

BOBBY ROSS JR.

Duck Commander and church elder Phil Robertson, left, prays at the end of a Sunday morning Bible class that he teaches at the White's Ferry Road Church of Christ in West Monroe, La. The other bearded fellow is Robertson's friend Dane Jennings.

The 'Duck Dynasty' church

FOR HOME CONGREGATION, *Robertson family's celebrity a blessing and a challenge.*

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

WEST MONROE, La.

Gasps of excitement wash over a crowded classroom at the White's Ferry Road Church of Christ as Phil Robertson arrives for Sunday school.

Seventy pairs of stargazing eyes follow the bearded, camouflage-clad Duck Commander as he shakes hands with fans, thanking a couple from Canada for sending their ducks down south.

The reality television star carries a well-worn Bible, the thick binding held together with duct tape, as he

takes his seat facing the audience.

"Y'all looking at me saying, 'That's about the raggediest-looking Bible school teacher I've ever seen in my life,'" Robertson tells the class, a mix of yuppies in suits and shiny shoes and rednecks in faded jeans and mud-caked boots.

"God does not look at outward appearances, the clothes on your back," the 67-year-old church elder adds as he opens his Bible to John 3:16 and begins sharing the Gospel.

"Duck Dynasty" — which set a reality TV record with nearly 12 million viewers of one episode last year — has made celebrities out

of Robertson, his wife Kay, their four sons, their daughters-in-law, their grandchildren and even Phil's quirky brother, "Uncle Si."

All the Robertsons are longtime, active members of the White's Ferry Road church, which meets just a few miles from the Duck Commander/Buck Commander warehouse in this northeast Louisiana town of 13,000.

The church itself has shown up at least a half-dozen times on the show, touted by the A&E Network as following a Louisiana bayou family as they operate a thriving duck call and hunting accessories business while

See **DUCK DYNASTY**, Page 12

'Hate destroys the world'

IN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA, *ministers ask Christians to abstain from angry words as they pray for peace and reconciliation.*

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

As tensions flare between Ukraine and Russia, preachers in both countries urge Christians to stay out of the war.

The war of words, that is — taking place online as supporters of each nation fire shots across social media.

"We could use prayers for Christian unity," said Joel Petty, a minister for Churches of Christ in St. Petersburg, Russia. "On Facebook and other platforms, I am observing some negative back-and-forth between believers in Russia and Ukraine."

Vasya Denisov, a youth minister in Tomsk, Russia, is using social media in a different way — calling on followers of Christ to put away hate and speak in love.

"Hate destroys the world," he said in a recent Facebook post, translated from Russian. "Hatred is a weapon of mass destruction in the hands of our enemy. Unfortunately, hatred has penetrated into the hearts of my loved ones."

See **UKRAINE**, Page 14



Denisov



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Sasha Prokopchuk baptizes a woman in the Black Sea during a 2011 conference on Ukraine's Crimean peninsula — where pro-Russian militias recently seized two airports and raised the Russian flag.



**SEPTEMBER 28, 2014
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Standing up to religious bullies

In late 1990, as a correspondent for CBS News, I was sent to Saudi Arabia to cover Operation Desert Shield. This was the precursor to the first Gulf War.

Inside Story

The host country was going through some culture shock. The Saudis were not used to large numbers of Westerners living among

Doug Poling

them — and we learned quickly that our ways are not their ways.

I was staying at a hotel near the Persian Gulf. Each morning I spent some time reading the day's newspapers. Since the weather there in November is delightful, I took my papers and a cup of coffee outside to sit beside the hotel's Olympic-size swimming pool.

After doing this for a few days, the concierge asked me to see the hotel manager. Although he was very polite and soft-spoken, the manager told me I could not sit by the pool in the morning. That time of day, he explained, was reserved for women. Men use the pool in the afternoon. The sexes do not use the pool together.

"But," I protested, "no women are ever there in the morning. Nor are there any men. I'm the only one out there."

See **BULLIES**, Page 4



STILL FROM VIDEO PRODUCED BY CANCER TREATMENT CENTERS OF AMERICA

As she battled breast cancer, Heather Holladay continued to teach Zumba exercise classes.

Faith and Zumba

CHRISTIAN MOTHER IN ALABAMA credits God, her church and her love of movement in her battle with breast cancer.

BY ANTHONY RHOADS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MONTGOMERY, Ala.

Two things helped Heather Holladay throughout her fight against breast cancer — her faith in God and her love of Zumba.

When she was first diagnosed with cancer on Sept. 12, 2012, she knew the battle would take her complete trust in God and the support of her Landmark Church of Christ community.

But equally important was her determination to continue doing what she loved — teaching Zumba, an increasingly popular form of group exercise rooted in Latin dancing.

Holladay was introduced to the class four or five years ago after 18 years of

exercising through high-impact step aerobics. She later became Zumba-certified and began teaching at the East YMCA in Montgomery.

But Holladay's cancer diagnosis in 2012 threatened the active woman's lifestyle.

Though there was some suspicion she might be at risk for breast cancer as she had a mass removed in her 20s, nothing could have prepared her for the diagnosis.

Holladay's skin had started itching while teaching Zumba one night. She thought it was a rash. Finding out it was instead advanced stage breast cancer, a little bit larger

than a tennis ball, was heartwrenching.

"I almost passed out," she said. "Hearing that word knotted my stomach up. It's not

See **ZUMBA**, Page 16



CANCER TREATMENT CENTERS OF AMERICA

Heather Holladay at a cancer treatment facility in Newnan, Ga.

Big gifts for ACU: Three donations total \$55 million

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ABILENE, Texas — Abilene Christian University revealed this big number during a recent chapel assembly: \$55 million.

Three donors have contributed that amount toward construction of three science buildings and two sports stadiums — including one that will allow ACU's football team to play its home games on campus for the first time since World War II — President Phil Schubert announced.



Schubert

The total includes the largest single gift in ACU's 108-year history: \$30 million donated by alumni April and Mark Anthony of Dallas. That tops the \$26.37 million received from the Grace L. Woodward Memorial Endowed Fund in 1998.

The other gifts:

- **\$15 million** from alumni Kathy and David D. Halbert of Colleyville, Texas.

- **\$10 million** from Kay Onstead of Houston, whose late husband, Robert Onstead, served on ACU's board of trustees from 1978 to 2004.

Schubert said the gifts will "bring about a transformation on this campus that hasn't happened since the 1960s." The projects are part of an initiative called "Vision in Action" that will total \$75 million.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, see www.acu.edu/via



IMAGE PROVIDED BY ACU

An artist's rendering depicts plans for a new football stadium on the campus of Abilene Christian University in Texas.

RETURN

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NEW: Web-exclusive columns



Can a Christian be a journalist? Sarah Jane Kyle writes about her experiences working in secular media.



A four-course church potluck. Erik Tryggstad shares stories from his recent travels in France, Belgium and the African nation of Togo.



What will Phil say? Bobby Ross Jr. previews Duck Commander Phil Robertson's upcoming keynote at the Tulsa Workshop in Oklahoma.

BULLIES: Responding to intolerance with love

FROM PAGE 3

"This is the rule", he explained. And, he said, I had been spotted and turned in by the *mutaween*.

Their full name is The Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. They are the Saudi religious police who enforce their brand of Sharia law in this strict Islamic nation. The *mutaween* patrol the streets enforcing their dress codes and the separation of men and women.

In my case, it made no difference that I was at the pool alone. I had broken one of their rules. A rule that, in this case, made no sense.

I'm not sure why, but this incident came to mind when I heard the story of the brave young Pakistani woman Malala Yousafzai. She had been campaigning for the right of girls and women to attend school, something the Taliban had forbidden.

One day, while returning home from school in October 2012, she was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen.

After a long stay at a hospital in England, Yousafzai recovered. But the Taliban renewed its threat to kill her. Undeterred, Yousafzai wrote her

memoir, "I Am Malala." She was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Perhaps what caused me to think of the Saudi religious police and the Taliban thugs who shot Malala is the intolerance which links them. Some of their rules are downright oppressive. For example, In Saudi Arabia the *mutaween* forbid women from driving cars. Nonsensical, but this is their rule, and the rules are what justify their existence.

Jesus encountered such people in his day. The Pharisees said his disciples violated their rules by picking and eating grain on the Sabbath. And by healing the sick on the Sabbath. All this was such a threat to their authority, they finally killed Jesus. Just like the Taliban tried to kill Malala.

Jesus stood up to religious bullies, and he changed the world. Malala Yousafzai stood up to the Taliban and

the world took notice. Jesus forgave those who killed him. Yousafzai said she forgives those who shot her.

In the eyes of God, which is noble: Those who seek to profit from made-up rules that harm others or those who do good and forgive their enemies?

DOUG POLING is a retired correspondent for CBS News and a member of the Heritage Church of Christ in Franklin, Tenn.



CLAUDE TRUONG-NGOC, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Malala Yousafzai defied the Taliban by going to school.

APRIL 2014

ALABAMA

OXFORD — Chandler Champion, the reigning Miss Alabama, is a member of the Betta-View Hills Church of Christ.

**Champion**

“She is open about her faith and her love of this congregation,” minister John Ross said.

Champion attends the University of Alabama, where she is majoring in dance and broadcast journalism. She is a graduate of the Alabama School of Fine Arts.

ILLINOIS

DECATUR — Three Churches of Christ in Decatur are planning an evangelism workshop this summer, followed a few weeks later by a citywide campaign.

Stan Williams and Steve Webb, who work with the Morningside Church of Christ, see the efforts as a way to help revive evangelistic zeal.

“The Morningside church approached the other two congregations in town, and they agreed we needed to do something,” Webb said.

The evangelism workshop will be June 19-21 at the Decatur Civic Center.

MICHIGAN

ESCANABA — Each Sunday, children at the Escanaba Church of Christ contribute change and small bills during a time called “Coins for Christ.”

In recent months, the boys and girls have \$588.33 to help buy food and household goods for the church’s “Christian Closet.”

“The Closet is a benevolent program in which we help the struggling folks in our community,” minister Dave Grant reported to *The Northern Frontier Mission News*.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

LACONIA — With support from the Green Lawn Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, Shaun and Marci Dutile have moved to New Hampshire to plant a new church.

“I do not expect this endeavor to be easy; in fact, I sort of expect to suffer,” Shaun Dutile wrote in a recent letter to the Green Lawn church. “But I am seeking full obedience each new day.”

New Hampshire is the nation’s second least religious state, according to a 2013 Gallup poll.



KEITH LANCASTER

Four-part harmony: Singers volunteer for new Acappella project

Mike Rogers, a member of the Irving Church of Christ in Texas, directs a recording for “Everlasting God,” a new project in Acappella Company’s praise and harmony series. In all, 137 volunteer singers traveled to the Mansfield Church of Christ in Texas, Acappella’s Keith Lancaster said. Singers were chosen through auditions and asked to submit their tryout song as part of a quartet, comprised of soprano, alto, tenor and bass.

SOUTH CAROLINA

SPARTANBURG — When the temperature dips below 20 degrees, the Central Church of Christ has begun serving as a homeless shelter.

The number housed has grown from three the first night to 34 on a recent Wednesday night, organizer Brad Brook said.

“We have also had two baptisms because of this ministry,” Brooks said.

TEXAS

ABILENE — With Sunday night attendance dwindling, the Northwest Church of Christ tried various approaches, such as inviting young men to preach and starting earlier so older members wouldn’t have to drive in the dark.

“None of this seemed to stop the dying process,” minister Pat Andrews said.

Eighteen months ago, the church decided to combine its Sunday evening assembly with a service a few members already were leading at a nursing center.

“What a blessing it has become,

almost more to us than to them,” Andrews said. “Some residents can hardly speak, but you can see their lips moving and forming the words to the familiar hymns that we use.”

VERMONT

CASTLETON — A congregation in the mission field of Vermont is seeking ministry support for Kirk and Karen Israel, graduates of Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas.

“We are a small, young congregation and can only provide a small portion of their support,” church leader Mike Adaman said.

Vermont is the nation’s least religious state, according to a 2013 Gallup Poll.

The Castleton Church of Christ began a decade ago with three people gathered around a dining room table. As membership grew to the mid-20s, the church rented a small meeting place.

For more information, write to Adaman at 4609 E Hubbardton Road, Castleton, VT 05735 or snowfolk5@aol.com.

SPOTLIGHT**Faith on cardboard**

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — At the Levy Church of Christ on a recent Sunday, messages written in black ink on pieces of cardboard testified to God’s power and grace.

The “cardboard testimonials” blessed the congregation through shared faith stories,

minister Danny Dodd said.

“It was an amazing witness of God’s grace,” Dodd wrote on his Facebook page.

To see a video of the messages, search for “cardboard testimonials” at www.christianchronicle.org.



SCREENSHOT VIA YOUTUBE.COM

A member displays his “cardboard testimonial.”



With cheerleaders and baseball players on hand to celebrate, 5-year-old Brooks Russell signs a letter of intent to play for Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. Head coach Jeff Forehand said the team will “be actively invested in his life as a player, brother, son and teammate.”



Decked out in his uniform, bat boy Brooks Russell fires a pitch. “It’s an honor to sign Brooks,” recruiting coordinator Brian Ryman said.



Brooks Russell joins his parents, Kari and Cody Russell, for a photo. The family lives in Hendersonville, Tenn.

5-year-old signs with Lipscomb

PHOTOS BY JAMIE GILLIAM | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

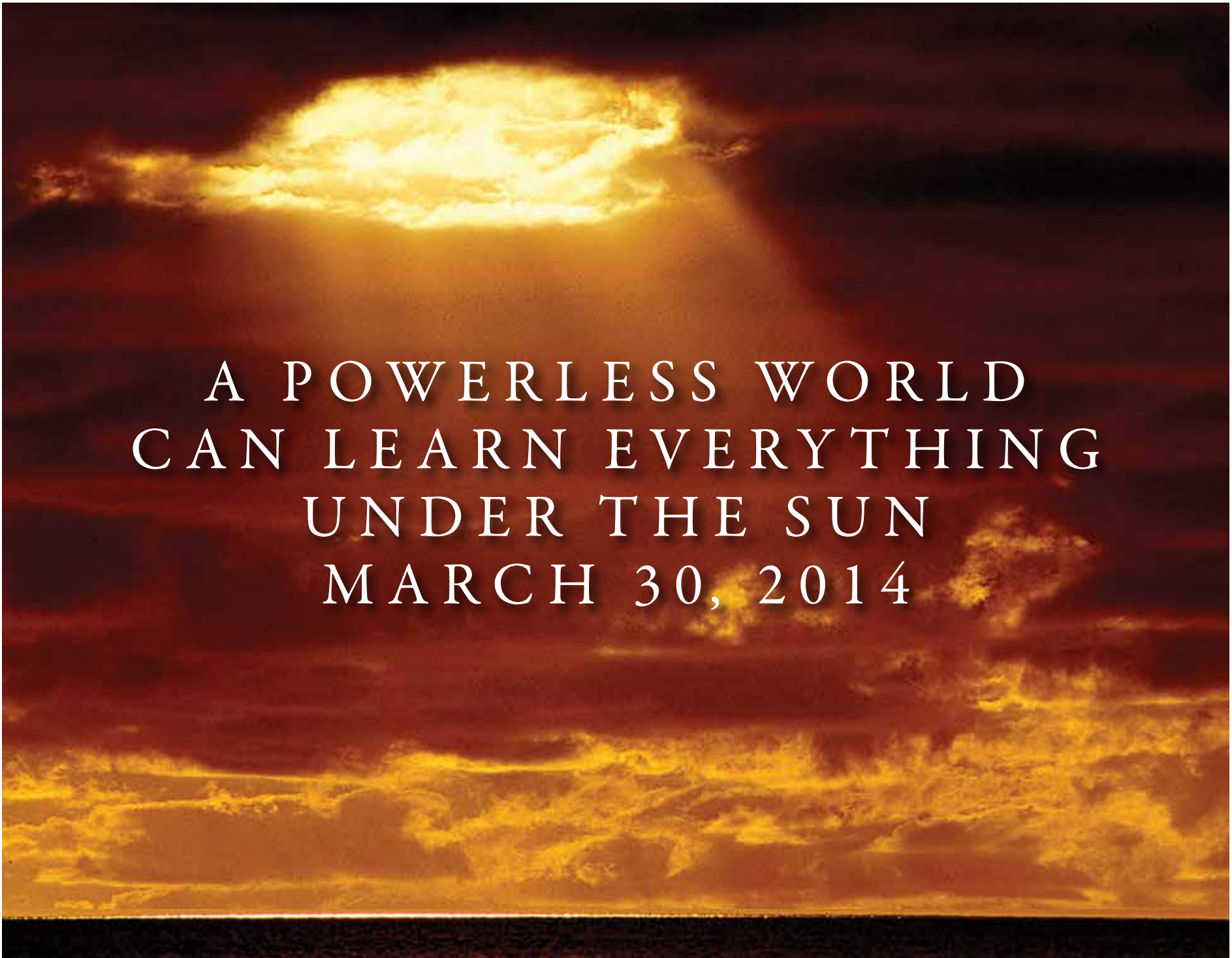
The baseball team at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., has added a five-star recruit: 5-year-old Brooks Russell. Brooks, the oldest of Cody and Kari Russell’s three children, is battling a brain tumor. The Friends of Jaclyn Foundation connected the family to Lipscomb.



Clockwise from left, Lipscomb’s Adam Lee, Josh Lee, Chad Shannon and Caleb Woodson pose for a photo with Brooks Russell.



Lipscomb University’s newest baseball player, Brooks Russell, swings for the fences. “‘Teammates Matter’ is what we pride ourselves on, and with Brooks, it will be no different,” head coach Jeff Forehand said. “As coaches, we are thrilled to have Brooks and his family on our team and a part of our family of Bisons.” Brooks’ mother, Kari Russell, thanked the organization Friends of Jaclyn for its role in the 5-year-old’s signing.



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ARUBA

ORANJESTAD — Nine students from Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., traveled to this Caribbean island for a mission trip. The trip resulted in several baptisms — including an 84-year-old man, Caribbean missionary Larry Waymire reported.

It was team leader Derrek Wilson's third visit to the island, part of the Dutch Caribbean. Wilson and his family plan to move to Cusco, Peru, to join a mission team there later this year. For more information, see thecuscomission.wordpress.com.

CROATIA

ZAGREB — The Bible Institute of Zagreb hosted its first Jesus conference recently. Teachers and preachers from Croatia, Hungary, Romania and the U.S. presented lessons for an audience of diverse religious backgrounds.

"We heard academic papers presented in daytime sessions at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb," said Tom Sibley, the institute's director. "We also heard keynote sermons all three evenings at the Hotel International. The speakers focused on highlighting Jesus as he is presented in both the Old and New Testaments."

INDIA

CHENNAI — The story of Phineas, a zealous believer who turned away God's wrath against the Israelites in the Old

Testament book of Numbers, is one of the articles in "Pattern to the Believers," a magazine for young Indian Christians.

The magazine, produced quarterly, also features Bible quizzes and a daily Bible reading plan.

Articles are written in English and the Tamil and Telugu languages. D. Pradabadathan, minister for the Erukkanchery Church of Christ in Chennai, edits the magazine and seeks support for its



PHOTO PROVIDED

The front page of "Pattern to the Believers."



PHOTO PROVIDED BY GREG ELANGWE

Bibles held high, African preachers march

In the West African nation of Cameroon, preaching students at the Bible Institute of Wotutu march in a parade during their nation's annual Youth Day observance. The holiday celebrates the country's young people and encourages them to renounce violence and embrace education, sports and the arts. As they marched past government officials, the students raise up their Bibles "to show that lives on earth will not be meaningful if many continue to live their lives out of the norms of the Bible," said Greg Elangwe, the school's director.

publication.

"Kindly pray for this magazine to be continued," said Indian evangelist David Martin. "Most of the youth in Churches of Christ are motivated by it."

LATVIA

RIGA — Christians in this European capital are providing support for victims of "the Maxima tragedy" of late 2013. Fifty-one people died when the roof of a popular supermarket collapsed.

Victor Barviks, minister for the Riga Center Church of Christ, gave funds to a woman widowed by the tragedy. The Riga church and two U.S. congregations — the Bastrop Church of Christ in Texas and the Chesmont Church of Christ in Pottstown, Pa. — donated the money.

The widow "was deeply moved when I told her what (the churches) had

done for her," Barviks said. "She said something to the effect of, 'Where do all of these good people come from?'"

PERU

LIMA — Christians in this South American capital recently launched a preacher training school with 12 students, with a few more expected to join. The students have committed to meet Saturdays from 3 to 7 p.m. for the next two years, said minister Helmut Garcia.

The congregation requests volunteer teachers and Spanish-language Bibles and gospel literature. For more information, contact the North Highlands Church



Garcia

SPOTLIGHT

A two-church family

TOOWOOMBA, Australia — Rowan and Shannon Bestmann, newcomers to this town of 157,000 souls in Australia's Queensland province, said they have received blessings as they have worked alongside two house churches.

In an interview with *Intersections* magazine, a publication for Australia's Churches of Christ, the couple describes the two congregations — one on the north side of town with 16 members and one on the south with 19 members. About once per month the churches combine for a joint service, usually with a guest speaker from a church in nearby Brisbane.

"The brethren here function like extended family," Rowan Bestmann said. "If someone needs help, others willingly step up and offer what is required."



KLESIS.COM.AU

The Bestmann family

DOWNLOAD A PDF VERSION of the magazine at www.klesis.com.au.

of Christ in Russellville, Ala., at www.mynhcc.com.

ZIMBABWE

MUTARE — "We regard 2014 as a year with many opportunities to serve our Lord in a better way, while we face the challenges of our day."

That's how leaders of the Mutare School of Preaching, established in 1958, began a recent report to the school's supporters. The school has a current enrollment of 19 preachers and six preachers' wives.

In the past year the school has faced challenges — including the loss of water to campus (now restored).

The school has a new instructor, Isaiah Suwari, and is working to forge a partnership with Lubbock, Texas-based Sunset International Bible Institute.



College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Gregory Straughn, Dean • ACU Box 29210, Abilene, Texas 79699-9210

The Department of Engineering and Physics invites applications for two tenure-track assistant/associate professor positions for its new and rapidly expanding engineering program. The engineering program started in Fall 2012 and has approximately 85 students in the freshman and sophomore classes. Applicants should have especially strong skills in teaching, scholarship and research. Ideal candidates will have a Ph.D. in engineering or a closely related field, and experience in teaching and research. Candidates with an M.S. degree also will be considered. Previous involvement with ABET accreditation would be helpful. Expected start date is August 2014. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/engineering.

School of Nursing

Dr. Becky Hammack, Dean • ACU Box 28035, Abilene, Texas 79699-8035

The ACU School of Nursing invites applications for two or three positions as instructor or assistant/associate professor of nursing beginning Fall 2014. Applicants should maintain an active nursing license, be eligible for R.N. licensing in the state of Texas and have a M.S.N. A Ph.D. in nursing, D.N.P., related doctoral degree or nurse practitioner is preferred. Applicants from a variety of nursing sub-specialties (medical-surgical, pediatrics, obstetrics, critical care, community health, mental health, and nursing informatics) are encouraged to apply. The successful candidate is expected to work collaboratively in shared governance with nursing faculty toward the Christian mission of the university. ACU encourages applicants who facilitate exceptional student learning environments, value mentoring and advising students, and engage in service for the university, profession and community. Applicants will be expected to pursue scholarly interests and engage students in these activities. Information about the school is available at acu.edu/academics/nursing.

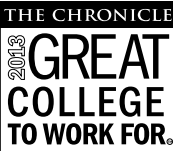
Brown Library

Dr. John Weaver, Dean • ACU Box 29208, Abilene, Texas 79699-9208

ACU's Brown Library invites applications for a director of educational technology. The position leads the development and use of academic technology in support of excellent teaching practices, engaging learning experiences and scholarly research across the university. This is either a faculty or a professional staff position that requires a master's degree, preferably in information technology, information science, instructional/educational technology, or a closely related academic discipline, with a minimum of five years of a combination of experience in positions of either university-level instruction or management in information technology, or related fields, to enhance learning in higher education or similar environments. A Ph.D. in any academic discipline taught at ACU is preferred, and there is a possibility of faculty appointment. Review of applicants will begin immediately. Information about Brown Library is available at acu.edu/library.

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

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



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PHOTO PROVIDED BY ESANG AKPANUDO

Nigerian Christians help struggling families in Sierra Leone

Women gather outside the meeting place of a Church of Christ in Freetown, capital of the West African nation of Sierra Leone, during a seminar on Christian families. Esang Akpanudo, principal of Obong Christian High School in Nigeria, and his wife, Chioma, traveled to Sierra Leone, recovering from a 10-year civil war that claimed more than 55,000 lives, to conduct seminars for Churches of Christ there. The Berry's Chapel Church of Christ in Franklin, Tenn., sponsored the trip.

"Families are in crisis throughout Sierra Leone," Esang Akpanudo said. "Many homes are headed by women struggling to raise children. Girls as young as 14 years of age become teenage mothers, as many are forced to leave home and turn to prostitution to survive."

The seminars are designed "to help families grow through God's Word," he said.

Flood claims lives of church member, seven children in East African nation of Burundi

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A recent flood in the East African nation of Burundi has claimed the lives of a Christian woman and seven children who attended a Church of Christ.

A "great rain" in the nation's capital, Bujumbura, killed more than 60 people in the northern part of the city, said church member Amou Akembe. Barry Baggott, director of Nashville, Tenn.-based French World Outreach, translated a message from the Burundian church member.

"The situation of the church in this part of town is deplorable," Akembe said, "for one of our brethren lost two children under 5 years of age. Another lost his wife and five children — carried away by the waters — and another has six children who were injured. Others among us are also injured and have lost belongings. The homes of nine of our families were destroyed."

The Church of Christ began in

Bujumbura in 2005 when Baggott and Doyle Kee, a French-speaking missionary in Geneva, Switzerland, traveled to the East African nation, south of Rwanda, to study with students enrolled in a Bible correspondence course.

"There are now half a dozen small congregations" in the area, Baggott said. Church members produce a weekly broadcast, sponsored by World Radio, a church-supported ministry based in West Monroe, La.

More than 50 people who listen to the radio program have contacted the congregation, saying that they lost homes and belongings in the flood and requesting relief supplies.

"The whole church here is in a desperate situation," Akembe said, "and appeals to brethren around the world to come to its aid."

TO ASSIST IN RELIEF EFFORTS email Baggott at fwo.ceb@gmail.com.

VISION in ACTION

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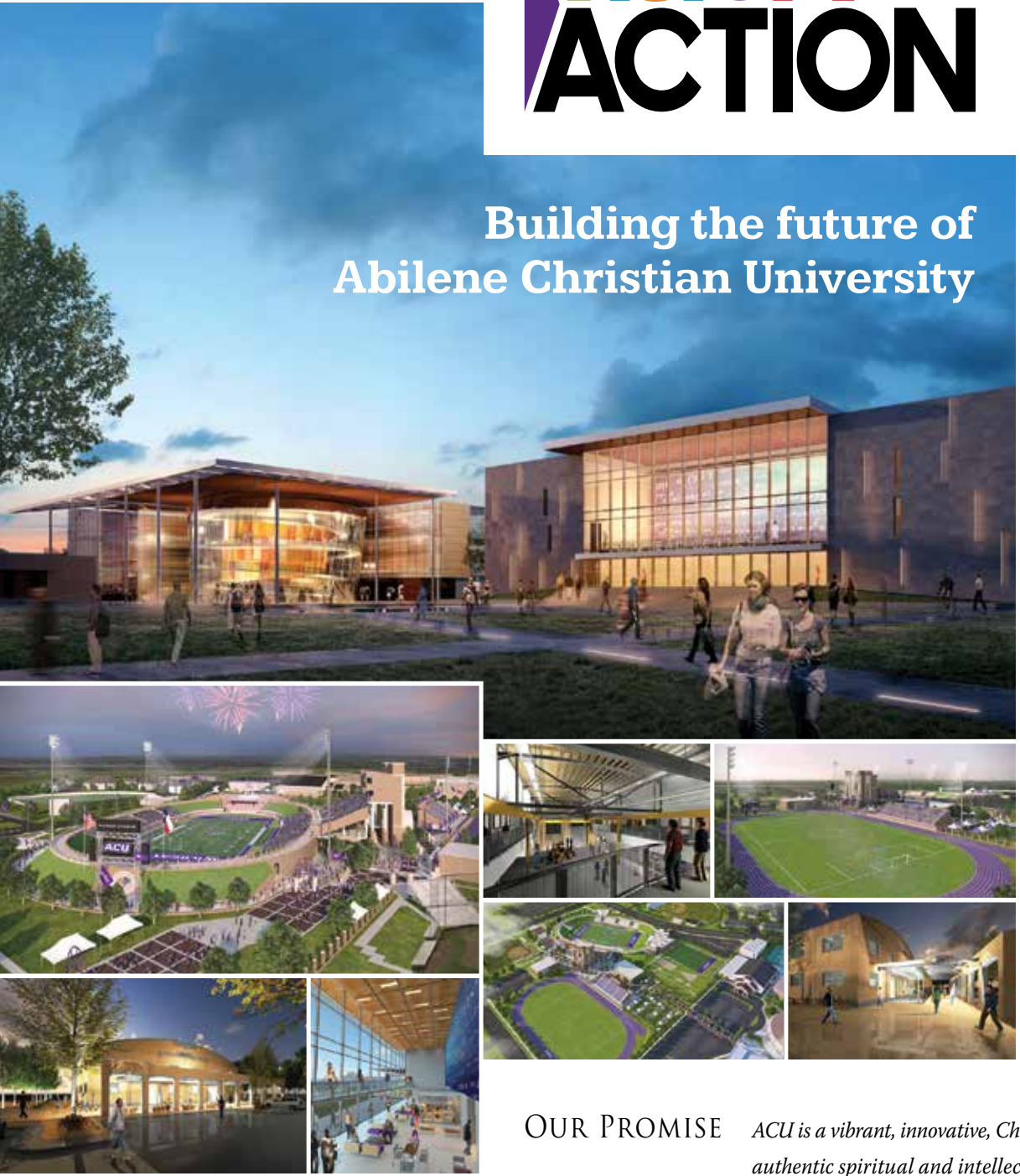
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DUCK DYNASTY: Show's fans flock to Louisiana church



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Guest spaces in the White's Ferry Road church parking lot fill up quickly as "Duck Dynasty" fans come to get a glimpse of the Robertson family.



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Elder and worship team leader Tommy Inman, front, sings with the praise team at the White's Ferry Road church. "Duck Dynasty" family member Missy Robertson, second from right, is a member of the team.



KAROLINA WOJTASIK, A&E NETWORK, COPYRIGHT 2014

Phil and Kay Robertson renew their wedding vows on an episode of "Duck Dynasty." Their minister son Alan — "the beardless bro" — officiates the 2013 ceremony witnessed by millions of television viewers.



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Dan and Betty Ann Stovell from Canada pose with Kay Robertson after Bible class. In the upper left, Jep Robertson greets Texan John Morgan.

FROM PAGE 1
staying true to family values. Like his father, oldest son Alan Robertson — the clean-shaven member of the clan who describes himself as a "Jacob in a family of Esaus" — serves as a church elder. "The biggest challenge is also the biggest opportunity — just the influx of people that come to services," said Alan Robertson, who stepped down as one of the 1,500-member congregation's ministers in 2012 to help run the family's burgeoning business. "Sometimes, it's overwhelming."

'THIS IS THEIR CHURCH FAMILY'
Two police cars parked outside the church building and a dozen-plus members trained to help with security testify to the changes — and frequent out-of-town visitors — brought by the Robertsons' success. "We have people come in from all states, and it's OK, even though some people say, 'Well, that's just not right,'" Kay Robertson said after pos-

ing for a photo with a family from Alabama. "But when you come here, you're going to hear the Gospel of Jesus, and you're going to hear everybody worshipping, praising God. So how can that be bad?" On a daily basis, the church's three secretaries — including an extra one hired to help with the flood of "Duck Dynasty"-related calls and emails — hear from fans touched by the show. Many want a Robertson to pray with them or baptize them. "I always tell them that it's a possibility that Phil won't baptize them or that one of the Robertsons won't baptize them, but somebody here will," secretary Luanne Watts said. Some don't understand the true meaning of baptism until arriving and studying the Bible, secretary Lori Easterly said. "They're like, 'Oh, my word, I've never heard it like that,'" Easterly said. Average Sunday morning attendance has jumped by more than 100 since "Duck Dynasty"

premiered, church leaders said. Even in an auditorium filled with 1,100 to 1,400 worshipers, depending on the number of visitors (and if there's a tour bus that Sunday), it's impossible to miss the bearded celebrities, their wives and children. Missy Robertson, wife of Jase Robertson, lends her voice to the praise team as the

congregation sings a cappella hymns, including "Listen To Our Hearts," "Father, We Love You" and "Shine on Me." The church's Celebrate Recovery addiction recovery ministry draws roughly 400 people each Friday night. The congregation's willingness to embrace people with "hurts, habits and hang-ups" can be

seen in the typical 20 to 30 minutes of special prayers for people who come forward to express specific needs each Sunday. When they're in town, Phil and Alan Robertson join fellow elders in placing hands on those people and lifting them up to God. On occasion, minister and elder Mike Kellett must remind guests to refrain from taking photos of the Robertsons during the assembly. "This is their church family. Let them enjoy their church family," Kellett said one Sunday, joking that he and associate minister Trent Langhofer would be down front to sign autographs after the service. "We keep it light if we can because we're honored that people would come," the preacher said. "It's not too bad, but it is a challenge every now and then."



LYNN MCMILLON

Alan Robertson and Mike Kellett shared the preaching duties at the White's Ferry Road church for eight years. Both still serve as church elders.

He's a tenacious personal evangelist who has brought hundreds of souls to new life in the Ouachita River. "I was an evil man, just a sinful scumbag, before I ran up on him," Robertson tells the Sunday school class, writing the name of Jesus on a white-board and circling it. "I'm just glad I'm out from under it," he says of his old way of life. "I'm glad you are, too," Kay Robertson chimes in from the audience. Upon hearing the voice of "Miss Kay," four children from Texas seated on the front row — wearing "Happy! Happy! Happy!" shirts and Duck Commander hoodies bought at the warehouse store — twist their heads around. The Morgan and Morris families made a special trip from Kingwood, Texas, near Houston, to see the Robertson family's hometown and eat frog legs and crawfish at Willie's Duck Diner, owned by Duck Commander

CEO Willie Robertson. "They're just good people that we can relate to," said John Morgan, a Southern Baptist father of three who praised Phil Robertson's Bible knowledge. Dan and Betty Ann Stovell from Beamsville, Ontario, heard about the class while shopping in the "Duck Dynasty" section of a West Monroe department store. "I was amazed at how very well informed he is and how he is so dedicated to his Bible studies," Dan Stovell said of Phil Robertson. "I was truly impressed. There was no pulling the wool over his eyes." **'PLAIN, BLUNT MAN WHO LOVES GOD'** Back in December, Phil Robertson found himself as the center of the nation's culture war after he characterized homosexuality as a sin in an interview with *GQ* magazine. In the Sunday school class, Robertson alludes to the controversy as he reads from Acts 2 and reflects on the 12 apostles.

All but John died for their faith, he tells the class — an idea propagated by Christians in the second and later centuries. The Bible itself refers only to Peter and James the son of Zebedee dying as martyrs, said Jeff Peterson, a New Testament scholar at Austin Graduate School of Theology in Texas. The book of Acts tells how all the apostles suffered



ZACH DILGARD, A&E NETWORK, COPYRIGHT 2014

Korie, Willie and Si Robertson approach the White's Ferry Road church building during the "I'm Dreaming of a Redneck Christmas" episode in 2012.

wife said he's simply "a plain, blunt man who loves God." "He's trying to get as many people to heaven as he can, and he's doing it any way he can," Kay Robertson said. "The man asked him about sin ... and he made a list of sins." "Duck Dynasty" remains the top cable show on Wednesday nights, but ratings have slipped. Rather than a backlash, the 5.2 million viewers for a recent episode likely reflect the normal quick shelf life for a reality series, said Joe Adalian, West Coast editor for *New York* magazine's pop culture site *Vulture*. The Robertsons know the show won't last forever. But as long as the cameras roll, they intend to keep entertaining Duck Nation. "While we're on TV and able to have a platform to get the Gospel out, we want to do that," Alan Robertson said. **WEB EXCLUSIVE:** What will Phil Robertson say at the Tulsa Workshop? See Bobby Ross Jr.'s column at www.christianchronicle.org.

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UKRAINE: President calls on Christians to fast, pray

FROM PAGE 1

One flashpoint of contention between the two former Soviet nations is the ouster of Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich. In late 2013, he rejected an economic deal with the European Union and decided instead to strengthen economic ties to Russia.

In late February, thousands of protesters poured into Independence Square in Kiev, Ukraine's capital, accusing the president of corruption and living in luxury as many of his countrymen suffered in poverty. Clashes between protesters and police resulted in 77 deaths.



Samodin

The protests forced church members to close the Ukrainian Education Center in Kiev, a facility where students from three nearby universities enjoy cups of tea as they use computers and a free wireless network and peruse a collection of books on Christian living.

About 50 to 100 students use the facility each day, said Vitaly Samodin, who directs the center and conducts English and Bible lessons there. A few of the students took part in the protests before they became violent, he said.

"Most people couldn't (and many still can't) hold back their tears, thinking of the people who laid down their lives on the main square of Kyiv," Samodin said in an email, using the Ukrainian-language spelling of the capital city.

His country's newly appointed president, Oleksandr Turchynov, is a Baptist preacher. He "has called for all Christians and believers in the country to fast and pray for the peaceful resolution of the problem," said Samodin, a member of the Nivky Church of Christ in Kiev.

Samodin said he has found comfort in Scripture, including Jesus' words in Matthew 24, "where he talks about rumors of wars and the need for Christians to keep their faith so that love does not grow cold in their hearts."

'OUR LIGHT POURS FORTH'

In the two decades since the fall of

the Iron Curtain, Churches of Christ have grown rapidly in Ukraine — especially the Donbas region of the country's Russian-speaking east.

Sasha Prokopchuk — who once served in the Soviet army and now ministers for a Church of Christ in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk — makes regular trips to Crimea to host a conference for church members and spiritual seekers.

Konstantin Zhigulin, a church member and professional musician in St. Petersburg, led singing at the conference in 2011 and taught the attendees Russian translations of hymns including "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "Shout Hallelujah."

Zhigulin, en route to the U.S. to visit churches in the Northeast with his quartet, Psalom, said he was praying for his Ukrainian brethren.

"In this troublesome time, God's church is called to be light to this world," Zhigulin told *The Christian Chronicle*. "Our light pours forth from the way we carry ourselves in this moment."

Participants in the Crimea conference received Russian- and Ukrainian-language Bibles and gospel literature from Eastern European Mission, a church-supported ministry that has placed its materials in nearly 14,000 public schools across Ukraine and Russia.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Russian musician Konstantin Zhigulin leads singing in Crimea, Ukraine, in 2011.

On April 1 the mission launches 31 days of prayer for Ukraine and Russia, ending with the National Day of Prayer May 1.

Founded at the height of the Cold War in 1961, Eastern European Mission used to smuggle Bibles

under the Iron Curtain. Its current president, Bill Bundy, said that "the difficulties in Ukraine remind us that EEM began this ministry to deliver Bibles under very harsh circumstances."

Despite the current tension, school officials in Ukraine continue to request Bible literature, said Bart Rybinski, EEM's vice president for European operations.

"Also, last week we received a request from a church in Crimea for a large number of Bibles," he said. "Though they are in the eye of the storm, they continue to share God's Word with people in their city."

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STILL FROM VIDEO PRODUCED BY CANCER TREATMENT CENTERS OF AMERICA

Heather Holladay talks about her battle with breast cancer and her love of Zumba.

ZUMBA: Cancer patient's faith grew through treatments

FROM PAGE 3
a matter of hearing it; I heard it as a curse word.”
Holladay ultimately decided to seek treatment from Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Newnan, Ga., where multiple members of her husband's family worked and volunteered.
“I had no fear, no anxiety. All I had was my faith,” she said. “All I could do was rely on God. I had faith that he would work through the doctors and nurses.”
Eight intense chemotherapy treatments in 16 weeks followed and, to everyone's amazement, the cancer was eradicated. Additional surgeries and procedures, as well as radiation treatment, ensured the cancer was gone.
The medical expertise of Holladay's doctors coupled with a sincere concern for her spiritual wellbeing as she underwent treatment.
“They treat the whole person, not just the cancer,” she said. “I knew I was at the right place, and you can't tell me any different. When you walked in, you knew the Holy Spirit was there. You cannot tell me God does not work through that place.”
Holladay was also determined to stay physically active through her beloved Zumba during cancer treatments.
“It's nothing but dance,” she said. “It kept my energy up, and it was something to focus on during chemo.”

She didn't miss a beat of the Latin fusion exercise throughout chemotherapy, offering free Zumba classes for other patients at the treatment center.
Buddy Bell, preaching and senior minister for the Landmark church, said the woman is nothing short of an inspiration to her fellow church members.
“I've seen her and her family's faith grow,” Bell said. “She's been real sympathetic to other people who have had cancer, compassionate to other people who've lost (people to cancer). It's been neat seeing her faith grow through all of this. ... I think God has used her.”
Because of Holladay's resilience and trust in God throughout her cancer journey, the ever-busy mother of two, graduate student and full-time worker is scheduled to be featured in three commercials for Cancer Treatment Centers of America — one for Zumba, one more faith-based and another that will serve as more of an infomercial.
As she looks back on her experience, Holladay said she learned how important it is to stay positive and rely on faith when hard times come.
“It's all about attitude,” Holladay said. “If you are not positive and you dwell on the negative, it's going to be a negative situation. If you don't have a spiritual relationship, get one. It will be what gets you through these trials.”
“Having a positive attitude is the biggest thing — stay positive.”

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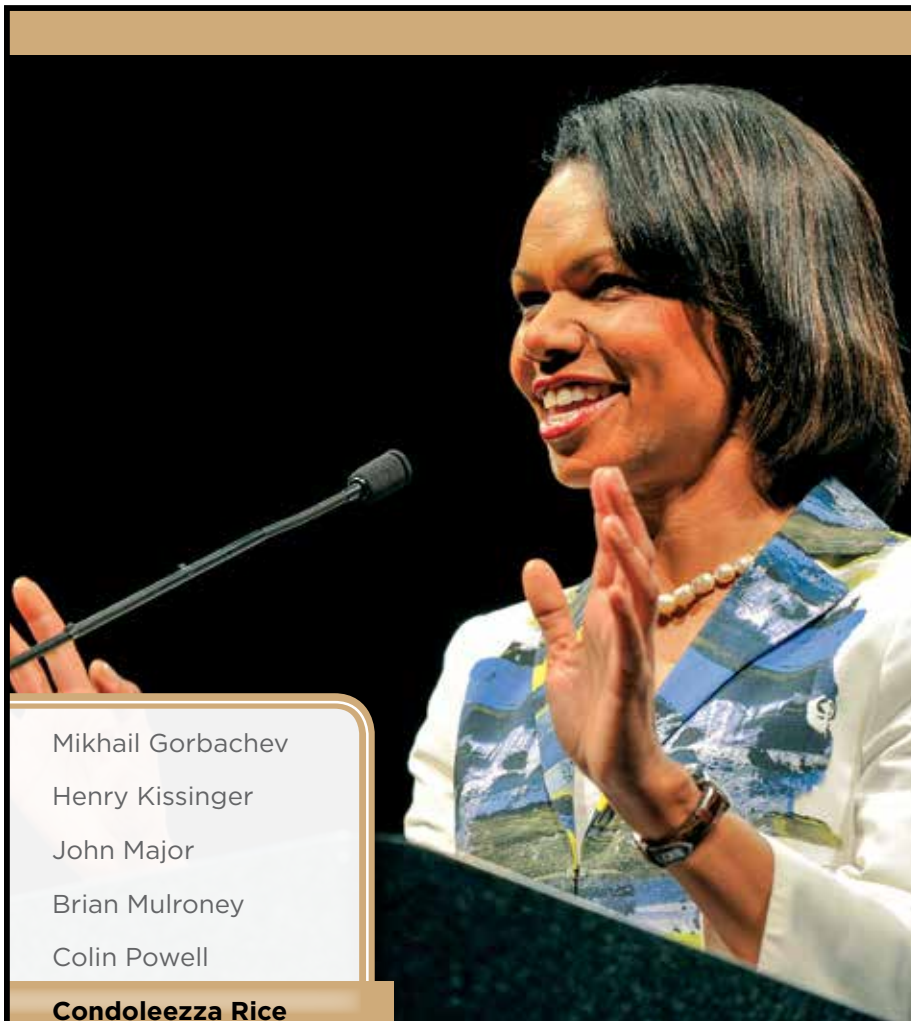
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Christian campuses sing in the spring

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Even before the first buds appear on the trees, students at colleges and universities associated with Churches of Christ become pirates, knights, mushrooms, crayons, zombies and an assortment of Disney characters as they welcome spring.

The competitions go by various names — Makin' Music, Master Follies, Singarama and two instances each of Songfest and Spring Sing.

But the elements of each are similar — comedic musical numbers, elaborate choreography, acrobatics and state-of-the-art special effects, all with the goal of attaining prizes and bragging rights until next year.

At Lipscomb University in Tennessee and Lubbock Christian University in Texas, the shows have been part of campus life for a half-century. The shows were inspired by musical revues produced by fraternities and sororities on campuses such as Villanova, Northwestern and Brown, some of which began as early as the 1920s.

At Harding University in Searcy, Ark., Lindsey Sloan is rehearsing for her fourth and final Spring Sing. She has served as a participant in and director of one of the show's eight musical numbers, produced by the university's

social clubs. As a senior, she will serve as a hostess for the second year.

Her desire to be a part of the show "absolutely stemmed back to coming to watch this production when I was in middle school and high school," she said. As she witnessed the camaraderie among the participants, united in an effort to win the competition as they



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

Members of the Chi Beta Chi social club at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., perform in Makin' Music 2013.

raised money for charity, "I couldn't wait to get to be a participant."

University recruiters pray for that reaction. The performances often are the highlight of campus visit weekends for potential students.

At Harding, Spring Sing "also serves as a showcase for potential donors to the university," said Steven Frye, professor of theater and director of the event. The performance "generates tremendous revenue for community hotel, restaurant, and shopping establishments with more than 12,000 guests attending one of the five performances each year."

While school officials rejoice at the positive effects on the economy and enrollment, some professors lament the days before the musicals, when students'

grades can suffer due to hectic rehearsal schedules. Administrators tend to limit the amount of time participants spend preparing for the performances and restrict those on academic probation from involvement, school officials told *The Christian Chronicle*.

At the home of another Spring Sing, Oklahoma Christian University, "we tell all of our students over and over that school and class are the most important thing," said Amanda Watson, student event coordinator, "You cannot miss or get excused from class for anything Spring Sing-related."

At Harding, Sloan said that the

academic requirements "only encourage me to continue to do well, rather than being a burden on my school work."

Equally encouraging is "working with others who have the same ultimate goal of spending eternity in heaven," she said.

As a sophomore in 2012, Sloan was shocked when 18-year-old freshman Ty Osman — who was scheduled to appear in the performance she was directing — was killed in a traffic accident during spring break.

"It fused the Harding family together like I have never seen," she said. "It fused our show together. We were doing that show for so much more than to simply have bragging rights for a year. ... I have never experienced such a challenge — and yet such growth all at the same time."



Sloan



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

Students at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., perform during Singarama in 1986.

the camaraderie among the participants, united in an effort to win the competition as they

Singing in the spring



In 1978, Rochester College presented a “Mickey Mouse Club” homage.



Lubbock Christian began its “Master Follies” more than 50 years ago.



In 2013, Pepperdine students followed the theme “From Page to Stage” for their annual Songfest, including “Alice in Wonderland.”

Share your springtime musical memories.
Go online to www.christianchronicle.org to see more photos — past and present — from springtime musicals at colleges and universities associated with Churches of Christ. Did you attend or take part in a performance? Leave a comment about your favorite moments. See additional comments in “Voices,” Page 33.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CHRISTIAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



From Texas and across the nation, crowds flocked to a recent “Sing Song” at Abilene Christian University.

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Songfest

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ON FEB. 14, 1957 “the giant Sing-Song contest” debuted on the campus of Abilene Christian College, directed by Bob Hunter. Fifty-seven years later, nearly one-third of the university’s student body participates in the event. Men’s and women’s social clubs and mixed voices groups compile three-and-a-half-minute performances — usually popular songs with rewritten, humorous lyrics — and compete for top honors. Thousands of alumni, parents and prospective students attend Sing Song, university officials said. NEXT PERFORMANCE: February 2015	FOR 36 YEARS, students on Faulkner’s campus have put together musical performances as part of a recruiting weekend for the university. The event also gives participating social clubs the chance to recruit new members. The weekend features events for alumni. “I am glad our school allows us to take part in such a great outlet that allows us to get to know each other and express ourselves in a wholesome and fun way,” said Laurie Ann Wadley, who served as a Jamboree hostess for the 30th anniversary performance in 2008. NEXT PERFORMANCE: April 4-5	NEARLY 600 STUDENTS participate in the annual musical event, a tradition since 1978. Six social clubs compete for a sweepstakes trophy. Each creates a seven-and-a-half-minute show, using familiar songs with modified lyrics to fit the stories. Competitors develop their own costumes and choreography. “I think participation can be faith-affirming,” said Nancy Bennett, media relations director. “Learning to work together for a common goal, developing leadership skills and building relationships are all skills that are vital in the church.” NEXT PERFORMANCE: April 11-12	EIGHT SHOWS OF SEVEN MINUTES, with up to 120 cast members each, highlight this year’s Spring Sing, part of campus life at Harding since 1974. The show usually clocks in close to two hours. It includes performances by hosts and hostesses that “incorporate full staging, costuming, media integration and state-of-the-art special effects,” said Steven Frye, professor of theater and Spring Sing’s director for 20 years. “We believe the process of teamwork and hard work is a perfect microcosm for the larger Christian experience,” Frye said. NEXT PERFORMANCE: April 17-19	STUDENTS USED TO STAND on risers and sing during the early years of this show, which first appeared on this Music City campus in 1964. Now the performance is three “mini-musicals” that include dialogue and a minimum of eight songs, said Sarah Keith Gamble, associate dean of student life. Hosts and hostesses open and close the show and perform between acts. “We strongly encourage the student directors to streamline their rehearsals so there isn’t wasted time,” said Gamble, who was part of the show during her college years. NEXT PERFORMANCE: April 3-5	A 9-FOOT CONCERT GRAND PIANO was the inspiration for this student talent show, envisioned by chorus director Wayne Hinds 56 years ago as a means of funding the purchase for the university’s music program. Now the show consists of performances from eight social clubs, using songs and choreography. The performances are the highlight of the university’s homecoming weekend. Students have portrayed hyper baristas and jumping crayons in years past. A group of coal miners and dancing cats took top honors this year. NEXT PERFORMANCE: February 2015	THIS MUSICAL COMEDY EXTRAVAGANZA was developed by students at Ohio Valley University in the mid-1970s. Now the university’s social clubs, individual students and faculty members participate. The Expressions! Players, an auditioned group of OVU students, hosts the annual production with short, comedic vignettes interspersed between acts. The performances are part of a homecoming celebration that includes a reception for alumni and friends, home basketball games and a senior recognition day. NEXT PERFORMANCE: February 2015	ABOUT 600 STUDENTS take part in this performance, which dates back to 1969. Hosts sing popular music between five-minute skits presented by the university’s social service clubs. The event is part of a campus visit weekend for prospective students. “This is a fully student-run show,” said Amanda Watson, student events coordinator. “The executive director, tech director, band director and club coordinator are all current OC students. These students along with many others make the whole show come together.” NEXT PERFORMANCE: March 2015	NOT FAR FROM HOLLYWOOD, up to 500 students participate in this production, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2013. This year seven groups will perform 12-minute shows, including a maximum of five musical numbers each. On occasion, a non-competing faculty, staff and alumni group participates. “Student groups come from all walks of campus life,” said Sam Parmelee, director and executive producer. “There are no requirements that groups have any affiliation with any particular student organizations.” NEXT PERFORMANCE: March 11-15	IN 1977, UNDER THE DIRECTION of Randy Gill and Larry Journey, the college launched Celebration. The music and theater departments presented a series of mini-plays and excerpts from musicals, recalled Larry Stewart, alumni director. Gill composed the event’s theme song, “Celebrate,” which “stirred great emotions every time it was performed in subsequent years,” Stewart said. “Nearly 400 guests packed the chapel in 1982,” he added. “We even had to sit students on the ledge by the stained-glass windows.” NEXT PERFORMANCE: March 20-22	NEARLY 150 STUDENTS, about one-fourth of York’s student body, take part in the annual Songfest, which began in 1978. Social clubs perform four shows, including song medleys and choreography. Three hosts and three hostesses perform solos, duets and group numbers between acts. “Though Songfest is not a ‘spiritual’ program, our emphasis in all activities is honoring God,” said Chrystal Houston, director of alumni and communication. “Many clubs incorporate prayer/devotional time into each rehearsal.” NEXT PERFORMANCE: April 3-5



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RENOWNED AUTHOR, THEOLOGIAN N.T. Wright speaks with *The Christian Chronicle* about Christianity's historic appeal — and what it will take to energize future generations of believers.

'Ordinary people living in an extraordinary way'

First of two parts

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Scholarly and readable. Those words — seen together too rarely — often are used to describe the work of Nicholas Thomas Wright.

The 64-year-old British theologian has made a career of explaining biblical concepts in terms appreciated by university professors and understood by their students.

Wright follows a tradition similar to British scholars such as F.F. Bruce and John R. Stott. He has written more than 30 books, and some reviewers refer to him as a modern-day C.S. Lewis.

His commentaries are recommended reading among universities associated with Churches of Christ. On March 24, he visits Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City as part of a promotional tour for his latest work, "Paul and the Faithfulness of God," by Fortress Press.

Wright says that, as a child, he was touched by the incomparable gift of God's love in Jesus Christ. That awareness has guided and motivated his lifelong study of and commitment to Jesus. He earned a Doctor of Divinity degree from Oxford University and numerous honorary doctorates. Presently, he serves as Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St. Andrews in Fife, Scotland.

His career has included positions at universities, including Oxford, and leadership in the Anglican Church.

A passionate Christian apologist, Wright has authored works such as "Simply Jesus" and "Simply Christian" that emphasize the realness of Jesus and the reasonableness of Christianity.

What do you see as the starting place for faith-building in a new generation?

The starting point, again and again, is a community that is actually living the Gospel. People in the Western world often are weary with hearing Christians talk about their faith. They need to see, and to know in their personal experience, what the Sermon on the Mount looks like in practice, "in a community near you," as the advertisements say.

The Christian faith spread in the early centuries, despite the Romans trying to stamp it out, because of "ordinary" people living in an extraordinary way: caring for people — especially the poor — even when they were not related to them; giving people medical treatment, education and so on (which had been reserved for the rich or the elite before). People were astonished. They didn't know it was possible to live like that!

Another particular point was the early church's insistence on sexual holiness. Again, people had no idea it was possible or desirable to live like that.

The other thing that made a big impact was the church's strong belief in the coming resurrection (which, as in Paul's writings, went closely with their belief that what you do with your present body matters a lot).

Wouldn't it be good if the church today was known in the same way?

What is a major challenge that we face in trying to share the message of Jesus with our contemporaries?

The very word "Jesus" in our culture often conjures up images of a typical Western, 19th century hero figure — tall, good-looking, probably blue eyes. The Bible says, "He had no beauty that we should desire him."

But it goes deeper. Many assume that Christianity is about a big bully in the sky who basically hates us but (fortunately for us) decided to take out his bad temper on someone else instead of us. The Bible doesn't say "God so *hated* the



PHOTO PROVIDED

N.T. Wright's works include "Simply Christian."

'Many assume that Christianity is about a big bully in the sky who basically hates us but (fortunately for us) decided to take out his bad temper on someone else ... The Bible doesn't say "God so *hated* the world" but "God so *loved* the world."

N.T. Wright

world," but "God so *loved* the world." Many in our world have lived for so long with the first vision of "God" that they find it difficult to believe in the real one.

And, sadly, many who see this point then water down the Gospel (which demands that we take up our cross and follow Jesus) into the bland idea that God will shrug his shoulders and smile, whatever people do.

We somehow need to live — and to

articulate — the true message, which avoids these two caricatures and offers a rich and powerful truth.

How viable is the Restoration, or "back to the Bible," message today?

We don't have the same "restorationist" movements in the U.K. as in the U.S.A., and I am not an expert on them in their various forms.

The task of each Christian generation is to go "back to the Bible," to try to hear in fresh ways what questions the early Christians were asking and what answers they were giving to those questions. That is what every wise church tries to do.

But history suggests that it's possible to be quite naive in thinking one can go "back to the Bible" and just reproduce early Christianity as though nothing had happened between the first century and today. (As though, for instance, the Holy Spirit had been inactive all that time!)

Often such movements are driven by a rejection of existing denominations (and sometimes by the fact of denominations themselves), but they regularly end up producing yet another "denomination" by default.

This is *not* to say that everything is all right with the existing church; only that the task of constant reformation in the light of Scripture is more complicated than it often appears.

What advice do you offer Christians who want to become better Bible students?

Learn Hebrew and Greek as soon as you can and as thoroughly as you can, and devote time every day to reading some of each, even if you're only a beginner. Whether or not that's practical (the older you are the harder it becomes), devote time and energy just to reading the text.

Just as an actor gets to know Shakespeare or a musician knows Beethoven, there's no reason why any Christian

See **WRIGHT**, Page 24

Pulpit Minister Needed

North Central Oklahoma congregation is searching for an experienced pulpit minister with a passion for evangelism to help bring the Gospel to a community of around 30,000. The congregation has three elders, 16 deacons, and a retiring pulpit minister.

Applicants should have 5 years of pulpit experience, a degree in Bible or preaching, and be committed to Christ-likeness, holiness, and Biblical authority. We prefer a family man who is an engaging speaker and enjoys personal work and visitation.

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WRIGHT: Not ‘shallow happiness,’ but ‘actually living the Gospel’ will attract lost souls to Christ

FROM PAGE 23
should not get to know the Bible very well indeed. Read it right through, in English if necessary, at least once every year. (Always have at least two quite different English translations at hand — none of them are perfect!) Learn key sections by heart (the Sermon on the Mount, the shorter letters, Isaiah 40-55, favorite Psalms). Use what you’re learning in your praying, day by day. Study the historical context of the Bible as broadly and deeply as you can. Again and again texts will spring into new life. Make your own analysis of key texts and sections. Do this broadly (whole books) and narrowly (focusing on key single verses, though never forgetting the whole context).

What will attract people to the Gospel of Jesus?

What has always attracted people to the Gospel of Jesus is communities and individuals that, in the power of the Spirit, are actually living the Gospel. There is a quality of generosity, kindness, gentleness, overflowing love, hospitality and joy — not a shallow “happiness” but a genuine and radiant trust in God for everything — which cannot be faked and which remains powerfully attractive. Of course, it is God’s business to attract people to the Gospel, and he remains sovereign, by his Spirit. But precisely because the Spirit produces the fruit described in Galatians 5, it is this quality of life which the Spirit uses as one of the powerfully attractive things.

As we know from missionary experience, many people are attracted to Jesus and his gospel without knowing a Christian community. I have heard personal testimonies from people from totally non-Christian backgrounds having vivid dreams about Jesus and going in search of Christians as a result. And God always uses the proclamation of the Gospel to reach people simply through the powerful Word.

READ A REVIEW of books including N.T. Wright’s “The Case for the Psalms” on Page 35.

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Wellington Church of Christ in Wellington, Ks., is searching for a pulpit minister; a college degree or degree/certificate from a school of preaching preferred. Salary commensurate with experience. 4-bedroom house provided. Interested candidates should forward a resume and sample of a recent sermon to:

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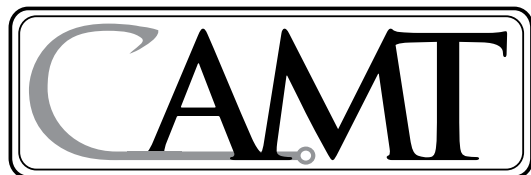


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Madison Academy, a PreK-12 Christian school in Huntsville, Alabama, seeks a president who will serve as Chief Executive Officer beginning the 2015-16 academic year. Candidate requirements include dedication to Christian education, extensive leadership and managerial experience, fundraising and financial expertise, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, church of Christ membership, and a Masters degree.

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Chris Lewter, Chair, MA Presidential Search Committee
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Assistant Director of Social Services:

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- Applicants must possess a Master's Degree in Social Work, be licensed or license eligible, and have experience in child welfare.

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HIGHER EDUCATION

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
ABILENE, Texas — Abilene Christian University has teamed with the faith-based nonprofit CitySquare, which has fought poverty and homelessness in Dallas for more than a quarter-century.

The Dallas Morning News recently highlighted the collaboration, which involves ACU honors students researching poverty and coming up with creative solutions — all while working with poor kids and teaching them how to make a difference.

ACU is leasing the second floor of CitySquare's 15-story mixed-use development as its academic base in downtown Dallas.

"This is a great partnership for us," John Siburt, CitySquare's vice president of programs, told the Dallas newspaper. "It's not only helping us with our mission, but it's allowing ACU to train students how to begin changing the world while they're still in school."

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Faulkner University's first doctorate-level degree in biblical studies has received approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The degree is only the second Ph.D. in the university's history.

The online degree program will be offered through the Kearley Graduate School of Theology, which is part of the V.P. Black College of Biblical Studies.

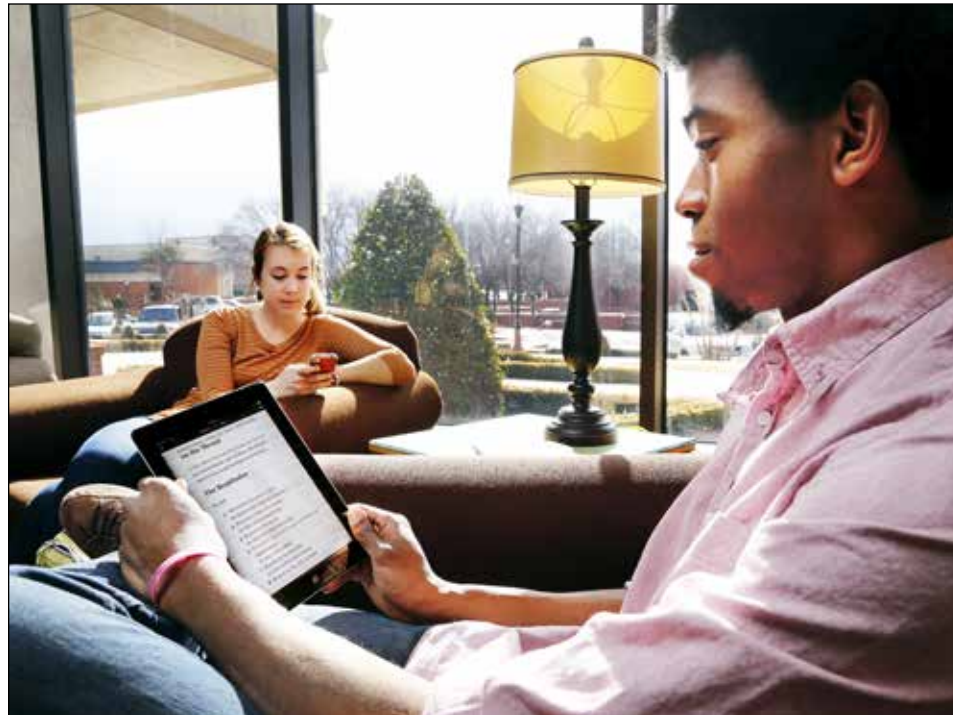
"This program is designed to merge distance education with biblical studies utilizing the latest in collaborative technology," said Scott Gleaves, Bible dean.

OHIO VALLEY UNIVERSITY

VIENNA, W.Va. — Ohio Valley University honored a couple's commitment to Christian higher education by dedicating the recently renamed Gene and Joyce Wharton School of Information Technology and Business in their honor. President Harold Shank described the Whartons as champions of faith-based higher education.

"We're honored to recognize their love and passion for OVU," Shank said.

Gene Wharton has served on OVU's board of trustees for 33 years. He's a former elder of the Grand Central Church of Christ in Vienna. Joyce Wharton coordinated activities for women at the church for many years.



JIM BECKEL, THE OKLAHOMAN, COPYRIGHT 2014

Oklahoma Christian debuts New Testament app

Oklahoma Christian University students Vivian Edmunson and Zekariah McNeal read the university's "Word: 60-Day New Testament Plan" devotional available on the YouVersion Bible app. The plan allows anybody with access to the YouVersion app or Bible.com to read through the entire New Testament by the end of the spring semester. Along with a daily Bible reading, the plan features devotional thoughts by Oklahoma Christian students, faculty and staff members.

A DEVOTIONAL FROM THE PLAN appears as this month's 'In the Word,' Page 32.

OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma Christian University's church relations department is circulating a survey among Churches of Christ throughout the U.S.

The survey seeks to gain information about how and why church members participate in evangelistic outreach.

The five-minute survey also asks questions about how much time members spend in various types of church work, why they do not give more time to outreach and what type of encouragement would make them more likely to reach out to the lost.

To participate in the survey, go to <http://bit.ly/ocscgl>.

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

MALIBU, Calif. — Nearly 200 Pepperdine University students dedicated spring break to service projects around the globe.

Students planted urban gardens, painted elementary schools and served lunch at a homeless shelter in Chicago.

They bonded with men and women at a drug rehabilitation facility in New Hampshire and helped cook and clean.

They built sanitary latrines and water facilities in Guatemala.

"By participating in Project Service, each student loudly declares, 'I'm choosing to work alongside those that need help rather than continuing to help myself,'" said Justin Schneider, assistant director of Pepperdine's volunteer center.

K-12 CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

GREATER ATLANTA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

NORCROSS, Ga. — Recent snow and ice brought the Atlanta area to a standstill, but it didn't stop Greater Atlanta Christian School from teaching its students.

The school parking lot remained empty, but classes stayed in session via an Internet-based communication portal, Haiku, that allowed students to access assignments from home and communicate directly with teachers.

SPORTS

\$1 million layup

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. — Rochester College has reached the \$1 million mark in fundraising for the Garth Pleasant Gymnasium, which will honor the college's former longtime head basketball coach.

The Christian college raised \$500,000 in less than six months, and Bill and Shirlee Fox, owners of Bill Fox Chevrolet, matched that amount.

In all, \$3.8 million is needed for the project. Pleasant compiled 720 wins in 38 seasons while coaching a team that played its games at a nearby high school.



JEFFREY LEWIS BENNETT

Garth Pleasant, left, poses with his son, Clint, who succeeded him as Rochester's coach.

"Our teachers are well-trained for days like this," said Misty Overman, vice president of learning initiatives and junior high principal.

OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

EDMOND, Okla. — In a recent chapel assembly, Oklahoma Christian Academy students watched a video chronicling exchange student Ben Shultz's journey from Germany to America.

Through unforeseen events, Shultz was led to OCA, where friendships, meals, acceptance and love contributed to his decision to be baptized and give his life to Jesus, school President Brandon Tatum said.

The video sparked a discussion that resulted in students talking about Jesus' sacrifice and the model of answering his call seen in Acts 2. That led to 12 students deciding to be baptized that day at the nearby Edmond Church of Christ.

"Often in education, we do not get to see the reap of our harvest, but we did on this day," Tatum said.

Milestones

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

Anniversary

Bill and Joanne Smith



Bill and Joanne Smith will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on April 8.

They met at Harding University and married in 1949. They have served in full-time ministry for more than 50 years, beginning at Johnson, Ark., followed by Holdenville, Okla.; Rogers, Ark.; Tulsa, Okla.; and Oklahoma City.

They are presently members of the North MacArthur Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. They have four children: Joyce (Kurt) Swanson, David (Lorrie) Smith, Dianne (Ken) Baker and Pam (Jeff) Durham.

They have seven grandchildren: Alan Webb, Justin Henry, Sarah (Al) Njuguna, Aimee (John) Cherry, Stephen (Karen) Swanson, Brooks (Ruby) Durham and Deborah Ann Swanson. They have three great-grandchildren: Kortney Webb, Kylee Cherry and Jase Cherry.

They are still involved in publishing the Bible Class workbooks that serve so many here and in many foreign countries.

The family is having a private celebration of their lifelong love for each other.

Congratulations can be sent to 10100 Haverhill Place, Oklahoma City, OK 73120.

Birthday

Gola Mae Fleming 100 years



Gola Mae Fleming enjoyed a family reunion and community reception over the weekend of Feb. 14 in honor of her 100th birthday on Feb. 18.

She has loved and

served her Christian family at the Cates Street Church of Christ in Bridgeport, Texas, for 51 years.

Gola Mae continues to grow and learn while actively blessing others with hugs, phone calls and prayers. Besides keeping up with her family and friends, she is an avid Dallas Mavericks fan. She was able to attend a game on her birthday and meet some of the players.

Retiring

Calvin Bowers

After 57 years of ministerial service at the Figueroa Church of Christ in Los Angeles, Dr. Calvin Bowers is retiring.

Now his efforts will focus on training the next generation of preachers, teachers and church leaders through his Fellow Workers ministry (training 1,000 leaders, teachers and ministers).

The church will honor the renowned minister March 7-9.

Dr. Bowers has touched thousands of lives during his distinguished career. "I began preaching when I was 14, and now I'm 81 years old. When I came (to Los Angeles) in 1957, I began working at the Figueroa Church of Christ with the late R.N. Hogan," Bowers says.

Bowers is a graduate of Pepperdine University and USC. He worked with youth and Christian education. He was the chairman of the National Youth Conference for 46 years. As an

educator, Dr. Bowers worked 35 years at Pepperdine University in several capacities: Dean of Ethnic Studies, as well as chairman of the Black Student Union, and Director of Equal Opportunity. Bowers retired from Pepperdine in 2004 as 'Professor Emeritus.' Bowers has written two books: "Realizing the California Dream" and "Ollie's Kids."

Send cards or monetary love gifts: Dr. Calvin H. Bowers, 2136 West 82nd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90047.

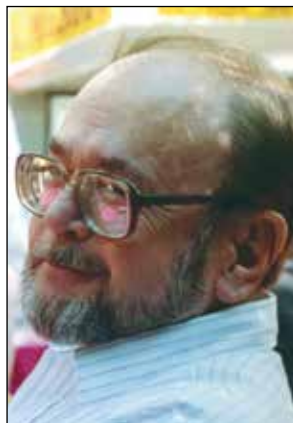


Memorials

Ron Carter

Ron Carter was born on July 19, 1933, in Denver.

At 17, Ron enlisted in the Navy and served on a ship as a radioman during the Korean War. After the Navy, he attended Harding College where he became a drama major.



He wrote, directed, and acted in numerous plays.

When he returned to Denver, he met Jean. They married and had two children. After living briefly in Denver, they moved to North Carolina and then to Alabama where Ron preached full time.

In 1970, they moved back to Colorado where Ron preached at the Central church of Christ in Colorado Springs.

In 1971, Ron and his two brothers established Kamp Koinonia, a youth camp that will be celebrating its 44th year this summer.

After several years at the Central congregation, Ron helped bring about the merging of two congregations, forming the Eastside church of Christ.

In 1982, Ron started preaching full time again at the Pikes Peak church of Christ. He preached there for 16 years, ultimately also serving as an elder.

Although he retired in 1998, he continued to preach and present seminars all over the United States and in other countries as well. Ron was also the editor of the *Rocky Mountain Christian* for many years.

In 2004, he and his wife Jean moved to Denver to be closer to family. Here he served as an elder for the Brighton church of Christ, where he attended and served for many years.

Ron left this life on February 22, 2014. He was surrounded by family and friends—a small group representing the countless lives he changed while he was here.

NEWSMAKERS

NAMED: Matt A. Vega, dean of the Thomas Goode Jones School of Law at Faulkner University, Montgomery, Ala. **Kay Grose**, director of admissions for Ohio Valley University, Vienna, W.Va.



Vega

AWARDED: Caitlynn Carman, a junior at Lubbock Christian University in Texas, the William N. Wasson Student Leadership and Academic Award. The award recognizes top undergraduate students who are participants of or employed by the Department of Recreational Sports.



Grose

NEW ELDERS: Victor Knowles, Mt. Hope Church of Christ, Webb City, Mo. **Stan McKeever**, **Bob Sheets**, **Roger Wilcox**, **Doyle Corder**, and **Alvin Stamps**, Southwest Church of Christ, Amarillo, Texas.



Carman

ANNIVERSARIES: 65th: Robert and Alyce McCoy, Cement, Okla. 61st: Bill and Natalie Wilson, Richardson, Texas; Carl and Melnora Williams, Amarillo, Texas. 60th: Charlie and Jane Moore, Lubbock, Texas; Curtis and Margaet McCord, Centerville, Tenn. 59th: Carl and Mattie Ayers, Centerville, Tenn. 57th: Doug and Maxine Shepherd, Centerville, Tenn. 56th: Gerald and Barbara Lyautey, Amarillo, Texas. 50th: Clarence and Paulette Richardson, Moody, Texas.

BIRTHDAYS: 100th: Bill Campbell, Claremore, Okla. 94th: Maurice Hall, Whittier, Calif. 90th: Bobbie Hicks, Lubbock, Texas; Irene "Mollie" Walker, Stevensville, Md. 89th: Doris Coleman, Batesville, Miss. 87th: Louise Bates, Centerville, Tenn. 80th: Larry Neve, Mesquite, Texas.

PASSAGES: Jessica Billingsley-Humston, 29, Jan. 15, Columbus, Ohio. Sabra Ellis, 35, Jan. 10, Hixson, Tenn. Shirley Goin, 79, Jan. 10, Edmond, Okla. Eddy Ball Hall, 97, Feb. 4, Sherman, Texas. Cynthia Jones, 87, Jan. 31, Lexington, Tenn. Lionel Walker, 92, Jan. 9, Edmond, Okla. Sadie Weiss, 94, Jan. 5, Edmond, Okla. Eulala Williams, 102, Jan. 8, Geneva, Ala.

March 19-22 The Tulsa Workshop. "Worth the Cost." Tulsa, Okla., Fairgrounds. Contact (918) 344-3402 or www.tulsaworkshop.org.

March 30 - April 1 217Faith Training Camp. Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, Tenn. Contact (877) 350-9222 or www.warrenapologeticscenter.org.

March 30 - April 3 Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship. "Still Standing But Not Standing Still." Memphis School of Preaching, Memphis, Tenn. Contact (901) 751-2242 or www.msop.org.

April 4-5 European Missions Workshop. Church of Christ, Ovilla, Texas. Contact www.ovillachurchofchrist.com or see Facebook: European Missions Workshop.

April 5 Parenting by God's Design Conference. Metro Church of Christ, Gresham, Ore. Contact (503) 233-7345, faithfullsb@hotmail.com or www.parentingbygodsdesign.com.

April 6-9 Ohio Valley University Lectures. "Perseverance in Faith." Contact gkpennington@ovu.edu or www.ovu.edu.

April 12-17 70th Annual Churches of Christ National Lectureship. Hyatt Regency Atlanta. Contact Hillcrest church at (404) 289-4573, West End church at (678) 444-4170 or www.cocnl.com

April 13-16 Crowley's Ridge College Lectureship. "Genesis....Where it all began." Crowley's Ridge College, Paragould, Ark. Contact (870)236-6901 or www.crc.edu.

April 22-24 India Missions Conference. Heritage Christian University, Florence, Ala. Hosted by HCU and World Evangelism. Contact (800) 367-3565 or www.hcu.edu.

April 24-27 25th Annual Oklahoma City Lectures. "Why the churches of Christ are not growing at the same rate as in earlier years." Barnes Church of Christ, Oklahoma City, Okla. Contact (405) 736-1001 or www.okcsbs.com.

May 1-3 Come Fill Your Cup Retreat. "2 Thessalonians." Eternal Purpose Retreat Center, Sedalia, Colo. Contact www.comefillyourcup.com.

May 2-4 2014 New England Lectureship. Hilton Inn, Tauton, Mass. Contact Maurice Davis at churchofchristmilton@gmail.com, (617) 274-2409, or www.newenglandlectureship.org.

May 3-4 Into All the World Mission Conference. Hendersonville, Tenn., Church of Christ. Contact (615) 824-6622, missions@hendcoc.com or www.intoalltheworld.me.

Milestones *continued*

Memorials

Mary Dailey

Mary Dailey, Brentwood, Tenn., age 88, was gently laid into the arms of Jesus by her loving husband of 68 years, Clarence Dailey, on Jan. 18, 2014.

Mary was born on April 16, 1925, in Sparta, Tenn. She is survived by her children Buddy and his wife Pat Dailey, Becky and her husband Charlie Portis and Suzanne and her husband Tommy Hardeman.

She is also survived by her grandchildren Erin and her husband Jayme Pastoric, Will Dailey, Courtney and her husband Chad Shake, Seth Portis and his wife Carrie, Meredith and her husband Andy Irwin, Darren Hardeman and his wife Rachel, and Austin Hardeman.

She leaves her precious great-grandchildren: Dean Pastoric, Dailey, Maisy, and Rebecca Rose, Avett Shake, Colt and Presley Portis, Charlie Irwin, and Evan and Silas Hardeman. She is dearly loved and will be deeply missed by everyone who knew her.

Memorials honoring Mary may be sent to Lipscomb University or to Harding Academy of Memphis. "Her children rise up and call her blessed."



Clinton "Gene" Goben

Clinton E. "Gene" Goben, 75, of Enid, Okla., passed away on Feb. 21, 2014, in Enid. He was born in Oklahoma City, on Sept. 28, 1938.

He graduated high school in 1956 from Great



Falls, Mont., and attended York College in Nebraska. He was a minister for Churches of Christ in Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Oklahoma.

At the time of his death he was preaching for the Northside Church of Christ in Waynoka, Okla. He held various public service positions and was active in numerous civic organizations.

Gene is survived by his wife Grace of the home, three children: Randy (Kathy) Goben, Pam (Brian) Love, all of Winfield, Kans., and Rick (Charity) Goben, Enid; six grandchildren: Dereck (Tina), Jacob, Jessica, Alexis and Mikaela; great-grandchild Aubra; brother Bill (Shirley) Goben, Billings, Mont.; sister-in-law Loretta Goben, York, Neb.; two sisters: Becky (Dan) Fraser, Lincoln, Neb., and Gay (Richard) Colgrove, Missoula, Mont.; and several cousins, nieces and nephews.

Memorial donations may be made to Yellowstone Bible Camp, In Search of the Lord's Way, or Colorado Christian Services.

Loyd Scobey, Jr.

Robert Loyd Scobey, Jr., 93, longtime elder and church leader, died Feb. 22, 2014, in Brentwood, Tenn.

A lifelong Nashville native, he was born Nov. 4, 1920, to a family deeply intertwined with the Stone-Campbell movement. His family founded the Chapel Avenue Church of Christ, where he attended for more than 80 years and served as an elder for decades.

A graduate of David Lipscomb High School and College, he was a longtime member of Lipscomb's board of trustees.

He received a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from Vanderbilt University in 1943 and served in the U.S. Navy during



World War II. He and his father founded R.L. Scobey and Son construction company which built schools, churches and commercial buildings, including 100 Oaks Shopping Center.

Survivors include his wife Mauveline Holt Scobey; children Lola Scobey, Lindy (Ken) Adams, Robert Loyd (Debra) Scobey III, and Corinne (Steve) Nace; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and one sister, Mary Emma Scobey Reneau.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 45 years, Marjorie Williams Scobey; his parents; brother John David Scobey, longtime vice-mayor of Nashville; and granddaughter Meredith Shelby Adams.

John Waddey

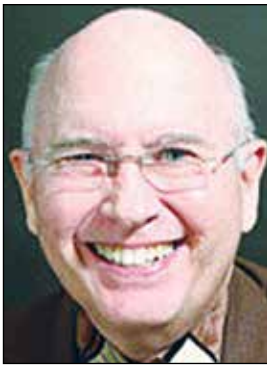
John H. Waddey, a native of Nashville, Tenn., died suddenly at the age of 75 in Sun City West, Ariz.

He served as a Church of Christ minister for 58 years in Mississippi, Colorado, Tennessee and Arizona and, upon his death, was preaching for the church in Sun City West.

Evangelism and missions were always a vital part of his work. He worked with missionaries in 19 foreign nations and for 18 years helped train young ministers in the East Tennessee School of Preaching.

He authored more than 1,400 articles published in numerous Christian publications. He edited four religious journals: *The Star Magazine*, *The Christian Bible Teacher*, *The Evangelist and Christianity*, and *Then and Now*.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy, daughters Lourene (Bob) Clark, Lesia (Clark) Horner, Becky (Bill) Schmitz and Rachel (Mike) Clemons, and siblings David, Darryl and Deborah Campbell, as well as seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



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



HONOR ROLL OF CHURCHES, 2013-2014

With deepest appreciation to those churches who have provided financial support for our efforts to inform, inspire and unite Churches of Christ worldwide.

ALABAMA: Cedar Grove Church of Christ, Andalusia; Central Church of Christ, Athens; Stony Point Church of Christ, Florence; Decatur Highway Church of Christ, Gardendale; Georgiana Church of Christ, Georgiana; Lincoln Church of Christ, Huntsville; Lanett Church of Christ, Lanett; University Church of Christ, Mobile; Central Church of Christ, Tuscaloosa.

ALASKA: Anchor Point Church of Christ, Anchor Point; Turn Again Church of Christ, Anchorage. **ARIZONA:** Church of Christ, Benson; Mesa Church of Christ, Mesa; Sunset Church of Christ, Morenci; Village Meadows Church of Christ, Sierra Vista; Mountain Avenue Church of Christ, Tucson. **ARKANSAS:** Atkins Church of Christ, Atkins; Velvet Ridge Church of Christ, Bald Knob; Beedeville Church of Christ, Beedeville; New Liberty Church of Christ, Cleveland; Church of Christ, De Queen; Center Street Church of Christ, Fayetteville; Mount Comfort Church of Christ, Fayetteville; Church of Christ, Green Forest; Greenway Church of Christ, Greenway; Hatfield Church of Christ, Hatfield; Central Church of Christ, Little Rock; Geyer Springs Church of Christ, Little Rock; Jackson Street Church of Christ, Magnolia; Northside Church of Christ, Mena; New Blaine Church of Christ, New Blaine; Levy Church of Christ, North Little Rock; Windsong Church of Christ, North Little Rock; 7th & Mueller Church of Christ, Paragould; Evening Star Church of Christ, Paragould; Pencil Bluff Church of Christ, Pencil Bluff; Steve Church of Christ, Plainview; West Ridge Church of Christ, Pocahontas; Prairie Grove Church of Christ, Prairie Grove; Russellville Church of Christ, Russellville; Saint Joe Church of Christ, Saint Joe; Cloverdale Church of Christ, Searcy; West Point Church of Christ, Searcy; Eastgate Church of Christ, Siloam Springs; Waldron Church of Christ, Waldron. **CALIFORNIA:** Central Church of Christ, Anaheim; Auberry Church of Christ, Auberry; Dos Palos Church of Christ, Dos Palos; North County Church of Christ, Escondido; La Puente Church of Christ, La Puente; Lathrop Church of Christ, Lathrop; Los Altos Church of Christ, Long Beach; Montebello Church of Christ, Montebello; Porterville Church of Christ, Porterville; Quartz Hill Church of Christ, Quartz Hill; Rialto Church of Christ, Rialto; 61st & Division Church of Christ, San Diego; Temple Church of Christ, San Gabriel; San Lorenzo Church of Christ, San Lorenzo; Turnpike Road Church of Christ, Santa Barbara; Santa Monica Church of Christ, Santa Monica; Santa Paula Church of Christ, Santa Paula; Sonoma Avenue Church of Christ, Santa Rosa; Seaside Church of Christ, Seaside; Springville Church of Christ, Springville; Lassen Street Church of Christ, Vallejo; Victor Valley Church of Christ, Victorville. **COLORADO:** Mountain View Church of Christ, Buena Vista; Kim Church of Christ, Kim; Twin Peaks Church of Christ, Longmont; Salida Church of Christ, Salida; Church of Christ, Walsh. **DELAWARE:** Newark Church of Christ, Newark. **FLORIDA:** Church of Christ, Graceville; Holly Hill Church of Christ, Holly Hill; San Jose Church of Christ, Jacksonville; South 14th Street Church of Christ, Leesburg; Bay Area Church of Christ, Mango; Palo Alto Church of Christ, Panama City; Hilltop Church of Christ, Winter Haven. **GEORGIA:** Eastside Church of Christ, Albany; Meadowbrook Drive Church of Christ, Augusta; Chattahoochee Valley Church of Christ, Columbus; Central Church of Christ, Dalton; Dublin Church of Christ, Dublin; North Avenue Church of Christ, Hapeville; Moultrie Church of Christ, Moultrie; North Atlanta Church of Christ, North Atlanta; Parkway Church of Christ, Savannah; Courtland Avenue Church of Christ, Quitman; Mount Pleasant Church of Christ, Valdosta. **HAWAII:** Kailua Church of Christ, Kailua; Kauai Church of Christ, Lihue; Maui Church of Christ, Wailuku.

IDAHO: Idaho Falls Church of Christ, Idaho Falls; Linder Road Church of Christ, Meridian; Pocatello Church of Christ, Pocatello. **ILLINOIS:** Arthur Church of Christ, Arthur; Browning Church of Christ, Beardstown; Brookfield Church of Christ, Brookfield; Maplewood Church of Christ, Cahokia; East Park Church of Christ, Danville; Jacksonville Church of Christ, Jacksonville; Macomb Church of Christ, Macomb; Park Forest Church of Christ, Matteson; Lake Land Church of Christ, Mattoon; Mattoon Church of Christ, Mattoon; Church of Christ, Ottawa. **INDIANA:** Heritage Church of Christ, Huntington; Fountain Square Church of Christ, Indianapolis; North Central Church of Christ, Indianapolis; Main Street Church of Christ, Lynn; Fairview Church of Christ, Mitchell; Church of Christ, Sullivan; Unionville Church of Christ, Unionville. **IOWA:** Tent Chapel Church of Christ, Blockton; Roosevelt Avenue Church of Christ, Burlington; McPherson Avenue Church of Christ, Council Bluffs; West Side Church of Christ, Oelwein; Sac City Church of Christ, Sac City. **KANSAS:** Cedar Vale Church of Christ, Cedar Vale; Eureka Church of Christ, Eureka; Eastwood Church of Christ, Hutchinson; Kingman Church of Christ, Kingman; McPherson Church of Christ, McPherson; Norwich Church of Christ, Norwich; Oberlin Church of Christ, Oberlin; Russell Church of Christ, Russell; Satanta Church of Christ, Satanta; Wellington Church of Christ, Wellington. **KENTUCKY:** Adairville Church of Christ, Adairville; Broadway Church of Christ, Paducah; Mount Vernon Church of Christ, Park City. **LOUISIANA:** Airline Drive Church of Christ, Bossier City; Cullen Church of Christ, Cullen; Natchitoches Church of Christ, Natchitoches; Pine Prairie Church of Christ, Pine Prairie; Pineville Church of Christ, Pineville; Southern Hills Church of Christ, Shreveport; White's Ferry Road Church of Christ, West Monroe. **MAINE:** Houlton Church of Christ, Houlton; Southern Aroostook Church of Christ, Houlton; Penobscot Valley Church of Christ, Hudson. **MARYLAND:** Church of Christ of Aberdeen, Aberdeen; University Park Church of Christ, Hyattsville; Salisbury Church of Christ, Salisbury; Oxon Hill Church of Christ, Temple Hills. **MASSACHUSETTS:** Greater Springfield Church of Christ, Chicopee; Cape Cod Church of Christ, Marstons Mills. **MICHIGAN:** 20th Street Church of Christ, Battle Creek; Beulah Church of Christ, Beulah; Brighton Church of Christ, Brighton; Heritage Church of Christ, Clawson; Redford Church of Christ, Detroit; Lapeer Church of Christ, Lapeer; Mount Morris Church of Christ, Mount Morris; Sunset Church of Christ, Taylor. **MINNESOTA:** Church of Christ, Hibbing; Wadena Church of Christ, Ottertail. **MISSISSIPPI:** Orange Grove Church of Christ, Gulfport; Hanging Moss Road Church of Christ, Jackson; Central Church of Christ, Pascagoula; Pearlington Church of Christ, Pearlington; Sherman Church of Christ, Sherman. **MISSOURI:** Arnold Church of Christ, Arnold; Church of Christ, California; Florissant Church of Christ, Florissant; Church of Christ, Forsyth; West Union Church of Christ, Granby; Eastside Church of Christ, Lee's Summit; O'Fallon Church of Christ, O'Fallon; Flat River Church of Christ, Park Hills; Central Church of Christ, West Plains. **MONTANA:** Church of Christ, Big Timber; Church of Christ, Glendive; Red Lodge Church of Christ, Red Lodge; Three Forks Church of Christ, Three Forks. **NEBRASKA:** Beatrice Church of Christ, Beatrice; Church of Christ, Glendive; Hastings Church of Christ, Hastings; Kearney Church of Christ, Kearney; Church of Christ, Nelson. **NEVADA:** Victory Road Church of Christ, Henderson;

HONOR ROLL OF CHURCHES, 2013-2014

North Las Vegas Church of Christ, North Las Vegas. **NEW HAMPSHIRE:** West Keene Church of Christ, Keene. **NEW JERSEY:** Freehold Church of Christ, Freehold; Pitman Road Church of Christ, Sewell; Sunset Road Church of Christ, Willingboro. **NEW MEXICO:** Montgomery Boulevard Church of Christ, Albuquerque; Fox & Lake Church of Christ, Carlsbad; Cimarron Church of Christ, Cimarron; Dora Church of Christ, Dora; Taylor Street Church of Christ, Hobbs; Third & Central Church of Christ, Lovington; Mountainair Church of Christ, Mountainair. **NEW YORK:** Linwood Church of Christ, Buffalo; Kingston Church of Christ, Kingston; Middletown Church of Christ, Middletown; West Islip Church of Christ, West Islip. **NORTH CAROLINA:** South Fork Church of Christ, Winston Salem. **OHIO:** Beallsville Church of Christ, Beallsville; Bellevue Church of Christ, Bellevue; Perry Church of Christ, Bellville; Stop Nine Church of Christ, Byesville; Cadiz Church of Christ, Cadiz; Southeast Church of Christ, Canton; Lake Walnut Church of Christ, Elyria; East Sparta Church of Christ, Magnolia; Marysville Church of Christ, Marysville; Mid-County Church of Christ, Troy; Woodsfield Church of Christ, Woodsfield. **OKLAHOMA:** Main Street Church of Christ, Alex; Church of Christ, Allen; Elm & Hudson Church of Christ, Altus; Tamarack Road Church of Christ, Altus; College Hill Church of Christ, Alva; Antlers Church of Christ, Antlers; Oak Street Church of Christ, Apache; Adams Boulevard Church of Christ, Bartlesville; Church of Christ, Beaver; Downtown Church of Christ, Bixby; Byars Church of Christ, Byars; Southern Oaks Church of Christ, Chickasha; Choctaw Church of Christ, Choctaw; Clayton Church of Christ, Clayton; Colcord Church of Christ, Colcord; Prairie Hill Church of Christ, Comanche; Cornerstone Church of Christ, Davis; Dill City Church of Christ, Dill City; Carter Park Church of Christ, Del City; Garriott Road Church of Christ, Enid; Fort Gibson Church of Christ, Fort Gibson; Gould Church of Christ, Gould; Granite Church of Christ, Granite; Church of Christ, Hobart; Church of Christ, Meeker; Chandler Road Church of Christ, Muskogee; Central Church of Christ, Nowata; Church of Christ, Okemah; Grand Boulevard Church of Christ, Oklahoma City; Church of Christ, Okmulgee; Hartford Avenue Church of Christ, Ponca City; Farrall Street Church of Christ, Shawnee; Church of Christ in Spiro, Spiro; Highland Church of Christ, Tecumseh; South Brooke Church of Christ, Tulsa; Weatherford Church of Christ, Weatherford; Wetumka Church of Christ, Wetumka; Wewoka Church of Christ, Wewoka. **OREGON:** Circle Church of Christ, Corvallis; Eugene Church of Christ, Eugene; Oregon Trail Church of Christ, Pendleton; Eastside Church of Christ, Portland. **PENNSYLVANIA:** Camp Hill Church of Christ, Camp Hill; Lower Bucks Church of Christ, Fairless Hills; Harding Church of Christ, Falls; Glen Rock Church of Christ, Glen Rock; King of Prussia Church of Christ, King of Prussia; Walnut Street Church of Christ, Mill Hall; Somerset Church of Christ, Somerset; Church of Christ of Wellsboro, Wellsboro; Kelton Church of Christ, West Grove. **RHODE ISLAND:** Kent County Church of Christ, Coventry. **SOUTH CAROLINA:** Grand Strand Church of Christ, Surfside Beach. **SOUTH DAKOTA:** Yankton Church of Christ, Yankton. **TENNESSEE:** Bartlett Woods Church of Christ, Arlington; Athens Church of Christ, Athens; Brighton Church of Christ, Brighton; Camden Church of Christ, Camden; Brainerd Church of Christ, Chattanooga; East Brainerd Church of Christ, Chattanooga; Saint Elmo Church of Christ, Chattanooga; Madison Street Church of Christ, Clarksville; Graymere Church of Christ, Columbia; West 7th Church of Christ, Columbia; Jefferson Avenue Church of Christ, Cookeville; Pickwick Church of Christ, Counce; Smyrna Church of Christ, Culleoka; Hendersonville Church of Christ, Hendersonville; Kingston Church of Christ, Kingston; Arlington Church of Christ, Knoxville; Fall River Church of Christ, Leoma; Madison Church of Christ, Madison; Maryville Church of Christ, Maryville; Olivet Church of Christ, McEwen; Church of Christ at Horn Lake and Levi, Memphis; Easthaven Church of Christ, Memphis; Great Oaks Church of Christ, Memphis; Southwind Church of Christ, Memphis; Corinth Church of Christ, Mount Juliet; Mulberry Church of Christ, Mulberry; 8th Avenue Church of Christ, Nashville; Central Church of Christ, Nashville; Tusculum Church of Christ, Nashville; Pegram Church of Christ, Pegram; Upper Sinking Church of Christ, Pleasantville; Union Hill Church of Christ, Portland; Rockvale Church of Christ, Rockvale; Fairlane Church of Christ, Shelbyville; Fremont Church of Christ, Union City; Woodbury Church of Christ, Woodbury. **TEXAS:** Adrian Church of Christ, Adrian; Woodland West Church of Christ, Arlington; Ridgewood Church of Christ, Beaumont; Bertram Church of Christ, Bertram; Church of Christ, Big Spring; West Highway 80 Church of Christ, Big Spring; Southern Hills Church of Christ, Buda; Buffalo Gap Church of Christ, Buffalo Gap; Buna Church of Christ, Buna; Vanderveer Street Church of Christ, Burnet; Channelview Church of Christ, Channelview; Childress Church of Christ, Childress; Church of Christ, Clarendon; Clifton Church of Christ, Clifton; Clyde Church of Christ, Clyde; Elm Street Church of Christ, Coleman; Columbus Church of Christ, Columbus; Copperas Cove Church of Christ, Copperas Cove; Grace Street Church of Christ, Crockett; Farmers Branch Church of Christ, Dallas; Hawn Freeway Church of Christ, Dallas; Walnut Hill Church of Christ, Dallas; Decatur Church of Christ, Decatur; Greenwood Church of Christ, Decatur; Morton Street Church of Christ, Denison; The Grace Place, Duncanville; Eliasville Church of Christ, Eliasville; Airport Freeway Church of Christ, Euless; Frankston Church of Christ, Frankston; Gail Church of Christ, Gail; Callisburg Church of Christ, Gainesville; Broadway Church of Christ, Galveston; Graford Church of Christ, Graford; Pecan Grove Church of Christ, Greenville; Haslet Church of Christ, Haslet; Holly Lake Church of Christ, Hawkins; Central Church of Christ, Hereford; Hidden Valley Church of Christ, Houston; Memorial Church of Christ, Houston; Palm Center Church of Christ, Houston; Trinity Gardens Church of Christ, Houston; Westbury Church of Christ, Houston; Northside Church of Christ, Huntsville; Iraan Church of Christ, Iraan; College Street Church of Christ, Junction; Riverside Church of Christ, Kerrville; Chandler Street Church of Christ, Kilgore; Killeen Church of Christ, Killeen; La Feria Church of Christ, La Feria; Garden Ridge Church of Christ, Lewisville; Crescent Park Church of Christ, Littlefield; Pine Tree Church of Christ, Longview; South Plains Church of Christ, Lubbock; Lumberton Church of Christ, Lumberton; Travis Peak Church of Christ, Marble Falls; Matador Church of Christ, Matador; Maud Church of Christ, Maud; Meadow Church of Christ, Meadow; 3rd & Dwight Church of Christ, Monahans; New Summerfield Church of Christ, New Summerfield; Tanglewood Church of Christ, Odessa; Mount Mitchell Church of Christ, Omaha; Church of Christ, Palacios; Lamar Avenue Church of Christ, Paris; 13th & Jefferson Church of Christ, Perryton; 9th & Columbia Church of Christ, Plainview; North Bay Church of Christ, Portland; Raymondville Church of Christ, Raymondville; Roaring Springs Church of Christ, Roaring Springs; Rusk Church of Christ, Rusk; Salado Church of Christ, Salado; Saltillo Church of Christ, Saltillo; Parkview Church of Christ, Sherman; Western Heights Church of Christ, Sherman; Church of Christ, Sterling City; Taylor Church of Christ, Taylor; Northside Church of Christ, Temple; Walnut Church of Christ, Texarkana; Texline Church of Christ, Texline; Woodland Oaks Church of Christ, The Woodlands; Throckmorton Church of Christ, Throckmorton; Hufsmith Church of Christ, Tomball; Lake Cities Church of Christ, Trophy Club; East Texas Church of Christ, Tyler; Welch Church of Christ, Welch; Whitney Church of Christ, Whitney; Broadway Church of Christ, Wichita Falls; Shep Church of Christ, Wingate. **UTAH:** Church of Christ, Monticello; Tooele Church of Christ, Tooele. **VERMONT:** Castleton Church of Christ, Castleton; Springfield Church of Christ, Springfield. **VIRGINIA:** Church of Christ, Covington; Church of Christ in Falls Church, Falls Church; Jefferson Street Church of Christ, Petersburg. **WASHINGTON:** Cashmere Church of Christ, Cashmere; Twin Cities Church of Christ, Centralia; Ellensburg Church of Christ, Ellensburg; Kennewick Church of Christ, Kennewick; Olympia Church of Christ, Olympia; Madison Park Church of Christ, Seattle; Southside Church of Christ, Seattle; Church of Christ, Spokane; Southside Church of Christ, Spokane; Lakeview Church of Christ, Tacoma; Washougal Church of Christ, Washougal. **WASHINGTON D.C.:** 16th & Decatur Church of Christ. **WEST VIRGINIA:** North Beckley Church of Christ, Beckley; Kanawha City Church of Christ, Charleston; Camden Avenue Church of Christ, Parkersburg; 36th Street Church of Christ, Vienna. **WISCONSIN:** Waupaca Church of Christ, Waupaca; Lakeland Church of Christ, Woodruff. **WYOMING:** Lander Church of Christ, Lander; Rawlins Church of Christ, Rawlins; Church of Christ, Thermopolis.

EDITORIAL

From persecution to pure joy

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

Around the world, we see these words from the first chapter of James come to fruition again and again. In Central America, a Nicaraguan preacher said that the repressive Sandinista regime helped usher in a “golden era” for Churches of Christ, sparking unprecedented growth.

Now NationsUniversity, a church-supported distance-learning program, reports good news from the unlikely places — Iran.

There, a man who studied the university’s faith-based curriculum is teaching it to 100 of his countrymen. In a

‘Perhaps God’s church really is growing, quietly and quickly’

place where “no one is allowed to even hear about Jesus,” online university “grew me up in Christ in the middle of Christ’s enemies,” he said.

Praise God! We rejoice as we pray for persecuted followers of Christ worldwide.

And make no mistake, persecution *is* real and ongoing. Open Doors, a group that monitors persecution, estimates that more than 2,100 people worldwide lost their lives because of their Christian faith in 2013. Organizations such as Voice of the Martyrs (www.persecution.com) also track instances of repression and violence against Christians.

The persecution experienced by the first century church in Acts 8 did little to stop the spread of the Gospel — and likely assisted in its growth. Though some focus on negative news about our faith’s apparent future, perhaps God’s church really *is* growing, quietly and quickly, in ways we can’t yet fathom.



“VISIONARY HEADS OF JOSEPH AND MARY” BY WILLIAM BLAKE, CIRCA 1820, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Finding the real, relatable Jesus in Matthew

“When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.”

— Matthew 1:24-25

and there is no doubt he understood what it felt like to be overworked and exhausted.

Put simply, he was human.

But what makes him remarkable — what makes him God in the flesh, is that he stayed the course. He never wavered from the plan for his life.

He put one foot in front of the other and he kept going. I’m inspired by this.

As you travel through this difficult and complicated life, remember that Jesus did too. When you feel like you can’t take another step, know that he felt the same way.

And because he’s been there, he’s desperate to help you through it.

All you have to do is let him.

In the Word



Summer Lashley

Jesus may seem like a person that you can’t relate to at all.

He lived forever ago, he never messed up his life like you and I have and he allowed himself to die a painful and cruel death when he didn’t have to.

However, when I read the first four chapters in Matthew, I am struck by how relatable this man is.

He was born into a humble family. His parents weren’t even married when he was conceived, and he comes from a long line of questionable characters — a couple of prostitutes and a murderer just to name a few.

Satan attacked him and continuously tempted him,

SUMMER LASHLEY is campus ministry coordinator for Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City. This devotional is adapted from the university’s “Word: 60-day New Testament Plan” available on the YouVersion Bible app.



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Despair not, ministers: Advice for those doing the greatest, most privileged work

For those of us who take a stab at preaching, I address a topic dear to our hearts — frustration. First of all, we begin enthused about what we would label the greatest calling on earth. Others may not see it that way, but we surely do. We begin eager, anticipatory and ambitious. What I want to do is to cheer you on to never hiccup over stresses and struggles. Finish deeper, farther, higher and wider than when you first began. How will that seriously transpire? Dodge the brotherhood whims and bullets? Never stand out on a limb with saw in your own hand? Avoid controversy?

If your goal is to be a minister of the Gospel and avoid controversy, you have just bailed on the walk of Jesus. He was so known for his controversy that his walk ended upon the Cross. All Christians — therefore especially us — are destined for the blender. By our very faith and confidence in the Holy Spirit of Christ we are set up for enormous and constant trouble. Trouble — we don't need to go looking for it. It comes to the believer as an automatic assumption of true and meaningful spiritual life. My word to those who serve in a role like mine is please don't be caught off-guard — as if something is wrong because strife arises. *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you* (1 Peter 4:12). The natural man seems to feel entitled that if we are going to serve in the church we don't need a bunch of unnecessary hassle. Oh, but suffering is most necessary. We need it, must have it and will have it. The question is not, "How do we avoid it?" The question is, "How will we use it as our fuel instead of our enemy?" To the contrary, we must have it. It is the nature of man to need it — and of God to afford it. With reflection upon the Beatitudes we learn that in risk, pain and

suffering there are steady announcements of blessings. Unbelieving preachers call them curses. They are not. We need the troubles to build us and discipline us for spiritual warfare, God's style. Yes, we are the brunt of public jokes in many places — in church pews and the outside world. We also are the target of undeserved love — in the church, out of the church and surely from God above. We get to do the greatest, most privileged work on earth. Very few would understand the baptism in our own tears. They just don't know. But neither do many realize how crummy we are, how failing we feel and how perplexed we remain.



Terry Rush

So what shall we do? Stick tight. Don't run. Instead, learn. Realize we are following in the Master's steps. As he had a cross of suffering, a tomb of death and the lift of resurrection, we possess equally all three. What's more fun than watching dead things live? Don't be afraid and — good grief — don't be whiny. Be bold. Awaken to the beauty of your struggles with people. We expect to win them. That's what this call of Jesus is all about. Nobody can really live unless somebody first dies for them. *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ... So death works in us, but life in you.* (2 Corinthians 4:7-12) Jesus went first. We came alive. Now it is our turn to suffer hardship so that others may live. *This* puts purpose into our frustration. Don't quit, *ever*.

TERRY RUSH is senior minister for the Memorial Drive Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla. Read more of his writings at terryrush.blogspot.com.

LETTERS

Responses to editorial mixed

Thank you for a very well-written editorial under the heading, "A Christian response to anti-gay laws" (Page 30, March). You expressed my sentiments very well in the statement, "We should uphold — for all people — the principle of fairness that our Savior practices as he calls a lost and dying world to reconciliation with the divine." I appreciate the *Chronicle* both online and in hard copy.

Raymond S. Stewart | Lawrence, Pa.

There is a reference in the editorial to "basic human rights." What are these basic human rights which we should uphold? I would dare to say that we have no basic human rights except those which God has given us. Is there a basic human right to promote and practice homosexuality? Is that what the author is contending? A vague editorial contending against vague laws seems to be a waste of space.

Steve Bastin | Edmond, Okla.

No false gospel, just 'Muscle'

In response to the story on "Muscle and a Shovel," (Page 3, March) I want to say I have read and pondered Michael Shank's message. I believe he has performed a great service. Allowing someone to read the book is a great way to help one learn the truth about salvation and the church. I was surprised by the comments of Jay Guin, an elder in Alabama. He says Shank teaches a false gospel. I would like to see what he found wrong with what the brother learned and is now teaching.

Don Huddleston | Ponca City, Okla.

Our church has distributed more than 250 copies of "Muscle and a Shovel" with great results. It is hardly a "false gospel" when it is filled with hundreds of scriptures. "Muscle and a Shovel" is a great evangelistic tool. We love it.

Clay Joseph | Springfield, Mo.

VOICES

What are your favorite memories of Spring Sing, Sing Song, Makin' Music or other springtime musicals?

Asked by Erik Tryggestad, editor.



I grew up watching Oklahoma Christian's Spring Sing. Students in bright costumes, moving in sync to cleverly written lyrics made student life look like so much fun. When I participated in Harding's Spring Sing my freshman year (1996) I made friendships I never would have if not for working together on our (winning) show.

Erin Bailey | Oklahoma City



I've been a part of Makin' Music at Freed-Hardeman for four years — this year as a club's director. A great tradition is the singing of "A Common Love" at the end of each show. While it is a competition, it's great to hold hands and sing that we're all unified.

Shea Brown | Henderson, Tenn.



Some of my favorite memories at Lubbock Christian University are participating in Master Follies, especially my sophomore year when my club broke a 21-year losing streak with our chili peppers show. It was always such a fun time — and definitely exhausting — but I loved every moment.

Katherine Gould | Beijing



I remember seeing York College's Songfest in the 1990s and seeing my cousin perform in a club show where they sang "500 Miles." I remember thinking it would be so much fun to do that show myself in the future.

Chrystal Houston | York, Neb.



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Why the Psalms matter in today's church

Two Old Testament scholars from different countries and faith traditions agree that the modern church is neglecting the consistent reading and praying of the Psalms, thus putting robust, balanced faith at considerable risk.

In their latest books, leading theologian and bestselling author N.T. Wright and Abilene Christian University Old Testament professor Glenn Pemberton urge churches to return the Psalms to their once central place, but for different reasons. Wright explores the transformational power of the Psalms while Pemberton unpacks the role of the Psalms in dealing with grief and healing.

Although both authors are scholars, these two books present profound thought and practical help in language easily read by the common person.

In **"The Case for the Psalms: Why They are Essential,"** Wright laments that too often the Psalms are either not used or are "reduced to a few verses to be recited as 'filler' between other parts" of the worship service.

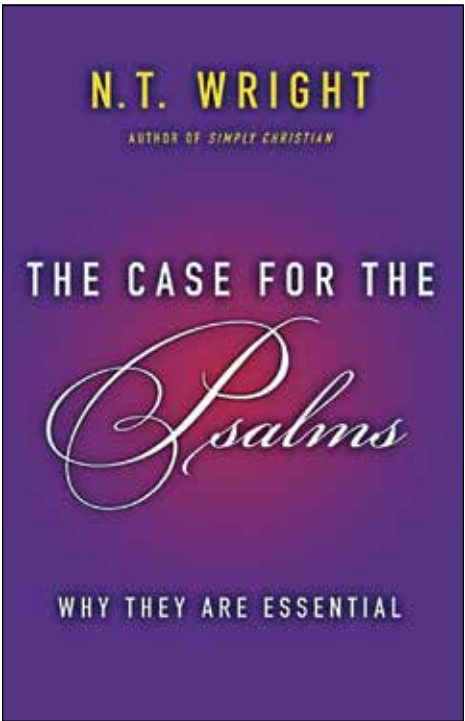
However, he contends, the Psalms are "the great hymn book at the heart of the Bible ... the daily lifeblood of Christians ... from the earliest times," and "central in the life and teachings of Jesus."

For these reasons, the Psalms possess transforming power, when read properly. This does not mean mere occasional reading of our favorite Psalms. Rather, transformation comes through "consistent reading and praying of all the Psalms as a rhythm of life," Wright contends.

The meat of this book then explores an array of Psalms, paying special attention to ways they shaped the thinking of Jesus and the early church, and how they can transform us today, as well.

The final chapter, "My Life With The Psalms," is filled with Wright's warm personal stories of God's transforming power manifesting itself to him during various encounters with the Psalms.

This book can help one see the Psalms and the world — and even one's self — in a new light, bringing richer fabric and more durable substance to one's faith.



★★★★★
N. T. Wright. **The Case for the Psalms: Why They are Essential.** New York: Harper Collins, 2013. 213 pages. \$22.99.

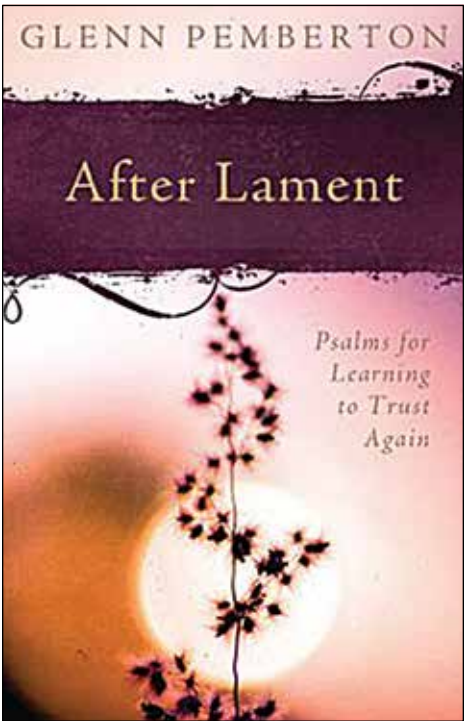
The Psalms have also strengthened the faith of Pemberton, author of the 2012 book "Hurting With God: Learning to Lament with the Psalms." In this follow-up, **"After Lament: Psalms for Learning to Trust Again,"** he argues that all the Psalms — not just the bright, upbeat ones — offer the central and most healthy way to process devastating grief and prolonged suffering.

To draw the reader in, Pemberton imagines conversations with Job, Abraham and Naomi after their own lament. Did Job's restored good fortune suddenly end his lament for his children who were killed? After Abraham's incomprehensible willingness to slaughter Isaac, "how did he defend himself — and his God — to his wife and his son?"

And how did things go with Naomi and God after her name became 'Bitterness?' No matter how loyal Ruth was, surely she could not replace a dead husband and be "better than seven

sons," as women tell her in Ruth 4:15. Life was never the same after Job, Abraham and Naomi's time of lament. Pemberton hauntingly observes, "Wherever lament may lead, it leaves us with stories of pain and scars (and) with much to work out with our God."

This memoir chronicles the suffering of a contemporary Midwestern family. Death, divorce, depression, addiction and an eating disorder all figure in, but ultimately the author, a practicing attorney who published the book himself, comes through with stronger faith and the ability to praise God.



★★★★★
Glenn Pemberton. **After Lament: Psalms for Learning to Trust Again.** Abilene, Texas: Abilene Christian University Press, 2013. 199 pages. \$17.99.

sons," as women tell her in Ruth 4:15. Life was never the same after Job, Abraham and Naomi's time of lament. Pemberton hauntingly observes, "Wherever lament may lead, it leaves us with stories of pain and scars (and) with much to work out with our God."

Pemberton himself bears these scars. He saw his house burn to the ground. He endured a divorce after 16 years of marriage. Much like Job, even Pemberton's own body has not remained untouched. A nerve disease has saddled him with excruciating, relentless pain, which has persisted for years, with no end in sight. And now, life in a wheelchair narrows his career.

However, this book is not about Pemberton's suffering. Rather, it is thoughtful help from a veteran sufferer, who walks with us through prolonged suffering and deep lament, using the Psalms as his guide. In the main body of the book, he illustrates vividly how different types of Psalms help us process various stages of lament.

I do not pretend to know what life is like for Pemberton. But my own journey through lung cancer gives me at least a small taste of persistent suffering, and this book brings me enormous help.

Each of these two volumes makes their own significant contribution. But when read together, they offer a rare gold mine of helpful guidance to those who suffer — and wise counsel to those who serve them.

LYNN ANDERSON is a former minister among Churches of Christ and founder and retired President of Hope Network Ministries. He also is the author of books including "Talking Back to God: Speaking Your Heart to God Through the Psalms."

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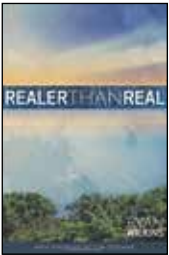


Lynn Anderson

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

MEMOIR

Ryan Wilkins. **Realer Than Real: A True Story of Grace, Hope, and Healing.** Nashville, Tenn.: Lightning Source, Inc., 2013. 168 pages. \$15.95.



This book is a compilation of memories, anecdotes and thoughts about teaching children's Bible classes, offered by volunteer Bible class teachers across the country. Intended as a gift to Bible class teachers, it was compiled by a Bible class teacher, mother and freelance writer who worships with the Calvert City Church of Christ in Kentucky.

ON TEACHING

Paula Harrington. **Once Upon a Bible Class.** Nashville, Tenn.: 21st Century Christian, 2013. 112 pages. \$8.99.



Film depicts real faith on an unrealistic campus

Suppose that, on your first day of college, an atheist professor required you to sign a declaration that “God is dead” or face a failing grade.

That’s the dilemma faced by students in **“God’s Not Dead,”** a Pure Flix production that debuts in theaters March 21. The faith-based film focuses on combating skepticism and atheism through equipping viewers with scientific evidence and reasoned arguments for God’s existence.

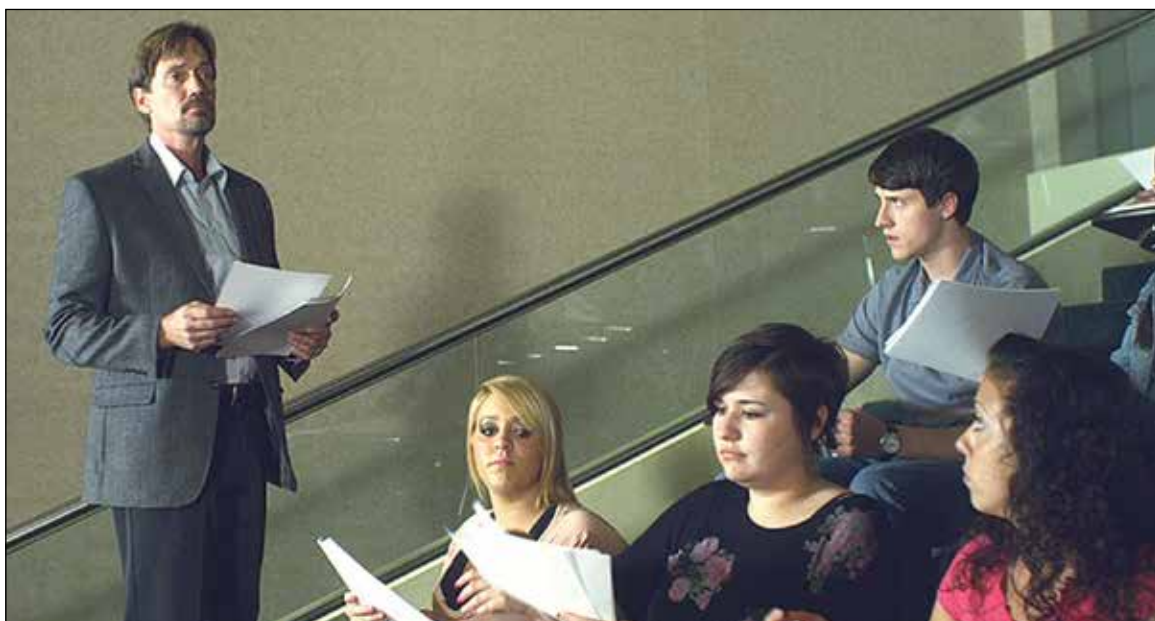
The movie features appearances by “Duck Dynasty’s” Willie and Korie Robertson, members of the White’s Ferry Road Church of Christ in West Monroe, La., along with a concert appearance by the Newsboys, whose 2011 rock anthem shares the movie’s title.

At fictitious Hadleigh University, Dr. Radisson (Kevin Sorbo, best known for his TV stint as “Hercules”) gives the dreaded mandate to his philosophy class. Every student takes the pledge that “God is dead” — except freshman Josh Wheaton (Shane Harper of the Disney Channel’s “Good Luck Charlie”).

After prayerful consideration and conflicting guidance from his personal network, Wheaton refuses to comply. His decision catapults the inexperienced college student into a series of one-on-one, Lincoln-Douglas style debates against tenured professor Radisson over God’s existence.

The debates are conducted at the end of multiple class periods in front of the lecture hall class of roughly 80 students. Wheaton can salvage his failing philosophy grade by defending his position and persuading the class with his arguments.

In many ways, the film is reminiscent of typical college



PURE FLIX ENTERTAINMENT

Atheist professor Dr. Radisson (Kevin Sorbo) challenges Josh Wheaton’s (Shane Harper) faith in **“God’s Not Dead.”** The PG-rated film debuts March 21. For locations and times, see godsnotdeadthemovie.com.

life — gossip among upper-class students about the best professors, drop-date mentions during welcome week, students in the wrong location on the first day and frequent calls home to parents.

The film’s non-student characters also face real challenges. Busy professionals are too device-prone for face-to-face interactions. Young adults defy family tradition to find a faith of their own. Adult children are troubled with adequately caring for an aging parent who suffers from dementia. And couples face deteriorating relationships in the midst of a life-

threatening illness — and the marital challenges experienced from being unequally yoked.

Each trial woven into the fabric of the film boasts real-world problems in the lives of faithful people.

However, not all educational aspects of the film are realistic. A professor determining students’ final semester grades in the class on the first day is

unlikely. Equally suspect is the near-unanimity among students, which few professors achieve in a seminar class of 12 — yet alone among 80 students.

And, in a time when higher education is under siege by state and federal governments and under pressure to meet the standards of accrediting bodies, no faculty member can devote the equivalent of a full week of class to a single debate with one student.

The film’s depiction of higher education suggests the public university classroom learning environment is primarily about dismantling faithful followers of Christ rather than educating students to achieve learning objectives associated with disciplinary knowledge.

A more accurate reflection of higher education would be to portray universities as striving to enact the key tenants of their institutional missions while they seek to meet the demands of academic assessment. This requires documented assurances of student learning. These activities have taken hold at most public

universities — something “God’s Not Dead” fails to adequately depict.

In these situations, it is the gradual decay of conversations guided by the authority of God’s Word that should be a primary concern. The absence of Scripture, rather than the presence of confrontational debates, most threatens the Christian walk of college students.

This slippage from God’s Word creates a dire predicament in which the true test of university life — living in obedience to God’s Word throughout one’s academic pursuits — is replaced with the affirmation that, because God lives, he supports our heart’s desires, whatever they may be.

Among believers, this position of pursuing self rather than revering the words of the living Creator is of far greater concern than debating one who denies God’s existence.

Students of faith who put themselves before God are in a parallel plane with atheists. Neither is obedient to God.

Instead of affirming “God’s not dead,” perhaps a better declaration for students of faith is “God’s Word lives.” It is authoritative and vibrant. It comforts and cuts. It should be studied and respected. And, it should have preeminence in our daily walk. When obeyed, it is capable of guiding the faithful from here to eternity. Without it, we have no hope and are akin to people such as Radisson who defy God.

As a film, “God’s Not Dead,” succeeds at underscoring the importance of demonstrating rather than merely talking about faith. It reminds us that God is good all the time. And it highlights the spiraling impact of a single courageous person of faith on those who believe and those who are frustrated by disbelief.

While the vindictive, spiteful threats from the professor defy realism, the arguments for and against the existence of God are commonplace.

The debate reaches a life-changing climax and standoff as the student challenges the professor in an intense yelling match of personal discovery for both individuals.

If for no other purpose than arming oneself with relevant reasons and stellar arguments

steeped in science to refute claims that God is dead, go see the movie.

JEANETTA D. SIMS is an associate professor in the marketing department of the College of Business at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Okla. She earned a doctorate in communication, is accredited in public relations and attends the South Edmond Church of Christ.

On Film



Jeanetta D. Sims

‘The absence of Scripture, rather than the presence of confrontational debates, most threatens the Christian walk of college students.’

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For more information, contact Ralph Richardson, Ph.D. at (918) 343-0003, ext 230, or e-mail ralph@hopeharborinc.org. To learn more about Hope Harbor, visit our web-site at www.hopeharborinc.org.

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To stay in the pulpit, preachers need more than a 'good sermon'

Worshiping God is an important aspect of our lives as Christians, and preaching always has been central to the communal worship among Churches of Christ.

Since preaching is so important to us, I am always amazed at how few families encourage their sons to go into preaching. That is reflected in the general view among those institutions that train preachers that not many young men are preparing to preach. Many college students want to be youth ministers or family life ministers, but not many want to fill the pulpit.

Preaching is not an easy task. The challenge of deciding on a subject and then knowing the audience well enough to make the preaching applicable make the job very hard. Often the person doing the preaching is expected to be a spiritual counselor, a marriage counselor, a grief counselor and to visit the sick and all the wayward members.

I have not preached much, but I have preached enough to know that a message that draws people closer to God takes time, serious study, deep reflection and continuous prayer. Preachers I respect tell me that preparing a sermon takes 20 to 30 hours.

For a very long time, I have urged that churches protect the time of their pulpit men so that they can study deeply and continuously. When a man has to endure a stream of visitors and regular phone calls, he cannot dig into the Scriptures so that he is filled with knowledge of God and the understanding of the challenges of spiritual living. When a preacher is expected to care for every need of the church, he will have to settle for superficial preaching that is merely entertaining and not life-giving.

If a church is blessed with a preacher who believes that he is called to the highest work among mankind, then the church should be sure that he has a salary that provides him a living standard comparable to other members of the church and the community.

Fortunately, most churches have realized that preachers should prepare for retirement. A wise church should have a systematic plan for helping its preacher invest for the future. Furthermore, I think that a preacher needs adequate

vacations to connect with his family and to find the revival and renewal.

Church members also need to provide moral support and encouragement. I am not suggesting that we put preachers on

Insight



Bailey McBride

pedestals the way we did in the decades following World War II.

When regular gospel meetings were part of the tradition of churches, I heard many preachers who were popular on the meeting circuit. Today, most preachers are not known outside the city

or country where they preach.

But we all have a chance to know the preacher for our congregation. We should share our appreciation or our thoughts about their teaching regularly. A simple "good sermon" as we leave the building is not what I have in mind. I am thinking of taking a break with the preacher to explore ideas with him and to share ideas about presentations or content.

For many years I have advocated sabbaticals for preachers and other church workers filling jobs that make heavy intellectual and spiritual demands.

Although many think a sabbatical is a prolonged vacation, it is a time for focused development of insights or skills. If the preacher's teaching is regularly reviewed by elders or others who have responsibility for the spiritual development of the church, it will be obvious how the time of the sabbatical should be used. If a preacher is sounding more like a sociologist or psychologist than a person in touch with God's spirit, then a time of serious Bible study should be planned. A time for intense Bible study or graduate courses in Bible may be useful. If the preacher is sounding the same week after week, then training sessions on presentations would be helpful.

I believe that God's kingdom can only flourish when our worship is nurturing our relationship with God and other believers. Because preaching leads to greater knowledge and inspiration to know God more fully, we must value godly men who study and teach.

CONTACT bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org.

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Employment Opportunity

The **Central Church of Christ** in Monticello, Florida, is looking for a pulpit minister.

Small congregation (25-30, no elders/deacons) enjoys comfortable facilities and an active, working ministry. We are well established (30+ years) and in an area that is poised for growth.

We are looking for a mature man that has a solid education, experience, strength and desire to lead to future growth. We seek someone who is open but committed to the fundamental truths of God's Word.

Financial resources are limited, but we can offer a candidate a reasonable salary and a very nice home with some utilities.

For more information:
info@ccofcmonticello.org

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Church of Christ
PO Box 487
Reserve, New Mexico 87830
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All candidates must be active members of the church of Christ and committed to Christian education.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY. Seeking full-time faculty member. A master's degree is preferred. Responsibilities include technical supervision and instruction of microbiology labs, oversight and management of laboratory resources, and other support roles as needed by the department.

Please submit a letter of application and curriculum vitae to Dr. Benjamin Bruner, chair, at bbruner1@harding.edu.

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES. Seeking full-time faculty member. The successful candidate will possess a minimum of a master's degree (a Ph.D. is preferred) and the ability to teach all levels of Spanish language and literature. Strong generalists with both a record of excellent teaching, research and graduate-level course work in Peninsular Spanish literature will be given priority. The ability to teach business Spanish would be a plus. The ideal candidate will also have training in ACTFL oral proficiency and methodology. In addition to teaching excellence, candidates will be encouraged to be involved with mentoring students in and out of the classroom.

Please submit a letter of application and curriculum vitae to Ava Conley, chair, at conley@harding.edu.

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC. Seeking full-time faculty member. The successful candidate will have a doctorate in music as well as documented and demonstrated success at the collegiate level as vocal instructor and classroom teacher. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate studio voice and other courses in the department in accordance with the candidate's interests and qualifications and assisting with student recruitment and advising. Experience in teaching music theory and in high school classrooms will be positively considered.

Please submit a letter of application and curriculum vitae by March 27 to Dr. Cliff Ganus III, chair, at ganus@harding.edu.

Minister Search

The **Fiske Boulevard Church of Christ**, located at 805 South Fiske Blvd., Rockledge, Florida, has begun a search for a pulpit minister to begin in summer 2014.

The Church began in 1953 in Cocoa, Florida, and moved to its present location in 1973. Our 60th Anniversary was recently celebrated in November 2013.

Membership is currently about 100 with 10 ministries led by various brethren to provide for the welfare of the Church and Community outreach. We seek a minister that is Sound in the Doctrine of Christ, married, with great teaching, organizational, counseling and human relations skills to minister to this congregation.

If interested, please send your resume with a recent sermon on DVD/CD to the following mailing or e-mail address:

**ATTN: SEARCH COMMITTEE
FISKE BOULEVARD CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 560052
ROCKLEDGE, FLORIDA 32956-0052**

Email Address: fiskecoc@att.net



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