

In Canada, refugees find love and hope

FOR THESE SYRIANS, church members have become 'a second family.'

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ST. CATHARINES, Ontario

Ten-year-old Mohammed and his sister Miriam, 6, shriek with excitement when they hear knocking at the front door.

The pint-sized Syrian refugees are expecting Jori Warren, one of a handful of Canadian church members bringing meals while the children's mother, Samia, recovers from gallbladder surgery.

"Jori!" Mohammed exclaims as he jumps up. "I'll get it."

"No!" Miriam protests. "I want to get it."

The brother and sister trip over each other as they run to answer the door.

A year ago, two Churches of Christ south of Toronto — their hearts touched by the plight of strangers abroad and resolved to show the love of Jesus — sponsored the Faham Katan family's resettlement to Canada.

In the United States, new President Donald Trump's push to bar refugees from Muslim-majority nations deemed terrorism threats — including Syria — has dominated headlines.

But here in Canada, the government has welcomed 40,000 men, women and children fleeing Syria's civil war since Prime Minister Justin



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Mohammed Faham Katan, 10, with his sister Celine, 2.



MICHAEL E. BROOKS

A believer carries his mother to baptism

MADARIPUR, Bangladesh — After he showed her the Way, he carried her to the water.

Prodip Baraigi, a convert to Christianity in the Asian nation of Bangladesh, studied at Khulna Bible College, a ministry training school associated with Churches of Christ. He then returned to his native Madaripur District and began working for a hotel. He also shared his faith with his family, said Michael E. Brooks, missions minister for the Highland Park Church of Christ in Muscle Shoals, Ala. Brooks makes regular visits to Bangladesh and Nepal and assists the Bible college.

At Baraigi's request, Brooks visited the family

and studied with them. Five family members, including Baraigi's parents and younger brother, requested baptism.

"His mother is very frail," Brooks said. "She walked maybe 50 yards up the road to the path that led to the canal where we baptized them, but Prodip and his younger brother carried her from there."

The family forms the core of a new Church of Christ — the first in Madaripur — as Baraigi works to reach other souls in his homeland, Brooks said.

IN THE WORD: A recent baptism reminds a longtime missionary in Brazil of the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. **Page 27**



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FORT WORTH, Texas

For 30 years, an Idaho newspaper reporter wrote a weekly column with the simple premise that “Everyone Has a Story.”

David Johnson, who retired in 2013, focused on the ordinary lives of people chosen randomly from a phone book.

Inside Story



Bobby Ross Jr.

From time to time, I’ve wondered if *The Christian Chronicle* might turn up compelling features with arbitrary calls to the 12,300 congregations listed in “Churches of Christ in the United States,” the national directory published by 21st Century Christian.

In traveling to churches in all 50 states and 11 nations, I never have failed to return home with more interesting stories than we have space to publish. If that sounds like a wonderful problem, it is!

Kelly Moore, new president of the National Christian School Association, invited me to speak at the association’s recent annual conference in Fort Worth. My topic: “Sharing Your School’s Story in a Media Age.”

While my presentation related to schools, the concepts could benefit churches and parachurch ministries, too. Five questions for leaders to consider:

1. What is your story?

We’ve already established that you have a story. But

See **YOUR STORY**, Page 4



NATHANIEL HOWARD

At the Challenge Youth Conference in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., Christian comedy duo Ben and Travis lead thousands of Christians in a heartfelt rendition of “This Little Light of Mine.”

After wildfires, the shows and the ministries go on

TWO YOUTH EVENTS associated with *Churches of Christ* bring 25,000 young Christians to the Smoky Mountains – a spiritual and economic boost.

BY NATHANIEL HOWARD | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn.

Nearly four months ago, traffic crept along the Spur — a section of U.S. Route 441 that connects this East Tennessee town to nearby Gatlinburg — as thick smoke darkened the sky.

Flames licked the sides of the roads that evening, Nov. 28, 2016, while hundreds of motorists drove in the same direction on both sides of the highway to escape the blazes.

“We could smell the fires from Georgia,” said Cody Grill, a member of the Buford Church of Christ, 150 miles southwest of Gatlinburg. “I was worried about the cabins, that they were going to burn down.”

Many of them did. The wildfires killed 14 and damaged 2,500 buildings

— including the meeting place of the Gatlinburg Church of Christ.

As homeowners returned to salvage what they could from the ashes, the future of two Tennessee youth events, both associated with Churches of Christ, seemed uncertain.



Grill

Nonetheless, Grill and nearly 13,000 other Christians gathered, as usual, at the LeConte Center in Pigeon Forge for the recent Challenge Youth Conference, or CYC.

And a weekend earlier, traffic once again snaked along the Spur — back into Gatlinburg — as 12,000 more believers gathered for the annual Winterfest youth event.

Young Christians, parents and

See **WILDFIRES**, Page 22

Wiggles, fidgets and buddies

CHURCH CAN BE OVERWHELMING

for kids with special needs. Expert suggests equipment and techniques that can help.

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

OKLAHOMA CITY

Taft Lawrence loves to go to Bible class, but that hasn’t always been the case.

The songs, activities and interaction with other children can, at times, be overwhelming for the 5-year-old, one of 3.5 million Americans living with autism spectrum disorder. The simple input he receives through his senses — sight, sound, smell, taste and touch — can, with little warning, become a harrowing experience.

“Sometimes, if Taft was too overwhelmed or anxious to be in his class, we would have to stay home with him or be alone in an empty classroom caring for him during that time,” said his mother, Miranda Lawrence. “He’s too old for the nursery. There wasn’t a place for him.”

Taft isn’t alone. Autism, one of the

See **BUDDIES**, Page 9



MIRANDA LAWRENCE

Taft Lawrence, age 5, spends time with his buddy, Natalie Reed, during Bible class.

YOUR STORY: Five questions for leaders to consider

FROM PAGE 3

what is it? A good place to start is to ask: What is your mission? What examples can you show of pursuing or fulfilling that mission? What excites you about your congregation, ministry or school? What person or project in your fold best epitomizes what you are all about? More than likely, the answers will lead to story ideas — no shortage of them, in most cases.

2. Who is your audience?

Once you know what story you want to tell, you must determine the audience you hope to reach.

If you're a school, is it prospective students and parents? If you're a ministry, is it potential financial supporters? If you're a congregation, is it the community you serve?

Identifying your desired audience will help you figure out the best means of sharing your story.

3. What ideas can you pitch to the traditional media?

Make a list of key media outlets — be it the local newspaper or a television station — that might be interested in your story.

Try to make a connection with a reporter or editor with each outlet. Find out how the journalist likes to be contacted. Many prefer email to phone calls or personal visits.

Pay attention to the stories and features that your preferred outlet publishes, and try to pitch ideas that fit within their normal approach. If your suggestion is rejected, respond in a gracious way that reflects well on your faith-based organization.



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Two decades of service to Christian schools

Leaders of the National Christian School Association sing "We Love You with the Love of the Lord" to outgoing President Philip Patterson and his wife, Linda, during the association's annual meeting in Fort Worth, Texas. Philip Patterson, distinguished professor of mass communication at Oklahoma Christian University, served the association for 20 years.

VIEWS: Christian and public schools must give freedom back to educators. Page 28

"I do think it's important for us not to get discouraged," said Kim Chaudoin, assistant vice president for communication and marketing at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. "I mean, if you stop and think about it for a few minutes, what we do in PR ... can be overwhelming and discouraging.

"There are so many messages hitting all of us that sometimes you wonder how on earth you can ever break through all of the clutter," Chaudoin added. "We still have to communicate clearly — and still have to have good stories to tell."

4. How might you use new media to tell your story?

As much as I hate to admit it, the traditional media are not the only game in town anymore. There are great — and inexpensive — ways for an organization, regardless of size, to share its story directly with desired audiences.

Options include free platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as well as tools such as mobile apps, email and blogs.

And, of course, video is crucial. "In this day and age, when equipment is so cheap, when software is so easy to use, and when publication

costs are nada, there is no excuse not to be adding video to school social media feeds and parent communication pieces and e-newsletters and news releases," said Grant Rampy, former public relations director for Abilene Christian University in Texas.

Remember, though, that easy access to communication channels heightens potential challenges as well as blessings.

"Social media provides an opportunity to have a conversation, and while it eliminates the necessity of gatekeepers in reaching large groups of people, it also brings great responsibility," said Dawn Bramblett, co-owner of an agency that handles public relations for Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn.

"Although creating and posting on an account is technically free," Bramblett added, "doing it well requires a significant investment in time — both for creating quality content and answering feedback 24/7."

5. When was the last time you updated your website?

I can't tell you how often (read: frequently) I visit a church website that hasn't been updated in forever.

You click a section title like "Latest News," and the most recent post came in 2012. Or there's a calendar page, and it's blank. Trust me, outdated or incomplete information does not make a positive impression.

You have a story to tell — no doubt a wonderful one. May God bless your efforts to share it.

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SPOTLIGHT

Bible Bowl champions

WALLED LAKE, Mich. — The Walled Lake Church of Christ hosted the recent Great Lakes Bible Bowl State Championship. The event drew a crowd of 300.

Teams in primary, junior and senior divisions compete in metro Detroit to advance to the state championship. The championship features the top three teams in each division.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROGER WOODS

A few of the Bible Bowl winners gather on stage.

“Great Lakes Bible Bowl has been challenging children to study God’s Word for over 40 years,” said Roger Woods, minister and elder for the Walled Lake church.

Frank C. Schipani is the event’s chairman and is supported by a board made up of members of several congregations, Woods said.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARY BROWN

New England Church Growth Conference draws nearly 200 participants

For the 10th year in a row, the Manchester Church of Christ in Connecticut hosted the New England Church Growth Conference. The recent conference drew nearly 200 participants, including, from right, Grace Graham and her mother, Claudette Graham, from the Northside Church of Christ in Hartford, Conn., and Gail Bouffard from the Manchester congregation. Truitt Adair from Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas, served as the keynote speaker. Besides Connecticut, states represented included New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia. For more information, see www.newenglandcgc.org.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE — When minister Eric A. Lorick planted the Inner City Church of Christ three years ago, some voiced concern about the location.

“You know there is no parking there?” one critic said.

“Our members ride the city bus,” the preacher replied.

A congregation must fit its location, Lorick stresses. Ministries offered by the Inner City church include the “God Help Me Stop” addiction recovery program and the “Take It to the Lord” lunch-hour Thursday prayer.

MISSOURI

NEOSHO — A Hillcrest Church of Christ member who serves as a Jasper County sheriff’s deputy was shot in the line of duty. Deputy

Nolan Murray has been released from the hospital after recent surgery to remove a bullet from his back, the sheriff’s office said.



Murray

Murray was attempting to serve a search warrant at a motel when shot, authorities said.

“He’s a great guy,” Hillcrest minister Danny Boggs told *The Christian Chronicle*. “He’s very servant-hearted.”

OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITY — Three Churches of Christ — Britton Road, Northeast and Oakcrest — recently received grants to provide Mobile Meals to homebound elderly residents.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHESTER — Women involved in the Virginia Avenue Church of Christ’s “Care Bear” ministry get together each week and make an average of 50 bears. The bears are given to children in the hospital, minister Rico Brown said.

“The ladies do this week in and



PHOTO PROVIDED BY RICO BROWN

Virginia Avenue church members show off some of the ministry’s “Care Bears.”

week out without a lot of fanfare, but I want to give them their roses while they can still smell them,” Brown said.

PARKERSBURG — Jo Langler and Melva Farris help fellow Camden Avenue Church of Christ members and other people save money.

The two operate a coupon ministry that began about four years ago, the *Parkersburg News and Sentinel* reported.

Langler said families tell her how much money they have saved through the church program.

People ask Langler if she can help them cut costs by providing money-saving coupons that arrive in newspapers, by mail and online. Coupons are provided for almost any product or service imaginable, including haircuts, car repairs and makeup.



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Russia, Ukraine and Jeff Sessions

A MINISTER for a Church of Christ in Alabama had discussions with the former U.S. senator – now attorney general – about the plight of Ukraine’s war-torn east.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A minister for a Church of Christ in Alabama had multiple conversations with former U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions about the plight of Christians in war-torn Ukraine.

The minister, Jeff Abrams, doesn’t believe that the Republican lawmaker — now U.S. Attorney General — had improper dealings with a Russian official on behalf of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign.

“Never, never, never. That’s not him,” Abrams, who preaches for the Tuscumbia Church of Christ in northern Alabama, said of Sessions in an interview with *The Christian Chronicle*.

Sessions recently recused himself from an investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The reason: two meetings Sessions had last year with a Russian ambassador — meetings Sessions didn’t disclose during his confirmation hearing to become attorney general.

One of those meetings included a discussion of Ukraine, Sessions said during a recent news conference.

“We talked a little bit about terrorism as I recall. And somehow the subject of the Ukraine came up,” Sessions said. “I had had the Ukrainian ambassador in my office the day before. And to listen to (the Russian ambassador) ... Russia had done nothing that was wrong in any area, and everybody else was wrong, with regard to the Ukraine. It got to be a little bit of a testy conversation at that point.”

Abrams began corresponding with Sessions in the 1990s when Sessions, then Attorney General of Alabama, began his campaign for a

Senate seat. In recent years, Abrams has spoken with Sessions and his staff about eastern Ukraine — where pro-Russian separatists broke away from the country after the ouster of Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich in 2014.

Sessions has “always been very sympathetic” to the suffering people caught in the middle of the conflict, said Abrams, who makes regular trips to Ukraine to work with Christians there. Abrams also has served as a correspondent for the *Chronicle*.

During his Senate years, Sessions was instrumental in helping Abrams meet with officials at the U.S. embassy in Ukraine’s capital, Kiev, in 2015, the minister said. The meeting, he added, seemed to have little effect on the conflict or the U.S. response to it.

Dozens of Churches of Christ met in the region before the conflict. Church members have seen their buildings seized by separatists, some of whom claim that the Russian Orthodox church is the region’s only legitimate faith.

Ukrainians accuse Russia of supporting the separatists. Russian officials deny that claim.

Amid calls for his resignation, Sessions defends the two meetings he had with the Russian ambassador as part of his duties as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee — not as a surrogate for the Trump campaign.

The controversy, Abrams said, distracts American Christians from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which has intensified in recent weeks.

The minister shared a message from a Ukrainian preacher — forced to flee his home in eastern Ukraine — who remains in contact with church members in the besieged region.

“They are very tired of the shellings that have become quite frequent recently,” the Ukrainian preacher wrote. “They are morally exhausted and in great need of spiritual support.”



Sessions



Abrams

Tennessee youth group finds treasure among ashes of grieving family's home

BY DAWN SHELTON | THE LUTHER REGISTER

LUTHER, Okla. — A youth group from Tennessee found a treasure as they cleaned up the burned-out house of a family who lost a loved one in the blaze.

The December fire claimed the life of Tony Taylor, who worshiped with the Wilshire Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. His wife, Juanita, escaped and was treated for smoke injuries. Their daughter, Alyssa, was not home at the time.

The tragedy followed the March 2016 death of the Taylor's son, Caleb, in an automobile wreck.

The youth group, from the Hartsville Pike Church of Christ, participated in a mission trip with members of the Nashville Road Church of Christ.

Both churches meet in Gallatin, Tenn. The team assisted the Luther Church of Christ. One of the group's projects was cleaning debris from the remains of the Taylors' home. Workers recently had torn down the unsalvageable structure.

Libby Rominger, 12, was digging through a pile of cookbooks when she spotted a plastic bag in perfect condition with something in it.

"We were told ahead of time there might be money in the house, but no one had been able to find it," Rominger said.

Elizabeth Morgan, 13, was working alongside Rominger and said she will never forget how her friend's face lit up when she found the treasure.

Chris Hill, minister for the Luther church, called Juanita Taylor and asked if she could come to her

former home. But he didn't tell her what they had found.

Juanita Taylor arrived and thanked the volunteers for their hard work. Then Rominger presented her with the find: nearly \$4,500. Tears

followed — from Juanita Taylor and the mission team.

Juanita Taylor thought the flames had consumed the money — a belief strengthened by the Wilshire church's generosity. At Tony Taylor's funeral, church members presented her a check for \$4,500.

At the time, "I said, 'OK God, I hear you. I know you are in control.' And I quit worrying about that money," Juanita Taylor said.

Now, "I feel like God has ... provided for us — over and over again."

The mission team also worked at the Luther Community

Service Center, a nonprofit supported by Churches of Christ that feeds 160 needy families and operates a store offering used clothing, furniture and household goods to those in need.

Tony Taylor was a longtime volunteer at the center.

Rominger's mother, Jenny, said the experience will stay with their family for a long time.

"This was God-driven," she said.

"There's no way, without God on her side, that we would have found the money."

DAWN SHELTON, a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University, worships with a house church in Luther, Okla. She launched *The Luther Register* (online at lutherregister.news) in 2015.



PHOTO VIA LUTHERREGISTER.NEWS

Libby Rominger, sifting through debris of a burned home, came across a plastic bag with nearly \$4,500 in cash.



Juanita Taylor



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www.stevensvillechurchofchrist.com



MEL LATTORE JR.

Christians pack the pews for the 2017 Affirming the Faith seminar in Oklahoma City.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Affirming the Faith

OKLAHOMA CITY

My family and I attended Affirming the Faith, a seminar for Churches of Christ that provides teaching on matters important to Christianity. The North MacArthur Church of Christ in Oklahoma City hosted again this year.

We dispersed to various classes based on our interests. I attended a class led by Mike Mazzalongo, a minister for the Choctaw Church of Christ in Oklahoma. I've recently become acquainted with him through the bibletalk.tv ministry.



Jason Leger

For me, the takeaway was simple but impactful: satisfaction and peace of mind are different. Satisfaction comes from accomplishing tasks, so when the tasks run out or the task changes, then our satisfaction may go up or down. This gets confused with peace of mind — something that can exist outside of the day to day hunt for satisfaction and can only be found in Christ. I've used this teaching to better identify my own emotions, faith standing and drive.

These types of insights are what I look for in events such as Affirming the Faith. It's fantastic to see brothers and sisters from various congregations excited and motivated to be together, but also there is a hunger for something new to be brought to the table — something that will help sustain us or fill in the gaps in our ministry.

I appreciated the seminar's focus

on church elders. In one class I attended, one of the first points brought up was that elders learn to be elders on the job. There's no ramp-up or training, even though the job is such a critical role in the Kingdom — yet another gap that needs to be filled. I appreciated

the messages to the elders and future elders that were present.

Another extremely relevant topic — that I repeatedly see need for — is the generational gap and sometimes generational conflict that exists in our congregations. This topic is at the core of some of the

heartburn or murmuring that the church experiences today.

A serious look at this topic, combined with an honest look at ourselves, shows that we have to overcome our preferences, our biased ownership of worship service traditions, and instead embrace that we are multigenerational. This is possible within the bounds of Scripture and appropriate worship activity.

Over the years Affirming the Faith has produced some of the most impactful lessons and discussions I've experienced. At other times the seminar simply has refreshed or affirmed a stance I have already taken. Either way, it continues to be a great event for my family. I appreciate all those who help make it happen.

JASON LEGER is a deacon of the Southwest Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. Learn more about Affirming the Faith at **www.affirmingthefaitthok.com**.

BUDDIES: Churches find ways to keep kids with special needs in class

FROM PAGE 3

fastest-growing developmental disorders in the U.S., affects one in 68 children, according to the advocacy group Autism Speaks.

In surveys of parents of children on the autism spectrum, more than half report they have kept their child from participating in religious activities because the church didn't provide adequate support.

"Church is one of the most over-stimulating places. ... Think of all the smells, perfumes, coffee," said Jill Jones, who directs preschool programs for the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, where Taft and his family worship.

Add to that the massive crowds of people moving from Bible class to worship, and it's easy for families of children with special needs to feel forgotten among the church's 2,200 members, said Stephanie Langley, the church's coordinator for children's education. But "we want them here," Langley said.

'SHOW THEM THEY'RE WELCOME'

The Memorial Road congregation recently invited child development expert Barbara J. Newman to host a workshop for area churches on effective ministry for children with special needs and their parents.

Newman, who has concentrated study in the field of autism spectrum disorder, works with the CLC Network, sometimes called the Christian Learning Center. The Wyoming-based nonprofit promotes the development of people with a variety of abilities and disabilities to live as active, integrated members of their communities.

Children with special needs — just like all children — are "image-bearers of God who are dearly loved by him," said Newman, who has worked in special education for more than 30 years.

After hearing story after story of families turned away from churches, she felt God calling her to do something to help.



Blessed be the

Caregivers

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www.christianchronicle.org



A timer, a wiggle cushion, a streamer and putty are among the items Barbara Newman says congregations should consider having on hand for students with special needs.

"I had so many students that were asked to leave their church," she said. "I thought, 'How can they be included seven hours a day in a Christian school, but they somehow could not survive or be able to hang out for 45 minutes in Sunday school?'"

Families of children with special needs simply want to find a place where they can worship God — a place where their children are welcome, Newman said.

"I think one of the beautiful ways we can show them they're welcome is by the equipment we stock in our children's ministry closets or rooms," she said.

That equipment may include "wiggle cushions," "fidget pencils" or simple weighted items children can hold in their laps. Giving them outlets for their anxiety can help students focus and become engaged in Bible lessons.

THE BLESSING OF BEING A BUDDY

A "buddy system" also helps congregations keep children with special needs in the classroom, Jones said. The Memorial Road church assigns one buddy to stay alongside

each special-needs child during Bible class.

"You don't have to have a degree in special education," said Natalie Reed, who serves as a buddy for Taft and one other child. "You just have to have the heart to serve and the willingness to sit with and help the children in Bible class."

For Taft, the program is a welcome resource, his mother said. It allows her and her husband, Jeffrey, to attend their own Bible class.

"It's good for Taft to have that independent time from us, because he requires our full-time supervision and attention," Miranda Lawrence said. "To get that focused, adult time is so important for us. To be able to talk about our situation with other adults and have the support and prayers of other people is vital."

Taft and Reed sit together every week.

"It takes Taft a while to form that connection and bond so that he

trusts the person," his mother said. "Consistency is important for him, and routine is important for him."

Reed said this is a ministry toward which she's felt God calling her for years and one she would encourage others to consider helping with.

"The families I have met through this ministry have meant more to me and touched my heart more than words can express," Reed said. "I may have signed up to help them, but God has used them to bless and help me more than they know."

FINDING A CALMING PLACE

As Sunday morning Bible classes end, Jones said, "we wanted to provide something for those parents who were just walking out the door because they didn't feel like they could make it through service."

The answer: a sensory room. It's a calming place with lights that dim, special toys and centers, a small trampoline, a ball pit and soon a swing. The room has a TV that streams a live feed of the worship service.

"It's not a playroom," Jones said, and it's not open to everyone. Rather, it's a place where children with special needs "can come in and



PHOTOS BY CHELLIE ISON

Building Inclusive Churches: See our exclusive videos of the Memorial Road sensory room and hear more of our interview with Barbara Newman at www.christianchronicle.org.

refocus and calm when everywhere outside it is just over-stimulating."

Sensory rooms, fidget tools and well-developed programs cost money, and Newman acknowledged that becoming more inclusive can be a challenge — especially for small congregations.

But even small, inexpensive changes over time can be impactful.

"If a parent walks in and they know their child benefits from having a particular item, that's an act of hospitality," Newman said. "It's like saying, 'You are welcome.' That's important."

WEBSITE: www.clcnetwork.org

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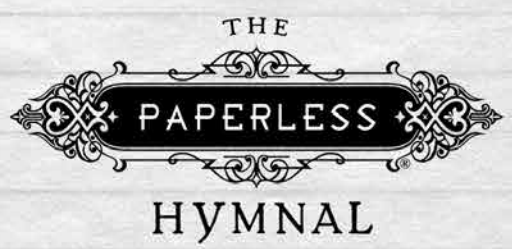
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SILENCE IS LOUDER *than words, says a young Christian as she urges older generations to ‘speak up for those who cannot speak.’*

We can't be bystanders to wrongdoing

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Elise Miller is a 17-year-old on a tight schedule.

When she's not working on the latest edition of *The Panther Prints*, the newspaper for Plano East Senior High School in Texas, where she serves as co-editor in chief, she's studying for her upcoming Advanced Placement exams. Last year she played clarinet in her school's marching and symphonic bands. (She also enjoys piano — and ukulele.)

A member of the Waterview Church of Christ in Richardson, Texas, she has participated in Leadership Training for Christ since third grade — using her God-given talents in speech, chorus, Bible bowl, signing for the deaf and art. On some Sunday mornings she serves meals to the homeless with the Main Street Church of Christ in Dallas.

"I am blessed to go to an extremely diverse school with teenagers who have various religious backgrounds," she said. She's had "complex, theological discussions" with her peers and a few teachers but finds the best way to interest her friends in her faith is to set an example "in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity," as she reads in 1 Timothy 4.

As she prepares for college this fall, she enjoys her final days at home with parents Rosalyn and Haven Miller and siblings Halle, 16, and Reece, 13.

What would you like for older people to understand about you and your generation?

My generation is constantly watching them — and taking notes of their actions and words.

Personally, I am grateful to have many wise and faithful Christians to look up to and model my life after. But sometimes their actions — or lack of action — have a negative influence.

Proverbs 31:8-9 teaches us to *"speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."* I have found that many adults are bystanders to wrongdoing. Thus my generation tends to be reluctant



RICHARD CHAMBERS

Elise Miller, a National Honor Society student, plans to pursue a career in journalism.

to address problems in our society.

Understand that actions — good and bad — set an example for younger generations. Sometimes silence speaks louder than words.

When do you see Christians acting as "bystanders to wrongdoing?"

When Christians assemble, we are united in our ideas, hearts and beliefs as stated in Acts 2. But sometimes the assembly is used as an excuse to say inappropriate things about race relations, other religions or people who live in the world.

Sometimes, we try to excuse this speech from fellow believers by saying they're just speaking out against "political correctness" in the world. Whenever these statements are made within the body of Christ, however, Christians should stand up for what is *biblically* correct — the over-arching love of God.

Who are the strongest spiritual influences in your life?

My parents have stood alongside me throughout my entire life, and

their influence makes me want to be a better person and a faithful Christian.

I think that parents do their children a disservice when they bring them to church to be pew-fillers but don't instill in them faith at home.

From the beginning, my parents taught me to believe and appreciate God's Word deeply. Without this foundation, I am not sure how strong my faith would be today. My parents love each other and display their love and concern for other souls.

Another Christian who greatly influenced my life is my fifth grade Bible class teacher, Judy Smith. She sparked a fire in me, making Bible class invigorating. She helped me understand that God has always had a plan for his people (Jeremiah 29:11). I am eternally grateful to her.

How difficult is it for you to be a Christian today?

In the Bible Belt, it is relatively easy to proclaim one's faith. While many teach false doctrines — and those with different beliefs look

down on Christianity — there is no doubt that it's safer to be a Christian in Murphy, Texas, than in many parts of the world.

Still, no matter where we live, it will never be easy to be a Christian. God simply did not design our faith that way. If Christianity were easy, everyone would be a Christian, and the world would not be plagued with poverty, hate, murder and greed.

God wants us to take joy in our struggles and to persevere through trials. James 1:2-3 teaches that the testing of our faith builds perseverance.

How do you hope to fulfill your Christian mission in life?

My personal mission is to win souls to Christ by being Christ-like. I also want to display gratitude in everything I do.

I know that God has a plan for my life, and my faith has led me to accomplish goals that I would have never imagined. I hope to intentionally live every day with the objective of going to heaven, pressing toward the goal that has been set before us.

Ultimately, I hope to reach and encourage people through my writing as a journalist.

What are the greatest challenges to your own faith?

For me, it is a challenge to see people who identify as Christians contradict the numerous Scriptures that are in the Bible about love.

We live in a world where it is necessary to speak out against the many sins that enslave humanity. But so many of us have forgotten that the greatest commandment is love. Though we don't like to talk about it, I think that hypocrisy is one of the biggest challenges that the church faces today.

I am optimistic about the church's future, however, because I know that God has provided his people with his grace and mercy.

COLOMBIA

CÚCUTA — A mission team of three families is moving to this South American city, just west of the Venezuelan border. The members are recent graduates of Baxter Institute, a ministry training school in Honduras associated with Churches of Christ.

One member, Ronald Sabino, was baptized by a missionary in Venezuela 10 years ago. He found



PHOTO VIA WWW.BAXTERINSTITUTE.ORG

Monica Sabino receives the First Lady's Award from Diana Teel of Baxter Institute.

his future wife, Monica, online and traveled to Colombia to meet her. She was a Pentecostal preacher. Sabino later baptized her.

During his time at Baxter, Ronald Sabino baptized 23 people during a five-month internship.

He received the President's Award from Baxter, and his wife received the first-ever First Lady's Award.

INDIA

SECUNDERABAD — Nearly 600 church members gathered for a recent area-wide preachers' meeting in this central Indian city, known as the sister city of nearby Hyderabad. Edward Rouse, an Indian minister, spoke on the theme "Unity."

KENYA

KISUMU — The Ong'adi Church of Christ appointed its first three elders and two deacons recently.

"The need for elders and deacons became critical after the church experienced sudden numerical growth," said Charles Ngoje, a minister and ministry trainer in Kenya. "Prior to this ceremony the five men went through rigorous classes on leadership, management and matters of spirituality. They are effectively equipped to take the church to the next generation."

The church, planted by mission-



PHOTO VIA CHURCH OF CHRIST CANAAN FACEBOOK PAGE

A Bible study and a selfie in Tobago

After a Tuesday night Bible study, members of the Church of Christ Canaan snap a group selfie photo. The congregation, launched in June 2016, is one of four Churches of Christ on the Caribbean island of Tabago, part of the nation of Trinidad and Tobago. The class discussed the gospel story of the rich young ruler who encountered Christ.

aries Hilton and Avel Merritt, has grown to 150 members. The elders are Samson Otieno Oyieyo, Simon Kimaguth and Robert Otieno Chiaga. The deacons are Levans Otieno Ouma and Charles Ojode Odiyo.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHARLES NGOJE

Elders and wives of the Ong'adi church.

ROMANIA

PITESTI — Six Christian men from the U.S. worked with seven Churches of Christ in this Central European nation during a recent mission trip.

The men conducted Bible lessons, had one-on-one studies involving about 30 Romanians, hosted a youth

meeting and delivered supplies for infants at a home for abandoned children. Two people were baptized during the mission trip.

"The men did the work with zeal, dependability and love, and the response of all seven churches was excellent," said Harvey Starling, a missionary supported by the Midway Church of Christ in Madison, Ala.

SOUTH KOREA

SEOUL — Churches of Christ across the Korean Peninsula host summer youth camps, missionary Malcolm Parsley said. Now church member Kim Yong Chul has launched a program to establish a first-ever youth work service camp.

"The purpose of the camp is to get the youth in numerous congregations to go out over summer break and provide free service to the churches and their communities," Parsley said. Church members hope the camp will prepare Christians for lives of service.

SPOTLIGHT

Sticky rice, tennis and South Africa

STELLENBOSCH, South Africa — Erika Scott is following in her parents' footsteps, though not on the same continent.

The daughter of missionaries in Thailand — and recent graduate of Abilene Christian University in Texas — moved to South Africa with her husband, Tyler, as part of a five-member mission team.

The team is training with Casper Steenkamp, a South Africa native and former ACU tennis player, and his wife, Ashley. Their nonprofit, Kingdom DNA, focuses on disciple-making, missional communities and a program called Grass Roots Tennis.

"We'll spend a lot of time in townships, which are very poor neighborhoods, playing sports and spreading the Good News through sports," Erika Scott told ACU's student newspaper, *The Optimist*. "I love to cook, and I plan to start a cooking class once a week to give people a taste of other cultural foods."

To help raise money for her mission work, Erika Scott sold Thai sticky rice and chicken to the ACU community.

Her father, Robert Reagan, said that he and his wife, Jan, are praying "that God will stretch and grow Tyler and Erika as they lead others into God's kingdom."

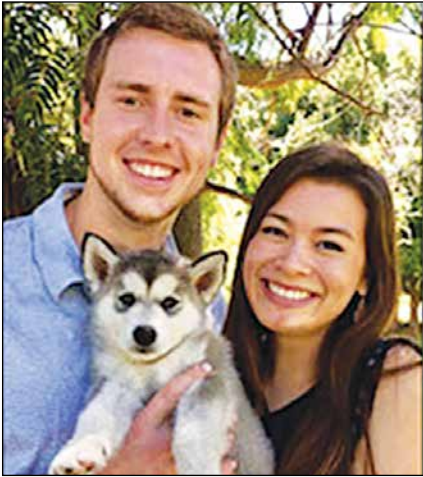


PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHIANG MAI TEAM

Tyler and Erika Scott are serving through sports as part of their South Africa mission.



Crowds gather to remember the life of Anthony Mwaihojo in rural Tanzania.

Restored to life, days before death

IN EAST AFRICA, a Christian who left the church and came back dies on the way to watch new souls give their lives to Christ.

TUKUYU, Tanzania — He returned to the Lord — two weeks before he returned to the Lord.

And as believers mourned his death, they celebrated new life.

Anthony Mwaihojo, baptized decades ago in this East African nation, trained for ministry at a preaching school in the town of Kitekelo in the 1960s.

But he fell away from the church — becoming what African Christians often call a “backslider” — and stayed away for many years, said minister Joseph Haonga.

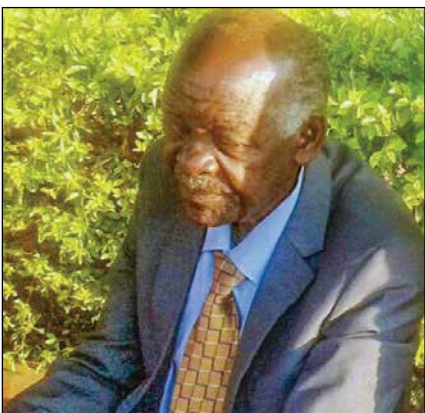
Recently, evangelists from the Chimala Bible Institute helped launch a new Church of Christ in Tukuyu, a small town in southern Tanzania near the Malawi border.

Mwaihojo, who lived nearby, began attending and became a restored Christian, said Haonga, a teacher at the Chimala institute.

Two weeks later, Mwaihojo offered a devotional for the Lord’s Supper during Sunday worship.

Speaking in Swahili, he paraphrased Matthew 7:22-23.

“On the last day, others will be rejected,” Mwaihojo told the congregation, according to Haonga’s translation. “They will say, ‘We lifted up our hearts, we did many things.’ But



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JOSEPH HAONGA

Anthony Mwaihojo gave a communion devotional on the day he died.

Christ will tell them, ‘You did not do my father’s will.’”

That, Mwaihojo said, is why he returned to the church.

After the sermon, three people asked to be immersed into Christ.

As church members drove to a nearby river for the baptisms, Mwaihojo died in the car. Days later, at the church member’s funeral, “we had a great opportunity to preach about Christ and his church,” Haonga said, “and many people were amazed (by what) the Church of Christ is teaching and doing.”

As the funeral concluded, five people responded to the invitation to be baptized, the minister said.

WEBSITE: chimalamission.com

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CANADA: Christians connect with Muslim refugees

FROM PAGE 1

Trudeau's October 2015 election.

On this recent Saturday — with Mohammed, Miriam and their four other sisters all home from school — the Faham Katan household buzzes with chatter and laughter.

In the living room, the Muslim father, Moamar, 44, visits with minister Noel Walker and his wife, Julie, from the Tintern Church of Christ, which joined with the Beamsville Church of Christ to help the family start a new life here in Canada's Niagara region.

A hijab covers the head of 18-year-old Samira — the oldest sister — as she serves tiny cups of espresso to the family's guests.

Twins Reem and Raneem, 16, sit by their ailing mother, who leans against a pillow and stretches out her legs under a blanket on the couch.

Two-year-old Celine entered the world during the family's years at a refugee camp in Lebanon. Wearing a Minnie Mouse T-shirt, she zips happily from person to person. One of the toddler's favorite pastimes is raising her hand to her forehead and singing the Canadian national anthem.

"Every morning at 6 a.m., it's 'O Canada,'" a chuckling Moamar says of the way his youngest daughter wakes him up.

CUPCAKES, TOO?

On a late winter day, patches of snow cover the ground outside the two-story townhouse that the churches rented for the Syrian family.

Jori Warren and her husband, Earl, arrive with boneless chicken, pineapple teriyaki, baked potatoes and fresh salad with raspberry dressing.

But Miriam, who earlier went with Jori Warren to see her favorite princess, Elsa, perform at "Disney On



SEE PAST FEATURES on Churches of Christ in Canada, and find statistics on the number of congregations north of the U.S. border. Look for "The Church in Canada" under the "Series" tab at www.christianchronicle.org.



Moamar Faham Katan shows his daughter Celine, 2, a picture. At right, in red, is Tintern church member Jori Warren.

Ice," wants to know about dessert.

"And cupcakes?" the girl asks.

Yes, Jori Warren assures her.

"They are sprinkled cupcakes with vanilla icing," the church member says.

Samia, 41, remains in pain after her surgery but greets Jori Warren with a hug and a smile.

"They're everything to us,"

Jori Warren says of the Syrian family. "They've been a ray of sunshine for our family."

As Miriam snuggles against him, Earl Warren recalls the first time he met the refugees.

"This little one came running to me — she didn't know me — and gave me a great big kiss right smack on the lips," the retired General Motors worker says. "And she had me for life."

'WE'RE FAMILY'

Back in September 2015, a 3-year-old Syrian boy named Aylan Kurdi drowned after a 15-foot boat ferrying him to a Greek island capsized.

Pictures of the toddler's lifeless

body on a beach horrified millions around the globe and spurred the two Canadian churches to act.

"As a mother, I just couldn't imagine it," Jori Warren says. "You don't just put your kids in a boat with their life on the line if their life wasn't already in jeopardy."

Rather than undergo a lengthy paperwork process to sponsor the family, the churches partnered with the Mennonite Central Committee — a refugee placement organization already recognized by the Canadian government.

Led by Tintern deacon Roger Perry, a committee of 24 men and women formed to tackle the family's needs — from housing to medical care to transportation to schools.

In a story last year, *The Christian Chronicle* first highlighted the churches' decision to sponsor refugees. However, rules precluded members from identifying the Syrian family or asking them to submit to media interviews. But the terms of that agreement have ended.

In the original report, Belal el

Hassan, a 50-year-old Canadian citizen who was born in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, spoke on the family's behalf.

"Thank you for saving their lives," el Hassan, who is Muslim, said he told church members.

"I would like to emphasize how much the Syrian family appreciates and thanks the Church of Christ for bringing them over, and they will never forget that favor to them," he told the *Chronicle*.

As planned all along, the churches' financial support of the Faham Katans ceased after 12 months. However, the Christians and the Muslim family maintain their tight-knit relationship.

"At the end of one year, we're still together because we're now

family," Noel Walker says.

Moamar, who works at a medical facility's parking garage, nods in agreement.

Samia tenderly places her hand on Jori Warren's shoulder.

"I hope every Arab people come to Canada," the mother says. "I have a



Miriam, one of the Syrian family's six siblings, is 6 years old.

second family.”

When the Syrians arrived at Toronto Pearson International Airport on a plane full of refugees, they spoke no English. But they’re learning the language quickly.

“Everything in Canada is really good,” says Samia, who spends most weekdays in English language classes at a multicultural center. “Canada’s people have a big heart. The future for the children is very, very, very good.”

“And your favorite is Justin Trudeau,” Noel Walker teases.

“Oh, my goodness,” she responds, her voice drenched with affection for Canada’s magazine-cover-handsome prime minister.

The rest of the family can’t help but laugh.

A RESILIENT FAMILY

Just a few years ago, the future did not look so bright for the Faham Katan family.

Noel Walker says he heard Moamar explain through an interpreter how his worst fears about Syria’s civil war were confirmed in 2011 when a missile struck the family’s apartment.

The father, mother and children packed up and fled to Lebanon, where they lived in a barn. But in Lebanon, the girls had no access to schools. Raheem, who has cerebral palsy, faced a particularly bleak outlook.

“When I first met Moamar, I quickly learned that he loves his son and his daughters very deeply — in the same manner that you or I would,” says Noel Walker, himself a father of four.

Jodi Warren praises the family’s resiliency.

“For people who have been through so much, they are not angry, bitter or vindictive but are still loving,” she says. “They are not at all what I had anticipated. People do not realize how much they have to offer new immigrants, and we are the ones who have gained so much in the process.”

A BOY’S COMPASSION

Since moving to Canada, Mohammed has learned to ice skate and enjoyed a Niagara Ice Dogs hockey game with his father and Noel Walker.

But it’s the size of the boy’s heart that impresses Jori Warren.

Recently, church member Linda Minter took him and Miriam to see Dr. Martin Cann, a dentist who also serves as one of the Tintern church’s elders. On the drive, Mohammed noticed a man standing beside the highway and holding a sign.

“What’s he doing?” the boy asked.

“He’s homeless, so he’s begging for money,” Minter told him.

“Well, I have a loonie in my pocket that I found,” Mohammed replied, referring to Canada’s \$1 coin. “Can we stop so I can give it to him?”

Of course, she said.

“I was so proud of you,” Jori Warren tells Mohammed. “See, when you don’t even know it, people find out things. And God always knows.”

Even though Moamar, the father, still attends Friday prayers at a mosque, he describes the Tintern congregation as “his church,” Noel Walker says.

“We are still getting to know them, and they are getting to know Jesus through us,” the minister says. “The whole family volunteered to help during last summer’s Vacation Bible School, and it was a delight to see them working with us and learning about Jesus at the same time.

“I can’t wait to see where this story will lead.”



Samia Faham Katan rests on her living-room couch after gallbladder surgery.



Samira, 18, serves a tiny cup of espresso to minister Noel Walker, as Julie Walker and Mohammed smile at the camera.

400+ Churches Closed

The Need. Over 400 congregations of the Churches of Christ have closed in the last decade. Unfortunately, for most the decision was not only heart-wrenching, but the unplanned process created stress, division and lost stewardship opportunities.

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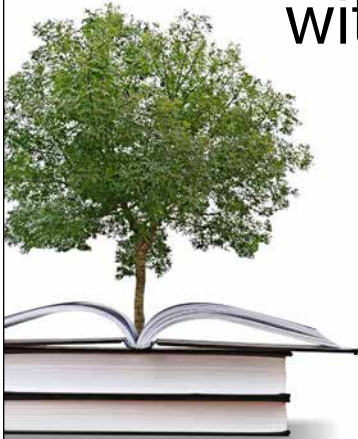
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Tales of prayer and patience in Taiwan

FAITH CAN TAKE YEARS — *maybe even a decade* — to grow in the soil of this Asian island, church members say. But it grows.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

TAIPEI, Taiwan

In this Asian metropolis, they've got money to burn.

On the last day of Chinese New Year festivities, a pair of young entrepreneurs stand outside the building where they rent office space, carefully adding stacks of yellow paper to a canister ablaze at their feet. On a folding table behind them are pastries and fruits. Above them smiles the bearded visage of Formosa Chang, icon of a fast-food restaurant next door.

The sweets and the "ghost money" are offerings to ancestral spirits, explain the entrepreneurs, whose company helps other aspiring businesspeople launch start-ups of their own. Across the highway, strings of fireworks crackle and pop in front of a small hotel — more prayers for prosperity as the Year of the

Rooster begins on the lunar calendar.

Two days earlier, the tiny Taipei Church of Christ met in this office building and offered prayers of its own — to a God

worshiped by less than 5 percent of the island's nearly 24 million souls. Hunched over Chinese-language Bibles in a narrow computer classroom they rent for worship, nine Christians read the words of the prophet Zephaniah: *"I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord."*

Preacher William Chen taught them about what it means

to call upon the Lord — and about the essentiality of baptism to salvation.

"We need to rightly divide the word of truth," he told the church, echoing Paul's charge in 2 Timothy 2:15, "and I encourage you to teach others what you have learned."

His words are almost prophetic. Chen

CONTINUED



Minister William Chen and wife Yolanda Wu at Tamsui Fisherman's Wharf in Taipei.



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Young entrepreneurs burn "ghost money" outside their office in Taipei.



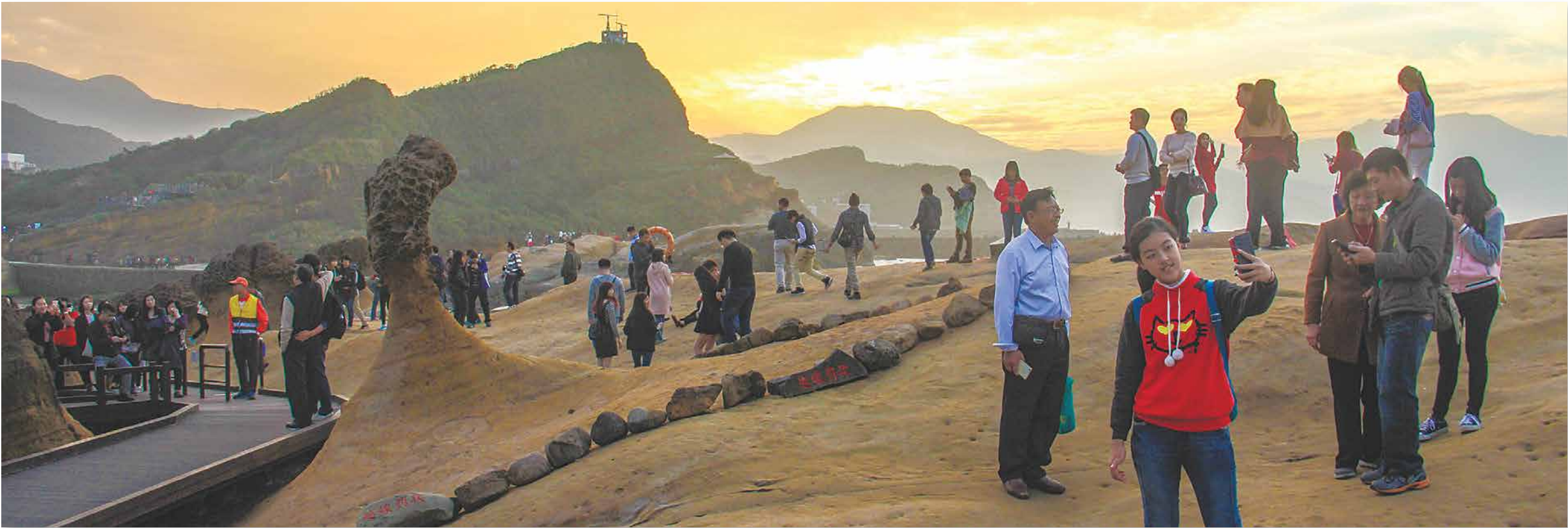
Taiwan

POPULATION: 23,464,787
LANGUAGES: Mandarin Chinese (official), Taiwanese, Hakka dialects.
RELIGION: 93 percent of Taiwanese practice a mixture of Buddhism and Taoism, 4.5 percent Christian, 2.5 percent other.
HISTORY: The teardrop-shaped island, about one-third the size of Tennessee, was called Formosa (the beautiful) by Portuguese explorers. Mainland China took control in the 1600s, but the island was

ceded to Japan after the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. After World War II, China again took control. A power struggle followed, and as the People's Republic of China emerged as a communist state in 1949 with Mao Tse-tung as leader, rival Chiang Kai-shek, his family and his military forces fled to Formosa and proclaimed Taipei as the capital of the Republic of China. The government in Beijing considers Taiwan a Chinese province, and only 21 countries recognize Taiwan as an independent nation. In late 2016, U.S. President-elect Donald Trump caused a political stir when

he accepted a congratulatory phone call from Taiwan's president — a break from America's "one China" policy.
CHURCHES OF CHRIST: American military personnel established congregations in 1957. Missionaries Roy Mullinax and Enoch B. Thweatt Jr. followed in 1959. At least 20 other missionaries have worked in Taiwan. Now small congregations meet in Taipei, Hualien City and a few other locales. John Yo ministers for a congregation in Taichung. Missionary Eugene Brzozowski works with a church in the southern city of Kaohsiung.





Visitors line up for photos in front of the Queen's Head rock (at left, named for its resemblance, from some angles, to England's Queen Elizabeth I), while others snap selfies at Yehliu Geopark near the northern tip of the island of Taiwan.

CONTINUED
and his wife, Yolanda Wu — who taught Bible class to two children in the corridor as her husband conducted the Bible class — are moving to Texas. There, the Taiwan-born preacher will serve World Video Bible School, a nonprofit that produces evangelism materials for Churches of Christ.

A 10-YEAR SEARCH FOR SOUND DOCTRINE

Evangelism is difficult in Taiwan, Chen said. Most families practice a mixture of Buddhist and Taoist beliefs. “Traditional burdens,” he said, weigh on new believers and cause tension in families. Some Christians feel they must quit their jobs if their bosses expect them to participate in ritual prayers for the company’s prosperity. A decade-long process, across two continents, brought the minister to faith. It began with his wife — a spiritual seeker, bewildered by the buffet of Christian denominations promising salvation. She met U.S. missionaries including John Grubb, who patiently worked around her schedule to study the Bible with her. “I really appreciated the sound doctrine,” Yolanda Wu said. “I’m so grateful they taught me about the one true church.” Grubb and his wife lived out what they taught, Wu added. They took in



Sheila Chen prepares communion as William Chen teaches Bible to the Taipei Church of Christ.

Christian converts disowned by their families. Wu remembered the look of pure joy on the missionary’s face as she emerged from the waters of baptism. “If it weren’t for John Grubb, I could’ve missed heaven,” she said. For her husband, Wu’s conversion set off a wave of excuse-making. No time for church — he had to focus on his career. The couple moved to New Jersey, where Chen earned a doctorate in food science from Rutgers University. His wife worshiped with a Church of Christ. After three years in the U.S., the couple returned to Taiwan in 1997. Wu asked her husband to drive her to church on

Sundays. She feared Taipei’s fast-paced, bumper-to-bumper traffic, she told him. The church’s preacher offered Chen a Bible. To his wife’s surprise, he took it and quickly absorbed it. The preacher later told him he had rarely seen such Bible knowledge in a non-believer. Chen credits Wu’s example — and her prayers — with his willingness to explore God’s Word. Finally, nearly 10 years after his wife’s immersion, Chen was baptized. In 2002, couple moved to San Francisco, where Chen worked for a biotech company. They worshiped with the Airport Church of Christ. Another decade passed, during which

Chen felt an increasing desire to share his Christianity — the faith it took so long for him to embrace — with his countrymen. He earned a preaching degree from the Southwest School of Bible Studies in Austin, Texas, in 2014 before moving again to Taiwan, this time to serve the Taipei Church of Christ. **PRAYING FOR NEW DAYS OF SALVATION** Chen sees a hunger for spirituality among Chinese-language speakers from Taipei to mainland China and beyond. As he seeks support for his new work with World Video Bible School — translating and producing Bible studies in his native tongue — he prays that his efforts will help starving souls worldwide. Leaving Taiwan was a difficult decision, he said, so he also prays for a new, evangelistic spirit among the handful of Churches of Christ on the island, whose combined membership he estimates at fewer than 200 souls. As Chen moves to Texas, preaching duties fall back to Chao Liang, the church’s longtime volunteer minister. Chao is a retiree and a self-styled tour guide, eager to show visitors his island’s attractions, including the historic Ta-Wu-Lun Fort and otherworldly Yehliu Geopark. Driving a U.S. visitor and Yolanda Wu between the two locales recently, he

shared the story of his own conversion as Wu translated. Two missionaries, Tommy Alford and Joe Ruiz, lived in his community and invited him to a Bible study. Over the next six months, he began to see truth in their teaching and started to let go of his inherited beliefs. He decided to be baptized but wanted to wait until it was “a good day” according to the lunar calendar. “Today is a fine day,” he recalled the missionaries telling him. “Today is the day of salvation. You don’t know when the end will come.” After Chao’s baptism, his wife, Sheila Chen, studied the Bible. Two years and many, many questions later, she was baptized. Chao enjoys preaching to the tiny assembly of believers from the Gospel of Luke. The retelling of the life of Jesus helps him see clearly the will of God and his plan for all mankind, he said. With kindness, prayer and patience, he believes other souls in Taiwan — who light small fires as prayers for prosperity — will see it, too. **WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL:** www.wvbs.org



Chao



Boaz Wang teaches seniors in Taiwanese, more common among the elderly than Taiwan’s official language, Mandarin.

Modern-day Ruth and Boaz grant the simple wishes of elderly souls

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

HUALIEN CITY, Taiwan

Silver-haired saints — some with broad smiles, some with tears in their eyes, a few asleep — sit in rows of wheelchairs as a man named Boaz talks to them about Jesus. That’s Boaz Wang, a 64-year-old Taiwan native who preaches for the Hualien Church of Christ. Three decades ago, when he became a Christian, he gave himself the name of the noble kinsman-redeemer from the Old Testament book of Ruth. “Boaz,” he explains, sounds like a Taiwanese phrase that means “you belong to your wife.” His wife, Ruth Lu, had no objections to this and chose for her name that of the loyal Moabite woman who married Boaz. It just seemed appropriate, she says. Weekly Bible studies — augmented by flip charts bearing



PHOTO PROVIDED BY BOAZ WANG

Ruth Lu, a hairdresser, regularly donates her talents to the elderly.

Bible verses in Wang’s practiced Chinese calligraphy, plus a giant cardboard Bible he made himself — are a small part of the couple’s 30-year ministry at this government-run nursing home in

Hualien, a small tourist town on Taiwan’s eastern coast. They’re here nearly every day, helping the residents eat their meals, drying their hair after they take showers. Some are from mainland China and rarely see relatives. A few are disabled and have lived here since they were children. One is 103. And about 20 of them have been baptized. “It’s not easy for the elderly to accept a new thought like Christianity,” says Liu Yu Xia, a member of the Hualien church who assists in the nursing home ministry. “It takes a lot of continuous effort to get them to accept Jesus Christ and the Gospel.” Few know this better than Wang, who describes his life before Christ as that of a brash hooligan. He cared little for religion — though he and his friends once participated in a fire-walking ceremony. **CONTINUED**

CONTINUED

The hot coals seared his feet, but he kept quiet about it. Burns meant you were “unclean,” he recalls.

COUNTLESS SINS — AND SALVATION

A sign maker by trade, Wang got a job — and a Bible study invitation — from Tommy Alford, a missionary from the U.S. who needed a sign for the Hualien Church of Christ. Wang accepted the invitation out of kindness. They studied Scripture in the back of the salon where Lu worked as a hairdresser.

Soon, Wang found himself arguing vigorously with the missionary. Alford was kind and patient — and always ready to debate, Wang says.

Relentless in his work, Wang took little time to think about Jesus. Then, five years after his first Bible study, the stress caught up with him and he became seriously ill. Fearing death, he started thinking about “the burden of sin in my heart,” he remembers. “What can I do to remove all these sins? They are countless.”

He was baptized in 1985 and began training with Alford for ministry. But Lu, who had overheard their years of Bible studies, was skeptical of her husband’s conversion.

“I wanted to see if he would truly change,” says Lu, who had once overturned their kitchen table when she caught Wang and his friends gambling on it.

Two more years passed, and she saw “a genuine, positive change in Boaz,” she says. So she joined him. The new Christians became active in evangelism and youth camps hosted by the church.

THREE DECADES OF SERVICE TO SENIORS

Soon after his wife’s baptism, Wang saw a newspaper ad asking for volunteers at the nursing home. He began making regular visits to serve. One

man, Hui Zhi Liang, was excited to learn that Wang was a minister. Long ago, Hui once was a believer — and even led a Bible study, he said. Hui studied with Wang and was baptized. The new Christian, in his 90s, spent the rest of his days carrying a small bag of gospel tracts on his shoulder, giving them to anyone who would take them.

More baptisms followed, so Wang began conducting Bible classes and worship at the nursing home. Now he and Lu arrive there at 6 a.m. on Sundays. They help the elderly eat breakfast and move them in wheelchairs — one by one — to a meeting room for worship.

As worship ends, they return the elderly believers to their rooms and rush to the Hualien church’s meeting

place for Bible study at 9.

After 10 a.m. worship with the 20-member church, the couple drives to a second nursing home for another round of Bible study and worship from 2 to 4 p.m. Hualien church members help out.

A MINISTRY OF URGENCY

Due to their busy ministry schedule, they make about a tenth of the money they made before their baptisms, Wang estimates, but they are far more responsible — and content, he says. When he’s not at the nursing home or offering Bible studies in the community, Wang writes detailed notes of encouragement to his fellow believers and their families in artful Chinese characters.

A few years ago, the couple launched a program called Make a Wish. They ask the elderly what they desire most — and often are humbled by the requests.

One man, confined to a bed, wanted the simple gift of a hot shower. Volunteers took him to a



PHOTO PROVIDED

Boaz Wang prays with a man he serves through Make a Wish.

 FROM THE
EAST
MATTHEW 8:11

See more stories from Churches of Christ in Asia and the South Pacific at www.christianchronicle.org.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Yolanda Wu, a preacher’s wife from Taipei, walks by a Chinese New Year display in Hualien City while visiting fellow Christians Boaz Wang and Ruth Lu. While Wu’s father lived in a home for veterans, Wang taught him the Gospel and wrote him notes of encouragement in beautifully detailed Chinese characters, she says.

hospital across town that had special equipment to help fulfill his request.

Another man wanted to visit a brother he hadn’t seen in 50 years. Make a Wish volunteers found the brother in another town and drove the man there. The brother, also handicapped, was unable to leave his fifth-story apartment. So Wang carried the man on his back, up the stairs, for the reunion.

Serving the elderly has taught Wang “to cherish right now and

today,” he says. “The evil days will come to us when we are old enough.”

One of his favorite memories is of a highly intelligent woman who studied the Scriptures with Wang for two years and was baptized at age 92 — just months before she died, unexpectedly, from colon cancer.

“Preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ is urgent,” Wang says. “We can’t afford to wait until later.”

INTERVIEWS TRANSLATED by Yolanda Wu.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

CAMPUS FOR CHRIST

JONESBORO, Ark. — The campus ministry at Arkansas State University plans to send a team this summer to plant a new campus ministry at the University of Washington in Seattle, said Chris Buxton, who is leading the team. “Those of us who are connected to the Campus For Christ organization are working to begin a movement that we hope will launch many new campus ministries in the coming years, and the team going to UW will be the first,” said Buxton, a Campus for Christ board member.



Buxton

“We are sort of building the plane as we try to fly it, but we are excited we are finally about to have a team on the ground soon.”



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LORA HUTSON

Rochester College finally has a basketball arena to call its own

Rochester College — formerly Michigan Christian College — has waited for a real arena for more than 50 years. That wait finally ended with the recent opening of the Garth Pleasant Arena, named after the Rochester Warriors’ retired coach. In 38 seasons, Garth Pleasant compiled 720 wins, four small-college national championships and a long list of former players who credit him with helping develop their faith. His son Klint succeeded him as coach. The opening game was sold out, and people lined up around the parking lot to get in.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

AGAPE CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Ministers from across the city came together recently to connect over food and fellowship at Agape Child & Family Services, which is associated with Churches of Christ.

Led by Agape board members and ministers Stacy Spencer of New Direction Christian Church and Josh Ross of Sycamore View Church of Christ, the luncheon served as a platform to discuss the current political and social climate and the effect both are having on congregations and communities throughout the Mid-South.

“This luncheon is a conversation

starter among those who inspire others week after week to grow in their relationship with God, but also instill hope for those in need when all hope may seem lost,” said David Jordan, Agape’s executive director.

Attendees explored opportunities for outreach through community service programs at Agape.

For more information, see AgapeMeansLove.org.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

HENDERSON, Tenn. — The Association of Theological Schools has granted accreditation to Freed-Hardeman’s Graduate School of Theology for an initial period of five years. At that time, the school will complete its next self-study in pursuit of reaffirmation.

The ATS Commission on Accrediting also granted approval for two degree programs, the Master of Divinity and the Master of

Arts in New Testament.

“This specialized accreditation validates the quality of the programs in the Graduate School of Theology and strengthens the resumes of our graduates,” said Mark Blackwelder, the school’s director.

HOSPITALITY

HANDS OF COMPASSION

ROCHESTER, Minn. — Hands of Compassion, a ministry that has provided soft beds and warm hugs to thousands of Mayo Clinic patients and their loved ones, is preparing to build a third house.

The new facility will sit on the lot between the ministry’s existing houses and provide more access for people with limited mobility, leaders said. It will give Hands of Compassion the ability to support families with younger children and to accommodate longer-term medical stays. A fundraising campaign has begun.

SPOTLIGHT

New Rochester prez

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. — The Rochester College board has selected Brian Stogner, former interim president and provost, to serve as the college’s 10th president.

Trustees cited Stogner’s academic leadership, history of service to the college and his commitment to its mission.

“Stogner’s understanding of our Christian heritage along with his knowledge of the college and of our community further confirm he is the leader we need to help Rochester College’s faculty and staff fulfill their mission,” board chairman Robert Chambers said.

Stogner said he is “deeply humbled and honored to accept this position.”



Stogner



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JAMIE ELKINGTON

Greg Diaz, left, greets Jim Harbin at the Agape luncheon in Memphis, Tenn.

WILDFIRES: Conferences seek to encourage Tennessee

FROM PAGE 3

ministers who made the trip to the foothills of the Smoky Mountains told *The Christian Chronicle* they were amazed by the region's rapid recovery.

Hundreds of volunteers with church-supported nonprofits — including Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort, Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team and Disaster Assistance CoC — worked alongside the Red Cross and other relief groups in the weeks after the fires. Country music legend Dolly Parton — perhaps the region's most famous native — raised more than \$9 million to help rebuild.

In Gatlinburg, hardest-hit by the fires, freshly seeded green grass replaced burned-out undergrowth on the roadsides, though the charred bases of still-living trees were reminders of the recent disaster.

“Honestly, I was kind of surprised. I thought (the fires) would have more of an effect,”



Miller



PHOTOS BY NATHANIEL HOWARD

Youths from the North Boulevard Church of Christ in Murfreesboro, Tenn., pose with Winterfest speaker Jeff Walling during the annual youth event in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

said Madeline Miller of Bethalto, Ill., who attended Winterfest for the first time. “But it seems like the community's really snapped back quickly. I haven't really noticed all that much.”

In Pigeon Forge, it was easy to forget that the fires happened. But CYC director Larry Davenport stressed to conference-goers that, for many East Tennesseans, the terrible impact of the fires lives on.

“There were either people directly affected that we would be coming

in contact with in Pigeon Forge, or they knew someone who was directly affected,” said Davenport, a development official at Mars Hill Bible School in Florence, Ala.

Davenport, who helped launch the Challenge Youth Conference in 2000, said that he has formed meaningful relationships with the employees at the LeConte Center and the Gatlinburg Convention Center, where the event took place until 2015.

“They make it so easy to do the

conference that we put on,” Davenport said. “I hope that we've been as encouraging to them as they've been to us.”

Organizers of Winterfest, launched 29 years ago, had contemplated using part of this year's gathering for service projects to help Gatlinburg recover. But by the time of the event, however, much of the short-term recovery work was done.

Still, participants played an important role in the region's recovery just by showing up, said Jeff Walling, a Winterfest board member and speaker at the event.

“When the fires took place, there was a lot of news across the country that Gatlinburg had just burned to the ground — and, quite frankly, they had a terrible Christmas because of it,” said Walling, a longtime minister and director of the Youth Leadership Initiative at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif. “I think our decision to continue to be here is a way of doing what we can to support this economy.”

“If we can do that and, at the same time, say ‘Don't thank us, thank Jesus,’ then Christ's identity will be helped.”

At Challenge Youth Conference, light shines after fires

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn.

“All around Pigeon Forge, I'm gonna let it shine.”

It was a poignant moment in an otherwise light-hearted performance by Ben Hayes and Travis Creasy at this year's Challenge Youth Conference.

As the Christian comedy duo, known as Ben and Travis, entertained thousands of teens with goofy, Bible-themed tunes, they paused to lead the audience in a heartfelt rendition of the children's song “This Little Light of Mine.”

In the past three months, this East Tennessee community in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains has experienced the terrible glow of wildfires in nearby Gatlinburg and the remarkable warmth of generosity from relief groups, nonprofits and ministries from faith groups including Churches of Christ. Together, they've



Logan Wallace, center, sits with friends from the Tuscumbia Church of Christ.

helped the hundreds displaced by the fires recover and begin the process of rebuilding.

Logan Wallace attended this year's conference with fellow youths from the Tuscumbia Church of Christ in Alabama. Wallace, whose family once experienced a house fire, said he empathized with those who lost property in the late-November blazes.

The fires added an earnest tone to the annual conference, which

has roots in youth events among Churches of Christ in the Florence, Ala., area. Noticing the potential of these get-togethers, organizers planned a larger activity in Pigeon Forge. The initial event drew 325 people and grew to 800 the next year. Organizers then moved it to Gatlinburg until 2015, when they returned the event to Pigeon Forge.

After the fires, some wondered if this year's CYC would happen.

It did, and nearly 13,000 youths, parents and ministers attended.

Allen Wilson, a third-year attendee from the North Jackson Church of Christ in Tennessee, said members of his congregation came to Gatlinburg after the fires to help in relief efforts.

He enjoys the congregational singing at the conference — something “that a lot of people don't get to experience,” he said, “and I'm glad we do it, because it touches you.”

In addition to bolstering the region's economy, Wilson said he hoped the young Christians' presence also would touch the community, bringing a shining light of encouragement.

“I think the best way is just to tell them that we're thinking about them — we're praying about them,” Wilson said. The conference is “a good thing to boost the positivity, just to have all these Christians in one place after all this.”



Wearing their Winterfest tags, Christians walk — and shop — along the streets of Gatlinburg, Tenn., three months after devastating wildfires.

Christians get royal treatment at Gatlinburg’s Winterfest

GATLINBURG, Tenn.
Teens were treated like royalty at this year’s Winterfest. Literally. “Identity” was the theme of the “little youth rally” — as organizer Dudley Chancey once called it — in this East Tennessee tourist town among the Smoky Mountains. Launched 29 years ago at a state park, the annual event now is one of the largest among Churches of Christ, bringing together youth groups from across the nation and locales as far away as Massachusetts. It looked as if this year’s Winterfest might not happen after November wildfires destroyed hotels and more than 2,500 buildings here. But the flames spared the city’s historic downtown and convention center.



After the impromptu coronations, Walling, a longtime minister and director of the Youth Leadership Initiative at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., charged the newly minted royals to truly live like royalty. “This is the truth I want you to get a hold of,” he told the throngs of teenagers. “If you’re a member of the body of Christ, if you’re a Christian, you are a child of the King. You are a royal person.” Chancey, associate professor of youth ministry at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, and fellow organizers charged Winterfest participants with putting their royal identity into practice by going out and showing God to Gatlinburg — a community recovering from the fires, which claimed 14 lives. Sadie Groen said she and her youth group were “really trying to pray for the people of Gatlinburg because we knew what they were going through.” Groen, who worships with the North Boulevard Church of Christ in Murfreesboro, Tenn., said she planned to treat the shop owners and restaurant workers in Gatlinburg like royalty. “People just need the encouragement,” Groen said, adding that she hoped the 12,000 Winterfest participants would — especially this year — “open up to the people of Gatlinburg and love like Jesus.”

INTERVIEWS: Nathaniel Howard

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Attention past and present members:
Saturday we will have a fellowship meal
at the church building starting at 11a.m.
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Please RSVP to:
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Family Minister Desired

The Church of Christ in O’Fallon, Mo., is seeking a family minister. The successful candidate will work with middle- and high-school aged members, strengthen and nurture families, facilitate community outreach, and work with our worship team to enhance our worship experience. He will be expected to work closely with the eldership and pulpit minister as an equal partner in meeting the needs of the congregation.

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The Christian Chronicle

HONOR ROLL OF CHURCHES, 2016-2017

With deepest appreciation to these churches — along with those mentioned on Pages 30 and 31 of our March issue — that have provided financial support for our efforts to inform, inspire and unite Churches of Christ worldwide.

ALABAMA: Bay Minette Church of Christ, Bay Minette. **ARIZONA:** Mount Vernon Church of Christ, Prescott. **CALIFORNIA:** Palmdale Church of Christ, Palmdale. **COLORADO:** Columbine Church of Christ, Littleton; Northwest Church of Christ, Westminster. **FLORIDA:** Bay Area Church of Christ, Mango. **IDAHO:** Valley County Church of Christ, McCall. **ILLINOIS:** Church of Christ, Freeport. **KANSAS:** Cedar Vale Church of Christ, Cedar Vale; Norwich Church of Christ, Norwich; 15th Street Church of Christ, Ottawa; Church of Christ, Saint Francis; Riverwalk Church of Christ, Wichita. **LOUISIANA:** Jackson Street Church of Christ, Alexandria; Grand Ecore Road Church of Christ, Natchitoches.

MICHIGAN: Brighton Church of Christ, Brighton. **MISSOURI:** Nevada Church of Christ, Nevada; Owensville Church of Christ, Owensville. **MONTANA:** Church of Christ, Belgrade. **NEW MEXICO:** Mountainside Church of Christ, Albuquerque. **TENNESSEE:** Linden Church of Christ, Linden; Silver Point Church of Christ, Silver Point. **TEXAS:** Bertram Church of Christ, Bertram; Highland Gardens Church of Christ, Houston; Manhattan Heights Church of Christ, Lubbock; Eastside Church of Christ, Marlin; Sherwood Church of Christ, Odessa; Tanglewood Church of Christ, Odessa; Antioch Church of Christ, San Augustine; Walnut Street Church of Christ, Seguin; Shep Church of Christ, Wingate.

To learn more about being part of the Honor Roll, please contact Lynda Sheehan at:
lynda.sheehan@christianchronicle.org.

Milestones

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

Anniversaries

Joe and Ruby Tobey 60 years

Joe and Ruby Tobey of Wichita, Kan., celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary Feb. 24, 2017. The Tobey family and friends at a reception hosted by their three children. The party was held on a Sunday afternoon at the meeting place of the 47th Street Church of Christ in Wichita. Their children are Brent (Tami) Tobey of Edmond, Okla.; Marla (Kent) Treat of St. Paul, Texas; and Lance (Jennifer) Tobey of Leavenworth, Kan. The Tobey family also have eight grandchildren and one great grandson.



The Tobey family have been members of 47th Street since 1963. Joe is currently a deacon and was church treasurer for many years. Ruby taught children's Bible classes for more than 45 years.

Joe is retired from *The Wichita Eagle* newspaper, where he was employed for 42 years. Ruby is a self-employed artist.

Fred Moulton, 94, of Thayer, Kan., and his wife, **Louise**, celebrate 69 years of marriage.

Memorials

Maxine Self Cudd 1924 — 2017

Maxine Self was born Oct. 8, 1924, in Orr, Okla., to James K. and Martha S. Burkett Self. She passed away Jan. 12, 2017, at Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City at the age of 92 years, three months, and four

days. She married Clarence Lesley Cudd on May 2, 1943. To this union, three children were born — Patricia Gail, Brenda Joy and James Lesley.

Maxine grew up the youngest of five children. Her early years were spent in Burkburnett, Texas. When she was in the third grade, her family moved back to Oklahoma, and she attended Zaneis Schools. In her class was a boy named Clarence Cudd. They began dating in their junior year of high school. After graduating from Zaneis, they were married in Wilson, Okla. Maxine was 18 years old, and Clarence was 17.

Clarence soon joined the U.S. Navy during World War II, and Maxine lived with her parents, working at Wacker's Grocery Store in Wilson, making \$2 per day. When the war ended, Maxine traveled to San Diego to meet Clarence. They bought a car and returned to Oklahoma.

Although Maxine and Clarence lived in various locations in the first few years of marriage, they eventually settled in Beaver, Okla., in 1960, where they raised their three children. During those years, Maxine worked in and out of the home helping to support the family. She worked in Beaver for the county school superintendent, the County



Clerk's Office and the local ASCS office. Maxine enjoyed sewing and watching sports (especially the Dallas Cowboys, the Oklahoma City Thunder and the University of

Oklahoma women's basketball). She also enjoyed involvement in church activities and helping others.

In 1985, Clarence and Maxine retired and moved to Edmond.

Maxine and Clarence were both baptized into Christ in 1948. They have been members of the Memorial Road Church of Christ,

continued

Monroe Hawley showed long-term dedication to Wisconsin ministry

MILWAUKEE — Monroe Hawley, who spent more than a half-century instructing, nurturing and encouraging Churches of Christ throughout Wisconsin, died Feb. 28. He was 93.



Hawley

He moved his family to Milwaukee in 1951 to minister for the 35th and Cherry Church of Christ. In 1958, he helped establish the Southside Church of Christ where he labored for more than 50 years. Hawley authored four books and four Bible correspondence courses. He was a founding member of the Wisconsin Christian Youth Camp and served for 21 years as a Board of Trustees member for York College, a Nebraska college associated with Churches of Christ.

In a 2007 interview with *The Christian Chronicle*, Hawley spoke about his years of service.

"When we moved to Wisconsin in 1951 there were about 10 congregations in the state," he said. "Today there are about 50."

"A major factor in the growth has been the longevity ... preachers who have come to Wisconsin and stayed. For example, Carl Frazier has worked with seven churches in his 55 years here and has spent his life helping troubled churches."

Hawley and his wife, Julia, were married for more than 70 years. They created and distributed correspondence courses through their family business, Hawley Publications, established in 1952. Their grandson now oversees the business, which is popular with prison outreach ministries.

Wendell Broom, African church planter, pioneering teacher of missions, dies at 93

DALLAS — When missionary Howard Horton asked Wendell Broom to move to Nigeria, "I thought that it was the dumbest thing I'd ever heard," Broom told *The Christian Chronicle* in a 2009 interview.

But he couldn't think of a reason not to go. So, in 1955, he went.

Broom, who helped plant churches across West Africa before becoming a trainer of future missionaries and a tireless advocate of missions on the continent, died Feb. 18 at age 93.

Born in Oklahoma City, he studied at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., and graduated from Abilene Christian University in Texas, where he met his wife, Betty. He preached for Churches of Christ in Wilmington, Del., and Philadelphia before moving to Africa.

Upon returning to the U.S. in 1960, the Brooms resumed work with the Elsmere Church of Christ in Delaware and spent three years with the Keeaumoku Street Church of Christ in Honolulu. After completing a master's in church growth from Fuller Theological



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Wendell Broom during a 2009 interview.

Seminary, Wendell Broom worked with George Gurganus to build the first missions department among schools associated with Churches of Christ at Abilene Christian.

Broom helped launch the Teachers of Missions Workshop in the 1970s and the Africans Claiming Africa for Christ conference in the 1990s.

EXPANDED OBITUARIES: christianchronicle.org

NEWSMAKERS



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MATT BARKER

Head coach Dale Neal discusses strategy with members of the Freed-Hardeman women's basketball team.

HONORED: Dale Neal, women's basketball head coach at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., with the Pat Summitt Trophy. Named after the late legendary Tennessee coach, the trophy recognizes the NAIA Coach of the Year.

APPOINTED: Lindsey Judd, as president of Ezell-Harding Christian School in Nashville, Tenn. **Susan Galbreath**, as senior vice president for strategy at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. **Paul L. Caron**, as dean of the Pepperdine University School of Law in Malibu, Calif. **Racquelle Grant**, as executive director of Georgia Agape in Atlanta.



Judd



Galbreath



Stone

NEW DEACONS: Mike Maxwell, Wayne Palk and Wayne Pogue, Pleasanton Church of Christ in Texas.

HONORED: Harold Stone, member of the Beech Bethany Church of Christ in Celina, Tenn., with a plaque of recognition and a surprise 86th birthday cake in gratitude for his life-long commitment to the cause of Christ. **Michael Williams**, president of Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., as outstanding alumnus at Ohio Valley University in Vienna, W.Va.

Milestones *continued*

Edmond, Okla., for the past 31 years. Maxine was preceded in death by her parents, Jim and Mattie; three brothers, Frank, Famon, and Clair; and one sister, Doris Norton. She is survived by her husband of 73 years, Clarence, of the home in Edmond; two daughters, Pat (Bill) Hanna, of Edmond, Okla., (although Bill passed away 31 hours later on Jan. 14, at Mercy Hospital); Brenda Bridgmon of Edmond, Okla.; one son, James (Amy) Cudd, of Hinton, Okla.; four grandchildren, Chad (Kim) Hanna, of Edmond; Brad (Lindsay) Hanna, of Edmond; Jared (Kristin) Cudd, of Arapaho, Okla.; and Lacey (Charlie) Pybas, of Yukon, Okla. Survivors also include six great-grandchildren: Hunter Steuart and Hallie Hanna; Traber, Channing, and Daxon Cudd; and Josephine Pybas; as well as many nieces and nephews.

Justice Jack Pope
1913-2017

Jack Pope Jr., retired Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice, died in Austin, Texas, Feb. 25, 2017. He was 103. He was a longtime member of the University Avenue Church of Christ in Austin and former president of *The Christian Chronicle's* National Council, an advisory body that preceded the newspaper's current governing board. The son of Dr. A.J. and Ruth Taylor Pope, he was born in Abilene, Texas, April 18, 1913. He graduated from public schools in Abilene, earned a bachelor's from Abilene Christian College in 1934 and a law degree from the University of Texas in 1937. While in Austin he met a recent graduate, Allene Nichols. They married June 11, 1938, and began a loving partnership that lasted 66 years. He volunteered to fight in World War II as a Navy sailor. Instead of fighting in the Pacific, Pope was ordered to Washington to decode enemy telecommunications as a crypt-

tologist. Texas Gov. Coke Stevenson appointed Pope Judge of the 94th District Court. Then, in 1960, Pope was elected to the Fourth Court of Civil Appeals in San Antonio and elected in 1964 to the Texas Supreme Court. Gov. Bill Clements appointed him in 1982 as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. His 38-year service is believed to be the longest of any judge on Texas' highest court. Pope wrote 1,032 opinions, believed to be more than any other judge in Texas history. He wrote the first "Jury Handbook," given to those called to jury duty, sponsored the creation of the State Law Library, helped draft the first Judicial Code of Conduct and became a charter member of the Texas Center of Legal Ethics. He and others established a program that provides legal service to more than 100,000 poor families a year in civil matters such as wrongful foreclosures, domestic violence and veterans who have not received their earned benefits. The money comes from Texas lawyers, not taxes. Gov. Rick Perry in 2012 recognized him and the program with the signing of the "Chief Justice Jack Pope Act."



Pope was named Outstanding Alumnus of Abilene Christian University and The University of Texas School of Law. When his father-in-law had his first stroke, Pope brought Allene's parents to San Antonio to care for them. Grandpa Nichols could not speak, but on so many occasions he thanked Jack with a smile and tears. Pope was as comfortable outdoors as he was lecturing in the summers at the New York University School of Law. A lifelong camper, he played a mean harmonica at night and then in the morning he could wake you with a bugle call. The Texas Longhorns filled him with happy memories, such as the game against TCU in the 60s when his shoes froze to the floor at Memorial Stadium. His family visited all the national parks but three by 1960. He and his wife jogged often at Zilker Park in Austin. There is a tree in Zilker Park he would point to and say, "I got my first kiss from Allene under that tree." That would have been in 1938. He was still walking by that tree in 2013 at age 100. He developed the Pope Fellows at ACU, which give scholarships to students interested in a career in public service. In 2010, the State Bar of Texas awarded him the Lifetime Achievement Award. On his 100th birthday all the living U.S. presidents and their wives sent letters thanking the Judge for his life of service. Pope was an incorporator of the Supreme Court Historical Society. The Freedom Foundation of Valley Forge gave him its George Washington Award. The Supreme Court Society published "Common Law Judge" in 2014. The book is a collection of essays, opinions and a biography of this uncommon man. Pope is survived by two sons, A.J. (Carla) Pope III of The Woodlands, Texas; Allen (Karen) Pope of Castle Pines, Colo. He had three grandchildren; Drew Pope, Ryan (Erin) Pope and Billie Pope (Jeff) Locke and four great-grandchildren, Dylan and Peyton Locke, Carinn and Caitlin Pope, and many nieces and nephews.

Dr. William Joe Hacker, Jr., 86, Huntsville, Ala., **Mike Lynn Reeves**, 73, Grand Island, Neb., **Dr. Evan Ulrey**, 94, Searcy, Ark., **Dr. Betty Ann Watson**, 74, Searcy, Ark.

continued on Page 26

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



"My experience at OVU not only provided me with the tools I needed to pursue my career, but I was also able to grow as a Christian while getting my education. The small classroom atmosphere, knowledgeable instructors, and individuals who cared about my future success all prepared me for my career as a teacher and principal. Not only did I get an education, I made memories that will last a lifetime!"

BRITTANY SCHOB - OVU SCHOOL OF EDUCATION '10
Principal, Marietta Middle School
Marietta, OH



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Milestones

continued from Page 25

Memorial/Honor Gifts

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in memory of Marietta Bitting, Jim Oliver and Justice Jack Pope.

Remembering

Dr. Jim Beyer
1939 — 2007

A Man of Purpose

"Come here, young lady. let's talk about what kind of person you intend to become." He patted the seat next to him. "All right," I said, taking him up on his offer. "Tell me what I am supposed to become."

Grandpa smiled his unique half-smile and slowly replied, *"Oh no. A good psychologist does not give answers. She listens until they are discovered."*

In addition to his progressive application of pronouns, my grandpa was the kind of man who listened intensely, laughed loudly and spoke slowly, with purpose. Since he passed away 10 years ago when I was 18, I never had a chance to know him as an adult. So I reached out to his colleagues and students to find out more about him, but I have to admit that I was skeptical about the response. For many, it has been 20 years or more since they interacted with Dr. Jim Beyer.

To my amazement, letters poured in from the people whose lives he touched. They have stories about how he listened to them, encouraged them to grow, dared them to succeed and built community.

The ripples of his presence are widespread. For example, Anita Reyna, speaking to a beginning social work class at Lubbock Christian University in Texas this year, described the influence Dr. Beyer had on her career — completely unaware that my cousin, his granddaughter, was in the classroom.

When I asked Anita about her memory of my grandfather, she explained that Dr. Beyer was critical to her success as a social worker. She

said, "He impressed upon us that we at times could be Christ's hands, Christ's ears, Christ's feet as we brought compassion, acceptance, comfort and, most of all, hope. We were not to forget that our profession was a gift in which we could earn a living while being a servant for the Lord. What he taught us was so powerful because he lived it. It wasn't something he read and passed on to us, but he had believed it because he lived it."

Another student, Susan Nemec, recalled how Dr. Beyer voiced his belief in her ability to accomplish her goals and helped her find her calling in the hospice movement. Twenty-three years later, she was able to talk with him about the conclusion of his own journey. In the dedication of the Jim Beyer Computer Lab at Austin Graduate School of Theology in Texas, his passion for helping others was recognized as "so deep that the early stages of cancer did not prevent him from teaching."



Dr. John Beyer, Jim's eldest son, summed up his legacy: "He devoted his life to helping people. He found he could do this best through his work in psychology and social work and as an elder in God's church."

I know that grandpa's relentless focus on compassionate service had something to do with why I chose to become an organization psychologist, and I will continue listening to discover just as he taught me. In grandpa's copy of "A Man's Search for Meaning" by Victor Frankl,

he had highlighted the sentence, *"The truth-that love is the highest goal to which man can aspire."*

I share the sentiments expressed by the letters I received from his students and colleagues because I, too, am richer for having known him. I aspire to live as meaningful a life as Dr. Jim Beyer, my grandpa, the man whose purpose was love.

— Amy-Louise Barber

EDITORIAL

A call to come home

Right now, U.S. military forces are helping to fight — and win — battles in the heart of Africa without firing a shot.

African forces, with American assistance, are flushing out the last vestiges of the Lord's Resistance Army. The brutal terrorist group, led by Joseph Kony, has dealt death and chaos across Uganda, South Sudan and the Congo.

Professing a perverted gospel, Kony and his troops murder, rape and mutilate those they deem to be enemies. They steal children.

"I don't know which 'Lord's' they are," James Sokiri told *The Christian Chronicle* in South Sudan's capital, Juba, in 2011. Sokiri was in a Ugandan camp — a refugee of Sudan's decades-long conflict — when the Lord's Resistance Army attacked, bound his hands and led him into the bush. Sokiri didn't fear, he recalled. In his mind, he was already dead.

Thankfully, he evaded his captors and hid. Hours later, the Ugandan army drove the rebels away. Other children weren't as lucky. The Lord's Resistance Army brainwashed them, turning boys into soldiers and girls into sex slaves.

Joseph Kony is still at large, though his forces are scattered. Now U.S. military helicopters roam the skies above the rebel's hideouts, *The Wall Street Journal* reported in a recent front-page story from the Central African Republic.

Instead of firing rockets, the helicopters broadcast messages recorded by parents of the child soldiers, pleading for them to come home.

It's working. One by one, soldiers slip away from the camps, lay down their weapons and return to their villages. We shed tears as we see photos of the joyous celebrations that erupt at their homecomings. We're reminded of the parable of the prodigal son — and the joyous reunion that awaits us all in the life to come.

We rejoice in the power of media to share these stories, and we salute the African and American soldiers who risk their lives in this noble task — one that mirrors our heavenly Father's soft and tender call to all humanity: "Come home! Come home! Ye who are weary come home!"

Sokiri answered that call. While working in Juba, he found World English Institute online and studied Scripture with a Church of Christ member in Kentucky. On Aug. 29, 2010, evangelist Isaya Jackson baptized Sokiri in the Nile River.

"I felt as though something physical were removed from my body," Sokiri said. "I imagined the time Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River ... and how happy I will be with him in eternity."



PHOTO VIA WWW.REDEEMINGRECIFE.ORG

'This was the thing she wanted most'

Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the (Ethiopian eunuch) reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?"

So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him ... Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?"

— Acts 8:30-31; 35-36, New International Version

RECIFE, Brazil

Tatiana, age 30, came to visit us with her Christian friend Rose. She had been reading the Bible for some time and was very hungry to understand better the Word of God.

She reminded me so much of the Ethiopian eunuch from Acts 8, reading the prophet Isaiah. She asked if someone could study with her.

Her time was very limited, as she is a single mom and works afternoons and nights at a university nearby. Thankfully, we were able to find some time during the week, and our studies began. She had many questions and a very willing heart. I was happy to be of help in her search for Christ.

On the day of her baptism, something interesting happened. Usually, after someone is

baptized, they emerge from the water, and then they leave the baptistery to hug their family and friends. Tatiana didn't do that — at least not right away.

In the Word



Aureni Pruitt

She stayed in the water for some time, crying. It was such a beautiful scene to see this young lady shedding tears of joy. She told me that this was the thing she wanted most in her life.

She has many struggles and battles to fight. She needs encouragement and prayers to continue on her journey.

AURENI PRUITT and her husband, Mike, have served as missionaries in northeastern Brazil for three decades. They focus on helping churches develop mature leadership. They have three sons — Joshua, Justin and Jonathan — all born in Brazil. Joshua Pruitt and his wife, Livia, serve as part of the Recife mission team. Learn more at www.redeemingrecife.org.



JANA HILL

Children line up for a photo during recess at Oklahoma Christian Academy, a K-12 school associated with Churches of Christ.

For public and Christian schools to thrive, we must give freedom back to educators

Sadly, many of us view Christian and public schools as competitors, adversaries. In reality, we both truly desire the best for our children. I have spent the past decade working in Christian education. I have developed close friendships with dedicated educators across the country. Many serve in public and charter schools. I have a deep respect for these men and women, and I know the love they have for their children is the same love that we Christian educators have for our students. In fact, my mother has spent 20 years serving public schools and has dedicated her life to bring out greatness in children and teachers. Following her example, I love and respect public education just as I love — and advocate for — Christian education. I'm thankful that our nation ensures us the freedom to offer faith-based learning to our children. I am grateful for the men and women who have fought and died to protect these freedoms. As I look back through the history of education in our country, I see similarities between Christian education today and the formative years of public education. Schools from elementary to university once were tied closely to churches and, in many cases, were overseen by church leaders. Over time, the religious freedom that served as the foundation of our public education system was stripped away, and now an unfortunate separation exists between public and Christian schools. I believe that the differences between public and Christian education today can be summed up by one word: freedom. Both desire excellence. Both seek to utilize best practices and good sense in their classrooms. But Christian schools have the freedom to educate children without the restrictions and mandates often imposed on public schools by legislators, politicians, and lobbyist groups. In Christian schools, we're allowed to teach students free from many of these constraints. Our teachers have the freedom to talk about their faith in the classroom without fear of retaliation, lawsuits or termination. I believe that a school environment

Views



Brandon Tatum

centered on honoring God can do incredible things for our families, our cities and our nation. Our Christian beliefs do not limit us in what we teach. Rather, our faith requires us to strive for excellence in everything we do. It demands a high standard for our school community — in our actions and in academics. We strive to align our teaching with biblical truth, but we don't shut our ears to teachings and concepts that challenge our beliefs. To thrive, we must be a diverse community that values freedom and honors God. In this regard, I know we can do better. A Christian education is not a perfect education, but it is a beautiful one. American education is under-performing in far too many areas — and struggling against far too many standards. Something must change. Some argue that reform can be found with the addition of more technology and innovation. At Oklahoma Christian Academy, where I serve as president, we're blessed to have classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboards and innovative programs. Our most recent class of 22 grads had \$1.5 million in scholarship offers, and our ACT averages continue to be significantly higher than state and national averages. Although technology has helped our students prepare for university and beyond, I believe that the real reason for their success — and the answer to school reform — is the freedom that we enjoy. We must give this freedom back to our educators. We must realign our schools more closely to the purpose of education — the formation of engaged, literate, proactive, service-minded citizens. We must return to these foundational principles and reclaim them for the 21st century. Christian school educators must bring their voices together as one and help our friends and family in public schools. BRANDON TATUM is president of Oklahoma Christian Academy, a K-12 school in Edmond, Okla., associated with Churches of Christ. He is a board member and secretary for the National Christian School Association. He and his family worship with the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

FROM OUR READERS

On broken hearts

A rabbi once said, "What do you do when you lose the key to a lock? You break the lock to open the door. So break your heart and open it to God." (See "When our hearts break, God's words fall in," Page 26, March.) I'm also reminded of Elijah, who sought God in an earthquake, a fire on a mountain and a tornado, only to have God speak to him in a gentle breeze. It seems Elijah wanted God to operate through power, but it's as if God were saying, "I don't operate the way people think I should. Trust me in this."



Darryl Willis

DARRYL WILLIS is education director for Eastern European Mission, www.eem.org.

Differing views on U.S. immigration policy

Sure, we know what Scripture teaches concerning loving our neighbors as ourselves. (See "Christians debate President Trump's immigration orders," Page 1, March.) But both Old and New Testament never condoned evil men, and God's people recognized and dealt with them accordingly to God Almighty's authority. Our nation already has legal ways that it receives and accepts outsiders, and unless that is respected we are setting ourselves up for self-destruction. We had better have ways of recognizing the good guys from the bad guys. All are not immigrants or refugees as they claim. Remember, Satan is out to kill the greatest nation ever.

Cleo Phillips | Spencer, Okla.

Are we to "do unto others" only in select circumstances? We are not promised physical security in the New Testament. Rather, we are told we *will* be persecuted. I, for one, will show the love of Christ even if it means risking my safety. Have we forgotten that this world is not our home?

Sarah Sprow | Taylor, Mich.

Full-Time Minister

Channelview Church of Christ is searching for a pulpit minister to preach solid topical sermons. College degree/certificate from a school of preaching preferred. Salary is commensurate with experience; three-bedroom house is provided. Diverse congregation in East Harris County. Interested candidates should forward a resume and sample of a recent sermon to:

Channelview Church of Christ
Attn: Ron Bible (preacher search)
1301 Sheldon Road
Channelview, TX 77530
office: (281) 452-7129 or Ron: (713) 829-3131

SEARCHING FOR PULPIT MINISTER

The **Oxon Hill Church of Christ in Temple Hills, Md.**, in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., is seeking a pulpit minister. Must have at least three years preaching and teaching experience. We prefer an evangelist who is married that supports our family-type congregation. Financial support is competitive and commensurate with the salary agreed upon. In addition, we will pay a housing allowance.

Those interested should send to the elders your letter of interest, resume, salary requirements, picture photo, two references, and an audio CD of your two recent sermons to:

Oxon Hill Church of Christ
4201 Brinkley Road
Temple Hills, MD 20748
(301) 894-5412, oxonhillcoc@comcast.com

Full-Time Pulpit Minister

East Allen County Church of Christ in New Haven, Ind., is seeking a pulpit minister to work with an established, self-supporting, elder-led, a capella congregation of about 140 members. Applicants must have solid Bible-based preaching abilities to work with a diverse and growing congregation. Ideal applicants will have a bachelor's or master's degree in Bible or theology from a Christian college or university and several years of preaching experience. Family counseling experience is also desirable. Salary is commensurate with background and experience. Send a cover letter, resume, and CD of a sermon to **Joe Nichols** at nicholsj@ipfw.edu, (260) 804-5445 or **Brad Martz** at brad.martz@edwardjones.com, (260) 223-9036.

Prescott Valley Church of Christ in Prescott Valley, Arizona, is looking for a full- or part-time minister. Prescott Valley is a congregation of around 25 members with the potential for growth. We are a caring congregation that truly has a great love for one another, our community and our faith. We can provide some salary. Our ideal candidate is either a retired minister or a part-time minister who would be willing to work another job part-time in Prescott Valley.

Email resume to:

Mark Green
kramred@hotmail.com

Pulpit Minister - Valdosta, Ga.

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

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

Full-Time Preacher

The **Dixon Church of Christ in Dixon, Mo.**, is soliciting applications for a full-time preacher with a college degree (or degree/certificate from a school of preaching is preferred). The Dixon congregation meets in a small rural area and has a 3 bedroom parsonage. Send resume and sample of recent sermon (CD-ROM/DVD) to: **Bill Johnson**, elder, at (573) 433-9370 and should forward a resume and sample of a recent sermon on CD-ROM/DVD to:

Dixon Church of Christ
PO Box 569
Dixon, MO 65459

FULL-TIME MINISTER VACANCY

Hillcrest Church of Christ in Decatur, Ga., is looking for a full-time minister for congregation of 400 plus. For job description, application, and a virtual tour of our facility, please visit our website:

www.hillcrestcoc.net/apply
Contact Elder Ken Neal
(678) 344-9871

Application deadline is May 31, 2017

FULL-TIME MINISTER

Springfield Church of Christ is searching for a man to preach solid, topical sermons, and fulfill other congregational needs as assigned by the elders. A minimum of a bachelor's degree required. Salary commensurate with education and experience; a three-bedroom house provided, expenses not included. We are a mixed-age congregation of about 80 in southeastern Vermont. Interested candidates should forward a resume and a CD, DVD or electronic file of a recent sermon to:

Springfield Church of Christ
P. O. Box 160
Springfield, VT 095156-0160
Phone: 802-886-2670 Fax: 802-886-1457 puggy6875comcast.net

Full-Time Pulpit Minister

South Taft Church of Christ in Loveland, Colo., is looking for a full-time pulpit minister for congregation of approximately 200. For information regarding job description, compensation and application process please visit our website:

lovelandcofc.net
Contact:
Gary Carpenter
(970) 690-2123

Application deadline is May 31, 2017

Seeking Pulpit Minister

The University City church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida, is seeking a dynamic servant of the Lord to be the Pulpit Minister for this 350-plus member congregation.

This candidate would join an active team of College, Youth, and Recovery ministers.

We are an established, diverse, and active congregation with one of the top college ministries in the country, a K - 4th grade "Faith City" educational program, an active middle school / high school youth ministry, and an established Lads-to-Leaders program. We are actively involved in two foreign missions, a substance abuse recovery ministry, a prison ministry, and other efforts seeking to serve the needs in our community.

The minister we are seeking should be able to effectively share the Word from the pulpit, in the classroom, and in more personal settings; be well-versed in Bible doctrine and a student of the Bible. He should be able to interact on a personal level with all segments of the congregation.

Contact the UCCC Minister Search Committee: UCCCSearch@gmail.com

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Seven disciplines can help us reach our shifting culture

Many Churches of Christ find themselves in communities undergoing significant cultural shifts in the way people think and live. Believers can no longer assume that most of those around them come from a church background — or have even a passing familiarity with the faith.

These changes raise new questions for how churches live as witnesses of Jesus and the kingdom of God. There are plenty of books addressing this, but I want to recommend **“Faithful Presence: Seven Disciplines That Shape the Church for Mission”** by David E. Fitch.

As a church-planting preacher and professor at Northern Seminary, Fitch weaves theology with his own ministry experience in the western suburbs of Chicago throughout this book. The result is a concrete vision for churches that moves beyond just adding more programs.

Fitch calls us to re-imagine a life around God’s faithful presence among the local community.

This book is organized around seven disciplines that faithfully attend to the presence of God in the world. As these disciplines become the way of life, the kingdom of God “becomes visible and the world is invited to join with God,” Fitch writes.

These seven disciplines are the Lord’s Table, Reconciliation, Proclaiming the Gospel, Being with the “Least of These,” Being with Children, the Fivefold Gifting and Kingdom Prayer. Each discipline has been chosen not just because of the author’s experience, but also because they are found within the Bible and were practiced by the historical church.

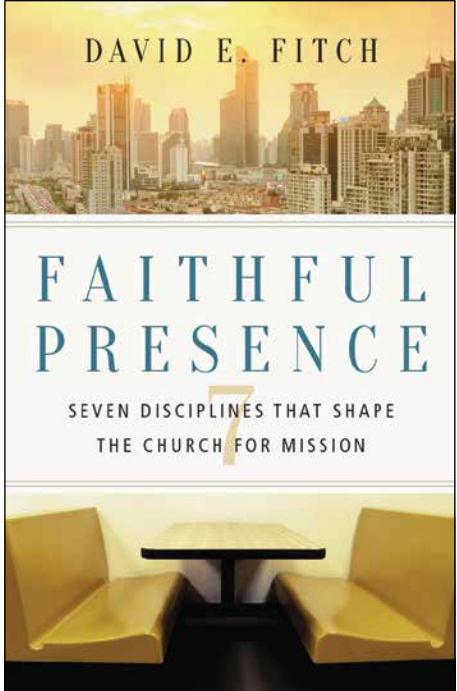
Key to each discipline is the mutual submission of every Christian, “trusting the one Lord who reigns to work in and among

(the church) for his preferred future,” Fitch writes. Such submissive faith allows for the discernment of God’s presence so that the church may join with God in his work among the world (the mission of God) and be the presence of Christ in the world (incarnation). This happens as each discipline is practiced “on the move” in three spaces which the author labels as the close circle (not “closed” circle), the dotted circle and the half-circle.

The close circle is a community of Christians discerning together in submission to the Lord and each other. Christians in this space are in close relationship with one another but don’t exclude others. Instead, they move together from this first space into the second, the dotted circle — their communities, where neighbors and strangers encounter the presence of Christ. From this second space, the presence of



In Print
K. Rex Butts



★★★★★
David E. Fitch. **“Faithful Presence: Seven Disciplines That Shape the Church for Mission.”** IVP Books, 2016. 231 pages. \$15.30.

Christ extends into the half-circle, where the church is among the hurting and broken people of the world as their guests.

Fitch presents his biblical and theological understanding of each discipline — and how each is practiced in the three circles. There are some minor points where readers may disagree with him or find his arguments unconvincing. I still have questions regarding the five-fold gifting of Ephesians 4.

Nevertheless, I do not question the central invitation of this book — for Christians to lead people in being faithfully present with the Gospel in their neighborhoods. I encourage you to read for yourself why.

K. REX BUTTS serves as lead minister for the Chillicothe Church of Christ in Missouri and is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry in contextual theology at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Ill. He and his wife of 18 years, Laura, have three children.

War thriller opens our eyes to horrors of the Holocaust

It’s one thing to hear about the harrowing atrocities of the Holocaust, but in **“The One Man,”** author Andrew Gross transports the reader directly into a perfectly plotted novel about this dark period in human history.

From the intense first pages — and throughout the story — I found myself completely drawn into the true friendship, love and intense bravery of the richly drawn characters in the midst of persecution.



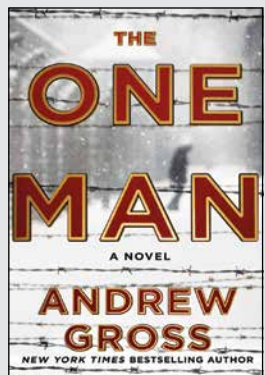
What we're reading
Dawnna Hale

This work of historical fiction is set in Poland in 1944. Alfred Mendl, a renowned physicist, is one of only two people in the world who holds the key to critical knowledge the Allies desperately need. As he attempts to flee Paris with forged papers, the Nazis catch him. Alfred and his family are forced onto a train headed to Auschwitz, the hellish concentration camp. Alfred is horrified when the Nazis, unaware of how crucial his information is to the war, set fire to the papers containing his life’s work.

Nathan Blum, meanwhile, is in Washington, decoding messages from Axis-occupied Poland. He’s an intelligence agent who escaped the Krakow ghetto after the Nazis executed his family. Nathan is recruited by the Office of Strategic Services, or OSS, to go on a deadly mission, sneaking into the heavily guarded death camp to find Alfred — the one man who holds the secret to ensuring victory.

This historical thriller deeply touched my heart. I felt the need to research and learn more about Jewish history. As a result, I now feel a deeper bond with my Jewish friends and the Jewish community. As the apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28, *“We are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

“The One Man” will linger with you for a long time after you read it. There is some coarse language, but it seemed true to the dark souls of the Nazi soldiers. I highly recommend this excellent book.



Andrew Gross. **“The One Man: A Novel.”** Minotaur Books, 2016. 432 pages. \$26.99.

DAWNNA HALE, a native of Abingdon, Va., has been married for 28 years and has three sons. She and her family have worshiped with the Pitman Road Church of Christ in Sewell, N.J., for the past 10 years. She enjoys writing, editing, reading, singing and songwriting.

WHAT ARE YOU READING? Share your thoughts on books, music and films that impact your faith. Send suggestions to erik@christianchronicle.org.



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School of Information Technology and Computing

Dr. John Homer, Director, ACU Box 29304, Abilene, Texas 79699-9304

The **School of Information Technology and Computing (SITC)** invites applications for an instructor or tenure-track faculty position in digital entertainment technology (DET) beginning Fall 2017. DET is an interdisciplinary major catering to students interested in game design and development, cinematics, modeling and animation. ACU's program was recently ranked 27th in the *Princeton Review's* top 50 game design programs in the nation. Faculty responsibilities include engaging with undergraduate students and colleagues in teaching, research and service. A terminal degree in a field related to the teaching discipline is preferred; a master's degree is acceptable if combined with significant professional experience and commitment to ongoing professional development. SITC is a growing academic unit within the College of Business Administration and offers majors in computer science, digital entertainment technology, information systems and information technology. The undergraduate computer science / computing theory and information technology programs are accredited by the Computing Accreditation Commission of ABET. Information about the school is available at acu.edu/sitc.

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

April 7-8 Central Florida Men's Retreat. Southside Church of Christ, Oviedo, Fla. sscorlando@outlook.com.

April 7-9 Alaska Statewide Lectureship. Wasilla, Ala. www.akvoc.com/lectureship.

April 9-12 Annual Bible Lectureship. Crowley's Ridge College, Paragould, Ark. ajohnson@crc.edu.

April 18 Eastern European Mission's Waco Event. www.eem.org/events.

April 21-22 Women Walking With God Conference. Wichita, Kan. www.womenwalkingwithgod.org.

April 21-23 Senior Seminar. National Association of Celebrated Seniors. St. Louis. nacs2017@yahoo.com.

April 22 17th Annual Special Needs Carnival. Raleigh, N.C. www.specialatbrooks.org.

April 23 100th Anniversary of the First Street Church of Christ. Lampasas, Texas. sbccglobal.net.

April 23-26 43rd Annual Southeast Institute of Biblical Studies Lectureship. Knoxville, Tenn. www.wedopreaching.com.

April 23-26 59th Annual Ohio Valley University Lectureship. Vienna, W.Va., www.ovu.edu/lectureship.

April 28-30 Spiritual Explosion Youth Rally. Riverside Church of Christ, Albuquerque, N.M. www.riversidecoc.net.

April 29-30 Jackson Street Church of Christ Homecoming. Alexandria, La. Ed Denney, (318) 442-3785.

May 1-5 Senior Quest. Pettijohn Springs Christian Camp, Madill, Okla. manager@pettijohnsprings.com.

May 2-5 74th Annual Pepperdine Bible Lectures. Malibu, Calif. www.pepperdine.edu/spritual-life/church-relations/biblelectures/.

May 11 Annual Spring Apologetics Lectures. Vienna, W.Va. www.warrenapologetics.org.

May 11 Eastern European Mission's Winston-Salem Event. www.eem.org/events.

May 11-14 Campus Ministry United. Wentzville, Mo. www.campusministryunited.com.

May 22-25 36th Annual Sermon Seminar. Austin Graduate School of Theology. www.sermonseminar.com.

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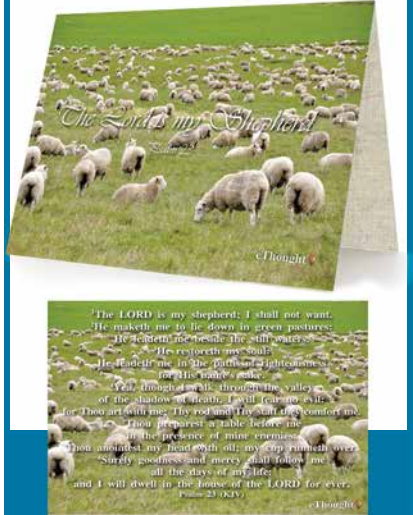
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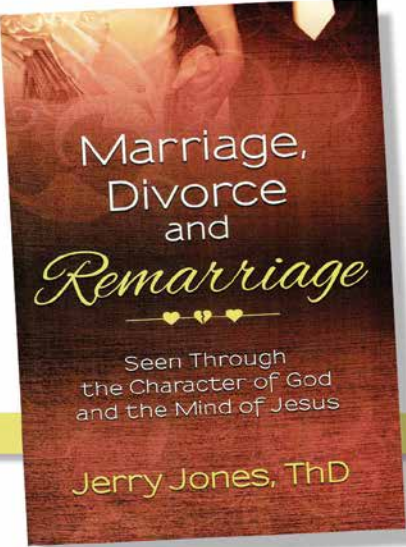
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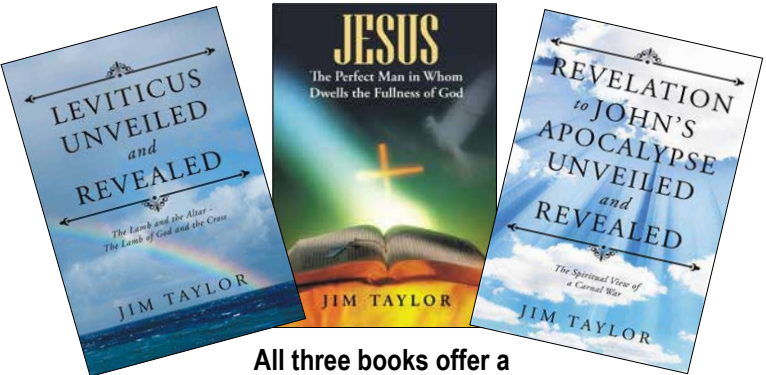
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The problem of stuff: In the midst of our materialism, a quiet revolution grows

I am drowning in my stuff. It is entirely my fault. I cannot bring myself to throw away anything except the daily newspaper and two weekly news magazines that I read to have a balanced view of the world.

(*National Geographic* is another story. I have every one that has ever arrived in the mail.)

I am a book lover. Even though I have contributed thousands of volumes to the college library, I have not one inch of space on any of my many shelves.

I have never paid much attention to my clothes; they just seem to accumulate. Lately the shirts in my closet are so crowded I can't get one out without messing up several others. I have gradually gotten rid of all the souvenir shirts and sweatshirts I collected on my travels. I have sorted out all those I can't remember wearing, and I am determined to buy no more.

Still, the stuff is all around. I remember vividly that, when I was 8 years old, a cigar box held all my "treasures" — a large magnifying glass to look at insects, a pencil and little notepad, an Indian-head nickel, four "aggies" and a "steely." That was more than enough to make me happy.

My recent time in Europe — where refugees from the Middle East arrive with all of their possessions in a small bundle — has heightened my realization of wasteful habits. Every time I buy a cup of coffee, I calculate that the money I've spent would feed a refugee family for a day or two. The money to buy a pair of socks to match my new trousers would feed a family for a week.

After reading Augustine and some of the Franciscan desert monks, I've also realized how stuff keeps humankind from discovering what is most valuable about life. Willing discipline makes us more aware of our sins, our need for God and our value as his creations.

Before Jesus began his ministry, the Spirit drove him into the wilderness. He did not eat and had no disruptions. And no stuff. Those 40 days prepared him to face and defeat Satan. They gave him strength to

deal with adoring crowds and mobs of critical Pharisees.

In the midst of the wealth and materialism of our age, a quiet revolution is taking place. Young Christians are moving to developing countries to live and to evangelize, working with

people who are barely surviving. Many of my fellow church members have gone to the Village of Hope — a ministry that serves children in the West African nation of Ghana — to help our African brethren provide these children with care and

the necessities of life.

Youth groups are beating paths to Mexico, Honduras and other Central American countries to build homes, schools and houses of worship. They also build relationships with children and teens there.

These experiences bring change to our churches — change that reflects the thinking presented in Shane Claiborne's "The Irresistible Revolution." Without a direct response to the "social gospel" punching bag, Claiborne advocates living the power of a sacrificial life devoted to people, not things. Drawing heavily on the teachings of Jesus, he argues that Jesus was not just being dramatic when he told the rich young man to sell all his possessions and give to the poor — then "*you will have treasure in heaven*" (Matthew 19:21).

"How many poor people do you know by name?" Claiborne asks. I can only name three in this country. I don't mean to be selfish, but being busy with my own stuff blinds me to the way that relationships with less blessed people will enrich my life.

I must address my stuff problem. Possessions come to possess us. They make us cling to this world when our hearts should be longing for the presence of God. We must change our hearts and seek first the Kingdom.

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Insight



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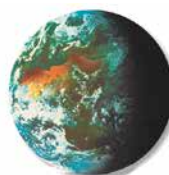
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Taiwan's long journey to faith
Christians share their tales of conversion, which can take two years, five years — even a decade. **17**



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