



In nation's capital, Christians 'Crusade'

BY HAMIL R. HARRIS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON — The Washington Hilton has hosted many presidents and political elites, but the sight of a baptismal pool and the sound of a cappella hymns filling the grand hotel's ballroom may have been a first.

The Crusade for Christ, which every two years draws hundreds of volunteers and leads to dozens of baptisms in a different major city, kicked off in the nation's capital about the same time as Hurricane Irene struck.

But even as many Washington-area religious groups canceled weekend services, the hurricane failed to derail the crusade.

When the storm passed through the area, about 600

people were singing "I am a hard-fighting soldier, on the battlefield" during the crusade's opening banquet.

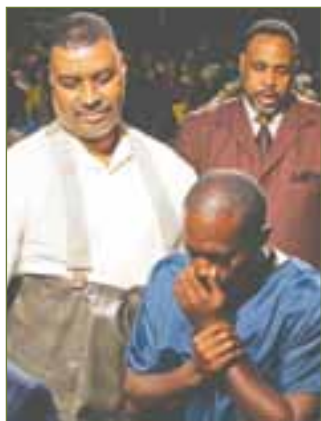
John Dansby, the evangelistic event's chief of staff and minister for the Russell Road

Church of Christ in Shreveport, La., smiled and told the gathering, "I was a meteorologist in the Air Force, and from the beginning, I wasn't worried" about the weather.

For a week, the Hilton was transformed into a sanctuary filled with "foot soldiers" — church members from across the nation — in yellow and green shirts.

Each morning, they marched out of the hotel, singing as they boarded buses to knock doors in neighborhoods in Washington

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HAMIL R. HARRIS

Edward Wilson, left, baptizes a convert during the Crusade for Christ in Washington, D.C.

Godless Pacific Northwest?

Seattle church experiences numerical, spiritual growth.



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'Courageous' fathering
New film urges dads to take active role in kids' lives.

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An artist's odyssey
Hawaii church member's paintings reflect his life.

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RYAN BARTELS

Oldest college football player gets first extra point for Faulkner

Alan Moore, a 61-year-old student at Faulkner University, gives a thumbs up to his family in the stands after kicking an extra point during the Montgomery, Ala., university's 41-19 rout of Ave Maria. Moore, a Vietnam vet, is the oldest player in college football history. "As soon as we called Alan's number ... everybody on the sideline started cheering and getting where they could see it, just in case history was made. And it was," said Gregg Baker, head coach for the football team at Faulkner, a university associated with Churches of Christ.

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At 108 years old, she's a new babe in Christ

Margaret Cooke felt numb. She could not believe what she was seeing.

For more than a half-century, Cooke, 78, had prayed that her mother, Lula Wallace, would accept the Gospel.

Inside Story



Bobby Ross Jr.

Now, five months shy of her 109th birthday, Wallace — still in her wheelchair — was being lowered into the chilly water at the Norris Road Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn.

Cooke would find it difficult to sleep the next few nights, as if it had been a dream and she might wake up to discover Wallace really hadn't confessed her faith in Jesus and washed away her sins.

"We haven't tried to force it on her in any kind of way," said Cooke, a Norris Road member influenced to become a Christian by her late husband, Ben. "Any time we had an opportunity, we'd just say a few words. ... We've just always made sure that we lived the life before her and let her know that Christ always came first in our lives."

Thirty years ago, Cooke helped win her younger sister Virginia Mack to the Lord. The sisters — two of 11 siblings born to a farming family — take turns caring for their mother at her home near Batesville, Miss., about

See **BAPTISM**, Page 4



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Brian Leavitt, minister of the Lobster Valley Church of Christ, and his wife, Chris, visit the southern Oregon coast. Leavitt has helped bring answers to his small Oregon Coast Range community.

Healing a wounded town

AFTER A STRING OF SUICIDES, an Oregon minister and congregation comfort the community and strive to heighten awareness.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ALSEA, Ore.

At the little white church off the two-lane blacktop, the front door stays unlocked all the time — just in case a passerby needs to use the restroom. Through the windows of the Lobster Valley Church of Christ, a 40-member congregation started by pioneer loggers a century ago, minister Brian Leavitt can look out and spot deer, elk and an occasional bald eagle. Up the hill, sawmill and dairy workers rest in peace in a cemetery deeded to the church by a founding member.

"When I first moved here in the '90s, we were still digging the graves by hand," said Leavitt, 54, a retired U.S. deputy marshal. "It was kind of a time where you do a little decompressing and a little sharing."

Leavitt, his wife, Chris, and their five chil-

dren moved to this Oregon Coast Range community — 40 miles from the Pacific Ocean — about 15 years ago. They live on forestland dotted with colorful lilies and irises and frequented by black bears and cougars.

"It's a pretty remote area, but it's gorgeous," said Leavitt, whose backyard overlooks a creek that runs into the Alsea River and serves as a swimming hole for salmon and steelhead.

Amid the beauty of wildflowers and wildlife, the ugliness of violent death gripped the tight-knit people of Alsea in 2009: Three suicides in three months shook the community.

"It took us to our knees," Leavitt said.

In the two years since, he and the Lobster Valley church have worked to bring healing — and answers — to the reeling town.

"It made us all aware of how fragile life can be," the minister said. "We know it from

See **SUICIDE**, Page 20

Divers recover body of missing Belize missionary

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Christians in the U.S. and Central America are mourning the loss of Bill Amason, a longtime missionary to the country of Belize.

Amason, 68, was reported missing from a resort owned by his family on Obabikion Bay in Sleeman, Ontario, on Aug. 26 — the same day he and his wife, Linda, celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary.

The missionary had taken a boat from the resort to a rock to burn trash, said his son, Jared Amason.

"It appears that his boat blew off the rock and he tried to swim after it but didn't make it," Jared Amason said.

Five days later, divers recovered Bill Amason's body.

Amason, a member of Churches of Christ in Florida and Illinois, organized more than 70 mission trips to Belize — some with more than 70 participants, his son said. His ministry brought medical, dental and spiritual aid to the impoverished people of the country.

Bill Amason also studied the Bible with prison inmates in Belize and organized "soles for souls" efforts to provide the inmates with shoes.

A memorial service is scheduled for 2 p.m. Oct. 23 at the Highway 161 Church of Christ in Centralia, Ill.



Amason



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Bill Amason preaches to inmates at a prison near Belize City in 2006.

www.christianchronicle.org

Go online to find news updates, an expanded calendar, classifieds and much more.

- **Crusade for Christ:** See a video of hundreds of Christian singing at the evangelistic event in Washington, D.C.
- **61-year-old kicker:** See a video of Alan Moore's first extra point for Faulkner University.
- **Breaking news:** Don't wait to read all the latest news or check out exclusive online features. Sign up for e-mail news alerts. Contact tamie.ross@christianchronicle.org.

BAPTISM: 'I'm doing this for myself and God'

FROM PAGE 3

an hour south of Memphis.

"I feel God has kept her around this long for a reason," said Mack, 66, a member of the East Frayser Church of Christ in Memphis.

Wallace — a grandmother of 22, great-grandmother of 45 and great-great-grandmother of 20 — always has lived an extremely moral life, her family said.

"No smoking, no drinking, no gambling, and she better not think that you're doing it," Mack said. "You had to live a clean life, and that's the way she was."

The late Nokomis Yeldell, the pioneering minister of the Norris Road church, came to Wallace's house and joined the daughters in pleading for her to be baptized. But she always declined — until a recent Thursday morning.

That day, Cooke sat down on the side of her mother's bed. They started talking about old times, as her mother loves to do. When Wallace complained to her daughter that "people just don't want to do what God wants them to do," Cooke sensed an opening.

"Oh, you are so right," Cooke said, starting in Genesis and leading her mother all the way through the Bible to Jesus' death on the cross.

At the end, Cooke smiled at her mother and asked, "Don't you want to be baptized?"

"Yes," she replied.

For the longest time, Cooke didn't say anything. Then — still in shock — she asked the same question one more time. Again, her mother replied, "Yes."

Still nervous that her mother might change her mind, Cooke called her sons and daughters — Wallace's grandchildren — and told them the news.

Nobody believed it right away.

"Y'all pray," Cooke urged as she

dressed her mother and prepared to drive her to Memphis.

At the Norris Road church building, John DeBerry, minister of the Coleman Avenue Church of Christ in Memphis and a cousin of Cooke's late husband, took Wallace's confession.

"Listen, I'm not doing this for no man," Wallace said, according to her daughter. "I'm doing this for myself and God."

Two of Cooke's sons — Wayne and Stanley — carried their grandmother in her wheelchair down into the water. After a bit of maneuvering, they pulled her out of the wheelchair and baptized her.

"It was one of the most gratifying experiences I've had in nearly 45 years of preaching, to be frank about it," said DeBerry, also a Tennessee state representative. "You thank the Lord that he allowed her to live so long. You have to feel as though the Lord knew her heart ... and for some reason, his grace and mercy allowed her not to leave this earth" unsaved.

Norris Road minister James Michael Crusoe prayed after she emerged from the water, and the crowd assembled for a Thursday morning Bible class greeted their new sister.

On the ride home, Wallace sat back and slept the entire way.

"Where have you all been?" Mack asked when she reached Cooke on her cell phone after trying to call the house.

"Mother was just baptized," Cooke replied.

"What?" Mack said. After realizing she'd heard right, she screamed with joy.

Back home, Wallace ate a senior meal prepared by the Norris Road church and returned to bed. The next day, Cooke had to leave before Wallace woke up. She softly kissed her mother.

"Sometimes, my mom's mind is not very clear," Cooke said. "But that morning, it was very clear. She knew what she wanted to do."

CONTACT bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org.



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Wallace

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MICHIGAN

WHITE PIGEON — Family and friends of U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jonathan Edds recently gathered in his hometown of White Pigeon to commemorate his life.

Edds, 24, was killed in Iraq on Aug. 17, 2007. He attended the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., and was an active member of the West Point Church of Christ. Edds' father, Barry, is minister for the White Pigeon Church of Christ.

In White Pigeon, about 160 people participated in the second annual 5K Walk and Run in support of the Edds Memorial Fund. Later, members of the community dedicated a 12-by-18-foot flag in Jonathan Edds' memory.

NORTH DAKOTA

MINOT — Volunteers from Florida-based Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team are helping church members clean up and repair flooded homes.

While flood-stricken North Dakota has disappeared from the headlines, the community's needs remain immense, said Daniel Kelly, minister for the Minot Church of Christ.

The homes of six families in the 60-member congregation sustained flood damage, Kelly said.

Earlier, Tennessee-based Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort sent a tractor-trailer load full of emergency food and supplies to help victims.

TENNESSEE

SPRING HILL — Inspired by a presentation he heard at Freed-Hardeman University's "GO! Camp," Logan Campbell organized a youth group trip to help the Global Soap Project in Atlanta.

Through the project, Derreck



GEOFFREY WYATT

In Alaska, combined Sunday school class bridges generational gap

John and Karen Essary and granddaughters Anna and Gillian share favorite Bible verses after making origami question catchers during an all-generation class at the Juneau Church of Christ in Alaska. On the first Sunday of each month, everyone ages 3 to 95 meets together for class. The eldership started the practice about a decade ago to help bridge a generation gap that seemed to be forming, deacon Geoffrey Wyatt said.

Kayongo, a refugee from Uganda, has a warehouse where soap thrown away by the hotel industry is sanitized, ground into flakes, melted with heat and reformed into bars cut to hand size. The recycled soap helps improve hygiene in needy countries around the world.

About 30 young people and sponsors from the Spring Meadows Church of Christ volunteered at the warehouse, said Tom Campbell, Logan's father.

UTAH

RENO — A Nevada National Guard member wounded in a shooting rampage at an IHOP restaurant regularly attends the Foothills Church of Christ.

Gary Cage, minister of the 125-member congregation, said Sgt. Caitlin Kelley is a friend of church members and has been studying the Bible with them.

"She's very interested in the Gospel," Cage said of Kelley, who was shot in the foot during the IHOP attack.

In the wake of the shooting, the minister said, "The main thing we're doing is serving her and seeing about her needs and spending a lot of time with her. It's very traumatic."

Guard leaders have characterized Kelley's response to the shooting as heroic. In all, 11 people were shot and four killed in the Sept. 6 attack.

VERMONT

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Church of Christ in Vermont helped flood victims in nearby towns after Hurricane Irene.

Elder Ernest "Puggy" Lamphere said the 80-member church received a truckload of emergency food boxes, personal care kits and cleaning supplies from Tennessee-based Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort.

Church volunteers used all-terrain vehicles to deliver supplies to some victims.

"It's a great effort and a great outreach for the church," Lamphere said, "and God gets the glory, not us."

SPOTLIGHT

Shining a light

SENATH, Mo. — The case of 3-year-old murder victim BreeAnn Rodriguez has made national headlines.

Hundreds attended a recent funeral for the slain girl at the Senath Church of Christ.

"The Rodriguez family did not attend here, but most of the members knew her and her family," minister Jody

McFadden said. "Several were her neighbors and saw and spoke to her and her family on a regular basis. We opened our building to them as a community service."

The service drew a standing-room-only crowd of more than 700.



Rodriguez



PHOTO PROVIDED BY SUSAN CAMPBELL

Sarah Grace Trimble, Hannah Weller and Autumn Collins use potato peelers to scrape layers off used bars of hotel soap.

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PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

The a cappella group The Fishers sings in front of the South Sudan flag at the Brothers' Organization for Relief appreciation reception at the Swope Parkway Church of Christ.

Kansas City church commits to bring education and Gospel to South Sudan

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — John Gak moved to this city in the middle of America 16 years ago, seeking a better life for himself and ways to help fellow refugees from his war-torn homeland of Sudan.

Now, Gak and a congregation of believers plan to bring badly needed education — and the Gospel — to the new nation of South Sudan.

"I know they say it takes a village to raise a child," John Gak said at a recent banquet for supporters of the work and community leaders. "It takes an entire church — the Swope Parkway Church of Christ — to build a school in my hometown."

For the past seven years, the 550-member church has sponsored Brothers' Organization for Relief, or BOR, a ministry dedicated to establishing a church and multi-use education building in Kongor, Gak's hometown in South Sudan. After decades of war with the Muslim-dominated north, South Sudan became an independent nation July 9.

Gak, who was baptized in Nairobi, Kenya, by missionary Joe McKissick before resettling in Kansas City, is a member of the Swope Parkway church.



John Gak thanks the Swope Parkway church for its devotion to his homeland, South Sudan.

A school building in Kongor is scheduled for completion next year, said church member Pete Peoples, chairman of BOR. The building needs fencing, electricity and water, and the church seeks additional partners to finance the work.

Nathan Shain, a video journalist with Kansas City TV station KSHB, traveled with Gak to Kongor recently to report on the ministry's work.

"The news can be a rough business at times," he said at the banquet, adding that he was glad to cover positive stories in South Sudan.

"What's really exciting about this work that you're doing is that it's just starting," Shain said. "There so much work still to do."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, see www.bormission.org or www.swopeparkway.org.

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1

"TITLE SONGS BOTH OLD AND NEW"

- Mansions Over The Hilltop
- I Need Thee Every Hour
- Only In Thee
- 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
- When I Look Into Your Holiness



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
- Lord, I Lift Your Name On High



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
- Why Did My Savior Come To Earth?



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
- Lord, Take Control



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
- The Lily Of The Valley



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- Old Rugged Cross
- 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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PHOTO PROVIDED

U.S. ambassador views mission team's work in Zambia

U.S. ambassador to Zambia Mark C. Storella, center, stands with Zambian government officials and village leaders, including His Royal Highness Chief Mumena, and members of a church-planting team in the southern African nation. Storella toured the Mumena Christian Outreach Center, tried out a bicycle-powered water well pump and saw other sustainable development projects undertaken by the team, which includes Brian and Sondra Davis, Rick and Karen Love, Sam and Ellie Rodriguez, Jeremy and Whitney Davis and Jason and Erin Davis. Chief Mumena said of the church members' work, "Look what great things can happen when a people of God follow his call to serve others."

ALBANIA

SARANDA — This year's Albanian Christian Camp was an international affair.

More than 300 campers attended, representing churches in nine Albanian cities and the nations of Montenegro, Croatia, the U.S., Greece, Germany and Luxemburg, said coordinator Sokol Haxhiu.

Alfred and Diana Zike of the Adriatic Church of Christ conducted the first week, designed for children. Bledi Valca of the Tirana Church of Christ conducted the second week for teenagers. Cimi Kafexhiu of the Durres Church of Christ directed a camp for adults during the third week.

GHANA

ASOTWE — Joel and Pat Coppinger led a team of six church members on a World Bible School campaign in this West African nation. The campaigners worked with Ghanaian Christians to baptize 141 and establish a new congregation in the village of Asotwe.

"In one day, 31 were baptized in that village," Joel Coppinger said.

GUATEMALA

GUATEMALA CITY — Twenty church members from the U.S. participated in a mission trip to this Central American nation recently. The team conducted a seminar — with classes for children, teens, men and women — at the Linda Vista Church of Christ. The team also made improvements to the homes of three families in need.

THAILAND

CHIANG MAI — A record-breaking 252 church members attended the 50th Asia Mission Forum. Speakers included Gordon Hogan, longtime missionary to Pakistan and Singapore; Tim Woodroof, minister for the Otter Creek Church of Christ in Brentwood, Tenn.; and Atsushi Tsuneki, minister for the Mito Church of Christ in Japan. Find audio from their talks and video interviews from the forum at asianmissionforum.com.

UKRAINE

DZERZHINSK — About 150 children from a public school in this Eastern European city learned about the "superheroes" of

the Bible during a weeklong camp.

Twenty-nine Christians from the U.S. sang with the children, performed puppet shows and taught Bible stories.

"Our days were full," coordinator Bill Wharton said. "The team was also involved in service projects within the church and community," including painting and repairing homes and visiting a nearby orphanage.

Alina, a 12-year-old who attended the camp, said, "I have learned a lot about justice, kindness, about our growth and about the superhero Jesus who is unconquerable. This was an unforgettable week. I also found a lot of new friends."

VIETNAM

HO CHI MINH CITY — Four church members from Singapore visited this Southeast Asian nation recently to teach Bible classes to a growing group of believers, said Tom Tune, who works with the church.

The congregation averages 50 to 80 attendees and is building a meeting place and medical clinic, Tune said.

SPOTLIGHT

A love and legacy for Latin America

PLEASANTON, Texas — Rick Harper once asked Jerry Hill how an agriculture major from Abilene Christian University in Texas ended up doing mission work in Latin America.

Hill's response: "Someone had to, and I could."

Hill, a pioneering missionary to Guatemala, laid the foundation for missions to follow, including Health Talents International, a medical ministry directed by Harper.

Hill, a member of the Pleasanton Church of Christ, died Sept. 12. He was 82.

Hill and his wife, Ann, moved to Guatemala in 1959 and were among the first missionaries from Churches of Christ to work in the Central American nation.



Hill

Armando Hernandez was 10 years old when the Hills arrived, and the family was instrumental in his baptism — and the conversion of his two brothers.

"I accompanied Jerry on several of his missionary visits to small villages in his old Volkswagen bug, which he loved so much," Hernandez said. "Jerry, with his gentle and humble spirit and his great smile, touched the lives of thousands of people in my country."

The Hills worked in Latin America for more than 20 years — in Guatemala, Mexico, Bolivia and Argentina. They also helped plant the first congregations in El Salvador. Jerry Hill recently authored a memoir about his work, "Guatemala: Joy and Crown."

Jerry Hill also inspired future missionaries, including Bill Richardson, who served in Guatemala, Argentina and Chile and now is director of the Center for Advanced Ministry Training at Harding University in Searcy, Ark.

"The English and Spanish languages together lack all of the superlatives that could be attributed to this great man of God and his partner, Ann, in the years of service they have provided," Richardson said.

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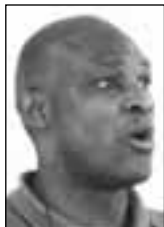
Team of 99 Christians serves 900 children

Some of the 900 residents of the Community of Children in La Ventanilla, Peru, play with balloons and members of a U.S. mission team. The team of 99 church members, ranging from 13 to 81 years old, represented congregations in Texas, Kentucky, Ohio and New Mexico. The Westover Hills Church of Christ in Austin, Texas, has coordinated the trip for five years, said Scott Warner, the church's outreach minister. The church also oversees a sponsor-a-child program with the orphanage. For more information, see www.peru-sagradafamilia.com.

Nigerian Christians rally behind 'a true Barnabas' battling cancer

LAGOS, Nigeria — A church leader in this West African nation faces a tough battle — physically and financially — with cancer.

Emmanuel Abiodun Adegorye, 52, began a ministry job with a congregation in Abuja, Nigeria's capital, earlier this year. The minister hosts a gospel radio program and served as an instructor at the School of Biblical Studies, a church-supported ministry training school in Jos, Nigeria, for 18 years. For two years, he studied at Heritage Christian University in Florence, Ala.



Adegorye

After about two months in Abuja, Adegorye experienced pain in his chest and limbs. A bone marrow biopsy confirmed that the minister had multiple myeloma, a cancer of the blood's plasma cells. Adegorye currently is undergoing treatment in Lagos, Nigeria, but requires additional treatment in the U.S.

Chikezie Madu, a Nigerian native baptized by Adegorye 24 years ago, now works as a graduate research assistant in a Memphis, Tenn., hospital and is

working to have Adegorye admitted to a hospital in Little Rock, Ark., that specializes in multiple myeloma treatment.

Churches in Nigeria have raised money for the trip, Adegorye said. They are praying for Christians in the U.S. to help defray the minister's medical expenses once he reaches Arkansas.

"I, on my own side, am asking the Lord for complete remission," Adegorye said.

Deborah Klein, who served as a missionary in Nigeria with her husband, Ken, described Adegorye as "a dear, dear brother in Christ who has given himself and his many talents to the spread of the Kingdom in Nigeria."

"He is a true Barnabas in terms of encouragement," said Klein, now an instructor at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., "and his wife, Gloria, supplements his ministry with her hospitality."

Lee Hodges of Hope Springs International, a water well-drilling ministry in Hendersonville, Tenn., is collecting funds to help with Adegorye's expenses.

TO CONTRIBUTE, contact Hope Springs International, 118 Wessington Place, Hendersonville, TN 37075. Please note "Cancer Treatment Fund" on contributions.



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

Physics Professor

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.
- Beyond the two weeks in which they are attending faculty meetings—including University-wide meetings, college meetings, and departmental meetings—faculty must complete the equivalent of two weeks of summer non-teaching assignments, as determined by the deans of the colleges, in conjunction with the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- 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:

Dr. David Lowry
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
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MISSIONS

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

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Christians from Philippines show love to their sisters in Hong Kong

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Two Christian women from the Philippines traveled to the Asian metropolis of Hong Kong recently to show love and minister to the needs of their sisters in Christ.

Hong Kong, one of two special administrative regions of China, is home to more than 170,000 overseas Filipino workers, said Gigie Carranza, a member of a Church of Christ in Quezon City, Philippines. Many of the workers are women who serve as maids and live in humble circumstances.

About 100 Filipino women worship with the Wan Chai Church of Christ in Hong Kong. Church members Felix and Luz Olidan often open their home to the women and prepare home-cooked meals for them, Carranza said.

Carranza and Dr. Evelyn Ignacio, a church member and physician in the Philippines, hosted a seminar for the women, covering topics from stress management to proper hygiene.

"I am humbled listening to their stories of faith and hope," Carranza said. "One sister, who is a single parent, beamed with pride as she told me about



GIGIE CARRANZA

Christian women sing hymns at the Wan Chai Church of Christ in Hong Kong.

her daughter who recently became a licensed nurse.

"Another sister refuses to spend her hard-earned cash on a vacation to her hometown so she can help her youngest son to open a cafeteria."

Being in their midst felt like a homecoming, Carranza added.

Before returning to the Philippines, Carranza and Ignacio also visited Macau, China's other special administrative region, about 40 miles west of Hong Kong. There, Filipino Christian Alfred Ceynas ministers to a small church that meets in an apartment, Carranza said.

Children fly high at Christian school

SEFWI-DEBISO, Ghana — Airplanes rarely fly over this remote West African village, and few children here ever consider careers in aviation.

That changed when Willette Neal, a church member from Georgia, hosted an aviation day camp at Lamplighter Community Academy, a 400-student Christian school supported by Churches of Christ.

Neal, who works for the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, talked to about 70 students in grades six through eight about her job, airplane components and airline safety procedures around the world. She showed them photos of airplanes on her laptop computer until the battery died. The

school does not have electricity.

The day camp "allowed the kids to learn about new ways of making a

living beyond farming with the limited land available to them," said Augustine Tawiah, a Ghanaian minister and the school's founder. "The fascinating part of the program was the experience of touching miniature airplanes and learning that the pilots talk to people on the ground."

The students received lanyards decorated with miniature airplanes.

"Every child that received one said, 'God bless you,'" Neal told *FocusFAA* newsletter. "We take such small things for granted. They were so appreciative."



PHOTO PROVIDED

Students in Ghana make planes during aviation day camp.



Abilene Christian Schools

Abilene Christian Schools (Pre-K through 12th grade) seeks a **President** who will serve as Chief Executive Officer. Candidate requirements include dedication to Christian education, experience in finance and budget administration, fundraising expertise, excellent communication and interpersonal skills, Church of Christ membership, and a master's degree. Interested parties should send resumes and cover letter to:

**c/o Charles Anderson
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CRUSADE: 'Foot soldiers' knock 15,000 doors in D.C. area

FROM PAGE 1

and neighboring Maryland and Virginia.

For minister Edward Maxwell and elder Bill Davis from the Suitland Road Church of Christ in Suitland, Md., bringing the crusade to the D.C. area fulfilled a 20-year dream.

"This was something to bring us all together," Davis said, referring to area Christians.

While some see modern tools such as online social networking as better ways to spread the Gospel, church leaders involved with the crusade still believe in the effectiveness of door knocking.

"African-American members of the Church of Christ have placed a lot of emphasis on evangelism going back to the early 20th century," said Edward Robinson, a Bible and church history professor at Abilene Christian University in Texas. These members "still cling to the face-to-face, door-to-door method. They believe in the human touch to demonstrate that you are concerned about your fellow man."

By the end of the week, the participants had knocked on nearly 15,000 doors — including a crusade record of more than 5,000 doors in one day.

Daniel Harrison, minister of the Chatham Avenue Church of Christ in Chicago, has served as the crusade's national director since the first crusade drew 3,000 people to a convention center in the Windy City in 1979.

"The crusade is not an organization," Harrison said. "It is a living organism with feelings and emotions, and there is nothing like making contact with people."

Knocking doors in Temple Hills, Md., Ella Murray, a 60-year-old home health aide from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., met Albert DeWitt. DeWitt, a Jamaican-born immigrant who used to play with reggae artist Bob Marley, told Murray he

was a Rastafarian who believed in "baptism of fire."

Still, Murray asked him, "Would you like a Bible study?"

Murray, a foot soldier since 1987, has traveled to crusades in Chicago, New Orleans, Los Angeles and elsewhere. During a break, she laughed with fellow Christians as they shared their door-knocking stories.

"They called the police on us. They said that it was a private neighborhood," said Pattie Johnson, a court reporter from Irvington, N.J. She came to the crusade with her two sisters, two nieces and a great niece.

While the crusade is made up of primarily African-American congregations, Maxwell said predominantly black and white Churches of Christ in the Washington area came together to raise more than \$200,000 for the event.

"It is not about race," said Floyd Williamson, who is white and serves as minister of the Oxon Hill Church of Christ in Temple Hills. "It's about coming together for the cause of Christ."

In the evening Murray and other foot soldiers exchanged their T-shirts for dress clothes during the revival portion of the crusade at the Hilton ballroom.

One of the highlights of the event was the singing, from the Crusade Choir under the direction of Jerome Jones to spirited music directed by song leaders Darwin Mason of Nashville, Tenn., and Chris Turner from New Jersey.

Jack Evans, president of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, offered fiery sermons each night that resulted in dozens of baptisms and prayer requests.

In an interview, Evans said that he was glad the crusade came to Washington.

"It is a unique opportunity for the church to come to the capital of the United States, within miles of the White House,



HAMIL R. HARRIS

Jack Evans, president of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, can be seen on the big screen as he preaches during the Crusade for Christ in Washington, D.C. Members and visitors assembled at the Hilton.

to tell people in and around the White House about the right house," Evans said, "and that is the church of Jesus Christ."

Shaneca Tucker, 35, was one of the people baptized.

She answered the door when Breeyantae Wells, 15, and Donald Brice came to her door. Brice took off from his produce manager job at a local Safeway to be a part of his first crusade.

In addition to asking about her faith, the duo also asked if Tucker and her friend had any needs. After learning that their power was out because of the hurricane, the church members invited Tucker and her friend to the Suitland Road building for lunch and bags of groceries.

But she also left with the Word. During a Bible study at the building, Tucker opened up to Maxwell about her life. Maxwell responded by drawing



HAMIL R. HARRIS

Elders and leaders pose for a group photo during the Crusade for Christ.

a circle. "If Jesus is in your life, you are in this circle," he told her. "If he is not, then you are outside. Where are you?"

After Evans' sermon, Tucker still had the circle on her mind as she confessed her faith and accepted Jesus in baptism.

Brice, a member of the Suitland Road church, said Tucker's baptism brought tears to his eyes. "I was overwhelmed ... to see that a lost soul had been saved," he said.

SINGING VIDEO: www.christianchronicle.org



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Send all materials to Dr. Robyn R. Miller, Chair; Oklahoma Christian University, 2501 E. Memorial Road, Edmond, OK 73013, robyn.miller@oc.edu.

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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.

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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

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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: **camia.agan@oc.edu**.

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

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Not *sheepless* in Seattle

FAR FROM THE BIBLE BELT, a congregation in one of the nation's most unchurched cities experiences growth and expands its facilities to create more opportunities to serve the community.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

SEATTLE

This Pacific Northwest seaport is famous for Starbucks, the Space Needle and citizens who sleep in on Sundays.

Minister James A. Maxwell has news for his fellow Christians, though: The Church of Christ is not *sheepless* in Seattle.

In this city of 600,000 souls, the flock of the Holgate Church of Christ has more than doubled in the last seven years, approaching 300 members.

"The field's white unto harvest," said Lynn

Fuller, one of the congregation's four elders. "If there truly is a multitude of unchurched people, that's just more opportunities to draw people in. And you do it through service."

The church, just off the busy Martin Luther King Jr. Way and next to the American Red Cross hub in the center of Seattle, has outgrown its building and is nearing completion of a \$2.3 million expansion project, leaders said.

Church member Robert Stowers, the congregation's financial secretary, led a visitor on a tour of the construction site, excitedly describing plans for a new fellowship hall, additional Sunday school classrooms and an auditorium that will seat 600.

"Right there, that's a physical fitness room with showers in them," he said.

"We might become a shelter if there's an emergency, so the Red Cross requires that emergency shelters have showers."

The fitness center will serve, too, as a tool to help members — and the community — stay in top physical as well as spiritual shape, Stowers said.

A commercial kitchen will allow the church to expand its feeding program for the homeless, while the new classrooms will open up more opportunities for community outreach, he said.

"We're going to be exploring having childcare down here when we're not having Sunday school," he said.

"We've talked about having a teen night on Friday nights and having the community come in."

CONTINUED

Holgate Church of Christ, Seattle

LOCATION: Center of Seattle, just off busy Martin Luther King Jr. Way.

WEBSITE: www.holgatecoc.org

ELDERS: Jeremiah Brewer, Lynn Fuller, Paul Reynald and Elgin Williams.

MINISTER: James A. Maxwell.

THEME FOR 2011: "Soaring toward heaven in 2011."

ABOUT THE SERIES

The Christian Chronicle launched Churches That Work in 2005. Churches That Work should be: **evangelistic**, reaching the unchurched at home or abroad; **biblical**, making Bible instruction central to their mission; **united**, possessing a spirit of internal vitality; and **visible**, appreciated for service in their community.

Read the complete series online at www.christian-chronicle.org.



Elder Lynn Fuller, with his son Theo Fuller, visits with church member Jason Cornelius outside the community center where the Holgate Church of Christ meets temporarily on Sunday mornings.

‘They wanted to grow the church’



Minister James A. Maxwell greets a visitor after the Sunday morning assembly.



Members and visitors stand to pray during a Sunday service. A community center's gymnasium serves as the congregation's temporary Sunday morning home.



Josiah Williams helps pass the collection trays for the Holgate Church of Christ.



Minister James A. Maxwell and church financial secretary Robert Stowers check on the status of construction. The 11,000-square-foot building is being expanded to about 28,000 square feet.

CONTINUED

Seattle is a long way from the Bible Belt — more than 1,700 miles, in fact, from Terrell, Texas.

That's where Maxwell — the Holgate church's preacher — grew up. His father, James O. Maxwell, serves as vice president of institutional advancement at Southwestern Christian College.

In 1995, while working as youth minister for the Dellcrest Church of Christ in San Antonio, the younger Maxwell and his wife, LaConya, brought 30 teenagers to the National Youth Conference in Seattle.

"It's one of those places where you say, 'I wouldn't mind living here,'" he recalled. "But I never thought I would."

Maxwell later spent six years as associate minister with the Figueroa Church of Christ in Los Angeles, where he worked with longtime minister Calvin Bowers.

When the Holgate church called in 2004 — nearly a decade after the youth conference — Maxwell felt God's urging.

"There were certain things they wanted to do," he said. "They wanted to build. They wanted to grow the church. They wanted to evangelize the community. And I was excited about the possibilities."

Membership totaled about 130 when Maxwell arrived. Now, attendance runs

between 250 and 285 most Sundays, he said.

Special events, such as a recent Friend Day, where the church welcomed guests and new convert Brandon Roy of the Portland Trail Blazers, draw crowds of 300 or more. Asked what has brought about the growth, Maxwell replied, "We emphasize a strong pulpit, and it's a place where you can get, we believe, the sound teaching for your family, teaching for your everyday life, your work life. I think that's a strength for us."

The dapper-looking man with stylish glasses and a charcoal-gray suit leading singing on a Sunday was Owen Craft.



Melvin Seldon, Darryl Ann Mason and Danny Mason discuss their recovery from addictions.

It was impossible to tell that he's a recovering drug and alcohol addict who just marked five years of sobriety.

"Everything that tasted like alcohol and everything that somebody said was a drug, I took it," said Craft, 51.

"It's only God," he said of how he overcame his addiction.

Holgate members minister to addicts through the Union Gospel Mission, a homeless center a few miles from the church. That effort has resulted in a number of baptisms, leaders said.

Danny and Darryl Ann Mason, both recovering addicts, said the congregation welcomed them with genuine love and care.

Darryl Ann said she walked away from her children, prostituted herself and served time in prison.

At her lowest point, loving herself and believing that God could forgive her were impossible, she said.

"The women here just have taken me under their wing," said Darryl Ann, sporting a black-print jacket dress and a necklace with a large onyx pendant on a Sunday. "They have not asked me about my past, nor do they care about my past. What they do care about is my soul, which is something so different for me," she added. "I get really edified when I

come here."

While primarily African-American, the Holgate church embraces increasing numbers of white and immigrant members, leaders said.

Fuller and his wife, Jeri, are white. They have five adopted children of mixed races.

"As you get to know brother Maxwell, all of a sudden, his character is more important than how he looks or the color of his skin," Lynn Fuller said. "And as you meet these people, you learn to appreciate the greatness in them rather than go, 'Hey, that guy's a different color/race than me.'"

Since his conversion nearly a half-century ago, Holgate member Behailu Abebe has devoted himself to sharing Christ. He has won souls in his home nation of Ethiopia and among refugees in Kenya, and now he teaches African immigrants in the U.S.

"Many times, we don't know why God takes us from one place to another," said Abebe, who came to Seattle to deal with heart problems. "But now I see here a lot of Kenyans and South Sudanese, and I am having (Bible) classes with them."

"The church here, there's really a lot going on," he added. "They want to work with all nationalities."

As the construction progresses, the congregation meets on Sunday mornings

at a community center, arranging folding chairs on a gymnasium floor.

On Sunday nights, Holgate members worship about 10 miles away with the Southside Church of Christ.

The joint services have strengthened the relationship between the congregations, Southside minister William Harper said.

"We're getting to know each other much better," Harper said. "That's one of the greatest benefits we have seen."

The Holgate church enjoys similar close ties with the Madison Park Church of Christ, the Seattle church where basketball star Roy was baptized.



Construction proceeds on an expansion project at the Holgate Church of Christ.

"The congregations here are kind of spread out, but we do have a level of closeness that some cities with a lot of congregations don't have," Maxwell said. "I think the fact that there are so few congregations, collectively, that it's allowed us to be closer, since we kind of have to depend on each other more."

The recent Legacy Conference, overseen by the Holgate church and directed by LaConya Maxwell, brought together more than 250 girls and women from 20-plus congregations.

Besides Bible study, the three-day event featured service projects, from assembling 300 rescue kits for shelters to providing 100 pairs of shoes for a church-supported school for the deaf in Ethiopia.

In Seattle, where about one in five adults describe themselves as atheist or agnostic, sharing one's faith can present challenges.

"I can't go out and say, 'Jesus is Lord,'" said Holgate member Earl Conner, a Christian since 2007 converted through the recovery ministry. "OK, I do say it, but people will reject it. So I have to allow God to put me in the places where he wants me to serve him."

So far, that approach seems to be paying spiritual dividends: Conner has helped lead six friends to Christ.

SUICIDE: Deaths prompt Oregon minister, town to take action

FROM PAGE 3
reality, whether it's logging accidents or cancer. ... But there are sometimes when we really recognize the frailty of the human condition, and suicide is one of those."

TABOO SUBJECT
Nationwide, nearly 35,000 people died by suicide in 2007, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. For every person who died, a dozen more tried to kill themselves. Here in Oregon, suicide was the leading cause of violent death in 2009, with the state health authority reporting a suicide rate of 16.8 per 100,000 people that year. Homicide was next with 2.6 per 100,000. "I don't think it's talked about openly enough," said Larry Brady, an elder of the Davenport Church of Christ in Alabama and author of "Undiagnosed: Losing the Son I Didn't Know," a book about the 2005 suicide of his 29-year-old son. "After Chris died, we found that there are a lot of people grappling with this same situation, same problem."

Victims range from teenagers harassed at school to military veterans suffering war trauma to elderly people facing a debilitating illness or loss of a spouse. However, the Suicide Prevention Resource Center cautions against oversimplifying the causes of suicide. More than 90 percent of victims have a diagnosable mental illness and/or substance use disorder, according to the center.

"I teach counselors and ministers to recognize warning signs of suicide risk, yet you cannot always predict or prevent every suicide," said Ed

Gray, professor of counseling at Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn. "Our compassion and caring involvement are our best responses to individuals who are at risk for suicide." Yet suicide remains a taboo subject for many in society — and in the church, where some view it as an unforgivable sin. "Undoubtedly, some who take their own life do so from a mental state that makes them no longer responsible for their choices," said Cecil May Jr., dean of the Bible college at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala. "The reason God is the final judge of such things, and we are not, is that the heart is involved, not just actions that can be seen. Only God can consider that essential aspect of things."

HOW COULD HE?
For 33 years, Gilbert N. Strom served as pastor of the Alsea Baptist Church, a tiny congregation that Leavitt said believes in baptism for the remission of sins. A Vietnam veteran, Strom liked handing out American flags as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7961 in Alsea. He taught hunter safety courses to generations of Alsea children — including Leavitt's — and worked at the post office.

"This is the mercantile," Leavitt said, pointing out the main store in town. "That bench is where Gilbert would sit forever and talk to folks. Gilbert was a person who was basically a friend to everybody in the valley." Strom died by suicide on Feb. 7, 2009. He was 62. As the chaplain with Alsea's volunteer fire department, Leavitt responded to the call



A two-lane blacktop highway runs between the Lobster Valley church and the cemetery across the street.

when his friend's body was found. Leavitt, fire chief George Foster — also a member of the Lobster Valley church — and their wives cleaned up the shooting scene to save the family that anguish. More than 500 people packed the school gymnasium for Strom's funeral, which Leavitt preached. A few weeks later, a third victim — a young man from out of town — was found on a hillside. "It kind of turned things upside down," said fire chief Foster, a rock quarry operator who also serves on the Alsea school board. The volunteer fire department covers a 100-square-mile area with less than 1,000 total residents. Everybody literally knows everybody. "I honestly don't think we're any different than any other community," Leavitt said. "I just think, because we

know our neighbors, everybody knew what happened."

SAVING OTHERS
In the aftermath of the deaths, the Lobster Valley church paid for Leavitt and two Alsea schoolteachers to attend a course on suicide intervention. That resulted in the high school offering a four-day suicide prevention program for students. Leavitt also traveled to Seattle and attended a police and fire chaplain academy focused on prevention and intervention. He shared what he learned with all of Alsea's 20-plus volunteer firefighters and other community leaders. At an areawide preachers' luncheon, Leavitt made the case for churches taking the lead in preventing unnecessary deaths. "If Christians don't have reasons for living, nobody has reasons for living," he said. According to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, warning signs range from a person threatening to hurt or



The Lobster Valley church was started by pioneer loggers.



Lobster Valley church member George Foster serves as Alsea's volunteer fire chief.

kill oneself to hopelessness, uncontrolled anger and relentless risky activities. "There are going to be some people that are going to slip under the radar, but most people don't want to die," Leavitt said. "Most people are looking for someone to engage. My question is, 'Are you going to be listening — really, actively listening — to what somebody's saying?'" After Strom's death, his family heard from a friend that he had contemplated suicide after his mother's death in 2007, said his sister Margie Ferris of Vancouver, Wash. "We wish she could have shared that with the family earlier," Ferris said. At home, Strom was quiet and withdrawn — not the outgoing, bubbly personality most people knew, his sister said. After his mother's death, the Baptist pastor buried his father and a close friend and was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Ferris and other relatives of Strom have visited the Lobster Valley church and expressed their gratitude for Leavitt and the congregation. "We may save others because of what Brian has done," Ferris said. "I think he's made it a better community and a more caring community."

Strom's sister doesn't blame herself for her brother's death, but she can't help asking, "What if?" "I'm not positive his death could have been prevented," she said. "But I wonder, if we had had the knowledge that Brian's bringing now, could I have done something? I'll always wonder." Already, the effort in Alsea is saving lives, community leaders said. "The number of people watching out for each other is staggering," Leavitt said. "It is my prayer that this effort is just beginning and that hundreds more — perhaps thousands — will benefit directly from our love for a dear friend."

RESOURCES

Information on suicide prevention:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org or (800) 273-TALK.
- **Suicide Prevention Resource Center:** www.sprc.org
- **Save One Life Suicide Intervention Training (Brian and Chris Leavitt):** save1life@peak.org or (541) 331-6445.
- **LivingWorks:** www.livingworks.net
- **QPR Institute:** www.qprinstitute.com
- **Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide:** www.sptsnj.org



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A conversation with Kayla Bilby

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AT AN INNER-CITY CHURCH *brings countless challenges and joys to young Christian's life.*

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

TULSA, Okla.

At the tender age of 20, Kayla Bilby already has made four mission trips to inner-city Houston and five to the Central American nation of Honduras.

She also serves the poor and downtrodden in her hometown. As part of the Contact Church of Christ, she shows God's love to children from low-income families. The church is an urban ministry launched by the Park Plaza Church of Christ in Tulsa in 1999.

"I like to take her into the 'hood because of the way she relates to children," Ron Babbitt, a minister for the Contact church, said of Bilby. "That spirit is a huge blessing to have."

Bilby grew up at Park Plaza and is a junior at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, pursuing a degree in religious education of children. She has recruited her uncle, brother, cousin, boyfriend and mother to teach classes with her at Contact. Her family includes parents Mickey and Shelly and brother Brent.

How did you become interested in inner-city ministry?

I began attending Contact when I was 11. It wasn't long before Ron Babbitt was telling me that one day I would be working there full time in children's ministry. At that point I thought he was just a crazy old man.

I began teaching classes and did my first internship at 13. After that summer, I was certain inner-city ministry was God's calling for my life. I began taking mission trips and traveled to Honduras, Houston



LYNN McMILLON

Kayla Bilby poses with some of the children she serves at the Contact Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla.

and the Dominican Republic. These trips served to grow my heart for the poor and for the broken, and I began to believe I was called to foreign ministry.

In 2009 I visited Contact again, and Ron asked me, "When are you gonna repent and come run with me in the 'hood?"

I replied, "I can start in May." Since then, I have never thought about going anywhere else.

What do you wish people better understood about ministering to poor children?

Ministering to the poor is not simply running a charity. It's not just providing shoes, clothes or food. These children need so much more than the temporary things of this life. They need people to stand in the gap — people who love and believe in them regardless of the circum-

stances that they live in or the choices that they make.

I wish churches would recognize inner-city ministry as a mission field. All of the ministers at Contact, myself included, have to fully raise their support just like in foreign mission work. To date, raising enough to cover personal expenses has been one of the most challenging parts of my ministry.

What have you learned from your experiences with underprivileged families?

One of the blessings of the inner city is that I get to meet

people where they are, not where I want them to be. At first, kids are not going to trust me,

'Ministering to the poor is not simply running a charity. It's not just providing shoes, clothes or food. These children need so much more than the temporary things in life.'

Kayla Bilby

and as time goes by, they are going to act out just to see if my love is genuine.

I will never understand where they come from. Seeing it has opened my eyes, but I cannot understand.

Ministry is not mathematical. If you can't find the 100, find the one. I have learned not to let

loss be Satan's stepping stone.

Success comes in giving it to the Lord and trusting that he is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to the power that is at work within us.

What are some things that children have said to you that have touched your heart?

I had the opportunity to bless a 6-year-old boy from church with much-needed shoes and socks. While teaching the following Sunday, I asked the children to explain how they know that God is in fact real.

This same young man said, "God bought me a new pair of shoes this week!" Once again, God took the temporary and made it into an eternal opportunity.

Ministry is not about me or a new pair of shoes; it is about a child having the opportunity to know his creator on a personal level. The shoes will wear out, but that child's soul will last an eternity.

Does a ministry to children provide genuine opportunities to lead children and their families to Jesus?

Absolutely! Every Sunday I have my Contact kids sing the "Crown Song," and we talk about the importance of heaven. A few months ago, one of my 5-year-old girls came up to me and said, "Miss Kayla, can we sing to my mama?"

I was privileged to hear this little girl sing, "Mama, I want to see you up in heaven when life is through. I want to be with Jesus, and, Mama, I want you to be there too."

I cannot help but believe that God uses his children to speak volumes to the adults around them — including their parents. Everyone is reachable, and God uses different people and a variety of circumstances to accomplish his goal of leading all his children to heaven.



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BILBY: Teaching kids self-worth is a challenge

FROM PAGE 23

Do you have a special story of a child that stands out?

Last summer I was doing a Bible study with one of the girls about anger. I asked her what made her angry.

She replied, "I don't even have a bed! I sleep on the floor with a sheet!" Not having a bed to sleep in was stripping this young woman of her dignity.

I cried all the way home that night. After spending time in prayer, I began making phone calls.

Park Plaza has a furniture ministry, and they agreed to donate eight brand-new beds. Within a few days, we were able to deliver the beds to this family. The 4-year-old daughter had never had a bed before.

She would not let me get out the door before putting sheets on her bed. The smile on her face lit up my world. I have never been more humbled.

What do you mean when you call these children "my kids?"

I have been asked this question many times. I refer to them as "my kids" because I love them, pray for them, cry with them and stand in the gap for them. I have invested in these children.

Real relationships do not happen in a 45-minute class once a week. The relationships I have formed with the kids have taken place when they are spending time in my home with my family.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:8, Paul speaks of sharing your life with the people you minister to. I am willing to share my life as well as the Gospel with "my kids."

What about your kids makes you cry?

One of the most difficult things to handle is the lack of self-worth. Because these kids do not receive the love and nurture they desperately need, they find their value in their abilities or what they are able to offer.

Recently, one of the boys informed me, "Your family loves me, but no one else does. You guys are all I've got!" It breaks my heart to watch as the

kids feel unloved and devalued. I have spent many nights praying about how to convey to these kids that their value comes from their heavenly father. Until they truly understand that he gives them value that cannot be taken away, they cannot fully understand the Gospel.

What about your kids gives you joy?

One of the blessings in ministry is when one of your kids really "gets" it.

A few weeks ago, one of my 4-year-olds came running and wanted to tell me the Bible story he learned in class. He said, "Miss Kayla, the man didn't do what God wanted. So he got thrown in the sea and the whale ate him. The man cried and he got spit out. Then he did what God wanted."

It was amazing to hear a 4-year-old recall the story of Jonah in his own words. Another one of my kids was able to share with Ron every miracle Jesus performed that we have learned about so far this semester. Watching the kids really begin to grasp

who their Lord is has been the greatest reward I have ever been given.

What words do you have for other young people who may be looking for a special ministry?

I believe that we all have been called to share the Gospel. Sometimes God is calling you to the ministry that was always there, right in front of your eyes.

If you truly want to be involved in a special ministry, open your eyes and open your heart. Allow God to direct your path. When he shows you where you have been called, act on that call—even if it seems too small to be significant and even if the situation seems completely hopeless. Put your trust in the Lord, and never forget that it only takes the faith of a mustard seed to move mountains.

READ KAYLA BILBY'S BLOG at www.kaylabilby.blogspot.com.



WWW.KAYLABILBY.BLOGSPOT.COM

Kayla Bilby gets a hug at a summer camp attended by children from the Contact Church of Christ.

HIGHER EDUCATION

NATIONSUNIVERSITY

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. — NationsUniversity, a church-supported distance-learning program that offers academic degrees in religious studies, recently reached an enrollment of 5,006 students. That's an



Cooper

all-time record for the 15-year-old program, said President Alan D. Cooper.

The total enrollment represents 143 countries. About 63 percent of the student body lives outside the United States. Students in the Middle East represent more than

10 percent of NationsUniversity's student body. Thirty-seven percent of its students are in the U.S. About three-fourths of the U.S. students are incarcerated, representing more than 100 U.S. prisons.

"We ... give the glory to God for leading the students to us — students who are poor, incarcerated or disadvantaged and have no other real opportunity for Christian education," Cooper said.

MINISTRY TRAINING

KCITI

NAIROBI, Kenya — The Kenya Christian Industrial Training Institute recently graduated 22 preachers from its Institute of Practical Christian Ministry, or IPCM.

The graduates will return to their home congregations "better able to meet the spiritual needs of their communities," institute leaders said.

"The IPCM program is dedicated to providing in-depth biblical instruction to the hundreds of untrained preachers currently working with churches in East Africa without the benefit of formal Bible instruction," according to a news release.

SUNSET INTERNATIONAL BIBLE INSTITUTE

LUBBOCK, Texas — Sunset recently opened its new School of Biblical Leadership with 17 students in Lubbock and 19 students in three remote locations.

A video conferencing system allows the institute to broadcast leadership classes live, so students can see, hear and participate in class proceedings in real time. The evening program is designed for anyone wanting to improve leadership skills.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROBERT BURTON

With faith and cardboard, Alabama students fight sin

Students at Madison Academy in Alabama share "Cardboard Testimonies" at a recent chapel assembly at the school, which is associated with Churches of Christ. "The kids walked across the gym holding up their personal sins on the back of the cardboard," Madison Academy President Robert Burton said. "The picture tells what they have done about their sin."

MEDIA MINISTRIES

CHRISTIAN PRODUCTIONS INTERNATIONAL

HIALEAH, Fla. — Efrain Valverde, long-time minister, writer and host of "Con La Biblia Abierta" ("With the Open Bible"), died Sept. 4 after a long battle with cancer. Valverde, 74, was a member of the Hialeah Church of Christ.

Valverde appeared on 137 episodes of the Spanish-language program that featured Bible studies and discussions of issues Christians face. The program appears on televisions in 20 countries and all 50 states of the U.S., said Rex Morgan of Hialeah-based Christian Productions International, who worked with Valverde since 1989. Thousands of viewers have requested



Valverde

World Bible School study material as a result of the program, Morgan said. Church members will continue to air shows as a tribute to Valverde's legacy.

RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS

CHURCHES OF CHRIST DISASTER RELIEF

RALEIGH, N.C. — Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort was honored during the 38th annual Mid-Atlantic Evangelism Seminar hosted by the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ.

Since 1990, the Tennessee-based disaster relief organization has distributed more than \$106 million in emergency food and supplies in response to 300 disasters in 42 states, leaders said.

The award presentation was made during a luncheon at the evangelism seminar, which featured speakers from North Carolina, Texas, Alabama, Florida, California and Tennessee.

SPORTS

Facility honors Murcer

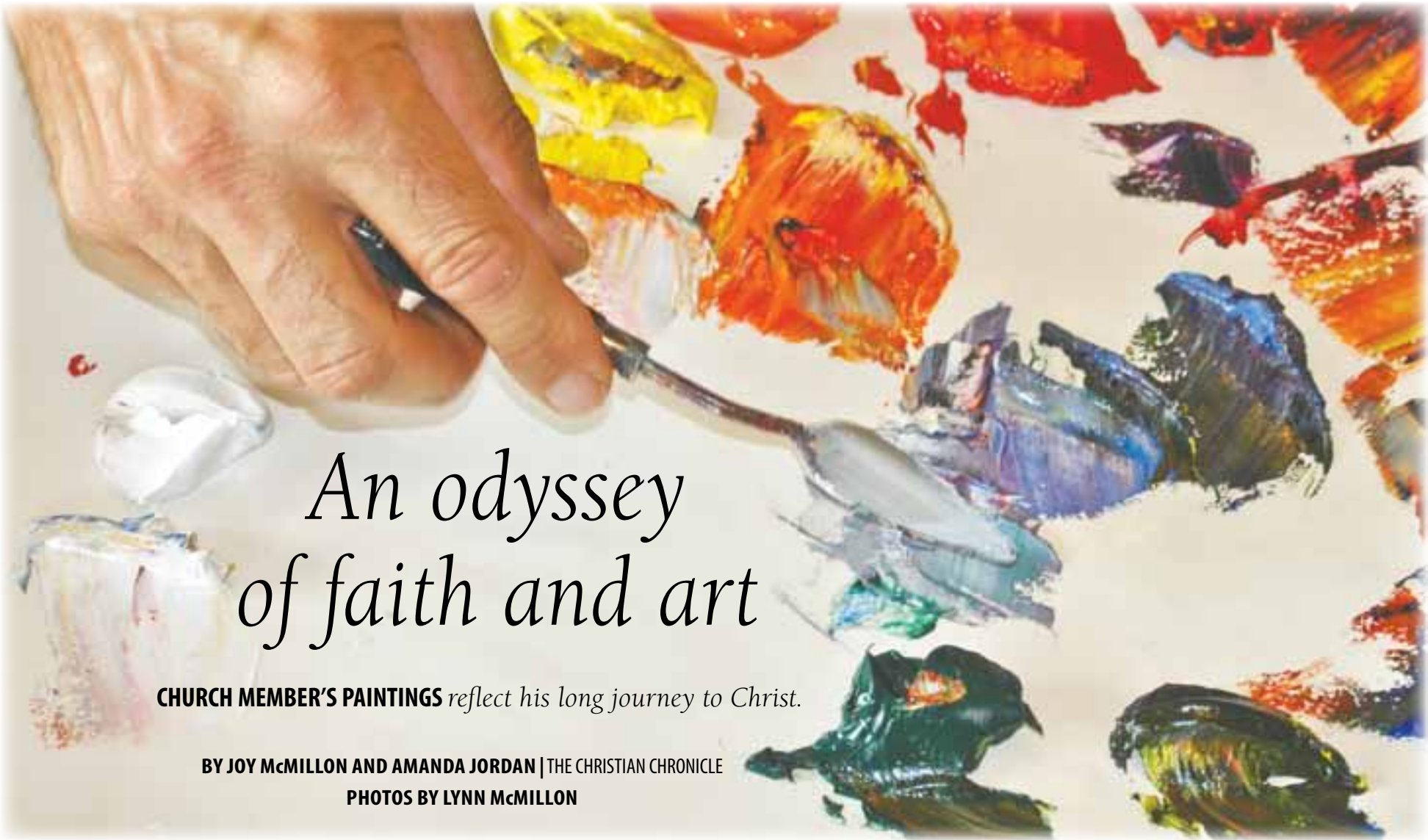
OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma Christian University is dedicating its new indoor baseball facility to a late New York Yankee who helped rebuild its program.



Murcer

The Bobby Murcer Indoor Training Facility — a structure that represents the last step in the program's revival — honors the former outfielder and broadcaster who died of brain cancer in 2008.

The five-time All-Star attended the Memorial Road Church of Christ next to the Oklahoma Christian campus and had strong ties to many associated with the university.



An odyssey of faith and art

CHURCH MEMBER’S PAINTINGS *reflect his long journey to Christ.*

BY JOY McMILLON AND AMANDA JORDAN | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE
PHOTOS BY LYNN McMILLON

Roman Czerwinski mixes paints at his home on the Hawaiian island of Maui. He uses a palette knife technique, painting with a blade to create textured landscapes and still lifes.

WAILUKU, Hawaii
There’s enough inspiration here for a hundred artists. Known as “the magic isle,” Maui draws tourists from around the globe to sun, surf and watch whales from its pristine shores. Surrounded by paradise, you might expect the studio of artist Roman Czerwinski to be filled with paintings of the island’s beaches and waterfalls. But in his two-story home — next to a banana orchard he planted himself — the longtime member of the Maui Church of Christ is surrounded by vibrant depictions of the canals of Venice, the poppy fields of his homeland, Poland, and the neon lights of Times Square. There also are still lifes here, lush tropical scenes from Maui, plus an unfinished painting of Michael Jackson on a small easel — the work of his

young daughter, Danya. The variety of subjects depicted in Czerwinski’s art reflects the church member’s life — a journey that took him through the Iron Curtain and across two oceans. Most importantly, it’s a journey that led him to the Lord.



Roman Czerwinski shows one of his works.

“My trip was exciting,” he said, “but not as exciting as finding Christ.”
A 25-YEAR SHOPPING SPREE
Born in Chmielnik, Poland, Czerwinski grew up in a nation controlled by the Soviet Union. In 1979 he moved to Wroclaw to attend college. It was a time of revolution, gas grenades and underground newspapers — the infancy of a movement later known as Solidarity. Czerwinski married and soon became the father of two daughters. His young family lived with his wife’s parents, nearly 300 miles away, as Czerwinski studied — and participated in an underground movement opposed to the Soviets. Czerwinski and his cohorts feared they would be discovered by the secret police. They planned to flee the country. During his fourth year of college, Czerwinski got permission to take a three-day shopping

trip to Vienna, Austria. “I keep telling people I am still not done shopping — 25 years later,” Czerwinski said. “Something at the time drew me to leave. Now I realize it was God. He wanted me somewhere else. ... I had to ... find out who I am and to find him.” He worked odd jobs, selling newspapers and magazines in Vienna, and sent money and gifts to his children when he could. He applied to the U.S. for political asylum and, in 1984, moved to New York. He lived in tiny apartments crowded with fellow immigrants and worked 14-hour night shifts at a Polish bakery in Brooklyn. He was miserable. One night, while walking home from work at 2 a.m., a gust of wind blew a discarded brochure into his chest. It was a travel ad for Hawaii. “I am going to pick pineapples,” he decided. “I’ve heard they are a good fruit.”

A BIBLE AND A ‘HAPPY ARTIST’ INSPIRE
After a cross-country bus tour and a discount flight to Maui, Czerwinski got a job on a tropical plantation. To save money, “I decided I am going to ride around the neighborhood and see who will let me stay for free ... living in a tent,” he said. He found Amy and Bill Hong. For eight months he camped in an 8-by-8-foot tent among the banana trees in the couple’s backyard. Czerwinski looked “like an honest, sincere, desperate guy,” Amy Hong recalled. She and her husband invited him to their congregation, the Maui Church of Christ. Czerwinski attended and started studying the Bible. “It all makes sense,” Czerwinski said of the Bible. “God can make things ... for your own good. I was never confused about that. Everybody else had a little different agenda other than the Word. The Word is enough.” Czerwinski was baptized. About the same time, he was inspired by the “happy artist who painted a picture in 30 minutes” on public television, Bill Alexander. He bought instructional videos, paint and brushes and went to work. Using a palette knife technique, he painted still lifes, rural scenes and cityscapes that became popular with Hawaiians and visitors, said Kim Smith, owner of Sargent’s Gallery, which displays Czerwinski’s work. Over time, his style evolved from realism to impressionism. The artist and his wife attempted to reconnect, but they ultimately divorced. Their daughters, now grown, live in Oregon and have a good relationship with their parents, Czerwinski said. In Maui, Czerwinski met and married Jamie Mitchell and brought her into the church. The couple has two daughters, Mia and Danya. In the years since his baptism, he also has helped convert his brother, his sister-in-law and a friend from the gallery. He has traveled back to Poland to share the Gospel. Two of his friends from college were baptized during visits to Maui. He works with the youth at the 50-member Maui Church of Christ and is an integral part of the church’s leadership, member Tim Shiroma said. Looking back on his odyssey of faith, Czerwinski said that God “brought me from Poland to bring me to my knees.” Now “the Lord has really blessed me,” he said. “I want my art to reflect the joy that comes from living on this island.”



Roman Czerwinski works on a cafe scene.



A painting of post-9/11 New York.



‘Le Consulat Cafe’ by Roman Czerwinski



‘Magenta Spring’ by Roman Czerwinski

SEE MORE ROMAN CZERWINSKI PAINTINGS at www.RomanCzerwinski.com.

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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/mft.

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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.

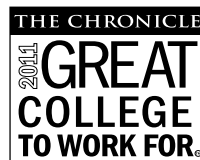
Communication Sciences and Disorders

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders invites applications for a non-tenure track clinical instructor and director for the Center for Speech and Language Disorders at ACU for Fall 2012. This is a 12-month contract position. The master's program in speech-language pathology at ACU is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Applicants must have a minimum of a master's degree in speech-language pathology, hold a current ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC-SLP), hold a current Texas SLP license (or be eligible for a license), and have a minimum of five years of professional clinical experience, including three years of supervisory experience. Responsibilities include the supervision of students enrolled in clinical practicum and for providing instruction in diagnosis and remediation of communication disorders. Essential duties include but are not limited to teaching graduate and undergraduate students, administering the daily activities of the clinic including record keeping, billing, scheduling and maintaining equipment and supplies; serving as the professional team member responsible for the evaluation of clients and in the development and implementation of treatment plans; developing and maintaining professional contacts for off-campus student clinical placements; and overseeing/advising supervisors for students in off-campus clinical placements. This person should be well equipped to serve as a liaison between community partners, departmental faculty, students, and clients. Information about the department can be found at acu.edu/cehs.

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

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

ACU does not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities.



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NEWSMAKERS

QUALIFIED: Greg Lynn, women's golf coach at Oklahoma Christian University and member of the Memorial Road church in Oklahoma City, and Greg Stirman, elder of the First Colony church in Sugar Land, Texas, for the U.S. Senior Amateur tournament. More than 2,000 golfers 55 and older tried out for the tournament.



Lynn

NAMED: Charles Rix and Grant Testu, assistant professors of Bible, Allison Cassady, assistant professor of education, Dan Sorenson, assistant professor of business, Kenneth Bell, assistant professor of electrical engineering, Emily Stringer, marketing coordinator for planned and estate giving, and Sada Knowles, instructor in the department of psychology at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City. Dale Armstrong, senior development counsel for the office of development and alumni relations at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. Julie Sanon, director of operations, Agape Child & Family Services, Memphis, Tenn. Diana Rapp, associate professor in the College of Education at Ohio Valley University in Vienna, W.Va.



Rapp

ANNIVERSARIES: 70th: A.F. and Doretha Fitzhugh, Houston, Texas. 58th: Jim and Ann Rogers, Edmond, Okla. 50th: Bill and Judy Freeze, Jacksonville, Texas.

BIRTHDAYS: 100th: Howard Justiss, Nashville Tenn., first executive director of Agape adoption, foster care and maternity counseling services in Nashville. 100th: Ethel Johnson, Tucker, Ga. 93rd: Trudy Rasane, Lincoln, Mo. 92nd: Audrey Gibson, Dowagiac, Mich. 90th: George W. Pappas, Hibbing, Minn.

PASSAGES: Murray Marshall, 92, Aug. 5, minister for 75 years, church member in Ennis, Texas. Annile Hemingway, 90, Aug. 9, longtime church member in Spring, Texas. Paul E. Cantrell, 81, Sept. 1, minister for 64 years, associate minister and elder of the Camp Hill, Pa., church. June Hamby Breninger, 70, Sept. 3, longtime psychology teacher at Cascade College in Portland, Ore., member of the East County church, Gresham, Ore. Floyd K. Clark, 83, Sept. 4, longtime member of the Fairlane church in Amarillo, Texas. Donald Ray Kittrell, 73, Sept. 14, longtime minister for the 56th and Warrington church in Philadelphia.

Oct. 2-4 Quest Lectureship.

Oklahoma Christian University. Contact www.oc.edu/quest2011.

Oct. 7 Grief Symposium. Hampton Inn and Suites, Mesquite, Texas. Presented by Christian Care Hospice. Contact <http://christiancarecenters.org/hospice/>.

Oct. 9 80th Anniversary and Reunion. Crowder, Okla., church. Contact dannyj65@hotmail.com

Oct. 10 Fundraising Dinner for Disability Resources of Abilene.

Omni Hotel, San Antonio. Contact (210) 494.2440.

Oct. 14 Celebrating brother and sister Merlon Thompson's 40 years of service. Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Phoenix. Sponsored by Tonto Street church. Contact (602) 309-6688 or nphillips50@aol.com.

Oct. 7 116th Homecoming. Pearl, Texas, church. Contact (254) 865-9282.

Oct. 19-22 Global Missions Conference.

Legacy church, Fort Worth, Texas. Contact Jay Jarboe at (817) 267-2727 or jay.jarboe@mrnet.org or www.globalmissionsconference.org.

Oct. 28-30 Shepherds Network.

Sponsored by the Church Leaders Resource Network. Contact Eddie Randolph at (901) 432-7724 or e.randolph@hst.edu.

Oct. 29-Nov. 5 Pan American Lectureship. San Jose, Costa Rica. Contact www.lectureship.org

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

Dec. 2 Freed-Hardeman University Benefit Dinner.

Featured speaker: Bob Newhart. Contact fhu.edu/Newhart.

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 kpach@fhu.edu.

March 20-25 Seminar in Congregation Shepherding and Leadership.

Harding School of Theology, Memphis, Tenn. Contact (901) 432-7724.

March 21-24 The Tulsa Workshop.

Tulsa, Okla., EXPO Center. Contact tulsa-workshop.org

April 28-29 50th Anniversary of the Garden Ridge church.

Lewisville, Texas. Contact pjnichols77@verizon.net

COMPLETE CALENDAR at www.christianchronicle.org

Academic Freedom.... Where it is Might Surprise you!

There have been cries for academic freedom in American higher education for several decades. The prevailing sense is that public colleges and universities provide the environment that promotes freedom of expression and thought. For many issues that may be true. But as we become an increasingly secular society, the irony is that conversations about God and faith are increasingly unwelcome in such institutions. There seems to be the freedom to discuss anything — except a Christian perspective of the world.

Stated clearly by the former president of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, "Today, research universities are thoroughly secular and comprise one of the few places in America where openly acknowledged religion is not a life option. Consequently, academic freedom has become a casualty at these institutions."

Obviously, there are exceptions. Many faculty at public colleges and universities possess a dynamic faith and through it are Christian examples to their students. In addition, there are dedicated ministers who have accepted the call to campus ministry and serve Christian students at such institutions in admirable ways. It would be difficult, if not impossible, however, to prove that they are the norm rather than the exception to the norm of secular thinking and secular teaching on the public campus.

Ironically, the place where academic freedom exists as it relates to religion and faith are our Christian colleges. It is in our Christian colleges that the existence of God can be freely proclaimed. It is in our Christian colleges that important societal issues can be discussed with the Christian perspective asserted. It is in our Christian colleges that faith can be proclaimed as integrated into all of life, not just a subset of life. Those opportunities no longer exist in most of American higher education and particularly not at state-supported colleges and universities.

What does this mean? For most people it simply does not matter. But for tomorrow's college students and their parents, it is the difference between an education that supports a vital Christian faith and one that will not. In a Christian college, academic freedom will allow life's most important questions to be asked, beliefs to be explored and faith to be expressed. As a Christian college environment demands critical thinking and pragmatic preparation for success in the real world, it also proclaims that God, faith and the Christian walk are part of that world, the world God created.

Academic freedom. Public colleges and universities talk about it. Christian colleges deliver it. Those of us in Christian higher education believe the difference is important...eternally important. What about you?



*L. Randolph Lowry
President, Lipscomb University*

If you have comments on Christian higher education please contact me at compellingmission@lipscomb.edu.



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EDITORIAL

The church's role in suicide prevention

In South Carolina, a distraught campus ministry student texted classmates and informed them of his plans to kill himself. A minister rushed to the student's apartment and helped save his life.

In Florida, a teenager confided his suicidal thoughts to a youth minister. As a result, the student got into counseling. Months later, he stood up and testified to God's power to help people at their lowest points.

In both cases, attentive Christians helped prevent the tragic loss of life.

In a feature story this month, *The Christian Chronicle* focuses on an Oregon community's experience with suicide as a way of highlighting the bigger issue.

Along with that insight, we offer a few additional suggestions from members and leaders interviewed by the *Chronicle*:

• **Know your church family.**

"People trust people they have relationships with, and it starts there," said Michael Johnson, a member of the Bristol Road Church of Christ in Flint, Mich., whose father died by suicide.

Nobody can walk in a room and say, 'Hey, what are you struggling with?' and get answers, because people want to be understood.

"They want to know you have been where they are, that you aren't going to judge them, that you can humanize yourself and bring down the walls and relate to them. Only then will people open up."

• **Take threats seriously.**

"Listen and be understanding," said Steven Gaines, associate minister for young adults and college students at the Central Church of Christ in Spartanburg, S.C. "Find out the person's location, and call the police if you think the person will try suicide. Go to the person, and take someone with you (as support and witness)."

"Even if you think it's an empty threat, recognize that the person needs your attention. Ask why the person feels like suicide. Help the person talk through the pros and cons."

"Try to restore meaning to the person's life. Get the person's promise that he or she will not hurt himself or herself. If the person won't make that promise, call the police!"

• **Recognize your limits.**

'We hope that this month's coverage may serve as a starting point for *Chronicle* readers ... to pursue more research, study and training.'

"For the most part, I think preachers, elders or whoever must learn to recognize the limits of their professional competence," said Keith Ellis, minister of the Enterprise Church of Christ in Alabama and a licensed marriage and family therapist. "I recommend that churches create relationships with good mental health professionals to refer to."

"In my practice, when one is actively suicidal, I always recommend and facilitate hospitalization and stabilization. It is not true that 'if people talk about it, they are not going to do it.'"

On a topic as complex — and serious — as suicide, it's impossible for a single article or editorial to cover the subject in

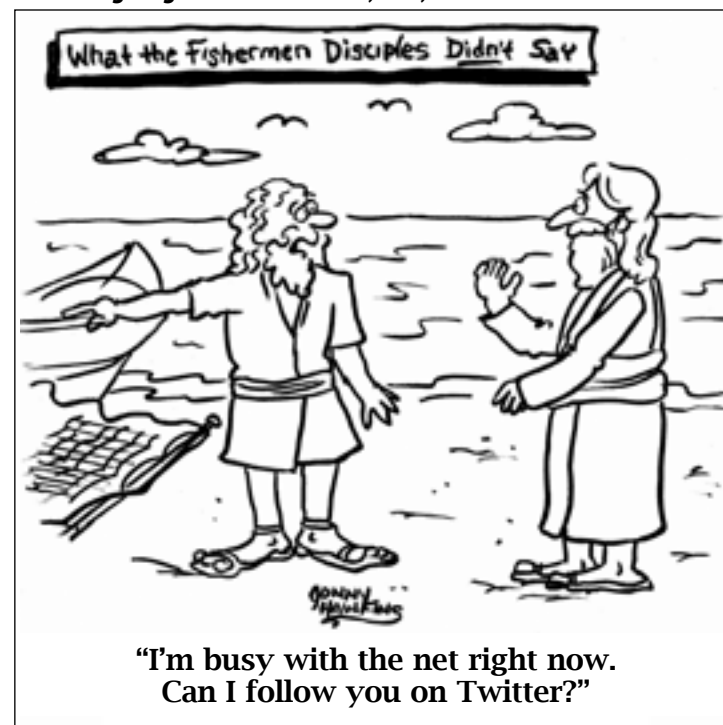
a comprehensive, all-encompassing way.

Yet we hope that this month's coverage may serve as a starting point for *Chronicle* readers — ministers, elders and others — to pursue more research, study and training.

Lives depend on it.

Ever-Laughing Life

by Jonny Hawkins



TO OUR READERS

Your feedback welcomed

Want to share news or have an idea for a story?

Know a faithful Christian who'd make an interesting profile?

We'd welcome your feedback.

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• **Letters to the editor:** E-mail letters@christianchronicle.org.

You can mail items to: *The Christian Chronicle*, P.O. Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100. Reach us by telephone at (405) 425-5070.



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Phone: (405) 425-5070; Fax (405) 425-5076
P.O. Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100
Delivery: 2501 E. Memorial Road, Edmond, OK 73013

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

Managing Editor: Bobby Ross Jr.

National, Partners news: bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org

Assistant Managing Editor: Erik Tryggstad

International news, features: erik@christianchronicle.org

Advertising Director: Tamie Ross

tamie.ross@christianchronicle.org

Editor Emeritus: Bailey B. McBride
bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

Reviews Editor: Kimberly Mauck
kim.mauck@christianchronicle.org

Circulation Manager: Lynda Sheehan
lynda.sheehan@christianchronicle.org

Associate Editor: Joy McMillon
joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org

Administrative Assistant: Tonda Stafford
tonda.stafford@christianchronicle.org

Administrative Assistant: Virginia Ware
virginia.ware@christianchronicle.org

Correspondent: Ted Parks

TO SUBSCRIBE:

See **www.christianchronicle.org**
e-mail **virginia.ware@christianchronicle.org**
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: letters@christianchronicle.org

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As bus wheels roll, Florida church shares Jesus

HOMESTEAD, Fla.

On a summer night, the church bus departed for the impoverished neighborhoods of this Miami suburb and nearby Florida City.

Children ran from houses and apartment complexes to find their seats — their giant smiles evidence of a life-changing ministry.

At the front of the bus, a volunteer led familiar Bible class songs such as “If You Love Jesus” and “God is a Good God.” As the wheels rolled, excited youngsters belted out the name of Jesus at deafening levels — the joyful noise echoing down the back streets of Miami-Dade County.

What a sight it must be to any passerby! I know I will never forget it.

I had the opportunity to work with the Homestead Church of Christ during their annual Vacation Bible School and was excited to see the unique work.

About two years ago, missionaries Mike and Karen Hoots and a team of students from Sunset International Bible Institute’s Adventures in Missions program (AIM) began going into the Homestead community each Saturday. They were joined by teens from the Homestead Christ of Christ youth group, which dubs itself “J4L,” meaning “Jesus for Life.”

In the community, the missionaries and students set up tents and tables and hosted weekly Vacation Bible Schools.

The neighborhood kids loved it and came in droves. Last year, the church’s VBS on Wheels ministry began inviting the area children to the congregation’s midweek service. However, the church didn’t have enough vehicles to transport all the children who wanted to attend.

Robert Porcha, a former AIM missionary from California who relocated to Homestead after his graduation, used his mission newsletter to inform Christians of the need for a bus.

When word got out that some children were unable to attend Bible classes due to lack of transportation, Christians got involved. Donations were sent, and a bus was purchased through the Taylor Bus Company in Murray, Ky. And soon, the Homestead church had its very own bus ministry.

Porcha wasn’t the only AIM graduate who decided to move to Homestead after his stint with Adventures in Missions. Three other missionaries who had worked with the Homestead church while in AIM — Casey Tamez from

Stockdale, Texas, Jaz Jubenville from Charlotte, N.C., and Amberley Payne from Brady, Texas — returned to make the 35-member congregation their home as well. Maria Calderon came out of the church’s youth group. Also a graduate of AIM, she spent two years in Brazil but is back home and working as a full-time missionary.

The Homestead church had one VBS in the morning for the students of Redland Christian Academy, a private school operated by church members.

At night, a separate VBS was conducted for community kids.

It took less than an hour to fill the bus as Mike Hoots beckoned the children with a loud-speaker. He and his helpers talked with parents as the children loaded letting them know that they were also invited to attend. Some took him up on the offer.

While I was with the Homestead church, three precious souls were added to the Kingdom. All were parents whom church members met through the bus ministry.

“We’re building the church from the children up,” Mike Hoots said. “These kids are going back into their community with hope, love and the joy that comes with knowing Christ.”

With upward of 80 children at the evening VBS services and the majority of them scarcely used to any kind of church setting, the nights were exciting, to put it mildly.

I taught the 10- and 11-year-olds and

learned quickly that they were eager to know all about Jesus. Our memory verse for the week was Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.”

To witness the extreme enthusiasm that came from memorizing Scripture from children who told me stories so heartbreaking it was hard to hold it together was more beautiful than anything I had seen earlier on my drive through Palm Beach. It wasn’t surprising when a child asked if we could delay game and craft time to focus on memorizing our verses. These children are starving for the truth.

As I rode the bus that last evening and witnessed the street parties going on around us, I realized that to these children their bus was a safe haven from the crime and heartache that

plagues them on a daily basis. As we said our goodbyes and before they exited the bus, I hugged them a little tighter, knowing that our paths may never cross again this side of heaven.

I thank God for missionaries all over this world, but especially for the ones in southern Florida. I’m grateful to be part of a fellowship of believers who aren’t afraid to get involved in the lives of others or scared to take Jesus to hurting families and broken communities.

Because of these faithful missionaries’ deep devotion to others and to Christ, I’m thankful that those precious children and their families will always have hope in Homestead.

PAULA HARRINGTON worships with the Calvert City Church of Christ in Kentucky. She is a columnist with *Forthright.net* and the compiler of the books “A Sunday Afternoon With the Preachers’ Wives” and “A Common Bond.” She can be reached at johnnpaula@windstream.net.

Views



Paula Harrington



PAULA HARRINGTON

Children and volunteers in Homestead, Fla., pile on the church bus for VBS.

LETTERS

Readers welcome coverage of 9/11

As a recipient of *The Christian Chronicle* for many years and a mother of an active-duty Army sergeant, I really appreciate you taking the time and effort to write the articles about all the servicemen and women (“Ten Years Later: The Legacy of 9/11,” October).

I am a founding mother of the local chapter of Blue Star Mothers of America. We are mothers of active-duty military pledged to serve them. I make sure our care packages have Bibles or religious materials included each time we ship.

Paula Fleming | Reno, Nev.

Thanks for the article about “A conversation with U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jeanene Pollard” (Page 25, October). I taught one of the twins in their seventh-grade math class. I have been acquainted with several of their family members over the years. It is so good to see what Jeanene is accomplishing while being deployed.

Elise Haley | Alamogordo, N.M.

The Somerset Church of Christ had a special service to commemorate the lives lost on 9/11. The Somerset church, just 10 miles from where United Flight 93 crashed 10 years ago, is the closest Church of Christ to ground zero in Shanksville, Pa. I grew up in Shanksville, a town of 250, so 9/11 is not only close to our hearts, it is close to our homes.

Jimmy Hinton | Somerset, Pa.

Christians all over the world face daily threats, whether in the war-front or not. I pray that the Good Lord will bring our brothers and sisters in the military service back to their families safely. May he uphold their spouses and keep their families intact in faith. Amen.

Williams D. Kareem | Abuja, Nigeria

Thanks for an outstanding article on the Roosevelt Drive church (“The war at home,” Page 19, October). The article has caused me to tear up so that I can hardly see the keys to type. Since I hunt and peck, that is a problem!

Ron Edwards | Jacksonville, N.C.

Sherwood and Myrtie Foster's Home for Children

Ever wished you could be in ministry full time? Praying about making a difference? Dreamed about living out church every day while being part of a healing community? Have you heard the call of Christ to be in the world, but not of it? Have an overwhelming need to sow seed for the kingdom that has all kinds of future possibilities?

Then you have been thinking about US!

Foster's Home for Children would like to offer you the opportunity to realize your spiritual passion for Christ and His Kingdom. We are inviting applications from couples who want to serve the Lord by not only providing a home for children, but a Sanctuary. Our caregivers live out our mission constantly:

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Heartwrenching film asks fathers to be 'Courageous'

BY TIM TRIPP | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

If you liked "Fireproof" and "Facing the Giants," don't miss "Courageous." The newest film from Sherwood Pictures, a ministry of the Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Ga., just may be the best.

Opening Sept. 30 in 900 theaters across the nation, "Courageous" tackles the crisis of fatherhood in America.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 24 million children — one in three — live apart from their father. Nearly two out of three African-American children live in father-absent homes.

Children who grow up without their fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse and to engage in criminal behavior than their peers, according to the National Fatherhood Initiative.

Men who abandon the babies they father will beget sons who often will repeat the same mistake. Can the generational pattern be broken?

Can men be challenged to take a "courageous" stand to reverse this trend and begin a new generational pattern of men determined to raise, nurture and honor the God-given gift of children?

As "Facing the Giants" focused on trusting God in the face of trial and "Fireproof" stressed remaining true to the covenant relationship of marriage, "Courageous" confronts the issue of men taking the lead in their homes and being strong fathers for their children.

My wife, Lenore, and I got a sneak preview of "Courageous" and found it to be powerful and moving. It's an action-laced police drama with the stream of parenting and family challenges running throughout. It's also rife with

lighter moments as the banter between the main characters turns humorous.

The film's message is clear — fathers need to step up and take their responsibilities seriously.

I rarely weep at movies but found myself with tears streaming down my face half-a-dozen times. "Courageous" is truly heartwrenching. At times, it borders on gratuitous in its obvious

effort to turn on the waterworks. My fear is that the movie may not appeal to its target audience — men — due to its heartrending nature.

Regardless, I already can envision planning a men's gathering to watch the movie and form discussion groups around it. I can envision numerous men's groups using "Courageous" as a catalyst for challenging conversations on the topic of fatherhood.

I'm sure the marketing wing of the production company already is printing copies of "The Resolution," a book featured in the film, and the certificates the men use to hold each other accountable.

I think "powerful" is the best word to describe

the experience of sitting through the film. A scene at the end where the main character speaks from the pulpit, challenging men to be courageous, will have a convicting and lasting impact on those who watch it. Men will ultimately excuse the emotional overload and appreciate the powerful challenge to courageously be the fathers to their children that God has called them to be.

Perhaps some enterprising tissue maker will anticipate the release of "Courageous" and make tissue boxes featuring a camouflage pattern.

I think we are going to need them.

TIM TRIPP serves as family minister for the Northeast Church of Christ in Cincinnati.



TODD STONE

Essay collection dips into baptism beliefs

BY ALLEN BLACK | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Baptism as a vital part of salvation has been — and remains — a distinguishing feature of Churches of Christ. Many church members might be surprised to know that some form of water baptism plays a significant role in virtually every religious group that claims Christ as its savior.

But, as the editors of “**Baptism: Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives**” observe, the “seemingly simple command of Jesus in Matthew 28 to make disciples and baptize them has been understood and practiced in a variety of ways.”

Gordon L. Heath, associate professor of Christian history at McMaster Divinity College in Toronto, and James D. Dvorak, associate professor of Greek and New Testament at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, offer nine essays representing diverse views of baptism from across the wide spectrum of contemporary Christian traditions.

Heath and Dvorak bring together essays from Catholic, Orthodox and seven Protestant traditions — Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Baptist, Quaker, the Restoration Movement

and Pentecostal. Each contributor is an academic but also writes as an insider concerning his own tradition, in which most have served in ministry positions.

In the book’s introduction, the editors say their goal is for readers not only

to understand differences among believers on this crucial issue but also to “nudge us just a bit closer together as baptized followers of Jesus Christ.”

As the book’s subtitle suggests, the reader finds not only the theological perspectives on baptism within a particular tradition but also the history of the development of each tradition’s viewpoints. I say “perspectives” because most traditions contain several viewpoints, and some contain a wide variety of views. For example, in the chapter titled “Baptism among Pentecostals,” Steve Studebaker discusses significantly differing view-

points among Classical Pentecostals, Charismatics and Oneness Pentecostals.

Anthony R. Cross’s essay on “Baptism among the Baptists” also seeks to present diverse points of view within a particular tradition. Cross is a British Baptist and is careful to indicate the history and current literature favoring some viewpoints that are congenial to a number of British Baptist scholars

but are not what he presents as the predominant view. For example, he suggests that “for the majority of Baptists, baptism is an outward symbol of what is already taken place inwardly,” but he seems sympathetic to the view that “baptism is more than a symbol; it is an *effective* symbol.”

There also has been some disagreement about issues connected with baptism in the Stone-Campbell Movement. In his chapter titled “Baptism in the Restoration Movement,” Curt Niccum, Abilene Christian University associate professor of New Testament, points out that the Disciples of Christ and Churches of Christ differ concerning “how one should regard those who actually received adult immersion from other groups who lack the same exact understanding of baptism.”

Niccum also gives a fine overview of biblical-theological material on what baptism is, its origins, who should be baptized and, most importantly, the meaning of baptism, including its implications for Christians.

The one article representing a group that generally does not practice water baptism is Howard R. Macy’s “Baptism and Quakers.” According to Macy, “At their best, Friends (another term for Quakers) teach that they believe in and

practice baptism as a spiritual reality, but that they do not use water or ritual to effect or symbolize that reality.” Yet, according to Macy, among Quakers there is a minority who believe that, although they are free from using the physical elements, they also are free to use them if they wish.

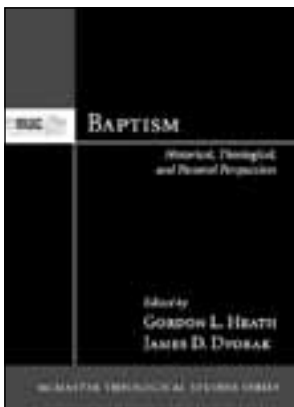
As the editors note in the book’s conclusion, baptism ends up serving as a catalyst for a range of other differences among religious traditions, including hermeneutics, church history and authority of Scripture.

Following the editors’ brief analysis, each contributor is given about two pages to respond to the other essays. One clear message that emerges

from these responses is to underscore both the diversity and the irenic spirit represented by the essays.

This book is written at a collegiate level and would appeal best to college students, ministers or others with a serious interest in theological matters. Its purpose is to help readers understand the viewpoints of other traditions besides their own. It is an outstanding book for that purpose. It not only covers a wide range of viewpoints but also provides insiders’ views.

ALLEN BLACK teaches New Testament at Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn., and works with adult ministries at Highland Church of Christ in Cordova, Tenn.



Gordon L. Heath and James D. Dvorak, eds. **Baptism: Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspectives.** Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 2011. 271 pages. \$32.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

SMALL GROUPS

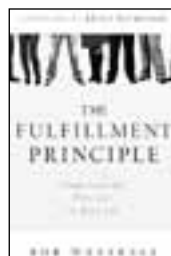
Brad House. **Community: Taking Your Small Group Off of Life Support.** Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2011. 256 pages, \$15.99.



A minister for one of the fastest-growing churches in the country gives a plan for how to nurture small groups. In three sections, he outlines the reasons churches should devote time to this ministry, how to create a small-group plan that works and practical tips on implementing it.

PERSONAL GROWTH

Bob Westfall. **The Fulfillment Principle: Experiencing Pure Joy in Your Life.** Abilene, Tex.: Leafwood Publishers, 2011. 128 pages, \$12.99.



Rather than purveying the popular gospel of personal achievement under the mantle of faith, businessman Westfall uses the parable of the sower to show that true joy and fulfillment come from sacrifice and investment. Westfall serves charities and ministries in financial stewardship.

CHRISTIAN FICTION

Lee Strobel. **The Ambition.** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2011. 288 pages, \$24.99.



The bestselling author of nonfiction works, including “The Case for Christ,” makes his fiction debut with this political thriller, drawing on his background in legal journalism.

Set in Chicago, the story follows a journalist’s investigation of a megachurch whose pastor has developed the titular political ambition.

TOPICAL STUDY

Francis Chan and Preston Sprinkle. **Erasing Hell: What God Said About Eternity, and the Things We Made Up.** Colorado Springs, Colo.: David C. Cook Publishing, 2011. 208 pages, \$14.99.



Rob Bell’s “Love Wins” proclaims that a loving God would not send any of his children to hell. Chan and New Testament professor Sprinkle refute Bell’s theology with Scripture, tempered with an understanding of human unwillingness to believe in eternal punishment.

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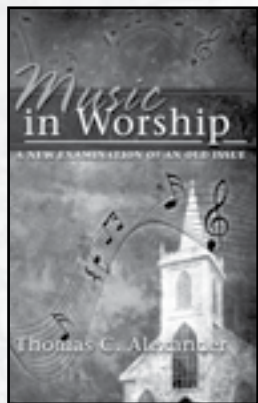
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Yellowstone's Golden Age Camp offers sweet fellowship, inspiration

PRAY, Mont.

The speaker concluded his final lesson about living by faith with the words from Hebrews 12: *"Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus."*

Then, nearly 100 people stood and sang "Turn your eyes upon Jesus." Deeply inspired, I had goosebumps on my neck and arms.

We were concluding the Golden Age Camp at Yellowstone Bible Camp, and the week had been a successful retreat from everyday business for all.

In June, when many days above 100 degrees were making us miserable, Joyce and I learned of the Golden Age Camp in Montana. The principal speaker was Kent Allen, a man whose teaching had touched our hearts and minds for many years. Joyce and I read all the information about the camp and immediately e-mailed the director to see if he still had space.

A really great opportunity related to the camp is a bus ride for about 50 people — picked up in Springfield, Mo., Bartlesville, Okla., and Salina, Kan. The bus travels through the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Park before arriving at the camp. When camp is over, the bus travels to the site of Custer's defeat at Bighorn, Devil's Tower in Wyoming and on to Mount Rushmore and the Badlands of South Dakota.

The bus trip allowed us to see sights we had wanted to see but never wanted to drive that much. About half the people on the bus had made the trip many times and enjoyed the fellowship so much that they kept returning.

Directing the camp were Mike and Gail Brazle, an amazing couple who have given their lives serving the Kingdom. Mike grew up in Montana and Canada, where his father helped plant churches. Gail grew up in Oklahoma, where her devout parents were church leaders and strong supporters of Oklahoma Christian University.

Mike and Gail had served many churches before they began ministering for the church at Kimberling City, Mo. In 1988, they set out to help older church members have a life-changing experience.

The camp drew people from 11 states

and Canada. Some drove campers or fifth-wheels and slept in their vehicles while sharing all the activities of the camp.

Insight



Bailey McBride

A family from Texas prepared all the meals, and all campers had cleanup duties. Campers slept in the log cabins that had once been part of a dude ranch.

The mornings had two hours of teaching and nearly an hour of singing in a relatively new assembly hall. The after-

noons were free, but Brazle led different excursions each day — two hikes and one mountain climb for those interested. Many of those who did not go on the hikes played cards or dominos. The dedicated gamesters also played at night after another hour of teaching and singing.

The atmosphere of the camp was relaxed as people learned about each other and shared stories about churches and mission work. Several widows have attended since they first came with their husbands. I was inspired by several campers who are approaching 90 and still remain very active. Complaining was rare.

Many men were songleaders who would help lead songs we had known all our lives. Many of the songs I had not sung in my adult life. I was moved by the words of those songs, which I now comprehend as I never understood before. The songs, the teaching, the examples of faithful devotion to God moved most to seek a closer relationship with God.

Brazle says of the Golden Age Camp, "While sweet fellowship, inspiration in a wonderful place of natural beauty and good Bible study and singing all took place, the real purpose of the Golden Age session at YBC is to equip and challenge senior Christians so that they return home to ongoing and increasing service to God in the Kingdom during their Golden Years."

For information about next year's sweet fellowship and inspiration, contact Mike at Brazmike51@msn.com.

CONTACT bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org



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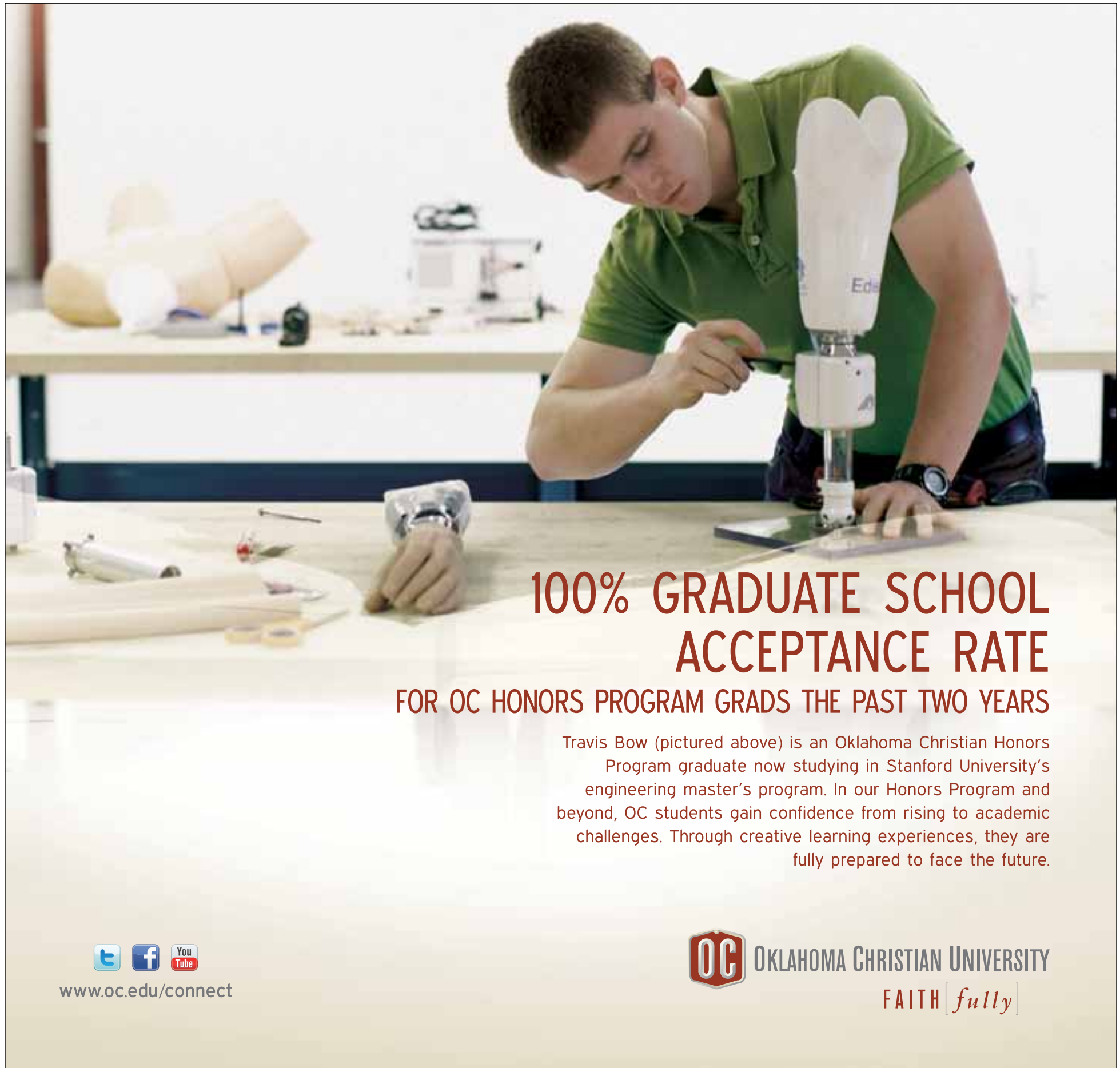


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