



Heat seeker: NBA champion puts faith first

BY MURRAY EVANS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

On the night before the biggest game of his basketball career — one that would make his team the NBA champion — Norris Cole was where he often

can be found: at a Church of Christ service in Miami, worshipping God with his family and friends.

Cole, a rookie guard for the Miami Heat, was a key reserve all season and hit three big 3-pointers in the NBA Finals as the Heat beat the Oklahoma City

Thunder in five games to win the title. During media interview times between games, he'd chat with ESPN basketball analysts and wave to reporters like they were old friends.

But through all the hoopla, those close to Cole say he's remained grounded

See **NBA ROOKIE**, Page 21



MURRAY EVANS

Norris Cole at NBA
Finals media day in
Oklahoma City.

Black, white and Gray

CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY who once challenged
Lipscomb University in court receives
the Christian university's highest honor.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE



KRISTI JONES

Fred Gray accepts an honorary doctorate from Lipscomb University, saying he's "honored, appreciative and humbled" by the recognition.

NASHVILLE, Tenn.

Forty-five years ago, civil rights attorney and preacher Fred Gray filed a lawsuit that exposed deep divides between black and white members of Churches of Christ.

The 1967 lawsuit challenged the transfer of more than \$400,000 in assets from the closed Nashville Christian Institute

— a school that trained hundreds of future black church leaders — to David Lipscomb College, a higher education institution with a history of racism.

On a recent Friday night, that same Christian college — now known as Lipscomb University — presented Gray with an honorary doctorate of humane letters, the highest award the university

bestows on an individual.

"It is not every day that you file a lawsuit against an institution and that institution later sees fit to honor you," Gray, 81, told a crowd of 500 that witnessed the ceremony in Lipscomb's Allen Arena.

Who, Gray asked, would have thought such an honor would be possible for an

See **FRED GRAY**, Page 14



Christianity in China
Church member shares
insight from Shanghai. **25**



It's GO! time
At this camp, the goal is
simple: Change the world. **17**



Kathmandu's kingdom
Christians in Nepal sacrifice
their culture for faith. **10**

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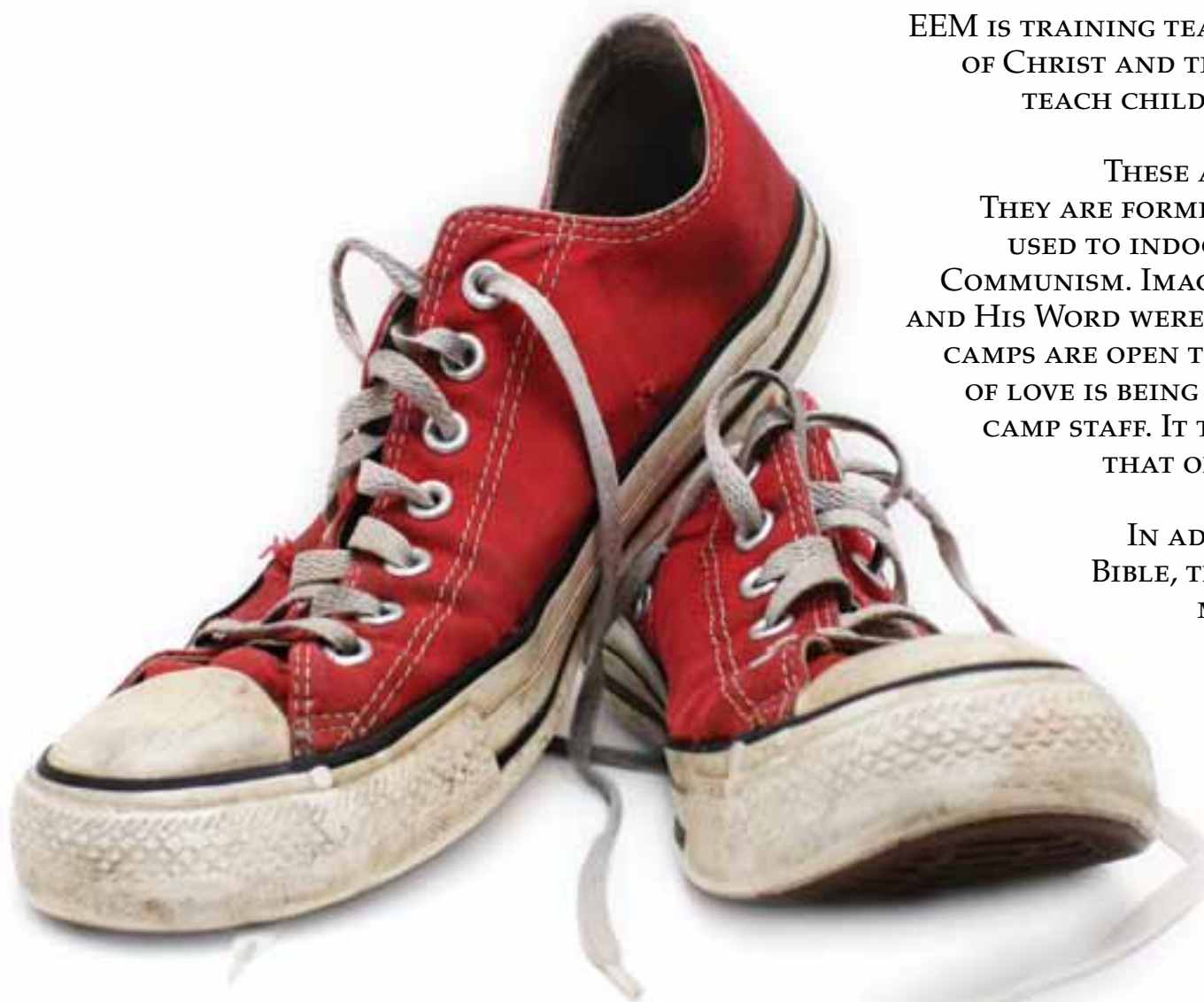
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Race and the church: How far have we come?

NASHVILLE, Tenn.

Young scholars, meet the old warhorses. At the Christian Scholars Conference, young scholars presented papers during a session dubbed “How Far Have We Come?”

Inside Story



Bobby Ross Jr.

A Current Assessment of Race Relations in Churches of Christ.”

Then the old warhorses — who actually experienced the turbulent times studied — explained what *really* happened.

I’m exaggerating, but the riveting discussion had that kind of feel to this journalist, born in 1967, the same year the Nashville Christian Institute closed (*see related story on Page 1*).

One could forgive Andrew Hairston, the preacher for the predominantly black Simpson Street Church of Christ in Atlanta since 1961, for his bluntness in responding to — as he put it — “the beneficiaries of stuff we created and worked on.”

“Now we sit in judgment of us,” Hairston quipped, drawing laughter from the standing-room-only crowd that filled a Lipscomb University lecture hall.

This was not, after all, the first time Hairston had tackled the race issue in the Lord’s body.

The banner headline on the front page of the July 5, 1968, *Christian Chronicle* declared:

See **RACE RELATIONS**, Page 4

Technology — old and new — spreads Gospel



TED PARKS

A camera in the Gospel Broadcasting Network’s main studio in Ringgold, Ga., captures a message for GBN’s “Focus on Faith.” Alan Pitchford, youth minister for a Church of Christ in Tennessee, speaks.

Georgia-based network sends timeless truths to television sets — and iPads

BY TED PARKS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

RINGGOLD, Ga.

For the Gospel Broadcasting Network, the challenge is using the latest communication tools to spread the timeless truths of the Bible.

Launched in November 2005, GBN is a 24-hour television network with studios in this north Georgia town, 17 miles southeast of Chattanooga, Tenn. About 20 cable providers offer GBN as a channel, with local on-air stations and satellite systems also airing selected

programming, according to the network’s executive director, Don Blackwell.

GBN employs three full-time production personnel — all in their 20s — assisted by part-time staff. The trio shares responsibilities, switching jobs as necessary between lighting, preparing sets, running camera, editing and directing.

“One of the things ... with the work here is to be able to wear many hats,” said videographer Blake Kelley. “We’re capable of adapting to circumstances that come before us.”

See **GBN**, Page 22

Hashtag to heaven: Series combines sacred text, tweets

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

SPRING HILL, Tenn. — #REDEMPTION.

That was the featured hashtag in the youth group Bible class at the Spring Meadows Church of Christ on a recent Wednesday night.

As youth minister Scott Bond pushed the play button on a video, he urged teens to take out their smartphones and discuss the lesson among themselves — and thousands of other young people.

“Right now, there are 177 churches doing this same series together,” Bond told the class. “There was a church that registered today in Pearl Harbor. ... If I was in Hawaii, I’d probably be surfing, but they’re doing the Hashtag Youth Series.”

Think of the Hashtag Youth Series as a high-tech version of long-popular areawide summer youth series.

But instead of driving to a sister congregation, youth groups watch a recorded lesson and post responses and questions online via Twitter.

“A lot of young people, in a lot of studies that are being done today, don’t know how to articulate or put into words what they believe,” Bond said.

Tweeting — as posting on the online social networking site is known — gives

See **HASHTAG**, Page 23



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Twitter posts by teens watching the Hashtag series appear on the screen behind Scott Bond.

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• **See family photos** of Miami Heat rookie Norris Cole, a faithful Christian whose team defeated the Oklahoma City Thunder in the NBA Finals.

• **Breaking news:** Don't wait to read all the latest news or check out exclusive online features.



RACE RELATIONS: 'A step in the right direction'

FROM PAGE 3

"Atlanta Conference Studies Race: Negroes, Whites Discuss Problems."

That story noted that the first speaker — Hairston — addressed "Spiritual Equality in Christ." The *Chronicle* reported that the minister, then in his 30s, said Christians need to believe in one church, regard racial segregation as a sin and realize that man is a whole being.

Royce Money, former longtime president of Abilene Christian University in Texas, moderated the recent panel discussion. In 1999, Money went to historically black Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, to apologize for ACU's "sins of racism and discrimination of the past."

Among the young scholars was Tanya Smith Brice, a social work professor at Baylor University and a member of the Crestview Church of Christ in Waco, Texas. Brice suggested that social and cultural traditions heavily influenced both black and white congregations.

"Not only were the white congregations silent about the Civil Rights Movement, so were the African-American congregations for the most part," said Brice, who is black. "African-American members of the Church of Christ were largely reluctant to participate in the Civil Rights Movement because it was led by a Baptist minister."

Fred Gray, a longtime elder for the Tuskegee Church of Christ in Alabama, served as Baptist pastor Martin Luther King Jr.'s first civil rights attorney.

"Leaders of this conference can't tell me that ... the Church of Christ didn't play a role in the Civil Rights Movement," Gray said. "Fred Gray is a member of the Church of Christ."

Yet, in a 1985 interview with the *Chronicle*, Gray himself said, "For the most part, members of the Church of Christ are very conservative, so neither in the white church nor in the black church has there been any real active participation in bringing an end to segre-

gation. That has not discouraged me."

Starting in the 1940s, the Nashville Christian Institute educated hundreds of future black church leaders.

The school allowed paternalistic white supporters and passive black beneficiaries to pretend Churches of Christ enjoyed racial unity, said young scholar Wes Crawford, who is white and preaches for the Glenwood Church of Christ in Tyler, Texas.

To some extent, it may be true that blacks did not do much to fight the unjust social order, Hairston acknowledged. "But it's largely true that we couldn't do anything," he said.

The Atlanta minister scoffed at young blacks whom he said suggest they would not have ridden at the back of any bus. "Yeah," Hairston said, "and you would have been out there on a tree somewhere or in a river."

Major Boglin, who is black and serves as family life minister for the majority-white North Atlanta Church of Christ in Georgia, highlighted that congregation's efforts to make its membership and leadership more diverse.

But Hairston said white congregations typically only want blacks who are willing to assimilate to the white culture. Gray said that for some, integration means draining potential black church leaders into white churches.

"Where do you see the reverse of what North Atlanta is trying?" Hairston asked. "Where do you see a black church being integrated by white folks?"

Despite the challenges, Gray sees Churches of Christ as making progress.

"What we are doing here is a step in the right direction," the old warhorse told the young scholars. "At least we are beginning to talk about it. Racism is still alive. It's wrong. And we need to come up with a plan to do away with it."

CONTACT bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org. Read *The Christian Chronicle's* past Dialogue interviews with Brice, Gray and Hairston at www.christianchronicle.org.

CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO — Two Churches of Christ have merged in an effort to “better reach out to the lost souls in San Francisco,” minister Daniel Hung said.

On a recent Sunday, about 130 worshipers celebrated the merger of the predominantly black Columbia Heights Church of Christ and the predominantly Chinese Westside Church of Christ.

The merged congregation will retain the Columbia Heights name.

“Before the celebration started, 10 young leaders of the church bowed their heads in prayer together before entering the auditorium,” Hung said. “They prayed for wisdom to lead this new congregation.”

GEORGIA

AUGUSTA — Tired, hot, drenched-in-sweat young people from Churches of Christ pressed on with their goal of inviting 10,000 people to church, the *Augusta Chronicle* reported.

More than 100 youths from congregations in Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina and Georgia knocked doors for up to six hours a day in a campaign dubbed “Magnify Augusta.”

“It’s the first time we’ve done anything like this,” Jeremy Hinote, youth minister for the Central Church of Christ in Augusta, told the local newspaper. “We do a lot of missions away. As a church, we go to Panama and other places. This is a way to minister to our own backyard.”

NORCROSS — As a domestic missionary for the Peachtree Corners Church of Christ, Terry Davis is reaching out to residents of a trailer park.

The church is sponsoring a 10-week Vacation Bible School at the trailer park. Dubbed “Camp Outreach,” the VBS runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day and features a meal, tutoring and activities as well as Bible study.

“It’s all outdoors, rain or shine,” Davis said. “You should see the tents we operate under the rain.”

LOUISIANA

WEST MONROE — Alan Robertson describes himself as a “Jacob in a family of Esaus.”

The clean-shaven minister, who shared the White’s Ferry Road Church of Christ’s preaching duties with Mike Kellett, told the congregation recently



JEREMY SMITH

With cookies eaten, it’s time to play at VBS

Toddlers practice their train formation as they follow Vacation Bible School teacher Seshia Ledbetter from snacks to games. The recent VBS, hosted by the Canal Heights Church of Christ in Demopolis, Ala., drew an average of 35 children per day, church member Jeremy Smith said.

that he’s leaving his ministry position. Robertson will work alongside his long-bearded brothers and father

**A. Robertson**

in the family’s thriving Duck Commander business — the subject of the successful A&E reality series “Duck Dynasty.”

“I will still remain on as an elder and teach and even preach as much as possible,” Robertson told *The*

Christian Chronicle. His father — Duck Commander Phil Robertson — also serves as a White’s Ferry Road elder.

MINNESOTA

DULUTH — After torrential rains caused more than \$100 million in damages, this flood-ravaged community received a welcome gift.

A tractor-trailer arrived from Nashville, Tenn.-based Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort filled with food, water and

cleaning supplies as well as rakes and shovels, WDIO.com reported.

The East Duluth Church of Christ worked to distribute the items to flood victims. Ron Gerst, the church’s emergency coordinator, said many people’s water wells were contaminated.

“They can’t drink (from) their well, so we have 5,000 bottles of water to give away,” he told WDIO.com.

OKLAHOMA

MANGUM — Todd McRay believes in the POWER of prayer.

McRay, who preaches for the Mangum Church of Christ, leads a prayer ministry called POWER — which stands for Prayers of Workers Encouraging Results.

A widow who told McRay she wished she could do something but felt impaired by her physical limitations inspired the ministry. The minister came up with the idea of a group of people like the widow meeting to pray.

SPOTLIGHT**Fire misses camp**

ALTO, N.M. — The recent Little Bear Fire scorched 44,000 acres and destroyed 254 structures, but it narrowly missed Mountain View Christian Camp, sponsored by the Sunset Church of Christ in Carlsbad, N.M.

The church — whose previous camp, known as Skyridge, burned during massive fires in 2000 — rushed to help the Little Bear Fire victims.

Mountain View camp was transformed into a relief center, offering lodging as well as meals, food and cleaning supplies to fire victims. Volunteers worked up to 15 hours a day.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ELISE HALEY

Water, clothes and other supplies fill the camp’s relief center for fire victims.

When the group meets, McRay presents a list of people, including church leaders, who need prayers. He also distributes names of prospects who might be reached with the Gospel.

TEXAS

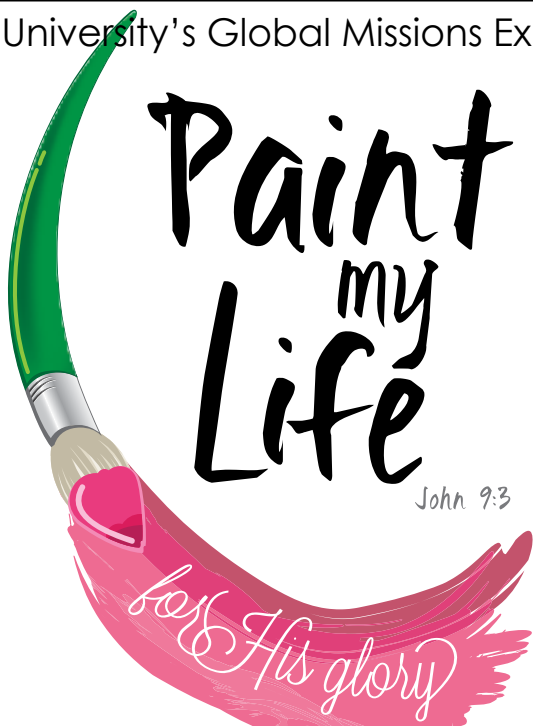
AMARILLO — Three Churches of Christ came together to help the community through “Mission in Amarillo.”

About 60 teens and 20 adults from the Central Church of Christ in Amarillo, the Church of Christ at the Colonies and the University Church of Christ in Canyon joined together for three days of service projects, KVII-TV reported.

“As the church, we feel it is our calling to be of service for the people around us,” said Matt McMahon, a summer youth ministry intern for the Central church.

The goal, he said, “was to go out and not just say, ‘Hey, we care for people in poverty,’ but to actually show them that we’re here and ... we can help.”

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARK YEAKLEY

Some of the 226 volunteers from four states who participated in the Wichita Workcamp scrape and repaint a Kansas home. The Northside Church of Christ hosted the service camp.

Paint, sweat and cheers

Summertime brings picnics, triple-digit temperatures ... and hundreds of teens from Churches of Christ spreading joy through hard work and sweat. Across the nation, many church youth groups take time away from dips in the swimming pool and late-night devotionals to show God's love during work camps. Young people painted homes and performed other manual labor during recent work camps in places such as Decatur, Ala.; Memphis, Tenn.; Parkersburg, W.Va.; San Antonio; and Wichita, Kan.



MARK PARKER

Lela Page, 90, helps during the Mid-Ohio Valley Work Camp in Parkersburg, W.Va.



BRADY ROSS

Teens paint a house during the San Antonio Work Camp. About 170 students participated in the three days of work projects, said Kody Speer, youth minister for the MacArthur Park church.

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PREACHER WANTED

The Blairsville church of Christ, located in the picturesque North Georgia Mountains, is seeking a full-time pulpit minister. The congregation has approximately 130 members, of which about one-third are high school age or younger. Currently there are two elders and three deacons who serve the congregation.

Qualified preachers should submit information, resumes, CDs of sermons or other pertinent documentation of their qualifications to:

Elders
Blairsville church of Christ
P.O. Box 1665
Blairsville, GA 30514
Or send e-mail to russtead@aol.com.

Visit our website at
BlairvillechurchofChrist.com

AUSTRALIA

CRICKVENICA — More than 90 youths from the Australian states of Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and the island of Tasmania attended the annual Cataract Camp, hosted by the Southwest Church of Christ in Ambarvale, Australia.

"You are God's field" was the theme, and participants were challenged to share their faith and serve their churches. Speakers included Graham Wall, Roberto Quintanilla, Tristan Grant and Joel Gough.

BRAZIL

CANDEIAS — Adriano Freire and his wife, Karol, have planted a Church of Christ in Candeias, a community south of Recife. Freire, 25, is a graduate of a ministry training school in Recife overseen by missionary Randy Short.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Adriano and Karol Freire in Candeias.

The church plant uses a "School of the Bible" method, Short said. Members of the community are invited to take free courses on the Bible and are invited to worship with the congregation.

Short preached for the church recently and found that "the little building they are using is filled to standing room only," he said.

INDIA

KOLKATA — Christians in this northeastern Indian city are carrying on the work of Daniel Singh, who died earlier this year. Singh, a school principal, became a Christian after completing World Bible School correspondence lessons. He helped establish 16 congregations in northeastern India and several more in Nepal.

"One congregation is at the border of Bhutan," which



CHRIS DU PREEZ

New life and Good Hope: South Africa campaign yields souls

With a heavenly dose of enthusiasm, minister Sizwe Gqotile leads singing and invites people forward to be baptized during a two-week gospel campaign near the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. Eleven people were baptized during the campaign, said Chris du Preez, a minister and lecturer at the Eastern Cape Bible College in East London, South Africa. Gqotile is a student at the college and minister for a church that meets in his father's home.

An ex-offender who was baptized after being paroled, Gqotile "has diligently applied himself and has done very well," du Preez said. "Sizwe is an exciting gospel preacher and evangelist and often gets invited to speak in the border-area congregations."

does not allow evangelism, said Paul Renganathan, a minister in Chennai, India, who has worked with Singh. "So converts from Bhutan come to this border congregation every Sunday for worship."

Singh's son, James, has coordinated work in northeastern India since his father's death.

NEW ZEALAND

TAURANGA — LTC is coming to NZ. The Tauranga Church of Christ will host its first Leadership Training for Christ convention on Oct. 13.

The church-sponsored training program, which features drama skits, Bible quizzes and song leading, draws thousands of youths to 10 venues in the U.S. each year.

"New Zealand Leadership Training for Christ is progressing right along as we

get more and more wanting to participate," church members said in a recent bulletin.

UKRAINE

KIEV — New Christians in this Eastern European nation are going from prison to the pulpit.

Ukrainian Mission Work, a ministry of the Westworth Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas, recently announced plans to partner with the Obolon Church of Christ in Kiev and Jeremiah's Hope, a church-supported ministry, to plant congregations in rural Ukraine.

The new work primarily uses Christians who were converted through prison ministries.

"We believe we are standing on the brink of opening the eyes of many people who have not previously had the opportunity to hear the Gospel," said

Timothy Johnson, a former missionary to Ukraine.

ZIMBABWE

MARANDURE — Three years ago a Church of Christ in this southern African town launched its inaugural service with an attendance of 18.



Tawanda

"Now we are more than 225, thanks to World Bible School," said minister Godwin Tawanda. The minister praised the Texas-based Bible correspondence ministry, which has assisted in thousands of conversions in sub-Saharan Africa.

To celebrate its third anniversary, the church spent a day in prayer, fasting, singing and Bible lessons, the minister said.

SPOTLIGHT**Kenyan criminals find hope in Christ**

KERICHO, Kenya — Thieves. Murderers. Anti-government rebels. Brothers in Christ.

Thirty-eight inmates at a maximum-security prison in this western Kenyan town were immersed into Christ recently, said David Tonui, principal of the Nairobi Great Commission School. It was the first time the prison, established in 1945, allowed baptisms, Tonui said.

Heavily armed guards surrounded the inmates as they walked to a brightly painted outdoor baptistry, built with funds from the Springtown Church of Christ in Texas.

"After baptism, a number of them took the podium to confess their evil activities," Tonui said. "Some of them had served outside the country of Kenya with anti-government militia groups. Each of them is remorseful and accepts that they are in prison for the wrong that they did."

Alumni of the Great Commission School — Isamel Sang, minister for the Kericho Church of Christ, and Eric Chepkwony — taught the Bible at the prison. After the baptisms, administrators at another prison in the Kenyan city of Nakuru contacted Chepkwony and asked him to bring the Gospel to their facility, Tonui said.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Isamel Sang baptizes a new believer near the Kericho prison.



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The Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences invites applications for a tenure-track position as assistant professor of animal science. It is seeking a visionary animal scientist with the earned Ph.D., Ph.D. / D.V.M. or D.V.M. (from an AVMA-accredited institution with M.S. in animal sciences or closely related field). A master's degree is required; a terminal degree or ABD status is preferred. The successful candidate is expected to become an exceptional teacher who values mentoring and advising students, and is expected to engage in service and scholarly activity with interest in continued growth and enhancement of the department's participation in ACU's undergraduate research program. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/agenv.

Political Science

The Department of Political Science invites applications for a tenure-track position as assistant professor of political science beginning Fall 2012. Applicants should have a Ph.D. (or have completed the Ph.D. by August 2012). Those from all areas of the discipline are invited to apply, and the successful candidate must have a commitment to teaching in an undergraduate environment and demonstrated potential for professional development and/or research activities. Political science is a dynamic department with a strong pre-law program, Certificate in International Relations and Comparative Politics, and a peace and social justice minor. It hosts the Jack Pope Fellows Program, oversees the university's criminal justice program and is actively engaged in ACU's new interdisciplinary Core courses. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/politicalscience.

School of Nursing

*Dr. Becky Hammack, Associate Professor
ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103*

The ACU School of Nursing invites applications for a tenure-track position as assistant/associate professor of nursing beginning Fall 2012 or Spring 2013. Applicants should maintain an active nursing license, be eligible for R.N. licensing in the state of Texas, and have a M.S.N. A Ph.D., D.N.P. or related doctoral degree is preferred, and experienced, qualified applicants currently

pursuing or interested in pursuing a doctoral degree will be considered. Applicants from a variety of nursing sub-specialties (medical-surgical, pediatrics, obstetrics, critical care, community health, and nursing administration), and with advanced practice credentials are encouraged to apply. The successful candidate is expected to work collaboratively in shared governance with faculty of the nursing school to work toward the Christian mission of the university. The School of Nursing encourages applicants who are willing to facilitate exceptional student learning environments, value mentoring and advising students, and are willing to engage in service for the university, profession and community. Applicants will be expected to pursue scholarly interests, and engage students in these activities. Information about the school is available at acu.edu/nursing.

School of Social Work

*Dr. Stephanie Hamm, Director
ACU Box 27866, Abilene, Texas 79699-7866*

The ACU School of Social Work invites applications for a tenure-track position as assistant/associate professor of social work beginning Fall 2012. Applicants should have an M.S.W. and an earned doctorate in social work or related field. A Ph.D. or related doctoral degree is preferred, but applicants who are ABD will be considered. Responsibilities include teaching social work courses at both the B.S.S.W. and M.S.S.W. levels, pursuing scholarly research, and performing service for the university, profession and community. Applicants should have experience in diverse areas of social work practice, be able to teach across the curriculum, and engage the broader community in which the school partners. Information about the school is available at acu.edu/socialwork.

Library

*Dr. John B. Weaver, Dean of Library Services
and Educational Technology
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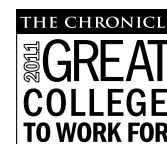
The Margaret and Herman Brown Library invites applications for a tenure-track position as instruction and outreach librarian beginning Fall 2012. The Instruction and Outreach Librarian will lead the library's instruction and information literacy program for undergraduate and graduate students using best practices in face-to-face, hybrid, and online teaching and learning. This faculty member also promotes the library

through workshops and other innovative initiatives that increase student engagement and enhance academic quality. This position reports to the public services librarian who reports to the associate dean for library services. The successful candidate is expected to be an effective leader with a master's degree from an ALA-accredited program (additional master's degree from an accredited university is preferred), demonstrated experience with information literacy instruction and instructional design, successful experience promoting and marketing library programs and services, demonstrated experience with best practices in library service assessment and evaluation methods, fluency with information and communication technologies, demonstrated familiarity and innovation with emerging technologies, and a demonstrated appreciation for ACU's academic and Christian mission. Information about Brown Library is available at acu.edu/library.

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

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The Himalayas poke above the clouds, as seen from the window of a flight between Kathmandu, Nepal, and New Delhi. The mountain range includes the world's highest peak, Mount Everest.

A MONARCHY NO MORE, the mountainous nation of Nepal wrestles with its future as a small Church of Christ struggles to serve

The (other) kingdom in Kathmandu

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD
THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

KATHMANDU, Nepal

Krishna Gopal steps out in faith — every time he crosses the street. On a Wednesday afternoon, the minister wades into a dusty road near his home in this Asian capital, choked with fast-moving mopeds, rickshaws and the occasional cow.

He passes a merchant selling tiny tomatoes from a basket on his bicycle. Across the street, at the multi-story Citycentre mall, movie posters boast the latest Bollywood imports from neighboring India — plus James Cameron's "Avatar" in 3D.

Gopal, 63, dodges his way through the dizzying mix of antique and modern, fast and slow, and arrives at a red-brick hospital. A member of the congregation he shepherds, the Kamal Pokhari Church of Christ, is in the intensive care

unit after a drug overdose. He talks with a nurse to make sure the patient is improving.

For 41 years, Gopal has preached, conducted Bible studies at kitchen tables and sat at the bedsides of the sick in this nation of 29.8 million souls, home to the world's highest peak, Mount Everest. He and his coworkers have planted doz-

ens of churches across Nepal — in Kathmandu and the remote villages in the Himalayas.

"My two passions are trekking and preaching," he says.

An ethnic Newar — an indigenous people of the Kathmandu valley — he grew up like most of his people, worshipping the god Taleju.

Walking through the city's

historic Durbar Square, he points to a large pagoda with elaborate carvings of the multi-armed goddess. He used to sleep in the temple as his parents participated in weeklong ceremonies dedicated to Taleju, known as Durga in India.

Much has changed since the days when Nepal's king lived in a grand palace near the pagoda.

Today the palace is a museum and the 239-year-old monarchy is history, swept away in 2008 after a decade-long insurrection by Maoist rebels. The Maoists, bearing the iconic hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union, are part of the country's new government, which struggles to write a new constitution.

Gopal's life also has changed since the days when he slept in the temple near the royal palace. As a young man, he found a pamphlet that told him about a different, eternal kingdom.

"I was worshipping a dead god," he realized after reading it. "I need a living God."

He searched for a Bible and found only one shop in Kathmandu that carried them. He swept the floors of the shop for a month to earn

enough money to buy a New Testament in his language.

"I read it and was really touched by the message," he says.

He shared the message with any who would listen. That got him in trouble with Nepali authorities, then opposed to public evangelism by "that cow-eating religion" from the West.

He spent three years in a jail near the pagoda where he once worshiped Taleju. In 1971 he was released, undeterred. Soon he met missionaries from Churches of Christ and was baptized.

"I don't want more. I don't want less," he says. "I just want the Church of Christ."

A COUNTER-CULTURAL FAITH

It's not that Nepalis are opposed to Christianity, says Susanna Phoboo, one of Gopal's three daughters, sitting in the upper-story living room of the family's home, near the Citycentre mall.

"On Dec. 25, all the malls of Kathmandu are lined with Christmas trees," she says. But during a Hindu holy month, celebrated with animal sacrifices, "the streets are awash in blood."

Outsiders mistakenly think of Nepalis as Hindu or Buddhist, Phoboo says. Most are both — incorporating elements of the two faiths — and have no problem including Christian principles into their pantheon of belief.

"Really living like a Christian — that's a problem," she says.

Believers don't participate in the rituals or eat meat sacrificed to idols. They must exclude themselves from their people's culture — often a source of friction in Nepal's tight-knit families.

When Gopal and his wife, Kamala, became Christians, his father-in-law refused to eat in the same room with them. The couple had become "untouchable," the minister says.

Patiently, Gopal tried to raise his family with Christian beliefs. Eventually, his example bore fruit, and his father-in-law was



Gopal



Members of the Kamal Pokhari Church of Christ gather for Wednesday night Bible study in Kathmandu, Nepal.



A 12-foot high statue of Bhairav, a six-armed manifestation of the Hindu god Shiva, symbolizing annihilation, stands in Kathmandu's Durbar Square.

baptized. He took the statues of his former gods and cast them into the river near his home.

To his father-in-law's relief, nothing happened. Soon the whole family was baptized, including Ichabod Shrestha, Gopal's brother-in-law.

Shrestha now works with a small Church of Christ in Chakhu, a village near Nepal's border with the Tibet region of China. When asked why he went against his culture and

became a Christian 26 years ago, he answers quickly.

"Because I wanted to save my spirit," he says.

FROM MAO TO CHRIST

Below the family's living room, the Kamal Pokhari Church of Christ gathers for Wednesday night Bible study.

The Christians pour over 2 Timothy 2, in which the apostle Paul urges his apprentice to "join with me in suffering, like a

good soldier of Christ Jesus."

The 25 souls in the small room, like Gopal and his family, have suffered for their faith.

Suraj Bahadur Basnet, who leads the Bible study, grew up in a Hindu family. He knew that leaving the faith would alienate him from his parents, but as he studied Scripture, "slowly, slowly I accepted that there is a Savior, there is a God," he says.

Now he spends weekends and vacations from his job to preach in Nepal's rural villages.

When she's not studying the Bible, Bimala Shrestha Ghimire goes from house to house, checking on people who have visited the church and inviting them back. Her husband is not a Christian but accepts her beliefs.

"The brothers and sisters here, their love makes me stronger," she says.

Kamal Panta was a Maoist before he met Gopal and studied the Bible.

"I learned the truth and the real life in Christianity and a real God," says Panta, a taxi driver. Now he and his wife, Sabitri, are members of the church.

Their son, Bimal, grew up in the congregation.

"I have spent so much time here since my childhood," the 21-year-old says after leading the closing prayer after the Bible lesson. "Society here is so different from the people I am friends with. Most of my friends are worldly people. They say, 'You are my best friend, but don't try to preach to me.'"

Increasingly, Nepali society reflects the West — from movies to clothing, he says. Modern Kathmandu faces new forms of idolatry, including money and self-indulgence. Big-city problems accompany these idols — including petty crime and drug overdoses.

Despite the temptations, Bimal Panta and Susanna Phoboo say they remain loyal to the eternal kingdom for which their parents sacrificed.

"Going to another religion is not an option," Phoboo says. "There is only one truth."



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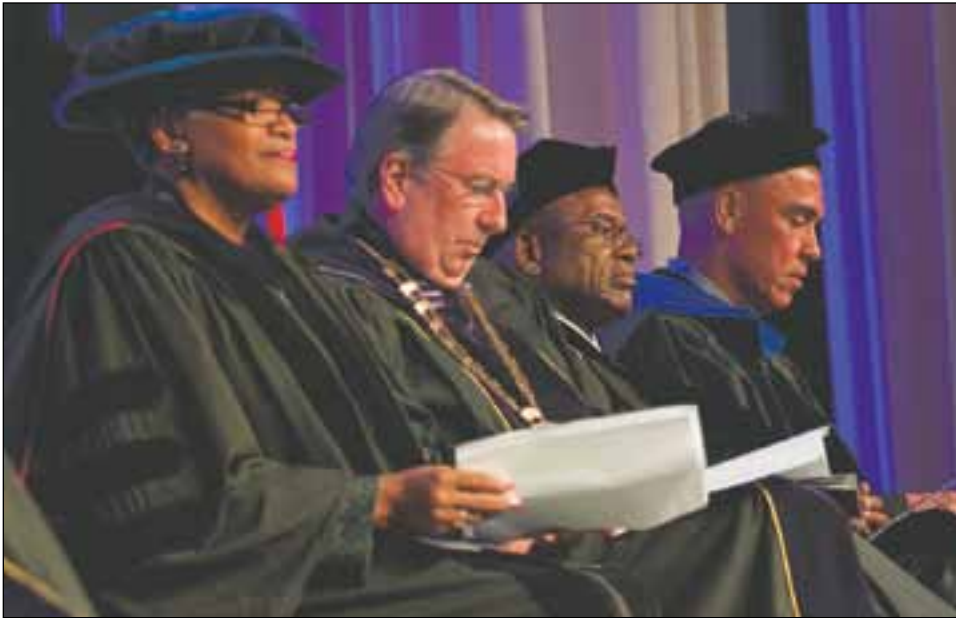
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FRED GRAY: Lipscomb honors civil rights attorney



KRISTI JONES

Tanya Smith Brice, social work professor at Baylor University and member of the Crestview Church of Christ in Waco, Texas, presents a paper on racial reconciliation in Churches of Christ.



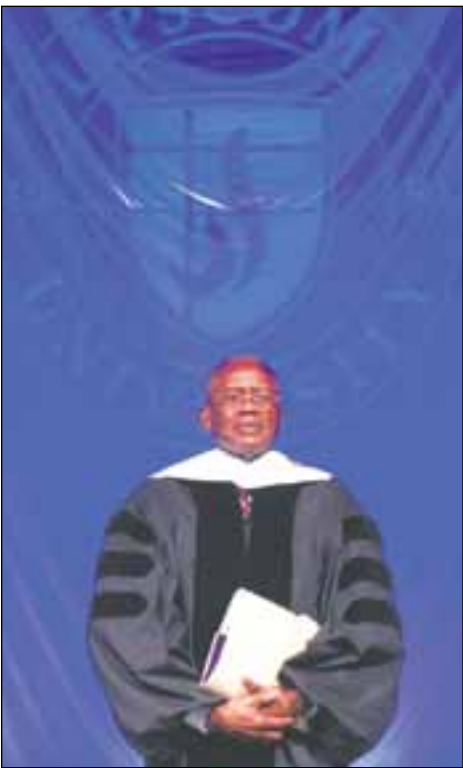
KRISTI JONES

At the ceremony are Norma Burgess, dean of Lipscomb's College of Arts and Sciences; Lipscomb President Randy Lowry; Fred Gray; and David Fleer, scholars conference director.



KRISTI JONES

Fred Gray, center, flashes a smile during a panel discussion on racial relations in Churches of Christ. At left is Andrew Hairston, longtime minister for the Simpson Street Church of Christ in Atlanta. At right is Doug Foster, church history professor at Abilene Christian University.



KRISTI JONES

Fred Gray receives congratulations from the crowd as he accepts the honorary degree.

FROM PAGE 1

Alabama boy who grew up in a shotgun house with no running water?

For a boy who rode segregated buses and witnessed the frequent mistreatment of black people?

For a boy who, before he became a lawyer determined to “destroy everything segregated” he could find, performed manual labor in the yards of Lipscomb professors?

“If each of us would be really honest ... we would say that we never thought this would be possible,” Gray said of the Lipscomb honor.

However, he was quick to add, “We serve a God with whom all things are possible. Notwithstanding whatever our adversaries may have been, things can be different. Individuals can change. And so can institutions.”

THE REMEDY FOR HISTORY

A longtime elder for the Tuskegee Church of Christ in Alabama, Gray served as the first civil rights attorney for Martin Luther King Jr.

He’s perhaps best known for representing Rosa Parks, the black seamstress who refused to give up her Montgomery, Ala., bus seat to a white man in 1955.

Lipscomb recognized Gray during the 32nd annual Thomas H. Oilbricht

Christian Scholars Conference, focused on the theme “Reconciliation: At the Intersection of Scholarship and Practice.”

In honoring Gray, Lipscomb sought to underscore its commitment to racial reconciliation.

The conference highlighted the importance of apologies and forgiveness in allowing both sides of a conflict to move forward, Lipscomb President Randy Lowry said.

“But the part that leaves me a bit unsettled is the sense that we could gloss over that particular moment and move back into a life that was the same as the moment before,” said Lowry, Lipscomb’s president since 2005. “It seems to me that the remedy for history, well, it is forgiveness, but it is also attempting to be reconciled, and it is also commitment to move forward in a different way.”

In the audience was Harold Hazelip, who served as Lipscomb’s president from 1987 to 1997 and later as chancellor.

In 2001, Lowry noted, Hazelip traveled with then-President Steve Flatt to historically black Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, “to make this university’s formal apology to our African-American brothers and sisters for the horror, the terror, the disappointment, the sorrow and the shameful history that we have had as a segregated institution.”

Today, African-American students make up 8 percent of Lipscomb’s undergraduate enrollment. In the last school year, 216 black students received \$1.6 million in institutional financial aid.

Nonetheless, suspicion has lingered among some black church members, much of it tied to the handling of the Nashville Christian Institute’s closing.

Wes Crawford, minister for the Glenwood Church of Christ in Tyler, Texas, examined the closing as part of

his Vanderbilt University doctoral dissertation in church history and homiletics.

From the end of the 19th century until the late 1960s, most black members of Churches of Christ acquiesced to white-imposed segregation, paternalism and racism out of necessity, Crawford reported in a paper titled “Shattering the Illusion of Unity: The Closing of the Nashville Christian Institute.”

But the institute’s closing “brought their feelings of resentment to the surface,” the white minister said.

“The board’s decision to close NCI and the subsequent lawsuit created a deep wound in Churches of Christ that has fes-

tered for over 40 years,” Crawford wrote.

Given that history, Crawford characterized the tribute to Gray as “monumental.”

“The fact that Lipscomb University, of all places, granted Dr. Gray such an esteemed honor certainly indicates we have come a long way,” Crawford said.

But Tanya Smith Brice, who is black and presented a paper titled “Race Relations in Churches of Christ: Strategies Towards Reconciliation,” voiced skepticism.

“We, as a body, have kept a friendly distance from each other,” said Brice, a social work professor at Baylor University and a member of the Crestview Church of Christ in Waco, Texas. “We have parallel structures — one that is white and one that is African-American. We pretend as if we are one body, but we are not.”

ONE OF MARSHALL KEEBLE’S ‘BOY PREACHERS’

From 1943 to 1948, Gray attended the Nashville Christian Institute, an elementary and secondary school.

He traveled with longtime school President Marshall Keeble as one of the influential black evangelist’s famed “boy preachers.” Before his death in 1968, Keeble baptized thousands.

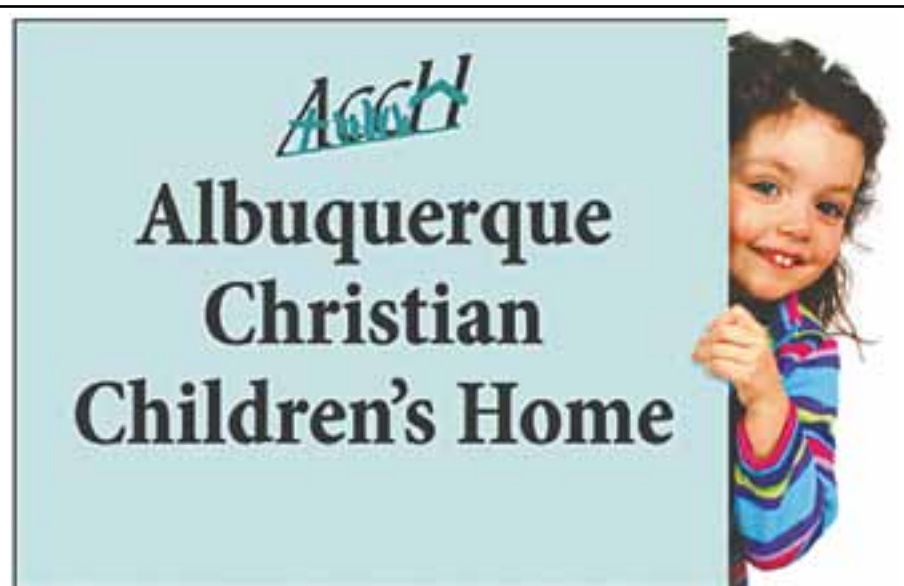
In 1967, the white-controlled board of the Nashville Christian Institute voted to close the school and transfer its assets to



Crawford



Jones



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PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR. AND KEATON ROSS

Young people hold hands as they pray during GO! Camp at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn. The camp mixes interactive labs and service projects with fun and activities.

Hey, campers: Let's GO! change the world

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

HENDERSON, Tenn.

Kassidy Morgan is unlikely to forget what she learned at GO! Camp, a weeklong service camp at Freed-Hardeman University. After all, the camp motto is tattooed on her left arm.

Love God. Love your neighbor. Change the world.

Morgan, 18, a member of the West Seventh Church of Christ in Columbia, Tenn., decided to make that message permanent after attending last year's inaugural GO! Camp.

"It's been different from any other camp I've ever been to," the recent high school graduate said. "I've grown up in the church, and I've been a part of a ton of camps, but I've never been to one that not only talks about what you can

do but also shows you how."

Here in rural West Tennessee, Morgan joined more than 350 young people from 25 Churches of Christ in eight states at the recent second annual GO! Camp.

The camp mixed fun — such as frequent Twitter updates, a homemade, James Bond-style movie and big-screen videos recounting each day's hijinks — with manual labor and "idea labs with world changers."

Campers chatted live via Skype — an online video service — with missionaries around the world, including an American who arranges free heart surgeries for children in war-torn Iraq.

The teens donated more than 3,000 bottles of water to an Arkansas-based homeless outreach unit called The Van.

One night, all the students and counselors drove to nearby Jackson, Tenn.,

CONTINUED



Students Lauren Martinez and Kathleen Childress make their mark on The Van, a mobile homeless outreach unit that visited the camp.

CONTINUED
and cheered at a baseball game played by children with special needs. For many youth groups, Bible camp means swimming in creeks, bunking in rustic cabins and singing praises to God around campfires. Other teens sleep in Christian university dormitories and eat in campus dining halls as they flock to leadership and service camps with names such as Cornerstone, Encounter, Genesis, Horizons, Impact, Kadesh, Soul Quest and Zenith.

GO! Camp teaches young people how to recognize needs in their own community and take action, director Brad Montague said. "Everything is about, 'How can I take this home? What does this look like there?'" said Montague, a former youth minister. "That's the big push."

DREAMING BIGGER
Months ago, GO! Camp organizers set a goal of raising \$30,000 to feed starving children. The idea was that the funds would be used to buy bulk quantities of rice,

vegetables, soy and chicken. Campers would measure the bulk supplies into smaller meal packets, then box the packets and ship them to destinations such as Haiti and Africa. Via Facebook and Twitter, word of the project spread. Jenna Ellison and Kelli Clausel, youth group members at the Savannah Church of Christ in



Kelli Clausel and Jenna Ellison hoped to raise \$500 to help feed starving children. With support from their church and community, they far exceeded their goal.



Kassidy Morgan shows off the camp motto, tattooed on her left arm.

Tennessee, decided to host a benefit banquet at their church. Their initial goal: \$500. Church deacon Lonnie Miller encouraged them to dream bigger. With help from other teens and adults, Ellison and Clausel sold banquet tickets, accepted donations and conducted a silent auction. Aspiring country singer Savanna



Student and musician Randall Turner, a member of the Wood Avenue Church of Christ in Florence, Ala., provides a special soundtrack as the campers pack meals.

Smallwood, who attends the Jacksonburg Church of Christ in Florence, Ala., performed. "Our idea just sparked and blew up," said Clausel, 16. "It just gave everyone ... a chance to give something." "Our church came together, and our community came together," said Ellison, 17. "I don't know what happened. God happened."

The banquet raised \$25,000. In all, GO! Camp supporters collected nearly \$52,000 for the food project. At Freed-Hardeman, campers packed 139,968 meals — enough to feed 384 children for a year. "You see the kids come to life when they realize they can live beyond themselves and get involved in something bigger than they are,"



Students at GO! Camp paint messages on The Van, a vehicle used by an Arkansas couple to deliver food, water and supplies to homeless people.



Chuck Morris, with his twin daughters, Katie and Claire, both 13.

said Beth Haley, a Freed-Hardeman graduate. "They find their purpose." Haley found her purpose as the founder of Exile International, which provides art and expressive therapy to former child soldiers and war-affected children. A member of the Otter Creek Church of Christ in Brentwood, Tenn., Haley shared her experiences with the campers. "I'm really excited to talk to the kids about what they can do, in big ways and small ways," said Haley, who had just returned from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. "That's how you change the world, in big ways and small ways."

SALT AND LIGHT
After GO! Camp last year, Katie and Claire Morris decided to gather eyeglasses to send to poor countries. The twin sisters, now 13, dubbed their project "Blind But Now I See." "I was thinking, 'I wear glasses and contacts. What would it be like without them?'" Katie said. "That inspired me to start it." The girls designed a logo and placed



Young people pack meals for poor countries during GO! Camp. Campers and other supporters raised \$50,000 to buy bulk supplies of rice, vegetables, soy and chicken. The campers measure the items and place them into smaller meal packets.

collection boxes at their school. Hundreds of donations later, Katie and Claire remain committed to the cause, said their father, Chuck Morris, a Bible teacher at Jackson Christian School and youth minister for the Crosswinds Church of Christ in Three Way, Tenn. "So many times our camps are very introspective as to *my* relationship with God, *my* spiritual growth. This is almost the next step," Morris said.

"I think these kids really get the message of Christ — I want you to be salt and light — and they're not satisfied with letting the lights hang in a church building and letting the salt sit in a shaker," he added. "They want to be out making a difference." Ellison, who made a difference by organizing the benefit banquet in Savannah, agreed. "Other camps I have been to, it's all about changing your life, like 'get

right with God,'" she said. "That's a great thing, but this camp is more about 'you get God, and then you go and take him to everybody else.'" Morgan got her tattoo on April 7, her birthday. "I planned it for a while because I knew it was something that I wanted a constant reminder of," she said. "It's very simple, but it means a lot." *Love God. Love your neighbor. Change the world.*



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NBA ROOKIE: 'Seeing him serving the Lord's church, it spoke volumes'

FROM PAGE 1

and faithful to the principles taught to him by his parents, Norris Sr. and Diane Cole, and reinforced by the brethren at the Webster Street Church of Christ in Dayton, Ohio, and more recently, the Miami Gardens Church of Christ in suburban Miami.

"A lot of people have grown up and decided not to keep the Christian faith, but you have to separate yourself," Cole said before the opening game of the NBA Finals in Oklahoma City.

"It's like being in the NBA," he said. "Not everybody can play in the NBA. You have to discipline yourself so that you can sustain and that you can make it. The same thing goes for Christianity."

MISSING PRACTICE FOR BIBLE STUDY

Faith always has been a priority for Cole, who while growing up attended the 60-member Webster Street church every Sunday and Wednesday with his parents and two older sisters. Cole gave devotional talks, led singing and represented the congregation in an annual Bible Bowl event hosted by the Northridge Church of Christ in Dayton.

"We come from the village mentality," Diane Cole said. "It takes a village. We had a lot of support with our kids, and we were open and receptive to that support. We have a very close-knit church and family. At a church like that, you can grow up and do things and have a good time and fun together, so they have friendships that will last a lifetime."

So close, in fact, that Norris



MICHAEL LAUGHLIN, SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL

Norris Cole takes a shot in front of Thunder forward Nick Collison during Game 5 of the NBA Finals in Miami.

Cole — during a key stretch of the Heat's Eastern Conference Finals series against the Boston Celtics — made sure to contact close family friend Rachel Melson Blanks in early June after she had to undergo an emergency Caesarean section.

"He has a million things to worry about, and he took time out to ask how I was doing and the baby was doing," Blanks said, holding her new daughter. "That speaks to his character. He is just a superior individual, not just on the court but off the court. He is loyal, faithful and honest. He always puts other people in front of himself."

His peers in high school noticed. Cole played alongside current Thunder guard Daequan Cook at Dunbar High School in Dayton, and Cook used to wonder why Cole never showed up for Wednesday night practices.

"I always wanted to know where he was, but I realized that he had to go to Bible study with his grandmother, so he had to miss practice with the team," Cook said. "We respected that. We knew that. Basketball was just an extra-curricular activity for him."



Cook

LEADING BY EXAMPLE — IN THE PEWS

Cole received only one NCAA Division I basketball scholarship offer, from little-known Cleveland State.

In 2009, he led the Vikings to their first NCAA tournament berth in 23 years. He was named the Horizon League's player of the year and defensive player of the year in 2011.

In last year's NBA draft, he was taken 28th overall in the first round by the Chicago Bulls, then traded twice on draft night — first to the Minnesota Timberwolves, then to the Heat.

After landing a roster spot alongside superstars LeBron James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh, Cole played in 65

of Miami's 66 regular-season games, tied for tops on the team. He started twice and averaged 6.8 points per game.

He played in 19 of the Heat's 23 playoff games. In Game 4 of the Finals, he hit a 3-pointer late in the first quarter and another early in the second quarter to start a 16-0 run by the Heat after they had fallen behind by 17 points. Miami went on to win the game, as well as the series clincher two nights later, in which Cole had another 3-pointer.

One of his priorities upon arriving in south Florida was finding a church home where he could just be a regular person and not a celebrity.

"When I first met him, he had walked into Bible study class, and he has that baby face," said Gale Nelson, the Miami Gardens minister. "I thought he was a teenager, and I addressed him as 'young man.' I didn't realize he was a basketball player. There was no ego with him. That's a sign of good parenting."

Nelson said Cole Sr. told him to put Cole to work, and that's what the Miami Gardens church has tried to do, while

avoiding the temptation of using Cole's fame.

"You talk about leading by example," Nelson said. "Norris led a prayer one evening. The young men know who he is, and seeing him in the congregation, seeing him serving in the Lord's church, it spoke volumes."

"To see him as a brother, they realize it's not a show. The Lord is no respecter of persons. He's a brother who is willing and able to work in the church."

WINNING THE PRIZE

The frenetic NBA schedule sometimes prevents Cole from being at church services, but he's determined to remain focused on his faith.

"It can be very tough," Cole said. "But what I do is, every sermon that I miss, the Miami Gardens church gives me a DVD so I can go back and watch. My mother, she gives me a daily Scripture reading and devotional for every day. They help me stay spiritually minded and keep me on task."

Those in Cole's church family back in Dayton cite Matthew 6:33 and call him an example of how God will bless a person who seeks the Lord first.

"He learned early on that you put God first and things will work out," said Richard Melson, the minister at the Webster Street church. "He is an intelligent young man. He is recognized around the city, not just as a basketball player but as a very positive influence among his peers. He has always been the right kind of example in faith, purity and love, like Paul talks about."

Cole now has won the prize of which thousands of basketball players dream. But he hasn't forgotten where he came from or what got him where he is.

"I love them back at Western Street," he said. "I have a pretty good following at home. They take care of me. That's why I like going back, so I can take care of them."



DAN ANTHONY, DANANTHONYPHOTOS.COM

Norris Cole celebrates during a victory parade in Miami.

GBN: Network has a place in history of TV outreach among Churches of Christ

FROM PAGE 3

A part of the production team's responsibilities is helping speakers adjust to the studio environment.

"Our job ... is to make the transition as comfortable as possible," Kelley said.

Alan Pitchford, youth minister at Chattanooga's East Ridge Church of Christ, recently visited GBN to record lessons for the "Focus on Faith" show.

Speaking about how the Old Testament sheds light on the New, it was the youth minister's first time to proclaim the Gospel in a TV studio.

As Pitchford spoke, his image — echoing on the screen in varied camera angles — illuminated a large monitor in the darkened GBN control room. Adam Vaughn sat directing at the console,

behind him a "peanut gallery" for guests, Kelley said.

Pitchford pointed out the contrast between the void beyond the studio lights and a Sunday auditorium full of faces.

"I kind of feed off the conversational aspect of speaking," he said. "Looking at the camera, speaking, you don't know ... if there's a thousand eyes looking back at you. Or a million. Or four.

"You sow the seed a little more blindly, and you hope that ... God uses that in some way."

Because viewers can watch GBN in multiple ways — including cable TV, Internet, even smartphones — measur-

ing the audience is difficult.

Users on five continents have accessed the GBN website, Blackwell said.

Owners of Apple devices in 50 countries downloaded the GBN app the first day it became available, the executive director added, surprised that China ranked second in downloads behind the U.S.

Blackwell credits GBN with the potential to reach half a billion "outlets," or devices capable of receiving the network or its shows. He bases the figure on hundreds of millions of mobile devices in the world capable of running GBN apps, along with viewers who watch on television and computers.

HISTORY OF 'PREACHING THE GOSPEL'

GBN forms a recent episode in the decades-long story of radio and television outreach in Churches of Christ.

Herald of Truth Ministries, which began in radio and expanded to television, recently celebrated 50 years on the air.

Though the Gospel Broadcasting Network has no ties to the Herald of Truth, early materials from the ministry — in display cases in GBN's lobby — detail the history of gospel television production.

In the cases, a copy of the New Testament in multiple translations bears the handwritten name — dated June 1968 — of pioneering Herald of Truth



Memorabilia from the early days of broadcasting in Churches of Christ — including books by and about well-known television and radio speaker Batsell Barrett Baxter — adorn a GBN display case.

speaker Batsell Barrett Baxter.

Nearby is a relic from a bygone broadcasting age, a 16 millimeter film can for a 29-minute black-and-white show for Herald of Truth titled "The Christian Businessman."

Close to the Baxter materials is a commemorative plate from the "Amazing Grace Bible Class," a television program that began in the 1970s featuring Ira North, longtime minister for the Madison Church of Christ in Tennessee. Adorning the plate are pictures of North and song leader Ray Walker.

Further down the row of cases is a poster from "Preaching the Gospel," GBN's flagship program. Beside the poster is a collection of sermons from the show's speaker, evangelist James Watkins.

'SOULS, NOT POCKETBOOKS'

Today, GBN produces about 25 shows. Under the oversight

of the Southaven Church of Christ in Mississippi, GBN recently announced acquisition of a new facility closer to the Southaven church. The Highland Church of Christ in Dalton, Ga., initially directed the outreach.

In addition to its own programs, the network airs content from congregations and smaller studios. Contributed programming must measure up to network technical standards as well as communicate "sound, true, biblically faithful material," Blackwell said.

The titles in the lineup suggest GBN's commitment to teaching the Bible. Among the network's own shows are "Searching the Scriptures" and "Thy Word is Truth." Congregations in Texas produce "According to the Scriptures" and "Give Me the Bible." And "Getting to Know Your Bible" comes from a studio in Tennessee.

Among GBN shows with a different format is "Digger Doug's Underground," a children's program. "On the Lord's Day" features recorded worship, including services from the Brown Trail Church of Christ in Bedford, Texas and the Forest Hill Church of Christ in Memphis,



PHOTOS BY TED PARKS

A prop for a GBN children's show



GBN's Adam Vaughn directs a segment for "Focus on Faith" from the console in the network's production control room.

according to the GBN website.

Three times a week, the network airs "In Search of the Lord's Way," perhaps the best-known television program among Churches of Christ.

Blackwell acknowledged the struggles of taking the good news non-stop to the world's televisions, computers and smartphones.

"We are living in a very difficult economy," Blackwell said. "Funding the work is probably one of the greatest challenges that we face."

The executive director called attention to GBN's approach to fundraising, one that stands out in the broader world of religious broadcasting. GBN never solicits money on the air.

While the website accepts online gifts, the network requests that only members of Churches of Christ donate.

Director of operations Mark

Teske said audiences quickly notice the GBN difference.

Not asking viewers for funds is "really making us distinct from a viewer's perspective," Teske said. "From an evangelistic perspective, it goes a long ways to showing people we're interested in souls, not pocketbooks."

Whatever the challenges, for GBN, the ministry's staff remains focused on the network's mission — to persuade a skeptical world that God exists, teach people the Bible and encourage congregations to remain faithful to Scriptural patterns of worship and divine principles for living.

"There's not a lot of bells and whistles. ... It's the gospel being preached," said Vern Schrimsher, an elder for Southaven church. "I just pray that everybody will have that opportunity to hear it at least once."

HASHTAG: 'So excited to be saved!' teen tweets

FROM PAGE 3

them a creative outlet to do so, he said.

"And they have to do it in under 140 characters," he added. "Short and simple. It's really amazing."

SMALL START, SURPRISING SUCCESS

The Spring Meadows church launched the Hashtag Youth Series as a 12-week, high-definition video series featuring different speakers from Churches of Christ.

For those unfamiliar with Twitter, a hashtag is a special symbol used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet. Everyone using the same hashtag — or searching for it — can follow the conversation.

Tackling topics such as #RESCUE, #RELATIONSHIP and #RECONCILIATION, the speakers recorded lessons in a makeshift studio at the church south of Nashville.

Series coordinator Bond said he initially expected a dozen churches — the speakers' home congregations — to participate.

"It started out really small, but it has grown to so much more than we could have imagined," said Bond, pointing to registrations by churches in 27 states and 10 countries. "Churches of Christ are actually starting to be evened out by the number of Baptists and Methodists and Presbyterians."

On this night, the featured speaker was Joseph Horton, youth and family minister for the Winchester Church of Christ in Tennessee.

During Horton's lesson, Spring Meadows member Lacey Paige Barr, 16, tweeted: *"We're all slaves to sin. Jesus can set us free! #redemption #gospelhashtag"*

After class, Barr described the series as "really uplifting."

"It's really cool to know that other people across the world ... are watching the same thing and believe the same thing that you do," she said.

PLANTING HIGH-TECH SEEDS

More than 150 miles away, Lacey Wood, 17, a member of the Midway Church of Christ in Jasper, Ala., boiled down the lesson this way: *"Prison+Price+Person=Redemption #redemption #gospelhashtag"*

Wood describes her passions as painting, singing and "getting as many souls to heaven as possible." She said 30 to 40 teens in her county meet each week at a different church building and watch the series.

"For me, I have had many signs of catching people's attention," Wood said of her tweets. "I've had retweets, and even others have responded by writing notes like 'You have amazing tweets' and 'I'll definitely go check Hashtag out.'"

A website — hashtagyouthseries.com — pro-



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Spring Meadows Church of Christ members pray after the baptism of Monica Cope, in the yellow shirt.

vides study materials, links to "tweets of the week" and speaker biographies.

The lessons also are available — for free — on Internet channels such as YouTube and Vimeo.

A church could begin the series at any time or start in the middle — to allow live interaction — and then go back and catch the lessons missed, Spring Meadows minister Dale Jenkins said.

"We kill our youth ministers in the summer," Jenkins said. "Scott has been gone on a youth mission and a work camp and a camp itself. And then we do Vacation Bible School."

With everything else going on, Hashtag means the youth minister does not have to prepare another lesson, he said.

Andrew Thompson, youth and family minister for the Priceville Church of Christ in Alabama, learned of the series through Facebook.

"I saw this as a great opportunity to evangelize not only to the youth group but to their friends in a way that would be appealing to them," Thompson said. "We live in a society today that is all about social media and technology, and Hashtag incorporates them both."

About 20 Priceville teens are getting together each week to watch the series, which Thompson said is a "truly amazing" number for the 100-member congregation.

"This has opened up the kids' comfort zone, and they are inviting people," he said. "We are planting the seed and asking God to give the increase."

At the Spring Meadows church, members gathered before class to witness the baptism of Monica Cope, a high school sophomore.

Cope, who began visiting on Wednesday nights a few months ago, decided to confess her sins and be immersed after watching the first two Hashtag lessons.

That afternoon, she tweeted: *"Getting baptized tonight. :-y) #gospelhashtag today too. So excited to be saved!"*



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FEATURED GUESTS AND THEME SPEAKERS

- Elaine Heath
- Walter Brueggemann
- Dallas Willard
- Mitch Wilburn
- Collin Packer
- Chris Goldman
- Jeff Christian
- Jerry Taylor



ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Meredith Rodriguez keeps her bags packed, waiting for the next travel opportunity to present itself. The 28-year-old is a polyglot, speaking English, Spanish and Mandarin.

Along with her two sisters and two brothers, she was raised as a missionary kid in Puebla, Mexico. Later the family moved back to California, where as a teen she attended the Conejo Valley Church of Christ and Sunday service at the Hollywood Church of Christ, where her father Dan, a professor at nearby Pepperdine University, preached. She spent her summers traveling on "Religions of the World" tours through China, Japan and India alongside her father, who taught the class.

In 2007, she graduated from Pepperdine, where she served as a reporter and editor of various university publications. She finished her English major in London, where she interned at a publishing house.

Hired by the *Kansas City Star*, she attended seminars and conferences for minority journalists and used her Spanish to write stories about the Hispanic and immigrant communities in the area. She left the newspaper in September 2010 to learn Mandarin in Shanghai.

She has taught English to engineering students. She also has tried her hand at traditional Chinese dishes — with help from her students. She has written freelance articles for *China Daily* and *CNNgo* and is a business columnist for *Shanghai Family* magazine.

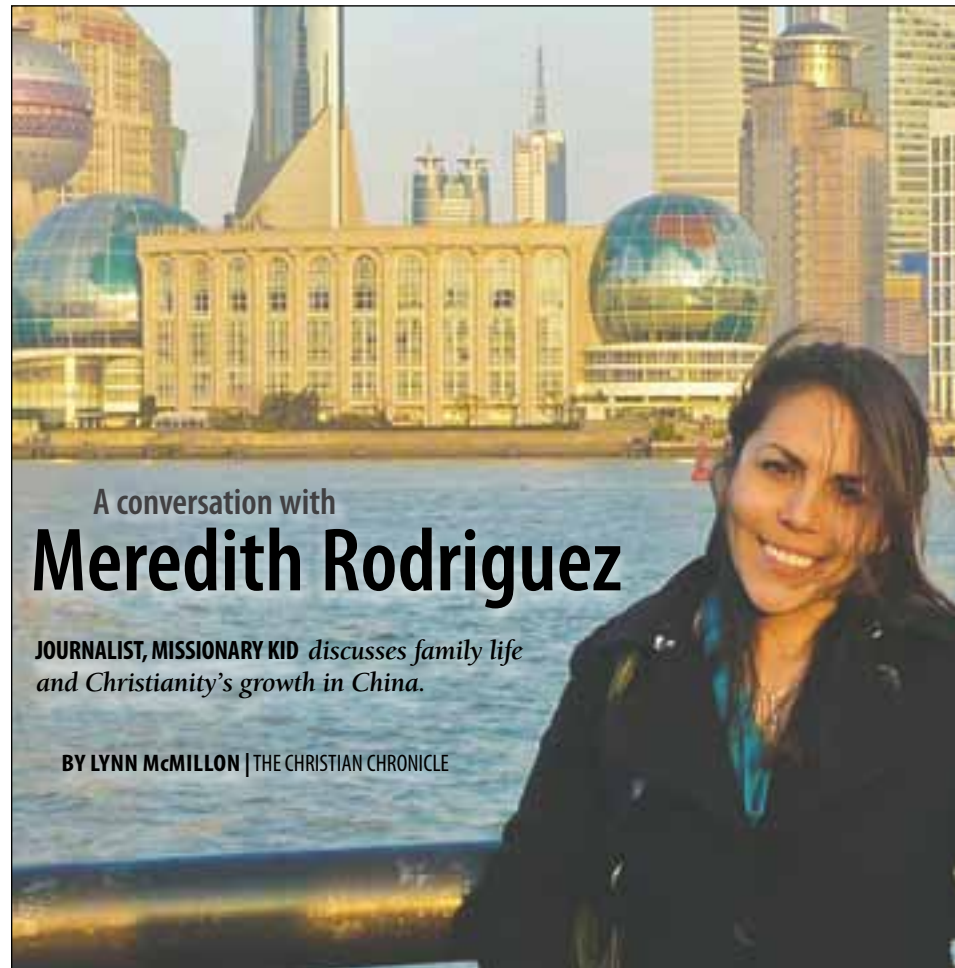
"I think my siblings and I are not only adaptable, but we feel more comfortable overseas," she said.

Describe the religious scene in China.

A young professional Chinese Christian told me that anything you say about China can be true and at the same time false. It is such a huge, diverse, rapidly changing and often-contradictory place.

However, it is safe to say that the god of the Chinese is money. Money is acknowledged as the best guarantee of security, respect, freedom and happiness. Everyone here seems to have an entrepreneurial plan, trying to cash in on China's rapid economic growth.

Amidst all this urbanization and modernization, though, there is an undercurrent of anxiety. It comes up often in discussions and the local news media. People are wringing their hands at what they call the "moral decline" of



MONICA RODRIGUEZ

A conversation with Meredith Rodriguez

JOURNALIST, MISSIONARY KID discusses family life and Christianity's growth in China.

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Meredith Rodriguez's home, Shanghai, is China's most populous city with 23 million souls.

the nation, which can be seen in areas like spoiled only-children losing traditional Chinese values of respecting the elderly. Also, China suffers from rising divorce rates, strangers ignoring helpless accident and crime victims on the street, government officials getting rich through corruption and companies that somehow get away with distributing toxic food to the public to save a buck.

As people lose faith in everything else, many are turning to religion. There is some return to the Eastern religions that were wiped out during the Cultural Revolution, particularly Buddhism.

Other religions like Islam also are growing, but the most notable growth is in Christianity, which has reached 14 million Chinese, according to government figures, but by some estimates has grown to more than 90 million.

What attracted you to China?

It was a mix between my family background and my journalism profession.

I was raised in Mexico, which I think my California-native parents didn't realize would forever dispose their children to move to far-off places.

My older brothers fell in love with China after moving here in 2003, which piqued my interest. Then they became fluent in Mandarin, which encouraged me that I could too.

My Spanish skills gave me an edge in my first journalism job, and I figured learning Mandarin in China would only add to my resume and increase my multicultural awareness.

In September 2010, after almost three years at a rewarding but grinding entry-level newspaper reporting position, I decided to join my family in Shanghai, where my dad was the faculty parent for Pepperdine's international program for eight months and where my brothers and their wives would be for the year.

We were excited to be together again in a foreign country, as if trying to relive a bit of the old days in Mexico.

What is the general attitude toward the Christian faith in China?

There's a reason Christianity is growing so fast here. Chinese are starting from a clean slate, not only in terms of not having to be converted from another religion, but also they are not obstructed by some of the scars and unnecessary baggage of our 2,000-year Christian history.

Many Christian values, like honoring your parents and submitting to authority, coincide with traditional Chinese values and are easy for Chinese to accept.

Also, while many modern, educated Chinese maintain that faith is simply a crutch for the weak, some prominent Chinese scholars have recently concluded that Christianity is the reason the West has been so successful.

Under what conditions are churches allowed to exist?

It is not illegal to be a Christian in China. However, certain forms of evangelism (handing out tracts, preaching on a street corner) are illegal, and mainland Christians are supposed to worship in one of the government-sanctioned Three-Self churches. These official churches are growing, but cannot support or account for the growth that is mostly happening through unofficial house churches.

The extreme persecution under which Christianity grew before and during the Cultural Revolution is largely gone. Most unofficial churches can meet in peace as long as they steer clear of politically sensitive topics and split before growing intimidatingly large.

House churches and their leaders encounter occasional interference, however, most often through a complaint from an irritated neighbor, a landlord who breaks a lease for fear of potential repercussions or a local official who decides to detour from the pragmatic position of "one eye open, one eye shut." This reality often creates a culture of fear, distrust and isolation among Christians here.

Do you have long-term plans for yourself in China?

Many foreigners declare plans to stay "one more year." Ten years later they're still here. The learning curve that comes with moving to China is overwhelming, but the more you invest, the more rewards you reap.

There is so much to learn and reflect on here, I often despair that I will never have enough time.

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MEET ONE OF OUR PROFESSORS

Phil McKinney, adjunct professor, Fairfax, Va.

- B.A., Harding University
- M.A., Harding School of Theology
- Ph.D., (ABD) Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Family includes wife, Angie, and three daughters: Kaylee, Taylor and Rylie
- Youth & Family Minister at Downtown Church of Christ in Searcy, Ark. (1995-2008)
- Spiritual Formation Minister at Fairfax Church of Christ in Fairfax, Va. (2008-present)

CLASSES SCHEDULED FOR FALL 2012

- Advanced Bible Study Techniques with Tim Westbrook
- Old Testament Theology for Ministry with Kevin Youngblood
- Ethics in Ministry with Phil Thompson
- Spiritual Formation and Discipleship with Phil McKinney
- Congregational Ministries with Scot Crenshaw

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- A Master's Degree in Education in Administration and Supervision.
- Administrative experience in an academic setting, ideally in target grade levels.
- Administrative License or Certification required.
- Experience in developing or coordinating respective grade level curricula.
- Strong interpersonal skills with a sense of calm authority.
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Send resume to rogernell@clarksvillechristianschool.org. See www.clarksvillechristianschool.org for more information about CCS.



HERITAGE
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FACULTY POSITION AVAILABLE FALL 2013

Heritage Christian University invites applications for a full-time faculty position in Theology and Scripture. The successful applicant will teach undergraduate and graduate courses. Course load is usually fifteen hours per academic year (alternating between three courses and two courses per semester). Competitive compensation and benefits. HCU is affiliated with the Churches of Christ; all qualified applicants must be professing Christians who are active, faithful members of a congregation of the Churches of Christ and be committed to the training of Christian ministers. HCU is a university with an increasing focus on graduate education. The school is served by the Overton Memorial Library, which specializes in divinity resources and recently received the late Frederick W. Danker's collection of books and papers. Candidates should be committed to the integration of scholarship with the life of faith, and they must articulate a well-developed research agenda. Applicants should hold a PhD in Theology or a related field; however, strong ABD's are encouraged to apply. Teaching competency in New Testament is advantageous, as is experience in administrative work. Interested persons should email the following materials to Edmon L. Gallagher, Chair, Faculty Search Committee (egallagher@hcu.edu): (1) curriculum vitae, (2) names and contact information for three academic references and one spiritual-life reference, (3) a statement of teaching philosophy (one page), and (4) a research plan. After the initial round of application review, we will request all transcripts of graduate and undergraduate work. Anticipated starting date is August 1, 2013, subject to negotiation. Review of applications will begin July 1, 2012, continuing until the position is filled. HCU does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, or disability. Applications from qualified minorities are especially encouraged.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CITY OF CHILDREN

ENSENADA, Mexico — The children's home dedicated its new Learning Center and Creative Arts Center, designed to give children "an ideal after-school study environment."

The facilities include a computer lab, space for private tutors, an art studio, a dance studio and a music room. Children who live at the City of Children will use the center for extracurricular activities.

"Private instructors and professionals from around Ensenada as well as visiting Americans will come and teach those children hungry to discover their talents and gifts," the home's newsletter said.

ORPHAN'S LIFELINE INTERNATIONAL

KISUMU, Kenya — A children's home in this East African nation specializes in helping the deaf and hearing-impaired.

It's producing scholars and athletes.

Children from the home, supported by Kalispell, Mont.-based Orphans Lifeline International, recently competed in a regional track event in Kisumu. Four children qualified for nationals in Nairobi. Churches of Christ support Orphans Lifeline International, online at www.orphanslifeline.org.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Twenty-five boys attended Faulkner's first Vanguard Preaching Camp this summer. They learned skills ranging from impromptu speaking to the mechanics of baptizing.

"At every session, seeds were planted to generate a desire to work in God's kingdom," said G. Scott Gleaves, Bible college associate dean. The university hopes to offer the camp again next summer and increase the number of participants.

HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Richard Oster's recent 65th birthday drew quite a crowd — for a scholarly discussion on "Ephesus As a Religious Center under the Principate."

More than 200 people gathered in honor of Oster, who has taught New Testament at Harding School of Theology since 1978. He has focused much of his academic energies and publishing on materials related to Ephesus.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY YORK COLLEGE

Campers 'Ignite' at York's Soul Quest

Campers show their enthusiasm during Soul Quest at York College in Nebraska. The weeklong camp for middle and high school students features high-energy worship times, challenging Bible classes and fun and activities, organizers said. The theme was "Ignite," based on Jeremiah 20:9.

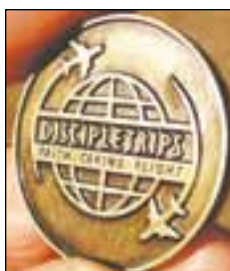
Speakers included archaeologists and New Testament scholars from Austria, New Zealand and various parts of the United States. They presented papers ranging from recent archaeological discoveries in Ephesus to cultural features connected with Ephesus that illuminate elements of early Christianity.

MINISTRY TRAINING

DISCIPLETRIPS

LUBBOCK, Texas — Jeff Smith, student minister for the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock, has launched a ministry "to make it possible for any Church of Christ teen — 16 years or older — to take a mission trip."

The ministry, DiscipleTrips, seeks



TREYMORGAN.NET

A coin bearing the logo of DiscipleTrips.

to connect teens with domestic and international mission opportunities. Christian students apply for the program — with the approval of their parents and recommendation of their church's leadership — and complete an online training program before leaving on a mission trip. The Sunset church oversees the work. This year the ministry coordinated two mission trips to Honduras. For more information, see discipletrips.com

EAST TENNESSEE SCHOOL OF PREACHING

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — David Lipe, a former Bible and philosophy professor at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., has been named director of East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions.

In 45 years of preaching, Lipe has worked with Churches of Christ in Mississippi,



Lipe

SPOTLIGHT

State of higher ed

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Are colleges and universities associated with Churches of Christ reaching as many students as possible within the fellowship?

Five presidents tackled that question and other challenges facing Christian higher education during the recent Christian Scholars Conference. Panelists were Abilene Christian University's Phil Schubert, Lipscomb University's Randy Lowry, Harding University's David Burks, Oklahoma Christian University's John deSteiguer and Lubbock Christian University's Tim Perrin.



KRISTI JONES

Presidents Phil Schubert, Randy Lowry, David Burks, John deSteiguer and Tim Perrin.

Tennessee and Alabama. He has conducted more than 400 gospel meetings.

In his last nine years at Freed-Hardeman, he preached for the Bethel Springs Church of Christ.

Most recently, he worked with the Sycamore Church of Christ in Cookeville, Tenn.

MEDICAL MISSIONS

VILLAGE OF HOPE

FETTEH, Ghana — Medical personnel at Hope Community Clinic, a ministry of the Village of Hope, performed two hernia repairs recently — the first surgeries to be performed entirely at the clinic.

"Both patients are doing very well," coordinator Araba M.A. Hammond reported. "We are hopeful that we will be able to acquire more equipment in order to provide much-needed services in Fetteh and its environs."

MISSIONS

Ramon Gonzalez defines the concept of Heritage Christian University missions. After participating in the HCU campaign program each semester as a part of his curriculum, he knew that he was capable of leading his own mission team. And he knew just where to take them. In 2009, he organized a team of HCU students to join him in his home country of Peru, where they conducted Bible studies and did outreach. Now, as an HCU alumnus and graduate student, he is planning a second trip. From being led to leading... that's the goal of the Christian Service and campaign programs. Ramon plans to return to Peru after graduation, but he will have left a legacy of leadership... and a dream in the hearts of other students. That's the type of missions experience you can expect from HCU. It's our focus.

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FULL-TIME MINISTER NEEDED

The North Heights Church of Christ, located in beautiful Batesville, Arkansas in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, is actively seeking a full-time pulpit minister for our growing congregation. Our progressive community boasts a population of over 10,000 and is a trade center for a 5 county area. We have two colleges and a large, regional health care center. We're located on the banks of the beautiful White River and offer multiple outdoor recreational opportunities.

Our congregation has a regular Sunday attendance of nearly 350 and boasts a rapidly growing younger segment. We have an excellent youth program with a full-time Youth Minister. We have beautiful, upgraded facilities with an annex that contains an indoor basketball court, video room and coffee bar.

Our Eldership is made up of 5 solid Christian men with a tremendous zeal for the Lord and a desire to continue our growth and influence. We are extremely mission minded, giving nearly 25% of our annual budget to various local and international mission works.

We are a forward looking, moderate, yet strongly grounded congregation that is seeking an energetic minister to help lead our work.

We prefer a man with previous pulpit experience but see the value of youth as well. We're looking for a man that desires to plant some roots for his family and grow with us. A strong biblical background is a must and the minimum of a bachelors degree in Biblical Studies from a reputable University is required.

If you think North Heights may be the place for you and your family, we encourage you to contact our Search Committee for further information and to discuss the opportunity.

Mark Skelton • Search Committee Chair • (870) 200-1114

July 20-21 Central Texas Bible Teachers Workshop. "Creating a Legacy of Faith." Cameron Road church, Austin, Texas. Contact crccaustin.org/ctbtw.html.

July 25-29 Global Reunion – Camp for TCKs and Parents. Oklahoma Christian University, Oklahoma City. Contact Nancy Hartman at nancy.hartman@oc.edu or (405) 425-5388.

July 26-29 Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes 2012 Leadership Camp. Freed-Hardeman University. Contact ladsoffice@lads-to-leaders.org.

July 26-29 National Campus Ministries Seminar. "God on Campus." Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Contact campuscrosswalk.org.

July 28 York Bible Teachers Workshop. York College, York, Neb. Contact york.edu or Rick Eldred at reldred@york.edu or (402) 363-5642.

July 29-Aug. 3 North MacArthur Preacher Training Camp. North MacArthur church, Oklahoma City. Contact northmac.org, (405) 621-5962 or Mel Latorre Jr. at mel.latorre@northmac.org.

Aug. 4-8 Campaign for Christ. George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston. Contact houstonchurchesofchrist.org.

Aug. 11-12 50th anniversary, East Park church. Danville, Ill. Contact (217) 442-2386.

Aug. 17-23 Polishing the Pulpit 2012. Great Smoky Mountains, Sevierville, Tenn. Events Center. Contact polishingthepulpit.com or 877.338.3397.

Aug 23-25 European Christian Workshop. "Jesus Touches the Unclean." Lancaster University, United Kingdom. Contact europeanchristianworkshop.com.

Sept. 9 50th anniversary, Center Road church (formerly Alto Road church), Kokomo, Ind. Contact (765) 453-1448 pennyr@centerandpark.org.

Sept. 16-19 ACU Summit. "Intimacy: Return to God." Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas. Contact acu.edu/summit or ministryevents@acu.edu or 325.674.3750.

Sept. 21-22 Global Leadership Summit and French World Mission Workshop. Laurel, Md., church. Contact ofwmissions@gmail.com.

Sept. 30-Oct. 3 Harding Lectureship. "Faith for a New Place & Time: Studies in Joshua." Harding University, Searcy, Ark. Contact 501.279.5123, Lectureship@harding.edu or harding.edu/lectureship.

Oct. 5-6 Michigan Church of Christ Conference. Brighton, Mich., church. Contact (810) 229-7051.

NEWSMAKERS

NAMED: Floyd Coppedge, interim president, Oklahoma Christian Academy, Edmond, Okla.



Michael Winegart, director of global learning at Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tenn. Cadet **Micah Charles Ables** commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He is a member of the Copperas Cove, Texas, church.

Ables



HONORED: James Moore, 2012 Educator of the Year at the Lake County, Fla. Community Service Awards. **Juan Monroy** as Man of The Year 2011 by the University of Salamanca, Spain. Klint Pleasant, 2012 Coach of Character by the NAIA.

Monroy

Pleasant is head basketball coach for Rochester College in

Rochester Hills, Mich. **Andy Little**, assistant professor of business law, 2011-12 teacher of the year by Abilene Christian University in Texas.

NEW MINISTER: Preston Hammitt, Stafford, Texas, church.

ANNIVERSARIES: 71st: Hugh and Freda Bowie, Abilene, Texas. 61st: Dick and Detta Wright, Hastings, Neb. 60th: Phillip and Lucy Steyn, Fort Collins, Colo.

BIRTHDAYS: 90th: Boyd Taylor, Dallas, Texas. 86th: Clyde Schinnerer, Edmond, Okla.

PASSAGES: Doyle E. Chilcoat, 88, Dec 24, and Evelyn Chilcoat, 89, April 17, Houston, long-time members of the Northside church, Temple, Texas. Wilford Culler, 84, Feb. 27, Lisbon, Ohio, served as treasurer for Beaver Street church in Lisbon. George Dumas, 78, June 15, Bradenton, Fla., a missionary in the Mediterranean, long-time minister and Navy veteran. Ronald Hill, 74, Feb 27, minister and elder of the Hidden Valley church, Houston.



Waugh

Beulah Little, 102, June 11, Edmond, Okla., member of Memorial Road church, Oklahoma City, **Floyd Lord**, April 12, Remington, Ind., minister for congregations in San Antonio, Toronto, and California. **Iva Jean Taylor**, 84, May 27, Norman, Okla., member of the Noble, Okla. church.

Charles Waugh, 78, June 14, Tipton, Okla., an Army veteran, a minister for churches in Chattanooga and Warren, Okla. as well as house parents for the Tipton Children's Home.



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'Healing the Wounds of Troubled Children and Families'

EDITORIAL

Responding to a rising tide of need

It's prayer request time.

If you've ever taken part in a small-group Bible study, you're familiar with the process. At the conclusion of the lesson, one member of the group searches for a piece of paper and a pen. Then the requests come — in a trickle that soon becomes a cascade.

We relate stories of family and friends in the hospital, on a transplant list, battling a recurrence of cancer, unable to get well, nearly out of money, not sure how they'll make ends meet.

It's easy to get overwhelmed by the amount of need — spiritual and financial — on our prayer lists. It's not that we question how a good God

can allow so much suffering. We know that we live in a fallen world, and we understand that physical hardship is part of life. (See Bailey McBride's Insight on Page 34 for thoughts on dealing with spiritual doubt.)

We want to show Christ's love to those who are sick, but with a page full of prayer requests — a seemingly unending sea of

suffering — where do we begin?

Imagine how we feel at *The Christian Chronicle*. As an international newspaper for Churches of Christ, we receive requests for prayers and financial support from around the globe. The world's current economic woes have increased those requests.

We could share countless stories:

- A mission team to El Salvador encountered a 1-year-old boy with a heart defect. He needs surgery in the U.S. to live.
- A church member in the southwestern U.S. went into kidney failure just as he was dropped from his health insurance for reasons out of his control.
- A young

Christian mother with multiple sclerosis could receive surgery — only available in another country — that will vastly improve her life. The treatment is experimental and expensive.

In addition to these health-related requests, we also receive countless appeals for financial support from ministries and missionaries worldwide.

We do our best to report these stories, but we simply don't have the resources to fit all of them into our pages.

We humbly request that Christians use online resources, including Facebook and Caringbridge.org. Both provide the means of informing and updating thousands of Christians about specific needs. Please send us links to these pages.

Unfortunately, our fallen world has dishonest people who prey on the goodness of others. We recommend that when funds are requested for a medical need they be collected through a sponsoring congregation and not sent directly to an individual.

Churches should take responsibility for verifying the authenticity of the needs around them.

Looking at our global prayer list, we hope that our inability to solve all of the world's problems will not keep us from serving those we can.

As we ponder the best way to bring more of these requests to light, we ask God for wisdom, patience and the spirit of endurance professed by Paul in Romans 8:18: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Ever-Laughing Life

by Jonny Hawkins



The original Facebook

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P.O. Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100
Delivery: 2801 E. Memorial Road, Edmond, OK 73013

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

Managing Editor: Bobby Ross Jr.
National, Partners news: bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org
Assistant Managing Editor: Erik Tryggstad
International news, features: erik@christianchronicle.org
Advertising Director: Tamie Ross
tamie.ross@christianchronicle.org

Editor Emeritus: Bailey B. McBride
bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org
Reviews Editor: Kimberly Mauck
kim.mauck@christianchronicle.org
Administrative Assistant: Lynda Sheehan
lynda.sheehan@christianchronicle.org
Administrative Assistant: Tonya Patton
tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org
Administrative Assistant: Tonda Stafford
tonda.stafford@christianchronicle.org
Administrative Assistant: Joy McMillon
joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org
Correspondent: Ted Parks

TO SUBSCRIBE:

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The Gospel and cancer: Wife's diagnosis leads to spiritual conversations, chances to glorify God

"It's cancer," said the cardiothoracic surgeon, still clad in her teal surgical garb, who had just biopsied my wife's lung. "And it's not early, as it's spread to her lymph nodes."

"Does she know?" I asked, shock numbing me.

The surgeon shook her head. "I'll call you in when she wakes up and tell her then."

Twenty minutes later, I approached Lori's bedside in the recovery area, hating that I had knowledge that she didn't of the biggest challenge that would face us in our 19 years of marriage.

I thought of our children — ages 18, 16 and 13 — and desperately wanted to know what this all would mean for our future, our kids' futures.

Lying there in blissful ignorance, she didn't yet need to writhe in anguish of the unknown. I have counseled many in these situations to trust God and have faith. But could I counsel myself? This was not supposed to happen to me — to us!

In a small mission church, my wife is the minister to the minister, the one who keeps me balanced, my rock ... outside of Christ. Her reaction would mean everything.

Her faith helped. "I'm not particularly attached to this life," she said later that evening. "If not for the kids' or your sakes, I'm ready to go home. We don't know God's plan, but it is good." Our prayer from that first night was that God would be glorified through this.

That was Friday. By Sunday, Lori and I realized from our never-ceasing phone calls and the overwhelming flood from most of our social media contacts that God had placed us in a unique position.

People, many who had never obeyed the Gospel, were watching to see how the preacher and his wife would handle this test.

We prayed we would pass.

We also soon realized that many who were coming to comfort us were really seeking reassurance themselves. God was using our faith in a new way to

minister and bring glory to him.

Attendance that morning was greater than it had been, and the effect of Lori's diagnosis for good was

immediately apparent. One sister, young in her faith, told me after worship that she had never realized what it meant before this that the church was a family and that every part of the body hurt when one part did.

The best, however, was seeing an older sister, who had harbored bitterness toward God for her dying 10-year-old grandson, walk through the

door for the first time in nine months. Several had visited, counseled and had lengthy Scripture-filled chats with her during that time, but nothing could bring her back except that we trusted God — no matter the outcome.

I spoke that evening on a Christian's response to bad news, and she was in the pews, where she has been ever since.

Our teenagers' reactions have given us opportunity for deeper spiritual conversations. Family and friends have cried much until they have spent time with us and experienced what we have called our "faith-filled optimism."

Fueling this has been the overwhelming outpouring from well-wishers. The messages, calls and visits (often from friends bearing groceries and home-cooked meals) continue to remind us that this is not about the clay but the potter who is molding us for his perfect purpose.

Views



Douglas Kashorek



The Kashorek family at the Plattsburgh Church of Christ in New York.

TERI MCAULIFFE

The love of the school and community where we have lived and ministered for 14 years has meant much to us. But more has been the love, prayers, and support from our brothers and sisters all over the country.

All this is humbling. To date, we have 138 cards filled with Scripture, words of encouragement and notes about how our handling of our ordeal has inspired them. Five are from just one lovely sister we have never met from Alabama. Some represent whole congregations praying for us. One informed us of a prayer service they held just for us.

If you are facing a challenge like this, know that God is in control and always works for good.

Others are watching. Your response is the Gospel you speak.

Those struggling are all around you. You have been given great power to encourage just by your prayers and a simple card.

We have endured six weeks of radiation and three rare allergic reactions to two common chemo drugs before finding something that Lori's system would tolerate in the just over three months since her diagnosis.

The outcome of this chapter of our lives is still unknown, but this has not diminished our faith-filled optimism when we sing "God is so good."

DOUGLAS KASHOREK, has ministered for the Plattsburgh, N.Y., Church of Christ since 1998. He is the author of "Kin of Cain." Contact him at www.douglaskashorek.com.

LETTERS

Thoughts on visitor-friendly churches

I want to send a hearty "Amen" to the pieces this month about churches being visitor-friendly (Pages 1 and 3, July). My husband and I have moved four times in 10 years and are about to move again. This means we have had to find a new church home every time.

We have had the *exact* same experiences with churches being very unfriendly — and sometimes downright rude — all the while professing how friendly their congregation is.

We have both grown up in the Church of Christ and have been extremely disheartened by the unwelcoming atmosphere in a lot of churches. Thank you for highlighting this need and providing some suggestions on ways for churches to work on it.

Sarah Walker | Gilbert, Ariz.

I think it's important to note that visitors also need to take some responsibility in making themselves available — through their time and demeanor — to be greeted and proactively greet members. Too often visitors come late and leave early (sometimes even before the service has ended), leaving no opportunity to be greeted. I don't want to diminish at all the importance of having members be welcoming, but the visitors shouldn't take a passive role.

Matthew Boydston | Oklahoma City

It seems a lot of people are putting the blame on church leaders and members for not producing a welcoming church atmosphere, yet no one has considered another possibility for this — the dynamics of a large congregation.

As a congregation gets larger in size, individual members become less and less involved with the group as a whole. "Cell groups" and "zones" become the means for involvement as well as for welcoming newcomers.

In a large group, the potential for members to see someone new and reason, "In a church this size, I'm sure someone is reaching out to them" only increases. Maybe it's time for church leaders to rethink the "bigger is better" strategy and reach the world via many smaller congregations.

James Isenberg | Chino Valley, Ariz.

Spiritual reasons for physical health

BY SOPHIA M. CLANTON | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

It's common for Christians to reflect on the dangers related to the so-called "seven deadly sins."

Sermons frequently hammer home the harmful

nature of lust, greed, sloth and pride. Less often does anyone address the sinfulness of gluttony.

Let's face it, that kind of sermon would be uncomfortable — in part because we can be greedy without our fellow congregant knowing; but carrying extra weight around isn't exactly a private affair. We wear our gluttony.

With the Centers for Disease Control's recent study indicating one out of three American adults is overweight, it's easy to recognize our nation has a steep hill to climb. And, sadly, according to a 2010 Northwestern University study, people who participate frequently in religious activities are more likely to be wearing extra weight than non-religious people.

The task of losing weight, not to mention managing it, can be overwhelming. But two new books give us a fresh sense of vigor toward our often-daunting health goals by applying biblical teachings to modern-day fitness and nutrition.

In Gary Thomas' book **"Every Body Matters: Strengthening Your Body to Strengthen Your Soul,"** we are reminded that we should fine-tune our bodies just like we focus on spiritually developing our souls.

Thomas emphasizes this point throughout his book by reminding us of Paul's words in 2 Timothy 2:21 — every body is an "instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."

In Thomas' words, "Christians who don't take their health seriously don't take their mission seriously. What we're

saying by our actions is, 'My life doesn't really matter.' But because of the ability of God to work powerfully in any repentant sinner's life, every body does matter."

Thomas opens his book with teachings from the Bible that stir up conviction in us to address our

health. He balances this with inspiring stories of individuals who have overcome physical battles, including a 300-pound pastor who realized his obesity was harming his ministry and a divorced woman who trained and ran a marathon.

Thomas' writing is fluid and conversational but enlightening and convicting enough to make me feel the need to put the book down and reflect before reading on.

In the author's effort to

make the task of getting healthy more manageable, he shares stories of those who have learned to strengthen their bodies and their souls at the same time. He

aims to help us retrain our thought processes so that we, too, can approach the task of eating right and exercising as a matter of Christian discipleship and obedience.

We should listen to our hunger, Thomas says, but we shouldn't let it enslave us.

If your church is not addressing physical health, or if you think you've tried everything to lose weight without success, then I suggest Thomas' book. You will have Scriptural encouragement and reasons to be disciplined in your health.

In **"Winning the Food Fight,"** minister Steve Willis provides more personalized stories of his church's weight struggles and experience with the ABC show "Food Revolution," which came to his hometown, Huntington, W.Va., after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention named it the unhealthiest city in the nation.

Tired of watching people die from health issues that could be reversed through proper fitness and nutrition, Willis urges Christians to see that God desires for us to live a healthy and vibrant life.

He cites Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:31 ("So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God") and Romans 12:1 ("Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship").

Willis provides practical, biblically based steps for readers to transform their health habits. Some helpful steps he covers include making up your mind to be different, being a positive example in health for your family, finding others to hold you accountable and provide support and being smart about nutrition, knowing where your food comes from.

This book would be appropriate reading for a small group, as it has thought-provoking discussion questions at the end of each chapter.

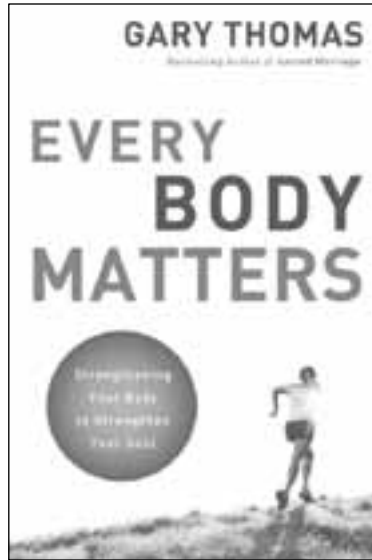
Both of these books are challenging — sometimes uncomfortably so. But because they both tackle one of America's most urgent problems with godly wisdom, I can heartily recommend them both.

If a sound Scriptural argument would be most effective to get you motivated, then Thomas' book is the best for you. But, if present-day personal stories are more likely to get you moving, Willis' would be more effective.

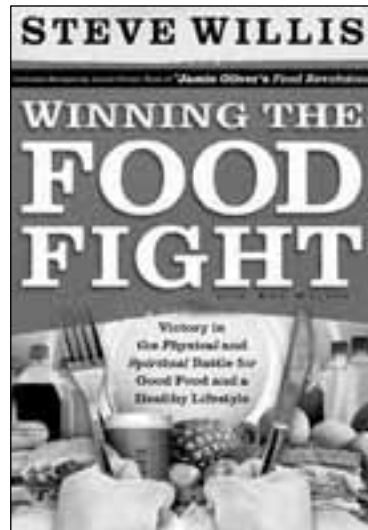
If we are to carry out God's work as Christian believers,

we must address this issue. Let's improve our health and the wellbeing of our church family so that we all can be ready to do God's work on earth.

SOPHIA M. CLANTON is a personal trainer and yoga and Pilates instructor at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif. She and her husband Caleb, a professor of philosophy at Pepperdine, attend the University Church of Christ in



★★★★★
Gary Thomas. **Every Body Matters: Strengthening Your Body to Strengthen Your Soul.** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. 256 pages, \$14.99.



★★★★★
Steve Willis. **Winning the Food Fight: Victory in the Physical and Spiritual Battle for Good Food and a Healthy Lifestyle.** Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 2011. 224 pages, \$19.99.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

SPIRITUALITY

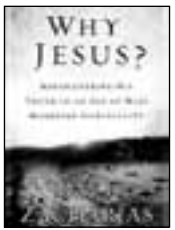
Ravi Zacharias.

Why Jesus?

Rediscovering His Truth in an Age of Mass-Marketed Spirituality.

Nashville, Tenn.:

FaithWords, 2012. 304 pages, \$21.99.



New Age teachings that proliferate in the age of Chopra and Oprah are confronted head-on in this book by one of today's favorite conservative Christian teachers.

Tracing the impact of popular culture on American religion, he shows why Jesus' resurrection overcomes beliefs of reincarnation, humans being their own gods, truth being relative and more.

MEMOIR

Carolyn Weber.

Surprised by Oxford: A Memoir.

Grand Rapids, Mich.:

Thomas Nelson, 2011. 480 pages, \$16.99.



With the poetic touch of a lover of literature, this English professor recalls a double romance that changed her life. While studying at Oxford, she fell in love with God and with the man who shared the Gospel with her. Anglophiles will appreciate her references to British literature and descriptions of the famed English college.

APOLOGETICS

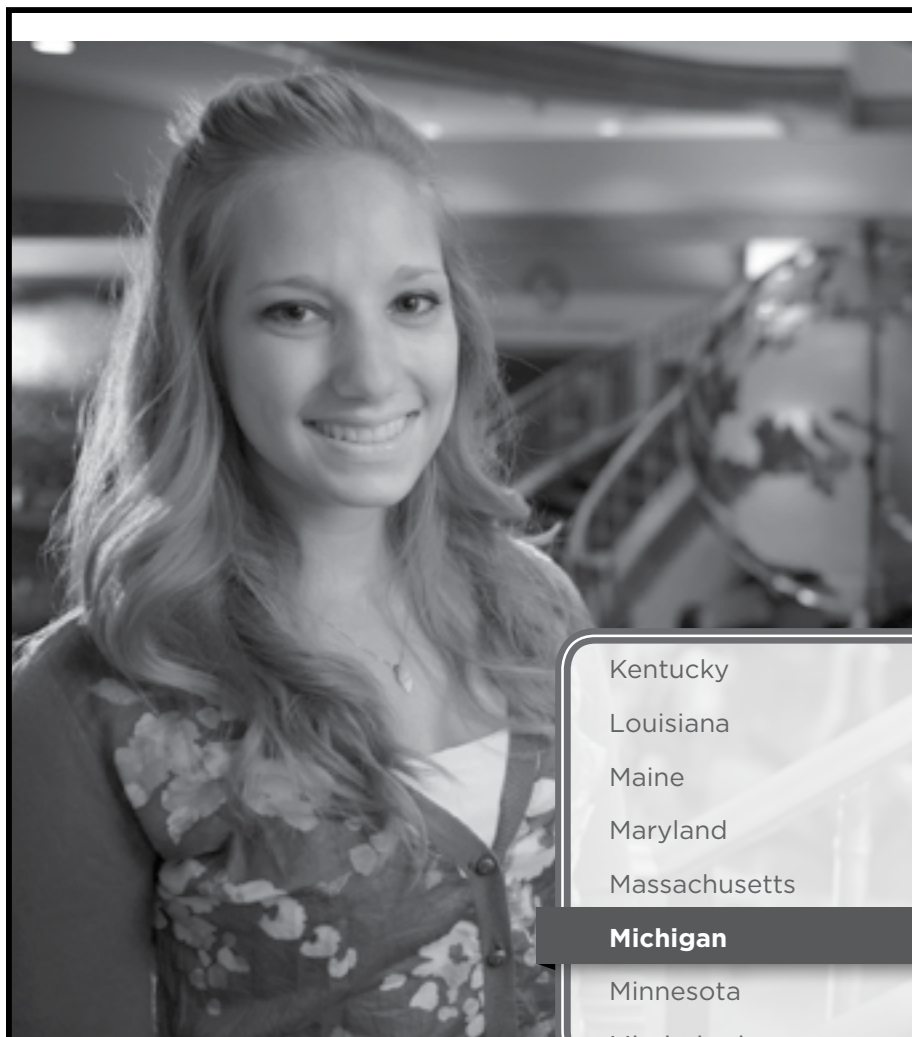
Alister McGrath.

Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find the Faith.

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2012. 208 pages, \$16.99.



This author, a theologian and former atheist like C.S. Lewis, pays homage to "Mere Christianity" in this book's title and in his learned, respectful appeals to reason. This practical guide seeks to educate modern Christians on how to be evangelists in their daily lives.



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Dealing with doubt: Scripture, quiet space and close friends reaffirm faith

I envy people who never once have had a moment of doubt about God and his work in this world.

Even though I have had great experiences with God and his people, something about the way my mind works allows questions and doubts to creep into my thinking at times.

My mother — who taught me to know God and believe all that the Bible and an orderly universe revealed about him — never had a single moment of doubt, even when her poor health had made her a total invalid with a sharp mind.

My wife is totally accepting of the existence of an all powerful and all wise God. Doubt is never an experience for her.

I am blessed to be a firm believer who knows in my heart that God exists and has great love for his creation, especially mankind for whom he gave his only son to redeem from the clutches of Satan and sin.

But every now and then, "What if ..." creeps in. The death of a precious, innocent 5-year-old, the malignant brain tumor of a young doctor who had been a history professor and in his early 30s felt called to become a physician, the man who needed a kidney transplant and, after having a successful transplant, had a series of issues resulting in his death seven months later.

Any apparent injustice or irrational event can trigger that questioning.

I have lived long enough to know that my faith rises and retreats like ocean tides. I have faith to face most things in life. In fact, the main experience of my life is marked by a high tide of faith.

But I have learned that, at times, the tide will retreat, leaving me with uncertainties. My life experiences have allowed me to assess the causes of my doubts and to develop strategies for addressing them.

I have come to realize that my doubts increase when I take my eyes off Jesus — just like Peter when he was beginning to walk on the water. When I am too obsessed with what I want (the recovery of health for a dear friend or family member) or when I am so busy that each hour of the day is scheduled with work and events, I become a prey to doubt.

Failure to succeed in something really important for my family, my

career, or my church family also allows doubts to arise.

My first step in dealing with doubt is to create quiet space and time when I can think through what is going on. Since my thinking and my fingers

Insight



Bailey McBride

seems to work together, I try writing out my feelings, my concerns, my thoughts to see if the problem is more than a passing concern.

At times the issue will be clear and I understand how to combat the doubt. At other times I have no real insight.

My second step is to read the Gospel of

Mark through a couple of times. Fixing my attention on the deeds and teachings of Jesus has great power over my thinking. The sense of eternal wisdom and purpose comes through in Mark's simple, direct narrative.

My next step is to visit with one of my friends who seems never to have doubt. I am fortunate to have strong believers from many different generations with whom total honesty is possible. The objective thinking of another person often reveals the basic issues in my doubt.

During times of doubt, I write out my prayers so that I can be very thoughtful. During greatest doubt, I have relied on very simple prayers — "Lord, help me believe without question," "Lord, forgive me for doubt," "Lord, have mercy on me," "Lord, I believe: help my unbelief."

Continuing to pray in times of doubt is very important. Our prayers affirm that we know God is there and shows our expectation that he will hear us.

When uncertainty is working in my mind, I find it really important to use as much time as possible to study my Bible. The usual 30 minutes I spend with Scripture each day is not nearly enough. Spending three or four hours a day in the Word can do wonders for my faith and help me see clearly how foolish my doubts have been.

When doubts arise, take action to reconnect your life and heart to God. The tide will rise and bring renewed peace to your life.

CONTACT bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org.



“Let *us* tell you what to think.”

That’s essentially the message from many universities today. And for many, Christianity and Jesus are frowned upon or openly ridiculed. The atheists and agnostics declare that they alone are wise and sophisticated. Some Christian students buy into that arrogance and lose their faith. But what are people to do? It can’t be helped if students want a “quality education,” can it? Ask the *hundreds of thousands* of successful professionals who were educated at our Christian institutions!

Many “prestigious” universities pressure students to conform to their secular agenda and offer only temporal ideas and world views. Ironically, Christian schools are now the truly “open” places where students are offered choices in thought. It’s time to challenge conventional preconceptions.

Investigate Christian higher education, the true open mindedness.

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OCTOBER 7-9, 2012

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"In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority."

COLOSSIANS 2:9-10



**NO FEES.
MORE HOURS.
SAME PRICE.**

Oklahoma Christian University will eliminate fees and will not raise total costs for tuition, room and board for the 2012-2013 academic year. We're also helping students graduate on time by offering up to 17 hours per semester for the base tuition price. Students and families can shape their costs with technology, housing, dining and other choices that best fit their budgets and needs.

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