



FUNDING ON THE DECLINE

Children's homes: Still a core church ministry?

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

DUNCAN, S.C. — Southeastern Children's Home cares for neglected and abused children on a 50-acre campus overlooking the Smoky Mountains.

Boys row out in a boat to catch bass and bream in a spring-fed pond. A bee-keeper teaches girls how to cultivate honey.

The home's residents ride horses as part of therapy and enjoy swing sets, basketball goals and a volleyball court.

As the Christian child-care agency meets physical needs, it fulfills a more important mission: sharing Jesus with children and families, executive director Robert Kimberly said.

"We've had eight of our kids become Christians this year, and so it's been wonderful,"

Kimberly said.

Yet he and many colleagues across the nation question if Churches of Christ are as passionate about caring for children in need as they once were.

In a survey of 20 children's homes in more than a dozen states, *The Christian Chronicle* found widespread concern about declining church support amid trying economic times and shifting ministry priorities.

"It has been tough to watch as more and more homes have been squeezed out of church budgets," said Cory Long, CEO of Carpenter's Place, a girls' home in Wichita, Kan., "and more and more homes are having to look outside the churches to get support."

For 50-plus years, children's
See **CHILDREN'S HOMES**, Page 12



PHOTO PROVIDED BY SOUTHEASTERN

Southeastern Children's Home serves young people in three group homes.



GARRETT HOSKINS

Students at Abilene Christian University gather to pray for victims of a bus crash that killed Anabel Reid, 19.

Crash brings ACU community to its knees

ABILENE, Texas — Anabel Reid loved her family. She loved her boyfriend. She loved serving children.

Most of all, she loved God.

Speaking to a crowd of more than 1,400 mourning the death of the Abilene Christian University student, Alex Wann described his 19-year-old girlfriend as a "totally righteous babe of the Lord."

"I love you so much, but I love God more than you," Wann said Reid told him, as reported by the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*. "She lived that kind of life."

Reid, a sophomore at the Texas university, died Nov. 4 near Ballinger, Texas, about 85

miles south of Abilene. She was part of a 16-person mission team on a bus en route to an annual service project at the Medina Children's Home in Texas.

The driver, ACU professor Michael Nicodemus, lost control and struck a concrete culvert. As the vehicle overturned, its canopy ripped away, ejecting 12 of its occupants.

Emergency workers transported the injured to
See **BUS CRASH**, Page 14



Reid

The Bible goes to school

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European
Mission at 50:
From Bible
smugglers
to textbook
suppliers.

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Wrap up your shopping
Find ideas to please all ages in
our holiday gift guide.

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Inside Story



Bobby Ross Jr.

You probably can guess what happens next.

That's right: Incredibly uplifting and challenging sermons.

And, yes, stopwatches working overtime and the original schedule falling quickly by the wayside.

Maybe in some congregations, the preacher can wrap up his message in *one-third* of an hour. But at the recent 74th annual lectureship at Southwestern Christian College — the historically black Christian college east of Dallas — I got the impression that the buzzer sounded (figuratively, of course) just as each speaker was getting warmed up.

"This does not work in Ethiopia," a smiling Behailu Abebe said of the time limit as he reported on mission work in his home nation.

There, he said, he'd talk for three hours straight. Here, he managed to complete his remarks in about 30 minutes — only 10 minutes over.

What a joy it was to be in the audience as speaker after speaker offered a fresh perspective on the theme

See **SOUTHWESTERN**, Page 4

Can churches reach 7 billion souls?

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica

When the global population crossed the 7 billion mark — according to United Nations estimates — about 125 of the world's souls were singing, praying and contemplating the divine in this Central American capital.

"Why would God, who made the world, want to be in a personal relationship with us?" Bart Dodson, a missionary in Honduras, asked attendees at the 48th Pan American Lectureship, shortly after the imaginary line was crossed.

"But he does — all 7 billion of us,"

Dodson said.



Hicks

The earth's booming population and its impact on evangelism was a recurring topic at the annual lectureship, a gathering of local Christians, missionaries in Latin America and U.S. supporters.

"It means to me, we have no time to stop and rest," Bob Prater said about crossing the 7 billion mark.

Prater, a longtime missionary in Africa and Europe, traveled to Central America from Erlangen, Germany, where he studies the Bible with a wide variety of



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Teens from Costa Rica sing Bible songs with missionary kids during the Pan American Lectureship.

nationalities, including Brazilians.

At the lectureship, he gathered ideas to help him reach Latin Americans with the Gospel — no matter where they live.

The Christians at the lectureship represented the increasing range of ages on the planet as average lifespan increases.

Bobbie Hicks, 87, a member of the Brownfield Church of Christ in Texas, attended the first Pan American Lectureship in Guatemala in 1963. This year, she brought her 29-year-old granddaughter, Cynthia Rowan.

Dodson's wife, Melissa, said she found the diversity of ages at the lectureship — and their commitment to Christ — inspiring.

"The fact that we have approximately 7 billion people ... I think this was a really neat place for us to be when that happened," Melissa Dodson said. "Almost every generation is here, and the thing we have in common is why we're here."

INSIDE: Church members in Costa Rica share their struggles and dreams for reaching their 4.6 million souls. See Page 10.

Church planted in hotel ballroom touts 'New Life'

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

BRIDGETON, Mo. — In a hotel restaurant, weekend guests nibbled bacon and eggs and sipped orange juice and coffee.

A short ride up a glass elevator, a less ordinary scene occurred: About 50 men, women and children gathered in a ballroom with red-cushioned chairs and bright chandeliers. They came not for a business meeting or a fancy banquet but to pray, sing praises and worship God.

The St. Louis area's newest congregation — the New Life Church of Christ — meets at 8 a.m. Sundays at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, near Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.

Minister Thomas Jackson describes the

church plant as a domestic mission effort aimed at meeting people where they are — as Jesus did the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4.

The New Life church intends to reach people who have no relationship at all with God, he said, as well as former church members who have become estranged.



Jackson

"The idea is, there's a lot of hurt. There's a lot of pain," Jackson said. "There's a lot of hearts that have been bruised, and because of that, some of the relationships are ... we tolerate each other, but we don't get along like a family."

Jewel McDaniels, 34, a St. Louis native and third-generation member of Churches of Christ, attended a recent New Life service with her mother, Judy, and 15-year-old son, Tony.

McDaniels said she's encouraged by the opportunity for a fresh start away from the walls and barriers that sometimes hamper congregations.

"I'm hoping that this will be a new life, a new beginning, to break down those," she said.

The early start time allows Jackson to preach at New Life and then drive about 20 minutes to his regular work — as minister for the Wagner Avenue Church of Christ in St. Louis.

See **NEW LIFE**, Page 16

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• **7 billion souls:** Church members from around the globe discuss the impact of the world's skyrocketing population on evangelism.

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SOUTHWESTERN: Powerful, passionate preachers

FROM PAGE 3

"Reach Out and Touch Somebody's Hand."

Among my favorites were LaVance Wes Anderson, minister for the Downtown Church of Christ in Kansas City, Mo., and Charlie McClendon, minister for the Northside Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Fla.

Anderson spoke on ministering to the down and out in the inner city and the need to "talk up" to such troubled souls. That can require a preacher to leave his office, take off his suit jacket and brush elbows with someone who may reek of alcohol or smell like urine, he suggested.

Or it may mean allowing a person dressed in less than Sunday best to use the church restroom.

"We've had people steal our toilet paper," Anderson said. "That's OK. It's 89 cents a roll."

McClendon highlighted his congregation's community outreach programs, including a youth basketball league designed to keep trigger-happy young men off the streets.

"It's not about basketball," he said. "But we knew if we put a ball out there, we were going to get the boys to come."

"Guess what?" he added. "These boys wind up wanting to become members of the church, and we end up baptizing their parents."

Arnelious Crenshaw, minister for the Northeast Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, brought copies of last month's *Christian Chronicle* story on that congregation's housing ministry and distributed the papers to lecture-ship attendees. Brother Crenshaw, we owe you for that free publicity!

Larry Guidry, minister for the Crowley Church of Christ in Louisiana, also included the *Chronicle* in his presentation on sports ministry, highlighting last year's feature on former Arkansas Razorbacks star tight end D.J. Williams, now with the Green Bay Packers.

Brother Guidry, we owe you, too!

After hearing such remarkable men of God share lessons from his Word, the audience was in for a real letdown ... *me*.

"You sounded a bit nervous, but you did OK," said my 14-year-old son, Keaton, who made the 500-mile roundtrip with me and helped pass out *Chronicle* calendars and coffee sent along by Editor Lynn McMillon.

Actually, I was a *whole lot* nervous.

But I was humbled and honored that James O. Maxwell, Southwestern's vice president of institutional advancement, invited me to speak.

Maxwell is the father of James A. Maxwell, minister for the Holgate Church of Christ in Seattle, with whom I spent time this past summer while working on a Churches That Work story. (We also may have enjoyed a Rangers-Mariners game, if you recall my baseball column from a few months ago.)

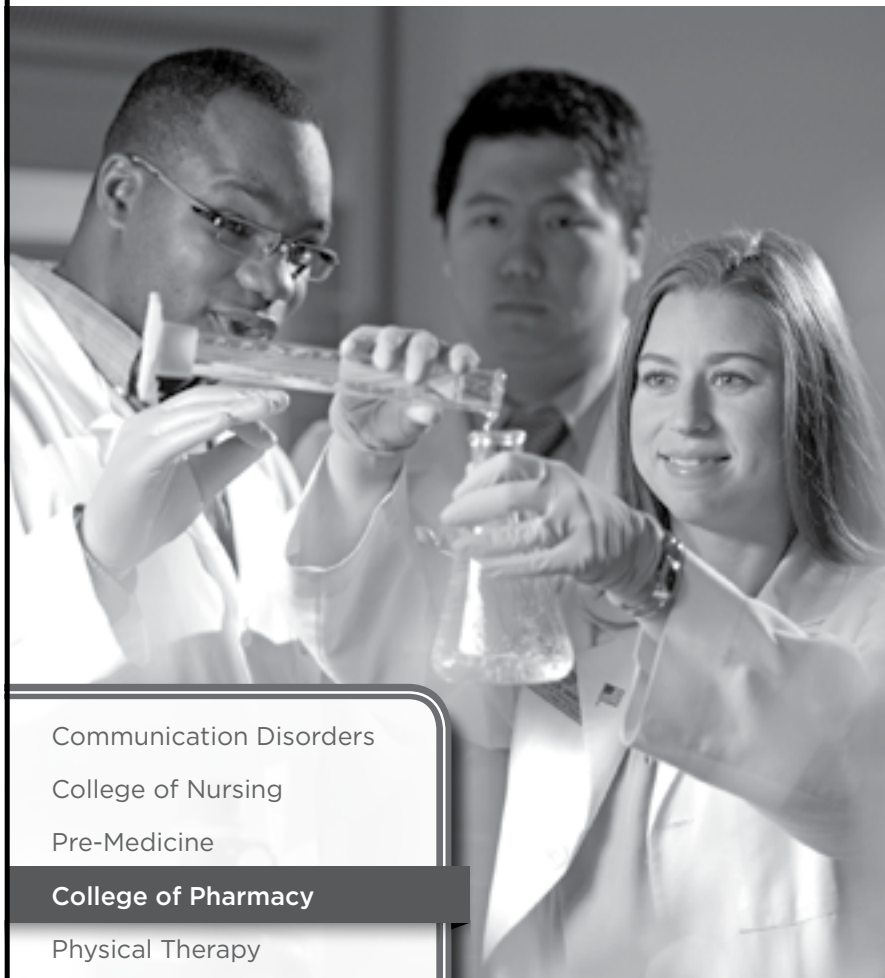
My topic was "Multicultural Church Membership and Fellowship." Now, that might sound like a peculiar assignment for a middle-aged white guy who attends a suburban church where most people look just like me, only skinnier and with more hair.

But in my *Chronicle* travels, I have written about a number of inspiring, multicultural congregations in the United States and Canada, including the Culver Palms Church of Christ in Los Angeles, the Northwest Church of Christ in Chicago and the South Burnaby Church of Christ in Vancouver, British Columbia.

I was privileged to share some of their secrets. (My thanks to Northwest minister Patrick Odum and South Burnaby minister Kirk Ruch, both of whom provided valuable feedback and biblical insight for my presentation.)

And I made it to the finish line in less than 15 minutes. Did I mention that I'm not a *real* preacher?

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CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO — Terri Weissinger was trying to start a new life by moving to Idaho but got stranded for eight days at San Francisco's airport because she couldn't pay unexpected baggage fees.

The Airport Church of Christ came to the rescue, donating \$200 from its benevolence fund to help her on her way, local news media reported.

"We go by what the Bible teaches, and the Bible teaches to do good to all men," preacher Robert Urbina told KGO radio station. "That's what Jesus tells us to do, and when someone comes to us for help, we help them."

MICHIGAN

WATERFORD — *"Cut the Cable. Help the Needy."*

Members of the Waterford Church of Christ have launched an effort called "Cable Free for Christ."

The mission is to encourage Christians to donate the cable savings toward partnering outreach ministries and seek out better ways to spend their time.

"While cutting the cable and helping the needy are key goals, our ultimate objective is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ," program coordinator John Furness said.

For more information, see www.cablefreeforchrist.org or connect on Facebook or Twitter.

OKLAHOMA

CORDELL — The FBI is active at the Northside Church of Christ. The Faithful Bible Investigators program, that is.

The congregation draws its largest attendance of the week on Wednesday nights thanks to the program, minister Tim Turpin said. The outreach effort serves children in the community. It features a meal, structured play time and Bible lessons. A van picks up some children, but most of the 40 or so who participate are dropped off by parents.

"One of the benefits of this program, unlike Vacation Bible School, is that the children are here every week," Turpin said. "We have not advertised, but the children are excited to be there and are ... bringing more friends."

SOUTH CAROLINA

SIMPSONVILLE — Sunday school classrooms at the Holland Park Church of Christ serve as temporary living quarters for homeless families.



KEN PARKER

'Classic' church members praise God, enjoy firelight fellowship

Participants in the "Classics for Christ" ministry at the Alameda Church of Christ in Norman, Okla., enjoy a time of fellowship and worship around a bonfire. The ministry serves adults ages 50 and older and is active in outreach opportunities, such as operating a clothing closet and food pantry and visiting hospitals. Group members also oversee a funeral meal program and an adopt-a-widow effort.

The congregation participates in a program that provides temporary lodging for the homeless in church buildings, member and former elder Carl Lancaster said.

"Holland Park and each church serves on a rotating basis and generally has homeless families with them about once a quarter," Lancaster said. "Typically, the families move in on Sunday afternoon. They spend each night in our classrooms."

For a week at a time, church members prepare breakfast and an evening meal.

During the day, the children go to school, while the adults work to find a job or become more employable.

VIRGINIA

FAIRFAX — The biannual Power House Youth Rally hosted by the Fairfax Church of Christ drew more than 200 young people from throughout the Northeast, organizers said.

With the theme "Post It," the recent

conference challenged attendees to stand their post as Christians. Seventeen congregations were represented, from as far north as Pennsylvania and as far south as North Carolina.

"The conference highlights included breakout sessions, fellowship, heartfelt personal testimony and the baptism of 18 new believers into the Lord's body," Fairfax youth minister Phil McKinney said. Wiley Lowe, youth and family minister for the Holly Hill Church of Christ in Florida, was the featured speaker. Brishan Hatcher, worship leader for the Highland Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn., led praise and worship.

WAYNESBORO — The Waynesboro Church of Christ was voted "Most Respected Place of Worship" in the *News Virginian's* 2011 Valley Favorites contest.

"This is a really loving congregation that is really reaching out to the community," said Tiffany Jones, wife of involvement minister Michael Jones.

SPOTLIGHT

Stepping down

BEAUMONT, Texas — John M. Davis, minister for the Ridgewood Church of Christ, is stepping down after 52 years with that congregation. Davis said in a letter to members that the congregation will remain his church home "until Jesus calls me home."

"The elders and I have diligently and prayerfully considered Ridgewood and its future," Davis wrote. "We all passionately want Ridgewood to grow, prosper and bring glory to God."

His resignation is effective Jan. 8. For more details, see www.ridgewoodcofc.org.



Davis

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PHOTOS BY JOHN R. IRBY

Participants in the 45th annual Bismarck Church Leaders Workshop came from Colorado, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Canada.

Teaching church leadership in a land needing leaders

NORTH DAKOTA CONFERENCE brings together Christians from across the Northern Plains, stresses the need for home-grown evangelism

BY JOHN R. IRBY | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

BISMARCK, N.D.

Churches of Christ often think of the Great Commission as a call to take the soul-saving Gospel to Africa, China, Latin America and the former Soviet Union.

But mission fields exist everywhere — just around the corner, close to home or just a few states away from the Bible Belt, in places like North Dakota, population 675,000.

Christians from across the region gathered in the capital city of the “Peace Garden State” for the 45th annual Bismarck Church Leaders Workshop. Preachers, elders and members came from North Dakota, Colorado, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming and Canada.

The theme, “Goads and Nails,” came from Ecclesiastes 12:11: “The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.”

The workshop’s goal is to encourage ministers, elders and future leaders in the Northern Plains — a land that is “skinny” on leadership, said Scott Laird, the workshop’s director and minister for the Great Falls Church of Christ in Montana.

“The majority up here have grown up in the North,” Laird said. “The idea of staying here is a struggle” for those that migrate from other parts of America. “If we don’t grow our own leadership we are not typically blessed with many new members.”

The cold weather, sparse population and abundance of Catholics and Lutherans, buoyed by years of German and Scandinavian migration, often are credited with adding to the Church of Christ’s struggle in this wide-open mission field.

The largest congregation in North Dakota is in Bismarck. The church averages a Sunday morning attendance of about 60 men, women and children and has a full-time minister.

The church in Minot, with about 50 members, was without a full-time evangelist until recently. Only five other congregations exist in the state — a 25-member church in Mandan, churches of about 40 members each in Grand Forks, Fargo and Dickinson and a 50-member church in Williston. None of these has a full-time preacher.

Though small, “North Dakota churches are tough,” Laird said. “You can’t kill



Scott Laird and Calvin Chapman speak at the North Dakota conference.

them off. People keep on going and serving even though they don’t get a lot of encouragement from outside. Their Christianity is real and important.”

The Great Falls church has almost 250 members. Laird credits that to longtime leadership and an influence from the Air Force base there.

Calvin Chapman, from Faith, S.D., told a story of what goaded a mentor of his into a long life as an evangelist. Chapman and the older preacher were riding in a car, approaching a funeral home.

Chapman asked the preacher what kept him going. After a pause, the man pointed to the funeral home and said he was



still preaching because he wasn’t sure everyone who ended up there was ready to be there.

“God uses us to bring light and life to the darkness around us,” Chapman said. “The work of a preacher is to bring about the will of God.”

Bismarck minister Walter Clark said there isn’t much knowledge about the Church of Christ in North Dakota. While not blaming the state’s history and culture, he, like many others, is aware of a “stubbornness” that can play a role in openness to change.

“We need to push for every member to understand they are ministers of the Word and make themselves available to opportunities God may be bringing into

their paths,” Clark said.

North Dakota’s growing population provides new opportunities to reach lost souls.

The state is experiencing an oil boom, and new jobs are being created in the energy industry. Unemployment is less than 1 percent in the “oil patch” and about 3 percent statewide. Some fast-food restaurants are paying people \$15 an hour to flip burgers. Those who can turn a wrench, drill or fracture a well or drive an oil tanker can make much more.

But what these cash-rich immigrant workers need most is God — not the whiskey pubs and strippers, said workshop participants.

Bruce Goodwin, of Eden Prairie, Minn., summarized the urgent need to reach lost souls in the Northern Plains in the event’s final session.

“Each day we walk among the (spiritually) wounded,” he said. “The word ‘grace’ is experienced so much that the word ‘obedience’ can’t be heard. People don’t know they are living in darkness because that’s all they know.”

JOHN R. IRBY is a member of the Bismarck Church of Christ. He retired recently after more than 40 years as a newspaper editor, publisher and university journalism professor.

BRAZIL

SALVADOR — Church members are mourning the death of Irla Sany, 17, who was killed in an act of gang-related violence, said missionary Valerie Quirey.

"She had been part of our congregation since it began in 2006," Quirey said, "and her stepfather Fernando rented a van to bring as much of his family as he could to church. ... She had grown up in the roughest of neighborhoods but never developed the hardness that often comes with it."

After an abbreviated worship service, members of the Church of Christ gathered in the Sany's home to pray with her family.

Fellow missionaries Randy and Jennifer Porter have been ministering to the family and the church, said Quirey, who is in the U.S. on furlough with her husband, Russell.

CHINA

BEIJING — Thirty-three women from four congregations in Beijing participated in a recent retreat. The retreat featured classes for single women and talks on marriage enrichment for married attendees, said Danita Jackson, a church member in Beijing.

GHANA

TAKORADI — Cheryl Bode, a Christian nurse living in this West African nation, conducted an HIV and Hepatitis B screening clinic for students at the Outreach Africa Vocational Institute, a church-supported school.

Bode and five Ghanaian nurses conducted 226 HIV tests and 220 Hepatitis B tests and administered 180 Hepatitis B vaccines.

"The students and staff were so excited about receiving this service," Bode said. "It was truly amazing to me how receptive they were."



Bode

INDIA

GUWAHATI — Daniel and Kathy Hamm, longtime missionaries in Thailand, will travel to this city in northeastern India to teach at the Northeast Bible Institute, which has 28 men and seven women enrolled.

The school's goal is to produce self-supporting ministers, said administrator Jim E. Waldron.



PHOTO BY ANNETTE WHITTAKER

Going Maasai way? Missionaries heal sick, teach Bible in Tanzania

Women and children of northern Tanzania's Maasai people crowd into a land cruiser for a ride back to the main road after a Bible study with Annette Whittaker. Her husband, Dr. Robert Whittaker, is filling in at the Tanzania Christian Clinic for physicians Danny and Nancy Smelser. The Whittakers formerly worked at Nigerian Christian Hospital. Searcy, Ark.-based International Health Care Foundation supports their work. About 30 to 40 Maasai attend the lessons, Annette Whittaker said, and at least 20 of them insist on climbing into the land cruiser for a ride. "The people seem very interested" in the lessons, she said, "and the men have asked for Bibles and where the church meets."



The school seeks U.S. preachers to teach in the school for one or two months, Waldron said. The Main Street Church of Christ in Crossville, Tenn., oversees the work.

NIGERIA

OYUBIA-ORON — An annual youth forum in this southern Nigerian town brought 1,169 participants, representing 96 Churches of Christ, to the campus of the Christian Secondary Technical School.

"The most impressive feature ... was seeing hundreds of youths braving the tropical storms and heavy rain that drenched them from head to toe," said Eno Otoyoy, a Nigerian-born Christian who works with Nigerian Mission, a ministry of the Normandie Church of Christ in Los Angeles.

The Nigerian youths' "smiling faces and bright eyes were filled with excitement over being able to attend and participate in this year's lectureship," Otoyoy said. Many of the participants

brought their own food and kerosene stoves. When the school ran out of beds, "they simply slept on the floors without complaint."

Fifty-six attendees were baptized.

THAILAND

BANGKOK — Thailand's worst floods in a half-century have created stagnant ponds of water across this city of 12 million souls and forced thousands from their homes, said Kim Voraritskul, a minister in nearby Khon Kaen.

"Trash is building up and floating. Dead animals abound. ... Food and drinking water have to be taken to the masses by rowboats," the minister said. "We have six Churches of Christ in Bangkok with about 700 Christians. Many need our help. They need drinking water, dry and canned food."

The Silver Spring Church of Christ in Maryland is collecting funds for relief. Contact www.silverspringchurchofchrist.org or call (301) 585-8727.

SPOTLIGHT

New elders in Japan

HITACHI CITY, Japan — For the first time in nearly 40 years, the Omika Church of Christ has elders. Church members have studied the qualifications and attributes of leaders for the past three years and recently named Hideki Ataka and Jim Batten as the congregation's elders.

Ataka has preached for the Omika church for 30 years. Batten has been involved with the congregation for nearly 40 years and serves as chancellor of nearby Ibaraki Christian University.



Ataka



Batten

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Fortune and faith in Costa Rica

IN THE LAND OF 'PURE LIFE,' self-sustaining Churches of Christ seek to reach their secular culture — and develop hearts for missions.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

LA FORTUNA, Costa Rica

Finding an actual Costa Rican in this Central American tourist town is a bit of a challenge.

On a Friday afternoon, the streets of the main plaza are choked with visitors from the U.S. and Europe, popping in and out of the ice cream shop and “Chocolateria.”

They come here from around the globe to ride horses, brave rapids and zip-line over lush vegetation, all in the shadow of the majestic Arenal volcano.

Rolando Castro came here to plant a church.

He and his wife, Daisy, along with a handful of other church members, moved to La Fortuna seven years ago. The congregation they helped plant has grown to about 25 members, meeting in an unmarked building near the town's square.

It's more important that believers point to Christ with their lives than with a sign, Castro explains, but the congregation does plan to buy one eventually.

Sitting in folding chairs on the auditorium's concrete floor, Castro talks with fellow believers from the capital, San Jose, about the congregation's work.

The visitors are in town coordinating the Pan American Lectureship, meeting at a hotel near the volcano.

In a classroom behind the auditorium, Daisy Castro and three other women sit with open Bibles, writing a curriculum for their Sunday morning children's classes.

The La Fortuna Iglesia de Cristo (Church of Christ) is using its finances to build the classrooms and an apartment, Castro tells the visitors. The congregation secured its second loan

from the bank for the improvements. The previous loan, which the church paid off, built the auditorium.

The congregation also is searching for a minister. At first, the preacher may have to find a secular job to help support himself, but the church has committed to support him full time eventually — without funds from outside the church.

Castro, a second-generation church member, has seen Christians suffer because of reliance on foreign aid.

“Sometimes the support from the U.S. has caused issues among the members and has been a stumbling block,” he says. His dream is for the church “to accomplish the mission of Christ in this area” and to have the means to finance the work.

CHURCHES THAT 'LOOK OUTSIDE THEMSELVES'

Self-reliance is a common characteristic among the 4.6 million people who live in Costa Rica. The country has enjoyed greater political stability than its neighbors, Panama and Nicaragua, and has a better standard of living than most Central American nations.

The country's unofficial motto is “Pura Vida” (“Pure Life”) — a laid-back enjoyment of simple living.

“We don't have an army, but an army of teachers,” says one of the visitors, Steven Guerrero, the last member of a mission team working with a congregation in Sabanilla, an eastern suburb of San Jose.

“People here are very well-educated, in a secular way,” Guerrero says.

Costa Rica has about 50 Churches of Christ, ranging in size from 20 to 250 members. That's fewer than other Central American nations, including Guatemala and Honduras.

In those countries, poverty and social inequality have made people receptive



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Arenal, more than 5,300 feet high, is one of Costa Rica's most active volcanoes.

to the Gospel, says Carlos Ulate, minister for the Heredia Church of Christ, north of San Jose.

Ulate, who was baptized while studying at the University of Florida, served as director of a ministry training school in Catacamas, Honduras. There, he saw how meeting people's physical needs allowed churches to then address their spiritual ones.

Though the people of Costa Rica have fewer physical needs, “the problem we're having is that the greatest institutions of society are falling apart — marriage, family and the church,” Ulate says. “So my dream is that ... the leaders of the churches see themselves as God's instruments to heal individual lives, to heal marriages, to restore families.”

Too often, church leaders are mired in the logistics of buildings and finances, Ulate said.

“It's my dream that the churches learn to do the right work,” he said.

Ronald Martinez also dreams of Costa Rican believers becoming missions-minded. He preaches for the Desamparados Church of Christ in San Jose. The 120-member congregation has planted a new church in a nearby

town. The church also has an active youth ministry and women's Bible study. Members visit poor farming communities, play games with children and give them Christmas gifts.

The church sent aid to victims of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras in 1998. Recently, Martinez and another Costa Rican minister traveled to Haiti to give funds and aid to victims of the 2010 earthquake.

Seeing the living conditions in Haiti made Martinez grateful for the blessings he and fellow Costa Ricans share.

“All people, rich or poor, need to understand that we're heading for heaven and judgment and prepare for that,” he says. “The church in Costa Rica can learn from the church in the

United States (to) have vision, a mission mindset, to look outside themselves.”

A CONGREGATION'S BIRTH

Missions-minded Christians from the U.S. and Costa Rica played a vital role in the birth of the Sabanilla Church of



With open Bibles, women at the La Fortuna Church of Christ prepare lessons for children.

Christ, says Guerrero, a native Costa Rican who owes his faith to his adopted father, a minister from El Salvador who came to Costa Rica in 1979, fleeing the war that ravaged his home country.

Guerrero became a Christian and studied ministry at the Baxter Institute in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. He joined a mission team — a mix of U.S. and Latin American Christians — and moved to the San Jose area about five years ago to reach young spiritual seekers.

The team and a group of short-term workers from the U.S. hosted a bilingual church camp, modeled after one organized by the Mars Hill Church of Christ in Vilonia, Ark. The team rented a campsite on the side of a hill. Seven youths were baptized at the camp and then brought their families into the church, which now has about 75 members.

Guerrero laughs as he remembers baptizing the youths in the frigid waters of the antique campsite. The temperature dropped near freezing, and most of the campers and counselors had only shorts and T-shirts to wear.

“But we made it through,” he says, “and that's how the church started. And we're going to have elders.”

Two men — Pedro Morales and Jorge Salazar — are training to become the congregation's shepherds.

Thinking about the days ahead for the young church, Morales prays that his congregation will be self-supporting and will show love to its community.

“The Gospel has been preached in

Costa Rica a lot,” he says. “We have the doctrine. ... We used to preach out of fear, not out of love.

“I would like the church to be like cereal with dehydrated bananas. You add spiritual milk and it expands — bursting with flavor.”

A LEGACY OF FAITH

Though the streets of La Fortuna teem with foreigners, the tourism industry here has taken a hit from the sagging global economy, Castro says.

He, like most of the church's members, works in agriculture, but the downturn has hurt all sectors of his country's economy. Some of the church's women are unemployed, so the congregation helps support them.

“Members here believe everything belongs to God,” Castro says. “We share what we have.”

As his visitors from San Jose walk toward their car to return to the lecture-ship, Castro's father, Orlando, pulls up in an old pickup. He became a Christian —

and a minister — more than 40 years ago, while attending a gospel meeting hosted by missionary Ray Bynum and Costa Rican evangelist Efraim Valverde.

“I believed the Word of God. I believe its importance,” he says, explaining why he became a Christian.

When asked how he feels about his son carrying on his legacy of evangelism, he smiles and places his hands over his heart.

“That's the best thing that has happened in my life,” he says.



Orlando Castro and his son, Rolando, stand by the La Fortuna church building.



Martinez



Ulate



Guerrero



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CHILDREN’S HOMES: Falling through the cracks?



BOBBY ROSS JR.

For 21 years, Robert Kimberly has served as executive director of Southeastern Children's Home in Duncan, S.C., a small town west of Spartanburg.

FROM PAGE 1
homes have been a core ministry of mainstream congregations, said Kimberly, a board member for the Christian Child and Family Services Association. (In the mid-1900s, congregations that opposed church-supported children's homes became known as non-institutional Churches of Christ.)
But now, the South Carolina church member said, "we're sort of falling through the cracks."
"I think a big concern is that fewer and fewer of our dollars are coming from the churches," said Kimberly, a member of the Central Church of Christ in Spartanburg, east of the small town where Southeastern relocated in 1986. "So the pressure is to go to corporations and maybe even to take state dollars."

LESS EMPHASIS, LESS SUPPORT?
Growing up in the West Side Church of Christ in Muskogee, Okla., Kenny Holton knew where to look for elder Willis Tudor, husband of his second-grade Sunday school teacher, Alma.
"I fondly remember brother Tudor standing at the main door of the church building every month, with basket in hand after worship, inviting us to 'put in our change' for the kids," Holton said.
The funds benefited Turley Children's

Home — now known as Hope Harbor.
The lesson in giving influenced Holton's future career: He serves as executive director of Raintree Village children's home in Valdosta, Ga.
"My experience has been that there has been less and less of an emphasis on Christian child care, which leads to less and less financial support," Holton said.
Ralph Brewer, president of Potter Children's Home and Family Ministries in Bowling Green, Ky., said: "I believe the support of children's homes is directly related to the amount of education which takes place among the churches. God's emphasis on it used to be taught more than it is today in many churches."



PHOTO PROVIDED BY KENNY HOLTON

Executive director Kenny Holton poses with children at Raintree Village in Valdosta, Ga.



DENNISE GONZALEZ

Several residents of Westview Boys' Home in Hollis, Okla., join their teammates in a homecoming parade.

In many cases, churches have kept supporting children's homes but not increased the amount, leaders said — even as costs rise to meet increased government regulations and demand for professional caregivers and counseling.
"If they gave \$100 a month 50 years ago, we continue to get that amount today," said Brian L. King, executive director of Tennessee Children's Home in Spring Hill. "The churches that are more in tune to the changes we have made have been generous in increasing their support."
Delton McGuire, executive director of Cherokee Home for Children in Texas, said: "Probably a majority are giving the same amount as they gave 30 or 40 years ago. But considering the financial struggles of small, rural congregations, this must still be considered a generous gift."
Many small congregations still provide "a large and steady part of day-to-day support," said Ron Bruner, executive director of Westview Boys' Home in Hollis, Okla.
"Yet as some congregations diminish in attendance and contribution to the point that their financial survival is at stake, they are sometimes forced to the unpleasant necessity of removing such ministries from their budgets," Bruner said.

CHANGED FOCUS, MORE COMPETITION
Individual congregations have changed their focus, said Micah Brinkley, CEO and executive director of Children's Homes Inc. in Paragould, Ark.
"I do not necessarily think the passion for ministries like Children's Homes has changed," Brinkley said. "It is just having to share the focus with a lot of other equally good ministries."
"Plus, I think a lot of congregations are having to turn inward to keep their members," he added. "The church is competing today with all the things the world has to offer, so individual churches are having to develop programs and activities that pique the interest of the younger generations in order to keep them engaged."
Churches desire much more personal involvement with the homes they support, said Glenn Newberry, president and CEO of Sherwood & Foster's Home for Children in Stephenville, Texas.
"They want to see firsthand the work," Newberry said. "They want some hands-on activities with our children. We are moving past the day where a church automatically sends a check each month to a post office box. And I agree that all of those changes are good, necessary and healthy."
Too often, as Kevin McDonald sees



JOHN D. MORRISON

A little girl named Ashley can be seen through the window, reading in the Bollin Cottage at Carpenter Place in Wichita, Kan. Carpenter Place began as Maude Carpenter Children's Home when the Riverside Church of Christ saw a need to help orphans in the congregation.

it, churches view children's homes as benevolence, not mission work.
As a result, homes have not received the same level of priority as other outreach efforts, said McDonald, president and CEO of Arms of Hope, which serves at-risk children and single-mother families at three Texas locations.
"In the past three years, we have seen almost 100 program residents in our care claim Jesus as their Lord and Savior through baptism," McDonald said.
Among the converts: Chris Mayo, 16, baptized last year at the Eastridge Church of Christ in Rockwall, Texas.
Before moving to Boles Children's Home, part of Arms of Hope, Mayo said he lived in a rundown trailer with drug-addicted parents.
"I remember waking up one night to my 4-year-old brother saying, 'Bubba, go help Mommy! Daddy's going to kill her!'" Mayo said. "That was the night God pulled us from that place. He gave me the strength to climb out my window and go call the police."

SHIFT TO INTERNATIONAL ORPHANGES
In the U.S., the number of child-care agencies associated with Churches of Christ has declined to about 65, down from a peak of about 120, said Harold Shank, national spokesman for the

Christian Child and Family Services Association.
A move in many states away from group homes — in favor of foster care, adoption and family reunification — has played a role, too.
At the same time, the last decade has brought "a dramatic rise in international work in child care," from the creation of orphanages to the adoption of foreign children, said Shank, president of Ohio Valley University in Vienna, W.Va.
"A dollar of support for a domestic children's home barely buys a bottle of water," said Ray Crowder, former executive director of Shults-Lewis Child and Family Services in Valparaiso, Ind. "A dollar given to a children's home in Zambia may buy gallons of water."
Childhaven Inc. in Cullman, Ala., has seen a "distinct shift" by major donors toward supporting international orphanages, executive director Jim Wright said.
"They see less cost and almost no regulation and find that attractive," Wright said.
As church funding shrinks, Christian Home and Bible School in Mount Dora, Fla., receives a larger proportion of funding from estate bequests and individual donors, said Chuck Shepherd, director of social services.
"More and more of our donor base

continues to age and pass on to glory," Shepherd said.
ONE TEEN'S ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT
Southeastern Children's Home traces its roots to the Carolina Lectureship in 1968.
That's when a group of Christians got together and decided to serve needy and homeless children, Kimberly said.
In the beginning, Southeastern drew almost all its support from congregations, he said. But in the first 10 months of 2011, just 13 percent of revenues came from church treasuries.
On the Southeastern campus — located within a 150-mile radius of



REBECCA MELTON PHOTOGRAPHY

Residents of Carpenter Place pose for a photo at a benefit golf tournament.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY GLENN NEWBERRY

Samantha, a resident of Foster's Home for Children in Texas, makes a big catch.

Atlanta, Charlotte, N.C., and Columbia, S.C. — boys and girls reside in separate group homes. A few miles away, a third cottage benefits older girls transitioning into adulthood.
Southeastern also operates a community counseling center that serves a few hundred clients a year.
For eight years, Janice Axsom and her husband, Tony, have served as house-parents. Four girls — ages 17 to 20 — live with them in the transitional cottage and worship with the Central church.
The Axsoms and the girls stay busy with youth group activities. They travel to youth rallies and Palmetto Bible Camp in Marietta, S.C.
"Many of them have been baptized," Janice Axsom said of the two dozen girls she has welcomed, "some of them in the swimming pool at the house."
Jesse Roach, 15, came to live at Southeastern when a state caseworker removed him from his drug-infested home.
At Bible camp last year, he made the decision to accept Christ.
"I'm probably a lot stronger than I was before, both physically and emotionally," Roach said of how he has changed since his baptism. "I used to have a bad attitude and all that. Now, I really don't."

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BUS CRASH: Victim wakes up from coma

FROM PAGE 1

four regional medical centers:

• Pat Miller, wife of ACU professor Emmett Miller, was moved to hospice care in a coma, according to her family.

However, Emmett Miller later posted on his Facebook page: "Pat woke up and is very responsive. Asking about people. Still not for sure what has happened. Keep praying."

• Naomi Cruz, a freshman from Richmond, Texas, was hospitalized in Abilene and later transferred to a hospital in Houston to be close to her home. She remained hospitalized at press time.

• Anna Ciufo, a freshman from The Woodlands, Texas, was flown from a hospital in San Angelo, Texas, to Dallas' Parkland Medical Center. Ciufo was released after several surgeries.

Other victims of the crash were treated for injuries and released.

'WE DON'T HAVE THE ANSWERS'

In Abilene, "the campus snapped into action the first moments after we first learned of the accident, either to help passengers and their families directly or to simply pray," ACU spokesman Grant Rampy said.

"We had more people — students, faculty, staff and our ACU neighbors — turn out for a candlelight prayer service on the night of the accident than our outdoor amphitheater could hold," Rampy said.

The university hosted additional prayer services in the days following the crash, including a chapel assembly dedicated to Reid that included prayers for those recovering.

"Our precious Anabel is in the arms of God this morning," ACU President Phil Schubert said at the chapel assembly.

Other universities associated with Churches of Christ also paused to pray for the victims, including Lubbock Christian University.

Workers with the Arms of Hope ministry also mourned the loss and prayed for the injured. The ministry oversees the Medina Children's Home, about 225 miles south of Abilene.

The ministry houses about 80 at-risk children and more than 50 single mothers and their children, said Kevin McDonald, Arms of Hope's president and chief executive officer.

The annual mission trip to Medina would have been the seventh for Emmett Miller. The home relies on such trips to maintain the facilities, McDonald

said. But the significance of such mission trips goes beyond maintenance.

"There are a lot of things here that go way deeper than just a group of students coming to work with some disadvantaged children," McDonald told *The Optimist*, ACU's student newspaper. "There's a lot of relationships here."

As the ACU community grapples with the loss, "we need to give people space to ask questions," said Frances Green, campus minister for the Southern Hills Church of Christ in Abilene. "This creates a lot of hard questions, and we don't have the answers."

Steve Rowlands, director of ACU's counseling center, said that the university must "find a new normal."

"I want to make sure that, although this is a crucible moment, this is not a crippling moment," he said.

REMEMBERING A DEDICATED CHRISTIAN

In Lubbock, Texas, friends and family gathered to celebrate Reid's life at the congregation where she grew up, the Broadway Church of Christ. Dozens more listened to an audiocast of the service at ACU's welcome center, just yards away from Reid's dormitory.

Reid was remembered as an outdoors enthusiast who loved kayaking, skydiving, zip-lining and mountain climbing — but hated fish.

Bill Starcher, minister for the Broadway church, said Reid had the kind of faith that wasn't practiced only on Sundays.

"Whenever there were things to be done, she stayed until it was done," Starcher said, according to the *Abilene Reporter-News*. "Anabel was always there to help."

Josh Haynes, Broadway's youth minister, described Reid as an avid debater who enjoyed verbal sparring on the long bus rides back from camping trips.

"She was my caffeine on the way home," he said.

Haynes remembered Reid visiting him at the hospital when his daughter, Harper, was born.

Reid asked the youth minister if she could hold the newborn. "For a second, I thought she didn't think I would let her," Haynes said. "But I, of course, did."

When he saw his daughter in Reid's arms, he said, "I can honestly tell you, at that moment I prayed that Harper would become like Anabel."

ADDITIONAL REPORTING: Sarah Stirman



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NEW LIFE: Meeting people where they are

FROM PAGE 3

A congregation of mostly older people, the Wagner Avenue church meets in a more traditional setting: a red-brick building with wooden pews and a cross perched atop the roof.

Like Jackson, New Life worship leader Jerry Williamson serves full time with a different congregation. Williamson is the youth and worship minister for the Florissant Church of Christ.

New Life emerged, Jackson said, as he and Williamson asked, "How can we reach beyond our areas of the Kingdom?"

"Wagner's on one side of town. Florissant's on another side of town," the preacher said. "Yet nobody is on this side of town, reaching people that perhaps don't have a relationship with God at all."

'BLESSING BUSINESS'

On a recent Saturday night, a few hundred Christians and visitors from throughout the area came together to celebrate the official launch of the New Life church.

Williamson and Christian singer Dorian Paul Williams, a member of the Trinity Gardens Church of Christ in Houston, took turns leading a selection of a cappella hymns ranging from "Lord, Reign in Me" to "Everybody Will Be Happy Over There." Directed by school administrator Carla Payne, a choral group from the Christian Academy of Greater St. Louis performed.

Lee Lewis, pulpit minister for the O'Fallon Church of Christ, west of St. Louis, prayed and asked God to bless the new work.

"In these times of economic downturns and the increase of hopelessness, it is important for people to know, understand and believe that our God is still in the blessing business," Lewis said in an e-mail to *The Christian Chronicle*. "Dr. Jackson and his team are the vanguard

in this area to make straight the way of the Lord for a people who may be too down to get to him."

Vicki Judd, a Florissant member since 1989, came with her daughter, McKenna, 16, to show support for the new work.

"I think it's fabulous," Judd said. "People in the community that maybe have been dissatisfied with another church, this is a good way to get other people here."

"And with the different ministers ... that are coming from other churches to here, it shows that, you know what, we can all come together," she added.

"You're not doing a disservice to your own church. You're just helping with another ministry within the area."

The hotel is centrally located, Jackson said.

"We can touch people without interfering with any other ministry north, south, east and west," he said.

'LIVING WATER'

New Life leaders canvassed neighborhoods near the hotel to invite visitors to attend. The church plans other outreach projects — such as free meals at apartment complexes — to engage the community.

As Jackson shared his vision for New Life, he reflected on the woman at the well.

"When this woman got the living water, she left her water pot, ran back to her city and told the town, 'Come see a man that told me everything that I've ever done,'" Jackson told the congregation.

"When she went back to her town, she changed that entire community," he added. "Jesus changed her, and because of her change, she changed the lives of those around her. She had a new life, because God met her right where she was and walked her to where she needed to be."



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Kaylee Helgeson, 7, joins a prayer circle for the new church. She is the daughter of Randy and Alice Helgeson.



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Students in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, wave and hold some of the thousands of children's and teen's Bibles that Eastern European Mission provides for ethics and character education.

From Bible smugglers to suppliers: EEM at 50

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

IVANO-FRANKIVSK, Ukraine

If you thought the Cold War was tough, just wait. A high school academic team in this former Soviet nation eagerly awaits the chance to do battle with American counterparts.

The subject: Bible knowledge.

The seven students, all ages 16 and 17, attend Public School No. 11 in this western Ukrainian town. They went toe-to-toe with the big-city schools and prevailed, winning a competition that tested their command of Scripture and its application to daily living.

On a break between classes, the students sit in a white-walled auditorium and talk about the Bible stories they referenced in their speeches.

Speaking in English — a key focus of the school's curriculum — Bohdan Navrotsky describes Jesus' parable of the vineyard tenants who beat their master's messengers and killed his son. His teacher, Anna Dmytrychenko, watches and smiles, gently correcting him when he dips back into Ukrainian.

The vineyard parable "shows that God is your

master," Navrotsky says, and "explains how God loved us enough to send his son to rescue us from our sins."

"These stories protect us from bad decisions," adds teammate Viktoriya Kalynyuk. She's the only girl on the team. ("One girl is worth six boys," her sly teammate Aksentiy Volodymyr chimes in.)

Kalynyuk, an academic standout and an accomplished dancer, dreams of working for the International Red Cross, helping the hurting in Africa, with the Bible as her guide. Such dreams seemed impossible a generation ago, when Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union. The government discouraged religion and confiscated Bibles.

In 1961, seven young couples from Abilene Christian University in Texas moved to Vienna, Austria. They set up a printing press, produced books of the New Testament in the languages of Eastern Europe and smuggled them under the Iron Curtain. Their ministry became known as Eastern European Mission.

A half-century later, the ministry produces Bibles in the countries where once they were forbidden.

In Ukraine, an independent nation since 1991, the Bible has become part of the public school curriculum.

CONTINUED



The high school academic team from Public School No. 11 in Ivano-Frankivsk won a national competition that tested their Bible knowledge and its application to daily living.



At a conference in Ukraine, Christians use song books produced by EEM.



Children at a hospital in Donetsk, Ukraine, gaze at new copies of EEM's children's Bible, given to them by Jay Don Rogers, director of the Ukrainian Bible Institute.



Barbara Camp recalls life on the mission field in Vienna, Austria, 50 years ago.



Stacks of gospel literature await shipment at EEM's warehouse in Donetsk, Ukraine.



Olesya Andrusyak, head librarian of Public School No. 11 in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, talks about the appeal of the illustrated children's Bibles among elementary students.



At Ivano-Frankivsk's Public School No. 16, students read EEM's children's Bibles.

In Eastern Europe, the Bible goes to school

CONTINUED

From kindergarten through high school, students can opt to study Christian ethics, using the Bible as a textbook.

EEM gives Bibles and Bible-based literature to all 763 schools in the Ivano-Frankivsk school system. To date, the ministry has provided biblical texts to more than 2 million children in 9,201 public schools in Ukraine and Russia.

The ministry also is a sponsor of Ukraine's Bible competition and provided prizes for the winning team from Public School No. 11.

"Christianity is a world religion," says team member Ihor Kozak. "Every country should have a competition like this."

EIGHTY BIBLES IN A SPARE TIRE

Richard Baggett, EEM's vice president of advancement, and members of the ministry's Ukrainian staff traveled to Ivano-Frankivsk to make sure the Bibles they provide were getting into the schools. Arriving unannounced, Baggett and his teammates found copies of their materials in each library and many of the classrooms.

The books, especially the illustrated children's Bibles, are particularly

popular with elementary students, said Olesya Andrusyak, head librarian at Public School No. 11.

At each school the team visited, teachers asked for more copies.

Eastern Europe's access to — and hunger for — gospel literature is a dream realized for Barbara Camp, who moved from Texas to Vienna 50 years ago with her husband, Lynn.

She remembers wearing a "Jackie Kennedy pillbox hat" and learning the ins-and-outs of grocery shopping and laundry washing in a foreign culture.

Lynn Camp, now president of EEM, remembers pulling cloth diapers from a drying line in the rain, as his Viennese neighbors giggled about him doing "women's work."

He's not sure what they would have thought about the young Christian men that visited him in Vienna — and squeezed into support stockings.

That way, "you can stuff a lot of Bibles under your jeans," he explained. "One of the kids took a tire tool, let the air out of the spare, loosened it from the rim and put 80 Hungarian Bibles in the spare."



Lynn Camp

Throughout the Cold War, teams of students from Christian universities stopped in Vienna on their way across the Iron Curtain. EEM armed them with tiny New Testaments in the languages of the Soviet world.

"Can it fit in a shirt pocket?" was the ministry's governing rule, said Murray Czeczotka, EEM's former director of operations in Vienna.

The nondescript testaments bore no writing on their covers and could be mistaken for cigarette packs.

Small groups of Christians, meeting across Eastern Europe, helped conceal and distribute the literature. A farmer in Czechoslovakia buried thousands of Bibles under the hay in his barn.

A few Eastern Europeans, including Hungarian believer Ivan Marcos, made regular trips to Vienna. Marcos traveled there two or three times per year to collect royalties from books written by his father. He often returned home with contraband produced by EEM.

Once, while riding a train to Vienna, a Hungarian border guard went through Marcos' belongings and found his personal Bible.

"A man like you with a Bible? You should know better," the guard told Marcos, a high-ranking banker in Hungary. The guard took the Bible

and "just sailed it out the window as the train was moving, maybe 50 miles an hour," Lynn Camp said. "And though we could get him another one in Vienna, he still wanted *his* Bible."

About two years later, Marcos got his Bible back in the mail. Some children playing near the railroad tracks had found it, a note explained.

"We must apologize to you that we kept your Bible so long," the note said, "but it took us this long to make copies of it."

"They had handwritten copies of that Bible," Lynn Camp said. The story "really taught us about what God was doing and wanted to do through us."

MINISTRY AFTER THE WALL

For more than a quarter-century, EEM workers did their best to alleviate what Scott Hayes, the ministry's publishing director, called "spiritual starvation" in the Soviet world.

Czeczotka believes that "people's desire for religious information contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall" in 1989. After that, EEM received tens of thousands of requests for Bibles.

Now, 20 years after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Christians in Russia "just take it for granted,

because if we need Bibles, we simply write to Eastern European Mission," said Igor Egirev, a former electrical engineer in Rostov-on-Don, Russia, who was baptized by a U.S. campaign team in 1990. Egirev is director of the Institute of Theology and Christian Ministry in St. Petersburg, Russia, which trains indigenous church leaders for the former Soviet world.

Russia now has 55 Churches of Christ, Egirev said. Most are aware of the role EEM has played in their development. Recently, a Church of Christ in Barnaul, Russia, made financial contribution to EEM part of its budget.

In 2006, EEM sold its Vienna facility and outsourced the printing of its materials to companies in the former Soviet Union.

Increasingly, Eastern Europeans take leadership roles in the ministry.

Dasha Novikova grew up in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk, where she now directs EEM's Ukraine office. Even as a youth, she hungered for a relationship with God.

For her 10th birthday, "I told my parents not to buy me any pres-



Novikova

ents, but to pay for my baptism in the Orthodox Church," she said. Later she was baptized again, after meeting a group of campaigners from Churches of Christ in the U.S.

The campaigners gave her the first copy of the Bible she ever owned, "and, by the way, that Bible was from Eastern European Mission," she said.

In Vienna, Bartosz Rybinski serves as EEM's vice president for European operations. He grew up in Poland and was converted while studying in the U.S.

"I witnessed firsthand the communist repression of religion and freedom," Rybinski said. "I would have never thought that a day would come when we could read Bibles in schools and talk about God openly."

"When I left my homeland in 1993 in search of an adventure and a greater sense of purpose, I couldn't have imagined that one day God would lead me back to Eastern Europe to

find both through a ministry that puts his word in people's hands."

'CHRISTIANITY IS THE GREATEST TREASURE'

EEM prints Bibles and spiritual literature in more than 20 languages and distributes them to Churches of Christ across the continent.

Each summer, the ministry supplies literature and teams of U.S. church members to host youth camps in Ukraine. In the Soviet years, the camps were used to indoctrinate young people with the values of communism. Now Ukrainian youths learn the Bible.

EEM also provides funds for religious TV broadcasts and evangelistic seminars — all overseen by indigenous believers. The ministry partners with Ukrainian churches in outreach efforts to orphanages.

In 1998, a Russian government official, Vladimir Skovorodnikov, approached EEM with a way to get Bibles into the hands of 436,000 students and 80,000 teachers — by producing a "morals and character" curriculum for his country's Altai region. To meet the challenge, EEM promoted a "Million Dollar Sunday," among Churches of Christ.

The churches met the goal, and EEM provided the schools with Bibles, illustrated children's Bibles, the "Newcomer's Guide to the Bible" by former EEM president Mike Armour and "Morals and Character Lessons," written by Armour and his

wife, Fran. As he reviewed the material, Skovorodnikov decided to ask for baptism. During a U.S. visit, Armour baptized him at the Prestoncrest Church of Christ in Dallas.

In the past decade, EEM has provided the Bibles and character curriculum to schools in five states in Russia and two in Ukraine. Officials in two additional Ukrainian states have requested Bibles. To finance the work, the ministry will host its seventh Million Dollar Sunday in April.

In Ivano-Frankivsk, EEM's books line the shelves of classrooms next to paintings of Jesus. Schools aren't allowed to teach religious doctrine, said Volodymyr Raikovsky, an ethics teacher at Public School No. 16. Instead, they focus on the principles of Christianity and how they impact daily living, School officials point to studies in other Ukrainian cities that show juvenile delinquency rates declining where schools teach ethics.

Like most of western Ukraine, Ivano-Frankivsk has a strong Orthodox tradition. In an ethics class observed by EEM visitors, instructor Nadiya Matsuk taught students about "agape" love.

"Agape is the highest form of love," she told the class. "This is how Christ loved all of us."



Plaksin

Then the students stood and Matsuk led them in the Lord's Prayer. They formed the sign of the cross before heading to their next class.

Churches of Christ are few in western Ukraine, compared to the larger congregations of the east. But workers with EEM see signs that Ukrainians, as they study the materials given by the ministry, yearn for simple, non-dogmatic Christianity.

The parents of students in Ivano-Frankivsk write to the ministry and ask for their own copies, Baggett said. Church members teach the Bible at summer camps, and a Church of Christ in the city is growing, he added.

The academic team at Public School No. 11 represents the first generation of Ukrainians to grow up entirely free of the Soviet Union.

Despite decades of communism, the people of Ivano-Frankivsk kept their faith close to their hearts — and instilled its value in their children.

"We know that Christianity is the greatest treasure we have," says Kozak, 17, one of the team members. "Now the people of Ukraine can believe in the God they want. After 70 years, people want to believe in the Master who loves us."

After meeting the students, Nickoli Plaksin, a Ukrainian church member and distribution manager for EEM, beams with pride.

"That's the future of my country," he says.

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Tamika Rybinski's desire to serve God has taken her from the mountains of her home state, Colorado, to the imperial palaces of Vienna, Austria.

She lives in the "City of Dreams," so-named for a former resident, renowned interpreter of dreams Sigmund Freud. For Rybinski, Vienna is a place where her dreams of serving in an international, multicultural setting are coming true.

As a student at Oklahoma Christian University, she participated in campaigns to Honduras, Poland, the United Kingdom and Mexico. She met her husband, Polish-born Bartosz "Bart" Rybinski, at the university. They married in 2001.

Four years ago, Bart Rybinski accepted a job in the Vienna office of Eastern European Mission. Together, the couple travels the former Soviet world, teaching and networking with other missionary families. Tamika Rybinski occasionally teaches Bible classes and recently taught an art class at Come Before Winter, a renewal event for missionary women.

The Rybinskis have three children: 8-year-old Izabela, 2-year-old Krystian and a newborn, Victoria. The family communicates in a combination of Polish, English and German — a language the Rybinskis dubbed "Podanglish."

What challenges do you face in a foreign culture?

The challenges of living in another culture start the minute the plane lifts off the ground, and you realize your life will never be the same.

We have all had to relearn how to live in a new culture, to understand visual cues in communication, a new language, develop new tastes and likes.

I remember how overwhelming going to the store was when we first moved. I didn't understand why some containers of milk were refrigerated and others weren't or why they didn't keep eggs in the refrigerated section of the store. I had to learn to cook from scratch. It stressed me.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Tamika Rybinski with Krystian, Bart and Izabela. Not pictured is the family's newest member, Victoria.

A conversation with Tamika Rybinski

MISSIONARY IN AUSTRIA discusses soul-winning in multilingual, multicultural Eastern Europe.

erated and others weren't or why they didn't keep eggs in the refrigerated section of the store. I had to learn to cook from scratch. It stressed me.

I am still learning how things work now that we live in multiple cultures simultaneously.

How are your children adjusting to a new culture?

Izabela was born in Oklahoma and has lived half of her life in the States and half in Austria. She attends an Austrian public school and has adjusted very well.

I have learned so much about the German language as well as Austrian culture from Izabela while helping with homework or volunteering at her school. She is introduced to many things in school and can share them with us at home.

Krystian was born in Austria and, like Izabela, is able to switch between cultures really

well. Even at his young age, Krystian can recognize the difference and respond accordingly. They Skype almost daily to keep up with friends and family. They play as if they were in the same room — not on the other side of the world.

Why did you and Bart choose to serve EEM?

It was a unique opportunity that could utilize both of our strengths and talents.

Bart grew up in Warsaw, where we led student campaigns for several years. We have always had a heart for that part of the world, and we could see that God was really on the move in Eastern Europe. Lives were being changed and doors were being opened through EEM's efforts.

Tell us about the Churches of Christ in Vienna today.

The churches in Vienna are

organized around the home church model. The environment is intimate and relational. We usually spend most of Sunday in fellowship and worship. Our meetings often include a meal. The children actively participate by sharing prayer concerns, singing, contributing to discussion and sharing what they have learned with the adults at the end of their Bible time together.

The church is very outreach-minded. There has been significant growth and several baptisms in the past two years. As a result, our group is multiplying into two groups.

All of the house churches in Vienna come together to fellowship and worship once per quarter. Each July the churches come together to run youth camps. It is a great way to serve together as well as to share Christ with children who desperately need him.

How has living in Austria and working with EEM impacted your spiritual life?

Working and traveling with EEM has enriched my spiritual life, while living in Vienna has really challenged it.

I always look forward to our EEM trips because I am encouraged by the mutual worship with others living abroad. I am blessed to hear how God is working and moving in their lives and communities. I am uplifted by praise and worship, and I enjoy opportunities to experience this in multiple languages.

At first, when worshiping in Vienna, I always felt lost and disconnected. I needed so much time to process and translate what was being said that I was always behind. I also had to learn the cultural differences of fellowship and worship. It challenged me to get deeper into God's word to keep myself motivated and growing. I started to do women's group Bible studies using CD's at home on my own.

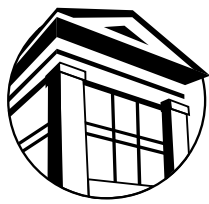
Is Eastern Europe still as receptive to the Gospel today as it was just after the fall of communism?

What we have learned about how receptive Eastern Europe is more than 20 years after communism varies from country to country.

People are seeking God everywhere. We see over and over that what makes a difference is being faithfully committed. Longtime commitment from churches, supporters and workers produces churches that grow and thrive. To succeed in missions in Europe, one must remain faithful and be patient.

Unfortunately, we see all too often that is not the case. Support is lost, leaving missionaries and promising works abandoned.

There are, however, great examples of mentoring and developing native Christians to carry on the work.



HARDING

U N I V E R S I T Y

FACULTY POSITIONS AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY

All candidates must be active members of the church of Christ and committed to Christian education.

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY. Seeking full-time faculty member within the area of pharmacy practice. Qualified applicants should possess a Pharm.D. as well as residency/fellowship training. At least two years of academic experience is preferred. Eligibility for pharmacy licensure in Arkansas is required. Responsibilities include creating, coordinating and delivering instruction in the pathophysiology, pharmacotherapy and patient-centered care didactic curriculum; developing and maintaining innovative clinical practice sites; conducting scholarly activity in an area of expertise; and engaging in service to the college and community. The college is partnering with local hospitals, clinics and community pharmacies to establish clinical practice opportunities. Applicants from all clinical backgrounds will be considered. Candidates with expertise in adult internal medicine, community practice, ambulatory care, cardiology, hematology/oncology or pediatric practice are encouraged to apply.

Submit a letter of interest and curriculum vita to Dr. Jeanie Smith, assistant professor of pharmacy practice, by mail at Harding University College of Pharmacy, Box 12230, Searcy, AR 72149-2230 or by email, jsmith17@harding.edu.

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM. Seeking full-time, 12-month faculty positions; rank will be commensurate with applicant experience. Each new faculty member will be responsible for participating in the teaching of the program's core curriculum, advising and mentoring students, assisting with the hands-on practical training of students in various clinical skills needed in clinical practice, maintaining clinical competency through practice at the program's affiliated clinic site, conducting scholarly activity in the faculty's area of expertise, and engaging in service to the College of Sciences, University and community. Qualified applicants should possess a minimum of a master's degree in physician assistant studies or similar field. Three years of clinical experience and one year of teaching experience preferred. PA applicants should be NCCPA certified and eligible for licensure as a physician assistant in the state of Arkansas. Applicants with other clinical training should have corresponding professional certification and be eligible for professional licensure in the state of Arkansas. Candidates must be able to demonstrate a commitment to Christian education.

Submit a letter of interest and curriculum vita to Dr. Michael Murphy, professor and program director, Physician Assistant Program, at mmurphy1@harding.edu.

Harding had a record enrollment this year of 7,155 students from all 50 states and more than 50 foreign countries. Comprised of eight colleges, it is the largest private university in Arkansas and attracts more National Merit Scholars than any other private university in the state. Harding also maintains campuses in Australia, Chile, England, France, Greece, Italy and Zambia.

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The Emporia church of Christ in Emporia, Kansas, is seeking a full-time minister to work with members in growing spiritually, numerically and in spreading the Gospel. The minister should have experience preaching the Good News. Ministers applying should be willing to work with all ages in visitation, teaching the truth and involved with our campus ministry.

The congregation has a regular attendance of 70-75, three elders and six deacons. A three-bedroom house is provided and is located next to the church building. Interested individuals can send resume with references to Church of Christ, PO Box 572 Emporia, KS 66801 or to Empchurchofchrist@yahoo.com along with salary and benefit requirements.

Please include an audio or video of some of your recent sermons.

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Employment Opportunity

BIBLE CAMPS

GANDER BROOK CHRISTIAN CAMP

RAYMOND, Maine — “Camperships” are helping more children enjoy Bible camp.

The donor-funded camp scholarships allow low-income children to experience Gander Brook, leaders said.

This past summer, 23 baptisms occurred during camp sessions, director Shawn Daggett said. “I continue to believe that more eternal good is done in the lives of our young people at Gander Brook than anywhere else,” Daggett said.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

HENDERSON, Tenn. — Richard Eleby, living in Biloxi, Miss., recently earned a master of ministry degree, the first Freed-Hardeman student to complete his graduate degree entirely online.

More than half of FHU students involved in master’s programs in Bible take at least part of their courses online. Students participate online live in 16 states as well as India, Australia, Korea and Russia.

“Offering our degrees online gives us the opportunity to extend our reach ... to many people who are not in the position to uproot their families,” said Mark Blackwelder, director of graduate studies in Bible. “For many people engaged in a career in ministry, this can make the difference between getting a graduate degree or spending years wishing they could.”

HARDING UNIVERSITY

SEARCY, Ark. — Harding President David B. Burks announced he will retire at the end of the 2012-13 academic year, after 26 years at the helm. Burks, 68, is the fourth president in Harding’s 87-year history.

“In 2006, the board extended my contract and asked me to work until age 70,” Burks said. “It should not come as a surprise to anyone that I am planning to retire. ... I will do everything I can to make sure the transition is as smooth as possible.”

In Burks’ tenure, Harding has grown from 2,997 students to 7,155 and completed \$250 million in capital projects.



Burks



EMILY LANSDALL

70,000 cans form Christian school sculpture

Students at Columbia Academy, a Tennessee school associated with Churches of Christ, build a sculpture using 70,000 cans of food. The items were collected as part of the Christian school’s annual canned food drive. After a special ceremony, the food was distributed to 18 local organizations and food banks. For 20 years, Columbia Academy has helped fill pantries of nonprofits and churches. More than 1.2 million cans of food have been collected during that period.

OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

OKLAHOMA CITY — The scenario Oklahoma Christian cross country head coach Mark Thompson had pictured months earlier came to happen on a recent Saturday morning.

Thompson hadn’t shied away all season from talk that his Eagles could win the NAIA men’s national championship, and they went out and did so in dominating fashion on a brisk fall day at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in Washington state.

“We thought going in, if we really executed well, we’d win, and we executed well, better than I expected,” Thompson said.

With three runners — Silas Kisorio, Geoffrey Njonjo and David McWilliams — finishing in the top 20, the No. 1-ranked Eagles posted a team score of 93, well ahead of second-place California State-San Marcos. The national championship was the first in the Oklahoma Christian cross country program’s history.

K-12 CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

DAVID LIPSCOMB CAMPUS SCHOOL

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The campus school received a \$10 million gift awarded by the Stephens Christian Trust — founded by Nashville resident Bill Stephens — to be used to support facilities and programs.

“In making this generous gift, the Stephenses are enabling us to begin putting form to the vision we have formulated for the campus school in recent years,” Lipscomb University President Randy Lowry said. “We hope to begin the first step in that vision, the renovation of our elementary school on Granny White Pike, within the next 18 months.”

Lipscomb Campus School is the largest private K-12 school in Middle Tennessee with nearly 1,400 students. Owned and operated by Lipscomb University, it’s one of the few secondary schools in the nation located on a university campus.

SPOTLIGHT

Character champions

YORK, Neb. — York College recently celebrated its selection as a five-star “Champions of Character” institution by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

The program recognizes athletic programs that intentionally teach character along with competitive excellence.

“Service is crucial to our mission,” York athletic director Jared Stark said. “One of the core components of the ‘Champions of Character’ program is servant leadership. This program directly supports our mission.”



STEDDON SIKES

York students don pink for a “Play for the Cure” game raising money for a cancer victim.

MEDIA MINISTRIES

HERALD OF TRUTH

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Christians in this Central American nation distributed 40,000 brochures during a recent evangelistic campaign. The campaign also included live radio broadcasts, door-to-door invitations, a seminar for marriage enrichment and three gospel meetings.

Herald of Truth workers Tim Archer, Rigoberto Vargas and Bruno Valle coordinated the campaign. Forty-three Churches of Christ in Nicaragua partnered in the work.

“Any time we touch thousands with the message of Christ, we feel we have been successful,” Archer said. “For this campaign, that feeling is accentuated by eight baptisms and the initiation of more than 30 personal studies being conducted by our brethren in Managua.”

Juan Monroy, another worker with Herald of Truth, plans to travel to Nicaragua for a follow-up campaign.



ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

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College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Charles Mattis, Dean

ACU Box 29210, Abilene, Texas 79699-9210

Engineering

ACU seeks an experienced engineer to develop an engineering program. This new position will work closely with the ACU Department of 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.

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 also 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. 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.

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.

NEWSMAKERS

NAMED: Trent Williamson, president of Harding Academy of Memphis in Tennessee.

The Christian school serves more than 1,200 students on three campuses. **John Folks**, superintendent of the year by the Texas Association of School Boards. Folks, a member of the MacArthur Park church in San Antonio, is superintendent of the Northside Independent School District in San Antonio. **David Scobey**, chair of the board of trustees, and **Scott Sager**, vice president of church services, for Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tenn.



Williamson



Folks

AWARDED: Timothy Pownall, the Peacemaker

Award from the Association for Conflict Resolution. Pownall is director of the PACIS Project in Faith Based Diplomacy and adjunct professor at the Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution at the Pepperdine University School of Law, Malibu, Calif.

ANNIVERSARIES: 74th: Walter and Ruth Bryan, Edmond, Okla. **70th:** Jim and Elva Musslewhite, Chambersburg, Penn. John and Mary Catalina, La Feria, Texas. **Elton and Eleanor Dilbeck**, Rowell, N.M. **60th:** Ted and Jennell Howard, Murray, Ky. **55th:** Roger and Shirley Hart, Emory, Texas.

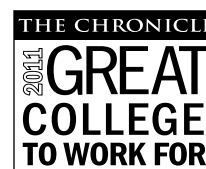
BIRTHDAYS: 100th: Nina Madge Sims, San Antonio. **90th:** Lois Demuth, Yukon, Okla.



Sims

PASSAGES: Condy Garland Billingsley, 87, Sept. 16,

minister for more than 50 years in New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. **Joseph Marlin Ivey**, 75, Oct. 21, elder of the South Huntington church in Kosciusko, Miss., for 36 years, and elder of Lake Harbour church in Ridgeland, Miss., former board chair of Sunnysbrook Children's Home in Ridgeland, and past board member of *The Christian Chronicle*. **Jane Lavender O'Neal**, 63, Nov. 9, member of the Pickerington Church of Christ in Ohio, longtime worker with churches in northern Italy. **Iris Reese**, 89, Oct. 29, longtime member of the University Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, and assistant director of the office of student financial aid at Abilene Christian University.





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Oklahoma Christian University is a higher learning community which transforms lives for Christian faith, scholarship, and service. The University is currently accepting applications for the following staff positions:

Business Office: Assistant Controller. This position reports to the Controller, and is responsible for assisting in all facets of accounting and financial reporting and oversight of business operations. A Bachelor's Degree in Accounting is required, and CPA status is preferred.

Physical Plant Services: Director. This position reports to the VP for Finance, and is responsible for oversight and management of the campus and facilities of the University. 10 years experience in facilities management or related fields and a Bachelor's degree are required.

Director of Transportation Services. This position reports to the Director of Physical Plant Services, and is responsible for oversight of the vehicle fleet for the university. Specific responsibilities include scheduling of buses for academic, athletic, and other campus uses, maintenance and upkeep of vehicles, and management of drivers and risk control policies. Experience in fleet or transportation management and mechanical knowledge or skills are required. Bachelor's Degree is preferred.

Resumes should be forwarded to the attention of Lynn Hooper, Director of Human Resources, Oklahoma Christian University. Lynn.Hooper@oc.edu.



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Dec. 3 Annual Dinner and Auction. Ohio Valley University, Vienna, W.Va. Contact (304) 865-6112 or ginny.moss@ovu.edu.

Dec. 3 Journey to Bethlehem. Michigan Christian Youth Camp. Contact (810) 664-8040 or mcy@mcyc.org

Dec. 4 35th Annual Cocoa and Carols. Oklahoma Christian University, Oklahoma City. Contact (405) 425-5530 or www.oc.edu.

Dec. 5 A Celebration of Christmas. Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tenn. Contact (615) 966-5932 or www.lipscomb.edu.

Dec. 10 50th Anniversary Dinner. Mobile Christian School. Contact (251) 661-1613 or www.mobilechristian.org.

Jan. 18-21 Sunset International Bible Institute Vision Workshop. Lubbock, Texas. Contact www.sibi.cc/workshop.

Feb. 3-4 Women of Hope Conference. Embassy Suites Hotel, Murfreesboro, Tenn. Contact www.hhi.org/womensConference.

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. 17-18 The NewLifeBehavior Network of Alabama Jail/Prison Workshop. Rainbow church, Gadsden, Ala. Contact (256) 547-3731, raycox1927@comcast.net or www.alabamaprisministryworkshop.org.

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

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

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 28-29 50th Anniversary of the Garden Ridge church. Lewisville, Texas. Contact pjnichols77@verizon.net.

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EDITORIAL

2011: Numbers that inspired us

Fellow Christians, you inspire us. As 2011 gives way to 2012, let us count the ways. These are a just a few of our favorite “numbers” from this past year:

- **9:** Age of Davis Burton, member of the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ in Little Rock, Ark., as he delivered an incredible sermon on the blessings of daily Bible reading.
- **17:** Hours driven by 31 teens and 10 chaperones from seven New England congregations to the Winterfest youth rally in Gatlinburg, Tenn.
- **20:** Age of Kayla Bilby, inner-city missionary who serves the poor and down-trodden through the Contact Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla.
- **25:** Consecutive years of record enrollment by Harding University in Searcy, Ark.
- **27:** Children for whom minister Dieugrand Jean cares in an earthquake-ravaged shanty town in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.
- **30:** Jersey number of Boston Bruins goalie Tim Thomas, member of the Burlington Church of Christ, named most valuable player as his team won its first Stanley Cup since 1972.
- **32:** Single-family houses

built by the Northeast Church of Christ in Oklahoma City as it aims to provide salt, light — and affordable living — in its urban community.

- **50:** Years that Eastern European Mission has produced Bibles and Christian literature for the Soviet, and post-Soviet, world — and the number of years that have passed since a pioneering mission team arrived in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

- **61:** Age of Alan Moore, Vietnam veteran and kicker at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., the oldest player in college football history.
- **108:** Age of Lula Wallace when she accepted Jesus Christ as her savior and was baptized at the Norris Road Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn.

- **193:** Countries in the world since South Sudan became the newest nation, allowing thousands of Sudanese baptized in refugee camps to return home and plant churches.

- **258:** Room number for Steve Hawley, Bible teacher

at Westbury Christian School in Houston, whose passion for teaching God’s word earned him the National Christian School Association’s Teacher of the Year Award.

- **275:** Combined years of preaching in the Los Angeles area by six ministers: Billy Curl, O.J. Dyson, Carl C. Baccus, Calvin Bowers, Ellis Lewis Sr. and Burl Lundy.

- **15,000:** Doors knocked by “foot soldiers” during the Crusade for Christ evangelistic campaign in the Washington, D.C., area.

- **30,000:** Baptism requests each year by World Bible School students.

- **250,000:** Monthly readers of

The Christian Chronicle.

We deeply appreciate everyone who reads the *Chronicle*, particularly the many donors who provide generous financial support that allows us to bring you the news in print each month and online as it occurs at www.christianchronicle.org.

May God continue to bless you and yours in the new year.

‘We deeply appreciate everyone who reads the *Chronicle*, particularly the many donors who provide generous financial support.’

Ever-Laughing Life

by Jonny Hawkins



Genuine Leather

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“I will survive. We will not let that gunman take our hopes.”

MAVY STODDARD, widow of Dorwan Stoddard. The 76-year-old member of the Mountain Avenue Church of Christ in Tucson, Ariz., was killed in an assassination attempt on Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords.



MARCH: Remembering shooting victim Dorwan Stoddard. **AUGUST:** Celebrating independence in South Sudan. **SEPTEMBER:** Serving tsunami victims in Japan. **DECEMBER:** Praying for unity in Helena, Mont.

Remembering 2011: The year in quotes

Tragedy — on scales massive and personal — touched Churches of Christ in 2011. An earthquake claimed thousands of lives in Japan, tornadoes devastated congregations in Alabama and Missouri, and shootings robbed churches in Arizona and Mississippi of beloved members. In their own words, Christians describe the heartbreak, hope and even humor that characterized their lives in the past 12 months.

“Dory Stoddard didn’t die a hero, he lived a hero.”
MIKE NOWAK, pulpit minister for the Mountain Avenue church, on his friend’s dedication to his family and community.

“His final act of selflessness was to dive on top of his wife, sacrificing his life for her.”
PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, speaking about Dorwan Stoddard at a memorial service for the Tucson shooting victims.

“I get questions like, ‘Do y’all accept chips in your basket?’”
LEO G. GAY, minister for the North Las Vegas Church of Christ, on fellow Christians’ reactions when they learn he’s from Sin City.

“You’re going to see people that, a generation from now, are Christians because of what’s happening now. And God can count that – we can’t.”
LARRY MUSICK, former president of Global Samaritan Resources, on Christians’ earthquake relief efforts in Japan.

“I try to believe in God still. When I doubt God, I pray to him, ‘God, why did you do this?’”
YUKO KAWAMURA, member of the Sendai Church of Christ in Japan, three months after a 9.0-magnitude earthquake claimed the lives of her best friend and her friend’s two children.

“God didn’t do this. This was just evil.”
LES FERGUSON JR., minister for the Orange Grove Church of Christ in Gulfport, Miss., after the slayings of his wife, Karen, and son Cole.

“The students that I have now are so digitally connected that to sit and have a face-to-face with them is like sitting on nails. They would much rather talk to me through a screen.”
JON JUSTICE, youth minister for the Warrenton Church of Christ in Virginia, on technology’s impact on the church.

“Sometimes, my mom’s mind is not very clear. But that morning, it was very clear. She knew what she wanted to do.”
MARGARET COOKE, member of the Norris Road Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn., on her mother Lula Wallace’s decision to be baptized at age 108.

“We are the rod and staff that God uses to help these families through this very brief — but very intense — time. We hope that, by being there with them, they are made aware of God’s presence, that God is very real and cares about them.”
LT. COL. DENNIS SAUCIER, member of the Dover Church of Christ in Delaware and senior staff chaplain of the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operation at Dover Air Force Base.

“I know that, yeah, there’s a possibility that anybody that deploys may not come home. I don’t want to have to deal with that. But I have a faith, and I have a (church) family, that can help keep me secure and keep me positive.”
WHITNEY COLES, member of the Roosevelt Drive church on the deployment of her husband, Marine Staff Sgt. Ahmal Coles, to Afghanistan.

“It’s a lot of pizza and Scripture.”
KIMBER KELLEY, Bible Bowl coach and member of the Walled Lake Church of Christ in Michigan, on her work with a junior team called the Walled Lake Miracles.

then I wouldn’t be here.”
MARINE STAFF SGT. TIM HARRISON, member of the Roosevelt Drive Church of Christ in Jacksonville, N.C., as he prepared to serve his third tour in Afghanistan.

“There was a point when I said, ‘God, I don’t get it.’ To see people suffer like this, you suffer in your soul.”
DEBBIE VANDERBEEK, of Mission Lazarus, on working in Haiti one year after the January 2010 earthquake.



Kawamura



Harrison



Vanderbeek

“It’s unfortunate that sometimes it takes a catastrophic event for people to talk about God and Christ. But I’m glad that people are now thinking about Jesus.”
DOUG DOUTHITT, elder of the 26th and Connecticut Church of Christ in Joplin, Mo., on the tornado that claimed the lives of two church members.

“I don’t want to hit anyone over the head with the Bible. I think they have to reach the point where they want to start asking questions.”
JEFF OLIVERSON, former Mormon and elder of the Southside Church of Christ in Salt Lake City, on ministering in a state dominated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

“You do understand that I didn’t write this book?”
RUBEL SHELLY, president of Rochester College in Michigan, to a student who asked Shelly to sign a paperback Bible used in a course called “Introduction to the Christian Faith.”

“Yes, sir. But this is the first Bible I’ve ever owned, and you’ve taught me how to read it.”
The student, in reply to Shelly.

“Malawi is the Israel of Africa.”
PRIESTLY NKHONJERA, a longtime minister in Malawi, a country with more than 4,000 Churches of Christ.

“When we try to make the church anything instead of letting the Malawians make a Malawian church, we’re going to have problems. Besides, it’s Jesus’ church. And Jesus was not an American.”
RANDY JUDD, second-generation missionary in Malawi.

“There was a point when I said, ‘God, I don’t get it.’ To see people suffer like this, you suffer in your soul.”
DEBBIE VANDERBEEK, of Mission Lazarus, on working in Haiti one year after the January 2010 earthquake.

“It is a unique opportunity for the church to come to the capital of the United States, within miles of the White House, to tell people in and around the White House about the right house, and that is the church of Jesus Christ.”
JACK EVANS, president of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, on conducting the Crusade for Christ in Washington, D.C.

“I get these older women — 70 and 80 years old — and they’re telling me that they’re watching me ride a motorcycle. It’s kind of funny.”
TREY CANARD, professional motocross champion and member of the Central Church of Christ in Shawnee, Okla., on being a role model for young — and old — fellow Christians.

“I believed that the KJV came directly from the mouth of God, and as a child, I thought that King James was a biblical character.”
LOVENTRICE FARROW, member of the Naperville Church of Christ in Illinois, on growing up in congregations that relied exclusively on the King James Bible, which marked its 400th anniversary in 2011.

“I’m so thankful for this new excuse. Of course I’m overweight. I go to church!”
JULIE TRUEX, member of the Saturn Road Church of Christ in Garland, Texas, on a Northwestern University study suggesting that regular church attendance might contribute to obesity.

“It’s a good way to get to know God better.”
DAVIS BURTON, 9, member of the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ in Little Rock, Ark., on reading the entire Bible in a single calendar year.

“In one attack, I lost almost all the members of my church. Sometimes I think it wasn’t because I was a better soldier. I think God saved me for a reason. ... Today, if you go to any office of the government, you will find the cross there.”
ZECHARIAH MANYOK BIAR, a former member of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army, who now serves in the government of South Sudan.

“I’m praying for this new church, and I’m praying that there will be no more fighting.”
BETTY ALENG, a recently baptized member of the Church of Christ in Parajok, South Sudan.

“The greatest preachers have always had two jobs. Even Jesus was a carpenter.”
FRANCO VERARDI, a minister in Italy who paints houses to support his work.



FRANK HOPPEN

Motocross champion and church member Trey Canard trains on a dirt track.

“The old saying is, ‘A tornado sounds like a freight train.’ Well, it almost sounded like 10 freight trains.”
ANDREW BROADFOOT, campus ministry student, on huddling in a small cinderblock closet at the Central Church of Christ in Tuscaloosa, Ala., during a monster twister.

“What remains? Faith. Hope. And love. Those are the only three things we had beforehand anyway. The things that matter have not changed.”
LEE JAMIESON, minister for the Alabama church, after the tornado obliterated the building and caused massive damage throughout Tuscaloosa.

LETTERS

Montana church merger inspires

Praise the Lord that these congregations were able to overcome differences. (See “In Big Sky Country, three congregations merge,” Page 1, December.) What a wonderful testimony to the community. It gives me hope that we too can renew fellowship with others in our community. God calls us to unite and to forgive those who have hurt us. We need to follow Christ’s example. Then God will bless his church with growth.
Dawn Mathias, | Fort Wayne, Ind.

It would be good to write about these churches years after the fact. I tend to agree with Flavil Yeakley’s statement that in many cases, declining churches merge only to drop back down to the size of the larger congregation within five years. We can’t say they were operating in sin as three functioning Churches of Christ. There were good reasons for their doing what they did at the time, and I’m sure much good was done by all three over the years.
John Paul Hundley | Brussels, Belgium

Filipinos’ service lauded

I have served with these two special sisters on a medical mission in the Philippines, and I assure you this is their life. (See “Christians from Philippines show love to their sisters in Hong Kong,” Page 12, November.) These two ladies and many more faithful Filipino Christians tirelessly serve their fellow Filipinos on medical missions all over their native country. Many have obeyed the Gospel at least in part because of the faithfulness of Gigie and Evelyn.
Wade Phillips | Elkmont, Ala.

Praise from Scandinavia

I just wanted to take a few minutes to say a very big thank you to all of you at *The Christian Chronicle*. Your service makes being on the field and all alone so much easier. Also, thank you to all those that donate and advertise so all of us can enjoy.
Janice Larson | Vemdalen, Sweden

'Tis the season for giving and saving, say authors

BY KIMBERLY MAUCK | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

There's a reason the colors of the season are red and green: Red is the color you see when you realize how much green you're spending.

Two new books encourage Christians to use their money wisely so they have plenty to give to others, not just in the month of December, but year-round.

Bestselling author Randy Alcorn has trimmed his classic financial guide "Money, Possessions, and Eternity," some heavy reading at 520 pages, to the more budget- and pocket-friendly "Managing God's Money: A Biblical Guide."

This book is a challenging and beneficial read for anyone in the church who would like a Scripture-based, eternity-focused guide to personal finance.

For a more specific guide on getting out of debt or day-to-day money management, though, a Dave Ramsey or Larry Burkett book would be more helpful.

Alcorn's book is written in his characteristically easy-to-follow preacher prose, with plenty of quotes from church leaders, illustrations and exclamations. He also references or quotes Scriptures in almost every paragraph.

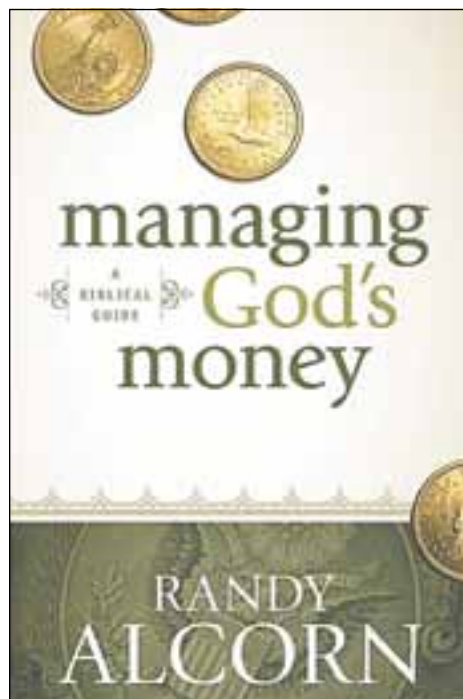
However easy to read Alcorn's book is, applying the concepts in it will prove to be a challenge for many. As he notes, the Bible's money management principles are radically countercultural.

A powerful example of this is the parable of the rich fool, who Jesus condemns for building additional barns to house his hoarded wealth.

Today, Alcorn points out, this would be called wise financial planning.

The primary message of Alcorn's book is that God does not own 10 percent of Christians' money, or whatever they choose to give to his church on Sundays. He owns it all, and Christians are simply stewards.

Alcorn believes Christians' management of God's money is crucial to



★★★★★

Randy Alcorn. **Managing God's Money: A Biblical Guide.** Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011. 272 pages. \$5.99.

bearing fruit and, ultimately, securing salvation. To prove this, he applies two Scriptures in ways that many Christians might not have before.

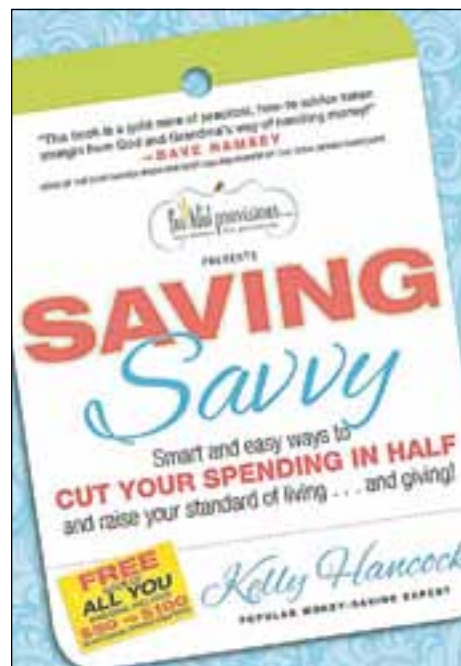
He interprets Jesus' instruction to store up treasure in heaven rather than on earth (Matthew 6:20) to mean that financial gifts on earth will become treasure in heaven.

As Alcorn puts it, "you can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead."

Another teaching Alcorn has that will challenge many is that of tithing — some will say that it's legalistic, but Alcorn says that despite this percentage not being

mentioned in the New Covenant, he doesn't believe God would expect any less of his children today than he did of the Israelites, especially when Western Christians today are among the wealthiest people in the world.

Alcorn also says that tithing is really



★★★★★

Kelly Hancock. **Saving Savvy: Smart and easy ways to cut your spending in half and raise your standard of living ... and giving!** Brentwood, Tenn.: Worthy Publishing, 2011. 240 pages. \$16.99.

only the first step of giving, calling it "the training wheels of giving," and goes on to talk about what he calls free-will or grace giving.

Giving also is the end goal of popular blogger and speaker Kelly Hancock's first book, "**Saving Savvy: Smart and easy ways to cut your spending in half and raise your standard of living ... and giving!**"

But, as the title shows, the book's main idea is practical tips on saving money, with giving being more of an afterthought.

The book begins with Hancock's own story of how she cut her grocery and dining-out budget from \$1,100 to \$200 per month when she quit her job to be a stay-at-home mother.

Her writing style is breezy and conversational, reading much like her presentations probably sound. Her upbeat tone makes spending less seem simple, not nearly as time-consuming

and tedious as the "extreme couponers" make it appear.

Particularly geared toward women, chapters are devoted to meal planning, freezer cooking, stocking up on groceries and toiletries when they're on sale and doubling savings by using coupons in conjunction with store sales.

Although Hancock recommends using the good old Sunday paper and other paper inserts to find the best coupons, she also appeals to the tech-savvy reader with QR codes throughout the book that link to her resource-rich blog, as well as listing coupon websites and services wherever applicable.

Each chapter concludes with two lists of steps to follow: one set if you have less time, and one set if you have more.

Spread throughout the book are quotes from women who have used Hancock's blog or heard her presentation and have slashed their grocery and toiletry budgets by half or more.

She also sprinkles Scriptures throughout, but doesn't examine them in the text or base her instructions on the Bible's teachings on stewardship, discipline and patience.

The penultimate chapter is a mix of suggestions of things readers can do with the money they save from her saving strategies.

Hancock encourages readers to use their time, talents and money to give generously. For her, this means buying

extras of items she for which has coupons and giving them to charity.

It also means having homemade meals and desserts in the freezer so she can give them to people at her church who are sick, grieving or adjusting to life with a new baby.

Giving from a cheerful heart is easy to do this time of year, when the recipient is a loved one. These writers both have valuable advice for how

to view money as precious, both for providing for family and for giving to those in need.

KIMBERLY MAUCK is Reviews Editor for *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact kim.mauck@christianchronicle.org.

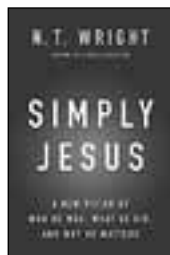
'A powerful example ... is the parable of the rich fool, who Jesus condemns for building additional barns to house his hoarded wealth. Today Alcorn points out, this would be called wise financial planing.'

'Hancock encourages readers to use their time, talents and money to give. ... For her, this means buying extras of items for which she has coupons and giving them to charity.'

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

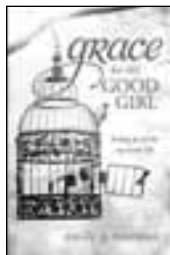
N.T. Wright. **Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters.** New York City: HarperOne. 256 pages, \$24.99.



When today's leading New Testament theologian has something new to say about anything, readers pay attention. In his latest work, he again exhibits his gift for making in-depth scholarship vivid and accessible.

FOR WOMEN

Emily P. Freeman. **Grace for the Good Girl: Letting Go of the Try-Hard Life.** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Revell Books. 272 pages, \$13.99.



Many women slip into a "Superwoman" mentality, believing it's their job to have everything under control at all times. Freeman reminds the woman who wears a "mask of perfection" to let it go and instead rely on Jesus. Includes a small-group study guide.

FOR TEENS

Alex and Brett Harris. **Start Here: Doing Hard Things Right Where You Are.** Colorado Springs, Colo.: Multnomah Books. 176 pages, \$12.99.



In the follow-up to 2008 bestseller "Do Hard Things," the twin brothers give a practical guide to fulfilling the apostle Paul's admonition to young Timothy to be an exemplary Christian, despite the low expectations with which teens are often burdened.

Kristen Jane Anderson, as told to Tricia Goyer. **Life, in Spite of Me: Extraordinary Hope After a Fatal Choice.** Colorado Springs, Colo.: Multnomah Books. 224 pages, \$13.99.



This memoir charts a teen's journey from a suicide attempt that

left her a paraplegic to nationally known Christian speaker on depression and suicide prevention. Its gruesome beginning progresses to a message of hope. This inspiring read is not just for depressed teens, but also for those with friends who struggle with suicidal thoughts.

FOR 'TWEENS

ESV **Grow! Bible.** Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books. 1,600 pages: \$21.00.



This study Bible is designed for kids ages 8 to 12, with the entire Bible in a reliable translation, with information graphics like Cross Connections, which show kids how the entire Bible relates to Christ; age-appropriate applications for passages of Scripture, called 4U; and colorful maps and other helpful articles.

FOR CHILDREN

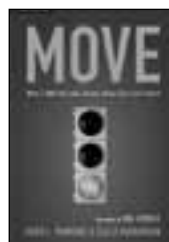
Polar Pals (Made By God/I Can Read). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. \$2.99 each, 32 pages.



Perfect for church bags, this slim paperback is one of a new series that tells about the coolest animals on earth in simple sentences, bright photographs and an important message about their Maker. Other titles include "Sea Creatures," "Jungle Beasts" and "Big Bug, Little Bug."

FOR CHURCH LEADERS

Greg L. Hawkins, Cally Parkinson. **Move: What 1,000 churches reveal about spiritual growth.** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Books. 288 pages, \$21.99.



Based on surveys administered to a quarter-million churchgoers, this book begins with the paradigm-shifting results of the authors' research: Church attendance — and even participation — does not mean a closer relationship with Jesus. The authors, leaders of a Chicago megachurch, explore how churches can foster real spiritual growth.

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Praise God for a lifetime of blessings

From Thanksgiving until early January, America enjoys a great time of family celebration and connection. These wondrous times should be marked by personal thanksgiving for all that life brings. God's care and guidance make all of our lives possible, and these are days to enjoy the relationships and thank God for all his blessings.

When I start considering what I am most thankful for, I have to begin with family. Joyce and I have had 55 years of growing closer and experiencing the very best of life. Her parents and mine accepted us and our relationship with support and love.

Some of the most memorable times in our lives were those years when our children, Melissa, Lynette, and Michael, were growing up. All too soon all three were grown, blessed with a Christian education and ready to start their own families. Phil Roe, Pat Brown and Karen Cloud came into our family and helped us learn to open our hearts and lives to new views and traditions. From 1984 to 2003 Jennifer, Luke and Savanna Roe, Kailey and Ashlyn Brown, and Brady, Connor and Garrett McBride enriched our lives and further extended our capacity to love and share. Since 2007 the oldest three have married — Jennifer to Joe Thurman, Luke to Rachel Varno, and Savanna to James Millikan. God has blessed us with an amazing family.

Through all the years of our marriage we have been supported by wonderful church families. We have been challenged to grow and lead. Since 1966 we have been part of great church — a place where children are valued and trained. For more than 40 years Joyce has taught the pre-kindergarten class on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening.

Almost from our first day with this church I have had a chance to teach and lead in different ways. We have been nourished with biblical sermons, and our shepherds know us and pray for us. Few blessings are greater than the spiritual nurture of a great church: a vital force in our lives and the lives of our children when they were growing up. The church has given us a foundation of faith and service.

I can only vaguely trace the powerful impact of my college students on my life. In 1958 I was invited back to Central Christian College (now Oklahoma

Christian University) to teach English. I have taught at three different institutions and always had students who challenged me to become more compassionate or a better communicator.

I have worked with people who later would be a colleague at OC. I have had a role in the lives of university presidents and administrators. I have known students who possessed spirituality far beyond their years, and they have gone on to reach multitudes with the Gospel.



Bailey McBride

I have had the opportunity to know great thinkers and leaders, and

I resist the idea of retiring because I can hardly imagine life without the inspiration of college students who will become church ministers, scholars, leaders in business and industry, medical professionals, social workers, engineers, military leaders and educators.

The energy and vision of each new generation gives me optimism about the future of the church and the nation.

God has been in my life since my early childhood. My mother read the entire Bible to me before I started school. She taught me about Jesus throughout my childhood, encouraging me to read the Bible every day.

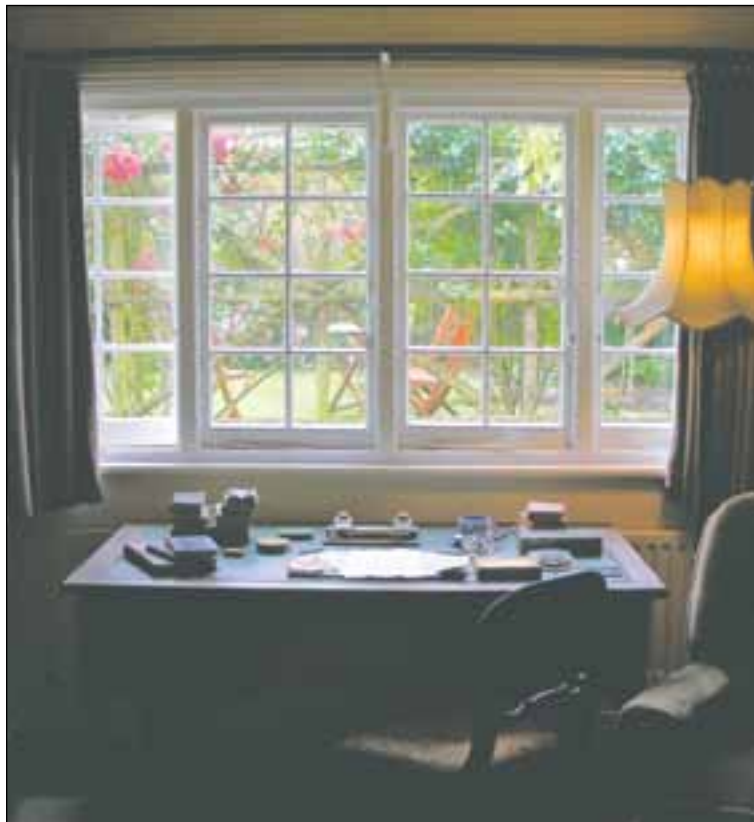
My aunt Faye taught me how to study the Bible seriously when I was 13, and I have sensed the Holy Spirit working on my heart and helping change me into a person somewhat more like Jesus.

My life has been blessed by people with deep spiritual insight and understanding. Many of the people I work with at OC have sacrificed to be at a place where they can influence the lives of young men and women. Most are serious students of the Word and seek to let their faith reflect in whatever secular subjects they teach.

Integrity is central to the lives of the people where I worship and where I work. Furthermore, my profession has allowed me opportunities to read the great spiritual thinkers of the world. Those thinkers along with the work of the Holy Spirit through the word have blessed me.

Thank God! Hallelujah!

CONTACT bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org.



Secularism—does it have the answers?

Most Christians would agree that the secular worldview doesn't have the answers so desperately needed in our world. Yet many believe that secular education is the best option to prepare our children for success in the real world. Really? How's that working for us? It's time to think again.

Christian colleges and universities have risen to the challenge of providing high quality education that is truly relevant in the world. With one huge addition—they also offer students an eternal worldview. Ask our graduates. They're God's leaders for the future. It's time to challenge conventional wisdom.

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A close-up, profile view of Dr. Alan Martin, a Black man with a beard and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a light blue collared shirt.

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

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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.

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