



Minister's wife, son shot to death in Mississippi

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

In the midst of unimaginable tragedy, Les Ferguson Jr.'s faith survives.

"God didn't do this," said Ferguson, preaching minister for the Orange Grove Church of Christ in Gulfport, Miss. "This was just evil."

Even as he clings to God, Ferguson can't help but weep as he mourns his

wife, Karen, and son Cole, 21, who were shot to death in the family's home Oct. 10.

"They were just beautiful people,"

Ferguson said. "My son struggled his whole

life with disabilities. He was frustrated and hurt a lot, but he was a good boy. He wanted to do right, and he loved God. He loved to sing, even if nobody else understood what he was saying."

Karen Brown Ferguson, 44, was "just the best mama and wife you could ever want," the minister added. "She sacrificed

See **TRAGEDY**, Page 14



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAMILY
Karen and Les Ferguson
were married 24 years.



BOBBY ROSS JR.

After fasting for 24 hours, church members gather on a hill in Helena, Mont., to pray over the state capital and ask for God's blessings.

In Big Sky country, three congregations merge

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

HELENA, Mont. — Welcome to the Gunslingers Church of Christ.

Not really.

But that characterization might not be too far off in describing the Lord's body in this Wild West state capital over the past 25 years.

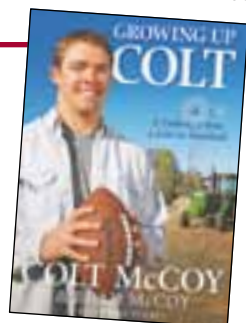
In a Big Sky community founded with the 1864 discovery of gold, personal disputes, doctrinal issues, allegiances to ministers and sins by leaders all have contributed to repeated church splits and hurt feelings.

"I think it's been like, this is kind of the Old West, and if we don't like something, we're going to draw our gun and

shoot," said Jerry Botts, who joined the ministry staff of the Rocky Mountain Church of Christ eight years ago. "And that's not the nature of Jesus."

On a recent Sunday, however, Helena's three remaining Churches of Christ came together under an open-air tent to make a fresh start — as a single, merged body.

See **MONTANA**, Page 12



Faith and football

NFL quarterback and his dad discuss 'Growing Up Colt.' **32**

Finding hope in a red door

Church's housing ministry gives salt and light to urban community. **3**



New births in Brazil

A tale of two church plants concludes series. **17, 30, 31**

INSIDE

CALENDAR.....	29
CURRENTS.....	17
INSIGHT.....	34
INTERNATIONAL	8
NATIONAL.....	5
OPINION.....	30
PARTNERS	27
PEOPLE.....	28
REVIEWS.....	32
VIEWS.....	31

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Blessings come in all shapes and sizes. And colors.

Red, for example.

"Since I was a little girl, I always wanted a house with a red door that would

welcome me with love and hope," said Senoil Holmes, a mother of four young children.

Now, she has it, thanks to the Northeast Church of

Inside Story



Bobby Ross Jr.

Christ and its determination to provide salt, light — and affordable housing — in its urban community.

About seven years ago, the church formed a non-profit called Central Urban Development Inc. to undertake development in blighted areas. The corporation recently celebrated the completion of a 32-unit housing development in the poorest quadrant of Oklahoma City.

Financed with a mix of government and private funds, grants and loans, the \$4.5 million development features brick, three- and four-bedroom homes with modern amenities.

Richard Lillard, chairman of the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency, praised church leaders for sticking with the project despite a housing market crash and other setbacks.

"This takes my breath away," Lillard said at the ribbon cutting for The

See **HOMES**, Page 4



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Sasha Prokopchuk baptizes Roman Onischenko during the annual Crimea conference in Ukraine.

Baptized in the Black Sea

TWENTY YEARS AFTER the fall of the Soviet Union, hundreds of Christians gather in a coastal Ukrainian city to sing praises to God, fellowship and welcome new believers.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ORDZHONIKIDZE, Ukraine

In waters once patrolled by Soviet submarines, Roman Onischenko gave his life to Jesus.

The 16-year-old was one of 11 people — male and female, young and old — baptized in the Black Sea on a Saturday afternoon.

The new births were part of a three-day conference that drew more than 300 Church of Christ members and spiritual seekers to the shores of Crimea, a beach-lined peninsula in this former communist nation. Church members stepped cautiously around sunbathers to watch their sons, granddaughters, aunts and friends become Christians. Dozens also lined

the boardwalk, clapping and cheering as minister Sasha Prokopchuk drew each new convert up from the chilly water.

For Onischenko, baptism in the Black Sea is a family tradition. His father, Valera, was searching for "a pure approach to the Bible" when he discovered the Crimea conference through a television program hosted by Prokopchuk. In 2006, the family attended and Valera Onischenko was baptized. "And, as it says in the Bible, 'his whole household believed,'" said Valera's wife, Irena, quoting John 4:53. She was baptized a

year later at the conference. The couple's daughter, Kristina, followed in 2008 and aunt Svetlana in 2009. This year, Roman

See **UKRAINE**, Page 22



One of 11 new Christians gets a hug on the shores of the Black Sea.

Mike Cope to direct Pepperdine Bible Lectures

MALIBU, Calif. — For 30 years, the name Jerry Rushford has been synonymous with the Pepperdine Bible Lectures in Malibu, Calif. — one of the largest annual gatherings among Churches of Christ.

After the 2012 event, though, a new leader will assume the director's duties. His name may be just as familiar, though, as he's delivered the keynote address at Pepperdine more than any other speaker: Mike Cope.

Pepperdine President Andy Benton also announced that Rick Gibson, associate vice president for public affairs and chief marketing officer, has been appointed vice president for public affairs and church relations effective Nov. 1.

"Jerry deserves our deepest gratitude and respect for his three decades of exemplary service," Benton said. "His enthusiasm, dedication and passion for excellence set high standards which called upon all of us to be our better selves. We look forward to his continuing at Pepperdine as director of our Churches of Christ Heritage Center." Cope, former longtime minister of the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, said he and his friends have asked for a few years, "Who would be crazy enough to follow Jerry?"

"Turns out I'm that guy," Cope said. "I certainly intend to learn as much as possible from him. I told Jerry I'd be the one breathing over his shoulder at the 2012 lectures."

Cope will not move to Malibu.

"Dr. Benton told me — perhaps knowing that my two granddaughters have just moved to Abilene — that it would work fine for me to remain where we are," he said. "I'll be traveling a great deal."



Cope



Rushford



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HOMES: 'Overwhelmed with the love and support'

FROM PAGE 3

Fair Grounds — so named because of the development's location west of the one-time state fairgrounds. "God bless you all."

Northeast minister Arnelious Crenshaw, the corporation's chairman, said church leaders hope to stimulate economic development in the community while enhancing the lives of people.

"It represents a hand-up as opposed to a hand-out," Crenshaw said. "It brings dignity and preserves the dignity of the individual. Those are the things that are important."

"And also, it's historic for the Northeast Church of Christ because it represents a dream. It represents our commitment, our mission statement, which is to positively impact the lives of people by being community-sensitive and by ministering to people holistically."

Really, what business does a church have building homes?

Northeast member James Williams, who serves as vice president for Central Urban Development, said the church endeavors to minister to the mind, body and soul.

"Our whole vision is lifted right out of the Scriptures," said Williams, a lifelong resident of Oklahoma City's northeast side who serves on the city's planning commission. "This provides homes. This provides shelter. It is good works."

"Through the good works," he added, "it provides opportunities for us to be able to minister to folks and also for us to have an evangelistic effort. So ... we are providing an entity that we believe can produce much fruit."

State Rep. Anastasia Pittman, D-Oklahoma City, a Northeast member,

joined the grand-opening celebration.

"It's harvest time!" Pittman proclaimed, urging her church family to press on.

"I don't need you to grow weary in well-doing, because it's harvest time," she added. "It's time for us to take our holistic ministry and our salt-and-light projects to the forefront of this community. We've stayed inside the church walls for so long."

Senoil Holmes' house is an answer to prayers for a family that has experienced hard times and heartache.

Frank Shay Holmes faced three years of unemployment after his layoff from

an automotive assembly line in Detroit. He found a manufacturing job in Oklahoma City and visited the Northeast church, where Williams told him about the housing development.

"The Lord had blessed Shay with a job, which, in turn, blessed him to be able to get approved for one of the houses for us," Senoil Holmes said. "So, when the children and I arrived, this was the first place he brought us — to show us the house that he had picked out

for us. But to my surprise, the neighborhood was beautiful, and also, I had a beautiful red door."

Her husband, 37, died unexpectedly in July.

"But he made sure I got my red door," said Senoil Holmes, who is studying nursing at Oklahoma Christian University. "This housing project not only gives my children a beautiful yard to play in but a place to grow and call home."

"So, we are so overwhelmed with the love and support we are receiving from so many."



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Senoil Holmes, center, celebrates the development's ribbon cutting.

CONTACT bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org.

CALIFORNIA

SIERRA MADRE — Girl Scouts Jennifer Rokus, 12, and Kendall Biard, 13, each received the Church of Christ Good Servant Religious Award.

Each girl spent more than 25 hours teaching children at the Sierra Madre Church of Christ. They created Bible lessons and an education and attendance program that encourages children to pay careful attention to Bible lessons and attend church as much as possible.

Jennifer and Kendall served others, both inside and outside the church, by visiting the elderly, cleaning the church's classroom building and organizing gifts and supplies for the children of missionaries in South Africa. In addition, Kendall volunteered as a youth counselor at the San Marino Twilight Girl Scout Camp while Jennifer wrote, organized and led devotionals in her home.

COLORADO

CASTLE ROCK — After studying "missional theology," the youth group at the Castle Rock Church of Christ decided to put the concept into practice.

During a prayer walk downtown, the teens decided to adopt a floral business to bless, minister Matthew Morine said. At the shop owner's request, they landscaped the front of her building.

"Over 20 teenagers worked in the hot sun to create a presence for Christ in someone's life," Morine said. "This has been a huge success, as the owner went from shock to disbelief to appreciation."

FLORIDA

CROSS CITY — With a Sunday attendance of only 23 or so on "a good week," the Cross City Church of Christ still manages to serve in a big way, member Donna Brooker said.

The church distributes food to the needy and helped 300 people during its most recent monthly giveaway, Brooker said.

"We are too small to offer a VBS, but the food pantry allows all of us to be involved, from sorting and handing out food to cleaning up after the event," she added.

NEW JERSEY

HOLMDEL — The newest church plant in New Jersey began in the center of a community still mourning the loss of many residents in the World Trade



JOHN MCADAMS

Games and toothy grins at Milwaukee carnival

A boy enjoys a neighborhood carnival presented by the Northtown Church of Christ in Milwaukee. The community outreach event featured face painting, games, a bounce house, dramatic presentations and other fun. Church members provided school supplies and gently used clothing for needy children, church member John McAdams said.

Center attack a decade ago.

The first service of the Gateway Church of Christ, about 20 miles south of 9/11's ground zero, drew 83 people. The congregation meets in township-owned facilities that it expects to rent at least through the end of the year.

"This new church planting is a dream come true for several of our members, who have anticipated this strategic church location (for many years)," lead evangelist Carl Williamson said.

TENNESSEE

MEMPHIS — On a recent weekday, 26 children gathered for a Bible study at the Autumn Ridge Apartments.

Percell Duckett, an elder for the Ross Road Church of Christ, taught on the topic of "The Creation."

All the children received Bibles, compliments of the congregation.

The lesson and gifts were part of the community outreach efforts of Powerlines Community Network, led by Agape Child and Family Services, a nonprofit organization associated with Churches of Christ.

TEXAS

ALEDO — The Aledo Church of Christ is trying to do its part to knock out bullying.

The church hosted a recent seminar to provide parents with strategies for preparing their children to handle



PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAVID JORDAN

Children at the apartment complex in Memphis.**SPOTLIGHT****Serving at home**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — For the Pleasant Valley Church of Christ youth group, mission trips all over the U.S. are a summer tradition.

During a recent three-day break from school, however, the teens focused on ministry opportunities closer to home.

About 35 young people slept in the church's teen room, showered in the gymnasium and ate at the building, youth minister Casey Rine said.

The youth group helped at a food bank, painted a house for an organization that serves the homeless, visited the residents of an assisted-living center and worked with a medical supply project.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CASEY RINE

Kennedy Stecks and Savannah Stripling move food at the Arkansas Foodbank.

bullying situations.

"This is an issue which our children and grandchildren seem to be dealing with on a more destructive level than I can remember when I was in school," church elder James Norman said. "We wanted to do something as a church family to help our community family overcome this growing problem."

Kimberly Buch, wife of minister Ron Buch, organized the seminar.

PALESTINE — Court Drive Church of Christ members collected hundreds of teddy bears for wildfire victims of Bastrop, Texas.

"Bears for Bastrop" was inspired by a local program that supplies blankets and bears to children who have experienced traumatic events, church member Jessi Jones told the *Palestine Herald-Press*.



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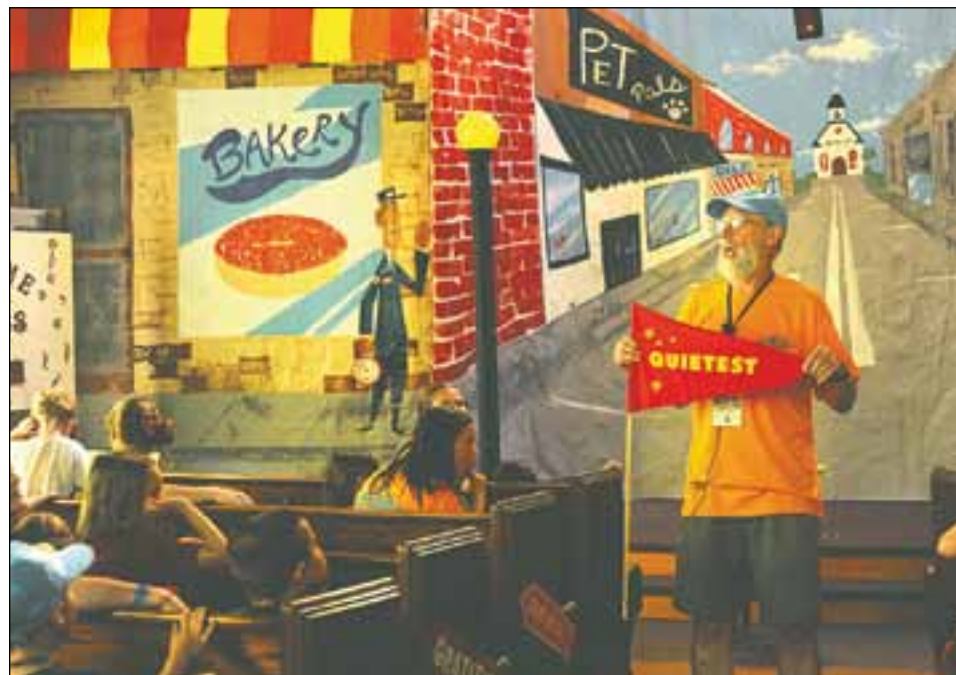
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JIM FROST

At VBS, a time to be silent and a time to speak

Jim Coehoorn, minister for the Elkhorn Church of Christ in Wisconsin, gives out a Vacation Bible School award for the "quietest" group while stressing that there is a time to shout and a time to listen. A youth group from the Riverchase Church of Christ in Birmingham, Ala., travels to the Wisconsin church each year to canvass the neighborhood and work with the VBS program.

His heart's desire: new church plant

WILLARD, Mo. — After a 16-month battle with brain cancer, Nick Brumfield gained his eternal reward Oct. 9.

But the 19-year-old son of Joe and Latina Brumfield lived long enough to see a dream come true.

"His greatest desire was to see the new church plant in Willard," said Joe Bright, minister for the Sunset Church of Christ in Springfield. The new Jackson Street Church of Christ, in this community northwest of Springfield, was launched a few weeks before Brumfield's death.

The Jackson Street congregation is

the third church plant initiated by the Sunset church. Joe Brumfield is the minister for the new congregation.

In 2000, about 75 Sunset members left to start the Union Hill Church of Christ in Nixa, Mo., which has grown to Sunday morning attendance of about 450. Nixa is south of Springfield.

In 2005, Sunset planted a second new congregation in Brookline, Mo., west of Springfield, by sending out 150 of its members. The Brookline Church of Christ averages Sunday attendance of about 300.

Disaster ministry helps wildfire victims

BASTROP, Texas — Disaster Assistance CoC, sponsored by the Lake Jackson Church of Christ in Texas, is helping victims of recent Texas wildfires.

Ministry coordinator Mike Baumgartner said 14 families from the Bastrop Christ of Christ lost their homes in the fires.

"We are in the process of clearing those lots plus others," Baumgartner said.

In addition, the ministry has provided food, water and other necessities to more than 1,400 families and served roughly 7,800 meals to victims and volunteers, Baumgartner said.

"This cleanup process is going to be a long, slow process," he said. "Most of the slabs have to be removed and new ones (placed) before rebuilding can start."

For more information, see www.disasterassistancecoc.com.

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- Greatest Commands
- Follow Me
- He Lifted Me
- Walking Alone At Eve
- You Are The Words And The Music
- Stand By Me
- I Go To The Rock
- Teach Me Lord To Wait
- People Need The Lord
- Does Jesus Care?
- Blessed Assurance
- Who At The Door Is Standing?
- Just As I Am
- Under The Water
- Shall We Gather At The River?
- Sweet Will Of God
- An Empty Mansion
- Nobody Fills My Heart Like Jesus
- Hold To God's Unchanging Hand
- There Is Strength In The Name Of The Lord
- Lord, I'm Coming Home
- I Can Hear My Savior Calling
- Hilltops Of Glory / Salvation Has Been Brought Down / I'd Like To Stay Here Longer
- Lord, Feed Your Children
- I'm Telling The World About His Love
- If I Stand
- Glory
- There's A Fountain Free
- The Potter's Hand

AND MORE SONGS!

2

"REQUESTED FAVORITES AND NEW SONGS"

- Under The Water
- I Awaited
- Let Us Break Bread Together
- Do You Know My Jesus?
- Learning To Lean
- Crying In The Chapel
- As The Deer
- My Faith Looks Up To Thee
- How Shall The Young Secure Their Hearts?
- Never Grow Old
- Every Time I Feel The Spirit
- Jesus Is Calling
- There's A Gold Mine In The Sky
- The Golden Rule
- Jesus Rose Of Sharon
- Rescue The Perishing
- Mansion, Robe And Crown
- The Steadfast Love Of The Lord
- Sing Hallelujah To The Lord
- Holy Father, Grant Us Peace
- Give Thanks
- I Am A Sheep
- I Am Thine, O Lord
- Heaven Is Going To Shine
- Will You Not Tell It Today?
- Let Him Have His Way With Thee
- Reach Out To Jesus
- There's Room At The Cross
- Are You Coming To Jesus Tonight?
- Shout To The Lord
- Light The Fire
- There's A Stirring

AND MORE SONGS!

3

"CLASSIC HYMNS AND NEW SONGS"

- We Have Come Into His House
- In Moments Like These
- The Way That He Loves
- Bless God
- Learning To Lean
- He Is Ever Over Me
- Thomas' Song
- Jesus Flow Like A River
- Go With God
- God Will Make A Way
- Hallelujah
- Heavenly Love
- Ivory Palaces
- O Sacred Head
- One Day
- How Beautiful
- Be With Me Lord
- Were You There?
- Beauty For Ashes
- Sweeter Than All
- Take Time To Be Holy
- Lord Be There When I Call
- Redeemed
- Boundless Love
- Praise God
- The Lord Reigns
- Highest Place
- The Majesty And Glory Of Your Name
- When The Night Is Falling
- Just A Closer Walk With Thee/ I Just Want To Be Where You Are
- I Can Only Imagine

AND MORE SONGS!

4

"THE BEST OF CONGREGATIONAL SINGING"

- Lord, We Come Before Thee Now
- Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
- I Am The Vine
- Ready To Suffer
- The Church's One Foundation
- Just As I Am
- God Is Calling The Prodigal
- I Love Thy Kingdom Lord
- Out Of My Bondage
- There's Not A Friend
- The Great Physician
- Break Thou The Bread Of Life
- Only A Step
- Who At The Door Is Standing?
- Almost Persuaded
- Give Me The Bible
- Alleluia
- I Know The Lord Will Make A Way
- Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah
- I Am Resolved
- Sweet Hour Of Prayer
- There Shall Be Showers Of Blessing
- I Gave My Life For Thee
- Wonderful Love Of Jesus
- More, More About Jesus
- What A Day That Will Be
- I Want To Be A Worker
- Work, For The Night Is Coming
- Careless Soul
- There's A Stranger At The Door
- Jesus Loves Me
- There's Within My Heart A Melody
- There Is A Habitation

AND MORE SONGS!

5

"THE BEST OF THE NEW SONGS"

- Come Into His Presence
- Worthy The Lamb That Was Slain
- Hear, O Israel
- We Shall Assemble
- My Eyes Are Dry
- We Bow Down
- Spirit Of The Living God
- In His Presence / Holy Ground / We Are Standing On Holy Ground
- Poured Out Like Wine
- Come Share The Lord
- Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus
- I Stand In Awe
- Thank You, Lord (Mabry)
- A Common Love
- Glorify Thy Name
- Faithful Love
- Gentle Shepherd
- There's Something About That Name
- As The Deer
- There's A Stirring
- O How He Loves You And Me
- The Greatest Commands
- You Are My All In All
- How Beautiful The Body Of Christ
- Sanctuary
- Awesome God
- The Battle Belongs To The Lord
- Shine, Jesus Shine
- Thou Art Worthy
- Above All Else
- He Is Exalted
- I Love You, Lord

AND MORE SONGS!

6

"JESUS IS LORD"

- I Can Only Imagine
- Jesus Is Lord
- Jesus, Name Above All Names
- Thomas' Song
- Jesus, Flow Like A River
- Heavenly Love
- Awesome Power
- Nobody Fills My Heart Like Jesus
- There Is Strength In The Name Of The Lord
- I'm Telling The World About His Love
- Reach Out To Jesus
- He Is Ever Over Me
- Jesus, Savior Pilot Me
- Instruments Of Your Peace
- We Are One In The Spirit
- There's A Stranger At The Door
- Go Light Your World
- No Not One
- The Steadfast Love Of The Lord
- Sing Hallelujah To The Lord
- Holy Father, Grant Us Peace
- Do You Know My Jesus?
- Tho' Your Sins Be As Scarlet
- There's A Stirring

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- He Leadeth Me
- Brightly Beams
- How Great Thou Art
- What A Friend We Have In Jesus
- Just As I Am
- Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory
- There Is A Balm
- I Come To The Garden
- Peace In The Valley
- Precious Memories
- Take My Hand Precious Lord

AND MORE SONGS!

8

"MOST POPULAR RELIGIOUS SONGS OF ALL TIME" VOLUME 2

- Turn Your Radio On
- He'll Understand And Say Well Done
- Farther Along
- I Am A Poor Wayfaring Stranger
- Softly And Tenderly
- I Need Thee Every Hour
- Nearer My God To Thee
- My Faith Looks Up To Thee
- There's Power In The Blood
- Abide With Me
- The Lord Bless You And Keep You

AND MORE SONGS!

9

"MOST POPULAR RELIGIOUS SONGS OF ALL TIME" VOLUME 3

- Thank God For The Lighthouse
- He's Got The Whole World In His Hands
- When The Saints Go Marching In
- 'Tis The Old Time Religion
- Onward Christian Soldiers
- God Be With You Till We Meet Again
- Eternal Father, Strong To Save
- O God, Our Help In Ages Past
- Sweet Hour Of Prayer
- Will The Circle Be Unbroken?

AND MORE SONGS!

10

"MOST POPULAR RELIGIOUS SONGS OF ALL TIME" VOLUME 4

- Jesus, Savior Pilot Me
- Have Thine Own Way, Lord
- In The Hour Of Trial
- Nearer Still Nearer
- This Is My Father's World
- Purer In Heart, O God
- More Love To Thee, O Christ
- Beyond The Sunset
- Hide Me, O My Savior
- To God Be The Glory
- Our God, He Is Alive
- Take Time To Be Holy

AND MORE SONGS!

11

"MOST POPULAR RELIGIOUS SONGS OF ALL TIME" VOLUME 5

- Climbing Up The Mountain Children
- Let My People Go
- You Raise Me Up
- I'd Rather Have Jesus
- I'm In The Glory Land Way
- Church In The Valley By The Wildwood
- Where Could I Go?
- On The Jericho Road
- There's Not A Friend Like The Lowly Jesus
- Alleluia
- Lord, I'm Coming Home
- My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less

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CANADA

BAIE-SAINT-PAUL — Bren and Cheryl White of Operation French World, a ministry of the Laurel Church of Christ in Maryland, traveled to this city on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec recently. The couple, joined by evangelist Jean Grenier, made 13 new contacts for Bible studies and follow-up work.

The ministry “needs French-speakers to go to this special place to help with the starting of a New Testament church,” Bren White said. For more information, see www.ofwmissions.com.

CROATIA

ZAGREB — Joy Crouch, a church member in Abilene, Texas, who travels the globe doing mission work, visited this Central European nation recently and took a shipment of blankets — handmade by Christian women — to a children’s hospital.



Crouch

“This hospital is in bad need of everything, including pajamas for children,” minister Mladen Jovanovic said.

“Most of them spend months in the hospital, and they and their parents are very appreciative for the help received in the name of Jesus.”

GAMBIA

SEREKUNDA — London Corner is somewhat removed from the United Kingdom. It’s in the tiny West African nation of Gambia, to be exact.

Despite living in a country that’s about 90 percent Muslim, the Church of Christ in London Corner — a neighborhood of Gambia’s biggest city, Serekunda — is growing and has about 70 members, missionary Isaac Daye said.

Recently, the congregation baptized a former Muslim named Rashid.

“Rashid said he has been reading his Bible for many years, seeking the truth,” Daye said, “and he is thankful at last to discover it and become a member of the Church of Christ.”

INDIA

CHENNAI — Graduates of a Bible college in this southeastern Indian metropolis are taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth, said administrator Paul Renganathan. The college has 74 students enrolled, and nearly all of the college’s graduates become ministers,



PHOTO PROVIDED

Ten nationalities retreat to ancient Corinth for fellowship and fun

Children frantically pass a soccer ball during an outdoor game at the annual family retreat for the Omonia Church of Christ in Athens, Greece. Members of the metropolitan church traveled to North Peloponnese, near the site of the ancient, biblical city of Corinth, for fellowship and fun. Participants represented 10 countries — Albania, Bulgaria, Ghana, Greece, Nigeria, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, Ukraine and the U.S., organizers said. Church members from Tennessee, Texas and California spoke during the event. To help the participants understand each other, organizers used a mobile translating set, purchased with funds donated by the Smyrna Church of Christ in Tennessee.

Renganathan said.

A past graduate, Satish Kumar, visited Chennai recently and updated his fellow Christians on his ministry in Coff’s Harbour, Australia, Renganathan said.

LITHUANIA

VILNIUS — The Church of Christ in this nation on the Baltic Sea hosted a strategic meeting of bishops recently.

Kings and queens were there too, as were knights, rooks and pawns.

Church members organized a chess tournament for members and visitors. Competitors matched wits for five hours, minister Ilja Amosov said.

“It was nice to see two people who do not attend the church but came to the tournament,” the minister said.

ROMANIA

PITESTI — Forty students completed the 11th annual Pitesti Bible Training School. The Midway Church of Christ in Jasper, Ala., launched the program 11

years ago to “build faith and knowledge” among young Christians in Romania, missionary Harvey Starling said.

“Students receive no personal support for attending the 60 classroom hours of Bible instruction during the two weeks,” Starling said, “but U.S. churches do provide funds for transportation, meals, study materials and lodging.”

Last year, Starling, who has served in Romania for two decades, turned over direction of the program to Romanian preacher John Fratostiteanu.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Students at the Pitesti Bible Training School.

SPOTLIGHT

Head of the class

HO, Ghana — Alexander Paa Kwesi Sam, a student at church-supported Sonrise Christian High School in this West African nation, received \$500 toward his university entrance fees.

Of his classmates, Sam scored highest on the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination, school administrators said. For the first time in school history, all of the school’s students who took the exam passed it.

Sam plans to study economics and mathematics at the University of Ghana, Legon. Church members Clarence and Valerie Richmond provided funds for the annual scholarship.



Sam

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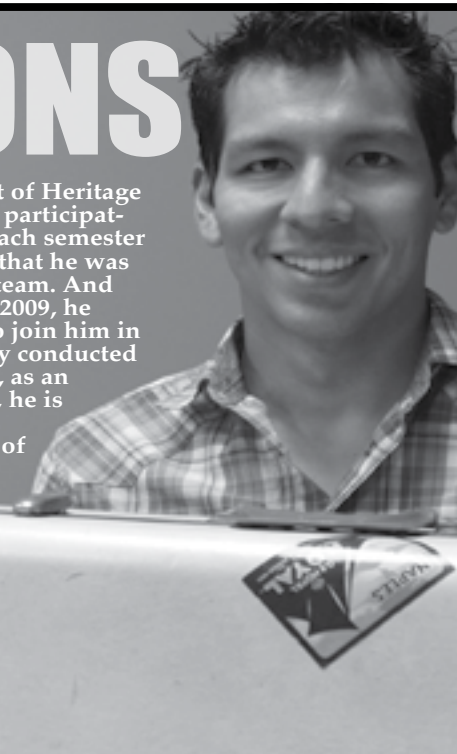
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Missionaries stranded, churches in need after floods in Central America

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

From Guatemala to Costa Rica, Churches of Christ are coping with the effects of record rainfall and flooding.

"Today the sun is shining for the first time in 10 days," Jarrod Brown wrote in a recent report to supporters of Mission Lazarus, his ministry in Honduras. "The waters that had forcefully invaded the homes of thousands in the Choluteca region like an unwanted intruder have slowly begun to return to the holds of the river banks that they escaped from."

Choluteca, in southern Honduras, was particularly hard-hit by the rainfall, which overwhelmed the banks of rivers and stranded missionary families in their homes. In the city of San

Marcos, "Mission Lazarus is opening up schools, churches and homes to house flood victims," said Meredith Jones, the ministry's director of health services.

The Christian Chronicle has received additional reports of severe flooding and church members in need in Guatemala and El Salvador.

In Honduras, "the response from across the U.S. has been wonderful," Brown said. "We have been able to buy thousands of pounds of food ... and our teams on the ground in Honduras have been working long hours to make sure that food gets into the hands of the folks who need it most."

SEE UPDATES and find links to contribute to flood relief at www.christianchronicle.org.

Nonprofit gives soap to South Sudan

MT. JULIET, Tenn. — For families living on the equivalent of \$1 per day in South Sudan and other African nations, soap is a luxury. But the cleansing agent many take for granted is "a first line of defense" against child mortality around the world, says Derreck Kayongo, founder of the Atlanta-based nonprofit Global Soap Project.

Kayongo announced recently that 10,000 bars of soap — created by recycling used, miniature bars of soap from hotels — will be sent to the new nation of South Sudan. Sudanese Christians working with The Sudan Project, a mission outreach of the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ, will distribute the soap shipped by Healing Hands International of Nashville, Tenn.

"It seems only logical that those who are trying to cleanse the souls of South Sudanese should also be distributing a product that will help cleanse their bodies of potential illness," said Don Humphrey, coordinator of The Sudan Project, which is building a ministry training school and medical clinic in the village of Parajok, South Sudan.

Kayongo, a native of Uganda, thought of the idea for Global Soap when he stayed at a hotel in Philadelphia. Kayongo told CNN that he noticed that his bathroom was replenished with new soap bars every day.

"I tried to return the new soap to



PHOTO PROVIDED

Derreck Kayongo, founder of the Global Soap Project, stands next to a South Sudanese flag during a visit to Tennessee.

the concierge since I thought they were charging me for it," Kayongo said. "When I was told it was just hotel policy to provide new soap every day, I couldn't believe it."

Kayongo called his father — a former soap maker in Uganda.

"My dad said people in America can afford to throw it away," Kayongo said. "But I just started to think, 'What if we took some of this soap and recycled it, made brand new soap from it and then sent it home to people who couldn't afford soap?'"

Kayongo has been doing just that since 2009. Now the mission-minded entrepreneur is a top 10 finalist for CNN's Heroes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, visit globalsoap.org and www.sudan-project.org.

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MONTANA: Three churches merge

FROM PAGE 1

At the construction site for what will become the newly named South Hills Church of Christ, about 170 men, women and children sat in folding chairs overlooking the cloud-covered Rocky Mountains.

Noisy tractor-trailer rigs buzzed along Interstate 15 as church members shared blue and maroon hymnals and gold and silver communion trays. The mix of colors reflected the coming together of the 125-member Rocky Mountain Church of Christ, the 50-member Helena Church of Christ and the 25-member Big Sky Church of Christ.

“You have to understand, up until about three years ago, these bodies didn’t even fellowship. I mean, there was no cohesiveness whatsoever,” said Randy Yaeger, a member of the former Big Sky church and one of the new congregation’s six elders. “And so, over the course of this last year especially, we could see God’s hand change people’s hearts, people’s attitudes toward this whole thing.”

SMALL GESTURE, BIG RESULT

The Sleeping Giant Church of Christ — referring to a mountain that can be seen across the interstate from the construction site — was 13-year-old Caleb Peterson’s suggestion for the new congregation’s name.

“I thought it was appropriate, but it didn’t make the cut,” joked Caleb’s father, Shaun Peterson, a Rocky Mountain church elder who will continue in that role with the new congregation.

Peterson credits God’s providence for the reconciliation efforts that led to the merger. It helps, too, that some people who might have opposed the idea are no longer around, he and others said.

“The hearts of the leadership of all three congregations are very humble and considerate of one another,”

Peterson said.

One small gesture that contributed to improved relationships came when Helena minister Tom Anderson developed an illness. Rocky Mountain minister Roy Ramsey, who moved to town in 2006 and was not a part of the history of splits, offered to preach for the Helena church for a few Sundays while Anderson recuperated, Peterson recalled.

As members grew closer, the two churches combined to offer a larger Vacation Bible School than either could organize on its own. At the same time,

teenagers from the two congregations started going on a joint mission trip to the City of Children orphanage in Ensenada, Mexico.

“That put a lot of the parents together,” said Carey Burnside, a member of the Rocky Mountain church for nine years.

The teens already knew each other from Bible camp and youth rallies, said Lisa White, a Helena church member.

“I think it was harder on them to understand why there were three of us,” said Diana Janicek, a Rocky Mountain member, referring to the separate congregations. “When you teach your kids love and respect, they all wanted this years ago.”

HEALING OLD WOUNDS

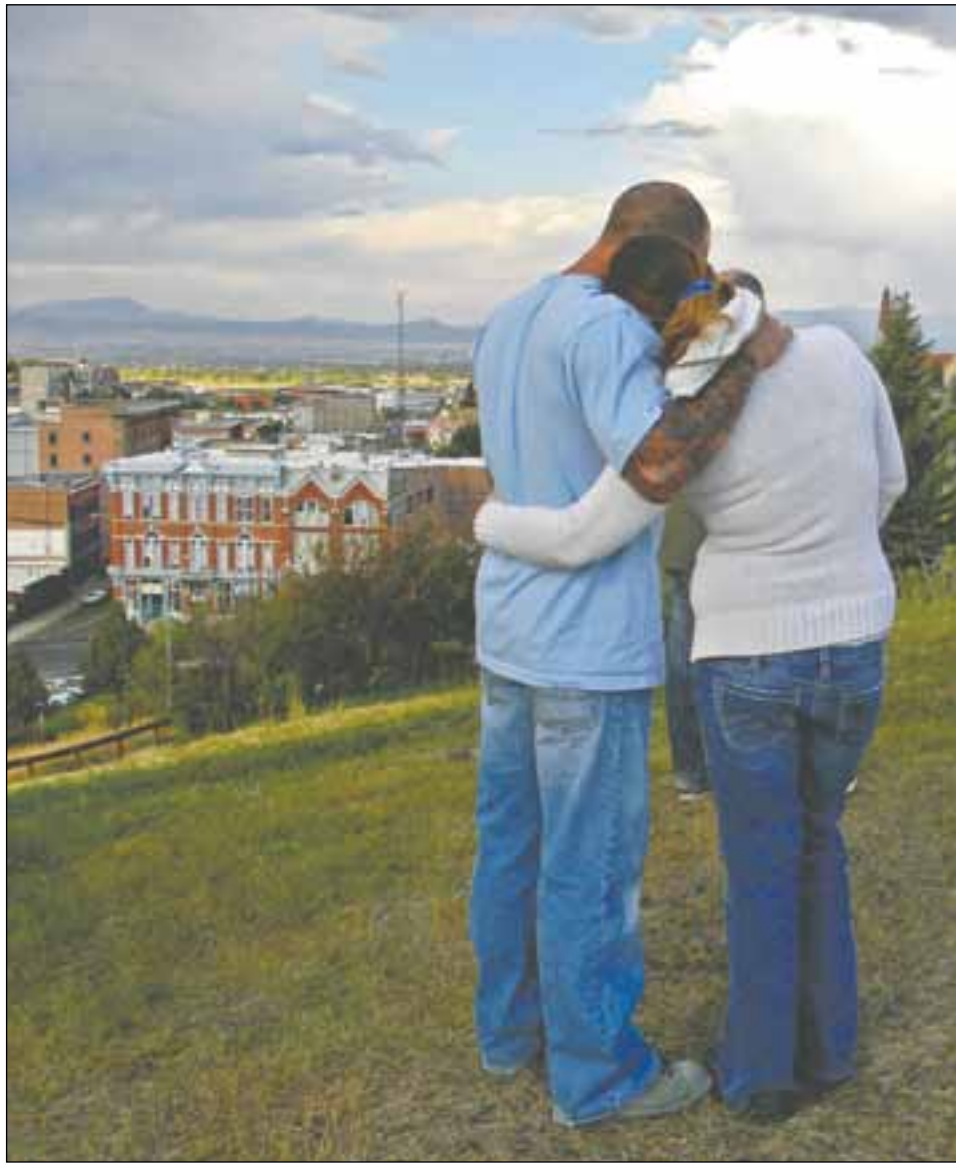
Early this year, Ramsey and Anderson got together for coffee and discussed bringing together the Rocky Mountain and Helena churches.

That talk led to meetings between both churches’ leaders and, ultimately, a decision to merge.

As the effort progressed, Ramsey called Brandon Moore, minister for the Big Sky church, and invited the third congregation to join

the discussions.

“Our church, in particular, had a lot of people that had been pretty beat up by churches in the past,” said Moore, who moved to Montana in 2010 after falling in love with the wide open spaces during



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

From a hill with a view of downtown Helena, Mont., Tracy Warren and Jamie Bogg pray after a day of fasting. The 24 hours of fasting were followed by a potluck feast and celebration.

an elk-hunting trip to Idaho. “And so, we tried to be a place of healing and really committed ourselves to that.”

Moore said he had built up enough trust that Big Sky members listened when he encouraged them to sit down with the other churches and at least talk.

Still, he said, “They were pretty hesitant, extremely hesitant at first ... And part of that was they wanted to make sure that it was a God thing ... and that the leadership was doing this with humility and not just for self-satisfaction.”

Mark Wilson, one of the Big Sky church’s founding members, said his family had been “really hurt by the Rocky Mountain group.”

Given that history, suspicion and tension characterized the first reconciliation meeting, Wilson said.

“But that went away,” he said. “Within a month, that initial suspicious hostility was gone. I think that what we saw is that everybody was sincere, and nobody was trying to bring all that past history forward.”

Nonetheless, the Big Sky church proceeded with caution.

Before committing to merge, the smallest of the three congregations asked to enlist expert assistance.

“So often, when churches merge ... most of the members think just in terms of getting together to worship and not in terms of being a body together,” said Evertt Huffard, vice president and dean of Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn.

Huffard and Scott Laird, minister for the Great Falls Church of Christ



Dave White prays before the offering during the Dedication Sunday events in Helena, Mont.

in Montana, encouraged leaders to examine four key areas of their congregational lives: spirituality, organization, relationships and ministry.

“You’ve got to have a mission that’s bigger than what you would be as three individual congregations,” Laird recalls telling the group.

In many cases, declining churches merge only to drop back down to the size of the larger congregation within five years, said Flavil Yeakley, retired

director of the Center for Church Growth at Harding University in Searcy, Ark.

“The problem is that a merger gives the illusion of growth without any real increase in the family of God,” Yeakley said. “If the motive is to increase the opportunity for evangelistic outreach, church mergers are a good idea. If the motive is just to have the appearance of growth without any evangelism, then merger is not a good idea.”

The process of deciding whether to merge is as important as the outcome, said Charles Siburt, associate dean for ministry programs and services at Abilene Christian University in Texas.

Issues such as who will serve as the ministers and elders and what property

and church name will be used must be negotiated, Siburt said.

“If they’re not negotiated in the process of making a decision about merging, then they’re very likely to become problems later on,” he said.

In Helena, starting with a fresh name in a new church building should help eliminate the chances of the largest congregation simply absorbing the smaller two, experts told *The Christian Chronicle*.

Two ministers from the Rocky Mountain church and one each from the Helena and Big Sky congregations will remain on the payroll for at least another year.

At least one man from each church will serve as a shepherd.

On the weekend of the Dedication Sunday, members fasted for 24 hours and then marched to the top of a hill near the city’s historic fire watch tower.

There, they prayed for the community and asked for God’s blessings on the merger.

“This is a risk, but we just feel like God has taken risks for us, and he expects us to the do the same,” Shaun Peterson said. “We can be better and more effective, and offer more to one another and more to our community, as one body.”



Members pray near the historic fire watch tower in Helena.



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Employment Opportunity

TRAGEDY: Minister's wife, son killed

FROM PAGE 1

her whole life for everybody around her. She did it again. I really believe she could have saved herself."

The suspect in the double-homicide — Paul Ellis Buckman — died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at his apartment about two miles away, Gulfport police Capt. Craig Petersen said.

Buckman, 70, had attended the Orange Grove church until he was charged in July with sexually assaulting Cole Ferguson, who had cerebral palsy, friends and authorities said.

The youngest of the Fergusons' four sons — 5-year-old Casey — ran to a neighbor's house and survived the attack, witnesses said.

Ferguson was attending a preachers' meeting at the Rodenburg Avenue Church of Christ in nearby Biloxi that afternoon. The minister said his wife fought the killer.

"She fought him so hard, you just wouldn't believe," Ferguson said. "She saved one. She got Casey out of the house. She fought hard for Cole."

Son Conner, 14, had spent the night with friends from church. Not long before the shootings, Conner

stopped by the house and got money from his mother to play miniature golf, Ferguson said. Oldest son Kyle serves as campus minister for the University Church of Christ in Murray, Ky.

From near and far, the tragedy drew an outpouring of sympathy and prayers from members of Churches of Christ.

"Huge numbers of people have been touched," said Milton Sewell, chancellor of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., and a next-door neighbor of Bob and Joan Brown, Karen Ferguson's parents.

Many in Churches of Christ know Les Ferguson Jr. through his work with church volunteers from across the nation after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

His father, Les Ferguson Sr., is a former president of the now-defunct Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko, Miss.

Les Jr.'s brother, Billy Ferguson, minister for the Seventh Street Church of

Christ in Columbus, Miss., delivered the eulogy at Karen and Cole's funeral Oct. 14. An estimated 700 mourners packed the Orange Grove church building.

Close family friend John Dobbs praised the "outstanding response to this horrific tragedy" by the Orange Grove church.

"The family was never alone, never had a need, never was without someone ready to do whatever could be done," said Dobbs, minister for the Forsythe Church of Christ in Monroe, La. "And yet they did not smother the family — they were simply available."

In Tennessee, countless people from the Browns' congregation, the Henderson Church of Christ, comforted the Browns at their home, sent cards, called and otherwise tried to ease their suffering, Sewell said. Bob Brown is a retired Freed-Hardeman physical science professor.

Dan Winkler, minister for the Huntingdon Church of Christ in Tennessee, whose son, Matthew, was shot to death in 2006, was among those who visited and encouraged the Browns. However, Sewell said, "You can't be around them very long before they're encouraging you."

They're just that strong in their faith."

The day of the slayings marked Les and Karen Ferguson's 24th wedding anniversary. That morning, Karen Ferguson posted a Facebook message wishing her husband — "the love of my life" — a happy anniversary.

"You are a great husband and a great father to our four boys! I love you ALWAYS!!!!" she wrote.

Before his world turned upside down, Ferguson posted a message of his own: "Happy 24th Anniversary to my beautiful wife Karen Brown Ferguson! Heaven couldn't be any sweeter! I love you!"

Now, heaven can't come soon enough.

"I'm ready to get home," Ferguson said. "It's still a nightmare. I'm still trying to wake up."

AN ACCOUNT TO BENEFIT the Ferguson family has been set up at Hancock Bank branches. For more information, see www.ogcofc.org.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAMILY

Les and Karen Ferguson, with Conner, Casey and Cole. Not pictured is the Fergusons' oldest son, Kyle.



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In Brazil, a tale of two church plants

NATIVE CHRISTIANS AND MISSIONARIES *from the U.S. carry on a legacy of evangelism started half a century ago.*

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

GUARAPARI, Brazil — On occasion, the manager of a pizzeria in this seaside Brazilian community finds her head waiter sitting at a table with a customer, preaching about Christ instead of taking his drink order.

She doesn't mind.

The manager, Alexandra Neto, and her "waiter" husband, Ricardo, opened the restaurant in a humble storefront near Guarapari's dark-sand beaches.

Across the street and down a few doors is the real reason they're here — a bright yellow building with a sign reading "Igreja de Cristo em Guarapari" ("Church of Christ in Guarapari").

Speaking in Portuguese, Ricardo Neto said he and his wife moved here to plant a church and start a business — in that order.

"I think that's what God wants us to do," said Neto's translator, Jailson Germano, a fellow Christian who partners in the church-planting work,

along with his wife and two daughters.

In another storefront, about 280 miles southwest of Guarapari, a mission team nurtures a young Church of Christ in Niteroi, an urban metropolis near Rio de Janeiro. The four-family team was recruited in the U.S. and came to Brazil with financial support and detailed plans.

"We're here to start and grow a church in Niteroi, then develop leaders and share our vision," team member Jill Nichols said. "Ultimately, our

goal is to work ourselves out of a job."

Both sets of Christians carry on a legacy that began 50 years ago, when a team of 13 families moved from Texas to Sao Paulo, Brazil, with the goal of planting self-replicating churches. At the time, the United States was the epicenter of Churches of Christ, home to the greatest number of congregations, congregants and financial resources.

Half a century later, the majority of

CONTINUED

In fast-paced, metropolitan **Niteroi**, church planters work with a young Church of Christ. Recruited in the U.S. by a **church-planting ministry**, the team moved to the city of more than a half-million people. In addition to renting a meeting place and conducting worship services, the team teaches theology courses and volunteers at an orphanage. One of the team's goals is to train Brazilian church leaders and **'work ourselves out of a job,'** team member Jill Nichols said.



The Niteroi Church of Christ's home.



Brent Nichols and Zane McGee lead singing during Sunday worship in Niteroi.



Antonio Silva, of the Vitoria Church of Christ, plays soccer with a youngster on a beach near the Guarapari church's building.

In the oceanside community of **Guarapari**, a handful of Brazilian Christians planted a Church of Christ. The **self-supported team** includes a family who opened a pizzeria as a means of support — and outreach. The Christians were converted through the work of U.S. church planters and see their ministry to the town of 100,000 souls as a continuation of the missionaries' work. **'I think that's what God wants us to do,'** said church planter Jailson Germano.



"We're family," Fabiola Germano says of the new congregation in Guarapari.



The meeting place of the Guarapari church.



ABOUT THIS SERIES

Churches of Christ are changing. Less than a century ago, most of the members were concentrated in the United States. But after decades of evangelism, the epicenters of church growth have shifted to the Global South — Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

Increasingly, Christians from these regions are taking the lead in evangelizing their own people and reaching beyond their borders.

The Christian Chronicle launched Global South in 2009 to highlight the effects of the changing face of the church worldwide. Find the entire series at www.christianchronicle.org. Choose "Continuing Coverage" from the "Articles" tab.

PAGE 19: A view of Rio de Janeiro from Sugarloaf Mountain. (Currents photos by Erik Tryggstad)

CONTINUED

the fellowship's material wealth remains concentrated in the U.S.

But the makeup of the church has changed.

Fertile soil for the Gospel in the Global South — Africa, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent and Latin America — has resulted in a southward shift in Christianity. By 2050, only about one-fifth of the 3 billion people who claim Christianity as their faith will be non-Hispanic whites, writes Philip Jenkins, researcher and author of "The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity."

According to research by *The Christian Chronicle*, at least two-thirds of the global membership of Churches of Christ now resides outside the U.S.

In Brazil, churches planted by U.S. missionaries now send out a new generation of native church planters.

Meanwhile, ministry leaders in South and North America ponder the most effective ways to use the church's combined resources — human and financial — to reach lost souls.

Despite the rapid growth of the

faith in the past 50 years, "we need to be taking advantage of every opportunity to share the Gospel, not knowing the future," Nichols said.

BIG-CITY EVANGELISM IN NITEROI

Guarapari's laid-back beaches strike a stark contrast to Niteroi, where buses lurch and swerve through crowded streets at break-neck speed. From Niteroi's beaches on Guanabara Bay, a half-million people look across the water to Rio's iconic landmarks — Sugarloaf Mountain and the open-armed Christ the Redeemer statue.



Costa

Continent of Great Cities, a church-planting ministry that evolved from the work of missionaries in Brazil in the late 1960s, recruited five families to serve on the team. One team member, Juliana Roberts, is a native Brazilian. Her husband, Ben, and teammate Nathan Zinck are the sons of missionaries to South America.

Despite the rapid growth of the

The team moved to Niteroi in 2008. In January 2010, they rented a meeting place for the church.

For nearly 15 years before the team arrived, a handful of Christians met in a tiny apartment room in Niteroi, said Jose Costa, who now attends the Niteroi congregation, named "The Way: A Church of Christ."

In addition to conducting church services, the Niteroi team teaches theology courses at the building.

"I have the courage, but I don't know if I have the skills to evangelize," Costa said, so the team's arrival "has been wonderful. I've learned so much."

Missionary Brent Nichols said he and his teammates who didn't know Portuguese have worked hard to master it — and to adapt to Brazilian culture. Finances also have been a challenge, added his wife, Jill Nichols. A faltering U.S. economy and burgeoning Brazilian oil business have hurt the dollar's exchange rate against Brazil's currency, the Real.

One of the couples, Wes and Carrie Gotcher, moved to Texas after their twin boys were born prematurely.

Providing for the boys' medical care would be easier in their home country.

"The Gotchers were a huge asset," said team member Zane McGee, and the team spent much time in prayer and planning to adjust its workload.

Despite the challenges, the remaining four families see the young congregation growing. Up to 80 people have crowded into the small storefront for Sunday worship, McGee said. The team also is building relationships in the community, donating toys and supplies and playing with children at a nearby orphanage.

The orphanage is surrounded by churches, its director said, but the Church of Christ is the only group that actively cares for its children.

HUMAN PLANS AND 'GOD'S WISDOM'

Since Continent of Great Cities launched in the late 1970s, the Texas-based ministry has sent 37 teams to Latin America. Increasingly, the ministry recruits teams from Latin American ministry training programs, including the Honduras-based Baxter Institute.

Now, teams of predominantly U.S. citizens account for only one-fourth of the groups sent out by the ministry, said executive director Kelley Grant.

But Christians from the North still may play an important role in Global South church plants, said Grant, a former missionary to Santiago, Chile.

Latin American nations have rigid social structures, and Christians from one economic class often are reluctant to reach out to another.

Church planters from the U.S. can bridge those social divides and encourage their congregations to get involved in benevolence work, including orphanages, Grant said.

U.S. Christians also have access to the financial resources that allow them to rent or buy church facilities in high-traffic areas, attracting more attention, Brent Nichols said.

However, foreign missionaries don't stay in the field forever, and Latin American Christians "are more likely

to work their entire careers as evangelists in their home country," said Bryan Gibbs, who trains and advises church-planting teams of Brazilians for Continent of Great Cities. He recently traveled to Brazil's capital, Brasilia, to work with the ministry's first all-Brazilian church-planting team.

A future church-planting project will involve Brazilian Christians, overseen by a Brazilian congregation, with support from Christians in the U.S. Team members will raise at least 25 percent of their support from Brazilian sources, Gibbs said.

In Brazil, there are dozens of large cities unreached by Churches of Christ, Grant said. He prays that the church planters of the future, regardless of their nationality, will find "people who would hear the Gospel."

Jill Nichols agreed. "I believe that God will use whoever is sent," she said. "We can try to reason what is the best plan using our human wisdom. God's wisdom is always better."

In the next half-century, Churches of Christ in the U.S. must "leave behind the mentality that we are the

primary source for the spread of the Gospel," Gibbs said.

"When we can truly see our brothers and sisters from other parts of the world as partners, then we will be ready for our future role in world evangelism," he said.

A SMALL-TOWN FAMILY IN GUARAPARI

Ricardo Neto doesn't think of himself as a missionary. He describes himself as a "country preacher" — perfect for the pace of life in Guarapari.

Baptized in Justinopolis, a small town in Brazil's interior, he trained for ministry in nearby Belo Horizonte. He has participated in church plants in other parts of the country and says he loves the close-knit family he's found in this town of about 100,000 souls, 30 miles south of Vitoria.

Four families comprise the core of the Guarapari church. Attendance on Sunday mornings can reach 30 adults and children, said Jailson Germano, an English teacher who assists in the church plant. Previously, he and his family attended the Vitoria Church of Christ, a congregation planted by a

U.S. mission team in the 1990s.

The younger of his two daughters, Fabiola, says she misses her friends at the Vitoria church, but she understands the need to reach out to a new community. Many of her peers claim to be Catholic but rarely attend church or get support from fellow believers.

"We're just trying to help," she said. "We're family."



J. Germano

Her mother, Simone, brushed back tears when she talked about the Vitoria church — a congregation that has struggled to grow since the missionaries returned home. She sometimes feels that she has abandoned the Vitoria church, but "we want to be able to spread the Gospel in a part of the city that never had it," she said.

Jailson Germano says the infant Guarapari church reminds him of the early days of the Vitoria congregation.

"People call you when you don't come on Sunday morning," he said. "I can see that first love here."



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Oklahoma church member Alan Middleton, right, gives a devotional talk at the Vitoria Church of Christ to a group of youths in a jobs-training program. Translating into Portuguese is Terry Fischer, former missionary to Vitoria.

Church partners in job training

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

VITORIA, Brazil — A young man dressed in robes takes center stage at the Vitoria Church of Christ. As a simple Brazilian pop song plays through the church's loudspeakers, he takes the hand of a young woman and leads her through a series of dance steps. She smiles serenely.

Other youths join the couple on stage. One convinces the young woman to gaze into a mirror and fixate on her appearance. Another offers her a drink. A third hands her something to smoke. The young woman soon realizes she's surrounded. She lunges toward the young man in robes, but the other youths hold her back. She falls to her knees.

As the pop song hits a crescendo, the robed youth throws himself between the girl and her oppressors, sacrificing himself for her freedom.

The auditorium, packed with youths wearing blue and white T-shirts, erupts in cheers.

This isn't a church service — it's not even Sunday. Nor is it a Christian youth rally.

It's a government-sponsored jobs-training program.

The Vitoria-based program, COEP, seeks to end unfair economic practices, including child labor, by giving young

people the skills — and the character — to function in society as professionals.

Two years ago, program officials approached the Church of Christ about using its large facility, located across the street from a university, for its classes. COEP pays rent and utilities.

The 400-plus students who participate in the program get daily doses of the Gospel during character classes taught by the church's minister, Luiz Carlos Matias.



Matias

COEP pays the youths — many from economically disadvantaged communities in Brazil's interior — to attend seven

months of jobs-training classes. Businesses then provide internships for the students.

The students also attend chapel services conducted by Matias. On a recent Monday, their clapping shook the building's rafters as they sang devotional songs in Portuguese.

A mission team from the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City sang English hymns for the students. Team members Aaron Lewis and Alan Middleton gave devotional talks. Then, groups of

students about to complete the program presented skits about the values they had learned in the past seven months.

"I adored them," Renata Goncalves said of the students' performance. She and her classmate, Laurromy Couto, said the jobs-training program has provided them with friends from across the region and opportunities they wouldn't have in their home communities.

The two students, who attend evangelical Christian churches, said they also appreciate the program's spiritual focus.



Goncalves

Matias hopes that the church's involvement in the classes will result in more Christians in the pews on Sundays. When students express interest in the Church of Christ, the minister invites them to participate in a theology course overseen by the congregation. Bible studies and baptisms have resulted from the course, he said.

Hosting the jobs-training program also allows the church to "set a good example in the community," Matias said. "Everywhere we go, the church is known."

A nephew's 'gift' leads to transformed lives

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

VITORIA, Brazil — "Don't try to change me, preacher. I like wine, and I like women."

Antonio Silva remembers saying those words to a U.S. missionary nearly 13 years ago. At the time, Silva used most of the money he made as an electrician to satisfy his drinking habit. Friends joked that his car trunk, always filled with liquor and ice, was a "bar on wheels."

The only reason Silva had set foot in the Vitoria Church of Christ was as a favor for his nephew, Marcus Mendes. Mendes, whose parents were baptized by the missionaries, had begged his uncle to come to church, with no luck.

Finally, when Silva asked Mendes what gift he wanted for Children's Day — a holiday in Brazil — the young boy saw an opportunity. Come to church, he asked his uncle. That would be his present.

Silva did just that. The first thing he saw when he entered the building was two missionaries dressed up in bedsheets, pretending to be Bible characters.

That was odd enough, he said. Then one of the missionaries, David Duncan, asked him if he wanted to study the Bible. When Silva told him he had no interest in changing, Duncan was speechless — but only for a moment.

"Nobody has the right or the power to change you," Duncan replied. "Only Jesus can do that. I'm just inviting

you to know Jesus."

"Then it was my turn to be speechless," Silva said.

In the weeks that followed, Silva and Duncan studied the Bible. Silva changed his life and committed to one woman — his wife, Dalva. Duncan and missionary Taylor Cave baptized them side-by-side in the Atlantic Ocean on a moonlit night.

"As we stood in the water, two falling stars crossed in the sky right in front of us," Duncan said. "Someone yelled, '*E um sinal de Deus!*' (It's a sign from God!)." I don't know that it was a sign from God, but I don't know

any other way to explain it."

Now, more than a decade after their baptisms, Silva and his wife remain stalwart members of the Vitoria church, where Silva leads singing.

Recognizing that his nephew's gift led to his salvation, Silva returns

the favor, inviting others to church. A childhood friend of Silva's, Alcenir, and his wife, Elisangela, accepted the invitation. Two former missionaries to Vitoria, Terry and Kelli Fischer, studied the Bible with Silva's friends. The couple was baptized in 2007.

"Antonio's enthusiasm while leading singing is so contagious," Terry Fischer said. "He and Dalva have faced a lot of challenges, and they are still there every time I go back to visit — worshiping and serving and teaching their two children to obey Jesus."



Antonio Silva leads singing at the Vitoria Church of Christ.

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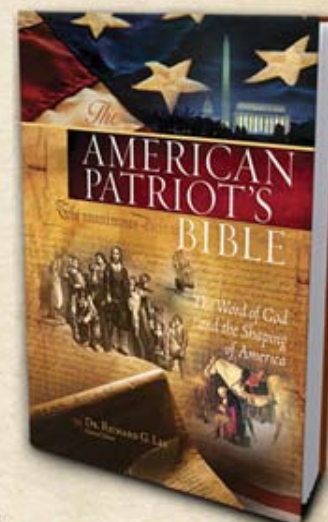
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UKRAINE: Hearts are receptive because 'people love freedom'

FROM PAGE 3

became the final member of the family to be baptized.

The family worships in their home in Novooleksiivka, a tiny town in the center of the Crimean peninsula. Their neighbors think they've joined a religious "sect" and are getting money from Americans. They haven't, and they're not, the family said.

Irena Onischenko prays for unity among believers and for more young people in their region to become part of the church.

Meanwhile, gathering with hundreds of fellow believers at the conference is an "indispensable" part of the family's life, she said. The thought of skipping a year "cannot even be discussed. We are here."

FREE THINKERS AND COZY FEET

When they weren't on the beach, attendees gathered in a Soviet-era lecture hall, next to a smiling statue of communist leader Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

Some wore shorts and sandals — and one held a set of giant swim fins — as they sang gospel hymns.

Konstantin Zhigulin, a church member and professional musician in St. Petersburg, Russia, led them in Russian translations of "Holy, Holy, Holy," and "Shout Hallelujah" and original compositions, including the words of John 3:16 ("For God so loved the world ...") sung in a three-part round.

Prokopchuk talked about the Old Testament story of Esau, who traded his birthright to his brother, Jacob, for a bowl

of stew. The minister urged the audience to focus on permanent, spiritual matters instead of temporary needs.

The conference "is kind of like a big battery" that recharges Churches of Christ, said Evgen Sosnovsky, a Christian in the eastern Ukrainian mining town of Dobropole.

Many believers meet in small groups across this vast nation of 45.4 million souls. Prokopchuk's ministry, which includes the television program, a faith-based magazine and a Bible study correspondence course, has a mailing list of 70 Churches of Christ and 158 home groups, ranging from two to a dozen Christians each.

The largest congregations meet in the Donbas region, in Ukraine's industrialized, Russian-speaking east.

Missionaries from Churches of Christ conducted campaigns in Donbas soon after Ukraine became an independent nation in 1991. A church-supported ministry, Eastern European Mission, provided Bibles, which many Ukrainians had never before seen. Hundreds were baptized.

It was more than the faith's novelty that brought the people of Donbas into the church,

Sosnovsky said.

During the Soviet era, "free thinkers" who disagreed with communism had two choices — exile in Siberia or labor in the Donbas mines, Sosnovsky said. "And so, here in Ukraine, people love freedom."

Sosnovsky, a coal miner, became a Christian in 2002. He ministers for a 30-member congregation in Dobropole. At work, he uses the long, slow descent into the coal mines — which can last an hour — to share his faith.



Sosnovsky



Konstantin Zhigulin leads singing at the Crimea conference.



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Church members and spiritual seekers pray in a Soviet-era meeting hall during the Crimea conference.

"In mining, we wear gumshoes," he said. "And if you stick your foot without socks in this shoe, it will start bleeding and it will be painful."

"The person without God is the same way. There is a soul in his body that is bleeding. But when Holy Spirit starts dwelling in your body, it's like rubber around the soul. The foot is warm and cozy."

MORE THAN A HOLIDAY

Evangelism is harder here than it was two decades ago, Prokopchuk said. People are



Demchenko

distracted from spiritual matters by the need to earn money in Europe's struggling economy.

But many Ukrainians respond to the television ministry, which focuses on Christian daily living, he said.

The show also invites viewers to attend the Crimea conference. Eastern European Mission provides funds for the show and the conference.

Yaroslav Ciesielski, a member



The Onischenko family — Svetlana, Irena, Valera, Roman and Kristina — celebrates Roman's baptism on the shores of the Black Sea.

of a small Church of Christ in Radom, Poland, traveled here to reunite with his spiritual brothers and sisters. Along the way he joined Vladimir Pestov, a longtime friend who lives in the nation of Moldova, across Ukraine's western border.

Pestov, who is not a church member, said he was impressed by the gospel lessons at the conference — and especially the a cappella singing, which reminded him of the Orthodox Church back home.

Svetlana Demchenko, a church member in Kharkov, Ukraine, said that worshipping

alongside hundreds of fellow Christians "joins us together and makes us one big child of God."

Demchenko became a Christian seven years ago, after a friend invited her to church.

Demchenko's father died fighting the Nazis, who occupied the Crimean peninsula during World War II. After her baptism, God became the father she never had, she said.

The conference is more than a holiday, she added. "It's a chance for all of us to receive God's blessing — something you can't measure with anything in the world."

Ukrainian minister's faith journey led from Red Army to TV evangelism

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

DONETSK, Ukraine — Sasha Prokopchuk doesn't like being a TV personality.

The minister says he gets a bit embarrassed when people in this eastern Ukrainian city recognize him as "that preacher on TV" who walks around town in a turtleneck, talking about the problems that vex Ukrainians and offering free Bible lessons.

Standing in the TV ministry's "response center" — a converted apartment in a crumbling, Soviet-era building — Prokopchuk takes a letter from the top of a stack and reads it. A viewer wants to receive a magazine produced by the ministry and is interested in what the Bible says about love and marriage. Similar requests come, via letters and e-mail, from across the country — and from other former Soviet nations, including Russia.

For Prokopchuk, who has preached on the airwaves of Ukraine for more than a decade, those requests make the notoriety worthwhile.

"I don't feel like I'm a TV guy — never," he says. "God created this."

Prokopchuk grew up in the Soviet Union as an atheist.

He and his wife, Victoria, were newlyweds when his government called him to serve in the Red Army. He later worked in a Soviet hospital but earned little money. He tried coal mining and truck driving to support his family.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, they lost what little money they had.

Frustrated and depressed, Prokopchuk read to take his mind off his problems. One night, unable to find a newspaper, he picked up a "black book with a cross" that his wife had bought from a beggar woman in a train station. He flipped through the pages and found a passage in which the author lamented

that all of his life's pursuits — from drinking wine to amassing riches — had proved meaningless. "I realized, 'This book is about me,'" he said.

He kept reading the Bible, and found encouragement in Jesus' teachings about prayer and repentance.

His relationship with his family improved — including his mother-in-law, who was housing them at the time.

After two years of studying on his own, Prokopchuk and his wife met Denny Kruse, a U.S. missionary in Donetsk. Kruse baptized Prokopchuk on May 2, 1995, and encouraged him to preach.

Prokopchuk served as minister and elder for the Petrovsky Church of Christ in Donetsk, which grew to nearly 400 members, he said. In 2004 he helped plant the Transfiguration Church of Christ, where he now ministers, in the city's downtown.

He launched the TV program in hopes of reaching more lost souls. The episodes are filled with the life lessons he learned from studying the Bible. In 2001, Kruse helped secure funds to broadcast the show nationally.

"People like the episodes about human emotions," Prokopchuk said. "We go

through conflicts and worry ... the Kingdom of God, peaceful life." A key focus is making God's word understandable, he added.

Eastern European Mission, a church-supported ministry, provides Bibles and gospel literature for the show's viewers.

Richard Baggett, the ministry's director of development, said he is inspired by Prokopchuk's desire to reach the people of Eastern Europe.

"It's the closest thing to what I read in the book of Acts," Baggett said, referring to the stories of early Christians reaching lost souls in their homelands. "It's what all of us who have been involved in mission work want to see."



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sasha Prokopchuk in the Soviet army, circa 1983.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Sasha Prokopchuk preaches in 2011.

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A conversation with Harold Shank

MINISTER, AUTHOR, SCHOLAR discusses new role as university president.

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Harold Shank, who grew up in an “unchurched” home in the town of Indiana, Penn., has served as an urban church planter in Milwaukee, a longtime preacher in Memphis, Tenn., and a professor of Old Testament in Oklahoma City.

Now he has a new role — university president in a region close to his heart.

For 20 years, Shank ministered for the Highland Street Church of Christ in Memphis — the first congregation profiled in *The Christian Chronicle’s* “Churches That Work” series in 2005. He later moved west to serve as professor at Oklahoma Christian University. He also was the *Chronicle’s* reviews editor. This year, he became president of Ohio Valley University, a 527-student Christian university in Vienna, W.Va., four hours southwest of his hometown.

Shank also serves as national spokesman for the Christian Child and Family Services Association and has long had a heart for the poor and disenfranchised.

He is respected for his preaching and scholarship and has authored more than 25 scholarly articles and seven books, including his most recent, “Listening to His Heartbeat,” in 2009.

He and his wife, Sally, have been married 37 years and have two sons, Daniel and Nathan. Both sons are engaged to be married and are doctoral students.

Is Christian education relevant today?

Christian education in its purest form integrates faith and learning. Nothing could be more contemporary.

In many of our nation’s universities, the professors and students look through secular glasses to investigate their surroundings. In Christian universities, the faculty and students look through Christian glasses in order to examine the world.

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Hydrogen and oxygen combine at Christian universities to make water just as they do at state schools. The difference is that professors start with the reality that hydrogen and oxygen are made by God. We operate with the Christian worldview while using rigid academic standards to integrate all learning. That’s the core of Christian education.

What interested you in becoming president at OVU?

A significant leader and insightful observer of our fellowship recently told me, “OVU is on the geographic frontier of Churches of Christ. We *have* to have it. It is the lifeblood of the region.”

That reality draws me to this university. A recent OVU graduate, Scott Johnson, who works with the Clifton Church of Christ in uptown Cincinnati, recently baptized 15 students from two different universities.

New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Cleveland and a dozen other cities are within a few hours’ drive of OVU. The opportunities for mission among the 129 million people in this part of the nation are enormous. We *have* to have this school.

What do you see as the next great challenge for OVU?

Staying true to mission is always a challenge. Financial pressure, market demands and cultural influence all can cloud a Christian university’s focus.

My greatest challenge is staying the course, leading OVU in such a way that it will remain true to its mission of “transforming lives in a Christ-centered academic community.”

When you talk to prospective students, what do you tell them about OVU?

I tell them why we are unique. The distinctive education we offer combines four critical factors: A Christian worldview, a nationally ranked Tier One



DEREK COLE

Harold Shank at Ohio Valley University.

academic education, a community where people know your name and a plan for each student to experience their career while they are still in school. When those four critical factors are wrapped together it is a bit like having a personal trainer at the local gym.

Take the case of Anne-Claire Tans, a 2010 OVU graduate from the Netherlands. Her primary motivation in coming to OVU was to play golf, but she was soon immersed in academically credible classes framed by the Christian worldview. People got to know her so well that she began to see aspects of life and vocation she had never seen before. She changed.

She won all sorts of championships, but to hear her talk about it, she learned to “walk the course,” her description of what she discovered about herself. In a nurturing Christian environment, well-trained professionals give personal attention to students like Anne-Claire to enable them to fulfill their dreams and successfully experience that life — all in four years.

How does a Christian university deal with moral issues?

Our curriculum is value-driven and filled with moral teaching. We teach values as a means of moral transformation. Our goal is for students to make decisions like one of our basketball

players did this past year. He spoke at a youth banquet this summer in Ohio. He told the teenagers that he wanted to be real. He recalled that, during the school year, a woman he had met in the community asked him to move in with her.

He thought about her invitation and then said, “No, I’m going in a different direction.”

What relationship to Churches of Christ will OVU have under your leadership?

My vision for a Christian university is a school that exists to serve its church constituency. We join with the Churches of Christ in equipping young people for life and service. No matter what their chosen career, we send out graduates who serve their communities, become respected figures in their field, lead churches, teach the Bible and become people of good influence.

I grew up in a totally unchurched family. People like Mildred Stutzman and Ray Beggs from the East Pike Church of Christ in western Pennsylvania reached out to me. We must continually train others to go out and do that again and again.

I was talking to people at one congregation that hired an OVU student as a summer intern. A quiet young man, he was seldom around, and they grew apprehensive that they had made a mistake. Then they learned he had knocked on every door in his apartment complex and that he was engaged in several Bible

studies with fellow residents. Stories like that remind us that OVU belongs to Churches of Christ.

What is your dream for OVU?

I want to spread the news about a hidden treasure I’ve found on this hilltop in the Ohio Valley. I see us linking hands with congregations and people in our region to be the city set on a hill.

I look forward to being intimately involved in thinking informally in the cafeteria and more formally in chapel about how the Christian faith can soar in our postmodern world. For me, there’s no better time to be alive and no better place to be than OVU.

‘The opportunities for mission among the 129 million people in this part of the nation are enormous. We *have* to have this school.’

Harold Shank

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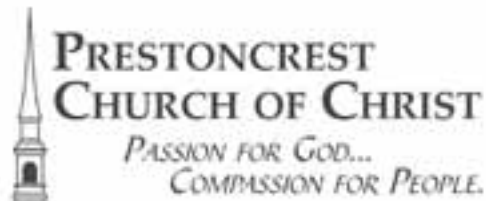
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HIGHER EDUCATION

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Faulkner honored Billy D. Hilyer for his 25th anniversary as president and CEO during the university's annual benefit dinner featuring former President George W. Bush.

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley presented a surprised Hilyer with a commendation for his service to Faulkner and the state.

Faulkner's board of trustees gave Hilyer and his wife, Kay, a crystal award commemorating the anniversary.

Under Hilyer, Faulkner has increased its enrollment, added programs and degrees and expanded its facilities.



ROBIN COOPER

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley, left, honors Faulkner's Billy Hilyer for 25 years of service.

HARDING UNIVERSITY

SEARCY, Ark. — Neale Pryor, who taught Bible at Harding for 45 years, died Sept. 25. He was 75.

Pryor served as chairman of the Bible department, director of the annual Bible lectureship and vice president



Pryor

of academic affairs. He preached at more than 500 gospel meetings and received Harding's Distinguished Alumni Award. President David Burks described Pryor as a "pillar of this school."

"The faculty and his students will remember him as a master teacher," Burks said at Pryor's funeral, according to *The Link* student news website.

LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Lipscomb has created a new School of TransformAging.

The school will focus on healthy



ERIK TRYGGSTAD

A cross-continental prayer at the Global Missions Conference

Mark Hooper, facilitator for Asian church planting for Missions Resource Network, leads a prayer during the Global Missions Conference at the Legacy Church of Christ in North Richland Hills, Texas. On stage are members of a praise team from the Highland Oaks Church of Christ in Dallas. On screen is Winston Chong, an elder of the Pasir Panjang Church of Christ in Singapore. From his home, 13 hours ahead of Texas, Chong discussed his conversion and his congregation's mission work. More than 1,200 church members attended the event, hosted once every three years in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. This year's conference was combined with the annual World Mission Workshop.

RELATED VOICES, Page 31

aging and the development of leaders to bring new thinking to the changing landscaping of how society looks at — and experiences — aging, leaders said.

"This program combines a unique interdisciplinary education with engaging and collaborative conversations to bring innovative solutions to aging services," said a statement by Charla Long, the program's creator.

OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Oklahoma Christian are launching a new MBA scholarship program for tribal members.

Ken Johnson, chairman of the university's Graduate School of Business, said he anticipates most of the Choctaw students will complete the program online.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is a federally recognized tribe whose service territory covers 11,000 square miles in rural southeast Oklahoma.

ROCHESTER COLLEGE

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. — National radio personality Dave Ramsey has chosen Rochester as his educational partner for an online, three-credit personal finance management course.

"More and more college students are asking for courses in personal financial management," Ramsey said. "Some of them have watched their older brothers and sisters graduate from college with huge debts hanging over them."

Rochester President Rubel Shelly said: "College students are telling us they want financial education programs so they can learn how to avoid debt, pay for college and manage their money well."

"Dave Ramsey is on a mission to help Americans take control of their finances, and we're thrilled to partner with him now to let students study personal finance with the man who 'wrote the book' on achieving financial peace."

SPOTLIGHT

Enrollment records set

Harding University in Searcy, Ark., posted an all-time high enrollment for the 25th consecutive year, eclipsing 7,000 students.



Shelly

Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., topped 4,000 students, marking a fifth straight year of record enrollment.

The headcount at Rochester College in Michigan — which has faced significant financial difficulties — is a record 1,084, up from 1,069. "This ... encourages all of us that the turnaround is in progress," Rochester President Rubel Shelly said.

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Submit resumes to marylauren@christshaven.org.

Visit www.christshaven.org for more information.

The department of **Language and Literature** at **Oklahoma Christian University** invites applications for an **Assistant Professor** position to begin Fall 2012.

Candidates should emphasize their ability to teach composition, courses related to the Teaching English as a Foreign Language [TEFL] degree, and basic-intermediate language courses corresponding either to one of the university's overseas programs — German, Japanese, Chinese — or to one of the department's current language offerings: French, Spanish. Applicants with a Ph.D. or ABD are preferred, but other qualified applicants will also be considered.

Course load for the position is 4/4 with English courses in Linguistics, Structure of the English Language, and/or Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and Composition, and courses in the appropriate language.

As a department committed to the integration of faith and learning, Language and Literature is a dynamic community that serves 100 majors/minors and boasts a variety of academic successes: an active honors society

chapter, an annual faith-based speakers series, a strong student/faculty connection, increasing TEFL and writing internships, and successful placement of graduates. We seek an engaged candidate whose specific expertise will further develop our growing TEFL program.

Oklahoma Christian University is a liberal arts university affiliated with the Churches of Christ. Applicants should be active members of the Churches of Christ and have a personal life that reflects the teachings, example, and love of Jesus Christ.

Applicants should send curriculum vita, teaching philosophy, statement of faith, and writing sample related to the particular specialization to **Dr. Cami Agan**, Chair of the department of Language and Literature at the following e-mail address: cam.agan@oc.edu.

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

Oklahoma Christian University is an equal opportunity employer.



OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

— Since 1950 —

NEWSMAKERS

APPOINTED: Renee Cornett, to the Texas Board of Dental Examiners. Cornett is a member of the Southern Hills church, Buda, Texas. **Chrystal Houston**, director of alumni and communication, York College. **Tom Ingram**, leader-in-residence at the Andrews Institute for Civic Leadership at Lipscomb University. **Susie Bullock**, vice president for advancement, Ohio Valley University. **Scott Sager**, vice president of church services, Lipscomb University. **Andrew K. Benton**, one of three inaugural vice chairs at the creation and first convening of a national Commission on Higher Education Attainment. Benton is president of Pepperdine University.



Bullock

HONORED: Blake Jackson, recipient of a 30/30 Next Gen Award by iON Oklahoma City. Jackson attends the Northwest church, Okla. City.

ANNIVERSARIES: 75th: Wendell and Ruth Riepe, Brookport, Ill. 65th: Dawson and Hazel Cook, Little Rock, Ark. 65th: Hubert and Walterrene Hartin, Cedarville, Texas. 62nd: Bill and Pat Wallis, Dallas.

BIRTHDAYS: 104th: Auline McDonald, Lafayette, Tenn. 102nd: Ida Riggs, Huntsville, Texas. 101st: Benna Tarter, Farwell, Texas. 98th: Mary Stewart, Chicago. 95th: Doris Darling, Salinas, Calif. 95th: Faye Parks, Plainview, Texas. 92nd: Trudy Rasane, Lincoln, Mo.

PASSAGES: Rosetta Berry, 83, Sept. 16, longtime member of the Groton, Ct., church. **Ellis Crum**, 83, Oct. 17, evangelist, missionary, publisher of *Sacred Selections* and member of the Kendallville, Ind., church. **Ruby A. Deason**, 87, Oct. 5. Longtime member of the Broadway church, Wichita Falls, Texas. **Rochelle Hall**, 97, Oct. 3, life-long member of the Bay Minette, Ala., church. **William Hoyt Nelson**, 81, Sept. 28, minister for over 55 years, member of the Hartselle church in Moulton, Ala., and founder of Camp Wiregrass. **James LeRoy Secrest**, 88, Oct. 3, elder of the Northside church, Waynoka, Okla. **Morris Womack**, 83, Sept. 17, longtime professor at Pepperdine University, former minister and member of the Simi Valley church.



Deason



Womack

Nov. 5 37th Annual Steak Dinner. Benefitting Michigan Christian Youth Camp. Contact (810) 664-8040 or mcyc@mcyc.org

Nov. 5-6 4th Annual Symposium on Spiritual Formation. Grace Pointe church, Montgomery, Ala. Contact www.grace-pointe.com

Nov. 6 60th Homecoming. Aiken, S.C., church. Contact (803) 648-8877 or aikenc-reunion@gmail.com

Nov. 6 100th Anniversary of the Laurel, Tenn., church. Contact (856) 524-1122 or cbharrell@bellsouth.net

Nov. 13 90th Anniversary of the Santa Paula, Calif., church. Contact robzervations@aol.com

Nov. 15 Free Church Safety Seminar. Central church, Victoria, Texas. Contact copandcross@copandcross.com or www.safeatchurch.org

Nov. 20-24 Southwestern Christian College's 74th Annual Lectureship and Founder's Day Program. Contact (972) 524-3341.

Dec. 2 Freed-Hardeman University Benefit Dinner. Featured speaker: Bob Newhart. Contact fhu.edu/Newhart.

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

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.alabamaprisonministryworkshop.org

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

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

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

COMPLETE CALENDAR at www.christianchronicle.org



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

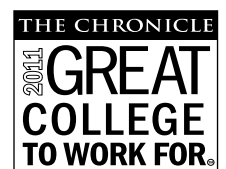
School of Social Work

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.



EDITORIAL

To reach the majority, we must decrease

The Third World, the developing world, the emerging world. The Global South.

As we prepared to showcase the changing face of the church in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent and Latin America, we grappled with the best way to describe these vast and varied regions. Our goal: To give readers a firsthand look at Churches of Christ in the parts of the world where they are growing fastest.

In the two and a half years since we launched the series, we have encountered another term to describe these regions — the Majority World. Today the vast majority of the world's people — God's children — call these places home.

We count it as providential that God has placed his fastest-growing churches in areas where they can serve the most souls.

Reporting this series has taken us to 20 countries on five continents. We interviewed Christians in an indigenous, mountaintop village in Ecuador, on a crowded train during a 30-hour journey from New Delhi to Vijayawada,

India, in a monstrous shopping mall in Singapore and under a thatch roof in the world's newest nation, South Sudan.

We also found inspiring stories in Europe and the U.S. From Amsterdam to Minnesota, immigration from the Global South is transforming Churches of Christ.

Why has the Gospel taken firm root among the people of the Global South? Many of them see faith as a real, almost tangible thing — something they cling to despite hardship. When the poorest of the poor ask God to “give us this day our daily bread” it is a very real request.

Among the disenfranchised, those cast out from society and declared untouchable, there is hope. In Christ they find a Savior who truly cares.

In the First World, the developed world, we are tempted to dismiss this faith as something born out of desperation — embraced with the hope of aid from wealthy Christians and forsaken when bellies are filled.

Time and again we encountered believers who didn't seek dollars, who recognized the

destructive power of money in their midst. We met Christians in Asia and Africa who had earned great material wealth and chose to spend it on efforts to reach lost souls on their continents.

All of us must realize that we are linked together in joint poverty. We all are imperfect, sinful creatures, estranged from the divine. Realizing our common condition, we must work together as equal partners.

In the past century, Churches of Christ in the Global North helped to birth countless churches in the Global South. Now these northern churches must learn to be what Dan Bouchelle of Missions Resource Network calls “spiritual grandparents,” providing support and guidance while following their grown children's lead in reaching and nurturing future generations of Christ-seekers.

To be equal partners, Bryan Gibbs, a trainer of Brazilian missionaries for Continent of Great Cities, says that we all must adopt the attitude of John the Baptist toward Jesus, recorded in John 3:30: “*He must increase, but I must decrease.*”

May God bless us with wisdom, understanding, patience and our daily bread as we walk together, making disciples of all nations.



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

TO OUR READERS

A Chronicle that fits in your pocket

The Christian Chronicle is excited to take another step in the digital age.

We have launched our new mobile site at **www.christianchronicle.org**.

The site, developed by webmaster Travis Langley, enables readers to access *Chronicle* stories via their iPhones and other mobile devices.

Additionally, those with an app-based reader may scan the inset barcode (above) to

be taken directly to the site.

In addition to providing up-to-the-minute news, the mobile site gives a new venue to *Chronicle* advertisers.

Contact Tamie Ross at **tamie.ross@christianchronicle.org** for rates.

We invite you to explore the site and provide feedback. What do you like? Could we improve? Send remarks to **letters@christianchronicle.org**.



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In Africa, foreign support may rob God of his role as sustainer

Across my homeland, Kenya, orphanages are springing up on a regular basis. Unfortunately, many of these are started for no other motive than to eat out of the hands of the underprivileged.

It isn't just orphanages. Some African Christians have launched Bible schools and academies that exist only for the trapping of foreign aid. Money meant to feed the poor and educate young Christians has become a salary for those who solicit the funds.

Does this mean that American Christians shouldn't support missions in Africa? No, far from that. All labor that uplifts human dignity and importance should be undertaken with the painstaking excellence that it deserves.

My concern is for African Christians who rely completely on foreign donors for their livelihood. Doing so robs God of his role as a loving father who should be fully trusted to provide for all of our needs.

In my years of experience as an educator and counselor, I have come to see clearly that some of my well-meaning brothers and sisters of the faith view God as an instrument of manipulation to meet their daily needs — a cash cow of some sort. They see the Almighty as someone who must be impressed to milk out material gains under the guise of a Christian ministry or project.

Some of my countrymen have started their own business enterprises and tagged them as "Christian ministries" in order to draw foreign financial support. To them, keeping their wallets continuously lined with the dollar is a sure way of making ends meet.

Deserving, needy children in our societies have been used as bait to win foreign sympathy and support in order to earn a healthy living.

Loving the poor truly is inherent to following Jesus Christ. But I have seen the dignity of many African Christians destroyed when they become dependent on foreign support.

Views



Dennis M. Okoth

The benefactors who collect and coordinate this support often don't know the consequences of their actions. It sometimes takes years for those who bite the bait to realize that they have been duped. If one tries to wake them up to this reality, they become reluctant to admit their folly. Doing so would require them to acknowledge their error to the supporters who contributed to the work with a sincere desire to help.

To break this vicious cycle, we must train our young and vibrant Christian soldiers that God can meet their needs through the skills he has generously endowed on all his children. We must teach them that hard work pays.

Tentmaking is a noble endeavor that honors God. It also sends a positive message to the younger generation that God blesses hard work.

The devil, who is the enemy of God and his children, would like us to see God differently. This prompts me to ask a question to people in Africa and America: *Who is God to you?* On a daily basis, we decide whether God's leadership is better than ours, whether or not he is the source of our joy.



The strongest determinant of how much we enjoy life here on earth is hinged on how we perceive God. If we perceive that God has our best interests in mind, we will follow his leadership in every circumstance. We will leave our survival in his hands — not in the hands of a foreign financial donor.

I believe it is time we say "no" to financial arrangements that could be working against us — both the beneficiaries and the donors. We must stand up for what is right, even if we stand alone.

DENNIS M. OKOTH, a native of Kenya, is principal of Messiah Theological Institute in Mbale, Uganda, and works with a mission team of Americans and Africans. He will serve as a dean at LivingStone International University, a church-supported university under construction in Mbale.

VOICES

A mingling of the mission-minded

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, Texas — Effective ministry in the Global South was a recurring topic at this year's Global Missions Conference.

Missionaries, university students and ministers from around the globe mingled in the hallways of the Legacy Church of Christ, sharing strategies for advancing the Kingdom in a way that promotes indigenous leadership.

Self-sustainable ministry also was a popular topic, in view of the sluggish global economy.

Following are a few faces — and ideas — from the four-day conference:

• **Dusty and Cecily Breeding** fell in love with mission work in Kenya — and with each other.

They married in July in the East African nation while working with Made in the Streets, an inner-city ministry that helps children escape the cycle of poverty and crime. The couple taught a class titled "Urban Ministry in At-Risk Communities in the Global South."

Dusty Breeding, a graduate of Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., was inspired to go to Africa after attending the World Mission Workshop in 2005. He now serves as youth minister for the University Church of Christ in Malibu.

He and his wife, also a Pepperdine alum, presented a video they produced about Mary, a young woman who grew up in the slums of Nairobi, addicted to drugs before Made in the Streets changed her life. She now works in an upscale restaurant and credits her success to God. Former "street kids" also serve as administrators of the ministry, director Charles Coulston said.

Coulston encouraged congregations outside the Global South to consider how they can best serve youths in need.

"Every big-city church should have a street ministry," he said.

• "The greatest preachers have always had two jobs. Even Jesus was a carpenter," said **Franco Verardi**.



Verardi

The minister presented "An Italian Vision for Kingdom Expansion" during the conference.

Verardi works with Churches of Christ in the southern Italian cities of Taranto, Mesagne and Torre Santa Susanna.

He is a "tentmaker," or vocational minister, who paints houses to support his work. During his talk, he referenced the apostle Paul's tent-making, as recorded in Acts 18.

Verardi also has done international mission work, assisting at a youth camp in Albania and working with the underprivileged in the southeastern Asian nation of Cambodia.

He stressed, however, that "every heart without Christ is a mission field."

• South African ministers **Tebogo Ramatsui** and **Machona Monyamane** discussed their congregation's work in Africa and around the world. Both men serve the Seeiso Street Church of Christ in Pretoria, a congregation established in 1948 by Ramatsui's grandfather.

The ministers talked about their church's efforts to provide home-based care for people suffering from AIDS. The African church also sponsors mission work in India and Cambodia.

Monyamane discussed the role of Africa's urban congregations in reaching people from across the continent — and sending them home with the Gospel. He likened the work of urban churches to the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. About 3,000 people were baptized in the big city of Jerusalem. The converts then planted churches in their hometowns, spread across the ancient world.

"That is the plan God had for a global mission," Monyamane said.



Cecily Breeding



Dusty Breeding



Ramatsui



Monyamane

McCoy's love of God comes before game

BY DAVID RAMSEY | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

The title of the story of Colt McCoy's surprising rise from small-town football hero to NFL starter could be "Growing Up Old-School Church of Christ."

In "Growing Up Colt: A Father, a Son, a Life in Football," Colt attends church services three times a week, suffers through spankings, endures his mouth getting washed out with soap and refrains from drinking alcohol or even Dr Pepper.

Through it all, he retains a refreshing sense of humility despite constant adulation and remains utterly devoted to his Lord and Savior.

Colt McCoy is a folk hero in Texas, and he has a good chance to become every bit as beloved in Cleveland, where he seeks to revive the Browns, but he belongs to the Church of Christ. His story is a reminder of how much our movement can help a young man achieve.

Co-written by McCoy, his father Brad McCoy, and sportswriter Mike Yorkey, "Growing Up Colt," is — there's no way around it — downright inspiring.

This book is as clear as a sunny spring afternoon in West Texas, where Colt grew up. It's earnest, unpolluted by cynicism. It's a strong read with clever, direct writing. The book will most strongly appeal to parents and

football fans, but anyone who enjoys reading about a young man who refuses to fail also will enjoy it.

First, Colt tells his version of his upbringing, and then Brad follows with his take. Father and son riff off each other, and the two direct, no-nonsense voices allow the reader to sit beside Colt and Brad during his childhood, his teen years, his college days and, finally, his rookie year in the NFL.

His ambitions as a football player seem absurd. Colt plays prep football for his father at Jim Ned High School in Tuscola, a tiny, dusty Texas town — or maybe just a suggestion of a town — on the outskirts of Abilene.

Colt's ambitions were outsized in this undersized location. He talked in grade school about his vision of playing in the NFL, but he didn't just talk. He worked, relentlessly and wisely, chasing his vision.

The story threatens to veer into the

too-good-to-be-true category, but never quite arrives there. Colt is gifted with a powerful arm and an endless determination to improve. He's a superb student, bright enough to be pursued by Stanford, diligent enough to graduate from the University of Texas with a 3.4 grade point average. He's protective and proud of his two younger brothers. He's wildly in love with his wife. He's dedicated to following the narrow path of righteousness despite being surrounded at the University of Texas by all the temptations of the flesh.

His book works most powerfully as a statement of how hard work can transform a life. McCoy was born with the athletic gifts required for high school stardom, and he could have cruised his way to a strong football career at a private Christian school.

But he wanted more.

In a typically direct sentence, McCoy writes, "I wanted to get good enough to play football in college, but I wanted to play for a bigger school than Abilene Christian University."

He wanted to compete at UT and play in the NFL. Not many of us can grab virtually everything we envision. Colt did, and his determination serves to multiply his reader's determination

and ambition. If Colt can become so successful, the reader is left with a simple, powerful question:

What can I do?

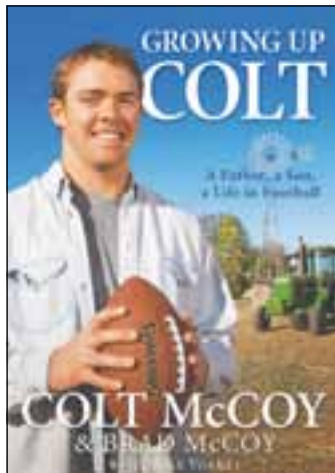
And there's another tantalizing question. How will this story end? Leading an NFL team as quarterback is the toughest task in sports. The failure rate is astronomical, and McCoy might, for the first time in a happy life jammed with triumph, travel to the foreign land of failure.

But readers — even devout Steelers fans — will root for him to carry the Browns to a Super Bowl title.

More importantly, readers will realize this is a young man who has more on his mind than a mere game.

Colt's unbending belief in an all-powerful God served as his fuel for his inspiring rise. He labored without ceasing as he chased his unlikely goals, but the charm of this book is his unending thanks to the family and the faith that made possible his journey from Tuscola to the NFL.

DAVID RAMSEY, a 1979 graduate of York College in Nebraska and a 1981 graduate of Abilene Christian University, is a sports columnist for the *Gazette* of Colorado Springs. He attends the Eastside Church of Christ. Contact him at lukeramsey@yahoo.com.



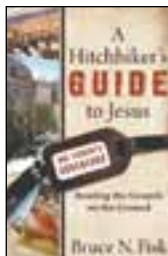
Colt McCoy, Brad McCoy, Mike Yorkey. **Growing Up Colt: A Father, a Son, a Life in Football.** Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour Books, 2011. 256 pages. \$24.99.

'McCoy was born with the athletic gifts required for high school stardom, and he could have cruised his way to a strong football career at a private Christian school. But he wanted more.'

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

CHRISTIAN FICTION

Bruce N. Fisk. **A Hitchhiker's Guide to Jesus: Reading the Gospels on the Ground.** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic. 320 pages, \$22.99.



Fisk, a New Testament professor, travels entirely new ground in the realm of fiction here.

Set in the contemporary Middle East, this book follows college graduate Norm on his pilgrimage through the Holy Lands, combining journal entries, biblical history, theological reflections, maps and photos.

BIBLE STUDY

Phillip Graham Ryken. **King Solomon: The Temptations of Money, Sex, and Power.** Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books. 256 pages, \$16.99.

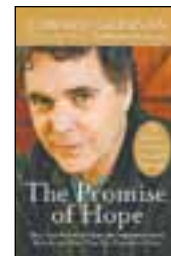


This book explores how Christians today must guard against the same temptations that ensnared the wisest man who ever lived.

In 13 chapters, Ryken, president of Wheaton College, presents an in-depth study of 1 Kings 1-11, suitable for a sermon series or small-group study.

MEMOIR

Edward Grinnan. **The Promise of Hope: How True Stories of Hope and Inspiration Saved My Life and How They Can Transform Yours.** Harlan, Iowa: GuidepostsBooks. 288 pages, \$18.96.



The editor of *Guideposts* magazine weaves his own story of overcoming alcoholism with inspiring ones he gleans from the pages of the magazine.

Each of the book's nine chapters is tied to one of his "nine keys to personal powerful change."

PARENTING

Debbie Taylor Williams. **The Plan A Mom in a Plan B World: Raising Faithful Kids in a Flawed World.** Abilene, Tex.: Leafwood. 224 pages, \$14.99.



Williams, a popular speaker and author, uses her conversational style to encourage moms to be models of Christian behavior for their children, overcoming the isolation and frustration that often comes with the territory. With discussion starters at the end of each of the 18 chapters, this book is appropriate for small-group study.



Oklahoma Christian University seeks experienced professionals to serve in the following position:

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The Department of Chemistry and Physics at Oklahoma Christian University invites applications for a tenure-track position in Physics. Ph.D. or ABD candidates will be accepted. Successful candidates should have a strong commitment to teaching foundational undergraduate physics courses, including laboratory sections, in both algebra-based and calculus-based classes. Duties of the faculty position include:

- Manage, maintain and upgrade laboratory experiments and equipment in the area of physics.
- Support the University's Core Curriculum (general education program) by teaching a non-majors course in Astronomy, Earth Science, or General Physical Science, as needed.
- Support the undergraduate research program by offering summer research projects, when available.
- Attend monthly meetings of the Department of Chemistry & Physics.
- Attend monthly meetings of the University faculty.
- Faculty contracts are for the academic year, which includes eight months of teaching and one month of summer work in May. During an academic year, full-time faculty members are required to teach during the fall and spring semesters.
- In addition, full-time faculty are required to participate in the fall faculty meetings, which are held the week before the fall term begins, and in the spring faculty meetings, which are held the week after the spring term ends.
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- Other duties in support of the department, as needed.

Oklahoma Christian University is a liberal arts university affiliated with the Churches of Christ. Each applicant should be an active member of the Church of Christ and have a personal life that reflects the teachings, example, and love of Jesus Christ. Interested applicants should send their resume/CV, transcripts, two letters of recommendation from academic or professional sources, one letter of recommendation from a church leader, a writing sample of your scientific work, and a teaching philosophy which specifically addresses integration of faith and learning to **David.Lowry@oc.edu** or by mail to:

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Christians struggle to find support for work in former East Germany

For the past 30 years, I have been concerned about the global mission of the church, especially in secular, unchristian Europe where faith is extremely hard.

I have observed dear, faithful people struggle in Poland, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic and other places, laborers of faith who have hearts for difficult work. I am therefore very distressed that a talented, eager young couple wants to work with a church plant in Leipzig, but they are not networked enough to have support.

When Roy Rhodes was a high school senior, I helped recruit him to the honors program at Oklahoma Christian University. He married Tiffany before his senior year, and during that final year they met Larry and Pam Sullivan, visiting missionaries of 20 years from Chemnitz, Germany. That relationship caused the Rhodes to dream of working in Germany for the Kingdom.

They decided to apply for the Helpers In Missions, or HIM, program — a two-year internship supervised by local evangelists and funded by the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. They worked in Chemnitz and now want to join the Sullivans in Leipzig.

Since March, they have sought support and a sponsoring congregation. They have found some support but no sponsor.

Joyce and I have come to love the Rhodes and see in them faithful servants with determination. In an early conversation, I asked Roy what about his Chemnitz experience had shaped his dream.

"Being missionaries on the HIM program taught us a lot about discipleship," he said. "Christ calls us to him out of his deep love for us, and he loves the people of East Germany just as deeply. And that truth is a truth most people in East Germany will not be confronted with, but we want to tell them.

"We learned that the German Democratic Republic's (Soviet-controlled East Germany) attempts to systematically secularize society were very effective.

When the GDR was established in 1949, 98 percent of East Germans confessed faith in Christ, and when

Insight



Bailey McBride

Germany reunified in 1990, less than 25 percent of East Germans claimed to be Christian.

"That number hasn't risen since. The general belief that religion is a crutch and that society is better off without an illusory faith very much persists, as does a great deal of ignorance regarding the Gospel."

When I asked Roy about their plans, he indicated that they saw this as a long-term commitment of at least 10 years.

Clyde Antwine, a longtime missionary to Germany, visited the Rhodes and is enthusiastic about their work. Larry Sullivan, who worked with the couple on a daily basis, strongly recommends them.

Since their arrival in Leipzig in July 2009, "Roy and Tiffany Rhodes ... have shown themselves to be willing workers," Sullivan said. "Tiffany has been able to use her artistic talents on

numerous occasions to help the church. She has prepared many of our invitations and flyers and has opened their apartment to many of their contacts. Roy has shown himself to be gifted learning German and shows no inhibitions about speaking to others.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Tiffany and Roy Rhodes.

"Both of these young people exhibit characteristics such as willingness to adapt, hospitality and readiness to serve — all things that we look for when searching for workers."

Sullivan also talked about the respect the church and team have for the Rhodes and how intense prayers are arising from Germany for them.

I ask you to pray for the Rhodes and consider ways you can help them evangelize in Leipzig. They especially need a loving, sponsoring church. Reach them at roy.rhodes@gmail.com.

CONTACT bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org.



Don't believe everything you hear about higher education...

Consider this: many of today's secular colleges and universities are places where a majority of Christian students lose their faith. At an impressionable time, they're immersed in a secular worldview, which most are unprepared to handle. "That can't be helped, because if students want a quality education there are no other options," some people say. Is that true? Ask the *tens of thousands* of successful professionals who were educated at our Christian institutions!

Secular colleges and universities offer only temporal ideas and worldviews. That's all they are allowed to offer. It's ironic that Christian colleges and universities are now the truly "open" schools where students are provided wisdom for making informed decisions about life's most important questions. It's time to challenge conventional wisdom.

Consider Christian higher education, the true open-mindedness.

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