

BOBBY ROSS JR.

Nicaragua mission focuses on body, mind and soul

A girl named Maira rests on her father Martin Marvin Herrera's shoulder during a Tuesday night Bible study at the Jinotega Church of Christ in the Central American nation of Nicaragua. At left, her mother, Anabel, listens to the lesson. The church meets at a remodeled warehouse that serves as the home of Misión Para Cristo — Spanish for "Mission for Christ" — a 20-year-old ministry focused on the body, mind and soul.

SEE CURRENTS, 'Nicaragua mission brings blessings,' Page 17

Tulsa Workshop canceled

BY CHELLIE ISON AND ERIK TRYGGESTAD
THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

After a 40-year run, the Tulsa Workshop — a free gathering among Churches of Christ, known for many years as the "International Soul Winning Workshop" — has come to an end.

Elders of the Memorial Drive Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla., announced the cancellation of the 2017 workshop and the discontinuation of the program.

At its peak, the spring-time workshop brought together 12,000 to 15,000 believers from Churches of Christ across the U.S. and around the globe.

"It really helped us to have a vision to reach the whole world," said Terry Rush, senior minister for the Memorial Drive church and director of the workshop.

"The workshop is coming to an end, but See **WORKSHOP**, Page 24



Rush

They are friends in Congress — and brothers in Christ

THESE VETERAN POLITICIANS — the only two members of Churches of Christ in the U.S. House — share a special bond.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

When two U.S. congressmen visited a small, English-speaking Church of Christ in Brussels, one of them left Sunday worship with something that didn't belong to him.

Rep. Brett Guthrie, R-Kentucky, chuckles as he recalls his friend and brother in Christ — Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas — carrying a brown "Songs

of the Church" hymnal back to the pair's hotel.

"I took it by mistake, of course," Poe said with a laugh, noting that he had his Bible and the songbook in one hand as he greeted fellow Christians with the other.

"We had it delivered by the State Department back to the Brussels Church of Christ," the former Texas judge added.

Guthrie and Poe serve together on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. During annual trips to the Belgian capital, the congressmen worship with the Brussels church — an ethnically diverse congregation

with a Ghanaian immigrant minister named Joseph Acheampong.

Overall, 91 percent of U.S. House and Senate members describe themselves as Christians, according to a new report by the Pew Research Center. However, only two House members — Guthrie and Poe — identify as members of Churches of Christ, according to the report titled "Faith on the Hill."

A third House member with Church of Christ ties — Rep. Janice

Hahn, D-California — did not seek re-election in 2016.

Hahn, a graduate of Abilene Christian University in Texas, instead ran for the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. She won.

On the Senate side, Texas Republican John Cornyn was a member of the University Avenue Church of Christ in Austin, Texas, for many years. The Pew report lists his religious affiliation as

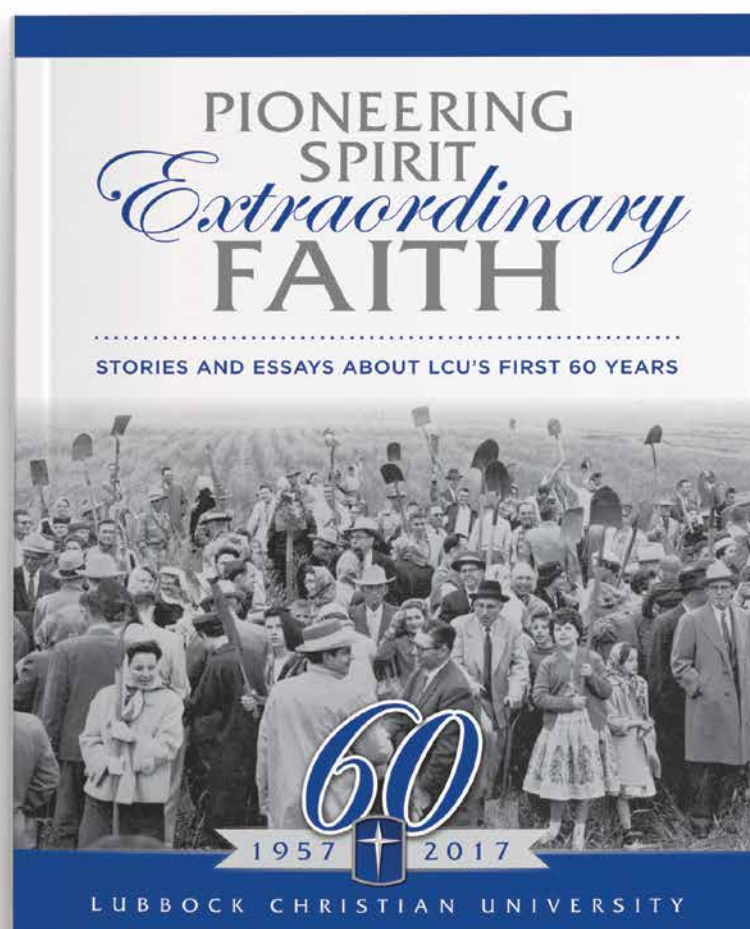
See **CONGRESS**, Page 8



Guthrie



Poe



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Believe. Belong. Be Blue.

A journey of faith from TV to digital news

‘H’as anyone ever told you, you look like that girl on TV?”

My husband and I chuckled as we sat in an office with the car salesman who made that comment.

Inside Story “I used to be that girl,” I said.



Chellie Ison

It’s hard to believe seven months have passed since I joined the team here at *The Christian Chronicle*.

Seven months since I stepped out of my comfort zone (the world of a TV reporter) and into a job that would challenge me in new ways.

I came here with one goal — to have more time for my husband and our children. The Lord has blessed me with that time. The transition has at times been emotional and hard, but a few weeks into the change I realized this was in fact the path God had made for me.

Recently, as I was with my family in the car, my 7-year-old said, “Mom, it’s really nice that you can hang out with us now.”

My schedule at my previous job was not the worst, but it often involved long hours and crazy, early mornings that started when my alarm went off at 1:18 a.m. (I had four alarms set on my phone — in intervals of three minutes each — so that I wouldn’t be late for the morning newscast.)

I often heard things like, See **DIGITAL**, Page 4



A Honolulu express bus makes its way through the working-class neighborhood of Waipahu, about 30 minutes from Waikiki’s beaches.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

WAIPAHU, Hawaii

One Sunday, a man wandered into the parking lot of the Wellspring Fellowship Church of Christ, a small congregation that meets in this working-class neighborhood of Honolulu, about 30 minutes west of Waikiki’s crystal beaches.

He started asking church members for money. They invited him inside.

He attends regularly now — especially on “Aloha Sundays” when the church has an after-worship potluck. The believers welcome him and help him whenever they can.

Once, he pulled out a harmonica and

attempted to accompany the otherwise a cappella worship service.

What tune did he choose?

“Oh, there was no tune,” minister David Cady said. “He doesn’t know how to play the harmonica.”

This isn’t the Hawaii you see on postcards. Waipahu is a maze of small homes with wire fences — the humblest of which rents for \$2,500 per month.

Multiple generations, descendants of immigrants from Philippines and Asia, share the same roof. Not far from the church’s building is a Buddhist temple.

The 52 souls who call the Church of Christ “*ohana*” — the Hawaiian word for “family” — represent a broad swath

See **PARADISE**, Page 10



Members of the Wellspring Fellowship church pray for a graduating student.

Church member, executive producer speaks on ‘Silence’



Liam Neeson stars in the film “Silence.”

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Why? Why is God silent when we suffer?

It’s a deep question that haunts Martin Scorsese’s “Silence.” Based on Shusaku Endo’s 1966 historical fiction novel, the film explores the cost of unwavering Christianity in 17th century Japan — at a time when the faith was forbidden.

“The title, ‘Silence,’ relates to a principle we all have to deal with — recognizing the power of a good and powerful God, alongside evil and pain,” Dale Brown, one of the film’s executive producers, told *The Christian Chronicle*.

Brown, a longtime member of the Golf Course Road Church of Christ in Midland, Texas, and former chairman

See **‘SILENCE’**, Page 25

DIGITAL: Delivering real news that matters

FROM PAGE 3

"Oh, bless your heart. That's awful," or "I just don't know how you balance everything."

The reality is, I wasn't balancing anything, and I constantly felt like I was missing out on the childhood of the two little people God has entrusted me with. Honestly, I think that's how a lot of working moms feel, and many of us don't have the option to change our schedules.

So it was in that car, in that moment, when my son's words made me realize I really had been missing out. Fortunately, now, we are able to spend a lot of time together.

I pray that I can be as much of a blessing to the *Chronicle* as it has been to me.

Plotting an online future for this publication means keeping up with ever-changing trends and technological developments — so much so that we've struggled to put a name to my function here. Recently, my title changed to Digital News Editor.

Over the past several months, I've been working to develop more video content for our website and increase our presence on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

However, the online world is a much different ... umm ... beast than our traditional print issue.

Our print audience trusts us because they know us. We've been mailbox buddies for years — decades even.

Now, thanks to the internet, we are able to reach a worldwide audi-



CHELLIE ISON

The Christian Chronicle delivers news about Churches of Christ through print and the internet, including our mobile website. See the information box below for links to our social media pages.

ence we could have only dreamed of reaching before.

But we don't have the years of familiarity with these new readers. Sometimes, we don't even speak the same language. Our words are read through translation programs that fail to deliver vital context.

Add to that the ever-fading line between reliable news and so-called "fake news" that seeks only to generate rage and page views.

As we work to make our content more available and more appealing, we are intentional about remaining relevant — and not sensationalizing stories for the sake of a click.

But let's be honest: the *Chronicle*, like other media, increasingly relies on online readers to sustain growth. We seek to bring you a professional-grade online product in the spirit of our print product.

As we grow, we value your suggestions and feedback, especially about the ease of access and interactivity with our website across multiple platforms — desktops, tablets, phones and other mobile devices. We seek to remedy the issues we encounter and make our online presence easier to navigate.

We also strive, as always, to hold true to our mission to produce news that informs, inspires and unites, to tell the stories of Churches of Christ in 2017 and beyond, to serve as a vital resource for people of faith.

The task can seem daunting in an age when social media comments are plagued with negative, hurtful words — attacks sometimes made by people of faith. But we believe God will guide our efforts if we seek to live our lives for his Son.

We do our best to follow our Savior's lead, and we ask you to walk beside us on this journey.

CONTACT: chellie@christianchronicle.org



YOUTUBE

Acappella selfies

In separate locales, Steve Maxwell, Gary Moyers and Gary Evans (along with Kevin Schaffer and Duane Adams, not pictured) film "selfie" videos as they sing the words of Ephesians 3:20, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us."

Despite the distances, the five members of vocal group Acappella sing together harmoniously. See the video and many more in our weekly "Voices Only" feature on our website, www.christianchronicle.org.

While you're there, send links to your favorite a cappella videos. Post them in the comments or email them to Chellie Ison at chellie@christianchronicle.org.

You'll also find web-exclusive content, including videos, and links to stories from our ongoing series, including "Blessed be the Caregivers" and "From the East," highlighting the growth of Christianity in Southeast Asia.

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Our mission: Inform, inspire, unite

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

Mail: P.O. Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100
Delivery: 2501 E. Memorial Road, Edmond, OK 73013



facebook.com/ChristianChronicle

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President and CEO: Lynn A McMillon
lynn.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org

Editor in Chief: Erik Tryggstad
erik@christianchronicle.org

Chief Correspondent: Bobby Ross Jr.

bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org

Digital News Editor: Chellie Ison

chellie@christianchronicle.org

Advertising Manager: Tonya Patton

tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org

Administrative Assistant: Lynda Sheehan

lynda.sheehan@christianchronicle.org

Administrative Assistant: Joy McMillon

joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org

Administrative Assistant: Melinda Wilson

melinda.wilson@christianchronicle.org

Staff Accountant: Louise Beyer

Editor Emeritus: Bailey McBride

bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

TO SUBSCRIBE: See www.christianchronicle.org, email joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5070.

LETTERS: letters@christianchronicle.org

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SPOTLIGHT

Spiritual interviews

CHILDRESS, Texas — Declining Sunday evening attendance challenges many congregations.

The Childress Church of Christ came up with an alternative that's working. After morning worship, members go eat lunch and then return for a 1:15 p.m. assembly.

"Then we have a spiritual interview with a person or couple instead of a typical 6 p.m. service," minister Trey Morgan said. "The person I interview each week gets a list of the 10 to 12 questions I'm going to ask."

"Eighty percent are spiritual questions that help them share with us their spiritual upbringing and story," Morgan added. "We've had some powerful interviews and testimonies that everyone has loved."



PHOTO PROVIDED BY TREY MORGAN

Teens are interviewed one Sunday.



NELLIE DONEVA, ABILENE (TEXAS) REPORTER-NEWS, USED BY PERMISSION

'God has really blessed this event,' director says of Alabama youth rally

A GULF Youth Experience volunteer, left, helps a storyteller known as "Harris III" perform a floating table illusion. The recent GULF — God's Unending Love and Favor — event drew 740 young people from 32 Churches of Christ to the Orange Beach Event Center in Alabama. "God has really blessed this event," said Jon Hackett, youth minister for the Gulf Shores Church of Christ in Alabama. Hackett, who directs the GULF Youth Experience, reported 29 responses and one baptism during the two-day event. Keynote speakers were B. Chris Simpson and Joe Brumfield. For more information and photos, see www.facebook.com/gulfyouthexperience.

MONTANA

HELENA — The South Hills Church of Christ recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Members marked the milestone with a day of fasting and prayer before coming together Sunday to share breakfast and fellowship with each other before morning worship service.



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Five years ago, church members prayed for God's blessings on the merger.

After worship, the church served the community — raking leaves in a nearby neighborhood, doing cleanup and light carpentry at an assisted-living center, serving lunch at a homeless shelter and assembling gift bags for police officers.

The South Hills church resulted from a merger by three area Churches of Christ.

OREGON

MILWAUKIE — The 50-member Milwaukie Church of Christ helps prepare Bible materials for distribution to missionaries around the world.

"We need to get the word to those going to preach the Gospel," said Mary Mitchell, who is active with the Global Seed Sowers ministry.

For details, see www.facebook.com/GlobalSeedSowers.

TENNESSEE

SPRINGVILLE — On the menu at the Sulphur Well Church of Christ recently: venison, duck, turkey, squirrel, gator and raccoon.

The church hosts an annual "Wild Game Supper" that draws about 700 church members and community guests. Members put on a "Hee Haw"-style variety show.

It's both a fundraiser for a community cause (the Family Resource Center this year) and an opportunity to introduce the congregation to newcomers, minister Bob Palmer said.

"The event very much fits the culture of this part of West Tennessee," Palmer said. "We have gained some members through the event, but probably the biggest blessing has been the community

reputation it has helped build for our congregation."

WEST VIRGINIA

CHESTER — The Virginia Avenue Church of Christ is 99 percent white. The congregation's preacher is black. Minister Rico Brown, who was hired after his graduation last year from the Florida School of Preaching, believes that's worthy of note.

The same scenario is true for Hiram Kent, who attended the preaching school with Brown and was hired by the South Florida Avenue Church of Christ in Lakeland, Fla.

"I had the joy and privilege of teaching and leading Hiram to Christ, and we now share the joy of being full-time preachers," Brown said. Moreover, "we both landed jobs which we could not have foreseen."

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A flight delay, a volcano and a gunman interrupt a Christian's journey home

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

"I'm just sending you a message telling you that I'm fine. As you can see, it has been ... crazy."

Roy Leandro spoke into his phone as he took a selfie video in Terminal 4 of the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in south Florida. Behind him, hundreds of passengers sat on the floor, bleary eyed and confused. A few stood, looking nervously toward the exits.

"So all of the people we have here are hiding," Leandro said. "We are just praying that God is going to take care of us."

Leandro was on his way to his homeland, Costa Rica, after spending time with his wife in Denmark. As he waited to check in for his flight to Central America, a Delta Airlines passenger drew a gun from his checked luggage in Terminal 2 and opened fire, killing five people and wounding eight more.

Police took 26-year-old Esteban Santiago of Anchorage, Alaska, into custody. Santiago, a U.S. Army veteran, had received psychological treatment recently, The Associated Press reported.

Leandro, who worships with the Sabanilla Church of Christ near Costa Rica's capital, San José, travels the globe on one-man mission trips. He has visited assisted-living facilities in the U.S. and Scandinavia where he paints portraits of elderly residents — an idea suggested by workers at a facility he visited in Sweden years ago.

"What I want to do is make them feel happy and comfortable with their own image," he said. "I want them to know, 'You are a piece of art.'"

Leandro's ordeal in Florida came in the midst of an already long journey that had begun three days earlier in Denmark. He has applied for permission to live in Scandinavia with his wife, but the process is not

yet complete, he said, so "I have been traveling back and forth to be with her the most I can."

From Denmark he flew to Norway, where his connecting flight to the U.S. was delayed 12 hours. When he arrived in Florida, he had missed his flight to Costa Rica. Rebooking was complex, he said, because of Costa Rica's Turrialba Volcano, which was spewing ash into the air, causing airlines to cancel flights.

He had to sleep in the Fort Lauderdale airport as he waited for his flight. Finally, as he prepared to go through security, he saw news of

the shooting on his phone. Then he was nearly crushed in a wave of passengers who flooded into the terminal as police shouted at them, Leandro said. About 300 people crowded into the terminal's immigration area.



ROY LEANDRO
Roy Leandro, right, huddles with other passengers in the Fort Lauderdale airport.

"Some people came in there crying in panic — especially some families with children," he said.

After about three tense hours, the passengers exited the terminal. More hours of confusion followed as they attempted to reclaim their baggage and rebook flights. Leandro helped translate for some of the passengers who spoke only Spanish.

Eventually, authorities brought in buses and took the passengers to a convention center. There, at about 5 a.m. Saturday, Leandro was able to borrow a phone and book a flight to Costa Rica that left two hours later.

To let his family and friends know he was OK, Leandro posted a photo of himself to Facebook.

"Don't let anyone put fear in your soul," he wrote in the caption. "I'm perfectly fine. God is with me!"

His friends from around the globe posted responses of relief and praise — in Spanish, English and Danish.

"Congratulations, Roy," one of them wrote. "You must be born again!"

VIDEO, EXPANDED STORY: christianchronicle.org



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CONGRESS: Guthrie, Poe point to faith's importance in life, politics

FROM PAGE 1

non-denominational Christian.

Cornyn spokesman Ben Voelkel said he would try to check with the senator on his current home church, but Voelkel did not provide that information before press time.

"He still has many good friends here," University Avenue senior minister Eddie Sharp said of Cornyn.

A COMMON HERITAGE

The shared faith heritage of Guthrie and Poe affords a special bond, both said.

"You just have that common background," said Guthrie, 52, who is serving his fifth two-year term.

"We are very good friends for a lot of reasons," agreed Poe, 68, in his seventh term, "but one is because we're members of Churches of Christ."

Guthrie flies home from Washington, D.C., most weekends and worships with his home congregation — the Alvaton Church of Christ near Bowling Green, Ky.

A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., Guthrie grew up in the Chisholm Hills Church of Christ in Florence, Ala. — a community with a heavy concentration of Churches of Christ.

"I went to a congregation where everybody knew everybody," he said of his early years. "It's hard to distinguish between my church life and family life. It was all together."

In Florence, it seemed like half the people attended one Church of Christ or another, Guthrie recalled.

"The Churches of Christ were just so embedded in everything," he said. "The Little League coach might be your Sunday school teacher. Like anything with faith, it affects you in a positive way."

BATTLE WITH LEUKEMIA

The son and grandson of Church of Christ elders, Poe got his start as a class president at ACU.

He's a longtime member of the Bammel Church of Christ in Houston, but a battle with leukemia has curtailed the frequency of his previously weekly trips home.

"I've had a lot of prayers from people all over the world, and the prayers are working," said Poe, who was diagnosed in July and initially received chemotherapy at the world-renowned MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. "The leukemia is in remission, which basically means it's under control."

"I'll be taking treatments for several more months, but everything is going well," added the congressman, who is now receiving care at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington. "Absolutely, my Christian faith has been the reason I am doing as well as I am."



Rep. Brett Guthrie, R-Kentucky, in his U.S. House office in Washington, D.C.

FAITH AND POLITICS

Turning the conversation back to politics, Poe said both he and Guthrie would love to see more members of Churches of Christ seek public office.

"We need more believers in government," Poe said. "I think that's something members of the church ought to look forward to. People ask me

about it, and I say, 'God put Joseph in charge of government in Egypt.'"

David Lipscomb, a prominent Civil War-era leader of Churches of Christ, argued that Christians should separate the "kingdom of God" from the "kingdom of the world" and not even vote, according to the *Stone-Campbell Encyclopedia*.

Two centuries later, most members of Churches of Christ see no problem with voting, said Stephen Morris, a



FACEBOOK.COM/JUDGETEDPOE

Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, right, pays tribute to his father, Virgil Poe, a World War II veteran and longtime member of the Memorial Church of Christ in Houston.

law and political studies professor at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn.

However, Morris said, "I do think a less extreme version of Lipscomb's views — that politics are corrupt and inherently corrupting, an entanglement in worldly matters, inconsistent with the Christian walk — remains prevalent in the church today. I know I heard it when I was growing up, and it's a question that is still raised periodically in my classes."

The United States has a population of about 319 million. The nation's 12,000-plus Churches of Christ have an estimated 1.5 million adherents — representing roughly one in every 213 Americans. By that measure, two House members out of 435 would be about right.

It's a matter Guthrie and Poe might contemplate during one of their frequent conversations on the House floor. Or on their next flight to Brussels.

"We spend a lot of time talking about the history of the Church

of Christ — things like how it expanded in the 1800s and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone and those things," Poe said, referring to two of the early leaders of the Restoration Movement.

The last time Guthrie and Poe visited the Brussels church, Acheampong insisted on one of them preaching. "To my utter surprise, both of them preached that day, and we had two wonderful sermons in one worship," the minister said.

When 35 people died and more than 300 were injured in last year's Islamic State terrorist attack in Brussels, the congressmen were among the first to check on the church members.

"We greatly appreciated their kind, brotherly gesture, which demonstrates that when the love of Christ our Lord and God our Father is perfected in us, it knows no boundaries," Acheampong said.

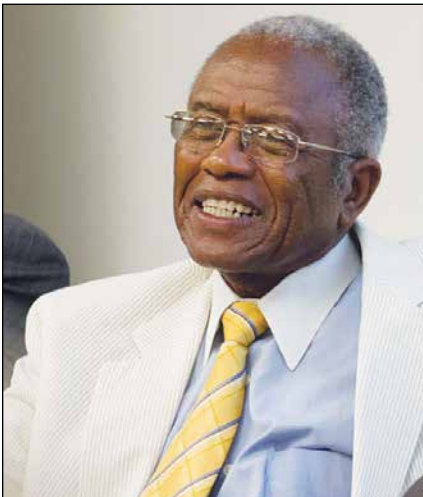
GUTHRIE AND POE discuss new President Donald Trump at www.christianchronicle.org.

Eight years later, Christians reflect on legacy of first black president

BY HAMIL R. HARRIS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON
Eight years — some joyous, some tumultuous — have passed since the inauguration of President Barack Obama. But the memories remain fresh in the minds of Christians who never thought they'd live to see their country elect its first black president. For many, it was the answer to unspoken prayers. Reflecting on the Obama years, African-American members of Churches of Christ shared stories from Jan. 20, 2008. Some wrapped their children in snow gear at 4 a.m. to make the trek to the U.S. Capitol. Others journeyed by train from as far away as Florida, hoping to catch a glimpse of the historic swearing-in ceremony.

“My hope was that he would help all America succeed, especially the middle class,” said Carl Womble, a former elder of the East Capitol Street Church of Christ, a predominantly black church that worships just a few miles from the Capitol. Many times, however, it seemed that the first black president was “embroiled in a constant, intense battle at every turn,” said Womble, who now worships with the Laurel Church of Christ in Maryland. Some church members applauded the Democratic president’s efforts to reform the nation’s health care and fight terrorism — and noted his struggles with the Republican-controlled Congress in his second term. Days before Obama’s inauguration, East Capitol Street minister Daniel Lester preached from 2 Timothy 1. “For God didn’t give us a spirit of fear, but one of power, one of love and of a sound mind,” he read from Scripture. Then he added, “God has spoken as far as I am concerned, and he has spoken in the hearts of the people who elected Barack Obama.”



KRISTI JONES

Church elder and civil rights attorney Fred Gray discusses race relations in Churches of Christ at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., in 2012.

Eight years later, Lester said he still admires Obama, though he’s disappointed in the president’s support for same-sex marriage, which Lester believes is contrary to the Bible’s teachings. “I have to stand on God’s Word,” the minister said. Fred Gray, an elder of the Tuskegee Church of Christ in Alabama, recalled Obama’s inaugural parade, which featured a bus from his home state similar to the one that Rosa Parks rode in 1955 — when she refused to give up her seat for a white passenger and move to the back. “The president recognized the importance of that moment in civil rights history,” said Gray, an attorney who represented Parks and other civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr. Obama’s presidency, though historic, didn’t erase the nation’s racial tension, Gray said. “We have had the same racial problems since we came over as slaves in 1607,” he noted. “My hope for President Obama was that he would make a significant impact while he was in office, and he has done that.” As for newly inaugurated President Donald Trump, Gray said, “My hope is the same now as it was then, that the president will do well.”



Lester

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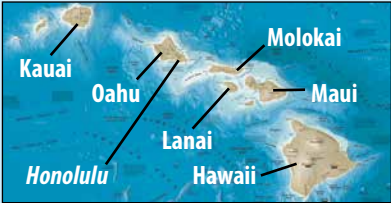
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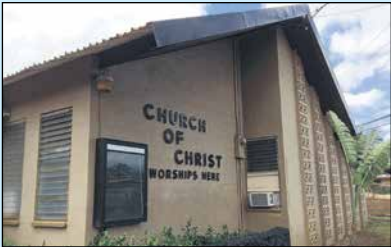
POPULATION: 1.4 million, with more than 8 million visitors annually. **ETHNICITY:** U.S. Census data shows no ethnic majority. Hawaii's population is about 38.6 Asian, 24.7 white, 10 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander and 8.9 percent Hispanic. Nearly a quarter of Hawaiians identify as having a multi-ethnic background.



HISTORY: First reached by Polynesians 1,500 years ago, the islands in the North Pacific Ocean became home to settlers from Tahiti 500 years ago. They brought their beliefs in gods and demigods. In 1778, Captain James Cook landed on Kauai and named the archipelago the Sandwich Islands. In 1791, Kamehameha united warring factions and unified Hawaii into a kingdom. Protestant missionaries arrived in the 1820s. American colonists followed and made Hawaii a U.S. territory in 1898. In 1959, Hawaii became the country's 50th state.

RELIGION: About 63 percent of Hawaiians identify as Christians — Protestant, Catholic and other groups including Mormons, according to the Pew Research Center. Buddhists and other non-Christian faiths make up about 10 percent of the population. The rest, about 27 percent, claim no religious affiliation.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST: The islands have 14 congregations with a combined 945 adherents (baptized members and children), according to the 2015 edition of "Churches of Christ in the United States" published by 21st Century Christian. Eight churches meet on Oahu, the most populous island and home of the capital, Honolulu. There are four churches on Hawaii ("The Big Island") and one each on Maui and Kauai. There are no known Churches of Christ on the islands of Molokai (population 7,300) or Lanai (population 3,100).



The Wellspring Fellowship Church of Christ meets in Waipahu, Hawaii.

PARADISE: Barefoot prayer, geckos and God's love

FROM PAGE 3
of income levels, ethnicities and journeys of faith. Some have good jobs with the military, the tourist industry, even the National Weather Service.

But many struggle to make ends meet in the high-priced "Aloha State," which has the highest per-capita homeless population in the nation. At least 8,000 people in Hawaii are homeless, according to government figures. Social service workers suspect the actual number is larger.

"Everybody here ... you're living paycheck to paycheck. It could easily be you," said Patricia Flores, who worships with Wellspring Fellowship along with her husband, Albert, an Army chaplain's assistant stationed at Schofield Barracks.

As church members reach out to the hurting — in their community and their *ohana* — they're blessed with circumstances that keep them from taking themselves too seriously, said Cady's wife, Amy.

In addition to harmonica solos, there are geckos who scamper up and down the walls of the church building, a rooster that crows during worship and Sugar, a member's dog who is among the church's most faithful attendees.

But beneath the church's casual exterior is a serious faith, said Kevin Roach, a longtime church member. He occasionally leads prayers for the Lord's Supper — sporting a braided goatee and barefoot.

"In Hawaii, you don't wear shoes in someone's house," he explained. "And this is God's house. It's holy ground."

A MISSION-MINDED FAMILY

The Cadys lived 3,910 miles from Hawaii — in the Houston suburb of Friendswood Texas — before moving here with their two young children, Mackenna and Jonathan, in June 2009.

They weren't in search of paradise. After seven years with the 1,000-member Southeast Church of Christ



Jeremy and Lizzi Armstrong share a hug with their adopted mother, Jackie Bagood, after worship. "At some churches, you're not allowed to ask questions," Jeremy Armstrong said. But at Wellspring Fellowship, the minister says "Let's talk about it."

in Friendswood, where David Cady served as an associate minister, the couple was considering mission work, possibly in Nicaragua or Ecuador.

David Cady's father, Dennis, was a longtime missionary to Southeast Asia who married a Malaysian Christian, Susan. Through the Starfish Foundation, a ministry Dennis Cady founded, he and fellow Christians oversee children's homes, support relief and development work and spread the Gospel in nations around the globe — Indonesia, Haiti and, most recently, South Sudan.

David Cady and his siblings, Michael and Sarah, grew up in small-town Ryan, Okla., as their dad preached. All alums of Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, they have served churches, Christian K-12 schools and universities. Along with their spouses and children, the siblings have accompanied their parents on mission trips to countries including Belize and Indonesia.

At first, ministering in Hawaii seemed too domestic — almost too "churchy," David Cady said. He quickly learned that the culture is

different from the U.S. mainland. "So it fit the bill," he said. "And we felt God's hand in it."

The Southeast Church of Christ agreed to help support the family in their domestic mission work. Shortly after the Cadys moved to Hawaii, the rest of the family planned a mission trip here — to repaint the church building and the parsonage next door.

HARD TO BUILD A CHURCH, EASY TO BE THE CHURCH

Since moving to Waipahu, the Cadys have searched for a phrase to describe their community.

"I don't think there is one," David Cady said. "It's almost one-third inner-city, one-third suburban, one-third developing nation. Somehow it all fits together."

In such an environment, "it's hard to build a church institutionally," he added, "but it's easy to be the church." The congregation doesn't have to create programs to serve the underserved. Instead, "just come and love on people who you would never cross paths with in any other setting."

That's what David Cady — who has a master's in psychology from Abilene Christian University in Texas — and his family are trying to do.

Amy Cady, the daughter of longtime Church of Christ minister Lyman Mereness, never saw herself following in the footsteps of her mother, Dana, as a preacher's wife.

Now, "I look around, and I see all



David Cady preaches about the importance of the Lord's Supper.

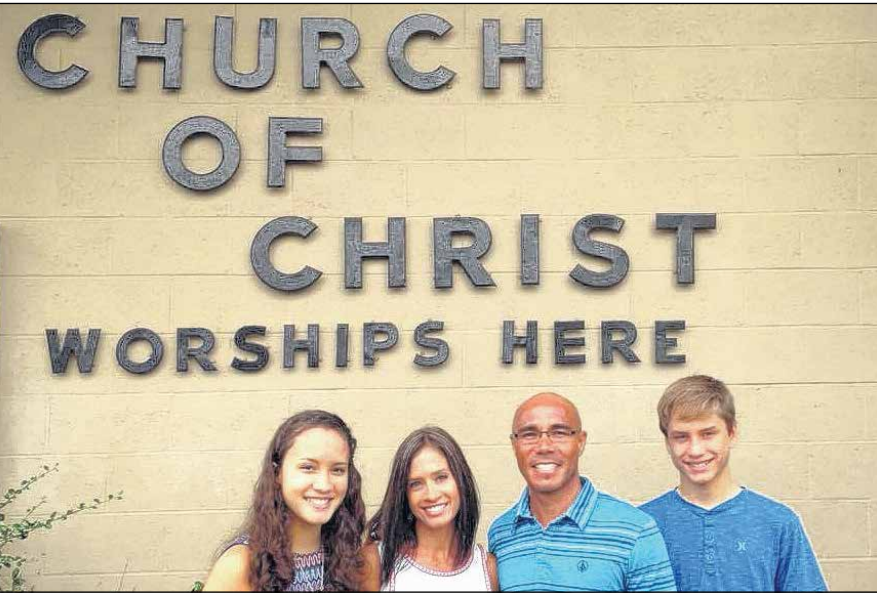


PHOTO PROVIDED

The Cadys — Mackenna, Amy, David and Jonathan — stand in front of the Wellspring Fellowship Church of Christ's building. The congregation changed its name from Waipahu Church of Christ in part to avoid confusion with nearby, similarly named churches.

these precious people,” she said of the church. “So many of them weren’t here when we got here.

“There is no one who could show up here that we wouldn’t welcome. Regardless of your background, situation or lifestyle, this is a safe place to be loved, to hear that you’re included, and to be introduced to Jesus.”

The congregation serves special-needs adults who live in group homes near the church’s building. Many suffer physical and psychological ailments — some from past years of substance addiction and abuse.

After years of self-described “hard living as a child of the 60s,” Cheryl Carpenter suffered a stroke and woke up wheelchair-bound.

“I consider my chair a blessing, really,” she said. “The stroke brought me to God ... and this church.”

Now “I always have a place to sit,” she said, “but I do look forward to dancing in heaven.”

More than half of the congregation’s members have come into the church since the Cadys arrived — most from outside Churches of Christ. Among the first was Charles Dias, who the Cadys met through the church’s involvement at a nearby YMCA. Dias, who works there, had come to a faith in God and was looking for a way to introduce his wife, Chanel, to Jesus.

“Church was unfamiliar to me,” Chanel Dias said, so she was a bit apprehensive about visiting Wellspring

Fellowship. “I remember leaving my first Sunday amazed at how relevant David’s message was to me.”

On July 17, 2010, the couple was baptized in the Pacific Ocean. Now they are active members and work with the congregation’s youths.

At the YMCA, David Cady has found “a whole other church,” he said. “I’ve gotten to pray for and counsel people there. Many have visited church. Several have stayed.”

Church members helped build a playground and assist in fundraising for the Y. David Cady leads prayers before special events there, including an annual ukulele class concert.

IT’S OK TO ASK QUESTIONS

On a recent Sunday, the congregation sang “Amazing Grace” in English and then paused as Jackie Bagood sang the lyrics in her native Hawaiian.

Bagood grew up going to church. A friend invited her to the Waipahu congregation and she never left.

Her husband, Butch, said he “used to walk on the dark side, y’know?”

“This is where I found God.”

Jackie Bagood has become an adopted mother to Jeremy and Lizzi Armstrong, a young couple that began attending in 2014.

“I like the way David preaches. He doesn’t assume stuff. He goes back to the Bible,” Jeremy Armstrong said. “At some churches, you’re not allowed to ask questions. David says, ‘Let’s talk about it.’ He doesn’t put up



PHOTO PROVIDED

At a celebration of her high school graduation, Ka’ili Dias is nearly smothered in flower leis she’s received from well-wishers. Standing with her are her parents, Charles and Chanel, and brother, Kumalie. The family worships with Wellspring Fellowship.

a front. He’s OK with disagreement.”

Whatever the theological issue, he added, “you always leave saying, ‘Wow, I have a new view on it.’”

After worship, church members set up folding tables in the back of the auditorium for “Aloha Sunday.” Over plates of chicken, rice and mixed vegetables, they talked about the role the church plays in their lives.

Andrea Evans and her husband, Tom, came into Churches of Christ through the Boston Movement, a group that originated in the fellowship that left in the mid-1980s and became the International Churches of Christ. The group’s controversial discipling practices drove them away, and for 12 years they avoided church completely.

Four years ago, Andrea Evans found Wellspring Fellowship. She worried that her husband would refuse to visit when he learned the congregation had “Church of Christ” in its name. But he gave it a chance

and now is a leader in the church.

Now, “this is our *ohana*,” Andrea Evans said. “These are the people I wanted to be with, the people I should be with. I love these people so much.”

PACKING MEALS FOR ‘POINT PANIC’

As the Christians finished lunch, Patricia Flores and a few volunteers formed an assembly line, scooping the leftovers into to-go boxes for Kakaako Waterfront Park.

Known to surfers as “Point Panic,” the park also is a gathering place for Honolulu’s homeless.

“The most I’ve found was a family of 10 — all these beautiful children, peeking out of a tent,” Patricia Flores said, scraping the last of a casserole into a box. “The kids, they’re the ones that just took my heart.”

The church knows how easy hunger and hurt can come, she said. It seems appropriate to end their meal of shared fellowship with an act of service.

“We all bring love to the table, and we take that love to the streets.”



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

After an “Aloha Sunday” potluck, Patricia Flores and Butch Bagood prepare to-go boxes for the homeless at a nearby park.

ALBANIA

TIRANA — A Church of Christ in this Central European capital supplies more than 20 families with food on a regular basis through its benevolence ministry.



Valca

But “we wanted to spend more time (with them), to learn their stories and to share our story,” said Bledi Valca, the church’s minister.

Inspired by a recent workshop he attended in Greece that focused on serving refugees, Valca and his fellow church members hosted a Saturday night potluck and devotional for the families.

“We experienced a full house,” Valca said, “and we pray that it was profitable for the people who were present.”

BRAZIL

ITU — Antenor and Phyllis Goncalves recently celebrated their 20th year of service to Churches of Christ in this South American city.

When they arrived in Itu, the city had one congregation with fewer than



PHOTO PROVIDED

Antenor and Phyllis Goncalves

30 members, the couple wrote in a recent report. Now there are two Churches of Christ in Itu, and the Goncalves have helped plant congregations in Cabreuva, Salto, Tatui and Sorocaba. Combined, the churches have about 400 in attendance for Sunday worship. “Praise God for the progress of the Gospel in our region,” the couple wrote.

INDIA

CHENNAI — Churches of Christ are responding to those in need after a recent cyclone claimed 27 lives and destroyed thousands of homes in this southern Indian city.

The meeting places of at least three Churches of Christ sustained damage, and four rooms at a



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New wheels bring big smiles in Africa

Chimwemwe Chelewani, 22, grins as he tries out his new hand-powered scooter in Juma, Malawi. The scooter, produced by Mobility International, was a gift from The Malawi Project and Namikango Mission, ministries associated with Churches of Christ. Unable to walk since birth, Chelewani dropped out of school and was unable to grow crops. He plans to use his new mobility to start a business selling eggs — and to go to church, he said.

church-supported children’s home were destroyed, said minister Paul Renganathan. The children were evacuated unharmed.

LATVIA

RIGA — Victor Barviks, minister for the Riga Center Church of Christ in this small country on the Baltic Sea in Europe, recently received 1,000 copies of “Up Right: Character for Kids” by Lynda Alsobrook Landreth, translated into the Latvian language, and 3,000 copies of the gospel tract



JOEL PETTY

Joseph Rhodes speaks in Lithuania.

“What the Bible Says about Baptism and the New Life in Christ.” Eastern European Mission provided the materials. Barviks distributes the materials to parents and clergy in Riga’s Orthodox and Lutheran churches.

LITHUANIA

VILNIUS — In this small European nation there’s a big demand for ScreamFree Parenting. That was evident to members of the Vilnius Church of Christ when nearly 90 people — almost more than they had room for — registered for a seminar based on the popular program developed by Hal Runkel, a member of the North Atlanta Church of Christ. Joseph Rhodes, a long-time worker with a Church of Christ in Barnaul, Russia, conducted the program in the Lithuanian cities of Vilnius and Klaipeda. Rhodes has taught the ScreamFree seminar for more than 10 years.

About 40 visitors attended the Vilnius event, said minister Juozas Puodziukaitis. The church gave them free children’s Bibles.

SPOTLIGHT

At the ends of the earth, Gospel grows

DUVIARA, Vanuatu — From this remote village on the island of Ambae in the South Pacific, Christians made their way along a narrow trail to a stream and pool in the middle of a rainforest. There, they baptized new believers into Christ.

Randy and Sharon English, missionaries who live in American Samoa and conduct gospel campaigns across Polynesia, recently visited Ambae, part of the nation of Vanuatu, to teach and preach in the village and encourage members of Churches of Christ there. Two church members from the U.S., John Willingham and David Banks, accompanied them and assisted in the work.

“It is here that people still do things the simple way, taking life and all its joys and challenges one day at a time,” the couple wrote in a recent report. “It is here that hard work is known, and the principle of seed-sowing is trusted without exception. It is here that God’s Word has taken root and is growing.”

As the Gospel spreads, “indigenous, self-supporting congregations of the Churches of Christ are being planted, grown and prepared to take the Gospel to others in their nation,” the Englishes reported, “according to the only pattern that we have for New Testament Christianity — God’s powerful Word.”



PHOTO PROVIDED

John Willingham baptizes a woman in a rainforest pool on the island of Ambae.

Churches respond to tropical storm

Randy Ross, a member of the Alkire Road Church of Christ in Grove City, Ohio, helps unload relief supplies in Upala, Costa Rica. Ross was on vacation after Tropical Storm Otto took nine lives in the Central American nation recently. When minister Heiner Montealto made a trip to Upala to deliver the supplies, Ross asked to accompany him and help, Montealto said.

Montealto, a graduate of the Brown Trail School of Preaching in Bedford, Texas, ministers for a Church of Christ in Bagaces, about 15 miles from Upala. During the storm, members of the San Jose de Upala Church of Christ took shelter in the congregation's building as the floodwaters rose, Montealto said. All of the church members survived the storm, he added, "but they lost everything." To contribute to relief, see an expanded story at www.christianchronicle.org.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY HEINER MONTEALTO

As Berlin mourns after a terror attack, 'only the Gospel' will change Europe, minister says

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Just weeks after Christians gathered in Athens, Greece, to discuss effective ways to serve refugees from the Middle East, a man driving a semi-truck plowed into a crowded public market in Berlin, killing 12 people and injuring 56 more.

As police gathered evidence, German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged Germans not to give in to fear — and to continue showing compassion to those fleeing violent conflicts.

Should the attacker be revealed as an asylum seeker, "this would be especially despicable toward the many, many Germans who are daily engaged in helping refugees," Merkel said, "and toward the many, many people who truly need this protection and strive to integrate themselves into our country."

Rudiger and Michaela Renken are among the Germans helping refugees from the Middle East. The longtime members of a Church of Christ in Bremen and their fellow Christians reach out to refugees who live in an informal settlement near their church building.

"We have started a language school, and some church members have already invited some refugees to their homes," Rudiger Breman told *The Christian Chronicle* at the Athens conference. "Relationships are growing." The Renkens came to the conference "to understand how to make the next step and introduce (the refugees) to Christ."

Despite the revelation that the attacker, Anis Amri, was a Tunisian asylum seeker believed to be in touch with radical Islamists, members of Churches of Christ in Europe said they will continue to show Christ's love to the refugees in their midst.

In Vienna, Austria, Reggy Hiller and fellow Christians have conducted Bible studies with refugees that have resulted in baptisms. Hiller asked for prayers for the new believers. After converting, some have been threatened with death by members of their own family, she said.

Jacob Haskew works with the Danube Church of Christ in Vienna, another congregation helping refugees.

"We continue ahead," he said, "not dismayed by the terror of evil." He cited the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:10: "That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe."

Across Europe, Christians also pray for the families of those lost in the attack — and for the Gospel of Christ to shine through the tragedy.

After the attack, Dino Roussos, minister for the Glyfada Church of Christ in Athens, posted the following message to social media: "Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ — the message of peace, love and forgiveness — will change the situation."



Haskew



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"... be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God."

— Ephesians 5:18-21, New King James Version

SINGAPORE

I was 13 years old when I discovered the immensely satisfying joy of a cappella music in worship.

I was on my first mission trip, with support from my parents and my cousin, Irvin, who placed me

Voices



John Lim

in the bass section, which sounded really cool.

And, praise be to God, we saw the smiles of joy and delight on the faces of those for whom we sang, every single time. Lives were touched, tears were shed and the spirit of God was present in power.

That love for a cappella worship kept on growing — an inevitable but awesome side effect of being raised with a youth group that loved to sing. We even had events called "Singspiration" among the young people. We had massive turnouts. One night we nearly ran out of chairs in the church building's



John Lim leads members of Singapore's Pasir Panjang Church of Christ in a hymn during a recent Singspiration event.

lobby. We would just sing and sing and sing, offering endless praises to our King. We talked about bringing this gift to the rest of the church.

Thus, a churchwide Singspiration was born. We just had our second one.

Perhaps we think of singing as "that thing we do on Sunday" or as something good to do — maybe even as something we *have* to do because it is commanded.

If I've learned anything after years of mission trips and leading songs in worship, it's that congregational singing is much, much more.

When we make music with our hearts and our lips, it is both

to the Lord, as a form of praise, and to each other, as a form of encouragement.

Our singing is akin to having a conversation with God. It's a love letter in which we express our thanksgiving for his unfailing love. We let loose our inner feelings of extreme joy and extreme pain and lay them at the feet of Jesus.

Sometimes the songs we sing express what I can't put into words myself — when the pain is simply too great to describe, when the joy is too intense. Songs help me to connect with God in a way that no amount of mere words can.

When we worship, we also have a powerful influence on others. I am blessed whenever I hear an enthusiastic voice powerfully proclaim the glory, goodness and love of the Lord. To see someone enraptured by God's majestic presence inspires me to be in his presence as well, that I may experience the same fullness of joy.

There are some who may not show it in their voice, but in their faces or gestures. Closed eyes, raised hands, bowed heads, a gentle swaying to the beat — all of these point toward an

individual whose whole being is so full of God's presence that it cannot help but manifest in his outward behavior. How I long to experience the same depth of presence!

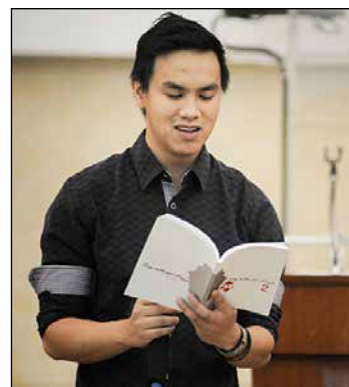
It is my prayer that the Spirit stirs all of us to worship better and to understand what it means to worship.

There are many ways through which we honor God and encourage each other. Singing is but one of those methods. Nevertheless, perhaps there is power in worship that we as a church have not discovered just yet,

and it is a vast resource beyond comprehension should we choose to dig deeper.

So come, let us go up into the house of the Lord with praise on our lips and gratitude in our souls.

JOHN LIM worships with — and occasionally leads singing for — the Pasir Panjang Church of Christ in Singapore. This fall he begins his studies in ministry at Harding University in Searcy, Ark.



PHOTOS BY KU WEE TIONG

Jesse Bestre leads a song during Singspiration. Bestre, from Baguio City, Philippines, is a student at Sunset International Bible Institute in Singapore.



John Lim's family — mother Wan Lai Fun, father Lim Swee Aun and sister Christine Lim — plus Koon Liang, Chen Ting and Chen Yi sing during the Singspiration event.



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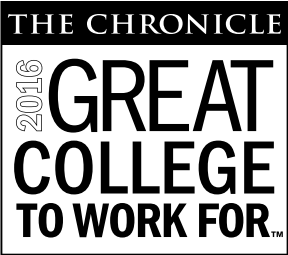
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College of Education and Human Services

Dr. Donnie Snider, Dean, College of Education and Human Services, ACU Box 28276, Abilene, Texas 79699-8276

The **Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders** invites applications for an instructor or tenure-track faculty position beginning Fall 2017. A doctoral degree is preferred but strong candidates with the master's degree in speech-language pathology will be considered. Candidates with a master's should have an interest in/desire to pursue a Ph.D. in communication sciences and disorders or a closely related area. Applicants must hold a current ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC-SLP) and hold (or be eligible for) a current Texas SLP license. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate courses in basic human communication processes such as language and speech development; teaching or facilitating courses for graduate students in the instructor's area(s) of expertise; supervising clinical practicum; and serving on departmental, college and university committees. Tenure-track candidates will demonstrate the ability to engage in research and scholarship in areas of expertise. The department is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/comm/disorders.

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



OHIO VALLEY UNIVERSITY NOTICE FOR THIRD-PARTY COMMENT



Ohio Valley University is seeking comments from the public about the University in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency. The University will host a visit **April 17-18, 2017**, with a team representing the Higher Learning Commission. Ohio Valley University has been accredited by the HLC since 1978. The team will review the institution's ongoing ability to meet HLC's Criteria for Accreditation.

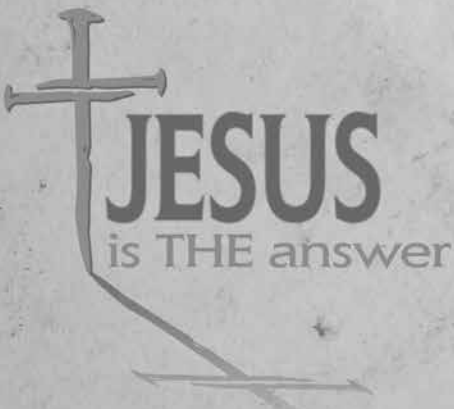
Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing.
All comments must be received by March 20, 2017.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding OVU to the following address:

**Public Comment on
Ohio Valley University**
Higher Learning Commission
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604-1411

Or submit online at:
www.hlcommission.org/comment

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Misión Para Cristo's headquarters in Jinotega, Nicaragua, are across the street from a major city market and a bus stop used by 6,000 to 8,000 passengers per day.

Mission brings hope to Nicaragua

What began as a small medical clinic has grown into a multifaceted ministry that serves thousands.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.
THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

JINOTEGA, Nicaragua

In a nation where many live on just a few dollars a day, things most U.S. residents take for granted make a world of difference.

An aspirin to relieve a headache. A filter to provide clean water. A classroom for boys and girls to receive an education.

Here in Central America's poorest country, a 20-year-old ministry called Misión Para Cristo — Spanish for

"Mission for Christ" — brings blessings such as these to thousands.

"It's a basic fact," said Benny Baker, the American missionary who with his wife, Donna, started the Christian nonprofit in 1997. "You cannot teach a hungry man. You cannot teach a man who is sick. They are not in a position to hear."

Misión Para Cristo began with a small medical clinic in this mountain city a few hours north of the capital of Managua. The Bakers worked with a Nicaraguan minister and 12 church members to launch the clinic.

In the two decades since, the mission — overseen since 2013 by the Grapevine Church of Christ in Texas — has planted dozens of congregations, built or remodeled 25 school buildings and become one of Nicaragua's largest providers of medical care outside of the government.

Besides nearly a dozen full-time American missionaries, Misión Para Cristo relies on a core staff of 47



Baker

Nicaraguans — including directors who coordinate areas such as health care, education and construction.

"How did we get here?" Baker said, contemplating the 40,000 patients served each year and the 1,000 adults and children who worship with 28 congregations supported by Misión Para Cristo. "It's a God thing."

'EVERYBODY KNOWS THEM'

Roosters crow in the morning, and firecrackers explode at night.

In between, vehicles honking

CONTINUED



A woman named Flor, daughter of Nicaraguan farmer Aurelio Benjamin Hernández, pumps water outside. Inside, a new water filter has improved the family's quality of life.

‘It’s an amazing work. Kids see the logo on the van and run to it.’



Dr. Judith Peña, medical director for Misión Para Cristo, examines a patient at the mission's clinic in Jinotega, Nicaragua. Peña said her Christian faith motivates her service.



Dr. Bismarck Rivera works on the teeth of a woman in the clinic's dental office.



Benny Baker, who founded Misión Para Cristo, greets Marta Castro after a Bible study at the Jinotega Church of Christ. Castro has worked as a housekeeper while finishing her education.

CONTINUED
and vendors shouting provide the soundtrack for hundreds of short-term missionaries who make annual pilgrimages to Misión Para Cristo.
About 35 groups — mainly from Churches of Christ and Christian universities such as Harding and Lipscomb — come to serve each year in this poor, coffee-producing region of northern Nicaragua.
The mission houses up to 75 guests at a time in a remodeled, two-story warehouse across the street from a bustling city market and bus stop. Fees paid for meals and lodging cover a major portion of the ministry's year-round operating expenses.
“My wife says, ‘We’re not the Hilton; we just try to be,’” Benny Baker quipped.
Holly Wilkerson, 28, first experienced Misión Para Cristo as a student at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., and has returned multiple times.
“They have so many projects, and they are doing so many things,” said Wilkerson, a pharmacist and member of the Parr Avenue Church of Christ in Dyersburg, Tenn. “Everybody knows them.”
On her trips, Wilkerson has stitched baby blankets, made bricks to build houses and distributed anti-parasite medication.
“It’s an amazing work,” she said. “Kids see the logo on the van and run to it.”
Jinotega — home to 125,000 souls — is

the largest city in a region that suffered some of the worst violence during Nicaragua’s long civil war.
Although the war ended a quarter-century ago, many still associate this nation of 6.2 million people with the fighting between the Contras and the Sandinistas.
“It’s actually much safer than it is (in America) from a violent crime standpoint,” said Dr. Patti Patterson, a Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center professor who brings groups of medical and nursing students. “The mission does a fantastic job of keeping us safe.”
Texas Tech offers the trip as a global health elective, and participants have included Hindus, Muslims and atheists, said Patterson, a member of the Monterrey Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas.
She warns the students that Misión Para Cristo is a Christian organization and that they should expect prayers before meals and voluntary devotionals.



Jonathan Holland, Misión Para Cristo's deputy director, visits with, from left, Nohelia Zúñiga, Juanita Zúñiga and Ruth Isaguerre.

“It’s all worked fine, and actually, the different backgrounds lead to really great conversations,” she said, adding, “The Christianity I believe in is doing stuff with your hands, not just talking with your mouth.”
Patterson said she likes that the teams she organizes contribute to an ongoing mission.
“We’re not just helicoptering in and doing good and leaving,” she said. “The mission is there 365 days a year.”
‘CHRIST DOES THE WORK’
On a typical weekday, women and children line up at the clinic to see Dr. Judith Peña, the medical director, and Dr. Bismarck Rivera, a dentist.
While waiting, they listen to preaching by Edward Martinez, minister for the Jinotega Church of Christ.
“They respect it when somebody talks about the word of God,” Martinez said.
Peña said her faith motivates her service. “Jesus Christ does the work, and we are part of it,” she said.
In another part of the building, Rebeka Molina coordinates a project for pregnant

mothers — many of them young, single and lacking basic necessities.
“I know the needs that they have,” said Molina, who was unmarried when she became pregnant with her 4-year-old son, Marcelo.
Elsewhere, Misión Para Cristo teaches the Bible to hundreds of young people through special classes and a child sponsorship program called Kingdom Kids.
“I don’t kid myself,” said missionary Jonathan Holland, who is married to Sheila and has an adopted Nicaraguan son named Alejandro. “Part of the reason they come is that we feed them.”
Many places the mission serves are difficult to reach.
Medical brigades involved with a project called Esperanza del Río — “Hope for the River” in English — travel hours in boats to an indigenous region.
To visit schools, education director Felipe Cuadra steers a four-wheel-drive truck. Even then he sometimes must park, cross water on foot and walk 20 to 30 minutes.
In a rural community, Oscar Gutiérrez

trudges through mud to greet a farmer named Aurelio Benjamin Hernández.
Gutiérrez, a native Nicaraguan, serves as project coordinator for Hope4Life — a sustainable living project developed by three American missionary families who work with Misión Para Cristo.
Cats and chickens scamper across the dirt floor in the tin-roofed home that Hernández shares with six family members.
The man beams as clear water pours through a filter funded by Hope4Life.
“It’s been a gift from God,” Hernández said. “We’re not drinking dirty water anymore.”
People in nine villages have received a total of 900 water filters through Hope4Life, Gutiérrez said.
However, he stressed that the goal isn’t to build up numbers. It’s to share the Gospel.
“It’s about going slow, focusing on the needs the people have,” Gutiérrez said.
Hernández said Misión Para Cristo’s kindness has bolstered his faith in Jesus. “He gives us hope,” the farmer said.



Martin Marvin Herrera speaks during a morning devotional for Misión Para Cristo staff.



Republic of Nicaragua

POPULATION: 6.2 million. **PRESIDENT:** Daniel Ortega, a 71-year-old former Sandinista guerrilla fighter, was sworn in for a third five-year term in January. His wife, Rosario Murillo, became the new vice president. Misión Para Cristo works closely with the government on projects such as education and health care.



HISTORY: After founding Misión Para Cristo in 1997, Benny and Donna Baker traveled to Nicaragua several times a year while living in the U.S. In 2005, the couple moved to Jinotega to serve full time. They still make regular fundraising trips to the U.S., and Benny Baker stresses that the mission's Nicaraguan staff members are the “boots on the ground.”

AMERICAN MISSIONARIES: Benny and Donna Baker, Tommy and Becky Brown, Chris and Jill Counts, David and Caryn Henninger, Jonathan and Sheila Holland and Colette Price. (Former missionaries: Mike and Ann Faris.)

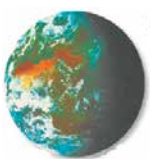
NICARAGUAN GENERAL COORDINATORS: Alberto López and Harvy Chavarria.

WEBSITE: www.misionparacristo.com



Fresh fruits and vegetables are sold at the market near Misión Para Cristo.

Why we support



The Christian Chronicle.

Gerd and Lucky Fecht

As one that was converted on the mission field (Frankfurt, Germany, 1953), then an Oklahoma Christian grad (1965), missionary to Gothenburg, Sweden (1966 to 1975) with my wife Lucky, we have great appreciation for The Christian Chronicle and its mission. The various and certainly diverse reports give insight into not just foreign efforts, which are well written and illustrated, but the U.S. as well. The



articles are always newsworthy, refreshing, meaningful, current and, along with pictures, certainly tell the rest of the story. We appreciate the professional journalism seen in each issue, the outstanding staff and their all-out effort to be as honest, complete and thorough as possible. And so we join with many others in supporting this ongoing effort in telling the Good News the Lord is doing worldwide.

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BOBBY ROSS JR.

The Tocumen International Airport in Panama City offers international cuisine — pizza.

On international trip, this picky eater asks, 'What's on the menu?'

PANAMA CITY

By the time I arrived at Tocumen International Airport in this Central American capital, I was starving.

Domino's Pizza in the airport food court never looked so heavenly.

"How do you say pepperoni in Spanish?" I joked on Facebook.

It was close to 8 p.m. I'd rushed to catch a connecting flight in Houston with no time for a meal. Except for pretzels, I hadn't eaten since leaving Oklahoma City about noon.

I still had the final leg of my journey left — to Nicaragua, where I was headed to report on Misión Para Cristo ("Mission for Christ" in English). I hoped to avoid boarding my first-ever flight on Copa Airlines with a growling stomach.

My *Christian Chronicle* colleague Erik Tryggestad has reported from 60-plus countries. He has written about his "mouth-watering" international culinary experiences — from barbecued warthog in Zimbabwe to giant, roadside churros in Brazil.

Tryggestad is an adventurous eater. I am *not*.

When I travel internationally, I tend to fill my suitcase with jeans, T-shirts and enough Cheese Nips to keep me alive for weeks.

To my delight on this night, I discovered that pepperoni is pronounced basically the same in Spanish as in English.

But even as I devoured my piping hot pizza, I wondered what might be on my plate the rest of the week.

I need not have worried.

The next day, I enjoyed fried chicken at Tip-Top — a national chain in Nicaragua — with

Road Notes



Bobby Ross Jr.

missionary Benny Baker and ministers Efraín López and Franklin Mairena.

"Better than KFC," I declared it.

At the mission, I woke up one morning to peanut butter, pancakes and pineapples. Yummy!

For lunch another day, the cooks prepared chicken with a special jalapeño

gravy, along with mashed potatoes, rolls and *chaya*, commonly known as "tree spinach." Yes, I ate it all. I even somewhat liked the *chaya*.

But I'm pretty sure I'll never put a barbecued warthog in my mouth.

Then again, if it came on top of a pizza, I just might consider it. Especially if I'd run out of Cheese Nips.

CONTACT: bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org. Join the discussion at www.christianchronicle.org: Tell us about the most interesting food you've eaten on a mission trip.

UNINTENTIONAL TRAILBLAZER Billy Curl reflects on decades of ‘whole man’ ministry and race relations in Churches of Christ

Know Jesus, know each other

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

As Martin Luther King Jr. sat in a Birmingham jail cell in 1963, Billy C. Curl was 800 miles west, desegregating the campus of Abilene Christian College in Texas.

“I had no intention of being — what do they call it? A pioneer, a trailblazer? None of that,” Curl, a longtime minister in Los Angeles, said in a 2012 interview with *ACU Today*, the magazine of the school, now Abilene Christian University. Curl had completed two years at Southwestern Christian College, a historically black college in Terrell, Texas, associated with Churches of Christ, and Southwest’s then-president, A.V. Isbell, suggested he continue his education at Abilene Christian, also associated with the fellowship. Curl and Larry Bonner, both from Nacogdoches, Texas, were the first black students to enroll.

College wasn’t easy. One teacher told Curl she intended to keep him from passing her class. But he passed. Often he and Bonner felt isolated. Both finished their degrees and left without attending graduation. Fifty years later, ACU honored the unintentional pioneers with a formal graduation and class rings. Curl also earned a doctorate in humanities in 1995.

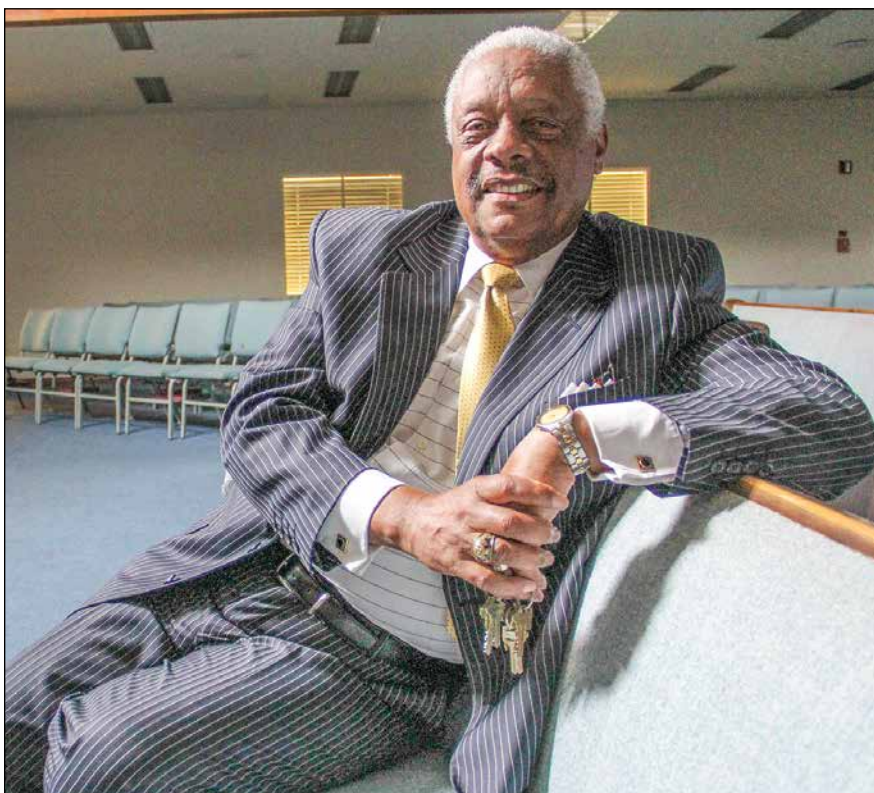
Curl served alongside white Christians as a missionary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for six years and learned to speak the language. Eromo Kelbisow, an Ethiopian, met Curl in 1966.

“I wanted to know more about the church that sent white and black missionaries together,” recalled Kelbisow, who was baptized a year later. Many baptisms followed as Curl and his teammates helped establish more than 30 congregations in the African nation.

Returning to the U.S., Curl began a 40-year tenure as minister for the Crenshaw Church of Christ in Los Angeles. The church, once predominantly white and Asian, had begun to change after the 1965 riots in nearby Watts. When Curl retired in 2013, the predominantly black Crenshaw church had grown to about 600 members.

Curl has served on boards for schools including ACU, Southwestern and Normandie Christia School. He taught for many years at Los Angeles Bible College and was a regular panelist for on “The Way of Truth” TV program.

Curl and his wife of more than 50 years, Mary, have two sons: Charles (deceased) and Michael, and five grandchildren.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Billy C. Curl sits in the auditorium of the Crenshaw Church of Christ in Los Angeles.

What has been your ministry philosophy for the past 50 years?

The first step in ministry is to build relationships. My upbringing and life experiences shaped this philosophy. I grew up in a large family on a farm in East Texas — religious, but not a church goer. After graduating from college, I moved to Africa as a missionary. The people there wanted to develop a relationship before studying. I adopted that philosophy in ministering to people.

Relationship is essential. Gaining insight into who a person is — their life’s journey, family background — became a part of my ministry.

I am convinced that true ministry is concerned with the whole man. Building interpersonal relationships with people serves them in ways that will benefit them inside and outside the church.

Describe the status of African-American Churches of Christ as you see it.

It is challenging to describe that status with one adjective. In general, I’m optimistic about the church in the African-American community.

I have observed tremendous numerical and spiritual growth in our churches across the brotherhood. Growing churches tend to be led by elders, deacons and ministers who possess a high degree of decorum and education. These congregations have developed great faith missions and objectives that emphasize spiritual

growth and organization.

On the other hand, there are some African-American churches that are stagnant and spiritually abated. The latter is not just a theme for African-American churches, but also for some white churches. These churches ultimately have either merged, closed their doors or no longer affiliate with the Churches of Christ.

There seems to be an unspoken distance between black and white churches in many places. What insight do you have as to why and what can be done to improve?

In some communities, it’s not so much unspoken as it is deliberate and established. Paternalism and domination are still prevalent in some white churches. This is something black churches will not tolerate or accept.

In other scenarios, black churches are simply not compelled to initiate the bridging of the gap and are indifferent to the distance.

There is a perception among many black preachers and churches that we do not measure up to the standards of worship that prevail in the white Churches of Christ. When major campaigns, mission efforts,

etc., are proposed — and after planning is over — we are invited to attend, but not to participate in the initial planning meetings.

Wouldn’t it be good if a group of white churches could plan a major event and invite all or most of the speakers from black churches? Boy, that

would be something!

What do white churches need to understand about African-American church culture?

We enjoy and revel in our culture.

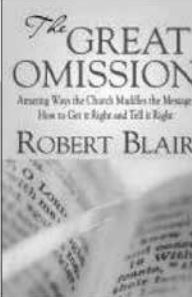
We enjoy the evolution of our

See **CURL**, Page 22

‘There is a perception among many black preachers and churches that we do not measure up to the standards of worship that prevail in the white Churches of Christ.’

Billy Curl, missionary and longtime minister

Two books every minister should have!
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ERIK TRYGGSTAD

Billy C. Curl takes a prayer request from Lemuel Johnson on a Sunday morning in 2013.

CURL: Respect and celebrate differences

FROM PAGE 21
preaching, singing and worship styles. We are liberated from the old adage that the way the white churches worship is “the right way.” In my generation black churches, especially in the South, were dependent on a white church for just about everything. The white church bought our buildings, supplied and paid our preachers salaries, essentially taking care of us to keep us out of white churches. Now that African-American churches are autonomous, the urge to modify our culture to assimilate is no longer of interest.

Who are your heroes of racial unity and social justice in our fellowship?
A hero of mine that stands out is the late R.N. Hogan of Los Angeles. Another preacher I admire a great deal is Zebedee Bishop of Detroit. I am impressed with his knowledge, dignity and presence. Bishop has had a resounding voice regarding racial unity and social justice.

Do black and white churches know each other well? What are the next steps to improve that?
When we become fully aware that Jesus is the head of the church, we gain the understanding that only through him will we recognize that we are one. The more we get to know Jesus, the more we will know each other. Repentance and prayer meetings are necessary in achieving that. Dialogue with one another regularly will allow us to get to know one another. This will go a long way in bridging the gap. Respect the fact that our worship styles are different. Then make an effort not only to understand, but also to embrace those differences. Recognize that we, as black ministers and members, know something about the Bible and seek a deeper relationship with God and each another. As diverse as the Churches of Christ are in general, do not place us all in the same boat (a definition of bigotry). Instead, allow and encourage black ministers to speak at your churches, lectureships and seminars. This will be a meaningful step.

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BRADY ROSS

At national youth ministry event, experts from four Christian universities take the stage

Youth ministry specialists address the crowd at the recent National Conference on Youth Ministries in Daytona Beach, Fla. Pictured are Robert Oglesby Jr., director of the Center for Youth and Family Ministry at Abilene Christian University in Texas; Jeff Walling, director of

the Youth Leadership Initiative at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.; Dudley Chancey, professor of youth and family ministry at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City; and David Frazee, special assistant to the president at Lubbock Christian University in Texas.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY
HENDERSON, Tenn. — Freed-Hardeman University has a new church match scholarship program for students whose home congregations fund a scholarship program.

The university will match church grants up to \$2,500 per student for a maximum of \$21,500 in institutional aid annually, admissions director Joe Askew said. New freshmen and transfer students are eligible.

"This program gave me the additional funds I needed to attend FHU," said Brooke Simpson, a member of the Lehman Avenue Church of Christ in Bowling Green, Ky.

HARDING UNIVERSITY
SEARCY, Ark. — Harding's professional counseling program has opened the Compassion Clinic.

The new clinic provides low-cost individual counseling, child play therapy, group counseling and couples counseling to residents of Searcy, White County and surrounding areas.

"It's definitely a mission, and you have to have a heart for it," Jenene

Alexander, the counseling program's director, said of the clinic, which affords students real-world experience. "I have a heart for the children in this community, and I have worked with veterans for several years. It's really a great thing to have this clinic here at Harding."

YORK COLLEGE

YORK, Neb. — Study agribusiness in a Christian college setting?

That will be a possibility for York College students with the college's addition of a four-year degree in that area starting this spring.

"So much of the area surrounding our campus is agriculture," said Stacie Turnbull, the assistant professor leading the program. "The need for many businesses in our area is employees with ag experience and a four-year degree."

For more information, contact Turnbull at smtturnbull@york.edu.

MINISTRY TRAINING

WORLD BIBLE INSTITUTE
MCDONOUGH, Ga. — World Bible Institute has begun offering a

master's degree in biblical studies.

Because the institute wishes to train kingdom workers for the modern world, the graduate program will focus on practical ministry.

"One of the best qualities of our degree program that sets it apart from others is that the student learns from hands-on projects relative to the field of study as opposed to just writing papers," said David Hamrick, the institute's president.

For more information, visit www.worldbibleinstitute.com.

GLOBAL MISSIONS

MISSION UPREACH

SANTA ROSA DE COPÁN, Honduras — Mission Upreach is launching the first deaf school in its region.

The need for such a school is great in an area without any formal deaf education, the ministry's leaders wrote in a recent newsletter.

"The deaf in Santa Rosa are a close community group, and the school will be an ideal outreach ministry," the newsletter said.

For more information, see www.missionupreach.org.

SPOTLIGHT

'Citizens' getaway

PANAMA CITY, Fla. — More than 1,100 campus ministry students gathered at the Edgewater Resort for the recent Gulf Coast Getaway.

"Citizens" served as the theme, and Abilene Christian University Bible professor Randy Harris gave lessons from Philippians.

"It was a wonderful time of bonding for our ministry," said campus minister Tyler Ellis, who took a group of 40 students from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.



TYLER ELLIS

Attendees worship at the Gulf Coast Getaway in Panama City, Fla.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Medical Missions Seminar

FORT WORTH, Texas

Be Christians first. Then use your education to heal and serve. That was Dr. Bob Whittaker's advice to 190 physicians, medical personnel and mission workers during the 35th annual Medical Missions Seminar. Whittaker, a British-born physician, has served for decades in the African nations of Nigeria and Swaziland.

Participants also heard talks from a Christian midwife, a pharmacist and a physician who discussed how medical missionaries can de-stigmatize depression in developing nations. Christians also discussed how non-medical believers can be useful on medical mission trips.

The seminar was the idea of international evangelist Joe Cannon and medical missionary Dr. Henry Farrar, who sought to encourage future generations of Christians to spread the Gospel through health care. More than 50 of this year's participants were students at Christian universities including Harding, Oklahoma

Christian, Abilene Christian and Pepperdine. The event is sponsored by International Health Care Foundation/African Christian Hospitals, a Searcy, Ark.-based nonprofit.

The seminar provided hands-on training for the students as they learned how to address fractures and dislocations in a wilderness setting. Organizers also honored medical missionaries including Dr. Fred Massey. He received the Farrar Award "because of his life-changing surgical work in many African countries that has saved the lives of countless women," said Farrar's daughter, Marty Highfield, who presented the award.

Highfield, who has a doctorate in nursing, worships with the University Church of Christ on Pepperdine's campus in Malibu, Calif. She continues her father's legacy, helping young believers train for medical ministry and participating in short-term trips to developing nations including Haiti.

At the seminar, "the halls and lecterns were filled with men and women ... who have made a lifetime commitment to spreading the Gospel by using their professional training to heal physically and spiritually," she said.



Highfield



JAMES STROTHER

Students practice making splints during a class at the Medical Mission Seminar.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Author Francis Chan prepares to speak to thousands at the Tulsa Workshop in 2013

WORKSHOP: 'Allow new ministries to sprout'

FROM PAGE 1

that vision is not."

In recent years, thousands packed into the Tulsa Fairgrounds' Expo Square Pavilion during the workshop to hear evening keynoters including "Crazy Love" author Francis Chan and "Duck Dynasty" star Phil Robertson. But the workshop, which included multiple keynotes and class sessions, has experienced a noticeable drop in numbers, Rush told *The Christian Chronicle*, adding that this drop indicated the event was no longer the best way to reach people.

The workshop was part of a movement launched in the 1970s by church members including Alan Bryan of International Bible College, now Heritage Christian University in Florence, Ala. By 1979, Churches of Christ hosted more than 30 soul-winning workshops in cities including Indianapolis, San Antonio, Denver and Tulsa, with a combined attendance near 300,000, according to research by the *Chronicle* for a 20th century retrospective published in 2000.

The workshops attracted primarily church members interested in evangelism and specialized ministry topics rather than doctrinal or issue-oriented programs, the *Chronicle* reported.

In recent years, organizers of other events associated with Churches of Christ, including Christian universities, have noticed declines in attendance. Scott Sager, vice president for church services at Lipscomb University in Nashville Tenn., and director of the university's annual Summer Celebration, gathered input about attendance trends from other Christian schools in the U.S. Among the challenges respondents cited:

- A decline in the number of U.S. church members, as recorded in the directory "Churches of Christ in the United States" published by 21st Century Christian, has contributed to a decline in attendance.

- Doctrinal differences lead some members of Churches of Christ to opt for ecumenical events outside of the fellowship — and others to attend events focused within the fellowship, such as Polishing the Pulpit in East Tennessee.

- Church members have an increasing number of choices for specialized events outside Churches of Christ, including Passion and Catalyst, and within the fellowship, including the Christian Scholars Conference.

- Increasingly, lectureships are broadcast online, allowing Christians to view them from home.

Rush hopes that ending the Tulsa Workshop will prompt Christians to consider new, innovative ways to encourage soul-winning.

"Sometimes, when ministries aren't doing as well as they once did, we tend to not let them die," Rush said. "Sometimes, we need to let ministries die so God can allow new ministries to sprout."

As news of the cancellation spread across social media, church members shared memories of past workshops.

Carl Feril, who preaches for the St. John Church of Christ in Kansas, said he will miss the interaction with friends who annually chose the workshop as a place to reconnect.

"I am not sure what God will raise up, but one thing learned from the workshops past and the great leaders there (is that) there will always be another act of God; just look for it."

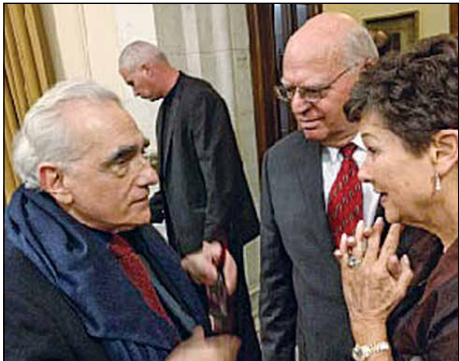


Andrew Garfield, left, of “The Amazing Spider Man,” and Adam Driver, of “Star Wars” fame, portray Jesuit missionaries in search of their mentor in Martin Scorsese’s “Silence.”

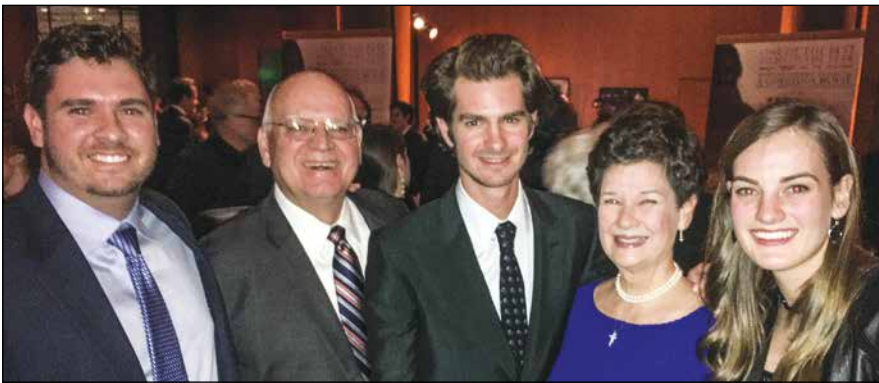
‘SILENCE’: Film offers no ‘simplistic answers’ for tough questions

FROM PAGE 3
of the *The Christian Chronicle’s* Board of Trustees, is the founder of Moriah Media and Sharpword Films, which were involved in the making of “Silence.”
Brown described “Silence” as a passion project for Scorsese, director of films including “Taxi Driver,” “Raging Bull” and crime dramas “Goodfellas” and “Casino.” In 2007 he won the Academy Award for best director for “The Departed.”
Scorsese started work on the project that would become “Silence” in the late 1980s, Brown said, around the time he directed the controversial film “The Last Temptation of Christ.”
“Silence” tells the story of Portuguese Jesuit missionary Cristovao Ferreira, played by Academy Award nominee Liam Neeson, who travels to Japan to teach Jesus to a people who face dire consequences if they convert from Buddhism.
Back in Portugal, two of Ferreira’s

former students are told that their mentor has turned his back on God, so they decide to make the journey to save him. Portraying the young missionaries are Adam Driver, best known as Kylo Ren from 2015’s “Star Wars Episode 7: The Force Awakens,” and Andrew Garfield, who recently portrayed a real-life soldier of faith, Desmond Doss, in Mel Gibson’s “Hacksaw Ridge.”
Unlike other recent faith-based films, including “God’s Not Dead” and “The War Room,” the R-rated “Silence” shows graphically the cost of following Christ.
“The hope,” Brown said, “is that folks who aren’t churchgoers will see Christian faith in a way that will inspire them to ask meaningful questions.”
Brown and his sons, Tod and Cary, got involved in the project because it aligns with the company’s goal of introducing spirituality and morality into today’s culture.
“It is not like a sermon in a film. It doesn’t go logically through argu-



During a screening of “Silence” at the Vatican, Dale Brown and his wife, Rita, talk with director Martin Scorsese.



Dale Brown and his family speak with Andrew Garfield at the Los Angeles premiere.

ments,” Brown said. “It gets into some pretty challenging issues.”
Reviewer Brian Truitt of USA Today described “Silence” as “a film Scorsese was born to make,” adding that the director “proves he’s as masterful a filmmaker with men of God as he is with gangsters.”
Although “Silence” shows the suffering endured by the missionaries, “it’s the converted people, those wanting to pray to God instead of Buddha and caught between these opposing forces, whose plights are the most arduous,” Truitt wrote.
“At what point and after how much pain would you denounce your core belief system? In their religious passion, Scorsese makes his point in a most powerful fashion.”
Scott Elliot, minister for the La

Grange Church of Christ, in La Grange, Texas, described “Silence” as “a mixture of beautiful filmmaking and a complex and challenging story that will linger with you long after the final credits.”
The film “does not provide easy answers and a nice warm conclusion,” Elliot wrote in a review. “In fact, you may have more questions after you walk away from this movie than you did going into it.”
“What makes ‘Silence’ worthwhile is that it takes faith seriously. It is not shallow in any way.”
Brown, reflecting on the film, said, “Simplistic answers don’t get us where we need to be.”
“If you’re looking for entertainment,” he added, “this may not be for you.”

Milestones

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

Birthdays

James “Eddie” Shewmaker, 95, Paragould, Ark.; **Al Stathopulo, 95,** Dallas; **Barbara L. Lee, 94,** Lawton, Okla. **E. Claude Gardner, 92,** Henderson, Tenn.

Anniversaries

69th: Harold and Cora Northcutt, Houston. **66th: Charles and Bonnie Shepard,** Abilene, Texas. **65th: Ed and Miys Haver,** Fallbrook, Calif.

Minister Transition

E.R. Brannon

Dr. Eulie Brannon (E.R., as he is affectionately known) entered Christian education in the 10th grade when he moved from Plateau, Ala., to Valdosta, Ga., to attend Dasher Bible School. His mother sold a milk cow to send him. In 1943, at age 17, he moved to Montgomery, Ala., to attend Montgomery Bible School. While there, he met and married Merle Moore and they lived in a small trailer on campus while attending classes. After graduating in 1945, he immediately began college at Montgomery Bible College – as college classes had just begun that year – earning his associate’s degree.



He then entered Huntingdon College in Montgomery, obtaining his bachelor’s degree. During these times he supported his family by delivering newspapers and preaching at nearby rural congregations, including Strata in South Montgomery County, one of the oldest congregations in Alabama.

Upon earning his bachelor’s, he began teaching at Montgomery Bible College. He also continued to preach at congregations in the area,

including Prattville and Tallassee, until 1955. He was then instrumental in establishing the College Church of Christ on the campus of what had, by then, become Alabama Christian College. He served as its preacher for many years, as well as an elder for much of that time.

Brannon was appointed principal of the junior and senior high schools and served in that capacity until being named dean of the college. Later he served as academic vice president. During this time he attended Auburn University during summer breaks, earning his master’s and doctorate degrees. In the fall of 1965 the college moved to its new campus on Atlanta Highway, and in 1973, Dr. Brannon was appointed its president.

His wife, Merle, passed away in October 1980, but he continued as president until January of 1981, at which time he met and married Willie Metta Strong and moved to Madison, Ala. After working with Dr. George S. Benson for a year, assisting congregations raising capital funds, he was invited to lead Jefferson Christian School in Birmingham and served ably as its president until 1990. Again, he was instrumental in establishing a congregation on his school’s campus, preaching there and serving as elder.

In 1990, the Brannons moved back to Madison, where E.R. worked as fundraiser for what was, by then, Faulkner University in Montgomery. During a preacher change at the Madison congregation, Dr. Brannon served very capably as interim preacher for more than six months until a new preacher could be secured. He has continued to preach when needed and skillfully teaches Bible classes on a regular basis. He also served as chairman of the church’s finance committee for 10 years.

In 2004, the Madison shepherds asked Dr. Brannon to join the Madison ministerial staff; in June of that year he retired from

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DISNEY

Disney auditioned hundreds of young women throughout the Pacific islands to be the voice of Moana. The directors chose 16-year-old newcomer Auli'i Cravalho of Hawaii.

A tutor for ‘Moana’

MINISTER FOR A CHURCH OF CHRIST in American Samoa spends a week serving Disney’s newest star as the film premieres in neighboring Samoa.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

It’s a small world — and an even smaller island — after all. Just ask David Willis.

The Texas native serves souls in American Samoa, a U.S. territory in the South Pacific, population 55,000, as a minister and elder of the Lupelele Church of Christ. He and his wife, Dana, also teach at Pacific Horizons School, a private school in American Samoa founded by church members Lynn and Mara Ashley.

So when Disney needed an educator for its newest star, Auli'i Cravalho, the Willises got the call.

Cravalho, a native of Honolulu, gives voice to the title character



Cravalho

in Disney’s newest animated film, “Moana,” a fairy tale set in ancient Polynesia. The 16-year-old high school junior required a tutor as she and the film’s directors participated in the premiere in Samoa, an independent nation of islands just west of American Samoa. Cravalho had to complete a certain amount of schooling each day during the visit.

“Auli'i is a wonderful young lady,” David Willis said. “She was very self-disciplined to keep up with her online classes while under the pressure



PHOTO PROVIDED

David Willis takes a turn steering the Gaualofa, a double-hulled canoe similar to one featured in “Moana,” with actress Auli'i Cravalho and director John Musker.

of all the appearances she had to make. She is a great role model for young people everywhere.”

David Willis also spent time with directors John Musker and Ron Clements, plus several Samoans who were involved in the film’s background and development.

In Samoa, “the movie was received with great excitement,” David Willis said. The Polynesian audience laughed and applauded at the film’s references to daily life in the South Pacific. “You knew, when tears of joy and shouts of pride were witnessed during the opening of the movie, that it was going to be a big success.”

NEWSMAKERS



PHOTO PROVIDED BY GREATER ATLANTA CHRISTIAN

Isiah Hill, right, teaches Advanced Placement and honors chemistry at Greater Atlanta Christian School.

APPOINTED: Isiah Hill, chemistry teacher at Greater Atlanta Christian School in Norcross, Ga., to a three-year term on the board of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

Tammy Letzler, chief clerk of the Tennessee House of Representatives. Letzler, a member of the Crescent Church of Christ in Murfreesboro, Tenn., **Letzler** is the first woman to hold this position. **Kelly Moore**, president of the National Christian School Association, succeeding **Philip Patterson**, who had served as president since 1997.



NEW BOARD CHAIRMAN: Mark Brewer, Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, succeeding **Don Millican**, who had served as chairman since 2002 and will remain on the board.

NEW TRUSTEES: Errica Rivera and Rodney Waller, Harding University in Searcy, Ark. **Gene Humphrey, Amy Roberts, Jack Rowe and Michelle Tucker**, Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City. **Malcolm Coco and Lynn Watson**, Hope for Life, a ministry of Herald of Truth in Abilene, Texas.

NEW MINISTER: Jeff Dunn, Huntsville Church of Christ in Texas.

NEW ELDERS: Larry Huffman, Bob Kay, Jay Plank and David Wertz, RiverWalk Church of Christ in Wichita, Kan. **Terry Burr, Don Gribble and Scott Ramsey** were reconfirmed as elders.

Milestones (continued)

Faulkner University and became involvement minister. He has continued to serve in this capacity, as well as minister in many other ways, especially teaching, fill-in preaching, and visiting. He has served Faulkner University for many years as a member of its Board of Directors and continues to do so; his love for and dedication to Christian education has never wavered. Sadly, he lost his wife, Willie Metta, to death in May of 2012, but in May 2015 he married the former Louise Wright.

Dr. Brannan recently announced his “official” retirement, which was effective Dec. 31, 2016. He continues to be active in preaching, teaching and being the great Christian servant he has been for many years. He plans to spend his retirement years traveling, writing and spending time with his beloved Louise.

The Madison church, Christian education and the entire brotherhood is greatly indebted to Dr. E.R. Brannan for his many years of service to God, Christ and His church and his fellow man. All who know and love Dr. Brannan wish him well and many good years beyond his present 88 in which to work and serve.

Memorials

Helen Isaacs Butters 1928-2016

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7)

Helen Irene Harper Isaacs Butters, 88, died Aug. 15, 2016, after a brief time of declining health. Helen was born on May 14, 1928, in Clemmons, N.C., the 10th of 11 children born to Andrew Blaine Harper Sr. and Mary Elizabeth Harper.

Helen means “shining light, the bright one,” and Irene means “peace,” and Helen exemplified both of those qualities.

Helen grew up in Clemmons, attended Lewisville School and graduated from R.J. Reynolds High School in 1944, the first class to

finish the newly added 12th grade. Helen skipped 11th grade and graduated at the age of 16 with the first 12th grade senior class.

Helen’s attention to detail and organization were qualities she shared in administrative work for government agencies, in the ministry of the church and in more than a dozen years of volunteer work at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and with the ALS Association.

Helen married T.A. Isaacs on June 25, 1948, in Winston-Salem, N.C., and joined him in ministry in the Church of Christ. After college at Florida Christian and in Texas, they served churches in Tampa, Fla.; Abilene, Texas; Sweetwater, Texas; Clemmons, N.C.; Columbia, S.C.; Charlotte, N.C.; New Orleans, La.; Hialeah, Fla.; Decatur, Ga.; Bossier City, La.; West Monroe, La. and Kernersville, N.C. T.A. died Feb. 17, 1996, and Helen remained in Winston-Salem, an active member of Linville Forest Church of Christ in Kernersville for more than 20 years.

While in college in Florida in the 1950s, T.A. and Helen met Steve and Mona Butters and remained friends even as both couples moved from place to place across the country. After Mona’s death, Helen and Steve Butters began a correspondence. Steve thought the letters Helen wrote to him were eloquent and beautiful, and he was drawn to Winston-Salem to visit her. When at 84, Helen shared the news of her planned marriage to Steve with her family, her smile filled her whole face. Steve and Helen married Aug. 16, 2013, to applause and well wishes from family and friends. They made their home both in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., and in Winston-Salem, where they had returned in late June.

Helen’s eloquence, elegance, her humility and her contagious laughter have left an impression all over the country with family, friends and those she met in all the places she lived

and worked. She worked to organize, gather and distribute clothing and supplies in the aftermath of hurricanes in New Orleans and opened her home

to others, especially at Thanksgiving, specifically inviting widows and recently bereaved to join her family. “I don’t need an audience,” Helen said more than once.

She worked in the background, quietly doing what needed to be done with grace and humility.

Helen was elegant in appearance, always well dressed and perfectly accessorized. She was

faithful in prayer, superhuman in emotional and spiritual strength, putting the needs of others foremost in her prayers, always concerned about others even when she had her own griefs and challenges.

Helen was preceded in death by her parents, 10 siblings: Ethel Harper Brewer, Lieuteene Marion “Bud” Harper, Paul William Harper, John Blaine Harper, Virginia Harper Tesh, Andrew Blaine Harper Jr., Grace Harper Grose, three siblings who died as infants; and her first husband, T.A. Isaacs.

Helen is survived by her husband Stephen Butters; son Tim (Pam) Isaacs; daughter Tammi (Jeff) McKinnon; granddaughter Laurel McKinnon (Jeremy) Barnes; and grandson Drew (Melissa) McKinnon; great-grandchildren: J.P. McKinnon, Lainey Hannon, Leah McKinnon and Grant McKinnon; stepson Mark (Dana) Butters; stepdaughter Cheryll (Ted) Vosburgh; stepson Shawn (Karen)Butters, nine step-grandchildren and five step-great-grandchildren. She is also survived by two sisters-in-law: Peggy (Hal) Essick and Ruth Gray Braden; many nieces, nephews and many special friends.

“Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul—and sings the tunes without the words—and never stops at all,” Emily Dickinson wrote. The melody of hope and love that Helen offered us will continue to surround us.



Milestones

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

Memorials

Harry Robert Fox Jr. 1921-2016

Harry Robert Fox Jr., our beloved father, passed away peacefully on Jan. 1, 2017, at the age of 95, surrounded by his loving family.

He was born on April 26, 1921, to missionary parents in Tokyo. His first 14 years were mostly in rural Japan followed by 12 years in the United States obtaining a Christian college education at Lipscomb, Harding and Pepperdine colleges.

In 1944, he met and married Jeri (Geraldine) Paden (twin sister of Gerald Paden, a missionary in Italy and a teacher at the Sunset School of Preaching, now known as the Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas).

In 1947, Harry Robert and Jeri served as missionaries to Japan for 10 years (sponsored by the Uptown Church of Christ in Long Beach, Calif.) during which time he served as a co-founder of Ibaraki Christian University and as an evangelist throughout Japan.

After their return to the United States in 1958, due to a break in Jeri's health, Harry taught classes in the Pepperdine College Bible department for two and a half years followed by two years as a "located preacher" for the Northside Church of Christ in Santa Ana, Calif., and later, 20 years as a social worker for Los Angeles County.

After his retirement in 1983, he and Jeri served numerous congregations in various ways in California, Oregon, and Utah. Most of their services were in the form of small home Bible study groups in all three of those states. Their life long passion was to share with as many

persons as possible the glorious implications of the Gospel of God's unconditional commitment to all of us in Christ.

During his last two years, Harry Robert was confined to a bed in Orem, Utah, where he shared the message of God's unconditional love with everyone who came to see him in Room 304 of the Lake Ridge Senior Living Center.



He was preceded in death by Jeri on May 6, 2015, and is survived by his four sons and their wives: Ken (Shawn), John, Larry (Becky) and Jerry (Jennifer); plus four brothers: Logan,

Sterling, Clinton and Arnold; 20 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren.

Joseph Herschel McKissick Jr. 1926-2017

Joseph Herschel McKissick, Jr., was born Feb. 21, 1926, in Tamaha, Okla., to Joseph Herschel, Sr. and Minnie (Allen) McKissick.



Papa Joe departed this life on Jan. 10, 2017, in his home with his caring wife Mary Lou (Stach) McKissick at his side. He is survived

by his daughter Sherry (Howard) Stein, son Jim (Debbie) McKissick, daughter-in-law Patricia Hernandez, brother-in-law Doug McSwane, sister-in-law Lee (Stach) Hodges, sister-in-law Gerry Smith; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He is preceded in death by his parents, nine brothers and sisters, and his son, Joe Burton McKissick.

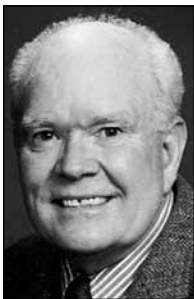
Years ago, Papa Joe told Nana (his

wife) that he always wanted to be remembered as a "good man." His family and friends all remember him as a very gentle, kind and humble man. He was a lifelong preacher and caring missionary from age 17 to 90. Even during his last five years battling Parkinson's disease, which left him weak in body and unclear in mind, he shared his life stories of studying the Bible with others, going to the lost, ministering to prisoners and bringing everyone he could to know God through Christ. That was his true mission in life which he fulfilled beautifully and lovingly to the end.

Papa Joe and Nana were married 64 incredible years. They truly are perfect examples of loving each other with all their soul.

Joel Frank Parks 1935-2016

A longtime resident of Monterey County, Calif., Joel Frank Parks, age 81, passed away on Dec. 22, 2016, in Lakewood, Colo. Born in Arkansas, Joel spent his boyhood in rural Missouri before moving with the family to Watsonville, Calif. He met the love of his life, Rosalene Gregory, at Watsonville High School and married her in 1954. They were married for 53 years and raised four children.



A retired vocational instructor for Soledad State Prison, he also served faithfully as a song leader, teacher, ministry leader, deacon and elder of the Prunedale and Alvin Drive (Salinas) Churches of Christ in Calif.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Rose, and is survived by daughters Jeanine Hull, Linda Derrick, Leslie Dively, son Douglas Parks, 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Arnold Edgar Pytkas 1926-2016

Arnold E. Pytkas, 90, of Searcy, Ark., passed away Dec. 15, 2016. He was born Sept. 20, 1926, in Menahga, Minn., to the late Carl and Anna Pytkas.



A devoted Christian, husband, father, and grandfather, he was a longtime active member of College Church of Christ in Searcy. He and his wife Wanda were faithful to the church and served as missionaries in Finland for several years.

Arnold served our country during World War II with the United States Navy.

Throughout his career as a professional educator, he served as a teacher, school administrator and as a professor. He had a passion for swimming, which he continuously shared with others through teaching the sport and through his work as a professor and swimming coach at Harding University in Searcy.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Gordon Pytkas, and is survived by his sister, Elizabeth Brownlee.

Arnold is survived by his wife of 63 years, Wanda Hutchison Pytkas; two sons: Stephen (Pamela), and Matthew (Betsy); one daughter: Lauri (Kelly) Bracken; six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Memorial/Honor Gifts

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in honor of Kent Allen, Marian James and Vernon and Gwen Means and in memory of Sister Rhenea Alridge, Lahoma Adams Byford, Jack Greenwood, Kelly Hall, George R. House, Jr., and William Jones.

We are a great nation; we must be a good nation

50 YEARS AFTER Martin Luther King Jr. urged people of faith to champion racial unity, equality seems closer, but ever elusive

A half-century ago, Martin Luther King Jr. gave us a message of hope and a warning against violence in his 1967 work, **“Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?”**

African-Americans, King wrote, had achieved new freedoms, such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Now all Americans — black and white, Republican and Democrat, rich and poor — must unite in a fight against poverty and work to make America a place of equal opportunity.

He shared that optimism with his countrymen, even in the face of threats. On April 3, 1968, from a church pulpit in Memphis, Tenn., Dr. King proclaimed that he had been to the mountaintop and had seen the Promised Land.

The next day, Dr. King was fatally shot as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis.

Like a sudden cold front, a wave of grief swept across the country. Confusion, anger and disillusionment gripped every street corner. Cities became war zones as America staggered — aimlessly, it seemed — in the haunting shadow of the assassination.

It was the very chaos Dr. King feared would come, should we fail to deal honestly with the problem of racial injustice. Our countrymen feared — and our enemies delighted in — the notion that our nation would collapse from within. We were the Roman Empire in its final days. Only by remembering Dr. King’s clarion call to nonviolence did we emerge from the horrors that followed his death.

Now, a half-century later, the question remains: *“Where do we go from here: chaos or community?”*

We’ve witnessed in our lifetime



CORNELL UNIVERSITY, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Garment workers at the Abe Schrader Shop in New York listen to the funeral service for Martin Luther King Jr. on a portable radio on April 8, 1968.

amazing strides in race relations, including eight years of leadership by our nation’s first African-American president.

Yet those who call for racial separation continue to promote an agenda of fear and venom. In our communities we see acts of injustice by those sworn to protect and serve us all. Words of hate poison our politics and turn us against each other.

Perhaps our division is due to a lack of vision — including the vision Dr. King urged us to keep. The words we learn from the Old Testament book of Proverbs haunt us: *“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”*

We are a nation of free markets. But when we place greater importance on money than human beings, when we exalt profit as the highest value, when our vision of prosperity promotes unethical competition, greed and overconsumption, our nation’s soul becomes unhealthy.

We must never sacrifice liberty, truth, compassion and equality on the altar of greed, falsely believing that our wealth will save us from the perils we see in the developing world, that it will provide us with security from threats foreign and domestic.

Those illusions were shattered in the attacks of 9/11 — and a few years later during the financial crisis of 2008 and the recession that followed. Most recently, in the presidential election of 2016, we saw — especially in states ravaged by economic downturn — a repudiation of the rising tide of globalization.

Sadly, much of our progress in race relations got lumped into this rejection of globalization. Too many of us mocked efforts to promote diversity as “political correctness,” as concepts that were holding us back from greatness.

Regardless of what awaits us, we must realize that our nation’s greatest treasure is not its wealth — nor its massive military, nor its status as a global superpower. America’s greatest treasure is a common vision based on shared aspirations for a peaceful and free society. We too often forget that, and we recklessly pursue profit instead of the counsel of prophets.

No matter how much physical wealth we lose, no matter what our enemies attempt to do to us, we still possess the enduring qualities of conscience, compassion, creativity, imagination and hope.

“Where do we go from here: chaos or community?”

I firmly believe that unity found in Christ — unity that crosses lines of ethnicity, political belief and socioeconomic differences — must be our goal. This is not easy to achieve, but it is our only viable alternative to an increasingly fragmented society.

What an opportunity for us, as followers of Christ, to practice true, counter-cultural unity.

‘America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”

That sentiment, attributed to Alexis de Tocqueville, is hundreds of years old. Scholars, warriors and leaders have repeated it, including Dwight D. Eisenhower as he campaigned for the presidency.

I am reminded of words thousands of years older, recorded in Proverbs 14:34: *“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”*

We are a great nation. We must be a good nation. We must exercise power with compassion. We must be fair, just and equitable. Only then will God crown our good with brotherhood.

“Where do we go from here: chaos or community?”

It has not been — and will not be — an easy journey. But we are a people who can do the impossible through the one who gives us strength.

In his final hours among us, Dr. King reminded us of this:

“Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And he’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land!”

JERRY TAYLOR is an associate professor at Abilene Christian University in Texas. He is a leader of the **Racial Unity Leadership Summit**, a program that brings Christians together to work for racial reconciliation in Churches of Christ.

Views



Jerry Taylor

EDITORIAL

As a workshop ends,
may new work begin

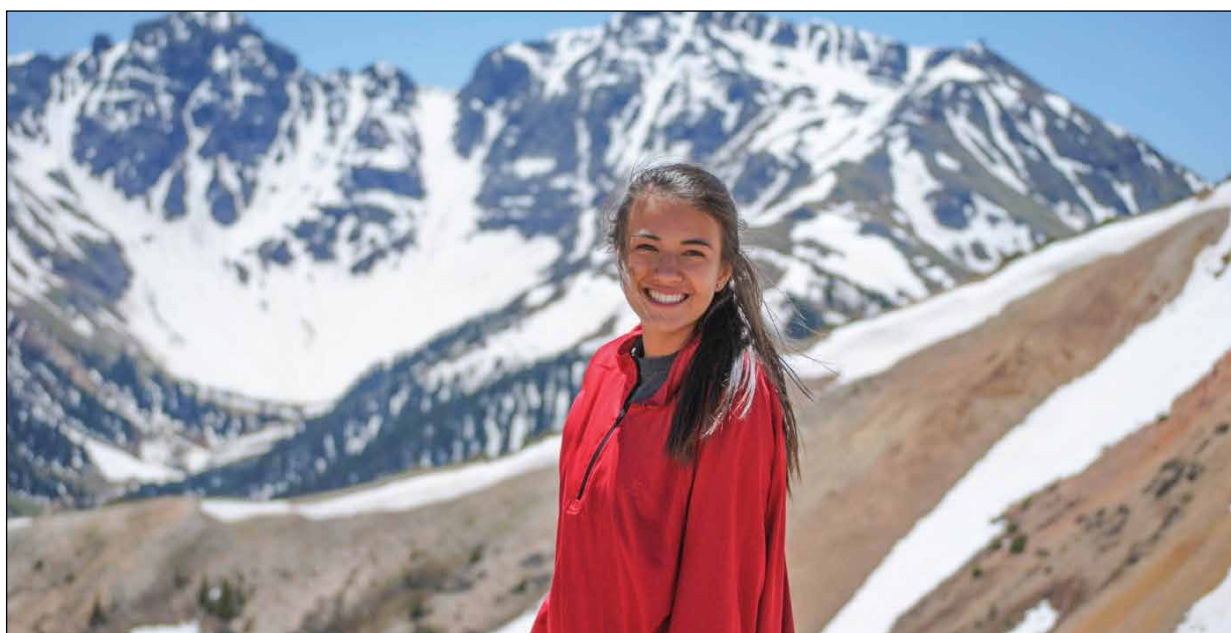
Forty-five years ago, Churches of Christ hungered to reach the lost. A grassroots movement, led by believers including Alan Bryan, resulted in the creation of soul-winning workshops across the U.S. — from Pensacola, Fla., to St. Louis to Seattle. These workshops were designed for the people in the pews. They provided more than just inspirational messages. They included how-to classes on parenting, financial management and marriage enrichment. They were real and relevant. Most of those workshops have disappeared, and the end of the Tulsa Workshop after 40 years saddens us. We will miss the annual, 90-minute drive up the Turner Turnpike from our offices in Oklahoma City to fellowship with Christians from around the world. We give praise and heartfelt thanks to Marvin Phillips, Terry Rush and the countless others who labored tirelessly to make the workshop work.

The Tulsa Workshop was many things to many people, but never dull. The event sometimes drew criticism for bringing in speakers from outside our fellowship. At times these speakers made us uncomfortable, but they also challenged us to give a defense for the hope that is in us.

‘The Tulsa Workshop was many things to many people, but never dull.’

Whether you attended and supported the workshop or not, we pray that the event’s clarion call to reach the lost will continue to motivate you — and all of us — to the uncomfortable business of soul-winning. Even as we say farewell to the workshop, we see its legacy living on. Easter is coming, and with it the annual gatherings for Lads to Leaders and Leadership Training for Christ, or LTC. Across the nation, thousands of our young people are preparing for the conventions. They’re memorizing Scripture, learning sign language, scripting puppet shows, producing videos. If we guide them with love, if we serve as examples of evangelism, they will take the Gospel to the world in ways we can’t fathom. In them, may that same, soul-winning hunger live on.

FIND LINKS to venues for this year’s Lads to Leaders and LTC conventions at www.christianchronicle.org.



Hannah Mae Gigstad (standing in front of the San Juan Mountains in Colorado) hopes to study geology in college.

‘Detraining’ to run the good race

“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.”
— 1 Corinthians 9:24-26, New International Version

Sometimes running coaches have to “detrain” their runners. That doesn’t mean they stop training. Instead, coaches help runners break their bad habits — starting out too fast, running stiff, not striding out. Coaches detrain runners in order to build them back up into faster, more efficient athletes. I think God works the same way. He detrains us from our bad habits by letting the world overwhelm us and break us down so that we realize how much we need him. We must stop and reflect — and pray. Then God comes in and builds us back up in his image. We just have to let him do his work.

I am in the process of detraining, both physically and spiritually. Breaking habits is difficult, but what’s even more difficult is trusting that my coach and my God will build me up in the best way possible. Recently, I’ve gotten to the point of running so fast through life — on parallel tracks of school, sports and friends — that I have lost sight of God, my finish line. Becoming selfish and too focused on ourselves takes us away from the race God has planned for us, but focusing on God will always, always bring about a grand finish. Do not ever forget where your blessings come

from. You may think you own your talents, but God still owns them and can take them away in the blink of an eye. What will never fade or diminish is God’s everlasting love. Don’t forget where your strengths and talents come from. Use them to glorify God. Even when we quit paying attention to God, he never stops pursuing us. God is constantly running after us, there to pick us up when we fall. This brings me so much security, knowing that no matter where I wander in life, God is always with me, waiting for me to turn around and admit that I need his help. I want to be joyously racing toward the cross, toward the God who welcomes me with open arms. I read a quote a few days ago that said: *“If you think you’ve ruined God’s plan for your life, rest in this: You, my beautiful friend, are not that powerful.”*

I love knowing that whatever mistakes I think I make or wrong paths I think I choose, God had a plan for me. No matter what I choose in life, as long as I keep my focus on God, I cannot make a wrong decision. As we go through tough changes and harsh realizations, we should never forget that God cares for us and wants the best for us. The finish is worth the momentary pain.

HANNAH MAE GIGSTAD, 17, is a high school junior in Arvada, Colo. An avid, competitive runner, she also enjoys reading and playing piano. She worships with the Northwest Church of Christ in Westminster, Colo. She blogs at hannahmaeblog11.wordpress.com.

In the Word



Hannah Mae Gigstad

FROM OUR READERS

Don't give up on the quest for truth

As a retired professional journalist who also happens to be a brother in Christ, I had a special appreciation for your piece on truth, "truthiness" and fakery. (See "News of faith in the age of post-truth," Page 3, January.) It was good to sense that your students, listening to your teaching, showed they have not given up on the quest for truth and their belief in fact-finding.



Ernest Holsendolph

At the same time, of course, they head out into a world seeking solace, not the truth. As James Madison, one of our nation's Founding Fathers and our fourth president, made plain in writing the First Amendment, there is a reason why free speech is first

among the rights. This democracy thing does not work unless we know what the government is doing, what elected leaders are doing, who the people are who seek our votes. As this last election may have underlined, it is hard to make informed decisions if you fail to get the facts.

I'm not so sure about my peers, but I have faith in these young folks to give truth a chance.

Keep up your good work. And keep faith in the young.

ERNEST HOLSENDOLPH spent more than 40 years as a newspaper reporter and magazine writer. A native of Quitman, Ga., he grew up in Cleveland and has worked for *The Cleveland Press*, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *The Washington Evening Star*, *The New York Times* and for *Fortune* magazine. He retired as an editorial writer for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in 2004. He worships with the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Decatur, Ga.

It's just a building, but it can be used for good

The Lindale Church of Christ in Houston was my church home from the time I was born until January 1983 when I moved to east Texas. (See "Alternate ending," Page 3, January.)

My family was involved with anything and everything that happened there. My father, Jay Norris, kept the building up and running from 1965 to 1983. My mother taught a ladies' class on Wednesday nights.

My sisters, my brother and I were involved with everything: Camp Bandina, a singing group led by R.A. Laird, car washes to raise money for our youth vans, visiting the elderly, teaching Vacation Bible School, teaching Bible school and more.

When I found out that the building was closing, all I could do was sob

and sob some more.

One person told me, "Well Jody, it is just a building. The people that went there are the church, so get over it."

Not knowing what was going to happen to the church building, I prayed for the site to be used in some way that would promote peace and love in the area.

Last summer, I heard whispers from my sister, who attends Memorial Church of Christ in Houston, that special contributions were being made to purchase the Lindale building for use by the Impact Church of Christ.

I want to thank all who loved the building enough to give monetarily to put Lindale back to God's use.

Jody Norris Hasken | San Augustine, Texas

God's provision evident after Tennessee wildfires

This is a wonderful article. (See "Sorrow, relief and fellowship," Page 1, January.)

We, as Christians, are supposed to help our fellow man — especially those of the household of faith.

We were very happy that the

Gatlinburg Church of Christ members came to worship with us during this tragedy that affected so many lives and destroyed so much property.

God takes care of his own.

Shirley Agee | Sevierville, Tenn.

Youth Minister

The **Kings Crossing Church of Christ** is seeking a full-time youth minister. We are a church of approximately 400, located in Corpus Christi, Texas. The youth minister will direct the Youth program for 6th to 12th grade, helping young people grow in their faith to become committed Christians equipped to stay faithful to God into adulthood. A minimum of 2 or 3 years of youth ministry experience is preferred. Bachelors or Masters degree in ministry or a ministry-related field required.

www.kingscrossingcoc.com

Contact Mark Adams for further information and to apply:
mark@kingscrossingcoc.com

Full-Time Pulpit Minister

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

Pulpit Ministers -

Are we the congregation you're looking for?

One of our pulpit ministers is retiring. We're looking for his successor.

The **Arlington Church of Christ** meets in Arlington, Va., about four miles southwest of the Lincoln Memorial, on U.S. Route 50. On a typical Sunday morning about 180 people worship in English and about 70 worship in Spanish. We recently refurbished our meetinghouse and celebrated our 75th birthday. Our membership reflects the demographic profile of the national capital area.

We're looking for someone who (with God's help) will preach regularly in English, provide leadership for our ministry team, and help our congregation move into the next stage of its life. The man we select will probably have advanced university training in a relevant field and several years of experience in full-time preaching.

You can learn more about us at:

www.arlingtonfamily.org

The elders are functioning as the search committee. The point of contact is Lamar Reinsch:

ReinschL@georgetown.edu

Compensation, commensurate with qualifications, is competitive and includes a ministry fund and a housing allowance.

To be considered, please send (by email) a resume and a digital copy or an on-line link to a video or audio recording of one or more of your sermons.

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Contact Tonya Patton at:
tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org

Find time to pray with your child after worship, between meals, author writes

As a mother, I over-think, over-analyze and stress about how I'm raising my children. Am I providing enough creative or athletic opportunities for them? Am I challenging them to be independent or hovering a bit much? Am I helping them achieve their educational goals? Am I helping them become functional members of society?

While all of these are good questions, the one that is the most important is, "What kind of spiritual legacy am I leaving them?"

In "Raising a Child Who Prays: Teaching Your Family the Power of Prayer," New Jersey minister David Ireland not only reminds us of a parent's most important role, but also offers advice and encouragement in training up a child in their prayer life.

As a parent and a former children's minister, this book caught my eye. I feel prayer is such an important aspect of a relationship with God, but also one that's very abstract for kids to understand.

I can't lie; I picked this book for selfish reasons too, as I struggle at times to figure out how best to encourage my children in their prayer lives. Often my 7-year-old can't even sit still during a short meal prayer — and doesn't want to say or listen to bedtime prayers.

I don't want to sour these special moments by reprimanding her, but I also want her to learn the importance of communicating with her creator.

Ireland reminds parents that a child's prayer life doesn't happen overnight. It's a process and a spiritual discipline.

All good habits take time to develop, he writes, and "if we are impatient with

(our children), they may interpret this to mean God is impatient."

Ireland also challenges parents to maximize the ordinary moments. Don't just focus on God on Sunday morning or before meals, but look for little moments throughout the day with your kids when you can help them talk to God: on the drive to school, after an unexpected blessing — no matter how big or small, when they are fearful or nervous. Of course, the best way to instill this in our children is by modeling it in our own

prayer lives. We parents must be diligent in our spiritual habits.

While there isn't really any information in this book that I hadn't come across before, "Raising a Child Who Prays" is a reminder of the ways I can encourage my children in their prayer lives.

The last chapter is especially good to have on hand for reference if our prayers become routine or dull. Ireland lists many helpful ways to incorporate prayer into our lives: texting a prayer to a friend or family member, learning the five-finger prayer, journaling our prayers and making a family prayer board.

"If you can leave your children money as inheritance, leave it," Ireland writes. "If you can leave them property, by all means do so. But more importantly, gift them with an unconquerable faith, an unstoppable drive and an insatiable passion to serve Jesus Christ. Give them a God legacy!"

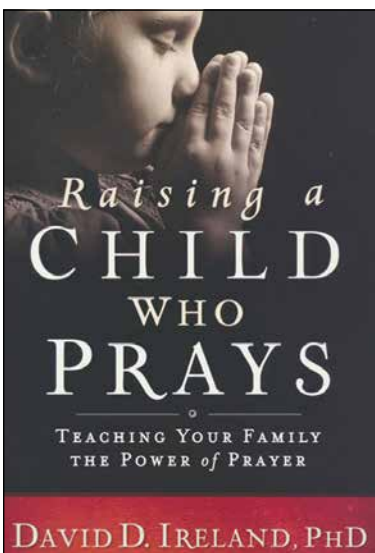
That statement alone is an answer to my prayer.

KATIE ISENBERG and her family worship with the Mayfair Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. She writes for Oklahoma City Moms Blog and has a personal blog, "Strawberry Ruckus," at ryanandkatie.blogspot.com.

In Print



Katie Isenberg



★★★★☆
David D. Ireland. **Raising a Child Who Prays: Teaching Your Family the Power of Prayer.** Lake Mary, Fla.: Charisma House, 2016. 224 pages. \$15.99.

As we seek to make disciples, do we need to be discipled?

I'm in the middle of two books: "Multiply" by Frances Chan and "Radical" by David Platt. Both focus on how Jesus called Christians to make disciples among the people.

What we're reading



Melissa Anderson

As I study, I'm somewhat convicted that there are more things I could — and should — be doing. But mostly, if I'm being honest, I feel pretty good about the work I'm doing. I spend time helping others. I set a good example. I'm vocal about my beliefs. My faith is strong. My prayer life is strong. I'm studying a good deal. Really, I'm in a good place.

As I think about ways I can disciple others, it starts to hit me. All of these things I feel good about doing also are things that other people do for me. Others share their faith with me. They pray for me. They study with me. Are they discipling me? Do I need to be discipled? Yes, in fact, I do.

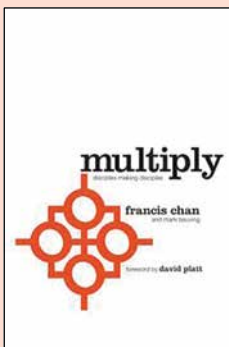
It's extremely humbling, but all of us need someone to show us how to become even more like Christ. We will never reach a point where we don't need to learn more about him and his ways.

My problem with this is my pride. I don't want to be discipled. I don't like the idea of people doing things for me out of a sense of obligation. I don't like the idea that someone would look at me and see a sin or a flaw that needs work. I don't like the idea of being someone's project.

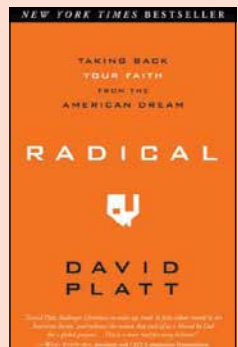
The truth is that I need those who are wiser in their faith than I am to guide me.

I need someone to point out my sin when I can't see it for myself. It's tough to acknowledge that we are flawed, that we need each other. It's tough to let others take care of us. It's tough to be discipled.

As I read these books, my focus isn't only on how I can apply them toward making disciples of others, but also how I can be more open to allowing others to make a stronger disciple out of me. It isn't about me anyway. It's about God and bringing him glory.



Frances Chan. **Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples.** Colorado Springs, Colo: David C. Cook Publishing, 2012. 336 pages.



David Platt. **Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream.** Colorado Springs, Colo: Multnomah, 2010. 240 pages.

MELISSA ANDERSON is a military spouse of 18 years. She and her husband, Joshua, have three children and worship with the Gateway Church of Christ in Pensacola, Fla. She has a Master of Business Administration degree and is pursuing a master's in marriage and family therapy.

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

Feb. 6 An Evening with David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons. Oklahoma Christian University. www.oc.edu/organizations/intergenerational-faith-center.

Feb. 17-19 Manhattan Youth Rally. Manhattan, Kan., Church of Christ. Zeb Carter, (785) 885-8194, zcarter@flinthillchristianschools.org.

Feb. 21 Eastern European Mission's Houston Event. www.eem.org/events.

Feb. 23-25 National Urban Ministry Conference. Raleigh, N.C. nationalurbanministryassociation.org.

Feb. 24-25 WINGS 2017 Conference. Harding University, Searcy, Ark. (501) 279-4448, www.harding.edu/events/wings.

March 3-4 Affirming the Faith Seminar. North MacArthur Church of Christ, Oklahoma City. (405) 621-5962, www.affirmingthefaithok.com.

March 20-23 Abundant Living Seniors College. Searcy, Ark. www.abundantlivingseniors.com.

March 31-April 2 Marriage Seminar. Springfield, Vt., Church of Christ. jaybird_43@yahoo.com.

April 7-8 2017 Central Florida Men's Retreat. Southside Church of Christ, Oviedo, Fla. (407) 296-0155, sscocorlando@outlook.com.

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

April 23 100th Anniversary The First Street Church of Christ. Lampasascoc@sbcglobal.net.

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

May 1-5 Senior Quest. Pettijohn Springs Christian Camp, Madill, Okla. (580) 795-5015, manager@pettijohn-springs.com.

May 15-27 Literary & Hymn Pilgrimage. England, Wales and Scotland tour. (405) 694-0506, www.oc.edu/pilgrimage.

May 26-28 Camp Hunt, 70th Anniversary. Hubbardsville, NY. David Owens, camphunt@camphunt.com.

June 2-8 Churches of Christ National Lectureship. Atlanta, Ga. www.cocnl.com/web/.

June 6-8 Abundant Living Seniors Ministry Conference. Searcy, Ark. gowen@harding.edu.

FULL CALENDAR, www.christianchronicle.org

Jackson Street Church of Christ
Alexandria, La.
Homecoming
April 29-30, 2017

Attention past and present members: Saturday we will have a fellowship meal at the church building starting at 11a.m. Sunday there will be Bible Study and Worship starting at 9:30 a.m.
Please RSVP to:
Ed Denney at (318) 442-3785 (M-F, 8-11a.m.)
If you need hotel information, please call Ed, and he can provide phone numbers.

Full-Time Minister
Channelview Church of Christ is searching for a pulpit minister to preach solid topical sermons. College degree/certificate from a school of preaching preferred. Salary is commensurate with experience; three-bedroom house provided. Diverse congregation in East Harris County. Interested candidates should forward a resume and sample of a recent sermon to:
Channelview Church of Christ
Attn: Ron Bible (preacher search)
1301 Sheldon Road
Channelview, TX 77530
office: (281) 452-7129 or Ron: (713) 829-3131

Family Minister Desired
The **Church of Christ in O'Fallon, Mo.**, is seeking a family minister. The successful candidate will work with middle- and high-school aged members, strengthen and nurture families, facilitate community outreach, and work with our worship team to enhance our worship experience. He will be expected to work closely with the eldership and pulpit minister as an equal partner in meeting the needs of the congregation.
For a full job description go to our website:
www.simplechristianity.com
Send resume to John Burnett at:
johnaburnett40@gmail.com

Great Lakes Bible College invites nominations and applications for the position of College President

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For additional information and list of qualification and duties, please visit: **www.glbc.ca**.



To inquire or to apply, Canada:
Ashley Hibbard,
Chair of the Board
c/o Great Lakes Bible College
470 Glenelm Crescent
Waterloo, ON N2L 5C8

Phone: (519) 591-3189
Email: boardchair@glbc.ca

To inquire or to apply, USA:
James Holston,
Secretary of the Board
c/o Great Lakes Bible College
2900 Hamilton Street, Unit 15
Houston, TX 77004

Phone: (281) 928-7995
Email: boardsecretary@glbc.ca

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Martin Church of Christ,
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233 Oxford St, Martin, TN 38237
(731) 587-2203
martintnchurchofchrist@gmail.com

Full-Time Family Minister
The **Westview Church of Christ** in Greeley, Colo., is seeking to hire a full-time family minister. This is a new position for our congregation. Our new family minister will be able to shape and form a new ministry through this congregation. For details, descriptions, and contact information, please contact:
Terry Newton
wvcocfmsearch@gmail.com

Preacher Wanted
Enterprise Boulevard Church of Christ is searching for a full-time energetic pulpit minister. Our area is fast growing and ripe for the harvest. Parsonage available.
Enterprise Boulevard Church of Christ
2801 Enterprise Blvd
Lake Charles, LA 70601
Fax: (337) 430-0093
office@blvdchurchofchrist.org

Youth Minister
Third and Central Church of Christ in Lovington, N.M., is seeking a married youth minister. College degree or certificate from a school of preaching preferred. Salary is based on experience. Some benefits included. Interested candidates should forward a resume to:
Third & Central Church of Christ
Attn: Youth Ministry Search
Box 1315, Lovington, NM 88260
thirdandcentralchurchofchrist@gmail.com
www.thirdandcentral.cc
Contact Emery Throneberry
(575) 704-7721
church office: (575) 396-5359

Pulpit Minister
The **Alexander City Church of Christ** is looking for an experienced pulpit minister to partner with our eldership to spread the Gospel in our congregation and community. A degree in Bible is preferred but not required. We are an a cappella congregation of 135 members with a desire to grow spiritually and in number.
945 Tallapoosa St, Alexander City, AL 35010
Ray Kelly, elder, (256) 496-4398 or
Allen Baker, elder, (256) 750-1861
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A feast of fellowship in Europe: Thoughts
from the Euro-American Family Retreat

ROTHENBURG OB DE TAUBER, Germany

I was blessed to experience the recent Euro-American Family Retreat in this medieval town.

For years I've heard great things about this annual gathering of believers from Churches of Christ across Europe and the U.S. My 10 weeks in Vienna, Austria, last summer convinced me that I needed to experience this retreat and share my experiences.

For several years, Scott and Sonya Young, members of the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, have attended the retreat, where Scott Young serves as worship leader. They invited me to travel with them.

The English-language song service was exuberant and inspiring. Most of those attending worship with small groups spread across Europe — sometimes in languages other than English. Scott Young was in his element, and his wife made sure the words and music on the screen flowed along with the voices.

The theme of the retreat was "First Things First." Seth McDowell, a minister for the Shawnee Trail

Church of Christ in Frisco, Texas, was the keynote speaker. His wife, Katy, and his three children were with him. Katy McDowell had attended several of these retreats as a child with her family during her father's time in Europe with the military.

Seth McDowell taught four outstanding lessons, using the Gospel of Matthew. He urged us to put the Kingdom first and our will second, our sin first and our brothers' sin second.

Mark and Jill Brazle, now working for Missions Resource Network after years of ministry in Belgium, made presentations on marriage enrichment along with Romanian Christians Emanuel and Christa Sanda. Bob Chisholm, a minister for

the Prestoncrest Church of Christ in Dallas, made an informative presentation on spiritual formation.

The retreat had special tracks for children and teens. On the final day, teens and parents have a banquet, "Tuesday Spectacular," to recognize achievements.

I quickly realized that, though the retreat had strong elements to prepare and enrich the work of those devoting their lives to the Kingdom in Europe, the fellowship was extremely meaningful. A key time at the retreat was breakfast, as Christians ate together and shared about their families and experiences. I enjoyed watching the people I know spending time with families they saw only at gatherings like this.

The afternoons were free, so participants had time to look around, have coffee or just visit with old friends. The restaurants in Rothenburg were full at mealtimes,

and the hum of conversations never ended. As a retired professor from Oklahoma Christian University, I was impressed by the number of alumni I saw. Some have been working in Europe more than 30 years.

This was the 53rd session of the retreat, which was started in Munich, Germany, by a church member who served as a U.S. military chaplain. This year about 115 participants came from 14 nations.

I was inspired by the presentations and moved by the spirited times of praise and fellowship. I also was motivated by the dedication of those working to save souls in Europe.

CONTACT: bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

Insight



Bailey McBride



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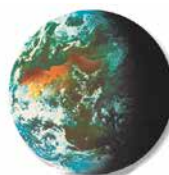
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ministers to the hurting
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- 3/2/17** Ft. Worth, TX / The Fort Worth Club
- 3/14/17** Nashville, TN / The Factory at Franklin
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- 3/28/17** Tyler, TX / Bushman's Celebration Center
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- 4/20/17** College Station, TX / A&M Church of Christ
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- 5/6/17** Portland, OR / Crowne Plaza - Lake Oswego
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