



ONE MINISTER'S PASSION FOR ALIENS

Illegal immigration pits law vs. mercy

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

CHICAGO — On a dark street, a mother weeps.

At 4:45 a.m., she stands outside a two-story brick building surrounded by razor wire, her sobs drowning out the drum of machinery at a nearby factory.

The Spanish-speaking woman just said goodbye — through a glass panel at a federal deportation center west of Chicago — to her son Miguel, an illegal immigrant from Mexico.

A minister wearing a beige overcoat and a black knit cap rushes to comfort the mother and pray with her distraught family.

"This is why I come," says the minister, Bobby Lawson, who pulled a white church van out of the Park Forest



Lawson

Church of Christ parking lot in Matteson, Ill., at 2:53 a.m. that Friday. "These families are getting ripped apart."

Across the nation, debate rages over U.S. immigration policy — with Americans split on whether to crack down on illegal immigrants or create an amnesty process for undocumented aliens.

In the 2011 fiscal year, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported a record 396,906 immigrants — 55 percent of whom had been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, according to the Obama administration.

A majority of evangelical Christians say that illegal immigrants "threaten traditional American customs and values," according to a Pew Research Center survey last year. Only about one-third of evangelicals believe these immigrants "strengthen American society."

For members of Churches of Christ
See **IMMIGRATION**, Page 14



MANDI WRIGHT, DETROIT FREE PRESS

The dream lives: Church members join Peace Walk honoring MLK

Members of the Oakland Church of Christ walk in Southfield, Mich., during the city's recent 27th annual Peace Walk honoring the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. About 2,500 people, including 20 members of the Detroit-area church, marched a mile, said minister Terrance McClain, pictured at far left.



Meeting special needs

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Relief that lasts

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Some glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away.
To that home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away.

I love the words to that gospel hymn penned by Albert Brumley in 1929.

Just one quick question:

Inside Story



Bobby Ross Jr.

Do we *have* to fly?

Might God consider special options for those who prefer wheels to wings? Perhaps a "Gloryland Way" bus or train?

I enjoy traveling and meeting Christians across the nation.

I tolerate flying.

I Google "fear of flying" for tips on overcoming airborne distress. I try to reassure myself with the much-reported claims that flying is safer than driving.

A recent Associated Press story carried this headline: "It's never been safer to fly; deaths at record low."

According to the article, the past 10 years have been the best in the nation's aviation history with 153 fatalities. That's one death for every 50 million passengers on commercial flights.

Still, my heart rate jumps as the engines (please, let there be *engines* plural) roar for takeoff. Any tiny turbulence makes my stomach churn like what I imagine it must feel like to bungee jump without a cord.

Like most, I was captivated by the "Miracle on the Hudson" in 2009: A cool-

See **FLYING**, Page 4



JEFFREY LEWIS BENNETT

Klint Pleasant, right, grew up at Rochester College, where his father, Garth, coached for 38 seasons.

All the more Pleasant

FOR THE NEW BASKETBALL COACH at Rochester College, following in his father's footsteps presents a challenge, but it's nothing compared to the test he endured off the court.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich.

Sign this. And quick.
It was 3 a.m., and Klint Pleasant's wife, Rachel, was drifting in and out of consciousness — a golf-ball-sized tumor in her brain about to explode.

"Sign this," the doctor said again. "We've got to go right now. We're going to crack open her skull and try to save her."

Klint scribbled his name on a form authorizing emergency surgery and tried — in 10 seconds — to explain just how much his wife meant to him.

"Please do your best work," he begged.

Then he leaned over, kissed Rachel and told her goodbye.

"I love you," he said.

As they wheeled her away, Klint slumped down in the hallway, unsure if he would see his wife again.

WINS, LOSSES AND REAL LIFE

Seven years later, Klint Pleasant, 37, deals with a different kind of pressure.

This basketball season, he succeeded his father, Garth Pleasant, as head coach at Rochester College, the 1,100-student school

See **PLEASANTS**, Page 22

Lubbock Christian committee narrows presidential search

LUBBOCK, Texas — Lubbock Christian University invited two candidates to visit with the search committee seeking the university's next president: L. Timothy Perrin and Brian Starr.

Perrin is vice dean and professor of law at Pepperdine University's School of Law in Malibu, Calif.

Starr is executive vice president and professor of economics and investments at Lubbock Christian.

Longtime LCU President Ken Jones transitioned to the role of chancellor as the university launched the search process last year.

Each finalist was invited to make a chapel presentation and meet with students, faculty and staff members in late January.

"We have been so blessed to have received excellent nominations and candidates with a genuine interest in LCU," said university trustee Sam Beard, who chairs the presidential search committee.

Perrin graduated from LCU with a degree in history. He received his law degree from Texas Tech.

He began teaching at Pepperdine in 1992. He served as associate provost from 2003 to 2007, then was named vice dean of the law school.

Starr holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Abilene Christian University in Texas, a master's degree in business administration from the University of Texas and a doctorate from Texas Tech.

A former campus minister with the University Avenue Church of Christ in Austin, Texas, he came to LCU in 2004 as a business instructor. He was named LCU's executive vice president in 2008.

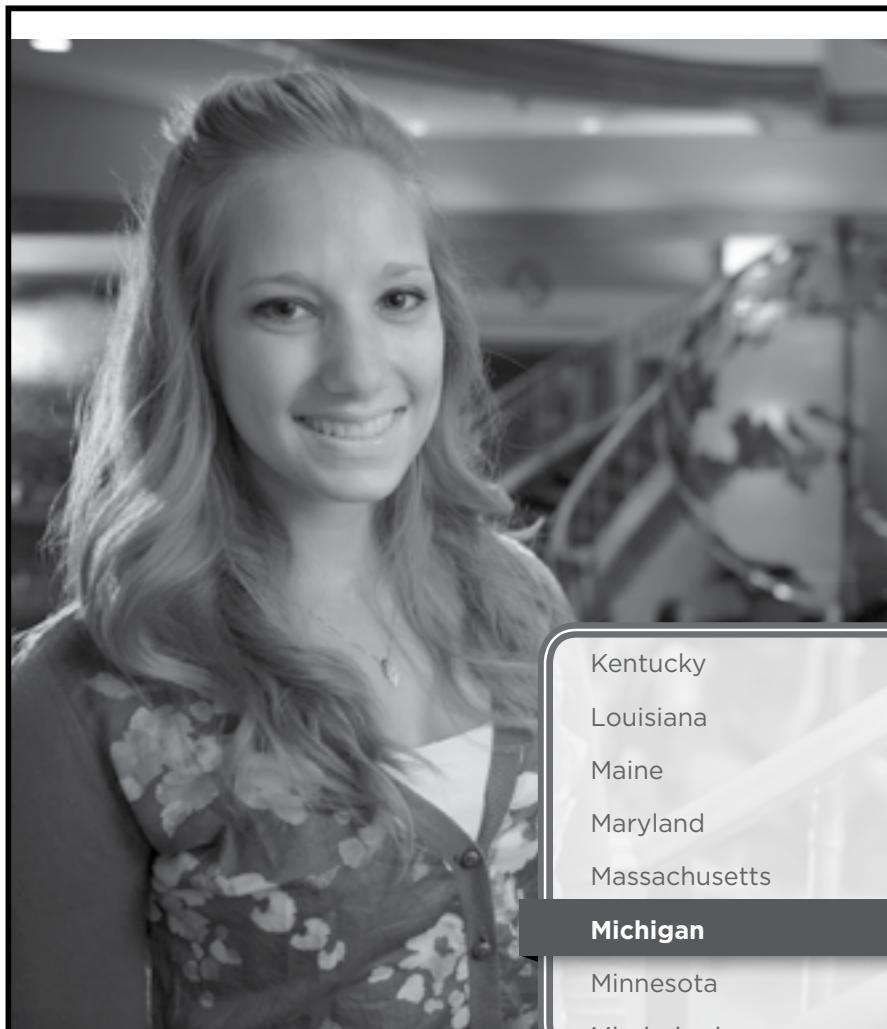
For more details on the candidates and search process, see www.lcu.edu.



Perrin



Starr



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FLYING: Learning to deal with turbulence in the air

FROM PAGE 3

headed U.S. Airways pilot splash-landed a crowded jetliner into New York's Hudson River after a flock of geese disabled the plane's engine thrusts.

All 155 people aboard survived!

Yet I couldn't help but wonder: Did the pilot, Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, use up all the available flying miracles in one fell swoop? (I am kidding. A little bit.)

Without a doubt, most flights turn out to be uneventful.

It's the exceptions that inspire me to pray without ceasing when I'm six or seven miles in the air.

On a flight home to Oklahoma City from Denver last summer, I was seated next to my 12-year-old daughter, Kendall, when our little jet encountered a fierce thunderstorm.

We shook, rattled and rolled. It felt like a roller coaster — only with no tracks underneath.

With my baby girl on that flight, you can imagine the uncontrolled sobbing and shrieking that accompanied each bump and bounce. But Kendall did her best to console me.

Several years ago, I was flying home from Memphis, Tenn., after covering an event at Freed-Hardeman University when the pilot came on the loudspeaker and reported trouble with the controls that direct the plane.

He said we needed to make an emergency landing in Tulsa, Okla., and rescue vehicles would be waiting as a precaution.

But he stressed that the flashing lights on the ground shouldn't alarm anyone because he didn't expect any problem landing the plane.

That statement would have provided more comfort if I hadn't kept asking myself: If the plane *were* going to crash, would he be so candid as to say so?

"Attention, passengers, I fully expect that we are all about to die. Please buckle your seat belts and get your affairs in order."

When we touched down safely, 49 fel-

low passengers and I exhaled with such force that I was surprised we didn't cause a sudden change in cabin pressure.

Yet I keep showing up in airport security lines and submitting to full-body patdowns by Transportation Security Administration agents.

Granted, I don't spend as much time in the air as my colleague Erik Tryggstad.

Tryggstad, *The Christian Chronicle's* assistant managing editor, covers international news. He has reported from 42 countries and logged 50,000 air miles just last year.

While an all-night, around-the-globe flight fails to faze my fellow journalist, he does worry about minor details like whether a Christian brother or sister will remember to pick him up in the Third World country where he's landing.

Since I handle the national beat, I'm typically in the air only an hour or two, but — as you might have surmised — that's plenty for me. In seven years with the *Chronicle*, I've reported from 45 states.

Why do I keep booking flights all over the nation — and sometimes outside the U.S.?

Because I love telling the incredible stories of Christians living out their faith far from my comfortable, on-the-ground existence in Oklahoma City.

I know the answer for my fear, of course. It's right there in Mark 4, where violent waves nearly swamp the disciples' boat as Jesus sleeps on a cushion.

The disciples wake Jesus and ask, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

He rebukes the winds and calms the waves. "Why are you so afraid?" Jesus asks them. "Do you still have no faith?"

My first thought: Wouldn't it be nice if I could take a boat instead of a plane on reporting trips?

Second, more serious thought: If Jesus were on my flight, is there any doubt that he'd be resting comfortably?

CONTACT bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org.

ALASKA

JUNEAU — Joan Mize, Kathy Schmitz and Rayisa Boone no longer have school-age children. That doesn't keep them from teaching the Wednesday night class for 3- to 6-year-olds at the Juneau Church of Christ.

"Their children are all raised, making their ongoing commitment all the more laudable," said church member Matt Jones, a father of six.

"Their continued service allows mothers of young children a break from the routine for 45 minutes," he added. "They exemplify a spirit of lifelong service to the church and validate a vital need for older members to remain actively involved in congregations."

HAWAII

HONOLULU — The television ministry "In Search of the Lord's Way" has begun airing the Gospel to the entire state.

The broadcast on KWHE reaches every island, speaker Phil Sanders said.

"After the very first program, a lady phoned the 'Search' office from Hawaii requesting materials," Sanders said.

The Edmond Church of Christ in Oklahoma sponsors the ministry.

INDIANA

LA PORTE — The La Porte Church of Christ has a team of three interpreters who help deaf people integrate with the congregation.

The congregation provides interpreters for potlucks as well as assemblies.

Linda Pitman said she believes it's her purpose to help the deaf communicate.

"It's a gift ... from God that we are able to do this, and so I look at it as it's been given to me for a purpose," Pitman told the *Herald Argus* newspaper.

MARYLAND

HYATTSVILLE — The Capital Beltway is a long way from South Sudan.

Most members of the University Park Church of Christ can't relate to walking miles just to find clean water.

But members walked 3.5 miles recently to raise money to build a Sudanese water well. In all, the congregation raised \$6,000, far exceeding the original goal of \$4,000, deacon Hamil Harris said.

MISSOURI

KANSAS CITY — The Downtown Church of Christ is fighting to remain in the



PHOTO PROVIDED BY TOM RILEY

Tennessee church celebrates 'Baby Day'

Deacon Tom Walker, center, presents gifts to Gil and Katina Ednacot during a recent "Baby Day" event at the Bellevue Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn. Katina holds the couple's 1-year-old daughter, Sophia, while son Tod is with his father.

Children's ministry director Wendy Rampy and deacons Walker and Josh Jackson organized the special recognition for babies and their families. The Sunday service began with the church singing "Jesus Loves the Little Children." Minister Tom Riley preached on "Let the Little Children Come." Each family received a Bible and a silver cup with names engraved.

inner city. The church is seeking \$5,000 per month in support to remain at its present location.

"Our bank is trying to pressure us to put our church building on the market," minister LaVance Wes Anderson said. "They see that our funds are low and nearing depletion.

"All they are seeing is numbers," he added. "We did not accept their offer. We walk by faith. There are far too many precious souls in this area on the brink of missing heaven."

For more information, call the church at (816) 241-9999 or write: Downtown Church of Christ, 2010 Van Brunt Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64127.

PENNSYLVANIA

READING — A police sting operation led to the recent arrest of a man accused of stealing from the Shillington Church of

Christ during Sunday services.

"We had a previous robbery, and I set up surveillance cameras and noticed suspicious actions," member Anthony Fischetto said. "I notified the police, who watched our surveillance videos and decided to set up a sting operation, which worked great."

TENNESSEE

DICKSON — After months of prayer and preparation, the Walnut Street Church of Christ unveiled "Opening Doors," a daily devotional book written by members.

Young and old alike contributed to the project, which is being shared with friends, relatives and the community.

"Most folks need a little help to start a conversation about spiritual things," involvement minister Larry Snow said. "Our book 'Opening Doors' provides that help."

SPOTLIGHT**Texas prayer box**

GARLAND, Texas — A revamped mailbox at the Buckingham Road Church of Christ allows neighbors to leave cards asking members to pray for specific needs.

The Neighborhood Prayer Box features a picture of praying hands and appeals in English, Spanish and Vietnamese for the community to share prayer requests.

"It's overwhelming to us when we consider that those who have deep physical and spiritual difficulties ...

would entrust us, virtually strangers, with the responsibility to present their desires to God," elder Willie Hunter said.

Each month, the church prepares at least 100 prayer request postcards for homes and businesses and asks for God's blessings on the recipients.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY BO CARTER

The prayer box at the Buckingham Road church.

More than 400 community members received the book — along with a free meal — during a recent outreach event sponsored by the church.

KENTON — A wreck near this west Tennessee town claimed the lives of three church members.

David C. Bell, 51, a longtime member and song leader for the Thomaston Road Church of Christ in Macon, Ga., died after the car he was driving was struck by a pickup truck that crossed the center line on a rural road in Obion County on Jan. 7. Also killed was Bell's mother, Sue E. Bell, 81. Bell's father, Jack Latimer Bell, also 81, died Jan. 12 from injuries suffered in the wreck.

The Kenton Church of Christ hosted a memorial service for the family. Survivors include David Bell's three children.

Popcorn, nachos ... and sex talk

IN A KENTUCKY TOWN, church leaders bring teens and parents together and focus on God’s vision for healthy sexuality.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

RUSSELLVILLE, Ky.
‘Sex Talk Live” came to town on a recent weekend.

Leaders of the Crittenden Drive Church of Christ couldn’t have been more pleased.

The question-and-answer session focused on God’s vision for sexuality and featured Steve Holladay, founder and director of the Ultimate Escape ministry.

As part of a two-day workshop dubbed “Truth About Sex,” teens from the Kentucky church’s youth group — and their friends and neighbors — peppered Holladay with questions.

What do you do when you’ve already messed up?
How do you get bad experiences out of your mind?

How can you encourage your friends who’ve already had sex that they can be forgiven and change their ways?

These were among the questions that Holladay tackled as he addressed an auditorium full of sixth- through 12th-graders and their parents.

Ultimate Escape, based at the Greenville Oaks Church of Christ in Allen, Texas, helps young people pursue healthy sexuality and overcome addictive sexual behavior. Holladay and his wife, Holly, founded the ministry in 2004.

Steve Holladay speaks from experience: He credits God and a faith-based treatment program with helping him overcome a pornography addiction. He later earned a master’s degree in counseling and completed additional clinical training.

“I wish they did something like this when I was growing up,” said Kelly Hamilton, a Crittenden Drive member who attended the seminar with his 13-year-old son, Jarrett. “We grew up not talking about sex a lot in the family.”

‘SEX THE WAY THAT GOD DESIGNED IT’

For many families and churches, sex

remains an illicit topic of discussion.

But in this tight-knit farming community, Crittenden Drive church leaders decided to push the subject into the open.

“As far as the state of Kentucky, our county has been one of the worst as far as high school pregnancies and things like that,” said youth minister Daniel McCarley, who grew up in Russellville and later played soccer for Ohio Valley University, a Church of Christ-associated school in Vienna, W.Va.

While society may tout condoms and birth-control pills to prevent pregnancies, practicing “safe sex” was not the emphasis of the church program.

“We want to teach them God’s plan — to wait until they’re married,” McCarley said, “so they can enjoy sex the way that God designed it to be.”

‘APPROPRIATE, PG-13 LEVEL’ DISCUSSION

Incorporated in 1798, Russellville traces its name to William Russell, a Revolutionary War general.

About 50 miles north of Nashville, Tenn., the town conducts an annual Tobacco and Heritage Festival, at which residents re-enact a local bank’s 1868 robbery by the notorious Jesse James gang.

Church leaders put up a sign at a major street corner advertising the sex workshop, and deacon Rusty Clark, president of First Southern National Bank, organized a luncheon to promote the program to area pastors. The bank underwrote Ultimate Escape’s costs.

More than half of the roughly 150 teens and parents who attended came from outside the Crittenden Drive church. “It’s much needed,” Clark said. “Like Steve said, if we don’t teach our kids about sexuality in our homes and in the churches, they’ll find out about it from their peers, at school and from the Internet and other media.

“So I’m just really encouraged by what he’s doing,” he said of Holladay. “I’m glad he’s got a passion and a heart for it.”



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Steve Holladay with his Rottweiler “Baby Ruth” and props used during the sex workshop.

Except for the subject matter, the scene resembled any church youth event — with teens clad in jeans, T-shirts and hoodies flirting and playfully punching members of the opposite sex while sharing popcorn, nachos and soft drinks.

Holladay opened by promising to discuss sexuality in an extremely open manner but at an “appropriate, PG-13 level.”

In sessions that stretched over 15 hours that Friday night and Saturday, he delved into neurochemistry, exploring sexual triggers in the brain.

The psychology graduate of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., contrasted society’s view of sex in a hook-up, friends-with-benefits culture with God’s portrait of a lifelong

intimacy between one man and one woman, united in holy matrimony.

In an age when teens can access full-motion sexual images with just a few clicks on a computer or smartphone, in-depth discussions focused on sexual purity, dealing with hurts — whether sexually related or not — and starting over after past mistakes.

“Sexuality is probably the single biggest issue that Satan uses to separate people from God and cause a lot of shame and guilt,” Holladay said over scrambled eggs and bacon at The Cattle Pen, a popular eatery not far from the church.

“A lot of the youth ministers I talk to echo that,” he added. “This issue is the



Youth minister Daniel McCarley, right, talks about overcoming sexual temptations.

biggest challenge that their kids face.”

It’s certainly a challenge for teens at the Crittenden Drive church, McCarley said.

“I’ve had kids who’ve admitted they’ve struggled with pornography and different issues with a boyfriend or a girlfriend,” the youth minister said.

McCarley knew Holladay from youth rallies and Christian camps and called him to seek advice on a specific situation. That led to the Ultimate Escape founder traveling to Russellville and teaching a class for teens and parents.

That initial presentation excited the congregation and sparked the idea of a more in-depth study, church leaders said. Rusty Clark’s daughter, Molly, 17,

said she learned about hormones and brain functions in high school anatomy class — but not about God’s plan for sex.

“The biblical standpoint wasn’t there,” she said.

“I mean, everybody learns about sex,” agreed Molly’s friend Katelyn Jones, 16. “But I don’t think they go into full depth about what Christ expects of it and stuff.”

As for discussing terms such as “orgasm” and “masturbation” in a church setting, Katelyn acknowledged, “It’s kind of awkward ... but it’s the good kind of awkward, and people need to learn about it. It’s not a subject you need to be blind about.”

‘THERE’S A LOT OF PRESSURE TO HAVE SEX’

Pam Jones, Katelyn’s grandmother,

was not shy about voicing her appreciation for the focus on sex.

“Society teaches us to use sex as entertainment, whereas God has a special plan that he says will make us happier if we do it his way,” said Jones, a 48-year member of the Crittenden Drive church.

“Yes, sex is a wonderful thing, but God gave us guidelines,” she added. “Just like we all love to eat, but he also says, ‘Don’t be a glutton.’”

On a student evaluation form, a 13-year-old boy characterized the seminar as “awesome!!”

“Keep going,” he wrote. “Kids these days need to know what you have to share. Thank you very much! You

probably just saved me from more bad choices.”

A 14-year-old girl wrote: “I loved it. It really made me more confident in my decisions to stay abstinent. There’s a lot of pressure to have sex, and I’m not willing to risk the consequences or wreck my relationship with God. I think my virginity is a gift from God and should be shared with my husband when I get married.”

In the “Sex Talk Live” session, teens could text questions to Holladay anonymously or scribble notes on pieces of paper and drop them in a box.

“If you do something you regret, does that make you a bad person?” one teen asked.

“No,” Holladay replied. “If you do something that you regret, that makes you human. Welcome to humanity.”



Katelyn Jones, 16, and Molly Clark, 17, attend the Crittenden Drive church.



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SHERRI HERNDON

'24 Hours of Prayer' in New Jersey

Susie and Matt Downing join an around-the-clock prayer effort by the Pitman Road Church of Christ in Sewell, N.J. The recent "24 Hours of Prayer" began on a Friday night and featured special prayer times for groups such as teens, women and fathers and sons, member Sherri Herndon said.

Snowbirds enjoy 'Spiritual Feasting'

QUARTZSITE, Ariz. — In the winter, this tourist hotspot draws thousands of RV campers.

As temperatures cool, the Church of Christ — which has only a few members in the summer — swells with snowbirds.

The final day of the church's recent "Eight Days of Spiritual Feasting" gospel meeting drew 107 people, said Gerald R. Molzahn, a snowbird and member of the Worland Church of Christ in Wyoming.

"This outstanding attendance can be attributed to the hard work of the winter members," Molzahn said. "Several

members knocked on doors and personally invited town residents as well as handing them printed invitations."

A sign announcing the meeting was mounted on a utility trailer that members parked at various locations and entered in a local parade.

In addition, a colorful banner advertising the event was towed behind a member's ultralight aircraft that circled the area.

"Feed My Sheep" was the meeting's theme. The eight speakers drew lessons from 1 Peter and 2 Peter.

Theft fails to dim church's spirit

FORT MYERS, Fla. — When the Lehigh Acres Church of Christ gathered for a recent fellowship, members were shocked to discover that the church's three air-conditioning units had been destroyed and stripped for parts.

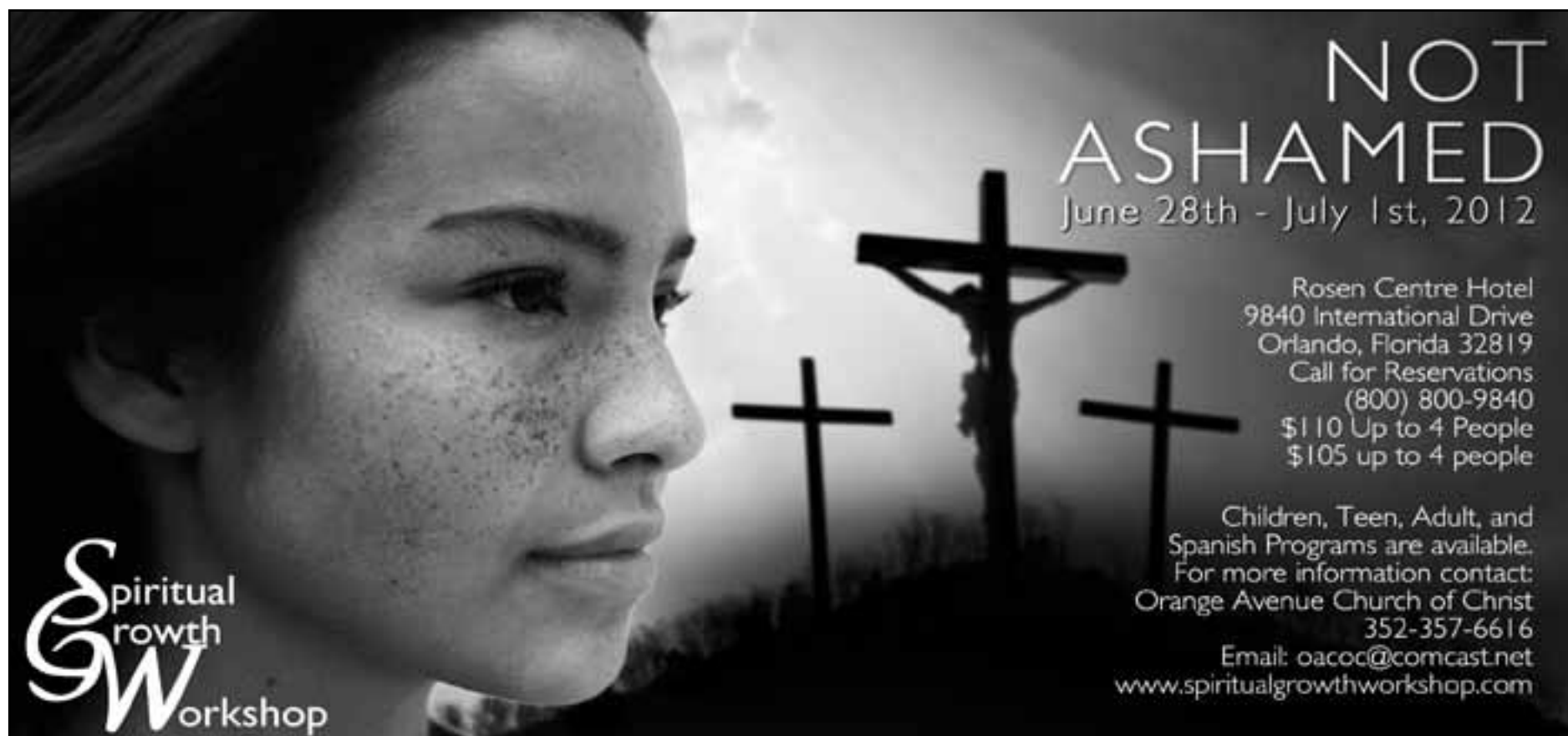
"It's like walking into your own house and finding out someone robbed you," member Doris Taylor told *The News-Press*.

How did the 35-member congregation

— which has cut its preacher's salary and done away with cleaning and landscaping services because of budget problems — respond?

Members proceeded with a planned chili dinner and count of coins collected for Mount Dora Children's Home, the newspaper reported.

The church expects insurance to cover the theft, minus a \$1,000 deductible, leaders said.



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ANGOLA

HUAMBO — Since moving to this southern African nation last year to serve with a mission team, Danny and Katie Reese have lost two computers, a printer and scanner to theft.

Someone even stole their puppy, Bravo, from their yard.

In addition, the couple has dealt with vehicle repairs, plumbing problems and a malfunctioning generator.

“Quite simply, it feels like we have been under attack,” Katie Reese said. “Yet we can see God working powerfully in providing for us.”

The couple was able to recover one of the computers, and a teammate found Bravo at a veterinarian’s office.

The Westover Hills Church of Christ in Austin, Texas, supports the Reeses, who seek additional partners to provide funds for their work fund.

For more information, e-mail reeses@angolateam.org.



WWW.ANGOLATEAM.ORG/REESES

The Reeses, reunited with Bravo.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

MALABO — This Spanish-speaking nation, composed of a small patch of land in West Africa and five small islands, has proved to be a difficult field for church planters, said Leonardo K. Bueto.

The church member, who lives in the country’s capital, Malabo, said he is aware of five previous attempts to spread the Gospel to his country’s 668,000 people that failed to produce lasting fruit.

Though the work is hard, Bueto and fellow Christians have baptized 28 people in Equatorial Guinea in the past year, he said. A small congrega-



PHOTO PROVIDED

In Croatia, Churches of Christ have a seat at the table

Mladen Jovanovic, left, sits on the set of a news program in the Central European nation of Croatia. Jovanovic, minister for the Kuslanova Church of Christ in Zagreb, Croatia, was part of a panel discussion, which also included representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the Muslim faith, about the role of religion in Croatia as the country prepares to join the European Union in 2013.

Jovanovic represented his country’s Churches of Christ at a reception for religious constituencies hosted by Croatia’s president, Ivo Josipovic. “I was on the editorial board of the book about religions in Croatia, which included a whole chapter dedicated to Churches of Christ and the Restoration Movement,” Jovanovic said. The minister asked the president to include the book in government offices and schools.

tion meets in Malabo and has a hospital visitation program.

The church sponsors a radio evangelism program that has resulted in many Bible studies, he added.

MAURITIUS

PORT LOUIS — Members of the three Churches of Christ on this island in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar, met for a retreat recently.

Guests included Jeff Fogarty, a member of the Mid-County Church of Christ in Ladue, Mo. The church supports Mauritius missionaries Tony and Caroline Leuteritz and Camden and Stephanie Subarayadu.



Bueto

MONGOLIA

ULAN BATOR — “This country is ready for the Gospel of Christ,” said William Crossman, a retired minister in Leavenworth, Kan.

Crossman recently spent three months in this nation of 2.7 million souls, teaching English and conducting Bible studies.

He seeks additional workers.

“I have met wonderful people in Mongolia — students interested in learning English and the Bible,” he said. “I have some good contacts to offer for any interested persons.”

For more information, see the website of the Leavenworth Church of Christ, lcofc.org/ministriesmongolia.html.

NIGER

TERA — Since 1979, an estimated 200 million people have watched

“The Jesus Film” in countries around the globe — including Niger.

African missionaries in this landlocked, West African nation showed the film — a meticulous retelling of the Gospel of Luke — in two villages near the city of Tera.

More than 80 percent of Niger’s 16.4 million people claim Islam as their faith. Many others practice indigenous beliefs.

The villagers said they appreciated the film “and asked us if we can come back again,” said Harouna Kanguy, a church member who moved to Niger after training for ministry in neighboring Benin.

Kanguy requested Bibles and benches to continue the work.

SPOTLIGHT**A nation’s lone church member**

PODGORICA, MONTENEGRO — Jo Byrd-Huddleston, a Christian in Arkansas, is praying for the day missionaries will move to this Central European nation and work alongside her “adopted spiritual daughter,” Marsida Bobaj.

Bobaj was baptized in 2010 after studying the Bible with Byrd-Huddleston through the World English Institute correspondence



Bobaj

program. The country of 661,000 souls has no Churches of Christ.

“Please keep her in your prayers,” Byrd-Huddleston said of Bobaj. “She has been faithful for a year and a half in a country that, at present, has no church with which to worship and fellowship. She is certainly God’s faithful, 17-year-old daughter.”

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

DUBAI — After leading seven people to Christ, a ministry student in this Middle Eastern nation was beaten by a group of attackers and nearly died.

Prasad, a native of India, required more than 60 stitches in his head but survived the assault, said Vaughn Graham, an elder of the Southwest Church of Christ in Pueblo, Colo. The church supports the ministry training school that Prasad attends as he works as an expatriate laborer in Dubai. Authorities arrested the attackers, Graham said.

“Prasad is out of danger and doing well,” the elder said. “Prayers are requested for this dedicated young man and all the work Christians are doing in such a hostile environment.”

Honduras missionary recognized as 'servant to the poorest'



TREY MORGAN

Marc Tindall hugs a woman at the Honduras garbage dump where he helps feed the poor.

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — The newspaper headline reads “Misionero de los más pobres,” or “Servant to the poorest.”

The words describe Marc Tindall, a missionary in this Central American capital. Tindall and his wife, Terri, work with Casa de Esperanza (“House of Hope”), a children’s home.

The couple also works alongside volunteers from the U.S. and Hondurans to build homes for families in need.

In the past year, their ministry oversaw the construction of more than 90 houses, plus a church building, a Sunday school classroom, a feeding center and two playgrounds, Terri Tindall said.

The Tindalls feed and serve Hondurans living in a garbage dump. The couple’s ministry provided food for 5,000 families in 2011. Partnering with U.S.

Christians, the couple hosts an annual “Jesus banquet” at the dump, setting up long tables and treating hundreds of the poorest of the poor to a feast.

In 2009, the First Lady of Honduras made an unannounced visit to the banquet. In front of TV cameras, she talked about the plight of the poor and thanked the missionaries for their work.

Recently, the Honduran newspaper *El Heraldo* profiled Marc Tindall, calling him one of the most generous people in Honduras.

“Marc Tindall is an American who dedicates each minute of his time to offer a roof and food to deserted children and families in extreme poverty,” the newspaper said.

MORE INFORMATION: territindall.blogspot.com

Texas boy’s legacy will live on in Africa

AS HE BATTLED LEUKEMIA, 7-year-old Liam Lowe raised awareness — and thousands of dollars — for clean water wells in Kenya.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Liam Lowe had a knack for helping people — in a country halfway around the world or in a hospital bed next door.

Battling leukemia for the second time in less than a year, the boy from Abilene, Texas, made it his mission to cheer up his fellow patients, especially after they got a “poke” from a nurse. He knew what that was like.

“I remember a couple of toddler girls he made friends with,” said his mother, Amy. “He would go and sit next to them, talk to them and make funny faces. Making others smile and laugh was obviously something he thought about and planned for.”

Liam’s sense of caring also will quench thirst for hundreds of people in Africa with no access to clean water. Friends, family and even strangers have donated more than \$32,000 in his name to construct water wells.

After rounds of chemotherapy, radiation and multiple stem cell transplants, Liam’s struggle with cancer ended Jan. 17 — four days after his seventh birthday. As his parents receive food and messages of support, they

remember their son’s giving spirit.

“I think that Liam was just an exceptionally kind and gentle boy,” said his father, Matt, “and very generous and very concerned about other people.”

Matt and Amy Lowe settled in Abilene, where Matt Lowe works as a computer programmer, after they graduated from Abilene Christian University. The family attends the Highland Church of Christ.

Their son was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia, a cancer of the white blood cells involved in the immune system, in November 2010.

The Lowes spent the next seven months at a children’s hospital in Fort Worth, Texas. Liam received a bone marrow transplant from his 3-year-old sister, Mary. Showing signs of improvement, he returned to Abilene in late June.

Less than a month later, he was back in the hospital with a stubborn fever. He had relapsed.

The family traveled back to Fort Worth, and later to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., for more treatments.

“After his relapse, in an attempt to make each day as meaningful as it



J. MALAHY PHOTOGRAPHY (WWW.JMALAHYBLOG.COM)

Liam Lowe and his sister, Mary.

could be, we decided that every day in the hospital should include three important things: learning something, making something and loving someone,” his father said.

During one conversation about loving people, Liam told his parents about a picture of a poor boy he had seen

working in a factory in a foreign country. The discussion turned to helping those without enough to eat or drink.

Browsing the Internet, the family found the website of The Water Project, a New Hampshire-based nonprofit that funds the digging of clean water wells in developing nations.

The family set up “Liam’s Wells,” a web page to collect donations in his name. Thus far, The Water Project has collected enough money through “Liam’s Wells” to fund four clean water wells. Two have been drilled — one at a primary school and another at a hospital in rural Kenya.

In the days since her son’s death, “when I’ve been sad, I think about all the other people — all the other parents — in the world who have lost their children to something simple, like dirty water,” Amy Lowe said.

She finds comfort in Scriptures about God’s love, including the admonition in John 13:34, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

Liam lived that verse, Matt Lowe said, and his son’s giving spirit will transform countless lives in Africa.

“I really think we’re going to be trying to live up to him,” he said.

TO CONTRIBUTE TO “LIAM’S WELLS,” see thewaterproject.org/liam

Missionaries return after five years of nurturing churches in Ukraine

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Brett and Alicia White didn't move to Ukraine to plant churches.

Rather, the young couple — newlyweds when they arrived in 2006 — consider themselves “second-generation mission workers,” Brett White said.

For five years, they helped nurture young churches planted in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Whites, who recently returned to the U.S. with their two daughters, lived in the capital, Kiev, the eastern Ukrainian city of Sumy, near the Russian border, and Ternopil, in western Ukraine.

Brett, a native of Valdosta, Ga., and Alicia, from Hurricane, W.Va., met while serving victims of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Both volunteered with the Tammany Oaks Church of Christ in Mandeville, La., as the congregation served victims of the catastrophic storm in the New Orleans area.

The couple moved to Ukraine under the oversight of Ukraine Mission Work, a ministry of the Westworth Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas. After language training in Kiev, they worked



PHOTO PROVIDED

Brett and Alicia White with their daughters.

with a congregation in Sumy, born out of an evangelistic campaign by Churches of Christ in 1993.

In Ternopil, the Whites worked with a congregation launched by Stephen Epi Bilak, a native Ukrainian. The Minter Lane Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, supports the work in Ternopil.

“We were so blessed to be partners with two amazing support groups from American churches and countless Ukrainian Christians and congregations,” Brett White said. “Even though our bodies are back in America, a part of us will always be in Ukraine.”

MORE INFORMATION: ukrainemissionwork.com

Thai Christian fights child prostitution

CHIANG MAI, Thailand — This Southeast Asian nation is a source of, transit point for and destination for human trafficking.

From here, women and girls from Thailand's hill tribes are trafficked to nations across the region — plus Australia, Europe, Canada and the U.S. — for sexual and labor exploitation, according to humantrafficking.org. International crime syndicates lure or force the young women into lives of slavery and horror.

Tawee Donchai wants it to end.

Donchai, a member of Cheung Doi Church of Christ in Chiang Mai and a scientist researching HIV, grew up in the village of Chiang Rai, an impoverished community that has one of the highest



Donchai

rates of child prostitution in the country.

Donchai is Thailand director for The SOLD Project, a Pleasanton, Calif.-based humanitarian effort that reaches out to village children at risk of being sold into slavery.

“The SOLD Project focuses on prevention by trying to show children and parents that there are far better options than selling a child into prostitution,” said Chiang Mai church planter David Allen. Recently, fellow church members worked alongside Donchai to help the ministry.

“I have a dream to start a youth center in my hometown,” Donchai said. “I think it is important to give these children a broader view of the world ... I would also like to be able to provide scholarships for poor families to send their children to school.”

MORE INFORMATION: www.thesoldproject.com

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IMMIGRATION: Law vs. mercy?

FROM PAGE 1

Christ, the Bible's instruction to obey civil law can clash with God's call to welcome strangers and aliens.

"Most average Americans, including those in the church, have not taken the time to get to know the immigrants in our inner cities," said Sean McClue, intercultural missionary for the Central Phoenix Urban Ministry, which is supported by Churches of Christ.

"People's identities have come to be defined by their immigration status rather than the fact that they were created in God's image," added McClue, a former missionary to Mexico. "Listening to their personal stories would help us understand the difficulty of the situation and the complexity of the issue."

Moises Pinedo, a member of the Elizabethton Church of Christ in Tennessee, said he sees no need to check someone's immigration status before sharing the Gospel.

But neither should Christians ignore the issue, said Pinedo, a native of Peru who became a U.S. citizen in 2008.

"For someone who purposely breaks immigration laws and then looks for ways to legitimize his actions, the only solution may be to return to his native country in order to assure his heavenly home," Pinedo wrote in "Illegal Immigration," a 2009 book published by Apologetics Press.

"Sadly," he added, "many more try to cross the border of the United States than to cross the border into heaven."

Immigration attorney Isaul Verdin, a member of the McDermott Road Church of Christ in Plano, Texas, sees it differently.

There's a difference, the American-born son of Mexican immigrants believes, between violating a moral law and an administrative one.

"These people are merely violating the law because there is no legal way to enter the U.S.," said Verdin, a graduate of Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., "and they are desperate to escape deplorable conditions in their country and help their family."

Every other Friday, Lawson rises

early and drives nearly an hour to the regional deportation center in Broadview, Ill., just off Interstate 290.

Here, he joins two Roman Catholic nuns and other volunteers who minister to detainees' families before their shackled loved ones are taken to O'Hare International Airport for flights to the U.S. border.

From 4 to 6 a.m., relatives can deliver cash and a small bag of personal items.

"They go into a room and sit at a table, and the person they've come to see is on the other side of a glass panel," Lawson says. "They don't get to touch them. And whatever they give them, they hand to a guard."

Hidden in a nondescript industrial park with few streetlights, the deportation center — which processes immigrants from six states — can be difficult to find.

Headlights pierce the darkness as vehicles bearing the detainees' relatives turn the corner. Lawson flags down the drivers and shares instructions on where to park and check in.

"There's usually somebody that speaks English," he says. "I make sure and tell them 'no cell phones' and that they have to have identification."

He hopes his kind words and friendly directions make a difference. "I can come and say, 'God cares ... and God's people care,'" Lawson says, a chilly breeze blowing as he awaits the next arrival.

STIRRING IN HIS HEART

Lawson traces his passion for immigrants to Bible studies over the last few years.

The 53-year-old minister grew up in a U.S. Air Force family and always considered himself extremely patriotic.

Until a few years ago, he believed that illegal immigrants needed to be deported. As he saw it, they were taking Americans' jobs and threatening national security.

After all, Romans 13:1 says, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established."

"But there just started being a stirring in my heart," said the father of four,



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Bobby Lawson, minister for the Park Forest Church of Christ in Matteson, Ill., south of Chicago, prays with an undocumented immigrant's relatives outside a deportation center.

who earned a Bible degree from Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., in 1980 and a master of theology degree from Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn., in 1985.

As Lawson read the Bible and sought to understand God's will concerning undocumented aliens, he was overwhelmed "by how much there is."

For example, Leviticus 19:33 declares, "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him."

Elders at the Park Forest church supported Lawson's request to teach a four-month Bible study on immigrants.

Jack Plummer, a Park Forest elder for 40 years, said the study caused him to reassess his beliefs.

"Now I'm just simply confused," he said with a chuckle. "I have no idea

what the answer is except to know that it will come from God and not from our human way of thinking and planning."

Jesus surrounded himself with those considered the least of the least, said Ray Rubio, a Park Forest elder and the great-grandson of a migrant worker from Mexico.

"In today's society, who is considered the lowest of the lowest? The undocumented Hispanic," said Rubio, the son of a preacher. "Then I would say, 'Yeah, I think that's where we need to be.'"

When Lawson heard about Catholic nuns JoAnn Persch and Pat Murphy providing pastoral care for detained immigrants, he contacted them.

He began visiting the deportation center and traveling to the McHenry County Jail to see immigrants clad in



As the sun rises, immigrant advocates gather for a prayer vigil at the deportation center.

orange jumpsuits.

"He found out about what we were doing and said, 'I'll be there at 4 in the morning,'" said Persch, 77, taking a break from the cold in Lawson's church van. "We thought, 'Oh, yeah, sure.' But boy, he was here the next Friday."

On a recent jail visit, Lawson saw detainees from Ethiopia, Somalia, Bolivia, Colombia and Mexico. "What a wide range of people in one place," he said.

Ricardo Barrera, minister for the Elgin Church of Christ, a Spanish-speaking congregation west of Chicago, accompanies Lawson on the jail visits.

Barrera, who immigrated legally to the United States when he was 16, said the detainees understand that they broke the law by crossing the border.

"But their perspective is like, 'I didn't do it to come and kill anybody. ... I did it because I had to. I had no choice,'" Barrera said.

The ministers provide rare physical contact — a hug, a soft touch — for inmates who must visit with relatives through closed-circuit television.

"You honestly do get to see in their eyes such a need of hope and mercy," Barrera said. "Everybody's looking at them like they're killers or rapists or whatever, and you come in and minister



Barrera

to them, and you bring them hope. You read the Bible, and you just listen to them, and that makes a big difference."

The amazing thing about Lawson, Barrera said, is that the Anglo minister could choose to ignore the issue.

"When he went to see one of our members, I mean, this family was blown away by how much mercy they saw in Bobby," the immigrant minister said.

TEARS AND PRAYERS

As teary-eyed relatives leave the deportation center, Lawson walks with them to their cars.

He always offers to lead a prayer. Most eagerly accept.

Miguel's three young daughters show no visible emotion after saying goodbye. As other relatives console the girls' grandmother, the children stare silently at Lawson. He assures the family that God will watch over them and Miguel.

The minister has no idea if the 36-year-old Mexican got picked up on a routine traffic stop or if he committed a crime.

Lawson can't explain why the man's relatives have proper documentation and he does not.

Really, Lawson says, such questions are not his concern.

"God, be with this family," he prays before they drive away. "Bless them. Keep Miguel safe. Bring them back together again."



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HARDING

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION

Clifton L. Ganus Jr.



David B. Burks

The board of trustees of Harding University invites confidential applications and nominations for the position of president of the University. The president is the chief executive officer, reporting directly to the University's board, and is ultimately responsible for the supervision and direction of both the academic and financial operations of the institution.

The new president will succeed Dr. David B. Burks, whose tenure has spanned 26 years. Dr. Burks announced his retirement effective June 30, 2013. He is only the fourth president in Harding's 87-year history.

Harding began as a senior college in 1924, when two junior colleges, Arkansas Christian College and Harper College, merged their facilities and assets, adopted the new name of Harding College, and located on the campus of Arkansas Christian in Morrilton, Ark. Harper had been founded in 1915 in Harper, Kan., and Arkansas Christian had been chartered in 1919. In 1934 Harding moved to its present site in Searcy, Ark., on the campus of a former women's institution, Galloway College.

The college was named in memory of James A. Harding, co-founder and first president of Nashville Bible School (now Lipscomb University) in Nashville, Tenn. James A. Harding had a passion and enthusiasm for Christian education that remains as a significant heritage of the institution today.

With the merger of the two junior colleges, J.N. Armstrong, who had served five years as Harper's president, became president of Harding College. He had also served as president of Cordell Christian College in Oklahoma. Armstrong was a pioneer in the development of Christian higher education west of the Mississippi River.

One of Harding's first graduates, George S. Benson, returned

About the Presidential Succession Process:

The board of trustees has approved a six-member Presidential Succession Process Committee charged with the responsibility of developing the process of selecting the new president and reviewing nominations and applications. The committee is chaired by Dr. John O. Simmons, who also is serving as the current chairman of the University's board. The committee will begin its review of nominations and applications upon receipt. However, to ensure full consideration, individuals should complete their application prior to June 30, 2012.

For detailed information including the presidential profile and how to submit your application or nominations, please visit www.harding.edu/presidential-successionprocess

from mission work in China in 1936 to assume the presidency of his alma mater. For the next 29 years, he led the institution in achieving financial stability, national recognition and academic accreditation.

Dr. Clifton L. Ganus Jr., a 1943 graduate, served as president from 1965 to 1987. His tenure featured a significant level of campus improvement and expansion. The College of Nursing and the development of an international campus in Florence, Italy, were two highlights of his leadership. The enrollment grew from 1,472 to 2,767.

Upon completion of a study begun in May 1978, the board of trustees approved the study's recommended change of Harding to university status, and, on Aug. 27, 1979, the name of the institution officially became Harding University.

Dr. David B. Burks became the fourth president in May 1987. During his administration, six new international programs were established, and doctoral programs in education, pharmacy, physical therapy and theology were developed plus master's degree programs in communication disorders, business and physician assistant. The school completed capital projects totaling more than \$250 million.

Today with an enrollment of 7,155 from 50 states and 53 foreign countries, Harding University is the largest private university in Arkansas. Students study in more than 90 majors in nine colleges — Allied Health, Arts and Humanities, Bible and Ministry, Business Administration, Education, Honors, Nursing, Pharmacy and Sciences. Ten undergraduate degrees are offered and 15 graduate and professional degrees. More than 40 percent of each graduating class has participated in one of the institution's seven international programs.

For additional information about Harding University, please visit www.harding.edu



A dry and thirsty land

CHURCH-SUPPORTED MINISTRY *seeks lasting relief for drought-stricken Kenya*

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

LODWAR, Kenya

Grass here is green again, thanks to recent rains. Camels and massive turtles roam, feasting on their newfound bounty.

But evidence of East Africa's months-long famine, which claimed an estimated 100,000 lives, remains — in the form of four-wheel-drive vehicles marked with the logos of Oxfam International and other non-governmental organizations.

The food crisis brought a flood of relief workers from Europe, the Americas and other parts of Africa to Lodwar, the heart of northwestern Kenya's Turkana region.

Wearing cargo pants and sipping coffee, they fill the town's stick-and-thatch hotels and engage in daylong discussions about the best way to help the impoverished souls who live here.

Meanwhile, the people of Turkana grow weary of being helped.

"We cry for relief, relief, relief ... but it doesn't last," says Jackson Erus, an instructor at a preacher training school on the dusty outskirts of Lodwar. Many of his people have left their traditional faiths and embraced Christianity. Now, instead of calling on a

CONTINUED



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

In the village of Nablou, Kenya, women of the Turkana ethnic group clap their hands and sing a song of praise for the relief aid they are about to receive.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Young women in the village of Nablon, Kenya, line up to receive relief supplies donated by Healing Hands International.

CONTINUED
“dreamer” or “diviner” to slaughter a camel and ask the spirits for rain, they pray to God for sustenance. But the Christians here want more than handouts, Erus says. They pray for real, sustainable development — to be good stewards of God’s provision. Enter Ebenezer Udofia, agricultural representative to Africa for Healing Hands International. He and other workers with the Nashville, Tenn.-based ministry, supported by Churches of Christ, have crisscrossed Africa teaching drip irrigation. The farming method uses buckets and long, plastic tubes to deliver droplets of water to seedlings. Udofia also teaches composting — turning vegetable waste into nourish-



Opondo

ment for the plants. Drip irrigation isn’t just sustainable, it’s biblical, Udofia says. He cites Jesus’ feeding of 5,000 people, a story recorded in all four gospels. “That’s the only miracle where Jesus asks them, ‘What do you have?’” says Udofia, referring to the five loaves and two fish that Christ used to feed the multitude. “Jesus took what they gave him and blessed it, and everyone was satisfied.”

PREACHING ‘FULL IN THE STOMACH’
Last year Udofia and his family moved to Kenya’s capital, Nairobi, where Healing Hands has registered as a non-governmental organization with the Kenyan government. Udofia teaches agriculture across the country — and to students at the Nairobi Great Commission School, where Church of Christ members from across Kenya train in ministry. As they study the Scriptures,

students make regular, 40-minute walks to a garden in Nairobi. Using drip irrigation, each student tends a small crop of vegetables. Learning to farm gives Christians a means of support as they preach, says Eunice Opondo, who helps tend the



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

A security guard looks over a crop of “sukuma wiki,” or kale, at a drip irrigation garden outside the Ngatataek Christian Community Center in Kajadio, Kenya.



EBENEZER UDOFIA

The Turkana people of Nablon, Kenya, prepare the soil for a drip irrigation garden.

model garden. Her husband, Tom, is the school’s registrar. The training also is changing the way Kenyan Christians view agriculture itself, she says, as she stands among rows of cabbages and tomatoes in the garden. “We are culturally pastoralists,” she

says, referring to her people’s reliance on livestock. “It’s hard to break away from pastoral living. “For you to preach the word of God, you have to be full in the stomach,” she adds. Christians who can teach sustainable farming serve as living examples that “God can provide physical food and spiritual food.”

‘THIS WON’T SOLVE ALL YOUR PROBLEMS’
Sometimes, however, physical food is needed to get starving Kenyans through another day. Back in Lodwar, Udofia and a small group of aid workers load a transport truck with cooking oil, ground corn and milk. The truck’s wheels spray dust into the air as the vehicle arrives at the village of Nablon. In the scant shade of a small tree, women stomp and chant in the Turkana language — a song of thanksgiving for the bounty they are about to receive. Rows of brightly



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

In Kajadio, Kenya, villagers show the bucket and irrigation system in their garden.

colored beads clack from their long necks as they jump. “Brothers and sisters in Christ send this food to you,” Udofia says, as a villager translates his words into Turkana. But “this won’t solve all your problems.” In a garden a short walk from the site of the giveaway, shoots of green force their way through the arid soil — the first fruits of the village’s drip irrigation project. “We are training you to make food for yourselves,” Udofia says, “but we know until that time comes, you have to eat.” The Turkana people, who herd sheep and camels, are accustomed to drought. But month after month without a drop of rain killed their livestock and led to a full-fledged crisis. “I’m very hungry. I have seen



Echemee

many people die,” says 15-year-old Joseph Lokai. “Some children here are orphans. Some women there are widows,” he says, pointing to a line of mothers waiting for food. His father, 75-year-old Alaku Echemee, says this famine is one of the worst he can remember. Three members of his family have died. The villagers pray that the recent rains will nurture their newly planted crops, says Lokai’s mother, Margaret. Meanwhile, they are thankful for the means of making it through one more day. “God has brought food,” she says in Turkana as her son translates. Gesturing toward the heavens, she adds, “And he has also brought water.”

DIFFICULT CHOICES
A few days after distributing food in Turkana, Udofia and representatives of the Great Commission School travel south to the village of Kajadio,



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Masai women in Timau, Kenya, smile as they talk about their drip irrigation project.

near Kenya’s border with Tanzania. They bring drip irrigation kits and water filters, but no food. The people here haven’t had to buy vegetables for six months, Udofia says. The villagers are eager to show the visitors why — their community



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

A Turkana woman in Nablon smiles as a sack full of relief aid rests on her head.

“shamba,” or “garden” in Swahili. The villagers, all of the Masai ethnic group, have grown tomatoes, onions and carrots in their drip irrigation garden — plus a leafy cabbage that Americans call kale, known here as “sukuma wiki.” The name means “to push the week” and refers to the fast-growing plant’s ability to make people’s food supply last through the week. “It means ... they get another day for this one,” says minister Joseph Olesaoi, pointing to one of the green plants he helps tend in the garden. Making it through the worst of the drought was difficult, even using drip irrigation, the villagers say. The water shortage became so severe that parents had to decide between tipping the tiny cups of liquid they could procure into the drip irrigation buckets or the mouths of their thirsty children.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Chris Gingles, vice president of Healing Hands International, prays for a group of Masai women and their garden near the village of Timau, Kenya.

KENYA: Preachers become gardeners

FROM PAGE 19

The community needs a well, but drilling it to the depth required for clean water would cost tens of thousands of dollars, with no guarantee of success.

Despite the water shortages, the Masai people “have tasted and they have liked” the fruits of their labor, Olesaoili says.

The farming technique allows poor, hardworking people to feed themselves and sell their abundance for profit. They no longer beg for money, the minister says.

Among the smiling Kenyans showing off the garden is John Sankaen, who just graduated from the Great Commission School. The elders of his congregation, the Kumpa Church of Christ, recommended him for the two-year training program.

He traveled to Nairobi expecting to study preaching. Instead, “the first day, when I arrived, they were doing a workshop on gardening,” Sankaen says. “I said, ‘What is this?’”

The ministry student soon learned the value of the technique. When the drought hit, he traveled back home to distribute food aid.

“Two days later,” he says, “they sent me a message, ‘Please come back with more.’”

Drip irrigation is a long-term solution to the problem, Sankaen says. It also “helps me to raise funds for myself, even when I am preaching.”

As the visit concludes, David Tonui, principal of the Great Commission School, encourages the villagers to pass on what they’ve learned, and to keep their focus on eternal life.



Olesaoili



Sankaen

Olesaoili assures the visitors that they will spread the good news of farming — and the good news of Jesus — to the villages around them.

“You are not working for nothing,” he says. “Now we are going to show others. It’s going to grow, grow, grow.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION on Healing Hands International and drip irrigation, see www.hhi.org.

Nigerian farmer plants hope

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

TIMAU, Kenya

The journey from Nairobi to this remote African village, at the foot of Mount Kenya, was supposed to take four hours. After a couple of wrong turns, it was closer to seven.

Ebenezer Udofia apologizes for the delay. His guests, from the U.S. offices of Healing Hands International, don’t mind. After all, the circuitous route carried them past a herd of roadside zebras and across the equator — three times.

Udofia, a 37-year-old Nigerian, acknowledges that he’s still finding his way in this East African nation. What he lacks in navigational skills, however, he makes up for in personality.

When he and his guests finally reach their destination — a drip irrigation garden outside Timau — the Masai women who tend the garden dance, sing and cackle with delight. Udofia smiles and laughs as he recalls the farming seminar he hosted here a few months ago. Then he reminds the women of Christ’s love for them.

He never wanted to be a preacher.

His father, Nathaniel, was a Church of Christ minister in Nigeria’s predominantly Christian south who moved the family to Niger State — about half Muslim and half Christian — to plant churches. Udofia played with Muslim children.

“We lived as brothers,” he said.

Though he loved the Lord, just as his father did, Udofia said he saw too many Nigerian Christians become dependent on U.S. support.

“When you wait for support from the USA, you work as if you’re working for the Americans — not God,” he said. “I wanted to learn something that would help me support my family and support the church.”

He studied animal husbandry, agriculture and education in college. During a year of compulsory government service, he wrote a guide to raising rabbits. A wealthy Muslim read the book and hired Udofia to work on his farm in Nigeria’s predominantly Islamic northeast.

Brad Blake, a Church of Christ missionary in the nearby town of Maiduguri, visited Udofia to get advice on farming in northern Nigeria’s arid climate. Later, the missionary introduced Udofia to David Goolsby, agricultural director

for Healing Hands International, who conducted drip irrigation seminars across Africa.

The Nashville, Tenn.-based ministry asked the Nigerian to serve as its agricultural representative to Africa. Though it meant taking a salary from the U.S., Udofia said he was inspired by the ministry’s focus on alleviating the suffering of the poor, orphans and widows while leaving their dignity intact. He began working for Healing Hands in 2007. A year later, he married another church member, Regina, whom he met at a congregation in Nigeria’s capital, Abuja.

The couple hosted sustainable farming and food preservation workshops for Muslims and Christians. They were dedicated members of the Wulari-Jerusalem Church of Christ, a

200-member congregation in Maiduguri.

When gangs of radical Muslims swept through the city in 2009, burning churches and killing pastors, the local Muslims protected the Church of Christ because of the kindness its members had shown, Udofia said.

In the next two years, however, the violence became worse. Healing Hands moved the couple and



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Ebenezer and Regina Udofia, with their daughter, Grace, stand outside their apartment in Nairobi, Kenya.

their infant daughter, Grace, to Jos, Nigeria, but religious tension also was high there.

Then the Nairobi Great Commission School, a church-supported ministry training program in Kenya, approached Healing Hands about teaching sustainable farming to its students.

Udofia accepted the challenge and moved his family to Nairobi in early 2011.

“We shed tears,” said Regina Udofia, who had never visited Kenya before the move. “We were not really that excited that we were leaving our country for a different one.”

“But we had concluded, my husband and I, that anywhere with Jesus we can safely go,” she said, referencing the lyrics of a popular hymn. “God brought us here.”

Ebenezer Udofia’s courses on agriculture have improved the lives of students at the Great Commission School, said principal David Tonui.

In addition, the Nigerian immigrant has traveled to remote locales across East Africa — including Timau — teaching farming. In each village, he is greeted with smiles and laughter.

“He’s so excited about his work,” Tonui said. “He’s everywhere.”



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ignitefaith.org

an online magazine for young Christians

PLEASANTS: After 38 seasons, coach's son takes his father's mantle

FROM PAGE 3
north of Detroit once known as Michigan Christian College. In 38 seasons, Klint's dad compiled an impressive resume: 720 career wins, four small-college national championships and a long list of former players who credit him with helping develop their faith. "I would be lying if I said I don't feel any pressure," said Klint, whose team was 16-6 at press time. Then again, he knows what real pressure feels like. Even now, that terrible night at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit puts basketball in perspective. "When you've kissed your wife goodbye after being told by a doctor that she wouldn't survive surgery, losing a game isn't so hard," he said. "I remind myself of that often."

COACHING ROOTS RUN DEEP
The Rochester Warriors practice in a small gymnasium at the back end of campus. Championship banners hang on the walls, but there's no room for bleachers. The team plays "home" games at nearby Rochester High School — a fact that always astonishes outsiders.

"Coaches are blown away," Klint Pleasant said. "They come in here and say, 'I thought your dad had 700 and some-odd wins.' And I say, 'Yeah, but all on the road.'"

On the bright side, a shiny new floor was installed a few years ago, replacing decades-old plywood that was splintering. For Klint, this old gym holds a lifetime of memories. He spent a huge portion of his childhood here. "Dad started taking me to

games when I was 3, and I always sat right next to him on the bench," Klint said. "Some kids grow up wanting to play in the NBA. I grew up wanting to coach." Garth Pleasant came to Michigan Christian, then a junior college, as a student-athlete in the late 1960s. He starred on the basketball court and grew spiritually. As a sophomore, he met his future wife, Pat, daughter of Lucien Palmer, Rochester's second president. He finished his studies at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. When Rochester's top coaching job came open in 1972, he jumped at the opportunity. His dream job, he called it — one that turned into a family affair. "I took my kids everywhere with me," said Garth, 62, who took one season off. "My wife kept the scorebook. For probably 20-something years, I didn't have an assistant coach. I was the trainer and bus driver. My wife did the laundry. But I thought I was the luckiest guy around."

Daughter Kim, a future Rochester cheerleader, arrived first. Klint followed. Then came Johnny, who got the final rebound in Garth's 500th win in 2001 and handed the ball to his dad. Johnny now serves as head basketball coach at Rochester High.

For all his on-court success, Garth said he never judged his players on wins and losses but on their character. "It would be hard for me to overestimate how important Garth Pleasant was in my life," said Josh Graves, a former starting guard who graduated



GREAT LAKES ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY

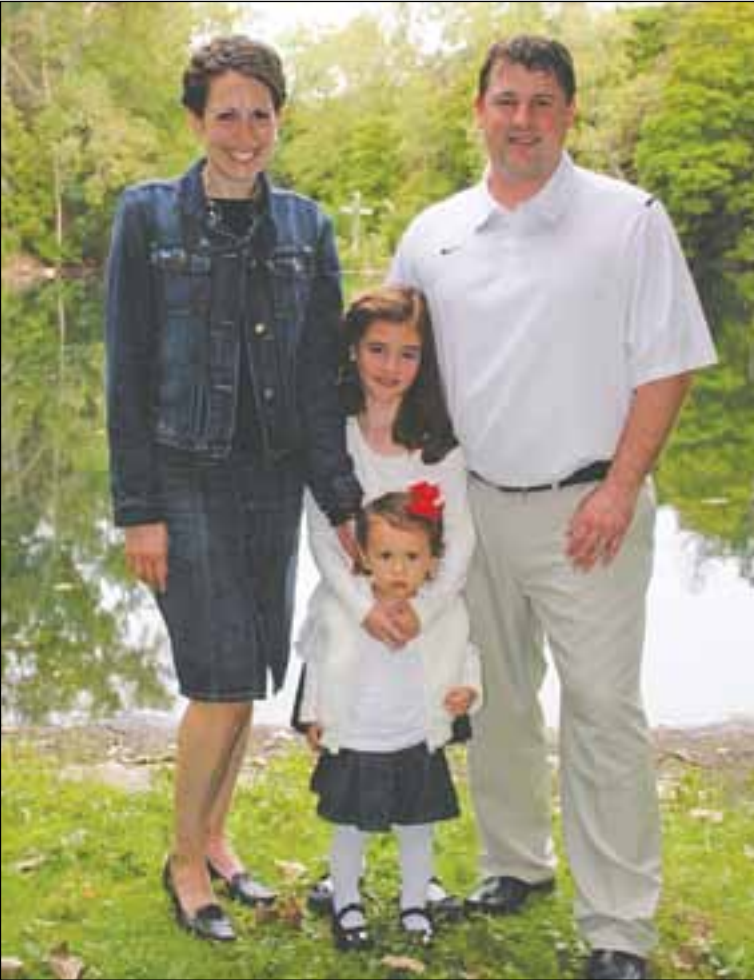
Klint Pleasant, left, and his father, Garth Pleasant, follow the action at a Rochester College basketball game.

from Rochester in 2002. "Besides my own father, no single man showed me what it looked like to take faith seriously, pursue a calling and enjoy every single minute of each day," added Graves, now the preaching and teaching minister for the Otter Creek Church of Christ in Brentwood, Tenn.

PROMISING CAREER, PRETTY GIRL
Like his dad, Klint Pleasant always wanted to coach basketball. But he loved playing football. So when Abilene Christian University recruited him for the gridiron, he headed to Texas in 1994. After two seasons at ACU, he transferred to Lipscomb to serve as a student assistant to Don Meyer, the legendary college basketball coach who retired with a record 923 career wins.

One time, with Lipscomb winning a game by about 40 points, Klint's eyes drifted into the stands and focused on a student seated at half-court. "I thought, 'My goodness, that's the prettiest woman I've ever seen,'" he recalled. Klint ran into her that night at the student recreation center and struck up a conversation. Her name was Rachel. At age 27, Klint served as an assistant coach on a Kent State team that made an Elite Eight run, knocking off Oklahoma State, Alabama and Pittsburgh in the NCAA tournament. That same year — 2002 — he accepted the head basketball coach's position at ACU. "ACU is where my relationship with God became the most important thing to me," he said then. "I feel the same way about ACU as my father feels about Rochester College."

But during Klint's third season at ACU — on New Year's Day 2005 — Rachel gave birth to a daughter named Abigail. Suddenly, Abilene seemed a long way from home, both for Klint and Rachel. She grew up in St. Louis, where her parents, Brad and Sue Stevens, attend the McKnight Road Church of Christ. Her father serves as a church elder. When Rochester offered Klint a fund-raising and development position, he brushed aside the idea — at first. He wanted to coach and entertained offers in the Midwest. But the more he thought about it, the more appealing the Rochester opportunity became. "I don't know if she'll wake up," the neurosurgeon told Klint after finishing the surgery. "If she does, I have no idea how much brain trauma she's going to have." But later that day, Rachel —



ELLIOT JONES

Klint and Rachel Pleasant with daughters Abigail, 7, and Julia, 2.

BRAIN TRAUMA AND BLESSINGS
Just a few months after the couple and their infant daughter left Texas, Rachel called Klint at work and told him she was experiencing a horrible headache. As it turned out, she had a hole in her heart. An infection in her bloodstream had slipped through the hole and up to her brain, causing a fast-growing tumor first diagnosed as cancer. As Klint's parents, friends and fellow Christians rushed to the hospital to pray with him, a brain surgeon opened Rachel's skull and relieved the pressure. The outlook remained grim. "I don't know if she'll wake up," the neurosurgeon told Klint after finishing the surgery. "If she does, I have no idea how much brain trauma she's going to have." But she points out that her challenges beat the alternative.

"wrapped up like a mummy" with tubes coming out of her head — turned and moaned. "Hey, Rachel, I love you!" Klint told her. "I love you, too," she whispered. Thus began an ongoing journey of follow-up surgeries, rehabilitation and therapy. Rachel lost partial vision in both eyes and found it difficult to walk down a supermarket aisle without running into shelves. She faced short-term memory loss and still can't collect her thoughts as easily — or as quickly — as she once could. But she points out that her challenges beat the alternative.



I can't fill one heel of his shoes. I just have to be me. This program stands on his shoulders, and I'm just delighted that I can carry the baton now."

Klint Pleasant
AGE: 37
WIFE: Rachel
CHILDREN: Abigail and Julia
QUOTE: "It is very humbling to take over for Dad. I can't fill one heel of his shoes. I just have to be me. This program stands on his shoulders, and I'm just delighted that I can carry the baton now."

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON
During the arduous journey, Klint remained focused on his responsibilities at the college. Rochester President Rubel Shelly appointed Klint to serve

'He's a basketball coach who would love to be a preacher, and I'm a preacher who would love to be a basketball coach.'
— **Mark Love**, Rochester College Bible professor



GREAT LAKES ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY

Former coach Garth Pleasant discusses the game plan while son Klint, then an assistant coach, looks on.

"I feel blessed to be alive," she said. Another blessing: Rachel gave birth two years ago to Julia, the couple's second daughter. "I'm grateful for the little moments: waking up together, eating family meals together, laughing together and worshipping or praying together," said Rachel, 34. "We have a greater appreciation of good times and good health."

as vice president of enrollment and lead recruiting efforts. At the same time, Klint joined his father's staff as an assistant coach and followed his dad in the pulpit when Garth stepped down after 30 years of preaching for the Lake Orion Church of Christ. Klint shares the Lake Orion preaching duties with Mark Love, who directs Rochester's Bible graduate program in missional leadership. "He's a basketball coach who would love to be a preacher, and I'm a preacher who would love to be a basketball coach," Love joked. When Garth decided to step aside from coaching, Shelly did not look far to find a replacement. Having grown up in the program, Klint was the obvious choice, said Adam Hacias, a Rochester player from 2003 to

2007. Klint understands that the foundational mission goes beyond basketball, said Hacias, a Rochester Church of Christ member. That mission? "Don't just develop boys into fine basketball players," Hacias said. "Develop men into fine husbands, fathers and human beings." Asked about his son's selection, Garth said he "couldn't have written the script any better." Even Klint's worst nightmare had a happy ending. "Klint's faith continues to grow," Rachel said in an e-mail. "I think his career as a college basketball coach encourages him to use his God-given gifts to serve others. Klint's work and ministry are filled with a deep passion to love as Christ loved us."

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CAMPUS MINISTRIES

CAMPUS MINISTRY UNITED

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — A three-person team — Catherine Kraus, Lauren Burke and Jeff Keely — is training to plant a new campus ministry at Missouri State University.

The ministry plan has been approved, and fund-raising is in progress, said Lynn Stringfellow, director of ministry advancement for Campus Ministry United, sponsored by the Park Plaza Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla.

The East Grand Church of Christ in Springfield will serve as the spiritual support and the local church home for seeking students, Stringfellow said.

"This congregation is very excited to be reaching out to young people searching for the Good News," he said. "God's hand has been visible all through this plant formation."

EVANGELISM

WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL

CEDAR PARK, Texas — Across America, people of all ages run, cycle and swim in organized athletic events.

From a 10K to benefit a local charity to a multi-day bike ride supporting diabetes, millions get active to benefit the world.

Now, some Christians — believers whose faith is active as well as their lifestyles — are becoming a member of "Athletes on Team WBS."

Their commitment: to train for an athletic event of their choosing and use it to raise funds for World Bible School.

"I've raised money for great causes like cancer," said Michael Everist, an Austin triathlete and Westover Hills Church of Christ member. "But I want to do something that has a more spiritual and evangelistic impact."

For more information, e-mail WBS vice president of development Kevin Rhodes at kevin@worldbibleschool.net.



MYRON HARPER

Four-part harmony: Singing emphasis helps church grow

The Laurel Church of Christ in Maryland sings during a Praise & Harmony Workshop by Keith Lancaster of Acappella Ministries. The workshop provided training in four-part harmony for all ages, with an emphasis on learning new songs, Lancaster said. Participants sat in "voice sections" to make learning parts easier. "I was impressed with the growth of this congregation over the past few years," Lancaster said, "and they partly attribute their growth to the emphasis upon vibrant worship." In eight years, membership has more than doubled, hitting 330, minister Michael Ray said.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

HENDERSON, Tenn. — Bob and Joan Brown, parents of Karen Ferguson, have established a scholarship in honor of their slain daughter and grandson.

Karen Ferguson, 44, and Cole, 21, were shot to death Oct. 10, 2011, in the family's Gulfport, Miss., home. The suspect in the double-homicide died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound a few miles away.

Bob Brown is the former chairman of Freed-Hardeman's Department of Chemistry and Engineering Sciences. Karen Ferguson was the wife of Les Ferguson Jr., minister for the Orange Grove Church of Christ in Gulfport. To contribute to the scholarship fund, contact the development office at FHU.

LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — A new Scout Award program will honor students who achieve the top rank in scouting organizations.

The Scout Award is a \$10,000 award for any incoming freshman who is accepted to Lipscomb and received the Boy Scouts of America's Eagle Scout Award, Venturing Silver Award or Sea Scouting Quartermaster Award; the Girl Scouts of America's Gold Award; or the American Heritage Girls' Stars and Stripes Award.

Funds will be distributed in \$2,500 increments each year for up to four years.

"Lipscomb is proud of what these students have accomplished as scouts, and we are proud to be able to recognize them for it," Lipscomb President Randy Lowry said.

K-12 CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

WESTBURY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

HOUSTON — The Westbury community is grieving after Marie Gage, 82, was robbed and killed in her home Jan. 12.

Her husband, Bill, 84, a fellow Westbury Church of Christ member, survived the attack.

The couple's daughter, Loa Glenn, said the family relies on its faith and knows God has a plan. Loa's husband, Greg Glenn, is head of school at Westbury Christian School, next to the church.

Marie Gage's "wonderful family is hurting but knows she is with the Lord," Westbury Christian School Bible teacher Steve Hawley said. Hawley paid tribute to the Gages on his blog at www.stevhawley.blogspot.com.

SPOTLIGHT



ignitefaith.org

New website makes debut

OKLAHOMA CITY — A new online magazine for young adults — ignitefaith.org — promises to unite believers and share the latest news and trends from a Christian perspective.

A service of *The Christian Chronicle*, the magazine will feature significant, honest stories, regular updates and an interactive platform, Managing Editor Miranda Wilcox said.

"It's pure journalism, but with a passion for uniting the Kingdom," said Wilcox, 19, an Oklahoma Christian University sophomore.

Ignitefaith.org was encouraged by the

Chronicle's national board of trustees and conceived by Lynn McMillon, the newspaper's editor, president and CEO.

"You will notice that everybody associated with this new magazine is very young," McMillon said. "My role? Just bring the elements together and see that it happens in fulfillment of the board's wishes."

Besides Wilcox, other staff members include website developer Nick Sayre and an unidentified student who will write an advice column called "Dear Norah." Ann White, interactive marketing coordinator at Oklahoma Christian, and Travis Langley, the *Chronicle's* website guru, helped with the project.



Wilcox

YOUTH MINISTER NEEDED

Faith Village Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas, is seeking a Youth Minister. Desired attributes include that of a mature individual who is experienced in working with youth and their families. Congregation size is approximately 600 (Sunday a.m. attendance). If interested, please send resume to nbeaver@faithvlg.org.

The 30-year-old AMEN Ministry connects Christians in the United States military with local churches of Christ both overseas and in the U.S. Please send name, contact information and especially e-mail addresses to:



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College scholarship honors memory of trailblazing 'woman of integrity'

BY MEREDITH CLARK | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Gladys Hawkins was a trailblazer. In the 1960s, long before e-mail and Skype, she arranged meetings, kept detailed notes and did the work of the church as personal assistant to renowned minister J.S. Winston.



Hawkins

Back then "employment of full-time secretaries was rare, particularly in largely black congregations of the church," said Darryl Bowdre, a family friend and minister for the South Central Church of Christ in Tyler, Texas. "Winston had hired Hawkins with a vision."

Hawkins also had a vision to support Christian education. During her life she contributed and raised funds for the school Winston helped found — Southwestern Christian College.

Now, more than two years after Hawkins' death, her family seeks to carry on her legacy by sponsoring a scholarship fund for young, working women to attend Southwestern, a historically black college in Terrell, Texas, associated with Churches of Christ.

Hawkins lived in Cleveland for 42 years and worked for Winston, longtime minister for the University Church of Christ, before moving west to Los Angeles. There she worked on the campus of Pepperdine University. She served on the board of the Los Angeles Bible College

and was a ladies Bible class teacher at the Figueroa Church of Christ.

Calvin Bowers, minister for the Figueroa congregation, called Hawkins "great PR for the church."

"She lived next door," Bowers said. "She was there for late-night baptisms. If someone needed to get into the building, she was there."

Repeatedly, the minister referred to Hawkins as "a woman of integrity."

In the Durham, N.C., home where Hawkins spent her last years, family members have myriad plaques and awards emblazoned with her name from congregations across the country.

Despite the accolades, "her work wasn't about a person. It wasn't about being known," said Karon Johnson, Hawkins' granddaughter.

Johnson established the Gladys Hawkins Memorial Scholarship for young women who attend Southwestern. Faith Mufundisi, a Southwestern student from Zimbabwe, received the first scholarship in 2010.

Johnson speaks at women's events across the country. She often refers to her grandmother's legacy and accepts donations for the fund.

"She taught me how to love the Lord," Johnson said of her trailblazing grandmother. "But she also showed me. ... I am trying to honor her love for Christ by doing the same."

CONTRIBUTIONS may be sent to the Gladys M. Hawkins Memorial Fund, c/o Karon Johnson, Southside Church of Christ, P.O. Box 3821, Durham, NC 27702.

Camp mainstay Cecil Perkins mourned

RAYMOND, Maine — The Gander Brook Christian Camp family is mourning the death of Cecil D. Perkins, a beloved figure to generations of campers.

Perkins, 58, died Jan. 9.

A junior high science teacher in Memphis, Tenn., Perkins began volunteering in 1973 and served as a counselor, waterfront director and bus driver at the camp, returning almost every summer.

"Over the last 38 years, there have only been two or three years that Cecil wasn't able to attend and offer his services to the young people of the Northeast," camp

director Shawn Daggett said. "Cecil's presence, personality, example and generosity have been so influential to Gander Brook that it is impossible to speak of one without thinking of the other."

Perkins' home congregation, the White Station Church of Christ in Memphis, hosted a memorial service.



Perkins

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Electronic attachments and cover letters preferred. The search will continue through Spring 2012 or until a suitable candidate is found.

Oklahoma Christian University is an equal opportunity employer.

NEWSMAKERS

NAMED: **Alex Denning**, head coach for women's soccer at Lubbock Christian University in Texas. **Nathan Samuel**, president of IARCCA, an association of 112 Indiana agencies that provide services to abused, neglected and delinquent children and their families. Samuel is executive director of Childplace Inc. in Jeffersonville, Ind., which is associated with Churches of Christ. **Daniel Napier**, to the faculty of Austin Graduate School of Theology in Texas. Napier will join the faculty in August, upon the completion of his commitment to the Institute of Biblical Studies in Zagreb, Croatia. **Larry Wu**, director of field operations for Christian Relief Fund, Amarillo, Texas.



Denning

NEW ELDERS: Rod Gingrich, Lynn Helms and Gary Klein, Bismarck Church of Christ in North Dakota.

ANNIVERSARIES: 75th: Alan and Violet Eagleman, Redding, Calif. 70th: James and Lorraine Patterson, Garland, Texas. 65th: Belton and Dorothy Kuykendall, Broken Arrow, Okla. 64th: Reed and Betty Munsell, Hastings, Neb.

BIRTHDAYS: 104th: Emma Johnson, San Saba, Texas 95th: Valentine Menard, Gleneden Beach, Ore. 92nd: Maurice Colvin Hall, Whittier, Calif. 89th: Muriel Luke, Hastings, Neb. 82nd: Betty Munsell, Hastings, Neb.

PASSAGES: **Eleanor Dilbeck**, 91, Jan. 5, Roswell, N.M., preacher's wife for more than 70 years and a member of Country Club Road Church of Christ in Roswell, N.M. **Audrey Gardner**, 84, Mt. Dora, Fla., wife of Don Gardner, first president of Ohio Valley University in West Virginia. **Martha Jeane Martin**, 77, Dec. 24, Longview, Texas, charter member of the Lindale Church of Christ in Houston. **Sam Sparks**, 83, Dec. 28, Santa Rosa, Texas,



Martin

member of the board of trustees for Abilene Christian University and Sunny Glen Children's Home and longtime member of the 8th and Harrison church in Santa Rosa, Texas. **Louis E. Tandy**, 90, Jan. 1, Wichita, Kan., minister for the Northside Church of Christ, Wichita, for 29 years and a speaker on "Know Your Bible" television program for 23 years. **Ralph Webb**, 80, Dec. 18, Westland, Mich., member of the Plymouth, Mich., church.

Feb. 5-9 76th Annual Freed-Hardeman University Bible Lectureship. Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, Tenn. Contact www.fhu.edu, lectureship or kpack@fhu.edu.

Feb. 9 Mission Alive DFW Celebration. Riverside church, Coppell, Texas. Contact www.missionalive.org.

Feb. 10 Lakewood Village Seminar. "What Seniors Need to Know about the Issues of Homeownership Today." Lakewood Village, Fort Worth, Texas. Contact (817) 451-8001.

Feb. 12 50th Anniversary of the Skagit Valley church. Burlington, Wash. Contact rkblunt@hotmail.com or (360) 757-3608.

Feb. 17-18 The NewLifeBehavior Network of Alabama Jail/Prison Workshop. Rainbow church, Gadsden, Ala. Contact (256) 547-3731, or www.alabamaprisonministryworkshop.org.

Feb. 17-19 LAUNCH Christian Singles Weekend. Oceanside church, Satellite Beach, Fla. Contact (321) 698-1111 or burkardce@bellsouth.net.

Feb. 24-25 Affirming the Faith Seminar. North MacArthur church, Oklahoma City. Contact www.affirmingthefaithok.com.

March 2-3 Arkansas Shepherd Conference. "Grown-Up Churches: Shepherd Congregations Toward Maturity." Pleasant Valley church, Little Rock, Ark. Contact (501) 225-5818 or www.pvcc.org.

March 5-8 Faulkner University Lectureship. Faulkner University, Montgomery, Ala. Theme: "Christ Above All. (Studies from Hebrews)." Contact cmay@faulkner.edu.

March 6 Eastern European Mission Dinner. "Exciting 'Million Dollar Sunday' News." Marriott Oklahoma City. Contact (800) 486-1818, or www.eem.org.

March 8 Third Annual Warren Christian Apologetics Center benefit dinner. Warren Christian Apologetics Center, Vienna, W.Va. Contact (877) 350-9222, or www.warrenapologeticscenter.org.

March 20-25 Seminar in Congregation Shepherding and Leadership. Harding School of Theology, Memphis, Tenn. Contact (901) 432-7724.

March 21-24 The Tulsa Workshop. Tulsa, Okla., EXPO Center. Contact tulsa-workshop.org.

April 6-8 Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes National Convention. Atlanta, Dallas, Indianapolis, Memphis, Tenn., Nashville, Tenn., and Orlando, Fla. Contact (334) 215-0251 or ladsoffice@lads-to-leaders.org or www.lads-to-leaders.org.

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Employment Opportunity

EDITORIAL

Fighting a rising tide of 'So what?'

'So what?" Increasingly, that's the response of Americans to questions of spirituality and faith. Recent research points to a broad swath of "apathists" — as one blogger called it — in the U.S.

• In a survey conducted by Baylor University, 44 percent of respondents said they spend no time seeking eternal wisdom, and 19 percent said "it's useless to search for meaning."

• Another study, by LifeWay Research, found that nearly half of those polled said they never wonder about whether or not they'll go to heaven.

In a *USA Today* story, one of the "so whats" described his feelings on spirituality this way: "I try to live my life and do the best I can. I figure if I do good, good things will happen. I'm not at all worried about the afterlife."

Plenty of Christians and non-Christians alike would argue that there's absolutely no evidence of good behavior begetting "good things" in this life. Suffering is universal. Repeatedly we see the innocent subjected to horrible trials for no apparent reason. Even atheists cry out for justice.

Though some say "so what?" to the question of heaven, the

majority of Americans polled in the LifeWay survey said they wonder at least once a month about finding meaning in life. Two-thirds of them agreed that there is more to life than this physical world, and nearly three-fourths agreed that there is a plan and purpose for everyone.

That doesn't sound like spiritual apathy to us.

Flip through the pages of *The Christian Chronicle* and you'll find plenty of reasons

to embrace the ideals of Christian service — whether or not you profess Christ as your savior. This issue features stories of church members committed to helping people marginalized by society in communities around the globe.

• On Page 1 we feature a minister who encourages the loved ones of those deported from this nation. He urges us to dwell on the Scriptures and ask, "What does God want us to do with the undocumented immigrants in our midst?"

• On Page 13 you'll find news

of a Christian who has dedicated his life to ending human trafficking in his native Thailand.

• Our Currents section features a ministry bringing real relief to drought-stricken East Africa, empowering people to grow their own crops and curb their reliance on foreign aid.

Christians must show the world that our Lord is the antidote to apathy. He intended for us to serve others, to practice

'Christians must show the world that our Lord is the antidote to apathy. He intended for us to serve others, to practice the "pure and faultless" religion.'

the "pure and faultless" religion from James' epistle — looking after orphans and widows in their distress and keeping ourselves from being polluted by the world.

We suspect that those professing spiritual apathy are more interested in everlasting truths than they let on. Deep down, they care about the world and their purpose in it. We must urge them to open their minds and consider both the issues that matter and the people involved.

We haven't much time. A day is coming when all of us, whether we believe or not, will have to answer the question, "So what?"

Ever-Laughing Life

by Jonny Hawkins



TO OUR READERS

Editor recovering from surgery

Lynn McMillon, editor, president and CEO of *The Christian Chronicle*, is recovering from emergency brain surgery in December.

Surgeons operated to remove bilateral hematomas on each side of McMillon's brain after he suffered a fall.

McMillon is working from home as he recovers and has been able to attend Sunday

worship with the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.



McMillon

"Though the recovery is going to take a while, the Lord has blessed me greatly, and people are a big encouragement," he said.



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The Christian Chronicle welcomes and encourages feedback that promotes thoughtful and respectful discussion. Letters/comments should be 150 words or less and may be edited for length and clarity. Comments to the print or online editions are considered to be letters to the editor and may be published. Please include name, city and state of residence, as well as home congregation.

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Significant U.S. Supreme Court ruling recognizes freedom of churches to hire, fire own ministers

In a recent case, the U.S. Supreme Court delivered one of the most important decisions on religious freedom in a generation.

The high court's ruling in *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission* addresses churches and church employees in employment discrimination cases.

Justices unanimously recognized a "ministerial exception" to claims against religious bodies for employment discrimination. In other words, churches get to decide who serve as ministers. If a church fires a minister, the church cannot be sued under federal anti-discrimination laws.

Harking to English history, the colonies and the founding era, the Court found that religious liberty depends on a religious group being free to choose its own ministers. A government cannot use laws that prohibit employment discrimination, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, to tell a religious congregation whom to hire or keep as its minister.

In *Hosanna-Tabor*, a Lutheran congregation operated a school with an explicit religious mission to provide a "Christ-centered education." The church made a distinction between "called" teachers who were ordained, received religious training and provided religious instruction and "lay" teachers who taught secular subjects and were not ordained.

Cheryl Perich was a "called" teacher. But after she developed a chronic illness, the school replaced her with a lay teacher. Church leaders asked Perich to resign as a "called" teacher and offered to pay for her medical insurance.

She refused to resign, appeared at the school, made demands and threatened suit. The congregation then fired her, and she filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. She maintained that the school had retaliated against her for threatening to sue under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The EEOC sued the school for the alleged discriminatory retaliation, and

the church responded that it has a constitutional right to decide who serves its congregation and school as a minister.

After mixed results from the lower courts, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the church. Unanimously, the Court found that the First Amendment prevents the government from telling a church whom it must keep as a minister.

Justices also found that a "ministerial exception" exists to legal protections against employment discrimination.

The Court ruled that "it is impermissible for the government to contradict a church's determination of who can act as its ministers." Then the Court grappled with the hardest and most obvious question: *Who* is a minister?

Should a court count the hours of a worker to see if she works more or less hours in religious or secular tasks? Should a court take a church's word for it? Should a court defer to a title? Do titles matter at all?

These questions will be especially interesting for Churches of Christ, which generally adhere to the doctrines of a "priesthood of all believers" and of congregational autonomy with very little guidance on who or who is not "ordained."

Without a clear clergy-laity distinction and with different practices among congregations, the answer to the question likely will be case-specific and circumstantial. Also, some tension may arise within churches who limit "ministerial" roles to very tight categories but would want the "ministerial exception" to apply to as many employees as possible.

Rather than create a formal definition or rule, the Court considered several factors in finding that the teacher in *Hosanna-Tabor* was a minister.

• **First, the church** held her out as a minister by giving her training and credentials and by directing her to do her

work "according to the Word of God."

• **Second, the church** gave her a formal title, but the Court repeats that the title is merely relevant, not determinative.

• **Third, the teacher** held herself out as a minister by accepting her call and its terms and by claiming the ministerial housing allowance on her tax returns.

• **Fourth, her job duties** "reflected a role in conveying the church's message and carrying out its mission," by teaching religious classes, leading students in prayer and devotionals, leading chapel and teaching Scripture.

These factors illustrate how the Court would identify a minister, by the person's function and role in the religious body, not by a formal definition or rigid legal test. (Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Elena Kagan argued in their concurring opinions for clearer definitions of "minister.")

Hosanna-Tabor does not mean that churches are immune from any law. Churches still can be liable in civil suits, for criminal violations and even for employment discrimination.

The Court's opinion is more modest. The ruling applies to congregations

with enough employees to trigger anti-discrimination laws, and it holds that churches are likely exempt from anti-discrimination laws if the employee in question is a minister.

Determining who is a "minister" will be an uncertain process of considering whether

the employee plays a religious role in the mission and work of the congregation and in transmitting the faith.

Hosanna-Tabor is an important decision, but it is modest and specific. Churches still should be cautious, caring and just with employees. Questions remain, and the calls may be close.

JEFFREY R. BAKER is an associate professor of law and the director of clinical programs at Faulkner University Jones School of Law. Baker, his wife, Jennifer, and their two daughters attend Grace Pointe Church of Christ in Montgomery, Ala.

Views



Jeffrey R. Baker

LETTERS

Praise for hardworking believers in Nairobi

I have traveled to this area (in Kenya) and met many of these wonderful Christians. (See "Fear and faith," Page 1, February.) Our brothers and sisters in Nairobi are committed to sharing the Gospel.

Thank you for telling others about the light they shine at Eastleigh.

Amy Bacon | Rowlett, Texas

Wife's illness draws response

Thank you for the insightful and caring way you presented your situation. (See "Pain, suffering and God's plan in wife's illness," Page 3, February.) I have been beset by some health issues recently that have produced the same feelings your wife is experiencing and have begun to do what I should have been doing all along.

And how rewarding it is to serve others! May God bless you all with solutions and greater service.

Bruce Stroud | Lithia Springs, Ga.

Thanks for this wonderful article of hope and caring and trusting in the God of all strength and healing.

My husband has gone through similar things with Myasthenia gravis. We almost lost him two-and-a-half years ago. He came out of intensive care telling everyone to trust in the Lord no matter what. We are trusting and sharing more than ever. May God bless you as you encourage others.

Mickey Bates | Wildomar, Calif.

Directory change appreciated

In March 2009 the *Chronicle* published my letter that was critical of 21st Century Christian's decision to remove from its 2009 directory those congregations which had begun instrumental assemblies in addition to their a cappella worship services.

It is fitting now to congratulate the publisher for changes to the 2012 edition (Page 7, February). They deserve thanks for restoring, as I wrote in 2009, "such a valuable aid to members and a great record of our history — rather than trying to determine that history."

Wayne Newland | Falmouth, Maine

Books explore ministry to the disabled, suffering

BY MARIE JOHNSON | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

How can the church help families who are dealing with disabilities? That question harkens back to an ages-old quandary — reconciling our understanding of an all-powerful, loving God with the seemingly endless suffering we see around us.

Three new books present a biblical view of suffering, offer practical advice to parents, counselors and church leaders, and help answer the question, “Why should the church be the leader in reaching out to the disabled and the suffering?”

In “**Why, O God? Suffering and Disability in the Bible and the Church**,” religious and medical professionals offer practical suggestions about how to minister to the disabled and those suffering. Biblical and theological knowledge is integrated with moving personal stories, providing extremely practical ministry guidance.

The book should be read by all church leaders. It will make the church aware of its need to minister to and involve the disabled in their ministries.

The diversity of the topics in the 22 chapters allows for a varied appeal to readers. “**Why, O God?**” gives a biblical foundation for understanding the existence of suffering, how suffering is used by God and how we can respond biblically — both individually and collectively — to the problems of pain and suffering of those around us.

Suffering and disability often leave its victims and their loved ones feeling helpless, and this is especially true of parents whose children struggle with special needs. These parents’ deepest desire is to take away the hurt, yet they feel inadequate.

As an educator of children with special needs, I have read many books written to help parents be advocates for their children with disabilities.

“**Different Dream Parenting: A Practical Guide to Raising A Child With Special Needs**” is perhaps the most practical book I have read for parents of children with disabilities.

Jolene Philo, a parent of a child

with special needs, offers practical help, extensive advice about resources and encouraging spiritual guidance.

Philo, a speaker, writer and blogger, encourages parents of critically and chronically ill children. Helping them grieve their lost dreams for their children and then create new ones is her passion.

The author wants to help parents “start where they are, move beyond the challenges and experience the joy of being your child’s advocate,” she writes. She encourages parents to ask their faith questions as

she shares what she and other parents have learned about “asking,

listening and waiting for spiritual answers or encouragement.” She offers suggestions about how to find comfort and courage in God’s Word.

“**Different Dream Parenting**” contains six sections: Diagnosis, Hospital Life, Juggling Two Worlds, Long-Term Care Conditions, Losing a Child and Raising a Survivor. Each section addresses practical issues and spiritual concerns.

At the end of each chapter, Philo includes reflections, resources, prayers and practical tips to increase parental awareness of services and to assure them they are not alone.

For most parents, the problem may not be a lack of resources but a lack of awareness of them or inability to access them. “**Different Dream Parenting**” brings advice from professionals and provides information about national organizations and resources. It also gives tips about where to start searching for state and local resources.

Another writer with some valuable insights into parenting a disabled child is Abilene Christian University instructor and Church of Christ preacher Mike Cope.

In “**Megan’s Secrets: What My Mentally Disabled Daughter Taught Me About Life**,” he says his best teacher was his intellectually disabled daughter, Megan, who in her brief life taught her father life-giving secrets. In his moving remembrance, Cope lovingly shares those secrets in a

way that will make readers laugh, cry and find hope. Megan, whose favorite song was “I’m in the Lord’s Army,” taught lessons the best scholars in the world could not.

The first half of this book focuses on the power of Megan’s frail life. In the second half, Cope pushes further into themes of loss, joy, doubt, faith, grief and hope.

Megan’s life exposed some of the insanities of this world’s messages about being successful.

Megan reminds us “that what really matters has to do with the internal

qualities of the heart: keeping promises, seeking justice in a brutal world,

learning to see those in greatest need and living with courage, joy and unconditional love,” Cope writes. The author and his daughter remind us that God uses our brokenness to his glory.

This heart-touching book wraps these secrets and more into stories that will restore hope to those grieving.

In addition to anecdotes and stories from Megan’s life are stories of other young heroes faced with similar challenges. Cope uses their circumstances

to introduce lessons from Scripture and biblical characters.

Comprehensive chapter notes and credits offer material for future reading. A discussion guide included at the end of the book makes it suitable for small-group use.

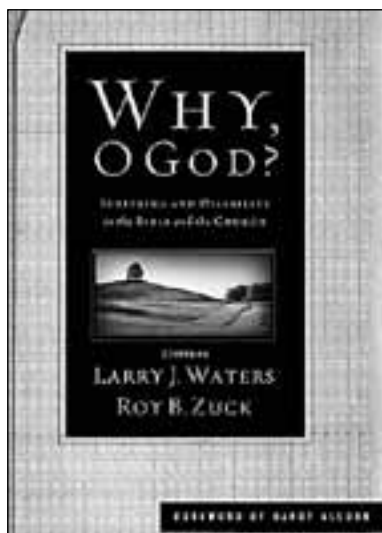
All three of these timely books uniquely address the problems of suffering, disabilities and the church through the testimonies of those who have suffered and the lessons God has taught them.

The wisdom of personal testimonies is buttressed with biblical studies in “**Why, O God?**” giving needed insight into the question, “**Why?**”

“**Different Dream Parenting**” offers an abundance of practical resources to help parents trust God as they find hope and strength for the task of raising a child with special needs.

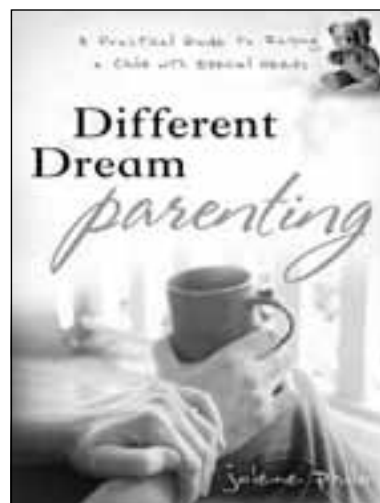
Finally, “**Megan’s Secrets**” teaches us that in our losses, we may cry, groan and question, but we don’t despair, for we live in hope.

MARIE JOHNSON is assistant professor of special education at Freed-Hardeman University and a member of the Estes Church of Christ in Henderson, Tenn.



★★★★☆

Larry J. Waters and Roy B. Zuck, eds. **Why, O God? Suffering and Disability in the Bible and the Church**. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2011. 336 pages. \$22.



★★★★★

Jolene Philo. **Different Dream Parenting: A Practical Guide to Raising A Child With Special Needs**. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Discovery House Publishers, 2011. 224 pages. \$12.95.

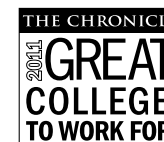


★★★★★

Mike Cope. **Megan's Secrets: What My Mentally Disabled Daughter Taught Me About Life**. Abilene, Texas: Leafwood Press, 2011. 222 pages. \$14.99.



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ACU seeks an experienced engineer to develop an engineering program. This new position will work closely with the ACU Department of Engineering and Physics, which currently offers an engineering physics degree. The department unanimously supports this venture and encourages the inclusion of the department's internationally recognized research groups into the engineering program. The faculty member will have the opportunity to use his or her experience, drive, connections and tenacity to develop a world-class engineering program. The ideal candidate will have experience with the ABET accreditation process and proven leadership skills to ensure a successful accreditation process. Rank will be commensurate with experience. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/engineering.

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.

College of Biblical Studies

Dr. Jack Reese, Dean
ACU Box 29400, Abilene, Texas 79699-9400

Marriage and Family Therapy

The Department of Marriage and Family Therapy invites applications and nominations in writing for a tenure-track position beginning Fall 2012. The MFT program at ACU has held continuous COAMFTE-accreditation since 1983. The candidate will be expected to teach courses relative to the modern theories of family therapy, family life cycle and human development, testing and assessment, and DSM-IV-TR diagnosis. In addition, the candidate will be expected to supervise graduate interns, mentor student research, and accept departmental, college and university committee assignments. The candidate should possess a well-defined program of research as evidenced by peer-reviewed publications and presentations. The candidate should also demonstrate competence in the integration of theological and spiritual issues with therapy. The candidate must hold the Ph.D. in marriage and family therapy or a

closely related mental health discipline, exhibit competence as a classroom teacher, demonstrate eligibility for licensure as an LMFT in the State of Texas, and hold Clinical Membership and Approved Supervisor status or be a supervisor-in-training with the AAMFT. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/therapy.

College of Business Administration

Dr. Rick Lytle, Dean
ACU Box 29303, Abilene, Texas 79699-9303

Accounting and Finance

The Department of Accounting and Finance invites applications for a tenure-track position in finance. A terminal degree or ABD status is preferred. Responsibilities include teaching finance courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, pursuing scholarly research, and performing service for the department and the university community. Teaching excellence is required, as well as an aptitude for research and publication. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/accounting.

College of Education and Human Services

Dr. Malesa Breeding, Dean
ACU Box 28276, Abilene, Texas 79699-8276

School of Social Work

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 Services and Educational Technology

Dr. John B. Weaver, Dean of Library Services and Educational Technology
ACU Box 29208 Abilene, Texas 79699-9208

Adams Center for Teaching and Learning

ACU invites applications for a director to lead the Adams Center for Teaching and Learning. Reporting to the dean of library services and educational technology, this tenure-track faculty position is responsible for the management of the Adams Center in order to fulfill its mission to provide resources and services that empower faculty to meet the educational needs of learners at ACU. A doctoral degree is required, preferably in education, instructional design, instructional technology, curriculum development or a related field; or, extensive professional experience in one of these fields, and a doctorate in an

academic discipline taught at ACU. Applicants should have at least five years of faculty teaching experience in higher education, with management experience involving multiple faculty or professional staff, and demonstrated expertise in learning theory and the application of best practices and innovative technologies to teaching in university learning environments. Experience with instructional design for online courses is strongly preferred. Successful experience with academic publication and not-for-profit fundraising is desirable. Excellent presentation, communication and negotiation skills are essential, as well as a demonstrated ability to manage organizational efficiency and change in a team-oriented environment. Responsibilities include collaborating to enhance the outcomes of ACU faculty teaching and student learning through planning faculty development opportunities; cultivating entrepreneurial faculty initiatives; guiding faculty research on learning theories and teaching practices; coordinating teaching innovation in relationship to educational technology by leading university planning for classroom and online learning environments; identifying opportunities for faculty innovation with teaching technologies; and cultivating widespread and effective faculty use of mobile devices in the classroom, partly through development of the mobile-learning fellows program. The director also will provide vision and leadership in course development, instructional design, and learning assessment for undergraduate and graduate online teaching by overseeing the work of the Adams Center's instructional design team, promoting collaboration among academic and operational leaders to develop online programs, and providing leadership in the application of new media and online learning to hybrid, on-campus instruction at ACU. He/she will have the opportunity to teach one course per semester in the academic department of his/her training. Information about the Adams Center is available at acu.edu/adamscenter.

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.

ACU is affiliated with the fellowship of the Churches of Christ. All applicants must be professing Christians and be active, faithful members of a congregation of the Churches of Christ and deeply committed to service in Christian higher education. The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

ACU does not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities.



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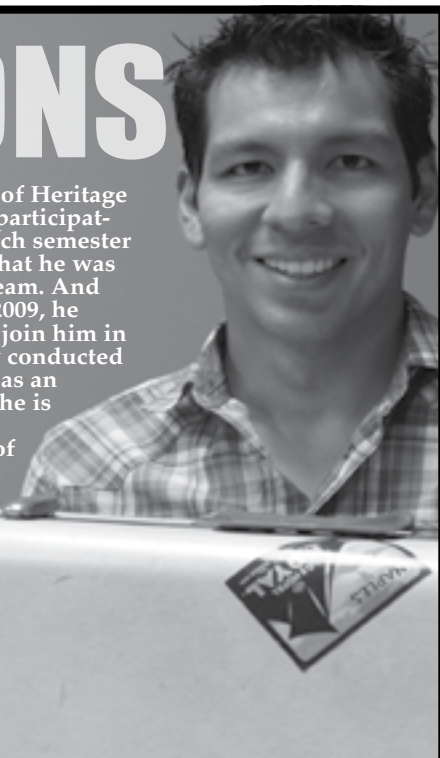
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MISSIONS

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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ORPHANAGE DIRECTOR (Mexico) — Ciudad de Angeles is an orphanage in Cozumel, Mexico. Position leads 12 member staff, caring for 35 children. Contact Gary at 404-551-5129 or gary@ciudaddeangeles.org

Details: www.ciudaddeangeles.org

Follow simple plan for serious study of God's inspired texts

Although the Bible is an all-time best seller, knowledge of the Bible seems to diminish each year.

In last month's Insight, I encouraged readers of *The Christian Chronicle* to counter this trend by reading the Bible through in 2012.

I had many responses from people who shared that they had read through the Bible — as many as 20 to 32 times.

Some reported that the annual program of reading was challenging and discouraging. Several readers advised that using a chronological Bible with commentary by author Max Lucado simplified the process.

One reader reported that her congregation had asked all its members to follow a schedule to read the Bible through a few years back. She remembered that members challenged each other to stay on schedule, and groups gathered to discuss what they had read each week.

All these efforts encourage me, and I think the serious Bible study may be even more important year by year.

I would never classify myself as a Bible scholar, but I have read and studied the Bible since I was 12. At Christian colleges I took the required courses and enjoyed studying the texts.

Throughout my life I have continued to study, often in preparation for teaching and to know better the will of God. At church I have been in excellent studies with serious, effective teachers.

Long ago I set up files for each book of the Bible and for important topics. I store notes from lectures or sermons. I also prepare notes as I study and eventually put those notes in the files.

I am preparing to teach Paul's letter to the Ephesians to a small group that meets every Monday through most of the year.

As a first step, I read all of Ephesians each day for a week. (Longer books usually require more than one sitting to complete, so it may take two weeks to complete the seven readings I need to get the full argument.)

Reading through Ephesians, I begin compiling a list of questions I want to answer when I dig into the text with the small group.

At this stage, I also make notes of passages that describe spiritual insights

I need to work into my life. My ultimate goal in this overview reading is to create my own outline for the book.

When I finish the overview readings, I make a list of the 29 paragraphs and then write my own commentary on each paragraph, including answers to the questions I had in my initial readings.

Insight



Bailey McBride

I normally do not look at commentaries until I have completed my own commentary. When I go to other commentaries, I am looking for insights I did not see in my own study, and I will add those ideas to my notes. After I have read a few commentaries, I go to my Ephesians file to review all my previous studies.

Some books, including James, establish specific tasks and undertakings for Christians, but Ephesians deals with subtle truths about the nature of the relationship of Jesus to the Father.

The book also stresses that the believers were "predestined" for a unique relationship to Christ. It catalogues the blessing that those living in Christ have. Ephesians encourages healthy relationships within families and the importance of being prepared (the full armor of God from Ephesians 6:10-17).

You may not like all the writing I do in study. Whatever works for you is what you should do. What is important is that you set aside time and find the atmosphere suitable for serious study and thought.

Of course, what is most important in study is measuring yourself by the standards of God as revealed in his Word.

Since we have all spiritual blessings in Christ, we are obliged to seek to know and understand what our relationship means. Doing so enables us to have the fullest spiritual life.

How blessed we are that we have the Bible as God's account of his relationship with mankind — and the inspiring texts about Jesus and his followers after his resurrection and ascension.

CONTACT bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org



Would it make any difference to you?

Think about this: would it make any difference to you if all our Christian universities and colleges were shut down for some reason? Some people are serious supporters of Christian education, while others couldn't care less. But the headline question above ought to remind us—sometimes we realize the *value of things* only when they're gone.

Think of how our Christian schools have ministered to the church, to society and to the world for more than a hundred years. These schools truly are the *leaven* in higher education and in America. Consider how you may encourage students to seek a Christ-centered education, which offers much greater value than other approaches. Other approaches miss the mark and short-change our children. It's time to challenge conventional wisdom.

Consider Christian higher education, the true open-mindedness.

Abilene Christian University

Amridge University

Austin Graduate School of Theology

Crowley's Ridge College

Faulkner University

Freed-Hardeman University

Harding University

Heritage Christian University

Lipscomb University

Lubbock Christian University

Ohio Valley University

Oklahoma Christian University

Pepperdine University

Southwestern Christian College

York College

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A close-up, profile photograph of Dr. Alan Martin, a Black man with a beard and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a light blue collared shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

DR. ALAN MARTIN

Dean, College of Biblical Studies
Associate Professor of Family Ministry

B.A., Harding University
M.A., Abilene Christian University
Ph.D., Michigan State University

GST.OC.EDU

As a part of Oklahoma Christian's Graduate School of Theology, Dr. Alan Martin is responsible for the Family Life Ministry track offered to all M.A. and M.Div. students. Dr. Martin is a member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and the National Council on Family Relations. He is heavily involved in outreach ministry, counseling ministry, and the family education ministry. He is a published author and sought-after speaker on family life issues.

Equipping You for Ministry and Scholarship.



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