



No small mission

TAKING A ROAD TRIP *with a spiritual focus, an Oklahoma group exemplifies a growing trend of Christian parents introducing children to mission work.*

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

LOGAN, Utah

Asked what excited her about going on a mission trip to Utah, 5-year-old Lainey Foster smiled.

"I might go swimming today or every day that I'm here," the blond-haired cutie replied. "So that's really good."

But as Lainey grows up, her parents pray she'll recall more than taking nightly dips in a hotel pool, roasting s'mores at a campfire devotional or even running into rattlesnakes on a hiking excursion.

For Josh and Jen Foster and their four young children, this summer's 1,200-mile journey was no ordinary road trip.

Rather than enjoy a traditional vacation, the Fosters and other families from the Edmond Church of Christ in Oklahoma decided to go on a mission trip.

Their destination: the Logan Church of Christ, a small-but-growing congregation in this predominantly Mormon community 85 miles north of Salt Lake City.

"We are going to help out a bit and just have fun while we're doing it," said 9-year-old Ty Foster.

Like the Fosters, a growing number of Christian parents take advantage of oppor-



DEIDRA DACUS

Dax Curtis, Brady Owens, Bryce Foster, Logan Breninger, Carter Owens, Ty Foster, Haley Dacus and Lainey Foster arrive in Utah.

tunities to expose their children to mission work, said Steven Bonner, who directs the youth and family ministry program at Lubbock Christian University in Texas.

"Family mission trips have seen a marked increase in the last several years," Bonner said. "I believe this is, in part, due to an increase in the realization that the best discipleship experiences occur in the context of intergenerational relationships."

Moreover, various studies have shown
See **FAMILY MISSION**, Page 12



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Ty Foster, 9, helps with a renovation project for the Logan Church of Christ in Utah. His father, Josh Foster, can be seen in the background.

Their World Cup overflows: Former missionaries are fans for life

BY MURRAY EVANS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Visit the Houston home of David and Barbara Duncan during the World Cup and you'll find it decorated in green and yellow, the colors of the flag of Brazil, where they once served as missionaries.

On days that Brazil — which is hosting this year's World Cup — is playing, the Duncans serve Brazilian food and soft drinks and watch the game with rapt anticipation, just like their friends and Christian family in South America.

"We spent years praying for Brazil before

we went," explained Duncan, now preaching minister for the Memorial Church of Christ in Houston. "Then what we wanted for seven years there was what was good for Brazil. We still want what's good for them.

"Outside of Christ and money in their pocket, they would say the next best thing would be Brazil winning the World Cup. That might be more important than money to them. Because we love them, we love what they love. So we get very passionate about it."

The Duncans aren't alone in their passion

See **WORLD CUP**, Page 14



PHOTO PROVIDED

The Duncans, top right, and some of their fellow former missionaries root for Brazil.



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Hollywood seeks and needs Christian screenwriters

I adore — and collect — embarrassing moments.

So, when preacher's wife and author Serena B. Miller said "I wanted to crawl under the table" during our interview, I had to know more.

Inside Story



Kimberly Mauck

This particular painful moment came as Miller — a grandmother from rural Ohio with no college diploma — found herself in a Hollywood screenwriting class peopled with Ivy League graduates, Los Angeles natives and people half her age.

Hence the desire to hide.

Miller, however, wasn't an aspiring screenwriter living on a prayer. Already a published author, she was invited to the class by Ted Baehr, founder of MovieGuide.org, an online guide to movies — with faith and family in mind.

Baehr met Miller at an American Christian Fiction Writers conference, where the website founder had come to recruit Christian writers to become Hollywood screenwriters.

In the mid-1980s, only one or two films produced in Hollywood portrayed explicit Christian values, Baehr said. That number has risen exponentially in the years since. Now MovieGuide counts about 65 films per year with Christian messages.

Even the most casual

See **HOLLYWOOD**, Page 4



Serena B. Miller shows off the welcome sign for Sugarcreek, Ohio, the setting of her novel.

CHRIS CONE PHOTOGRAPHY, CHRISCONEPHOTO.COM

Faithful fiction

TO SELL BOOKS, *Serena B. Miller was told that she had to include explicit sex scenes. She refused — and now her novel is a movie.*

BY KIMBERLY MAUCK | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Serena B. Miller was utterly unprepared for this moment. She was a cashier in a gas station, and couldn't even put together a sentence for a waiting customer.

Luckily, her customer was Tom Everett Scott, known for his role in the Tom Hanks film "That Thing You Do."

"Take a deep breath. You can do this," he told her.

Miller was not having difficulty making change, nor was she star struck.

She was making a cameo appearance in a film based on her first novel, "Love Finds You at Sugarcreek, Ohio," published in 2010, when Miller was 60 years old. The film debuted on the UPTV network June 1.

Although writing is Miller's special gift, acting is not.

"It was very painful," she said. "It took, like, 12 takes."

PREACHER'S WIFE, ROMANCE NOVELIST

Miller, a member of the Sunshine Church of Christ in Portsmouth, Ohio,

where her husband Steve has preached for 20 years, is the author of seven novels — and one forthcoming nonfiction book on Amish parenting. Her literary career took off just as her husband was diagnosed with bone cancer.

"It was God's timing," she said. "I had to write 'Love Finds You' while my husband was in 11 months of hospitalization, because I had just gotten a contract. I had a deadline. I asked God 'Why?' but my friends said it gave me my sanity."

Now Serena Miller's novels are a family affair. Steve

Miller helps her answer email and

See **FICTION**, Page 22



MISSION PICTURES

Sarah Lancaster stars in the film adaptation of "Love Finds You in Sugarcreek."

Disaster relief coordinator Joe Dudney dies

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Joe Dudney, who coordinated the distribution of millions of dollars' worth of aid to disaster victims across the nation, died June 24 in Nashville, Tenn. He was 91.

Dudney, who was born on a farm in rural Tennessee, served as an elder of the Brentwood Hills Church of Christ in Nashville for 21 years.

At age 67, soon after he retired as a manager for a state agriculture agency, he became vice president and executive director of the Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort.

He displayed boundless energy and could "outrun and outwork" most of the ministry's volunteers, his co-workers told *The Christian Chronicle*.

The nonprofit is a first responder to natural disasters within the United States, sending food, cleaning supplies and other necessities to Churches of Christ in affected areas, where members distribute them to those in need, according to its website.

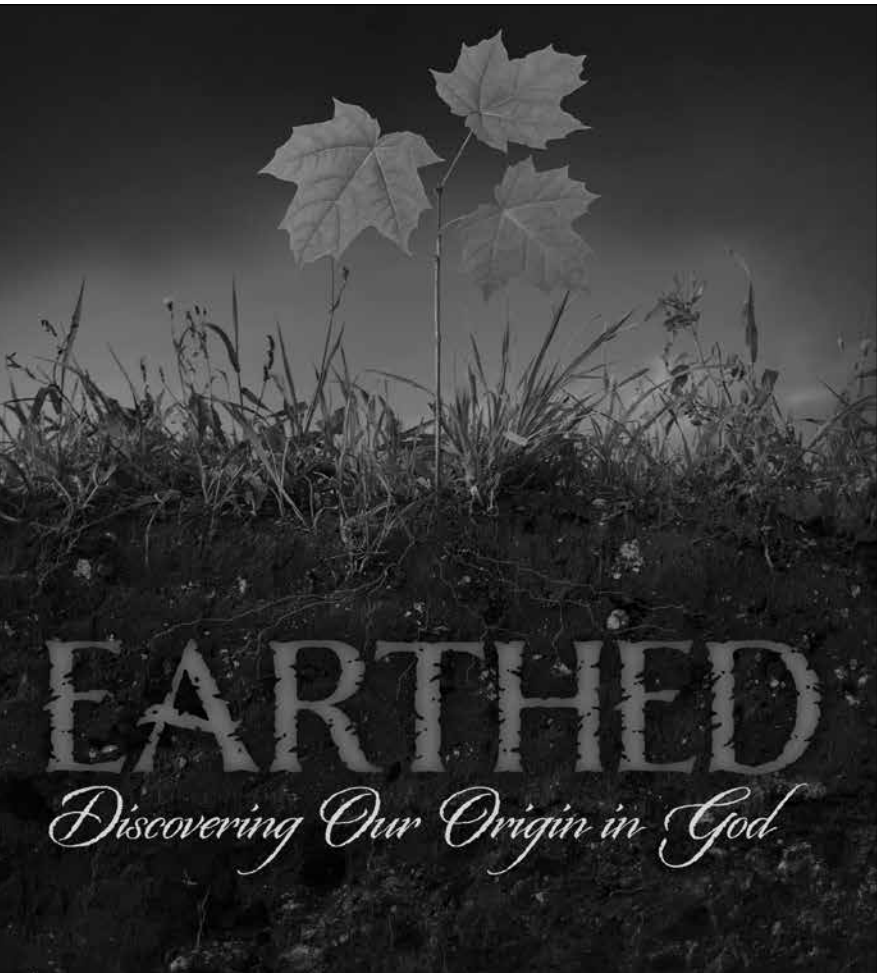
"The church does the work, and the Lord gets the credit," Dudney said in a 2004 Dialogue with the *Chronicle*.

SEE UPDATES at www.christianchronicle.org



TED PARKS

Joe Dudney stands next to boxes of relief items in the warehouse of Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort in 2013.



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HOLLYWOOD: Should Christians be involved?

FROM PAGE 3
movie consumer can detect the “God trend” at theaters this year (from “Son of God” to the controversial “Noah” and my personal favorite, “Moms’ Night Out”).

In fact, films with strong moral, patriotic and family values make more money than films with lots of profanity and sex, according to MovieGuide’s 2014 annual report on the current state of the film industry.

“Contrary to popular opinion, sex does not sell,” the report notes.

I said earlier that I love embarrassing moments.

That’s not true always.

I’m embarrassed when I watch couples being intimate onscreen. I’m embarrassed when I have to explain to my kids why they can’t watch certain TV shows with me (and, of course, I question whether or not I should be watching them myself). And I’m embarrassed when I’m not able to find a moral movie to share with my husband.

Christians can’t hide under the table. We must instead be salt and light — even to the realms of entertainment and media, which have so much influence in today’s world.

Miller didn’t hide her light.

Despite her moment of supreme apprehension, she had plenty of reasons to be in the screenwriting class. Her book, “Love Finds You in Sugarcreek, Ohio,” had just been adapted into a movie for the UPTv network.

That movie broke records for the network, and Mission Pictures International, which produced the film, has sold it to TV channels in France, Spain, Germany, Australia and Poland.

Now, Miller is equipped to work as a screenwriter herself.

Baehr, who encouraged her to take the class, said that Christians shouldn’t “abandon the mass media” because of its negative influences.

When they do, “they abandon their culture and their fellow man,” he said.

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Know before you go

A sampling of movie review resources for people of faith

- PluggedIn.com:** This website, published by Focus on the Family, gives nuanced reviews as well as descriptions of questionable sexual, spiritual, language, violent and drug and alcohol content. The site also reviews video games and music.
- MovieGuide.org:** In addition to reviews that rate language, violence, nudity and sex on a scale of “none” to “heavy,” this site has articles about trends in the film industry.
- Kids-In-Mind.com:** This site aims to give objective information — not recommendations — so its content analysis of films contains detailed information about sex and nudity, violence and gore, profanity and substance use. Each analysis also includes discussion of possible messages behind films.
- Dove.org:** No, this website has nothing to do with soap. The Dove Foundation reviews films in theaters — and many lesser-known Christian films that go straight to DVD — as well as children’s books. The site posts exclusive interviews with cast and crew members from Christian films.

And, “when Christians get involved in the mass media ... God honors that commitment with success.”

That may seem hard to believe, but it should serve as a call for us to “hold fast to what is good” — as Paul urges the church in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 — as we engage with mass media. Let’s honor the work of creative Christians by supporting their work with our dollars.

And, if God has given you the ability to write, now is the time to take a cue from Serena B. Miller. Dive in to popular culture, holding on to what is good and true.

Let your story light the path.

KIMBERLY MAUCK is reviews editor for *The Christian Chronicle*. She and her family worship with the Northwest Church of Christ in Durant, Okla.





PHOTO PROVIDED BY KERRY WILLIAMS

More than 800 attend as Arkansas church plant celebrates 10th anniversary

A recent 10th anniversary service at the Valley View Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Ark., draws 831 worshipers. The Valley View church was planted in June 2004 in a former Knights of Columbus building. The church grew so rapidly that it built a

multimillion-dollar facility after just two years, pulpit minister Kerry Williams said. Attendance now averages between 550 and 600. Present and former ministers, elders and deacons and those who have died were honored at the anniversary event.

ILLINOIS

BELVIDERE — Twelve of the 19 people present at the first assembly of the Belvidere Church of Christ in June 1964 returned to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary.

Betty (King) Potter is the only original member who has been at Belvidere all 50 years.

"Friends Are Blessings from God" served as the theme for the recent anniversary celebration.

OHIO

BELLVILLE — The Perry Church of Christ, which formed in 1844, recently celebrated its 170th anniversary.

Perry preacher and elder Vinton Morgan wrote a history of the 60-member church for the occasion, the *Mansfield News Journal* reported.

"We have about 30 family members who can trace their families to the original founders," Morgan said.

OKLAHOMA

TULSA — The Crosstown Church of Christ hosted a recent "Marriage Roadshow" featuring Richard and JeannaLynn May.

Nearly 60 people attended the Friday and Saturday night sessions. Richard May also preached Sunday.

"The Mays really bring personal warmth as well as life-changing content in their presentations," Crosstown minister Robert Prater said of the Oklahoma City couple. "They draw from their own personal experiences in their marriage and the experiences of the hundreds of couples they have counseled."

TENNESSEE

MILAN — When the Dream Center, which houses abused women and children, revealed plans to put a shelter in this West Tennessee community, the Main Street Church of Christ decided to help.

Leaders thought a special Sunday contribution might generate \$5,000 or so, minister Chad Ezelle said.

"But we collected \$20,000 for them that day," Ezelle said. "It's a pretty cool story of a church reaching out to their community."

TEXAS

ABILENE — Twenty-one inmates were baptized on a recent Wednesday night at the John Middleton Prison Unit.

The baptisms occurred during a midweek service at the prison, said volunteer Lou Seckler, a member of the University Church of Christ.

"It was a joyful occasion when the rest of the inmates present stood up

(and) walked to the front where the new converts were to welcome them to the fold," Seckler said. "There were laughter and tears."

In the past 10 years, close to 9,000 inmates have been baptized at the Middleton unit, Seckler said.

AUSTIN — After 13 years of service in Alotau, Papua New Guinea, the Reese family recently returned from the mission field.

Former missionary teammates surprised the Reeses by joining a "welcome home" celebration at the Westover Hills Church of Christ.

Marcus and Diane Reese have four children: Hannah, Hadassah, Rochelle and Faith.

WASHINGTON

CLE ELUM — "Leading In An Age of Compromise" served as the theme for a recent men's retreat at Camp Koinonia.

The retreat, featuring Old Testament scholar Daniel Oden of Harding University in Searcy, Ark., drew more than 40 preachers, elders and other leaders.

"There were at least 19 congregations represented from Washington and Oregon," said Micah Powless, minister for the Moses Lake Church of Christ in Washington.

SPOTLIGHT

Working in Wichita

WICHITA, Kan. — More than 200 teens and adult sponsors from Churches of Christ served — and sweated — during the recent Wichita Workcamp.

Students from Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma power-washed, scraped and painted 16 Wichita homes, painted over bridge graffiti and sealed and painted a soup kitchen's floor, the *Wichita Eagle* reported.

"We serve God by serving people," said Toby Levering, youth minister for the Northside Church of Christ in Wichita. For more information, see wichitaworkcamp.org.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARK YEAKLEY

Girls work on a painting project during the recent Wichita Workcamp in Kansas.



PREACHERSWIFERETREAT.COM

Forming hearts with their hands, participants in the 2014 Church of Christ Preacher's Wife Retreat pose for a group photo at Chickasaw State Park near Henderson, Tenn.

Blessing battered hearts of preachers' wives

AT A TENNESSEE RETREAT, ministers' wives share joys and struggles as they find camaraderie and support

BY PAULA HARRINGTON | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

I am what I am, and I do what I do, not because I am married to the preacher but because I am married to the Lord."

Cindy Colley delivered that message to more than 80 women from 15 states during the Church of Christ Preacher's Wife Retreat.

Colley, an author and motivational speaker, is the wife of Glenn Colley, pulpit minister for the West Huntsville Church of Christ in Alabama. She encouraged her fellow ministers' wives to "be what we profess before our congregations — all the way through."

It can be a difficult task for the wives of ministers, who often feel that they live under a spotlight — that the congregations they serve expect them to hide their frustrations and human frailties. They may feel misunderstood and alone.

Hence the title of Colley's presentation: "Bless Your Battered Heart." "If we love (God) with all our

hearts, souls and minds," Colley said, "the Gospel will emanate from our preachers' homes."

STRESSED, BUT NOT ALONE

The retreat, hosted at a state park near Henderson, Tenn., has grown significantly after only a couple dozen women attended the first one in 2012, founder and organizer Carrie Voss said.

Her husband, John, is minister for the Eagle Way Church of Christ in Hopkinsville, Ky. She got the idea for the retreat while attending Polishing the Pulpit, a workshop for Church of Christ members, held in Sevierville, Tenn., in 2010.

Carrie Voss said she felt "an immediate connection" with other wives of preachers at the conference.

"We shared the same struggles," she said, "and we were bonded together because of our similar situations."

Now Carrie Voss, who was the sole organizer at the retreat's inception, is joined by Summer Bowling and Michelle Johnson in making the Preacher's Wife Retreat a reality.

Carrie Voss hopes the retreat produces lifelong friendships — "and that we don't feel all alone in what can be a

very stressful position," she said.

At the retreat, "we learn to cope with the day-to-day circumstances that come our way because of the role we are in as a preacher's wife," she said. "We learn how to be an encouragement to our husbands."

Attendee Stephanie Kenyon of the Thomasville Church of Christ in Georgia said the event is a comfort and encouragement to preachers' wives across the nation.

"My heart has been filled and my soul refreshed after gathering with 80-plus women who share the same concerns and issues I face as we learned how to support our husbands in the Lord's work," Kenyon said.

'WE HAVE A COMMON BOND'

The retreat's first speaker was Donna Faughn, whose husband, Jim, preaches for the Central Church of Christ in Paducah, Ky. Such retreats are imperative for healthy churches, Faughn said, because they give a preacher's wife a forum to discuss feelings that she can't discuss with anyone else in her congregation.

"No one else shares her role, even if her congregation has multiple ministers," Faughn said.



Retreat organizer Carrie Voss, left, of Hopkinsville, Ky., and Devan Pierce, of the Parsons Church of Christ in Tennessee, share a laugh.

Faughn particularly likes that the retreat pairs women with a "preacher's wife pal" to share struggles and triumphs for the rest of the year.

"Most of the wives there are younger than I am, but that doesn't seem to make any difference," she said. "If anything, some have sought me out for advice on certain matters, and I feel very comfortable being with all of these younger women. We have a common bond."

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Preacher's Wife Retreat, see www.preacherswifetreat.com.



Colley

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SPOTLIGHT

Cool fellowship

GABORONE, Botswana — Nearly 2,000 Christians from 12 nations shivered as they shared warm fellowship at the recent International Lectureship of the Churches of Christ.

Church members bundled themselves in sweaters as they praised God in the southern African capital, where it's currently winter.

The *Phuthego Ya Ga Keresete* ("Churches of Christ" in Botswana's language, Tswana) hosted the event. The nation of 2.1 million souls has about 15 Churches of Christ, said church member Tebogo Maruping.

"Despite the cold weather, people really enjoyed the lessons, and I think many souls were uplifted," said Stanley Shereni, a minister in Zimbabwe. Two attendees were baptized.



STANLEY SHERENI

Dennis Malepa, a minister in Botswana, speaks to two new Christians.



PHOTO PROVIDED

A warm welcome for a mission team in South America

Members of the Clay Brick Church of Christ in the South American nation of Guyana welcome a visiting medical mission team from the U.S. The team of 29 church members conducted medical clinics and gospel campaigns alongside members of the Clay Brick Road church and other congregations, under the direction of Guyana Missions, a church-supported nonprofit. "What we strive for is to become a part of the local family in every way," team member Ray Hunt wrote in a report from Guyana. "We have not come as the 'experts' or 'teachers' ... We are not here to change their culture. ... We are not the Savior. We represent the Savior, just like the local folks do every day."

BELGIUM

BRUSSELS — Blair Roberts labors in this West European capital with French-speaking Christians.

Recently he was assisted by five members of a Church of Christ in Paris, who traveled north to Brussels and helped distribute Bible materials and conduct the French worship service. The church members plan to return and continue the work, Roberts said.



Roberts

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

SARAJEVO — Many families lost their homes during the Bosnian conflict in the 1990s.

Now, some of those families have

lost their homes again after record-breaking rainfall caused widespread flooding in the Central European nation and its neighbor, Serbia.

Byron Benitez and Hawatthia Jones, missionaries in Guatemala, raised funds to help a family there recover. Benitez's wife, Snezana, is a church member from Bosnia.

CANADA

ONTARIO — Fifty-five men, representing 14 congregations, attended a recent seminar for "elders, deacons, ministers and servant-hearted saints," said organizers from the Fenwick Church of Christ, which hosted the event.

Aubrey Johnson, minister for the Peachtree City Church of Christ in Georgia, led the seminar, titled "Dynamic Deacons."

INDIA

NEW DELHI — Joey Barrier, youth minister for the New Hope Church of Christ in Florence, Ala., recently made a teaching trip to India along with Stephen Gill, a student at Heritage Christian University in Florence.

They traveled from New Delhi to Bangalore, assisted by HCU alumnus Vinay David. Four people were baptized.

JAMAICA

KINGSTON — Nineteen students graduated recently from the Jamaica School of Preaching and Biblical Studies.

The students "will now use what they have learned to build and plant new congregations wherever the Lord permits," director Gladwyn Kiddoe said.

SWAZILAND

MATSAPHA — This small, southern African kingdom has the world's highest estimated prevalence rate of HIV-infected adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Church members, including Dr. Bob and Annette Whitaker, are helping the country's young people make healthy decisions. The couple recently launched a Saturday youth program at the Matsapha Church of Christ, including short videos, educational games, food and interactive Bible lessons.

The program is designed "to draw children and young people to the church, teach the Bible and biblical principles, form bonds and give them healthy alternatives to sex, drugs and other immoral and unhealthy practices," Annette Whitaker said.



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PHOTO PROVIDED BY SASHA PROKOPCHUK

Children play in the waters of the Sea of Azov during the camp in Berdyansk, Ukraine.

Camp Ukraine: As civil war looms, church members serve orphans

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Even in troubled Ukraine, there's a place where children can splash in the waves, spray paint macaroni and seashells and learn about Jesus.

Five members of the Transfiguration Church of Christ in Donetsk, Ukraine, hosted a Bible camp for 34 orphans along with three school teachers and a physician.

The campers traveled from their orphanage in eastern Ukraine — where pro-Russian separatists are accused of killings, abductions and torture as they fight Ukraine's military — to the port city of Berdyansk, on the Sea of Azov.

There the Christians taught Bible classes, "speaking about the Gospel, faith, kindness and friendship," said Sasha Prokopchuk, minister for the Transfiguration church.

"You could say it's a miracle of God," Prokopchuk said. "The director of the orphanage — in these perilous times — entrusted the children to our team from the Church of Christ, and we were able to take the children away from the town where there is war."

The camp followed a four-day seminar for church leaders, titled "Every day with Christ." Despite threats of violence, 30 people left their homes to attend the seminar, Prokopchuk said.

In Moscow, Christian unity trumps politics at Russian church conference

BY EILEEN EMCH | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MOSCOW — *You alone are my strength, my shield. To you alone may my spirit yield. You alone are my heart's desire, and I long to worship you.*

Not far from the Kremlin, 100 Christians sang those words — first in Ukrainian, then in Russian and finally in English — during the annual Russian Christian Conference.

"Tears were absolutely streaming down my face," said Lydmila Michaelova of Moscow.

It was a poignant moment for the faithful — representing 15 Churches of Christ in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus — as they showed that recent political tensions hadn't broken the bonds of fellowship.

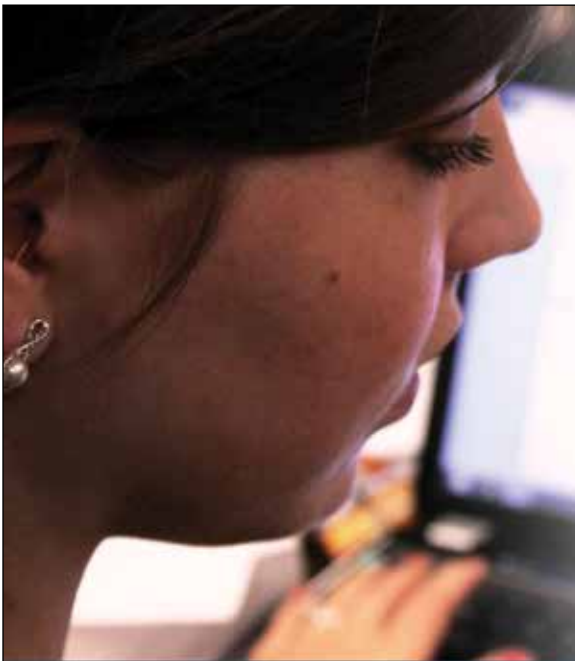
Russian Christians organized this year's conference — an "encour-



EILEEN EMCH

Dima Timoshenko of Donetsk, Ukraine, speaks at the conference in Moscow.

aging sign of maturity," said Joel Petty, a minister for Churches of Christ in St. Petersburg, Russia. Russian congregations also assumed more of the conference funding than in years past, said Vladimir Michaelov, a minister in Moscow.



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FAMILY MISSION: This was no ordinary summer road trip



Rick Owens and his son Carter Owens, 9, work on a ceiling project at the Logan Church of Christ.



Haley Dacus, 8, climbs on the sign outside the Logan Church of Christ in Utah while Alto Pirtle, 7, watches.

FROM PAGE 1
that the greatest impact on young people’s faith development stems from family activities, said Holly Allen, co-author of “Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship.”

“Youth from families that talk about faith together, participate in family prayer or devotions and ... participate together in service projects are more likely to have a mature faith than youth whose families do not partake of any of these activities,” said Allen, director of the child and family studies program at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Ark., and a member of the Siloam Church of Christ.

In all, 31 people from the Edmond church — ranging in age from 3 to 75 — trekked north through Kansas and then west across Nebraska and Wyoming, with an overnight stay in Cheyenne. The two-day caravan by three white rental vans involved nonstop chatter, occasional tears and plenty of snacks, not to mention frequent restroom stops.

“We just really want to teach them what it means to do missions,” said Courtney Curtis, mother of 5-year-old Dax, one of 10 children who made the trip.

“When I was younger, I didn’t get to go on any kind of mission trips,” Curtis added. “I hope they really learn what it means to serve others and to teach them about Jesus.”

‘A HUGE BLESSING’

With attendance of 1,200, the Edmond church — a Bible Belt congregation north of Oklahoma City — boasts more men, women and children in its pews than all the Churches of Christ in Utah combined.

Adherents of the Church of Jesus Christ of



Utah and Oklahoma church members fill out name tags before a Sunday assembly at a Logan picnic pavilion.

Latter-day Saints — known as Mormons — comprise roughly 60 percent of Utah’s 2.9 million total residents.

However, only 1,126 souls make up Utah’s 19 a cappella Churches of Christ, according to a 2012 national directory published by 21st Century Christian.

The Edmond church helps support John and Jill Schadegg, who serve as missionaries in Logan, where at night an opulent Mormon temple built in the late 1800s lights up the mountain-adorned skyline.

Trip organizers Caleb and Deidra Dacus know the Schadeggs through both families’ involvement with the Wyoming Bible Camp — the state where Caleb grew up before leaving to attend Oklahoma Christian University.

“I don’t know if we’ll ever grow to be a self-supporting congregation, honestly, because of the demographics,” said John Schadegg, a father of six who met his wife at the University of Wyoming, where both became Christians. “It’s such a high Mormon population. But it’s a mission field.”

A decade ago, the Logan church had just a handful of active members, including Tony and Tanya Pirtle.

“Tony would preach, do the Lord’s Supper, lead singing and baptize people,” Tanya Pirtle said of her husband, who recruited the Schadeggs.

In recent years, the church has grown to an average Sunday attendance of 60 to 75 — in part because of a focus on campus ministry at nearby Utah State University. However, the church building’s poor condition — including a ceiling damaged by water leaks — turned away potential visitors, leaders said.

“With the Edmond group coming, this has been a huge blessing to us,” said Logan member Susan Bryner, whose husband, Joshua, grew up Mormon.

For nearly a week, the short-term missionaries from Oklahoma worked alongside their Utah brothers



Missionaries Jill and John Schadegg sing during a devo.



Short-term missionaries from Oklahoma and their Utah hosts pray during a campfire devotional. Before singing, the group made s’mores — a campfire dessert of roasted marshmallow and chocolate between graham crackers.

and sisters to renovate the Logan church’s auditorium, refurbish its classroom floors and reinventorate its flower garden. White specks of plaster dotted Jen Foster’s forehead and covered her dark blue Oklahoma City Thunder T-shirt as she enjoyed a short break, not bothering to take off her work gloves.

“So we’ve been working on taking the popcorn ceiling down in the auditorium,” Jen Foster said. “I didn’t think it was that big of a deal. But actually, when I was talking to one of the members ... she started tearing up when she saw what we were doing.”

“She just said, ‘It means so much that you guys are willing to come here and do this for us,’” the mother of four added. “So that’s why I’m here, not home ... just meeting and fellowshiping with other Christians and blessing them in a little way.”

Lainey Foster scampered beside her father as he pushed a wheelbarrow full of mulch.

“Every morning we wake up, and we remind the kids why we’re here,” Josh Foster said. “It’s not about the fun things we get to do on the side, but it’s about the service-oriented things we do while still enjoying each other as a Christian family.”

A FAMILY-FRIENDLY MISSION TRIP

The Edmond church covers 80 percent of the cost for members to go on short-term mission trips to places such as Haiti, Nicaragua and upstate New York. Utah trip participants paid \$90 each.

“By funding a large percentage of each person’s

mission trip, we want to remove finances as an obstacle that might keep someone or an entire family from going,” preaching minister Randy Roper said.

In their book, Allen and co-author Christine Lawson Ross write that “providing whole families ... with opportunities to join the same mission trip can create common ground for discussion and ... increase and extend the spiritual growth.”

But a family mission trip can make for a miserable experience if not planned with the children in mind, Lubbock Christian’s Bonner said. “I have been a part of trips that did not take into account the physical and emotional limits of the children,” he said.

The children must be seen as active participants and not as obstacles that must be negotiated so the “real work” can take place, Bonner said.

That wasn’t a problem in Logan, said Maudie Surber, a longtime Edmond member who made her first mission trip.

At home, Surber teaches a first-grade Bible class and organizes a children’s service challenge as part of the Leadership Training for Christ program.

In Utah, she kept the children busy pulling weeds and shoveling piles of mulch.

“They have been here every morning at 9 o’clock ready to go,” Surber said. “They have literally fought to be the ones to assist and get their hands dirty.”

SEE A VIDEO highlighting the Utah mission trip and read the *Chronicle’s* 2011 report on “Ministry in Mormon country” at www.christianchronicle.org.

VOICES

THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE asked parents who have taken their children on mission trips to share their thoughts. These are just a few of the responses we received. Join the conversation online at www.christianchronicle.org.

I wanted to be able to model mission work in front of my boys — not just go off and do it and tell about it.

I want them to be able to see us working, and then I wanted them to be able to take part as well and for them to feel a part of the mission and helping other people.

Lori Owens | Edmond, Okla.

Our intent by going to Mexico has been to show the girls that there is a big world out there — one that is full of people that need help and that by serving them we are also showing them Jesus.

We want them to understand how blessed and abundant their lives are in an effort to encourage them to live generously.

Julie Truex | Garland, Texas

Our teenage children enjoyed being with the youth in the congregation in Costa Rica. They helped in Vacation Bible School and in children’s classes during the gospel meetings held at night.

Our 6-year-old, a little blond-haired boy then, went right on to class with the other Hispanic children. They didn’t speak the same language, but that didn’t stop them from running and playing and enjoying the VBS and classes together.

Andrea Johnson | Paragould, Ark.

We want to model the importance of missions for our daughter. We want her to know that helping others, no matter where they may be, is central to who God calls us to be. We went to Questa, N.M., and worked with a church.

We did sports camps for the kids in the community as well as service projects. It was a great experience. Our daughter had an even better time than we did.

Kent Benfer | Richland Hills, Texas

WORLD CUP: A Bible and a soccer ball are mission necessities

FROM PAGE 1
for soccer among those who have been on the mission field. Whether they served in Italy or Ivory Coast, Ghana or Japan, or Brazil or Argentina — to name just six of the 32 nations participating in the 2014 World Cup — missionaries often have a special enthusiasm watching the teams from the nations in which they worked play in the world's most-watched sporting event.

"I admittedly will root for Italy, even against the U.S.," said Brian Nicklaus, who served two stints on the mission field in that European nation and now attends the Hermitage Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn. "I hope the U.S. does well, but I don't get my hopes up. Even though I am an American of German/Anglo descent, my heart is at least half-Italian."

Allen Thompson, a native of Ethiopia who attended Oklahoma Christian University before doing mission work in Japan, said developing such a connection with an adopted nation's team is normal.

"Before I lived in Japan, I never really cared about the Japanese team," said Thompson, who now lives in Tipton, Okla., and worships with the Tipton Church of Christ.



Thompson "Now I can't help it," he said. "It's my second or third home. I know the culture and I know a lot about it, and I know the language. It's an automatic interest for me. No matter what, I am always now cheering for Japan, unless there's only one African team left. That's when I have a hard time."

SOCCER AS A MINISTRY

One thing missionaries from the U.S. often learn on the mission field is how to incorporate soccer in their ministries. Some host get-togethers based around soccer games, much as many churches in the U.S. do for the NFL's Super Bowl.

Sometimes, just producing a soccer ball can attract people, providing an opportunity for ministry, said Matt Miller, who,



PHOTO PROVIDED BY RAPHAEL MOREIRA

Red, white and blue in Brazil: Missionary cheers for the U.S.A.

The 2014 World Cup gave former missionaries the chance to root for their adopted countries. It also gave a current missionary from the U.S. the chance to cheer — in person — for her home country. Cris Carpenter, left, a missionary in Natal, Brazil, attended one of the first games of this year's World Cup, as the U.S. defeated Ghana 2-1 in the Dunes Arena in Natal. Brazilian Christians Andressa Signoretti and Raphael Moreira joined her — in the stadium and in face paint — to root for the U.S.

Carpenter was born in Brazil while her parents, Bob and Donna Carpenter, served as missionaries. After the U.S. scored its second goal, she said, she found herself "jumping and screaming as if I had made the goal myself, hands raised to show my U.S.A.-painted forearms in hopes of getting on TV." See a Dialogue with Cris Carpenter at www.christianchronicle.org.

with his wife, Andrea, has served in African nations including Togo, Ghana and Rwanda. The Homewood Church of Christ in Birmingham, Ala., sponsors their work.

"If I had two things to take with me on a mission field, it's a Bible and a soccer ball," Miller said.

Miller watched Togo's games in the 2006 World Cup in tents, set up with small televisions powered by generators, with hundreds of people gathered around the sets.

It's a similar scene in other parts of the world.

Michelle Goff, who once worked as a missionary in Venezuela and now travels throughout Latin America through her service with Brighton, Colo.-based Iron Rose Sister Ministries, remembered watching Venezuela's matches on the big screen in movie theaters.

"You could even bring in your flags

and horns to cheer on your team in true stadium fashion," Goff said.

In Ivory Coast, said Barry Baggott, who spent 16 years in the French-speaking African nation, "my family never owned a television, but my boys would join many others across the street where our friend, a Nigerian barber, would set his TV up outside so that people could gather around to watch important games with him." The Crieve Hall Church of Christ in Nashville, where the Baggott family now worships, sponsored the work.

Such gatherings often lead to meetings and conversations that result in Christian conversions, said Barbara Kee, who with her husband Windle served 25 years on the



Goff

mission field in Cameroon.

In 2000, when Cameroon won the Olympic gold medal in men's soccer, the Kees — who now attend the Faith Village Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas — were working to teach the Bible to a group of doctors, while the doctors taught the Kees how to speak French.

"We all watched those games together," Barbara Kee said. "One of those doctors was converted and he's still faithful. Soccer definitely played into his conversion."

Nicklaus and other missionaries have similar stories about how soccer helped provide a common meeting ground, allowing them to teach others about Jesus.

"I don't know if it's cliché to call it a religion," Nicklaus said, "but it's an overwhelming cultural phenomenon. It's a way to connect — and that's what we're trying to do."



LUK BRAZLE

Christians from across Europe compete in the annual "Footballweekend" in Switzerland.

Soccer and souls: Around the world, Christians show Jesus through sport

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Call it the Church of Christ World Cup — or at least the Europa League.

Every year, the young and not-so-young from congregations across the continent gather in the Swiss village of Thayingen to strike, steal and sing praises to God in a weekend of fellowship and "football" (as soccer is known in nearly every country except the U.S.).

The tournament helps church members introduce their friends to a community of faith, said Scott Raab, an evangelist in Lanaken, Belgium.

It also exemplifies one of his favorite sayings: "Christians know best how to really have fun."

The global obsession with the sport provides opportunities to share the Gospel, church members and missionaries told *The Christian Chronicle*. In the Central American nation of Guatemala, Saturday morning pick-up games may be just as vital to evangelism as Sunday morning worship, said Pancho Hobbes, who served as a missionary there for 13 years.

"Over the centuries, the traditional religion has presented Jesus as soft, weak, dying or as an infant," Hobbes said. "As a result, most men flee from church. Soccer helped us to portray the Christian life as something even

regular guys can plug into."

Professional soccer can become mired in controversy. As they host the 2014 World Cup, Brazilians have protested the high price tag of the games — in a nation where millions live in poverty. In Guatemala, some church members declared "el deporte" (all sports) as "of the world and unsuitable for Christians," Hobbes said, due to "the drugs, the mega-bucks, and the boastful pride."

"By contrast," he added, "playing soccer with good sportsmanship showed people — both inside and outside the church — that it is possible to live in the world but not of it."

That's the case in the Brazilian city of Cajazeiras, where church members have taught youths honesty, service, family, purity and the

Gospel through the Right Step soccer ministry since 2008.

Recently, the city council honored the program's director, Rivaldo Café, as "Citizen of Cajazeiras."

"Lots of social programs that sound good and have good ideas start, but most don't last more than a year because of the lack of commitment," missionary Joseph McKinney said. "We are thankful to be involved in a work that, over six dedicated years, has not only bettered society but brought families eternal life."



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In Brazil, Rivaldo and Leila Café were honored for their "futebol" ministry.

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HARDING UNIVERSITY



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

North Davis Church of Christ members gather on stage to witness the baptism of Tom Airola. After his immersion by senior minister Doug Peters, Airola raises his arms to celebrate.

Don't just sit in those pews

IN THE HEART of Dallas-Fort Worth, a once-shrinking congregation finds revival as it serves its community

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ARLINGTON, Texas

It's a Tuesday after school, and basketballs are flying at the North Davis Church of Christ family life center.

Welcome to "The Rec," as the banner outside declares.

Two afternoons per week, the 600-member church opens its doors for up to 120 students from nearby Lamar High School to hang out, shoot hoops and enjoy free snacks and beverages.

"It's a good thing," said Christian Retana, 15. "It gets kids out of trouble."

"This is a good environment,"

agreed Deshaun Lowry, 17. "Nobody's ever fighting, especially in a church. Everybody gets along here."

A few years ago, dozens of Lamar High teens congregating in a Walgreens store parking lot after school drew complaints of violence, thefts and illegal drug activity.

That's when the North Davis church decided to partner with Arlington police and school officials to offer an alternative.

"We said, 'Let's give them something better,'" said Darrell Lanford, youth family minister.

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

The North Davis church building sits just off Interstate 30 — in the

shadow of the Six Flags theme park and the home stadiums of the Dallas Cowboys and the Texas Rangers.

As this city between Dallas and Fort Worth boomed with new housing and explosive population growth in the 1980s, the church reached a membership of 1,000.

But by the 1990s, Arlington began to take on a more urban feel — with a higher poverty rate and increased racial and ethnic diversity.

Arlington's changing demographics, combined with ministerial and leadership turmoil at North Davis, contrib-

uted to 12 straight years of decline in Sunday attendance.

With that turmoil still fresh in members' minds, the church hired a new senior minister — Doug Peters — in 2001.

As longtime members describe it, Peters brought a new vision for how the then-shrinking church could fulfill God's will in its diverse community.

Peters stepped to the pulpit each Sunday and delivered a simple message, said Sheila Carter, wife of elder Bob Carter.

That message: "We weren't supposed to just be sitting in those pews."

The middle-class white church —

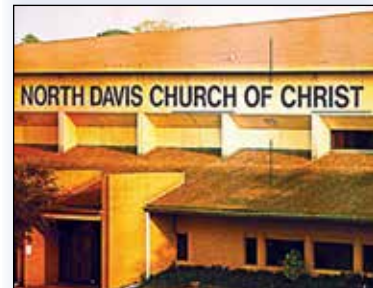
CONTINUED



Peters

North Davis Church of Christ

LOCATION: Arlington, Texas, between Dallas and Fort Worth.
MEMBERSHIP: About 600.
SERVICES: Bible classes at 9 a.m. Sunday. Worship at 10:15 a.m. Small groups meet Sunday night. Wednesday night features programs designed to equip ministries and mission efforts.
INTERNATIONAL: Besides its community-focused ministries, the church sends dozens of members overseas on Let's Start Talking mission trips. North Davis also partners with organizations such as Healing Hands International and World Bible School.
MINISTERS: Senior minister Doug Peters, youth family minister Darrell Lanford, worship and connections minister Bret Morris and children's family minister Summer Morris.
ELDERS: Jamie Bain, Bob Carter, Bill Dismuke, Allen Griffith, Nolan Kennedy, John David Patterson, Scott Souder, Gary Staley, Gil Vollmering Jr., Gil Vollmering Sr., Rodney Waller and Jim Wren.
ONLINE: www.northdavischurch.org.



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The *Chronicle* does not seek to endorse or promote any one congregation and its practices, but presents this series in an effort to highlight innovative approaches to ministry and outreach. Find the series online at www.christianchronicle.org.

Hurricane Katrina marked a turning point



Brenda Patterson and Jody Thornton greet Sunday morning guests at the North Davis Church of Christ's "Welcome Center."

CONTINUED
 comprised of commuters and surrounded by aging apartment buildings — could have relocated. "In fact, there are a lot of area congregations that have moved away," Peters said.

Instead, North Davis built a new family life center that opened in 2003 and sought out new opportunities to feed the hungry, house the homeless and clothe the naked — to put the church's vision in Matthew 25 terms.

By all accounts, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 marked a turning point. The church welcomed hundreds of New Orleans evacuees to sleep on cots in its building.

The Katrina victims arrived on yellow school buses, many wearing mud-stained clothing and carrying all their belongings in paper sacks, said Lana Wolff, an Arlington city councilman.

"With opened arms and a beautiful smile, the volunteers reassured the hopeless and the restless that they were safe here," the

councilwoman wrote in an email to *The Christian Chronicle*. "Spiritual support was always apparent."

In the Katrina relief effort, longtime North Davis members such as Janelle Truitt believe they discovered their true calling.

"We realized then what we were supposed to be doing," Truitt said. "Katrina put us on such a high. We did everything, and we did it from the ground up with no training."

"Then when it was done, everybody was like, 'Well, what are we doing *now*? We can't stop this.'"

'JOINING GOD AND OTHERS'

In recent years, the church has emphasized this motto: "Joining God and Others on a Kingdom Journey for the Sake of the World!"

"Whether you call it a mission statement or not, it does describe God's call on us as we live out the Great Commission," said Peters, who soon will leave North Davis to train and mentor future preachers at Oklahoma Christian



A Lamar High School student shoots a basket at "The Rec," an after-school program hosted each Tuesday and Thursday by the North Davis church.

University.

Just a few of the ways the church lives out that motto:

• **Hearts and Hands**, a cooperative food-and-clothing ministry, serves 30,000 people a year.

The nonprofit organization's warehouse is on the North Davis property. Other Churches of Christ in Arlington help, too.

One Wednesday night a month, the North Davis church's "ND Diner" invites Hearts and Hands clients — and anyone else — to a free, home-cooked meal.

"We're kind of a more Anglo church, and everybody around us has a more Hispanic or African-American background to them," church elder Gil Vollmering Jr. said. "So how do we break those stereotypes?"

One way, Vollmering said, is to sit down together — with no regard for race or ethnicity — and enjoy a no-strings-attached meal.

• **Members volunteer** at the Arlington Life Shelter, a nonprofit that provides short-term shelter

and employment training for homeless people.

Members teach classes weekly, deliver meals monthly and organize an annual fundraiser for the shelter's children's program.

"It's a very good model for a homeless shelter that actually gets people off the streets, off addictions and into jobs and housing," Peters said.

• **The church supports** the Arlington school district's pregnancy education program.

Members host an annual Christmas banquet for all pregnant or teen mothers and fathers in the school district and buy gifts for the parents and babies.

"We have such a passion for those girls," church volunteer Ladelle Young, 83, said of the teen moms. "Some of the members here have had that



Students sign in before playing basketball and enjoying snacks. Youth family minister Darrell Lanford and volunteer Larry Minor man the registration table.

happen to their girl."

• **Members welcome** immigrants to the building each week for FriendSpeak, a national ministry that helps internationally born neighbors improve their English skills by reading the Bible.

North Davis volunteers have worked with immigrants from China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Vietnam.

"Our favorite thing all our life was to go on a mission trip, but now we have a mission trip every Wednesday," said Landis Hogue, who with her husband, Carl, helps organize FriendSpeak. "We just love it."

• **Hoping to reach** more Spanish speakers with the Gospel, the church supports Jesus and Carmen Rodriguez, part of a Hispanic church-planting team.

The Arlington Iglesia de Cristo (Church of Christ) is a cooperative effort of Great Cities Missions, the North Davis church and two other Arlington congregations: the

Hillcrest Church of Christ and the Woodland West Church of Christ.

Arlington's Hispanic population has grown to more than 100,000 — over a quarter of the city's total population of 380,000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"The North Davis church has been wonderful, supportive in every activity, everything we do," said Carmen Rodriguez, a native of Puerto Rico.



Church member Janelle Truitt shows off the clothing room at Hearts and Hands, a nonprofit organization that serves the needy in Arlington, Texas.



North Davis members sing "Everlasting God" during a Sunday morning worship assembly. Small groups meet on Sunday night.

'THEY'LL GIVE YOU A LITTLE HUG'

Back at "The Rec," between 90 and 120 students show up each Tuesday and Thursday to play basketball.

The Arlington Police Department honored the North Davis church with its 2013 community partner award. The department's official Twitter account touted the church's after-school undertaking as "an

amazing program."

The program has no overt focus on leading teens to Christ, Lanford said. But winning souls has been a natural progression of the outreach effort, the youth family minister said.

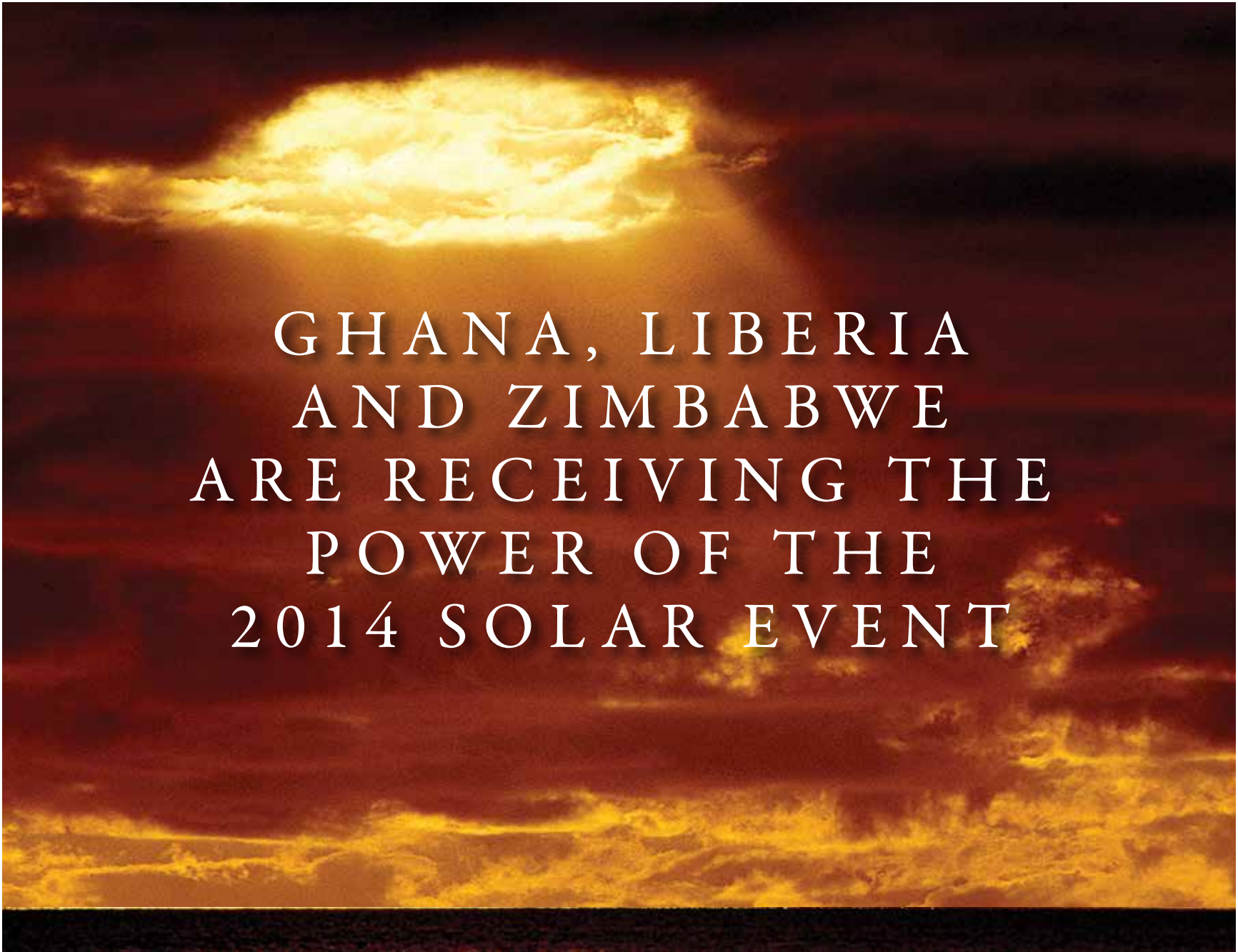
"We just try to meet them where they are," Lanford said of the teens.

About 12 to 15 North Davis church volunteers, mostly retirees, greet the students, serve snacks and offer tutoring.

"We just love being with the kids," said Jim Truitt, Janelle's husband and a North Davis member since 1967. "It's something that, when you see how much they enjoy it and what their special needs are, it just pulls you back like a magnet."

Larry Minor, a North Davis member since 1961, said he and his wife, Peggy, just try to be friendly.

The teens respond in kind. "Occasionally, they'll give you a little hug when they leave," Minor said. "How do you measure that?"



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ATTORNEY LORI WINDHAM discusses Hobby Lobby, liberty and the role of Christian education *'Religious freedom matters to everyone'*

BY ROBIN SAYLOR | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Political science and Bible classes have influenced the career of Lori Windham, a member of the legal team representing Hobby Lobby before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Windham, who grew up in Churches of Christ and enrolled at Abilene Christian University in Texas, said that her professors taught her how to argue effectively and pushed her to study her Bible and develop her faith. "I'll never forget Sunday night devos, worship in the amphitheater and Spring Break campaigns," she said.

After ACU, she earned her law degree from Harvard University and joined the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. Now, as senior counsel, she is part of the team representing Hobby Lobby's challenge of the Affordable Care Act contraception mandate. The case is important, Windham said, because it asks whether or not people give up their religious freedom when they open a family business.

Windham and her husband, Matt, attend the Fairfax Church of Christ in Virginia.

How did you get into the area of religious liberties law?

The relationship between church and state has always fascinated me. It's been a puzzle Christians have struggled to solve since the first century.

We don't have all the answers, but I believe that the U.S. Constitution is a great blueprint for how to respect religious belief while also promoting freedom for those who disagree.

While at ACU, and again in law school, I took internships focused on this issue. I was a research assistant studying this issue during law school, and when I graduated, I had the opportunity to come to the Becket



WWW.BECKETFUND.ORG

Lori Windham speaks on MSNBC's "Hardball" about Hobby Lobby's challenge to the contraception mandate of the Affordable Care Act. At press time, the U.S. Supreme Court had not ruled on the case. See updates and reaction at www.christianchronicle.org.

Fund and do religious freedom work full time. I jumped at the chance, and I have been doing this work ever since.

What do you consider the most pressing religious liberty issue facing our nation today?

The breakdown of the bipartisan coalition supporting religious freedom. In 1993, President Clinton and an almost unanimous Congress enacted the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, designed to protect Americans of all faiths.

In recent years, support for that act and other religious freedom measures has splintered along partisan lines. Religious freedom shouldn't be a Republican issue or a Democratic issue, but an American issue. If we lose the consensus that religious freedom matters to everyone, that sets the stage for a host of different problems.

What's your favorite part of your job?

When we win! In all seriousness, I love it when I can spend time with my clients, hearing their stories. An Amish community in upstate New York ran into problems with a local building code that didn't accommo-

date their way of life. The Amish were actually facing jail time for following their religious practices, but we got the town to dismiss all the charges.

While the case was going on, I spent a lot of time in lamp-lit farmhouses talking to Amish men and women about their way of life, how they understand the Bible, and the steps they take to protect their communities from modern society. (Also, eating their cookies. Did you know you can pay a lawyer in cookies?) I'm grateful to be part of cases that allow me to meet and learn about communities so different from my own.

What has been the most memorable and/or significant case in your career?

Hobby Lobby will probably go down as the most memorable. A couple of years ago, we handled a case involving hiring rights for religious schools. It went to the Supreme Court but did not get a lot of press coverage because the issues were pretty complex. We won a unanimous decision, and it was the first time that the Supreme Court had decided this particular issue.

Although it wasn't popular or sexy from a media perspective, it upheld an important constitutional principle

that the government cannot interfere in the special relationship between a church and its ministers.

It was one of the rare cases where "separation of church and state" was used to protect the integrity of churches. It's the kind of case that will be added to law school textbooks.

I'm honored that I was able to be part of such an important decision.

What was the most fascinating case?

In addition to Hobby Lobby and the Amish case, I handled a goat sacrifice case in Euless. That was probably my most controversial case to date.

This client was a Santero who sacrificed goats in his garage as part of a religious ceremony. The question was how far a city could go in restricting religious exercise in a person's own home. We relied on a Texas religious freedom law that had never been interpreted by the courts.

We won, and since that time, the same law has been used to protect other religious groups, including a child wearing a religious symbol in public school and Christian ministries housing the homeless.

Anything you would like to add?

I'll always be grateful to Abilene Christian University for a strong Christian education.

Christian education, especially higher education, is critically important because it wrestles with tough questions about faith and how it applies to and interacts with many different areas of study.

After I graduated and went on to a secular law school, I realized how much I missed studying our laws through the lens of a rich faith tradition. ACU is doing God's work, and I'm blessed to be part of that community.

ROBIN SAYLOR is editor of Abilene Christian University's website. See an expanded version of this interview at blogs.acu.edu/acutoday.

FICTION: Author's priority is 'to honor God with my writing'

FROM PAGE 3

brainstorms with her. Her son, Jacob, runs her website. serenabmiller.com.

The road to publication was not easy, though. For decades before she got her first contract, Serena Miller submitted articles and short stories to various periodicals. She attended conferences and workshops, including activities sponsored by the non-profit Romance Writers of America, and sought publishers and agents.

While this training was valuable, Serena Miller said she heard a lot of advice that, if she wanted to sell books, she would need to include explicit sex scenes. For the preacher's wife, this was not an option.

"My first priority has always been to honor God with my writing," she said. "I also want to write books that a 15-year-old can share with her grandmother. And I want to leave people with hope."

She almost lost hope herself at one point. She considered quitting. Her husband urged her to continue. "I told her, 'No. You are a writer. Write. No matter what happens, do what you're good at,'" Steve Miller said. "She kept on, and I'm glad she did."

Eventually, she found a publisher. The offers — and deadlines — followed. She's won a RITA Award, given by the Romance Writers of America and considered the highest award in the romance genre, and a Carol Award for Historical Romance, presented by American Christian Fiction Writers. She's been nominated for the Christy Award, given to novels of excellence written from a Christian worldview.

Not bad for a 64-year-old preacher's wife from "out in the boonies," as Serena Miller calls her rural home.

FROM BOOK TO FILM

"Love Finds You in Sugarcreek, Ohio" is one in a series of romances published by the now-defunct Summerside Press. The story takes



JACOB MILLER

Steve and Serena Miller stand in front of the meeting place of the Sunshine Church of Christ in Portsmouth, Ohio.

place in Ohio's Amish country, where a mysterious stranger, Joe Matthews, takes refuge with his son at a farmhouse inn run by three elderly Amish women.

Their niece, police officer Rachel Troyer, suspects Matthews is a criminal and tries to uncover his secret as she fights her own growing feelings of affection for him.

The story was perfect for Chevonne O'Shaughnessy, a Los Angeles film producer. Her company, Mission Pictures International, produces and distributes family-friendly films, some of them faith-based, including "The Ultimate Gift," "Seven Days in Utopia" and "To Save a Life."

"We're listening

to what buyers are looking for," O'Shaughnessy said. "The main thing that is working in the international market is family-friendly films with a female main character. So the 'Love Finds You' series has that. And with 'Love Finds You at Sugarcreek,' there was also an element of suspense — plus the fact that it had sold



MISSION PICTURES INTERNATIONAL

Tom Everett Scott and Thomas Kapanowski star as father and son in "Love Finds You at Sugarcreek."

2 million copies told us that it had followers already."

The June 1 premiere of the movie broke ratings records for family friendly UPTv, drawing 2.2 million viewers. It was the "strongest premiere of any original movie in the network's history," according to a news release from the network.

Filming took place in Sugarcreek, Ohio, about three and a half hours from the Millers' home in Minford. Serena Miller was on set often, at the invitation of the filmmakers.

"So many scenes were exactly what I had imagined when I wrote it," she said.

In addition to Scott, the film also stars Kelly McGillis, whose role as an Amish woman in the 1985 Harrison Ford film "Witness" made her one of Miller's favorite actors.

"There's a line where Kelly McGillis says, 'We won't compromise when it comes to doing God's will,'" Miller said. "That's become my battle cry. I've become a lot more tough in my faith."

COLLEGE DROPOUT, ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

Part of what kept Serena Miller from writing for so many years was not just life, church and mother duties (she and her husband have



OHIO VALLEY UNIVERSITY, OVU.EDU

Serena Miller with the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award from Ohio Valley University President Harold Shank.

three children, now grown).

It was the fact that she didn't have a college degree. She thought that writing "was the kind of profession where you had to be really, really smart, or really, really educated, or have some kind of magic," she said.

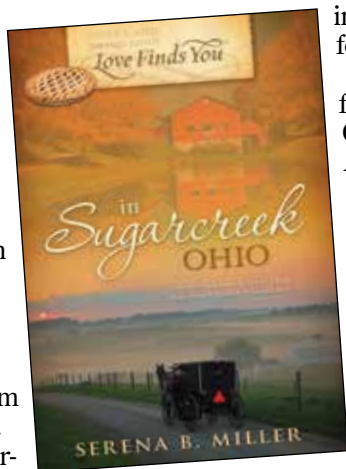
She attended Ohio Valley University, in Vienna, W.Va., for only one year. Nonetheless, the university, associated with Churches of Christ, recently named her its 2014 Distinguished Alumnus.

The university's president, Harold Shank, said he is pleased to see Scriptures spoken in a television movie based on Serena Miller's book. Though she wasn't at Ohio Valley long, the university is "proud to have had a small role in her education," Shank said.

"Serena is a person who has entered the romance novel world, with all of its worldly qualities, and yet she is holding fast to her Christian convictions, which is very admirable," he added.

Though she took a different, more winding path than many writers, Serena Miller's later-in-life success came without compromise.

As her husband said, "She's slow out of the gate, but she's fantastic in the back stretch."





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The **Graduate School of Theology** invites applications for a tenure-track position in New Testament, beginning Fall 2015. Rank is open, depending on the candidate's experience and qualifications. The successful candidate should hold a terminal degree (Ph.D. or Th.D.) in the field. The successful candidate also must demonstrate competence in teaching and must possess a well-defined program of research as evidenced by peer-reviewed publications and presentations. The committee will begin reviewing applications on July 1, 2014, and continue until the position is filled. Additional information about the Graduate School of Theology can be found at acu.edu/gst.

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

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CAMPING

CENTRAL FLORIDA BIBLE CAMP

EUSTIS, Fla. — Children who trek to this faith-based camp in the Sunshine State will notice improvements, thanks to local Christians.

Members of the Mount Dora Church of Christ in Florida installed a new metal roof on the camp's Langford Cottage.

Three volunteers also installed new light fixtures and a new deck on the Eustis Manor cabin, sponsored by the Orange Avenue Church of Christ in Eustis.

K-12 SCHOOLS

CLARKSVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. — Landon Lee Darnell was a graduating class of one. Darnell was the first-ever graduate



of Clarksville Christian, founded in 2007. Next year the school anticipates four graduates, and the rising sophomore class has 16 students enrolled, school officials said.

Landon Lee Darnell speaks at Clarksville Christian School's first graduation.

Darnell said, "but the friends you do have are one-of-a-kind. Clarksville Christian is not just a school — it's a Christian family teaching each other about God."

GREAT LAKES CHRISTIAN

BEAMSVILLE, Ontario — He spent his weeks nurturing young minds to serve Christ — and his weekends preaching the Gospel.

Brian Borden retired from Great Lakes Christian High School after 44 years of service — the past 20 as principal. During his tenure, he preached for Churches of Christ nearly every Sunday, chief administrator Don Rose said.

"Few people I know have committed so much of their lives to



CLIFF GANUS

Choral students stop to smell the flowers in Hungary

Singers from the Harding University Chorus in Searcy, Ark., take a whiff or two at a garden in Szolnok, Hungary. The students spent nearly a month in Europe, singing at concerts arranged by Churches of Christ in Italy, Switzerland, Slovakia, Croatia and Hungary. In Szolnok, church member Tibor Tamas arranged for a joint concert with two local groups, said Cliff Ganus, chairman of the music department at Harding and director of choral activities. In Vicenza, Italy, the group sang, and Earl Lavender, professor and director of missional studies at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., spoke. The events provided good outreach for the churches, Ganus said.

ministry in the ways that Brian and his wife, Mary, have," Rose said.



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Brian Borden speaks in chapel — as a teenager and recently at Great Lakes.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

HENDERSON, Tenn. — Hundreds of campers prepared 155,520 meals for the hungry during the annual GO! Camp sponsored by Freed-Hardeman.

The university partners with nonprofit Feed My Starving

Children to prepare the meals.

Seven people were baptized during the camp, which featured speakers including Rob Touchstone of The Well Coffeehouse in Nashville, Tenn., and Erin Bernhardt, who works with the African Children's Choir and is producing a movie, "Imba Means Sing."

SOUTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

TERRELL, Texas — Students sang in 22 cities in 28 days during a recent fundraising tour for this Texas college.

The tour, named after pioneering preacher J.S. Winston, began in Dallas and ended in El Paso, Texas.

The road-weary students sang renditions of hymns under the direction of Stephanie Booker, the college's new choral director.

TO SUBMIT ITEMS for consideration for Partners, email bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org. Contributing writer James A. Maxwell assisted with this month's news briefs.

SPOTLIGHT

Hands-on Kenya mission

NAIROBI, Kenya — Nine students from Lubbock Christian University in Texas spent six weeks in this East African nation as part of a new missions internship.

The program allows student to apply their education in practical ways, coordinators said, working with single mothers, widows and orphans. Students volunteered in schools and medical clinics and worked on agricultural projects.



PHOTO PROVIDED

LCU students Hannah Sutton and Taylor Castleberry share a laugh in Kenya.

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At Deer Run, campers 'see God in his creation'

Young men and women form a circle and pray at Camp Deer Run, a Christian camp in the piney woods of East Texas. Each summer, Deer Run serves about 1,200 campers from Texas and surrounding states. Campers range in age from 9 to 17.

The camp, established in 1958, hires 50 college students to work as summer staff.

"Campers see God in his creation and feel his love through care of our summer staff," director Ty Ford said. "In all things, we pray that God is glorified and that the story of his son is shared in our lives and lessons."

Mars Hill Bible School retires last bus donated by supporter

FLORENCE, Ala. — Since 1947, big yellow school buses have transported children from various towns across northwest Alabama to Mars Hill Bible School, thanks to the generosity of Charlie and Frances Morris.

Charlie Morris served on the school's first board of directors.

Morris, owner and operator of an automobile business, saw the need to transport students from a wide area to get the school established.

He agreed to provide buses for the school, a practice he continued for 45 years.

"My husband and I benefited from that gift as we each rode on some of those buses throughout our elementary and high school days," said Laurel Sewell, wife of Milton Sewell, chancellor of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LAUREL SEWELL

Relatives of the late Charlie Morris gather to retire the last bus he donated.

The last bus provided by Morris, who died in 1998, was retired recently. A number of the Morris' descendants gathered at the school for pictures with the bus.

Minister Wanted

The **Ypsilanti church of Christ**, located in Ypsilanti, Mich., is seeking to fill our vacant minister position: this includes pulpit, class and evangelistic duties. We are a diverse congregation with a current average Sunday a.m. attendance of 130.

If you desire to be considered for this position, please submit your resume with three sermons (audio and/or video) to:

ypsicofc@gmail.com

For further information contact:
Bob Bowen (elder) at (734) 482-6213.

P O Box 2070
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Pulpit Minister Needed

We are a congregation of 120 members located in Louisville, Ky. We are searching for an experienced, mature, evangelistic pulpit minister to work as a team with the elders, youth minister, deacons, and various ministry leaders. The appropriate candidate will be an active leader in the areas of ministry to promote programs designed to lead and develop others to grow spiritually and become leaders as well. We are searching for a biblically grounded man with a minimum of 5 years preaching experience. A bachelor's degree in Bible or a related field is desired. Salary is negotiable based on experience and education. Compensation includes a home located on the church property.

Visit **wtcoc.org** to learn more about us and the position.

Send cover letters and resumes to:
Watterson Trail Church of Christ
9607 Watterson Trail
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ATTN: Minister Search

Or email:
wtchurchofchrist@gmail.com

Full-Time Minister

The **King of Prussia Church of Christ** in Pennsylvania is seeking a passionate, doctrinally sound, and Biblically-driven congregational minister who is spiritually mature, Spirit-led and dedicated to equipping and encouraging the elders, deacons, ministry leaders and church members to ministry, maturity, and missions; caring for the church, leading the congregation in outreach to the community and motivating participation in our missions efforts throughout the world.

Contact the search committee chair, Andrew Cooper, at: **Andrew.Cooper01@comcast.net**

The church of Christ in Wheeler, Texas, is searching for a pulpit minister.

Our preference is a married man with some experience as a full-time preacher, with a Biblical degree and a deep knowledge of the scriptures. Our 125-member congregation is diverse in background and age. We have many young families who will be a major focus of our mutual efforts. We have three elders. See online classified for more details.

Please contact: **Stacy McCasland**
806 886-4000
mccas@me.com

Full-Time Minister

The **Richmond church of Christ** in Kentucky is looking for a family/youth minister to motivate, teach, and encourage Christian development that fosters unity among our youth and families.

Learn more: www.richmondcc.org

Serious inquiries send email to:
familyminister@richmondcc.org

We would like to have a man in the position by August 1, 2014.

Full-Time Minister

Yucaipa Church of Christ

We are a medium-sized congregation with an average Sunday morning attendance of 120. We are looking to hire a full-time minister who is a family man and is evangelistically motivated. We desire to hire a man who believes in the restoration principle and that the Bible is ultimate truth.

For additional information, please contact:
Jack Shupe at (909)797-1919 or
Dan Campbell at (909)224-6114



Houseparent Position

The Albuquerque Christian Children's Home is all about the children--loving them, helping them heal and teaching them about God's love. We are looking for a married couple who are faithful members of the church of Christ to come and work as Houseparents. Benefits included.

If you are interested, send your cover letter of interest and resume(s) addressed to our Executive Director, Everett White.

Please send to the email address:
sroberson@acch4kids.org
www.acch4kids.org

Bilingual Children's Minister - Miami, Florida

The **Sunset Church of Christ** is a 500-member bilingual church located in **Miami, Fla.** We are seeking a bilingual individual to oversee our Children's Ministry in both English and Spanish.

For more information:
(305) 271-8141
churchoc@bellsouth.net

Applications accepted through August 31st.



Foster Parents

Potter Children's Home and Family Ministries in Bowling Green, Kentucky, has been serving children and their families for 100 years. We are seeking foster parents for our on-campus Foster Care home for boys. In addition to the daily duties required in running a household, the foster parents will provide appropriate structure and supervision, transportation, participation in planning meetings and other activities that support the work. Couples must be faithful members of the church of Christ. They should also meet the state of Kentucky's requirements for foster parents, have a strong marriage, and be in good physical health. This is a live-in position with both parents hired. Salary is based on experience. Benefits are provided.

For further information see our website:
www.potterministries.org

If you are interested contact: Tom Doty, Minister of Family Services, by phone at 270-843-3038 or by email at tom@potterministries.org.

Full-Time Preacher

The **Church of Christ of Tooele, Utah**, has an opening for a full-time preacher to work with the congregation in Tooele County, Utah.

Please send resume to:

Church Of Christ
Box 426
Tooele, UT 84074

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NEWSMAKERS

Memorials

Gerald C. Cleveland

Gerald C. Cleveland, 78, a retired school principal and minister, went to be with our Lord Nov. 20, 2013.

Gerald was born on March 13, 1935, to Omar and Zula Cleveland in Cottondale, Texas. He was united in marriage to Carolyn Kay Hollaway on March 29, 1957, in Baytown, Texas. Gerald graduated from Paradise High School in 1953. He received a bachelor's degree from Abilene Christian College and a master's degree from Sam Houston State.

Gerald served as the second mayor of the City of Paradise, as principal in Santa Fe I.S.D., and he ministered for Christ in Whitewright, League City, Galveston, Hitchcock, Santa Fe, Cottondale and Crafton — all Texas cities. He also held gospel meetings in Barry and Quincy, Ill., Baytown, Texas, Pagosa Springs, Colo., Cody, Wyo., and spoke at the Grand Teton Family Gathering in Wyoming.

Those left behind to cherish his memory are his wife of 56 years, Carolyn Cleveland, of Paradise; his daughter, Patti Kay Tax and husband Joe of Paradise; his son, Jerry Don Cleveland and wife Lidia of Santa Fe, Texas; his daughter, Lori Kay Rhodes and husband David of Grand Prairie; eight precious grandchildren: James, Eric, Jacob, Miranda, Ashley, Victoria, Jonathan and Katie; his sister, Georgia Ruth Morris and husband Hulen of Paradise; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and a large host of friends. His hobbies were reading, gardening, building bird houses, writing children's stories and poems, doing things for others and playing with his grandchildren.



Lee J. Watkins

Lee passed away on Mother's Day, May 11, 2014, at the age of 102.

Born on May 4, 1912, in Madison, Tenn., he was a graduate of Goodlettsville High School and David Lipscomb College, class of 1932.

He began his career working for Tennessee Power & Light and then moved to Panama to work with his uncle at Standard Fruit Co. When World War II broke out, the government decided that he could best serve in Panama as a Merchant Marine.

He and his wife, Marian, were married in Panama, and after the war they settled in Sarasota, Fla., in 1948, opening one of the first Western Auto stores in Florida. He later owned two businesses, retiring at age 75 from Watco Sales.

A dedicated Christian, husband and father, he gave the Lord credit in *all* things, from establishing the first church in Panama to being an integral part in the establishment of the Fruitville, South Trail and Central Churches of Christ in Sarasota. His greatest desire was the furthering of the Lord's Kingdom. He served faithfully as an elder for many years and was part of several campaigns to the Caribbean as well as a supporter of missionaries in Ireland, Spain and Trinidad.

He loved the Lord with all his heart and lived a long and faithful life as a true example of that love.

Lee was a longtime and loyal supporter of World Christian Broadcasting in their efforts to preach the Gospel to the entire world through the building of radio towers in Alaska and Madagascar.

Memorials may be made in his name to World Christian Broadcasting, 605 Bradley Ct., Franklin, TN 37069.



He is preceded in death by his "little bride," Marian, and survived by two daughters: Marilyn Watkins of Sarasota, Linda Lee Giddens (Steve), of McKinney Texas, two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Scott Arthur Bostic

Scott Arthur Bostic was born Feb. 18, 1936, in Paris, Texas, to Leon Bostic and Euphemia Clement. He was the eldest of three, followed by brothers Donald and Ronald.

After high school, Scott pursued a degree in biology

at PrairieView College near Houston. He enrolled in the ROTC program, and after graduation in 1957, he joined the ranks of Army officers as a second lieutenant.

During a brief assignment in Michigan, he met Bobbie Jean Rogers at a social event. She wouldn't give out her phone number, but fortunately she was listed in the phone book. Knowing she was the love of his life, he married Bobbie in 1960. She accompanied him on tours of duty in Europe and across the United States.

Some tours of duty carried Scott to places too dangerous for a young family. When his assignments in Korea and Vietnam were completed, Bobbie breathed a sigh of relief. Lt. Col. Bostic retired from the Army in 1977, then settled his family in East Lansing, Mich.

He received his master's in education administration from Michigan State University and briefly pursued a career as an educator. Soon his professional interests led him to become a logistics analyst for the federal government in Battle Creek, Mich. For 17 years, Scott made the daily, 120-mile commute that put food on the table and wore out two Ford Escorts. In 1989, Scott was named the Defense Logistics Agency's Employee of the Year.



AWARDED: Sherri Mazur, a 2014 graduate of Faulkner University's Jones School of Law in Montgomery, Ala., second-best trial advocate in the nation at Baylor University's Top Gun Competition. **Jacob Sims**, a student at Mobile Christian School in Alabama, the National Merit Scholarship from the University of Alabama.

RETIRING: Bobby Dockery as pulpit minister for the Baldwin Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Ark., after 43 years of service.



ANNIVERSARIES: **Dockery** **58th:** David and Marion Tyree, Dallas. **60th:** Burt and Sammye Baggott, Nashville, Tenn.; Ed and Barbara Berlin, Charlotte, N.C. **61st:** Zann and Lexie Ray, Benton, Ky. **67th:** L. T. and Joan Barber, Bethany, Okla.; Don and Shirley Genrich, Albion, Neb.

BIRTHDAYS: **99th:** Mary Frances McHam, Bryan, Texas. **97th:** Ethel McCallie, Nowata, Okla. **95th:** Elzora "Susie" Rowe, Pensacola, Fla.; Trudie Wright, Livingston, Texas. **92nd:** Shirley Genrich, Albion, Neb. **89th:** Mabel Perry Taylor, Florence, Ala.

PASSAGES: **Gerald Austin Beasley**, 93, April 19, Oklahoma City. **Lawrence "Larry" Bosworth**, 90, March 22, Jewett City, Conn. **Pearl Boyce**, 96, May 27, Wichita, Kan. **Phyllis Chambers**, 83, June 9, Edmond, Okla. **Almarie (Payne) Denham**, 91, May 31, Paragould, Ark. **Doris Elder**, 86, June 10, Greeley, Colo. **James Timothy "Tim" Eldridge**, 47, May 10, Nashville, Tenn. **Ernest "Ernie" Gill**, 85, May 27, Corbin, Ky. **Carlos Martinez**, 45, May 22, San Pedro Sula, Honduras. **Hubert "Hugh" Glenn Minor**, 85, May 7, Madison, Ala. **Rex Owens**, 88, April 12, Fort Worth, Texas. **Alice Sheppard**, 86, May 23, Austin, Texas. **Vivia Simmons**, May 30, Pheonix, Ariz. **Larry W. Tubbs**, 58, June 16, Licking, Mo.

Continued on next page

July 10-12 Campus Ministry United Workshop. Park Plaza Church of Christ, Tulsa, Okla. www.campusministryunited.com.

July 13-16 Caribbean Lectureship. Montego Bay, Jamaica. www.caribbeanlectureship.com.

July 13-18 Sound Doctrine Summit. Lewis Street Church of Christ, Little Rock, Ark., (501) 666-2074.

July 13 25th Anniversary, Church of Christ, Hilton Head, S.C. (843) 686-2323, www.hiltonheadchurchofchrist.org.

July 19-25 Tahoe Family Encampment. Contact pmethvin1968@comcast.net.

July 24-27 Campus for Christ Conference. Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tenn. See www.campuscrosswalk.org.

July 23-27 Global Reunion 2014. (405) 590-2331, www.intermissionministry.org.

July 24-27 Angel Fire In-Depth Symposium. Angel Fire, NM. (918) 645-8114, www.johnwsmith.com/AngelFire.html.

June 26-30 Houston Area Campaign for Christ. M. O. Campbell Center, Houston. Go to www.houstonchurchesofchrist.org; email gsmith@fifthwardcoc.org.

July 30-Aug. 3 Pepperdine Family Camp. Pepperdine University, Malibu, Calif. (310) 506-6602, www.pepperdine.edu/familycamp.

Aug. 1-2 31st Annual American Indian Missions Seminar. Church of Christ in Gallup, N.M. (505) 722-2937, www.gallupchurchofchrist.com.

August 1-3 100th Anniversary, Church of Christ, Tabernacle, N.J. (609) 268-0576 or www.weplantandwater.org.

Aug. 8-9 National Meeting of Hispanic Preachers and Leaders. Northside Church of Christ, Benton, Ark. See www.XIIreunion-nacionaldepredicadores.com.

Aug. 9-10 70th Anniversary, Highland View Church of Christ, Oak Ridge, Tenn. (865) 483-7471, www.highlandviewchurch.org.

August 22-28 Polishing the Pulpit. Sevierville Events Center, Sevierville, Tenn. (877) 338-3397 or www.polishingthepulpit.com.

SEE MORE at www.christianchronicle.org.

Milestones *continued*

Scott Arthur Bostic Continued

Scott always had a positive attitude; he was personable, smiling, and loved to laugh. He enjoyed discussing events of the day, especially if the discussion was over a good meal.

He had an unshakable faith in the fundamental goodness of people, and he was generous to those in need.

Anyone who knew Scott knew of his love of sports, especially golf. If it wasn't golf, Scott was discussing Michigan State football, basketball, the Detroit Lions, or the Tigers. Many times he would ask, "Did you watch the game?" and people had no idea

which game he was talking about.

Beyond the details of his personal accomplishments, Scott was committed to serving God, especially through service to young people. Throughout his adult life, he demonstrated a profound desire to be a person through whom God's love could shine. Wherever his military service or professional career took him, he found a church, and he got to work.

He served first as deacon, then as elder, of the Holmes Road Church of Christ. When Scott taught youth worship there, he would stay up late on Saturday nights painting watercolor art to be given to his most attentive student. Scott led singing in the Wyoming Avenue Nursing Home ministry, taught

youth worship, and found a special role in Vacation Bible School.

Scott loved to create elaborate displays full of form and color, and the kids loved them. At a school where Bobbie worked, Scott set up a special class to teach chess to the students. He wanted the next generation to develop the thinking skills they needed to succeed. Scott always found a way to use his talents and interests to serve in God's Kingdom. He truly lived a lifetime of service, and he served as long as he was able.

Scott passed on May 9, 2014. He is survived by his wife, Bobbie, and their three sons: Michael, Roger, and David and daughter-in-law Simple, who all loved him dearly.

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

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EDITORIAL

A respected voice in Christian media falls silent

Our fellowship needs Christian journalism. Among Churches of Christ, which follow the biblical pattern of congregational autonomy, news services perform the vital task of delivering information that unites us, occasionally concerns us and demonstrates that we are not alone.

Rocky Mountain Christian has served this role nobly for 42 years. The Colorado-based newspaper was founded by Jack Carter, Roy Lanier Jr. and Max Hughes. Carter's son, Ron Carter, served as its longtime editor. His children,

Bret Carter and Julie Oehlert, have continued the work.

We were saddened to learn that the May-June 2014 issue is the *Rocky Mountain Christian's* last. The paper has been "a respected voice of teaching and

local news for churches in the western states," said Lynn McMillon, president and CEO of *The Christian Chronicle*.

While we're sorry to learn that an important voice of Christian journalism will fall silent, we certainly understand the challenges of producing — and mailing — news to people of faith. We're encouraged by the editors' words in the final issue: "Like all things in this temporary world, it is just a matter of time before the final word is printed. All things have a beginning and all things have an end, except for the kingdom of God."

We're equally encouraged that Bret Carter will continue to produce articles and editorials on his blog, www.nosmallcommotion.blogspot.com.

Rocky Mountain Christian will be remembered as an important voice of New Testament Christianity. As we grapple with the ever-changing landscape of news media, we thank you, dedicated readers, for your unyielding support of our efforts to deliver — in print and online — information that informs, inspires and unites.



Our mission: Inform, Inspire, Unite

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

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



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letters@christianchronicle.org



ERIK TRYGGSTAD

Volunteers teach Bible class in San Pedro, Belize, during a mission trip to the Central American nation.

Don't just show love ... say the words

"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

— 1 Corinthians 13:13

Three of the simplest — yet most profound — words that can be uttered are "I love you."

These words are a necessary ingredient in a healthy, balanced relationship of any nature. Unfortunately, these words have been cheapened by a society that has confused love with so many other things that are as far from love's nature as east is from west. Yet the words "I love you" still capture the essence of any genuine relationship. Simple as they are, these words affirm, bring security and warmth.

Some argue, "I'm just not the type to say 'I love you,' I just show it in other ways." Though it is certainly important to show love, it may be equally vital to accompany loving deeds with words.

No matter how hard the outer shell of a person's personality, there is something about the words "I love you" that can penetrate the

most calloused, protective emotional armor.

Come out of yourself and give yourself to others in love. We all are hungry for it. To be loved, to be shown love and to be told we are loved moves mountains that often eclipse communication in any relationship.

Let not the words "I love you" be scarcely uttered, and you will find that these three words may open the door for even better deeds. Don't be afraid to use the three words that God says with the sacrifice of his son.

Our Father repeatedly expresses his love for us in countless ways — in spite of the fact they we are not lovable on our own. As Paul says in his letter to the Romans, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Since God never hesitates to express his love for us, what is holding you back? I challenge you to tell someone today that you love them. They will be blessed, and so will you.

J.K. HAMILTON is minister for the Church of Christ at Mountain View in Dallas. He blogs at jkhamilton.org.

In the Word



J.K. Hamilton



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Special Blessings: Church plays a loving role in ministering to child with autism

The biggest gamble you'll ever take is when you have kids." I've heard our minister, Gary Bradley, say it more than once from the pulpit of the Mayfair Church of Christ.

Why? Because "you never know how they're going to turn out," he says. He is right.

Joseph was our first child, and my husband Chris and I really didn't keep up with the developmental milestones. At Joseph's second birthday, our pediatrician suggested we check into his speech delay.

One of the first specialists we visited suggested that Joseph might have autism. We were floored. We knew absolutely nothing about autism, other than the movie "Rain Man." We hoped to find some other diagnosis — anything but autism.

We endured a year of long waiting lists to see various specialists to determine the exact diagnosis. He also began early intervention services, including occupational therapy and speech therapy.

When we finally received the confirmation that he had autism, it was one of the most difficult, soul-crushing times of our lives.

Five years have passed since that day. We have learned much more about autism, and we know that it is not a closed door.

There is hope and there is help. Autism spectrum disorders affect one in 68 people, usually males, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes.

Autism usually results in impaired communication and social interaction along with repetitive behaviors. In Joseph's case, he is mostly nonverbal, although he repeats certain words and phrases from TV shows. He can read, write and do math.

Sometimes people ask, "How do you know what Joseph wants since he can't talk?" But I just know. He makes it pretty clear what he wants, even though he doesn't use words.

Our church family has been extremely understanding. Our elders have prayed for us on multiple occasions and asked what they can do to help. Our children's minister, Randy Fowler, worked with us to create a Special Blessings class for Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. Marilyn Torrice teaches, assisted by a group of loving volunteers. Now Joseph learns God's Word in a classroom that accommodates his needs. Marilyn uses picture cards to prompt

him through the various routines of class activities — including prayer time and crafts based on Bible verses.

Mayfair also offers a Parents Night Out for families who have children with special needs. We are grateful for this respite care. It is one of the most useful things that churches can do for the community, because it often is difficult and expensive to find care.

What means the most to me are the people who offer to pray for our family.

I encourage my fellow Christians to welcome the families of special-needs children. I know it can be difficult to approach someone with a disability. People on the autism spectrum may have unexpected outbursts, cover their ears, or exhibit other unfamiliar behaviors. Ask them how best you can serve them. Show compassion. Be willing to learn new ideas and accept those with differences.

Always remember to watch what you say around people with autism. Whether or not they can speak, they usually understand what is being said. They share our feelings and emotions.

Joseph interacts with his younger brother Carson, age 4, in such a sweet and loving way as they play with blocks or have bath time together. Carson is typical and loves his big brother dearly.

Chris is a full-time dad and is so patient with both of our boys. I don't know how we would have done this without him. Chris takes Joseph to his speech therapy sessions and attends local autism workshops. His tireless support has enabled me to lead our local autism networking group, Making Connections, part of the Autism Society of Alabama.

My faith has grown stronger as I have learned to trust in the Lord, taking one day at a time and not worrying about the future.

I am not sure what the future holds for Joseph. We want to give him the flexibility and support he needs to reach his full potential. God created each of us in his image, and everyone is special — especially those with special needs. I know that my purpose is to help Joseph and to help spread awareness and understanding for everyone affected by autism.

I love seeing Joseph smile, knowing that he's happy. I know that he has a good time at church. When he draws, he always draws happy faces.

That is pretty awesome.

JANA MILLER and her family attend the Mayfair Church of Christ in Huntsville, Ala.

Views



Jana Miller



PHOTO PROVIDED

Chris and Jana Miller with sons Joseph and Carson.

LETTERS

'Do something,' but what?

Why are you criticizing Matthew West for calling us to get up and do something about the things that make us question God? (Editorial, Page 27, July)

I love his challenge. It moved me from my social media activism for life to actually volunteering in a pro-life ministry. It was time for me to put my time, energy and money where my mouth is.

Laurie Barbee | Davenport, Iowa

I doubt that Matthew West intended to solve the world's problems with a few minutes of song, but he is making a point that we all need to do something to make a change in this world. We need to stop sitting around saying how bad everything is. We need to get up and make that connection that will allow us to "do something" about what is broken in our world.

Catherine Rochell | Harlingen, Texas

I encourage all those who were troubled by the editorial — and who insist that doing something is always better than doing nothing — to read "When Helping Hurts," which was linked in the editorial. The book does not encourage us to do nothing. It tells us how to do something that is constructive rather than destructive. Those who think that "doing something" with good intentions could never be destructive are those who need to read it the most.

We have a group who went through a five-week class on the book recently in preparation for a short-term mission trip to Nicaragua. The book did not cause us to cancel the trip and do nothing. It prepared us to do something in the right way.

Clark Coleman | Charlottesville, Va.

I think you have a very valid point. The idea is not to do nothing, but to research what that "something" should be and not simply react out of emotion. ...

Often, our help is more to alleviate our uneasy feelings about what is going on rather than an informed desire to attack the root of the problem and to find a solution that honestly helps long term and does not simply treat the symptoms.

Do we want to give medicine to reduce the symptoms of the sickness or are we willing to study what will actually combat the disease? I know it is really hard to understand, but the American way of solving everyone's problems is not always the God way.

Kim Solis | Toluca, Mexico

A stingless death: Psychologist offers a fusion of ideas

The term *fusion* describes the sounds or tastes created when different musical styles or flavors are merged — each recognizable, but creating a new style altogether.

Richard Beck, a psychology professor at Abilene Christian University, practices a little literary fusion in his third book, **“The Slavery of Death.”** The book mixes early church leaders’ ideas (scholars call this “patristic thought”), existential psychology and modern theology.

Such a combination, he says, serves to prompt “continued interdisciplinary reflection and conversation.”

Beck begins with a call to reverse our view of sin and death to align with early church thinking — which he identifies as Orthodox. Catholics and Protestants tend to see death as a result of sin. Orthodox Christians say — as does Beck — that death and the fear it produces drive us to sin, since we make self-preservation our highest goal. Death, therefore, is the basic human problem that God is acting to remedy.

The second strain in this fusion is psychology, where “death” means literal death, but broadens to include loss — a psychological death, as it were. The fear of death is the foundation of human behavior

because it produces two kinds of anxiety — “basic anxiety,” our fear of survival, and “neurotic anxiety,” our fear of negative self-concept.

In America, where — for the vast majority of people — basic needs are met, we more likely experience anxiety over self-concept. Such anxiety leads us to repress the reality of death, using our time and resources to hide our own faults and needs.

Beck asserts that such repression frustrates a basic tenet of Christian life: “A society without need offers no occasions to serve each other or bear one another’s burdens.” The fear of death, therefore, is the root of social and personal brokenness.

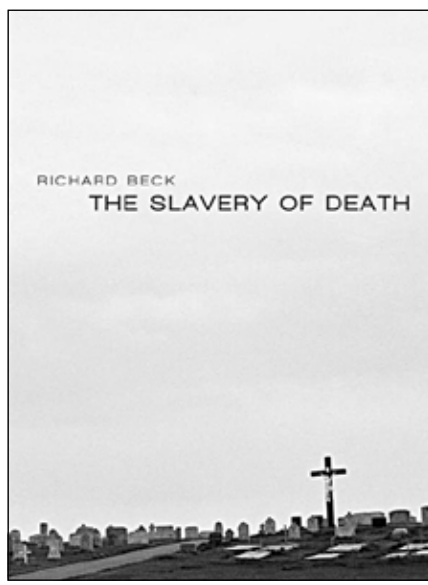
The third strain in the fusion is modern theology. Using the term “eccentric identity,” Beck argues that Christians must get their identities not from what they possess (which death will take away) but from something external to ourselves, namely the cross of Christ.

Beck also explains the “principalities and powers” and how systems and organizations call us to identify ourselves in relation to them. He calls such identification to things other than the cross idolatry. If our self-identity is not in the cross, then “our identities are being driven deep down by death anxiety,” he says.

The fear of death, therefore,



In Print
Mark Parker



★★★★☆
Richard Beck. **The Slavery of Death.** Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2014. 132 pages, \$17.

tempts us to various kinds of idolatry in the vain attempt to relieve our anxiety and spiritual guilt.

When the three strains are brought together, Beck’s fusion crescendos to declare the cross of Christ as the counterpoint to the anxious, sin-laced cacophony created by our fear of death. “The cross becomes the logical endpoint of the eccentric identity,” he writes.

He emphasizes spiritual practices such as singing and thankfulness, but of particular note is his framing

of prayer as a posture “where we do not possess anything but receive our lives as gift.”

Beck, as the chair of the psychology department at ACU, writes as a behavioral scientist finding revelation about human behavior in theological discourse. His blog, experimentaltheology.blogspot.com, was the dress rehearsal for the material in the book.

Despite the clear writing and welcoming tone, the book is almost exclusively theoretical. Beck explains clearly some difficult concepts, and his fusion of patristics, psychology and modern theology is fresh and dynamic. But the theoretical discussion limits readership to those individuals and groups comfortable with the abstract.

The focus on the cross is also praiseworthy, but Beck underplays the resurrection of Christ, his enthronement and the power of our future resurrection.

Neglecting these themes diminishes both the book’s theological power and connection to much of the New Testament.

Overall, Beck is to be thanked for making connections between his academic study and the work of God throughout history — fusing them into a song worth hearing.

MARK PARKER is young adults minister for the Grand Central Church of Christ in Vienna, W.Va. He teaches ministry and leadership at Ohio Valley University.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY: AUTHORS FROM CHURCHES OF CHRIST

ADDICTION
Mac and Mary Owen. **Never Let Go: God’s Story of Healing Hurting Lives.** Batavia, Ill.: Lucas Lane Publisher, 2013. 302 pages. \$14.99.

Mac Owen, former elder of the White’s Ferry Road Church of Christ in West Monroe, La., and his wife are leaders in the national Celebrate Recovery addiction support program and appear on a DVD series that is part of the program. In this book, they share their story of addiction and recovery.



FOR MINISTERS
Chris McCurley, editor. **Fit for the Pulpit.** Bowie, Texas: Start2Finish Books, 2013. 141 pages. \$15.99.

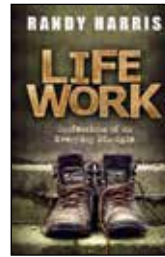
Eleven preachers, including Jeff Jenkins of the Lewisville Church of Christ in Texas and Neal Pollard of the Bear Valley Church of Christ in Denver, share their expertise.

Chapters are titled “The Preacher and ...,” and cover topics including relationships, criticism, sin and finances.



CHRISTIAN ETHICS
Randy Harris. **Life Work: Confessions of an Everyday Disciple.** Abilene, Texas: Leafwood Publishers, 2014. 160 pages. \$13.99.

Originating as lectures delivered by Harris, a professor of theology and ethics at Abilene Christian University, this book outlines seven principles of fair play, justice and peace. These basic ethics are not enough for Christians, who must instead embody “the subversive ethic of cruciformity,” he writes.



FOR WOMEN
Nancy Eichmain. **Beyond the Masquerade: Being Genuine in an Artificial World.** Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 2013. 126 pages. \$9.99.

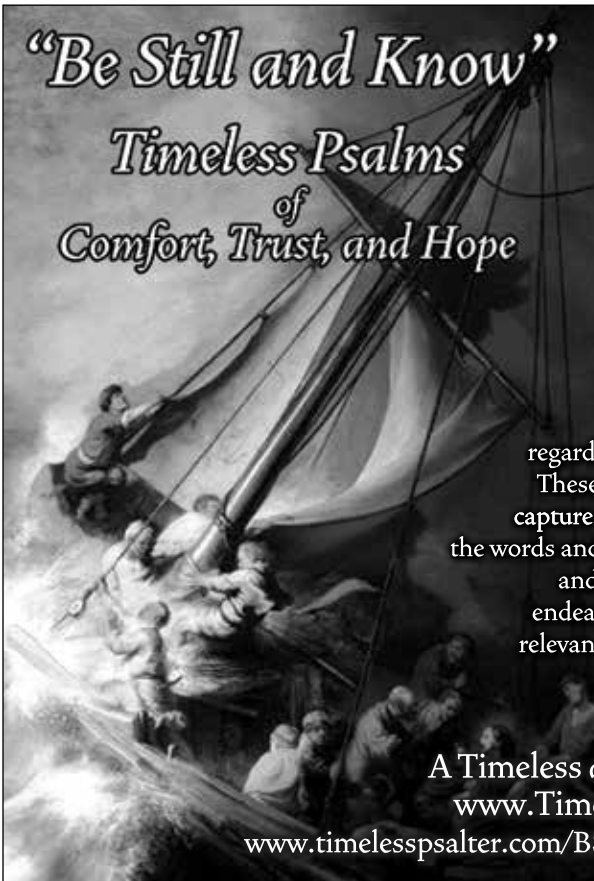
This 13-week study seeks to help women find their reality in Christ — not in the world. Topics include people-pleasing, true giving and hospitality. Each chapter ends with questions and a description of a trait of the Pharisees, who sought to hide behind supposed perfection.



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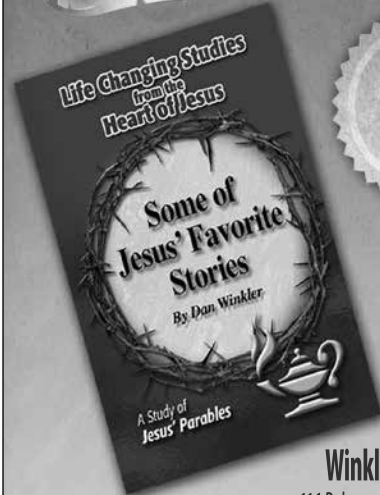
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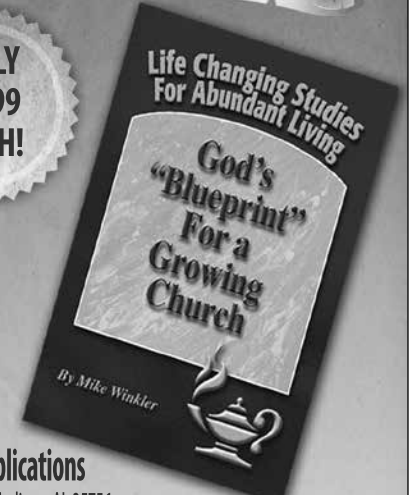
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Revelation 22:1

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To nurture students, Christian higher learning must remain true to founding principles of faith

Education — focused on the Bible and traditional liberal arts — is at the heart of the Restoration Movement.

As Alexander Campbell called followers of Christ to reject manmade creeds and embrace the simple truths of God's Word, he also encouraged them to pursue higher education, founding Bethany College in West Virginia.

Many more schools began during the 19th century, but few had the financial support to sustain their operations. Some survived, however, and thrived, including Lipscomb and Freed-Hardeman in Tennessee.

The early 20th century saw the beginning of Abilene Christian University and Harding University. In the late 1930s, George Pepperdine devoted his fortune to founding a college that has become a premier university in southern California.

Others followed, providing Bible training hand-in-hand with career preparation and guidance for Christian living. Among them are Faulkner University, Florida College, Heritage Christian University, Lubbock Christian University, Ohio Valley University, Oklahoma Christian University, Southwestern Christian College and York College.

These institutions believe that an education worth having begins with knowing God. They willingly accept responsibility for guiding students to mature Christian values, or, in the words of Don Morris, a former president of ACU, "completing the work of the Christian family."

In the history of American higher education, most private schools began with a foundation in Christian principles and connection to a religious group. Chapel, regular Bible study and close supervision of social life were characteristic of Harvard, Yale, Princeton and many private universities. But time and worldviews radically altered the mission and curriculum of these schools.

Almost no institution of higher education remains true to its founding principles or to the religious organization that created it. That sobering fact must prompt every institution associated with Churches

of Christ to examine more closely the trends and philosophy of their work.

Having studied trends in Christian education for most of my professional life, I am firmly convinced that no institution can be true to its founding principles if its trustees are not resolute in nurturing the faith of students. Trustees must have the vision of transforming lives through Bible study and Christian virtues.



Bailey McBride

Whenever academic excellence, national reputation or athletics takes over as the principal concerns of trustees, institutions begin to slip away from founding principles.

An institution's Christian principles are no stronger than the Christian commitment of the faculty. Faculty members who are mere "church-goers" weaken the institution's faith. Church members who are cynical about core values erode those values. Professors who are convicted firmly about the lordship of Jesus are models of faith and service for students who seek direction and guidance.

For at least 20 years, faculty and administrators at our higher education institutions have engaged in dialogue about the relationship between faith and learning. Faculties wrestle with showing the relationship of their disciplines to a Christian view of the world. Professors strive to profess Christ as clearly as they profess a philosophy of their discipline.

Christian higher education fills a vital role in preparing women and men for productive lives of faith and service. The culture of Christian colleges helps youths experience genuine transformation. They gain a vision of a fallen world desperately in need of Christ.

I urge parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles to encourage students — young and old — to consider seriously the value of Christian education.

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The Christian Chronicle

Vol. 71, No. 8 | August 2014 | www.christianchronicle.org

A heavenly GOOOOAL!

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