong. It was atrocious. It treated people like animals; it dehumanized them in the worst form possible.”

Too often, he said, Christians create a romanticized version of American history with compassionate slaveholders, content slaves and a Jesus who condones the injustice of slavery.

This sanitized, inaccurately portrayed Jesus “cares nothing about those who are at the bottom,” Rodgers said, “nothing about those who are below the scratch line, nothing about those who are in poverty.”

THE GOSPEL AND RECONCILIATION

Central to the summits’ approach is an insistence that God’s will does not stop with individuals, but calls for justice in society.

“Following Jesus means becoming like him. With Jesus, there is no category that he calls a ‘social gospel’ as if it were something different than a ‘missionary gospel,’” said Don McLaughlin, the summits’ program director and preaching minister for the North Atlanta Church of Christ.

Racial Unity Leadership Summit

Organizers plan a National Racial Unity Revival for April 3-6, 2016, in Memphis, Tenn., and offer to host racial unity retreats for churches, colleges and universities.

For more information, contact Keri Gray at keg08c@acu.edu or (903) 241-3312.



Jarrod Robinson, left, interviews ministers Bobby Green of Charleston, S.C., and Lawrence Rodgers of Baltimore during the Racial Unity Leadership Summit.

“With Jesus, the Gospel is comprehensive and is aimed at the total redemption of God’s creation, including the reconciling of people together right now,” McLaughlin said.

Wilson echoed that God’s will is far-reaching.

“God’s big plan is the reconciliation of all things,” Wilson said. “Of course, the individual is a part of that, but that is not the beginning and the end of the reconciliation process. We are reconciled so that we can be reconcilers.”

‘NOW THAT I RECOGNIZE INJUSTICE ...’

Carla Garrett, an elementary school principal and member of the Southern Hills church, was moved by what she heard at the Abilene summit.

“We know that, in the Christian walk, we are to take up the cause of the injustices in our world,” Garrett said. “Now that I recognize injustices that I’ve somehow walked past the majority of my life, I feel like I need to become very reflective.”

“I need to ... pray and ask God what is it that I am called to do.”

A willingness to address social ills, anchored in Christianity’s oldest spiritual practices, distinguishes the summits from earlier efforts at racial reconciliation among Churches of Christ, Wilson said.

Those efforts include Unity in Christ conferences hosted at ACU in 1999 and Dallas in 2001, said Doug Foster, professor of church history. Royce Money, the university’s then-president, and ministers including Tony Roach and Andrew Hairston led the events.

Also significant, Foster said, were New Wineskins and Freedom in Christ gatherings organized by Taylor to discuss racial and doctrinal issues in Churches of Christ.

More such events are needed, the summits’ organizers said, if Churches of Christ are to heal the racial divide — in their pews and in their nation. Churches can invite the summits’ organizers to conduct spiritual, racial unity retreats for elders, ministers, staff, ministry leaders and members.

“If the past 11 months have taught us anything, (it’s that) the wounds of racialization in America have not been healed,” McLaughlin said. “How can we imagine our work to be done when Christ himself does not believe the work is done?”

“He is still reconciling the world to himself — and the world to each other.”



McLaughlin

In race relations, churches 'ought to be the ones leading the way,' says Fred Gray, 'and we have not.'

On Ferguson, faith and the fight for equality

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

As a nation and a people, we must continue to lay down the burden of race," says civil rights attorney, preacher and church elder Fred Gray. "We must continue our efforts to tear down all barriers which keep us from our full potential as human beings."

For Gray, 84, the ongoing struggle for equality is deeply personal. Born in segregated Montgomery, his father died when he was a toddler. His mother believed in the power of education and sent him to Nashville Christian Institute, a boarding school in Tennessee.

As he completed his law degree, he promised himself that he would work diligently to end racial segregation in his hometown, Montgomery, Ala. He took on the cases of Claudette Colvin and Rosa Parks — both charged with disorderly conduct for refusing to give up their seats on a bus to white passengers. Parks's case sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted for more than a year and led to the desegregation of the bus lines.

In 1960, he argued before the U.S. Supreme Court in *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* about the unconstitutionality of Tuskegee, Ala., rezoning laws that would have kept black citizens from having a voice in elections. In 1975, he filed suit on behalf of survivors of the Tuskegee syphilis experiment of the 1930s. His clients received compensation and proper health care.

Gray has served as a preacher for the Newtown Church of Christ in Montgomery. In 1970 he won an election to Alabama's state legislature and served through 1974.

Have we made any progress since the Montgomery bus boycott 60 years ago?

We've made a tremendous amount of progress. I'm the first to admit that. Go into any city hall, county office, state office, federal office in our part of the country. When I started practicing law 60 years ago, you saw no people who looked like me in any of those offices except those doing menial janitorial work. There were no professional persons. There were no African-Americans enrolled in



Claudette Colvin, left, was the first person arrested for resisting bus segregation in Montgomery, Ala., nine months before Rosa Parks's arrest. Civil rights attorney and minister Fred Gray, right, defended both. He and Colvin spoke about their role in the civil rights movement earlier this year at Oklahoma Christian University.

any of the institutions of the historical white schools and universities, not to mention on faculty or staff, only in menial positions.

We still have a long way to go. If you want to know where there is a lack of diversity, look at your home. Look in your church. Look in your place of employment. Look at the persons with whom you associate on a day-to-day basis. And if all the persons you deal with on a day to day basis look just like you, you may have a lack of diversity.

Considering the protests and violence in Ferguson, Mo., New York, Baltimore, how can law enforcement and citizens trust each other?

At 84, I don't think it's my responsibility to tell the government or anyone else how to solve these problems. I think my responsibility is to call to their attention that we still have these problems, and if people are people of good will, they will acknowledge that we have the problems and they will

be willing to find ways and means of solving them.

I don't think this country has ever really, seriously, taken a real good look at racism and asked, "What can this nation do to destroy it?"

Until we get that attitude and decide we want to destroy it, there's going to remain an undercurrent that will continue to eat away at us — whether it's in the form of law enforcement, whether it's in the form of disparity in healthcare or whatever.

How have you dealt with prejudice and bias against you?

I never looked at it as if it was just against me. I looked at it as a racial problem against a whole race and I was just one little individual.

It was far greater than just the individual, and that's why my whole idea wasn't just to do something for Fred Gray. It was to try to change conditions that I saw as they existed when I was an upper teenager.

I think that, with a lot of help along the way, we've been able to help to change some of that.

Do you think we may be at the beginning of a new stage of the civil rights movement?

I don't know about another stage. Every year the National Urban League produces a "State of Black America" report to the President on the condition of African-Americans in this country. The different indexes in that report show that there is still a substantial disparity between persons of color and the majority in aspects from infant mortality to health care to employment.

Unfortunately, in some instances those areas are widening instead of narrowing.

The nation needs to look at these disparities. While all of them are not the result of race, many of them are byproducts of race, and we need to work on solving those problems.

What are your thoughts about race relations in our churches?

I have always felt that churches should have been the ones leading the way. We say that we are the church that the Lord established, and I believe that. I preach that. We ought to be the ones leading the way — and we have not led the way in many instances.

I concluded a long time ago that I was not going to devote my time and my effort in filing lawsuits to try to make religious people do the right thing. If they can't do it by understanding what God's Word teaches, it's going to be solved by somebody else.

In 1974 in Tuskegee, the white church and our black church saw no reason why we shouldn't just go ahead and meet together and worship together. There was a small handful of white ones and a small handful of black ones. Put us all together and we still didn't have a handful.

But, in any event, people can do it if they want to do it and if they're willing to make a plan.



WORKS FOR ME

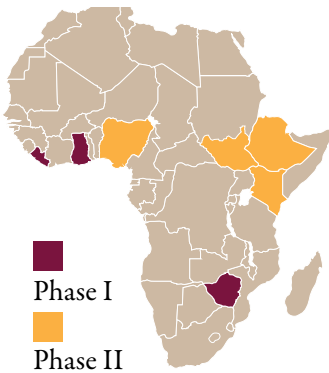


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COLOMBIA

SANTA MARTA — This city on the northern coast of South America was the first Spanish settlement in Colombia and is the oldest surviving city in that country.

It's also home to a new *iglesia de Cristo* (Church of Christ) planted by a mission team trained by Texas-based Great Cities Missions. The church-planting team includes the families of Carlos Escobar of Cauca, Colombia, and Pedro Carreño of Bogotá, Colombia. Among the guests for the inaugural service were members of the Singing Oaks Church of Christ in Denton, Texas, one of the churches that supports the work.

GUATEMALA

GUATEMALA CITY — About 500 Christians representing churches in Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador and the U.S. squeezed into a rented facility for the conclusion of the *Instituto Teológico Latinoamericano* (Latin America Theological Institute). The ministry training school's annual graduation followed the Sunday worship, conducted by members of the Linda Vista Church of Christ.

The graduates will return to the congregations across Central America that sent them to the school to study and will help plant new churches, administrators said.



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A mountaintop prayer circle in Thailand.

THAILAND

DOI INTHANON — Twenty-four men from three Churches of Christ gathered near Thailand's highest peak (elevation 8,415 feet) for a weekend of prayer and fellowship.

"Instead of inviting a talented guest speaker, each of the 24 men prepared a five-minute talk on a character in the Bible," said David Allan, a member of a mission team in Chiang Mai, Thailand. "We enjoyed three



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Finding the Savior in El Salvador

Myrna Sandoval prepares for baptism in the Central American town of Ataco, El Salvador. Gathered around her are Salvadoran Christians and members of the Spring Meadows Church of Christ in Spring Hill, Tenn. Sixteen Spring Meadows members knocked doors, set up and conducted Bible studies, hosted a two-day Vacation Bible School and a gospel meeting in an area where there is no Church of Christ.

"Our best results from this group come with following up on all of the contacts and relationships we create during the time they are here," said missionary Hector Cortez, who serves the 150-member Church of Christ in Ataco with his wife, Rachel.

The Tennessee Christians "have been a great blessing to us," he added. "Last year we had 23 baptisms because of the follow up we did with the contacts from this group. We have faith that we will have wonderful results this year as well."

straight hours of Bible study with everyone digging into the Word. "I think it was the best men's retreat I've attended in Chiang Mai."

UNITED KINGDOM

STIRLING — As Scotland — and the United Kingdom — become increasingly secular, Christians are taking the Good News to coffee shops, said missionary Mitch Vick.

In cities including Stirling and Glasgow, church members conduct Bible studies over cups of coffee. A mission team in Falkirk is doing likewise, Vick said. The church in Falkirk also works with the Pied Pipers, a drama group from Harding University

in Searcy, Ark., to provide faith-based entertainment for children.

VENZUELA

LOMAS DE NIRGUA — More than 400 young believers, representing 30 Churches of Christ, participated in the first National Convention for Christian youths, with the theme "*Defiende tu identidad*" ("Defend your identity.")

The event was designed to promote closer ties among Churches of Christ in the South American nation, organizers said, and to encourage youths to preach the Gospel throughout Venezuela. The convention included a *fútbol* (soccer) tournament and talent show.

SPOTLIGHT

Reptiles, refugees and baptisms

GAMBELLA, Ethiopia — Christians tossed rocks in the river to scare away alligators as they prepared for baptisms in this East African refugee camp, not far from South Sudan.

Though the gators stayed away, the arrival of a 3-foot-long poisonous snake cut the service short.

Nonetheless, Sudanese souls came to Jesus.

Don Humphrey, director of The Sudan Project, a mission outreach of the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ in Tennessee, traveled to Gambella, in western Ethiopia. He met with evangelists working in refugee camps there. In addition to ministry training and a health clinic in South Sudan, the ministry supports 16 South Sudanese preachers working in four refugee camps in Ethiopia and Uganda.

Though Sudan's decades-long civil war ended with the creation of South Sudan in 2011, ongoing violence in the new country prevents many refugees from returning. A congregation of about 150 souls meets in one of the camps, Humphrey said.

In another camp, a young church has experienced about 50 baptisms — despite the risks from reptiles.

The refugees also face crowded, unsanitary conditions and a lack of food and water, Humphrey said.

"However, for the Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia and Uganda, a great blessing is coming out of their current exile," he said. "They are hearing the Bible for the first time, becoming Christians and changing their eternities."



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A Sudanese believer is baptized.

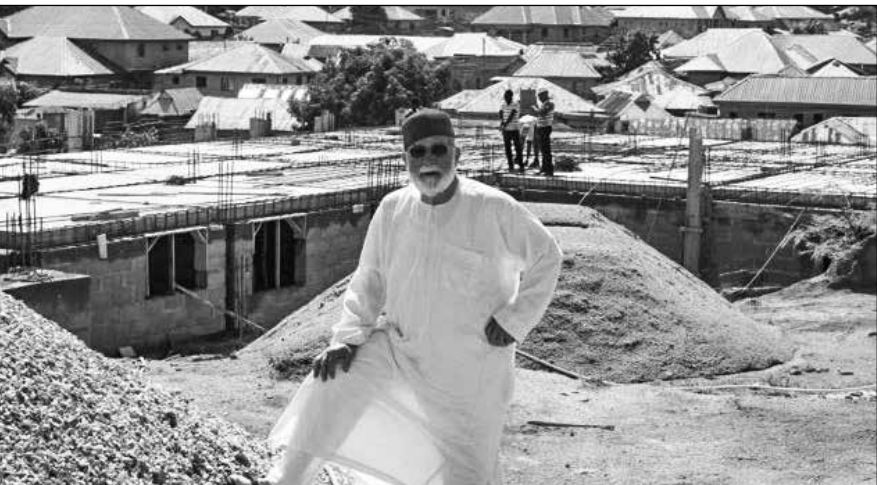


PHOTO PROVIDED BY STEVE WORLEY

Steve Worley, longtime worker for the School of Biblical Studies in Jos, Nigeria, stands near the foundation of the school's new male dormitory. Despite the threats of violence, Christians in northern Nigeria aren't "hiding in a hole," Worley says.

NIGERIA: Minister dies in Boko Haram attack

FROM PAGE 1

The increasingly savage attacks contributed to a spike in the number of deaths from terrorist attacks worldwide, according to a recently released report from the U.S. State Department. In the past year, 13,463 attacks claimed 32,700 lives — jumps of 35 and 81 percent from the previous year, according to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.

SIX CHRISTIANS KILLED IN ATTACK

For the Christians in northern Nigeria, the deaths are more than numbers. They're names — including Bitrus Pembu Kwada. Kwada, minister for a Church of Christ in the town of Mubi, and five fellow church members died when Boko Haram attacked recently. The minister's wife, their six children and eight other church members escaped on foot to Numan — about 150 miles southwest — and took refuge with a Church of Christ there. Kwada was a graduate of the School of Biblical Studies, a 25-year-old ministry training school in Jos, a city in central Nigeria. A handful of church members from the Chibok region, including Joshua Yaga, visited the school's campus during a recent lectureship and updated their fellow believers on the hardships they face, said Steve Worley, the school's development director, who has served in Nigeria for 30 years. Children in the Chibok region can-

not attend school, Yaga and his fellow ministers wrote in their report. Medical clinics are inoperative. "Nothing good remains in Chibok," they wrote. Food and drinkable water are scares, partly because Boko Haram "kills animals like dogs, swine, and dumps them in the wells so that people cannot get access to water." Danjuma Sati, minister for the Numan church, is looking after the family of Kwada, the slain minister, and other refugees. He has also visited refugee camps among the hills of Yola, Nigeria, where thousands of refugees must cope with inadequate medical facilities and food shortages, Worley said. "Brother Sati said he made only one visit to some of the refugee camps, and he cannot go back," Worley said. "When I heard him describe what he saw, I could understand why. When the terrorists raid a village, they use their machetes and hatchets on the people in order to save their bullets." Despite the horrors they face, Nigerian Christians refuse to "hide in a hole," Worley said. The School of Biblical Studies is teaching 105 Bible students — 24 of them women — to spread the Gospel in their communities. "The Lord's church is on the move in northern Nigeria," Worley said. **THE SAVANNAH** Church of Christ in Tennessee is collecting relief funds for Nigerian refugees. To contribute, see www.christianchronicle.org.

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The letter to the Philippians, written from a Roman prison to a church also confronted by the power of Rome, speaks across the ages to the 21st century. According to Paul, a church facing hostility from society responds, not with anxiety, but with joy. It challenges the emphasis on status and honor with the story of the one who “emptied himself.” This community, composed of people from diverse backgrounds, is united in the mind of Christ. Surrounded by those who look to political power for salvation and claim that “Caesar is Lord,” it proclaims instead the sovereign lordship of Jesus, our savior. This minority group does not retreat into isolation, but shines like stars in the world.



ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

For men enrolled in HopeWorks, a faith-based job-training ministry in Memphis, Tenn., physical as well as spiritual training is part of the daily regimen. That includes pushups.

Walking (with God) in Memphis

IN NATION'S POOREST metro area, a Christian ministry trains former inmates to succeed at work — and life

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MEMPHIS, Tenn.

In a room at the Midtown Church of Christ, a dozen men bow to pray each weekday morning.

Then they drop to the ground and do 10 to 15 pushups.

"It's just something I added to relieve a little physical stress," teacher Antonio Owens — known to

his students as "Tough Love Tony" — said of the exercise regimen.

These men — most convicted felons who spent years behind bars — know a little something about stress, as do the women studying down the hall with senior teacher and counselor Laura Harrison.

"I'm trying to get myself headed in a brand-new direction," said Joshua Banks, a repeat offender who served

nine years in prison. "I know I can't start over, but I can make this a new beginning."

Banks credits his chance for a new beginning to HopeWorks, a Memphis job-training ministry associated with Churches of Christ.

The program, which traces its roots to Christians who came together in the late 1980s to fight homelessness, has graduated more

than 1,000 students since 1998.

HopeWorks' success in helping former inmates was highlighted during the recent 42nd annual National Jail and Prison Ministry Workshop, hosted by the Highland Church of Christ in Cordova, Tenn., east of Memphis.

At the workshop, Memphis Mayor A.C. Wharton Jr. and Shelby County

CONTINUED



Teacher Antonio Owens, left, and student Jamar Jordan pray during a men’s class at HopeWorks, a nonprofit ministry housed at the Midtown Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn.

CONTINUED
Mayor Mark H. Luttrell Jr. both praised the faith-based approach. “The government cannot do it all,” Wharton told the roughly 250 workshop attendees. “You can touch the spirit in the way that we cannot.”

‘WE WORK ON THE PERSON’
A majority-black city of 650,000 residents, Memphis touts itself as “the Birthplace of Rock ‘n’ Roll and the Home of the Blues.” However, the ghost of Elvis on Union Avenue — where the Midtown church is located — sings his share of sad songs in a metro area that The Associated Press last year characterized as the poorest in the nation. More than one out of every four Memphis residents — 26.9 percent — lives below the federal poverty level, according to U.S. census data. In the same city where civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was



HopeWorks students “clock in” daily and must maintain regular attendance to remain in the job-training program. They also must pass random drug tests.

assassinated 47 years ago while fighting for better wages for black sanitation workers, desperation leads to drastic measures, Banks suggested. “You hungry or you ain’t ate in two to three days — you’re going to do

*Why I am at HopeWorks:
To be a better man*



Faces of past HopeWorks graduates can be seen behind executive director Ron Wade, who left a corporate career to work full time with the ministry associated with Churches of Christ.

something to get some food,” the HopeWorks student said. “Eating out of the garbage can ain’t for everybody.” But he was quick to add: “There’s a better way to do it, though, than going out there (stealing) or going out there selling illegal substances. You’ve just got to surround yourself around positive people. That’s what a lot of people don’t realize.” It’s a lesson that HopeWorks — a 14-week program that requires students to pass random drug tests and “clock in” from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. most weekdays — has helped Banks learn. Housed at the Midtown building, the Christian nonprofit emphasizes personal and spiritual development as it prepares students — 57 percent of whom have criminal backgrounds — to enter the employment market. Area church members volunteer as mentors known as “faith encouragers.” “We work on the person,” said Owens, a one-time drug addict

‘You hungry or you ain’t ate in two to three days – you’re going to do something to get some food. Eating out of the garbage can ain’t for everybody. There’s a better way to do it, though, than going out there (stealing) or ... selling illegal substances.’
— Joshua Banks, former inmate and HopeWorks student



Vernon Perry teaches a session at the 42nd annual National Jail and Prison Ministry Workshop, hosted by the Highland Church of Christ in Cordova, Tenn., east of Memphis.

But across the nation, Churches of Christ do a better job of baptizing inmates behind bars than helping ex-convicts succeed outside prison walls, participants said during the national workshop. “If you don’t have someone to help you (outside prison), it’s a vicious cycle,” said Vernon Perry, who served 13 years in Colorado, Mississippi and Tennessee prisons. “My reason for success is God. He came down, and he touched me,” added Perry, who coordinates the White Station Church of Christ prison ministry and works in the Harding School of Theology maintenance department, both in Memphis. Former inmates may not even realize they need to be saved, said Cedric Ivory, a former prisoner who serves as minister for the Crescent City Church of Christ in New Orleans. “They do know that they need a home,” Ivory said. “They do know

that they need a job and things like that. So we have to meet them at their basic needs in order to reach them.” Historically, Churches of Christ have focused on leading inmates to Christ, said Thomas Snow, executive director for the Tennessee Prison Outreach Ministry, a statewide organization based in Nashville. “We will always, I believe, maintain that as an important focus,” Snow said. “But once we lead them to Christ, then we have a responsibility to walk with them and to help them make that transition. That has been the weakest point in the ministry of the Churches of Christ.” However, Snow points to evidence of positive change — from HopeWorks’ efforts in Memphis to his own organization’s June 21 opening of a re-entry center in Nashville. At the site of the old Rains Avenue Church of Christ in Nashville, the re-entry center will serve as a



Laura Harrison, right, leads a discussion at HopeWorks. At left, student Africa Collins said a friend told her about the program. Africa is not related to fellow student Dara Collins.

hub for job and interview training, enhanced computer readiness, life skills development and Christian mentoring, Snow said. Other planned services: • Transitional housing. • 12-step addiction recovery programs. • Summer camps for inmates’ children. • Counseling offered in partnership with nearby Lipscomb University. “It’s holistic,” Snow said of the approach. “We are trying to have housing, employment and counseling all in one area, and we’re right on the (major city) bus line.” **CHANGE ‘FROM THE INSIDE OUT’** Back at HopeWorks, “life maps” adorn the walls of the men’s classroom. The simple drawings on poster-size pieces of paper help students visualize their life journeys. For example, one student’s map shows a stick figure and tells the year he was born. Other scribbled markings indicate when the young man started school, when he had his first child, when he began selling drugs and when he went to jail. “I’ve had numerous encounters with the law,” said Jamar Jordan, explaining his motivation for entering the program. “I’m just tired of constantly relapsing. And I still relapse, but my faith and my determination are greater than my relapse moments. So I’m standing firm.” Down the hall, Dara Collins said she entered HopeWorks because she’s tired of dead-end jobs. “It’s teaching us to have faith,” Collins said. “And my children, they say, ‘Mom, you don’t even get mad anymore.’ They say, ‘You’re so calm.’ And that’s because it’s helping me to handle myself better. ... They’re trying to rebuild a person from the inside out, and I like that.”



Snow

Out of prison, into hope

URBAN CHURCH KEEPS working to make 'one-stop shop' for released inmates a reality

KANSAS CITY, Kan.

Patience.
It's not always my virtue.
I struggle to wait on God's timing.

Enter my brothers and sisters at the Roswell Church of Christ — "a church with a heart in the heart of the community" — to teach me a lesson in perseverance.

"Do you remember me?" sister Monique Singh asks.

Of course I remember her.

I met her three years ago during my first visit to the Roswell church.

As you may recall, this inner-city congregation serves the "least of these" — as described in Matthew 25 — through ministries such as inmate mentoring, addiction support groups, private counseling and transitional "houses of hope."

In 2012, Singh shared how the Roswell church had rescued her from desperation and despair.

"God has delivered me from the bondage of myself: drugs, alcohol, prostitution, gang affiliation, homelessness, a hopeless state of mind," Singh said then. "I realized I needed a savior — Jesus — and this family took me in as I was and loved me until I loved myself."

I quoted Singh in a story on the Roswell church's work to transform a



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Roswell Church of Christ members and leaders gather outside a one-time dry cleaners being transformed into a resource center.

one-time dry cleaners into a Christian resource center to serve prisoners after their release.

Fast-forward to 2015.

Call it providential, but James O. Maxwell, Roswell's minister emeritus, called to update me on the project while I was on an unrelated reporting trip to Kansas.

Maxwell invited me to see the progress for myself — and enjoy

some of Kansas City's famous Gates and Sons Bar-B-Q. (For future reference, I never turn down barbecue.)

Here's what you need to know: The resource center is a labor of love by a church with more heart than cash.

The dream: to create a "one-stop shop" where the downtrodden can seek employment, housing, food and clothing as well as services such as resume writing, computer training, marriage classes and money management seminars.

Since my first visit, the church has kept working to realize that dream. Carpenters, plumbers and HVAC experts have donated time. Supporters in the church and community have contributed \$20 here and \$3,000 there to buy materials.

But pay-as-you-go progress can be slow. That's particularly true for a low-income church in a blighted community. Funds were recently depleted.

Still, with a little more paint and a few more ceiling tiles, the center could be ready to open soon. The remaining price tag: roughly \$10,000.

"We're praying that God will give

us the funding within the next three months," elder Randy George said as he showed me the counseling office, the commercial kitchen and the game room for inmates' children that are taking shape.

I asked about the patience it takes to remain committed to such a project for so long.

"It's more than just patience," Maxwell said. "It's faith."

Singh, too, remains eager to share a "light in the dark — a big, bright light."

"In the long run, I know it's going to be what God would have it to be," she said. "I'm excited to see the people that we're going to help. If they see me, maybe

it will shed a little hope on them."

After my tour, a dozen Roswell members and I gathered for a special prayer and sang "The Lord Will Find a Way for Me."

"We know, Father, you haven't brought us this far to leave us alone," said the brother who prayed. Amen.

Road Notes



Bobby Ross Jr.



Elder Randy George, left, provides an update on the renovation project. Elder Huey Hervey, center, and minister emeritus James O. Maxwell, right, listen to George.

CONTACT bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org

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SENIOR CARE

**CHURCH OF CHRIST CARE CENTER
CLINTON TOWNSHIP, Mich.** — LeadingAge Michigan recently honored Linda Arndt and her trained therapy dog,



PHOTO PROVIDED BY DOUG EDWARDS

Linda Arndt and dog Shealyn are Michigan's Volunteers of the Year.

Shealyn, as the state's Outstanding Volunteers of the Year. The advocacy organization for elderly care recognized Arndt and Shealyn for their volunteer work with the Church of Christ Care Center.

"They have been regular volunteers at the care center for a long time," said Doug Edwards, the center's director of philanthropy.

HIGHER EDUCATION

**FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY
HENDERSON, Tenn.** — Hundreds of middle and high school students took a stand against world hunger during Freed-Hardeman's recent fifth annual *GO! Camp*.

The campers packed 110,000 meals filled with chicken, vegetables, soy and vitamins, WBBJ-TV reported. "The idea is to inspire and empower kids who want to make the world a better place," camp director Brad Montague said.

**PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
MALIBU, Calif.** — Michael F. Adams, president of the University of Georgia from 1997 to 2013, has been named chancellor of Pepperdine University. In the 1980s, Adams served as Pepperdine's vice president for university affairs. Adams did his undergraduate studies at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn.



Adams



SHAWN TYLER

Battle of the Youth Groups in Arkansas

Grant Ingram from the Holmes Road Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn., reaches high for a catch during an Ultimate Frisbee matchup at Crowley's Ridge College in Paragould, Ark. The Holmes Road church faced Missouri's Bernie Church of Christ during the 21st annual Battle of the Youth Groups hosted by the Christian college. Battle of the Youth Groups is an admissions event designed to introduce potential students to the campus, Crowley's Ridge spokeswoman Andrea Johnson said. "It benefits the youth groups as they bond closer together ... and meet others from different congregations," Johnson said. This year's event drew 135 young people from 10 congregations, she said. For more information on Crowley's Ridge, see www.crc.edu.

**ROCHESTER COLLEGE
ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich.** — Rochester College is launching the Center for Social Entrepreneurship — citing a desire to cultivate a culture of giving back and global awareness. The center will offer a social entrepreneurship degree to students interested in solving societal problems while contributing to their communities. Internships emphasizing servant leadership and social justice will be a focus. The Christian college has hired a former city manager, Jaymes Vetraino, to direct the program.

"Rochester College is a special place," Vetraino said. "The students are really concerned with making a difference and not just making money when they leave college."

PUBLICATIONS

**GOSPEL ADVOCATE
NASHVILLE, Tenn.** — *Gospel Advocate*, the longest-running periodical in the Churches of Christ, celebrates 160 years of service in July. The small publication launched in 1855 has grown into the Gospel

SPOTLIGHT

Refreshing SoulQuest

YORK, Neb. — More than 500 teens from 13 states gathered for a week of spiritually uplifting fun at York College. Inspiring worship, Bible classes, service projects and fun activities highlighted SoulQuest, and about 70 were baptized. "Many others left with changed hearts and lives," York spokeswoman Chrystal Houston said. Soul Quest attendees spent one afternoon serving the community — from installing a garden at a residence to collecting food for a rescue mission to painting fire hydrants. "This week is a life-changing, mountaintop experience for these young people as they learn about Jesus and get to know him personally," Houston said. "They also develop friendships with other teens who will help them on their journey of faith."



CHRISTAL HOUSTON

SoulQuest teens work on a garden project during the annual camp at York.

Advocate Co., one of the largest publishing houses serving Churches of Christ. *Gospel Advocate* has had 17 editors, including Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, H. Leo Boles, B.C. Goodpasture, Ira North, Guy N. Woods, and the current editor, Gregory Alan Tidwell. Tidwell is pulpit minister for the Fishinger and Kenny Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio. The Neil W. Anderson family has owned the publication since 1990. For more information, see www.gospeladvocate.com.

No matter the cost — or the pay

THE LIFE OF J.D. TANT, who baptized thousands, shows ‘what it is to be committed,’ his grandson says



PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAVID TANT

A daguerreotype (an early photograph produced on a silver-covered copper plate) shows J.D. Tant at age 19, about the time he began preaching for Churches of Christ.



Jefferson Davis Tant: 1861-1941

A pioneer minister, J.D. Tant spent weeks at a time conducting gospel meetings and helping to plant Churches of Christ. He and his family lived and ministered in states including Texas, Tennessee, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Mississippi.

As the U.S. population moved from rural communities to urban centers, he was critical of churches adopting the practices of denominations, often concluding his writings with the phrase “Brethren, we are drifting.” He also was an ardent proponent of the church’s duty to care for orphans and widows.

BY ANTHONY RHOADS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MARIETTA, Ga.

In 1883, after three years of preaching, J.D. Tant was paid for the first time. He received a total of \$9.75 for the year — \$5 of which he got for performing a wedding. Adjusted for inflation, that’s an annual salary of about \$238.

That’s one message the renowned preacher’s grandson, David Tant, wants to convey to a new generation of ministers: be totally committed to the Gospel, regardless of the cost — or the pay.

The younger Tant ministers for the Roswell Church of Christ in a northern suburb of Atlanta. He recently presented “The Life of J.D. Tant” at the 71st annual Faulkner Lectures on the campus of Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala.

It was the first time he devoted an entire lecture to his grandfather. In addition to his personal recollections, he drew material from the 1958 biography, “J.D. Tant: Texas Preacher,” written by his father and J.D. Tant’s son, Yater Tant.

David Tant wants today’s preachers to learn from his grandfather “what it is to be committed,” he told *The Christian Chronicle*.

“To some of them, preaching is a profession,” David Tant said, “but that’s not what it’s all about, and if they can see that there are men who are committed to upholding the truth ... then that may inspire them.”

Even 74 years after his death, J.D. Tant remains “a great influence on a number of people still,” his grandson said. He was known as a skilled debater, participating in some 300 debates and gospel meetings during

his lifetime. He baptized more than 8,000 new believers, and about 100 of them became preachers.

Yater Tant became a key figure in the non-institutional movement among Churches of Christ, which opposes congregational funding of para-church organizations and missionary cooperatives. Today there are 2,918 non-institutional Churches of Christ in the U.S., with about 189,000 adherents (baptized members and their families).

Though scholars debate whether or not J.D. Tant would have supported the movement, they praise his zeal and his contribution to the growth of Churches of Christ across the South.

“J.D. Tant’s legacy of personal sacrifice, public debates and the conversion of hundreds of denominational members to the simple Gospel is beyond question,” said C.G. Caldwell, a professor and president emeritus of Florida College, a 500-student school in Temple Terrace, Fla., associated with non-institutional churches.

“Preaching was his life,” Caldwell said, “and alongside other unique, conservative men like Austin McGary, Texas Christians were brought to stand firm against innovations like instrumental music and church-sponsored societies.

“He was a one-of-a-kind character, right for his time, and effective in promoting the cause of Christ.”

CRAWLING THROUGH A WINDOW TO LEARN

By the time he began preaching, J.D. Tant was no stranger to financial hardship and poverty.

Born west of Atlanta in Georgia’s Paulding County, he was eight days old when his father, a farmer who



PHOTO PROVIDED BY WAYNE KILPATRICK

J. D. Tant at the New Hope Church of Christ in Middleton, Tenn., circa 1930.

Nannie Yater Tant

1872-1961

In her autobiography, “Reminiscences of a Pioneer Preacher’s Wife,” Nannie Tant described her life as “filled with incredible hardships and difficulties.” She often worked the family farm in rural Texas alone as her husband spent weeks at a time hosting debates and gospel meetings. Yet, “I have not one moment of regret for the choice I made,” she wrote.

Born in Tennessee, she was the second wife of traveling evangelist J.D. Tant, whose first wife, Laura, died of pneumonia while working on the farm. On occasion, she accompanied her husband on gospel campaigns. She also worked tirelessly on behalf of orphan homes founded by members of Churches of Christ. In 1930, she traveled the South and raised thousands of dollars for the Tennessee Orphan Home in Columbia, Tenn., urging women individually and in groups to contribute, church historian Richard Hughes wrote.

Though life as a pioneer preacher’s wife was hard, “equally incredible have been the reward and the happiness,” she wrote. “I have been richly blessed.”



didn’t own slaves, left home to join the Confederate army. He survived the Civil War but didn’t return for four years. During that time, the Union Army marched through Georgia, and the Tants’ home stood in the path of Gen. William T. Sherman’s march to the sea. Soldiers burned the home to the ground.

“They didn’t allow my great-great-grandmother to go into the house and get anything out at all,” David Tant said, adding that the family “lived under an oak tree for some months.”

Years later, a lawyer swindled the family out of their land, David Tant said, and the family moved to south Georgia. When J.D. Tant was 15, the family headed west to Texas. J.D. Tant attended school but couldn’t afford textbooks. A teacher took pity on him and agreed to leave a school window unlocked so he could crawl into the classroom at night, borrow textbooks from the cupboard and study.

“The other kids were amazed,” David Tant said. “People came from miles around to see the ‘Tant idiot boy’ that learned his lessons without any books.”

He was equally interested in preaching, joking that it “took more lung power than brain power,” so he qualified, David Tant said. At age 17 he was ordained as a Methodist preacher. Soon, however, he began to question the validity

of his infant baptism. In Buda, Texas, he heard Church of Christ minister W.H.D. Carrington preach during a gospel meeting.

“Some time later, he was convinced he needed to be baptized, so if I recall, he got on his horse and rode 120 miles to find someone to baptize him into Christ,” David Tant said.

RARELY PAID, TOTALLY COMMITTED

David Tant said his grandfather was never fully supported (or even well-supported) as a preacher, so he farmed to feed his family. For a time he worked as a “bronc buster,” saddle-breaking wild horses — sometimes while riding them to a gospel meeting. He earned \$5 per horse.

Maintaining a job and a farm was difficult, though, for a circuit-riding preacher — gone sometimes for two months at a time to preach at gospel meetings. Adding to J.D. Tant’s financial woes were churches that promised to pay him but didn’t.

“Many places it was not unusual for him to hold a two- or three-week meeting without one cent of support,” David Tant said.

Regardless of the challenges, though, J.D. Tant continued to preach and participate in debates almost up until his death in 1941.

“I’ve never read of anyone who had more total commitment than he did,” his grandson said. “Nothing was going to stop him from preaching the Gospel.”

An insult – and a challenge – led minister to serve children in need

BY ANTHONY RHODYS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MARIETTA, Ga. — An insult leveled against David Tant more than 40 years ago set the minister and his wife, Flora, on a path to serve dozens of mothers and children in need.

In the late 1960s, the grandson of renowned Texas evangelist J.D. Tant planned to preach at a gospel meeting in Waycross, Ga. Before the meeting, another preacher in the Atlanta area disparaged him on a radio program, claiming that Tant was opposed to helping widows and orphans and that his church “would let a child injured in a bicycle accident lie in the street and bleed to death before they would use the church phone to call an ambulance,” Tant recalled.

Tant spoke to the minister and explained that his congregation, a conservative, non-institutional Church of Christ, did not endorse the practice of congregations supporting para-church organizations, including children’s homes.

That didn’t mean, however, that his church was calloused to the plight of orphans, Tant insisted.

The other preacher challenged Tant to prove that he loved orphans. He would contact a juvenile court judge and tell him to give Tant a call about helping him find homes for children in need. Two weeks later, Tant got the call. True to his word, he and his wife began working to find homes for children in Georgia’s foster care system. In the decades that followed, they helped about 80 children find new homes — and hosted about 50 pregnant young women in their own home.

One couple blessed by the Tants’ service is Woody and Valerie McClendon, members of the Mountain View Church of Christ in Cumming, Ga. The Tants helped the McClendons adopt their first son, Jake. In the 1990s, the Tants were known for working with mothers in the foster care system, Valerie McClendon said, “so those of us who were looking to adopt would call David and Flora to let them know we were



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FLORIDA COLLEGE
Buddy Payne, right, presents David and Flora Tant with the Friend to Youth Award.

interested in being on their waiting list.”

Jake McClendon, now 24, is a student at Lincoln Memorial University’s medical school in Harrogate, Tenn. The McClendons adopted another son, Nicolas, and daughters Alex and Micaela.

The Tant family’s help has been invaluable, Valerie McClendon said.

“In the Lord’s church we hear a lot about what we can’t do and then feel justified in doing nothing,” she said. “David and Flora understood these convictions did not excuse them from this responsibility.” The couple has servant hearts, she added, “sacrificing their own time, resources, emotions to help so many people in each and every situation.”

David Tant said that he is continuing the example set by his grandparents, who “took in young people, as my father did and as we’ve done and as some of our children have done. So it’s continuing for four generations now.”

In March, David and Flora Tant received the 2015 Friend to Youth Award from Florida College, a Temple Terrace, Fla., school associated with non-institutional Churches of Christ. The college’s president, Buddy Payne, said that the couple’s “passion for young people, their Lord and his church has touched countless lives.”

David Tant thanks God for the opportunity to serve — “all because a liberal preacher called my bluff,” he said. “How many children were blessed because of what he did?”



PHOTO PROVIDED
Among the families helped by the Tants are Woody and Valerie McClendon, whose adopted son, Jake, is a medical school student.



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NEWSMAKERS

NAMED: **Amanda Archer**, lower school principal for Westbury Christian School in Houston. **David North**, director of computer science advancement and associate professor of computer science at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City. **Lawson Vaughn** to the board of directors at Hope Harbor Children's Home in Claremore, Okla. Vaughn is a member of the Park Plaza Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla. **C.J. Vires**, provost and vice president of academics, and **Matt Vega** as vice president for enrollment management, for Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn. **Bryan Burks**, vice president of advancement for Harding University in Searcy, Ark.

AWARDED: **Nicole Jia**, rookie of the year and third runner up in the Miss Oklahoma's Outstanding Teen Competition. Jia, a member of Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, also received awards for talent, lifestyle and fitness and the spirit award.

HONORED: **Dan and Suzanne Reed** by the Palm Street Church of Christ in Lonoke, Ark., for 55 years of ministry.

NEW ELDERS: **Doug Johnson** and **Jeff Klein**, the Sunset Church of Christ in Springfield, Mo.

Milestones

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

Birthdays

96th: Trudie Wright, Livingston, Texas. **90th: Billy Wayne Blakeney**, Foreman, Ark.

Appreciation

Betty Wolford

Betty Wolford, a member of the Western Hills Church of Christ in Lawton, Okla., recently stepped down from active Bible class teaching after 72 years of continuous service. She is 86 years old and started teaching seventh and eighth graders at the age of 14. Western Hills has considered her the "iron man" of their teaching pool for many years.



Up to her "retirement," she was a very effective teacher to all learning styles. She was always reliable and known for her firm-but-loving style to her first- and second-grade class. She was also known for using old-style filmstrips to tell her Bible stories, as effective as today's technology.

In her early days, Betty founded Kae Dee Day Care Center, built it herself as a single mother, and raised two daughters by caring for thousands of kids over the years. Her kids are known as "Miss Betty's Kids," and with that reputation, she has touched and influenced many children outside the church walls. Her regular day care kids are known for coming to the Western Hills congregation and reciting numerous Christmastime scriptures by memory to our entire assembly.

Betty was athletically active in numerous sports throughout her life, playing on church-league softball teams even into her sixties. She was a very competitive, good athlete.

Betty's daughter and son-in-law now run Kae Dee Day Care, but Betty

is still active and teaching there. Betty Wolford's life is a prime example of faithful service to the Lord.

The Western Hills congregation will miss her in their classrooms but will continue to see her impact for years to come.

Anniversaries

Dee and Audra Martin

Dee and Audra Martin are celebrating 70 years of marriage on July 24, 2015. They both grew up in Tipton, Okla. After Dee was discharged from the Coast Guard in 1945, they married in Houston, with Burton Coffman officiating.



In 1951, they moved to Plainview, Texas, where they farmed with Dee's dad, John Martin. In 1973, Dee retired to spend time with children and grandchildren.

During his cancer, Dee became Chairman of the Federal Land Bank Board, Producers Grain, Abilene Christian University advisory board, chairman of Church Loans and Investment Trust and several others.

Through life, Dee and Audra have worked as a team and always had a Bible study going in their home, leading many to baptism. They have enjoyed traveling to several foreign countries, both for pleasure and missions.

Dee was an elder of the Church of Christ in Plainview for 44 years. In 2006 came their move to Plano, Texas, to be near all their family. They attend Prestoncrest Church of Christ in Dallas.

Their family includes daughter Lana (Jeff) Clevenger and son, Joe Don (Janet) Martin; four grandchildren: Don (Jolie) Clevenger, Dave (Jolyn) Clevenger, Jacob (Christal) Martin, and Jennie Martin; and five great-grandchildren: William, Luke, and Joshua Clevenger and Audrey

and Caleb Clevenger. All are faithful members of the Church of Christ.

Seventy years — what a milestone and influence on their family and friends!

W. F. (Bill) and Frances Hair Weger

W. F. (Bill) and Frances Hair Weger, formerly of Lawton, Okla., will celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary Saturday, June 27, in the fellowship hall of the Sullivan Village Church of Christ in Lawton from 2 to 4 p.m.



Married Aug. 3, 1940, in Walters, Okla., they resided in Lawton and Oklahoma City. Bill retired from Sears in 1986 and then volunteered for 20 years at Comanche County Memorial Hospital. Frances, a homemaker, loves quilting, gardening, and cooking.

Before retiring to Luther, Okla., Bill served as an elder in the Lawton churches and traveled with the We Care Campaign for Christ. They have four children, 11 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

70th: Wendell and Betty Broom, Plano, Texas. **62nd: Linzel and Joyce Hutson**, Newport, Ark. **59th: Harold and Dolores Jones**, Amarillo, Texas.

Memorials

Loy Stanley Mitchell

Loy Mitchell was born Nov. 20, 1932, in Lawrence, Kan. His parents, Owen and Maude Mitchell, had three daughters and seven sons.



continued on Page 28

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

Milestones

continued from Page 27

All sons became preachers and three worked overseas in Argentina, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Loy and Donna Taylor were married in 1954 and have four children.

Loy attended Central Christian College, Oklahoma Christian College and Abilene Christian University. He received a bachelor's from ACU and did 24 hours towards his master's.

In 1958, Loy and Donna moved to Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) as missionaries. Along with Dick Clark, Roy Palmer and Alex Claussen, Loy established the Nhowe Bible College in 1958. The name was changed to Mutare School of Preaching in 1970 when the school moved to Mutare.

The Mitchells spent a total of 28 years working in the U.S. and Zimbabwe. They returned to the U.S. in 1997, where Donna passed in 2002.

In 2004, Loy and Debra Griffin were married. On June 9, 2015, Loy passed at their home in Knott, Texas.

Shirley Moore

Shirley Arnold Moore, whose life centered around the Christian Home & Bible School in Mount Dora, Fla., since her childhood days, passed away on May 31, 2015, at home following a lengthy illness.

As the wife of President James E. Moore, Shirley served as "first lady" to the Christian Home & Bible School family for the past quarter century.

Her connections to this institution, however, go much deeper.

Shirley was born April 28, 1947, in Shelbyville, Tenn., to the late Wade Alfred Arnold and Sammie Kate Adcock Arnold. She came into the foster care program at the children's home in the ninth grade and attended



high school there. Always an excellent and popular student, Shirley was homecoming queen in her junior year, valedictorian of her senior class, a cheerleader and in the Beta Club.

Perhaps one of the ways Shirley is best remembered from her high school days is as a gifted singer. She sang in various school choral groups, including the Choralaires and Girls' Sextet and also performed solos. It was their shared vocal music interest that first brought James and Shirley together. Then a student at Alabama Christian College (now Faulkner University), James met Shirley for the first time when his college singing group visited CH&BS. Their courtship blossomed after Shirley graduated and joined James as a student at Alabama Christian, where she earned the Associates of Arts Degree in Elementary Education.

James and Shirley were married on August 27, 1966, and enjoyed 48 years as a happy couple.

Mount Dora Christian Home & Bible School once again came into Shirley's life when she and James moved to Orlando in 1979, where James served as minister of the Concord Street Church of Christ. They immediately enrolled their children in the school. In 1990, James was named President and they became members of Orange Avenue Church of Christ in Eustis, Fla.

The Moores have two children: son, Scott (Cassie) Moore, Tampa, Fla., daughter, Tonya (Joe) Emory, St. Petersburg, Fla., and one grandchild, Brady Moore, Tampa.

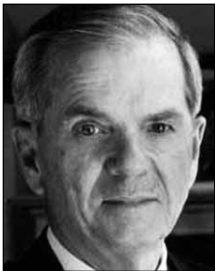
Floyd Stumbo

Floyd Stumbo passed to his eternal home on June 11, 2015. He was born in Humboldt, Kan., on July 16, 1930, to Ernest and Jewel Stumbo.

He grew up on the family farm in Lawrence and then attended Kansas State University, earning his bachelor's and master's in science, focusing on agriculture and business.

He served his country through ROTC during college and finished as a lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force.

Floyd met Patricia Childers, and they married June 7, 1961. He is survived by his wife and three children: Randy (Jenny) Stumbo of Lubbock; Scott (Julie) Stumbo of Kerrville; and Shelly (Jerry) Lewis of Southlake. His seven grandchildren include: Katie (Colton) Owsley and Sean Stumbo; Zackary, Breana, and Cutter Stumbo;



and Cole and Claire Lewis. Preceding him in death were his parents, four sisters, and his only brother.

Floyd worked at The Children's Home of Lubbock in Texas for 57 years. He performed numerous weddings and funerals for children who had been part of the Children's Home family. Floyd retired as president in 1995 and became president of the Children's Home Foundation. During his long tenure, he made friends throughout the community, helping raise solid funding which will benefit children for years to come.

Floyd was a member of the Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock, and a deacon and elder for many years. He had a servant spirit and was confident in his faith.

Ludean Wright, 96, Sparta, Tenn.
Mary Stephanie Killgore Carr, 93, Searcy, Ark.
Aletta Brummett, 89, Paragould, Ark.
Barbara Sipes, 82, Guthrie, Okla.

Memorial Gifts

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts donated in memory of John Breeden, Jack Greenwood, Wilmer Lloyd, Joyce McBride and Harold and Rita Meredith.

- July 4 Black Mesa Bible Camp 50th Anniversary Celebration.** Camp Billy Joe, Kenton, Okla. scott7stewart@gmail.com.
- July 12-15 The Caribbean Lectureship.** Saint Thomas. www.caribbeanlectureship.com.
- July 12-17 Harding Summer Honor Choir.** Harding University. www.harding.edu/honorchoir.
- July 12-24 Oklahoma Christian University Honors Summer Academy.** www.oc.edu.
- July 16-18 Homeschool Convention.** Dallas. (800) 235-4444.
- July 17-19 Greyhounds for Christ Reunion.** Portales, N.M. cofc_studentcenter@yucca.net.
- July 18-23 63rd National Youth Conference.** Oklahoma Christian University. www.nyc-coc.org.
- July 19 50th Anniversary, College Hill Church of Christ.** Alva, Okla. (580) 327-0130.
- July 23-26 Second Annual Angel Fire Symposium.** Angel Fire, N.M. www.angelfire-symposium.com.
- July 26-29 Campaign for Christ and VBS.** Fishinger & Kenny Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio. bucksfans@yahoo.com.
- July 27-31 Global Reunion.** Camp for Third Culture Kids and Parents. Oklahoma Christian University. (405) 590-2331.
- July 30-Aug. 2 Campus for Christ Conference.** University of Texas, Austin. www.CampusforChrist.net.
- Aug. 15-16 Back to School Bash.** Garden City Church of Christ, Garden City, Kan. (620) 290-2608, scott7stewart@gmail.com.
- Aug 21-27 Polishing the Pulpit.** Sevierville, Tenn. (256) 435-9356, luke@housetohouse.com.
- Sep 17-20 Global Missions Experience.** Harding University, Tahkodah. www.globalmissionsexperience.com.
- Sep 25-27 French World Mission Workshop.** Searcy, Ark. (501)388-2533, dkee@harding.edu, Thekees@bluewin.ch.
- Sep 27 Hope Harbor Open House and Auction.** Claremore, Okla. (918) 343-0003, ext. 230, titus.robison@hopeharborinc.org.
- FULL CALENDAR:** www.christianchronicle.org.

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

EDITORIAL

A prayer for Charleston and the world

As we mourn the victims of a senseless act of violence, born out of hate, in Charleston, S.C., our prayers echo that of Bobby Green Jr., minister for the Charleston Metropolitan Church of Christ.

We present excerpts of his prayer below, and we also offer these words on behalf of our brothers and sisters in northern Nigeria and the victims of hatred worldwide.

To the God who made one human race from the dust of the ground, who made us after his image that we might reflect his nature — and that we might reflect his character: We come to you with a mind that is confused and a heart that has been broken, in a tongue that is laboring to give birth to words and emotions too powerful to be constrained by our impotent vocabulary so we cry and we stomp and we tremble, hoping you hear us.

We beg you for your wisdom, for we too often do not know where to go or how to get there. We beg you for your courage, because we too often allow our fear to paralyze us from doing what is right. We beg you for your mercy, for we too often turn back from what we set out to do.

We pray for the families of these victims, whose loved ones were slain in cold blood, that your healing love will keep their hearts from becoming frozen by the pain of bitterness and resentment. We pray for the shooter, that his heart will soften that he will repent and seek forgiveness. We pray for the family of the shooter, that we might have mercy upon them.

Help us work together, because the humanity that unites us is stronger than the perspectives that divide us.

READ THE COMPLETE PRAYER at www.christianchronicle.org

Haiti's children urge sacrificial giving for Nepal

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

— Matthew 25:35-36, New International Version

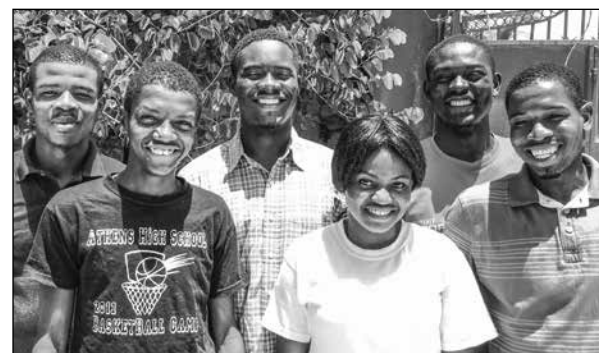
When we think of Haiti, we think about people on the receiving end of Christ's admonition to feed and clothe the poor. They are the hungry, the thirsty, the ones in need. But recently a group of children in this Caribbean nation put the whole weight of Jesus' words into action.

Half a world away, in the Himalayan nation of Nepal, massive earthquakes in April and May left thousands of people homeless, without food or water. Homes were destroyed. Lives were devastated. Many survived because of the kindness of helping hands from all over the globe.

The 24 children and teens at Sonlight Children's Home in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, know what it's like. In 2010, a massive earthquake devastated their city. One of their own, a 15-year-old named Nicky, was crushed by a collapsing wall. They buried him under a mango tree.

They know the loss, the pain and the desperation of the Nepali people. So they took action — just like so many others did for them five years ago.

The children developed a plan to challenge their fellow Haitians to help the people of Nepal. With assistance from Jean Claubert Belton, minister for the Church of Christ at Bonnette, they downloaded pictures of the disaster and created a presentation. The children visited five Churches of Christ — Vaneaux, Bonnette, Santo, Dagout and Delmas 18 — and the older boys presented their challenge. The children gave the congregation two weeks to



ROBERTA EDWARDS

At Sonlight Children's Home in Haiti, Wiles Antoine, Mackenndy Raymond, Francky Riche, Michemanna Blaise, Achimetre Michel and Marc Hodson Similien led an effort to raise relief funds after the Nepal earthquakes.

raise as much money as possible for Nepal.

Though they trusted that the Lord would provide, the children prayed many anxious prayers. Would people who have so little themselves step up and meet the challenge?

When the children returned to the churches, they collected a total of 2,560 Haitian Gourdes. That's about \$53 U.S. — not a lot, but huge for struggling Christians in Haiti. The children were thrilled. They gave the funds to S. Keith Kasayion, who delivered the money to Nepal.

These children and their fellow Christians lived out Jesus' commands through their compassion and generosity. What more does our Savior require of us who have plenty?

BOBBIE SOLLEY is director of international education development for Healing Hands International, a nonprofit supported by Churches of Christ. She has developed professional education workshops and seminars for Haiti. A retired educator, she teaches women's Bible classes at the North Boulevard Church of Christ in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

In the Word



Bobbie Solley



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A tragic loss leads a community to serve

MANSFIELD, Mass.
On a typical Sunday, the Edgewood Church of Christ may have 180 people in attendance — perhaps 200 on Easter or Christmas.

But on a warm Tuesday morning in June, we managed to fit 500 people into our auditorium and an additional 200 into an overflow area. Outside stood 1,000-plus more people, dressed in red and holding red balloons.

When the black hearse pulled out of the church parking lot onto South Main Street, the bystanders released their balloons. The funeral procession moved slowly through the rows of strangers and friends that lined both sides of the road.

Men and women, young and old, gathered together with hands over their hearts or tissues to their eyes as they said farewell to Shane Farrell, a boy that most had never met.

It was, for many, the most beautiful funeral they had seen.

Six days earlier, a tragic accident set forth a series of events that cannot be easily explained or understood. As news spread concerning the tragedy involving 13-year-old Shane Farrell, the exact details were uncertain. But a few horrible facts were clear: A school bus. A child on a bike. A death.

Dozens of middle school students witnessed an accident they were not prepared to see. A bus driver, though faultless, was overcome with guilt and sorrow. The responding police officers, firefighters, and paramedics who were all deeply shaken. Hundreds of parents struggled with how to explain a tragedy like this to their own children.

And Brian Farrell and Jackie McCabe had to absorb the loss of their son, if such a thing can be done.

The air on the night of Wednesday, June 3, was heavy with sadness, and as the sun began to set that evening, it was clear that darkness had already fallen.

The next morning, people woke



As the hearse drives by, people lining the streets of Mansfield release balloons celebrating the life of Shane Farrell.

from their fractured slumber still reeling from the news. As the initial shock wore off, an inexplicable urge built inside of people — an urge to do something, to serve. This service would become therapy, the community's way of coping.

In the days that followed, our community experienced an outpouring of kindness and compassion. Family, friends and strangers banded together in humble service, all in their own way.

People found ways to both honor the dead and serve the living. There was food, flowers, fundraising and forgiveness. Through the shock and pain, God worked wonders — bringing the gifts of faith, hope and love to the community.

Classmates, neighbors, teachers and strangers came forward, and each shared a unique memory of Shane. Each spoken story painted a

Views



Anthony Linden



Shane Farrell, second from left, with friends at the Edgewood Church of Christ.

more complete picture of Shane.

Those who worshiped with him or attended Bible studies and community groups with him already knew the godly young man he was. But it became evident that this is who Mansfield knew him to be as well.

What an incredible thing for a boy of 13 to be 100 percent genuine in word and deed regardless of where he was or who he was with. He

was a lamp casting its light in the dark room in which we all found ourselves.

No words can do justice to what the community of Mansfield experienced for a few days in June. Such is the difference that a small light can make in a dark world.

Shane was not just a member of the Edgewood Church of Christ — he was part of our family. And for a few days in June, so was Mansfield. The body of Christ that meets at the corner of Edgewood and South Main found itself at the center of the universe.

Our little church, like Shane, is a city on a hill, and the community has seen it.

ANTHONY LINDEN is an active member of the Edgewood church. He earned a degree in biblical studies from Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas, in 2009. He is the husband of Gina and the father of Anthony Jr., Joanna, Charlotte and Eleanor. Email him at dadlinden@hotmail.com.

Genesis: Fables, faith-building truths or both?

Can we trust Genesis? Does it give an accurate account regarding the early history of humanity? Does it record real history or simply provide a life-guiding myth? Two recent books cover these questions in great detail. While many of us in Churches of Christ are confident that Genesis rests on solid ground, Restorationist Thomas Campbell once cautioned that we are only one generation away from apostasy. These books help us to understand current debates surrounding Genesis and help us articulate solid reasons why we trust this foundational text. This helps us pass these truths to our next generation and enter into discussions with skeptics regarding Scripture.

“Genesis: History, Fiction, or Neither? Three Views on the Bible’s Earliest Chapters” helps us to see our interpretive struggles honestly. It is the latest volume in Zondervan’s “Counterpoint” series. Each book in this series examines a single theological topic from the educated perspectives of diverse viewpoints. These are fascinating books on some relevant topics, and this title is a wonderful addition to the series.

The editor, Charles Halton, is assistant professor of theology at Houston Baptist University. All three of his expert contributors believe the Bible is the Word of God. They focus their essays on three passages from Genesis — the narrative of the Nephilim in Genesis 6:1-4, Noah and the Ark in Genesis 6:9-9:29 and the

Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. James Hoffmeier argues that Genesis records accurate history and is fully reliable in its theology. Gordon Wenham argues rather that Genesis is a “Proto-History,” conveying essential truth in the same way a painted portrait does for its subject, as opposed to the way a photograph conveys facts and information.

Kenton Sparks argues for reading Genesis as “Ancient Historiography,” or myth that is based in factual events. If these second two academic options are disconcerting, we need to keep in mind that these are the very cultural influences our young people face daily — especially in academia — and we need to be prepared to address these ideas as well.

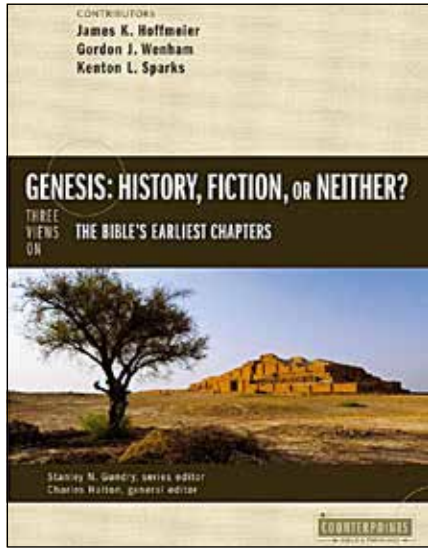
Many believers have had their faith shaken because of supposed scientific “facts.” Therefore, should science concern us?

John Walton’s **The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate** is a great case study on how to interpret Scripture. Walton, professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, places Genesis in its cultural context, referencing Egyptian texts, mentioning the influence of the Mesopotamians, Sumerians and Babylonians, and including one of the most concise and comprehensible comparisons of the Genesis origins narrative to another ancient text — the Gilgamesh Epic.

Such study will “help all Bible students read the whole of Scripture with fresh eyes” writes



Craig Cottongim



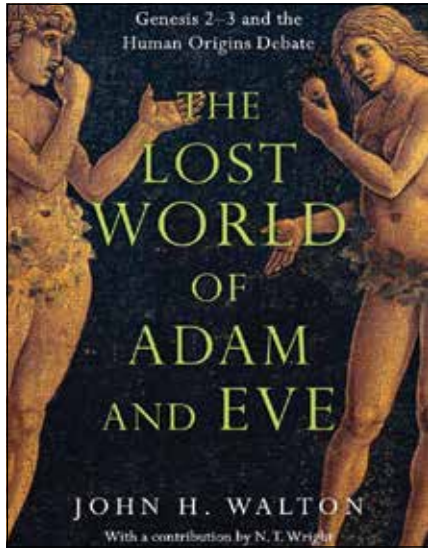
★★★★☆
Charles Halton, editor. **“Genesis: History, Fiction, or Neither? Three Views on the Bible’s Earliest Chapters.”** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2015. 173 pages. \$16.99.

New Testament scholar N.T. Wright. The book includes a discussion by Wright of the apostle Paul’s references to Adam in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15.

A weakness of the book is its focus on scriptural evidence without discussing human origins science. Walton doesn’t name any theological peers with different views. This weakens the force of his subtitle.

Conversely, contributors in Halton’s “Three Views” engage each other passionately and touch on contemporary contributions from science.

Both books remind us we are not the original audience the Bible addressed and would be helpful in any class on apologetics or theology.



★★★★☆
John Walton. **“The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate.”** Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 265 pages. \$17.

Walton’s book is invaluable in teaching anyone about the proper methods of interpretation, either in academic or congregational settings, while Halton’s “Three Views” offers a model for healthy dialogue.

Without the ability to form our own opinions and gracefully discuss them with respectful tolerance, believers often divide over doctrine. Our people would benefit greatly from Walton’s methods of interpretation and from his charitable example.

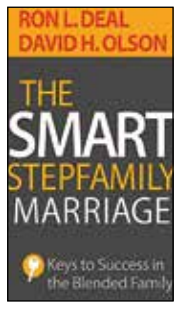
CRAIG COTTONGIM has ministered for Churches of Christ in Arkansas, Illinois and Tennessee for more than 20 years and is currently part of a church-planting team in Kingsport, Tenn. Contact him at craigcottongim@gmail.com.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY



HISTORY
José Antonio Fernández and Timothy Archer. **A History of Churches of Christ in Cuba.** Abilene, Texas: Herald of Truth Publications, 2015. 102 pages. \$11.50.

Fernandez, who preaches for the Versalles Church of Christ in Matanzas, Cuba, and Archer, a bilingual minister in Texas, seek to unite believers on the island nation with their North American brethren. In Cuba, characterized by a mix of Roman Catholicism and Santería, both ministers have worked to establish the New Testament church.

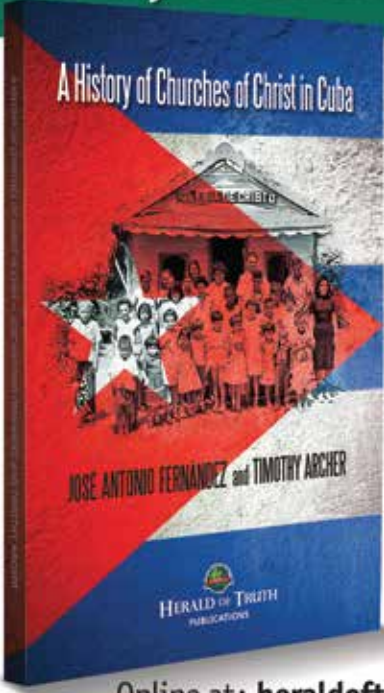


BLENDED FAMILIES
Ron L. Deal and David H. Olson. **The Smart Stepfamily Marriage: Keys to Success in a Blended Family.** Ada, Mich.: Bethany House Publishing, 2015. 256 pages. \$15.99.

Deal, a popular speaker and author on stepfamilies, teams up with Olson, a family social science professor emeritus, to explore 16 keys to strengthening relationships based on remarriage.

The book includes a voucher for an online test, the Couple Checkup, developed by the authors for those married, engaged or dating.

A History of Churches of Christ in Cuba



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subject was covered thoroughly."
--Anonymous

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WHAT WE'RE READING

The Great Omission

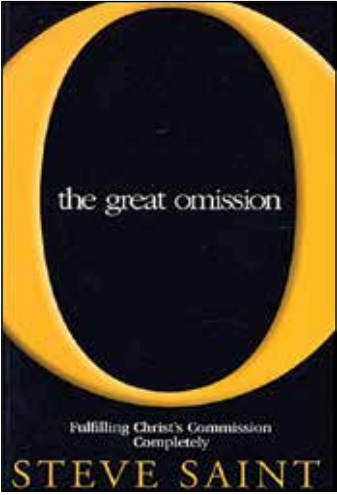
MONDULI, Tanzania
Can help cause harm?
We've seen it in African nations including Swaziland, a tiny kingdom where we served students at African Christian College.
We found beautiful church buildings without viable churches. Foreigners built them, sometimes with their own hands, paying for everything. We've taken African students to these areas to evangelize — with little contribution from the local Christians.



Fielden and Janet Allison

In **"The Great Omission: Fulfilling Christ's Commission Completely,"** Steve Saint writes about when he returned in 1994 to the Ecuadorian jungle where his father and four other missionaries were killed in 1956. In the years since, the Waodani people had become Christ followers, thanks in part to the evangelistic efforts of the slain missionaries' families (documented in books and the 2005 film "End of the Spear").
In addition to Christ, the Waodani had accepted foreign support. Despite a half-century of receiving the "best" that American dollars could give, Saint found no functioning Waodani church. They had become convinced that they could not do the job because they didn't have the skills, the equipment or the money of high-tech, well-educated foreign missionaries.
The Great Commission is for all Christians to *"go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,"* as Jesus says in Matthew 28. The "Great Omission," Saint writes, is that we have left the majority of the troops out of the battle.

We were part of a team that worked among the Kipsigis people of Kenya from 1973 to 1997. Our mission strategy was to plant indigenous congregations that were self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating. Local believers initiated projects and missionaries participated.
Growth may take longer when local Christians plan and execute their own works, but this usually results in a stronger body. When we left, the Kipsigis were 130 congregations strong. Now there are more than 400.
Saint argues for interdependency, where both parties are givers and receivers. He helped the Waodani establish a business to guide tourists into the Amazon jungle and launch an initiative to design tools indigenous people could afford, use and maintain. The money they earned gave them a sense of ownership. They began supporting their own ministry efforts.
"The Great Omission" targets missionaries working among the world's hidden tribes, but it applies to missions everywhere.
At times Saint can be preachy and redundant, but we found the book to be very candid and honest.



★★★★★
Steve Saint. **The Great Omission: Fulfilling Christ's Commission Completely.**
Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 2001. 200 pages. \$11.99.

FIELDEN AND JANET ALLISON work with Dr. Danny and Nancy Smelser and the church-supported Tanzania Christian Services. They travel the African continent, speaking to Churches of Christ through their Africa Institute of Marriage and Family (www.africamarriage.com).

WHAT ARE YOU READING? Contact Reviews Editor Kimberly Mauck at kimberly.mauck@christianchronicle.org to learn more about contributing to our "What we're reading" feature.

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If you or someone you know has any interest in joining our mission to provide Christ-centered care for children, please contact Kitty Duke, Social Service Director at kittyduke20@yahoo.com or 501-354-2428.

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Contact Carla Bjork, Business Operations Director at cbjork@agapenashville.org or 615.781.3000 x241

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*candidate will be an active member of the church of Christ.

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Send a resume, two references, at least one C/D of a sermon and salary requirements to:

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Small Congregation Financial Support Needed

The church of Christ in Fond du Lac, Wis., is seeking financial support for their preacher.

The congregation of 10-15 members is looking for opportunities of outside support so that their preacher can concentrate fully on the work of the church.

If you can help, please contact Alan Grinnell at alangrinnell@charter.net.

Aging ... with class? Some humble thoughts on an unexpected topic

I have entered what some call the Golden Years.

The funny part is that I found that out about two weeks ago.

At our regular Sunday afternoon meeting, our women's curriculum committee chose the topic for the fall — lessons from the life of King David — picked the speakers and adjourned. I left a little early.

Two days later the chairwoman notified me that the committee had "unanimously" voted for me to deliver the lesson on ... "Aging with Class."

Aging with class! A moment of sheer terror ensued. I gasped for breath. Our chairwoman's voice faded into the background as I thought, "So this is what a heart attack feels like."

Despite my hesitancy, here I am, trying to age with grace and tackling the humbling task of writing a column that all of us know rightly belongs to our neighbor and good friend, Bailey McBride, who is taking a three-month break.

For me, the apparent luster and glitter in the term "Golden Years" hides the challenges. These years include losses — and sometimes-painful blows to our self-esteem.

But there is real treasure to be found in these years — especially for the Christian. In Scripture, God makes hopeful promises to the aging, and there are many biblical examples of aging gracefully.

I could spend profitable time discussing topics including nutrition, exercise, wise resource management — even wearing contemporary attire.

But I am far more interested in the emotional and spiritual skills necessary to ensure continued growth and meaning during this life stage.

• **Be prepared for this stage of life before you live it.** During middle age I began to realize that the choices I was making would have long-term consequences on the emotional and spiritual quality of my final years. They also would impact my family. Looking at life from such a perspective at first seemed masochistic — like throwing a bucket of ice water on myself. Yet, even though the process was (and remains) sometimes painful, it seemed much easier

to examine my beliefs and actions when I was younger than to wait until I had done things the same way for 50, 60 or 70 years.

Over the decades, personalities and habits solidify. After years of reinforcing patterns of behavior and thinking, would I be capable of thinking or acting any other way?

• **Realize that we can choose our attitudes in this phase of life.** In every phase — with God's help — I always have the power to choose my mindset.

I've learned I need to combine my study of Scripture with times of reflection. I think about how I am responding to others as a window into the condition of my heart. Not infrequently, I fight and succumb to the temptation to rationalize and defend my unkind responses to those around me.

I will never just stumble into a Christian disposition. Acquiring the mind and heart of Christ has become a life-long journey in which the Holy Spirit daily gives me a new way to look at life as he shapes my mind, my heart and my attitudes into the image of Christ. To believe that I can substitute never missing a worship service or doing good deeds for actual character transformation is a seriously flawed idea.

I have friends who are living examples of this principle of choosing an attitude. One called herself "a good Christian," yet for the past 30 years she felt overlooked and unappreciated. Never satisfied and always critical, she alienated nearly everyone around her.

My other friend cheerfully moved into an assisted living home in her 80s. She views those alongside her as "new friends" — as a mission field — and spends her days joyfully sharing her faith in Jesus.

Life is pretty much like an echo. It has a way of bringing back to us whatever we send out.



Joy McMillon

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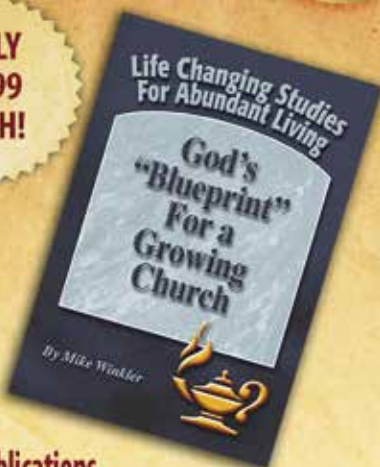


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- ACTS 16:15 -

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The Christian Chronicle

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Camping and working

Youths gather at camps — and job sites — across the country to learn, play and serve their communities.

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