



FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE BEHIND BARS

Ministries shine Christ's light inside prison walls

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

HARVEST, Ala. — Robbery. Murder. Child molestation.

The six inmates seated in state prison chaplain Charles Baggett's office on a recent Wednesday earned their lengthy sentences.

David, Jackie, Michael, Rodney, Tim M. and Timothy W. were condemned to Limestone Correctional Facility, a medium-security Alabama prison, to pay debts to society.

But here, in a world of razor-wire fences, tattooed arms and six-digit inmate numbers, these violent criminals came to believe that God sent his only son to pay a debt for them.

They found faith — and hope — in Jesus Christ. Now, these brothers in Christ teach, preach, lead singing and work hard to share what they discovered with other inmates.

"All of y'all are going to be wearing white one day, too. We just got a jump-start," joked Rodney, referring to the white prison garb stamped with "Alabama

Dept. of Corrections" in bold black letters that identifies Limestone's 2,400 inmates.

With 2.4 million people behind bars in the United States, jail and prison ministry affords tremendous opportunities for sharing the Gospel, said attendees at the recent 37th annual National Jail and Prison Ministry Workshop.

"White fields of harvest are found in each jail and prison," said Tom Dugan, prison minister of the Airport Road Church of Christ in Crestview, Fla., which last year baptized 42 inmates and sent 11,000 Bible correspondence courses to prisoners.

The workshop, hosted by the Madison Church of Christ, west of Huntsville, and the NewLife Behavior Network of Alabama,

drew 325 participants from 16 states.

"You hear so much about the church, the idea that we're losing members,"

See **INMATES**, Page 12



BOBBY ROSS JR.

James E. Williams baptizes inmate Anthony at the Limestone prison.

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BOBBY ROSS JR.

An inmate named Jackie and state prison chaplain Charles Baggett walk from the faith-based honor dorm to the prison chapel at Limestone Correctional Facility in Harvest, Ala.

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Did 'jailhouse religion' save Jeffrey Dahmer?

Nearly 16 years ago, one of America's most notorious serial killers was attacked and killed while cleaning a prison bathroom.

Few mourned the gruesome end for Jeffrey Dahmer, who strangled and dismem-

bered 17 boys and men and cannibalized some of them.

"Most people wanted Jeffrey Dahmer to fry," Episcopal theologian Kendall

Harmon said after Dahmer's



Bobby Ross Jr.

Nov. 28, 1994, slaying at a Madison, Wis., prison.

"Now that he's dead, they're celebrating, and they're absolutely sure he will burn in hell, because that's what happens to people like him," Harmon, whose doctoral work at Oxford University covered 20 centuries of teachings about hell, told Scripps Howard News Service religion columnist Terry Mattingly.

But did Dahmer go to hell?

Or is there a chance that we'll see him — *brother* Dahmer, that is — in heaven?

How you answer may depend on whether you believe God can work miracles in hearts and minds — even behind bars — or if you brush aside prison ministry (the subject of our Page 1 story) as "jailhouse religion."

When Dahmer died, I was a staff writer for *The Oklahoman*. I'll never forget talking that day with Curt Booth, a member of the Crescent Church of Christ in Oklahoma, about his role in Dahmer's conversion.

"I know Jeffrey was ready," See **DAHMER**, Page 4

Christian higher ed faces challenges

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — In an era of rising secularism and declining church membership, can Christian higher education survive and thrive?

Leaders of colleges and universities associated with Churches of Christ tackled that question during a 90-minute panel discussion at the recent Christian Scholars Conference at Lipscomb University.

Christian higher education "is being roiled by economic,

philosophical, ideological and political forces beyond anything I have seen in my



Tippens

lifetime," Darryl Tippens, provost of Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., said in a paper presented during the discussion.

"Our institutions are in transition, even in crisis," Tippens said. "We are in an in-between time."

In a separate paper, Mike

O'Neal, president of Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, cited "deep concern for the profound influence of an increasingly secular culture on faith-based institutions.

"I believe that modernism and post-modernism are two of Satan's primary weapons against Christianity," said O'Neal, who took a sabbatical leave in 2008



O'Neal

to research practices at 25 faith-based universities not associated with Churches of Christ.

In a third paper, Tracey Hebert, academic dean of Rochester College in Michigan, tackled the future of leadership in Christian higher education.

Hebert surveyed senior administrators at institutions associated with Churches of Christ.

Administrators who completed the survey acknowledged "the changing demographics and shrinking student market within

See **SCHOLARS**, Page 14

'Listen to what we have to say'

MALAWI'S VICE PRESIDENT *urges Christians to partner with Africans in good works.*

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

INDIANAPOLIS — Standing before a banquet room of Christians, Joyce Banda shared one of her favorite Bible stories — the feeding of the 5,000.

It's a subject close to the heart of the vice president of Malawi, a slender, landlocked country in southern Africa. Working with non-governmental organizations and church groups, she has helped increase crop yields and nourish thousands of souls in her impoverished homeland.

She traveled to the U.S. to speak in Washington and New York. But she also came to meet a group of people she called "our new family."

"I made up my mind that, no matter what, I was going to ... end up in Indianapolis, specifically to say thank you," she said to members of the Green Valley Church of Christ.

The 340-member church, in nearby Noblesville, is a long-time supporter of The Malawi Project, a nonprofit that pro-



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Joyce Banda, right, vice president of Malawi, speaks with natives of her homeland living in Indiana. After discussing Malawi's educational and developmental needs, Banda prayed with the group.

vides medicine, education, orphan care, agriculture and other services in Malawi.

"More than 10 percent of the congregation has been there," said Bill Brooks, one of Green Valley's elders. The church also plans to help launch a ministry training school 30 miles south of Malawi's capital, Lilongwe.

Banda, a Presbyterian, told the

church members that she likes the Gospel of John's account of the miraculous feast, in which Jesus asks his apostle, Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

"He says, 'Ay-yi-yi-yi! It's too much money. It's too much trouble,'" Banda said, paraphrasing Philip's response.

See **MALAWI**, Page 21



RELATED STORY: Africa's first World Cup shows emergence of Global South, Page 17.



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BOBBY ROSS JR.

Inmates play basketball at Limestone Correctional Facility in Harvest, Ala.

DAHMER: Inmate's letter cited Christ's 'protective grace'

FROM PAGE 3

Booth told me. "Today, all the angels in heaven are rejoicing because Jeffrey has come home."

Booth said he had no doubt about the sincerity of Dahmer's conversion.

"On the great resurrection day, I'm expecting to see him right along there with Abraham, David, Isaac, James, John and all the saints that have lived right up to the modern day," Booth said.

Booth usually ministered to inmates at prisons closer to home. But in April 1994, he caught a glimpse of Dahmer on television. Dahmer mentioned that he wished he could "find a little peace," Booth said.

The Oklahoma church member sensed what he considered to be the hurt in Dahmer's voice and eyes. Booth said he thought: "I know somebody who can give you that peace. His name is Jesus Christ."

Booth sent Dahmer a Bible correspondence course teaching the steps to salvation. Dahmer mailed the answers back and thanked Booth for the course.

"But I still have one problem," Dahmer wrote. "This prison does not have a baptismal tank and Mr. Burkum the prison chaplain is not sure if he can find someone to bring a tank in and baptize me. I've taken all the other steps."

Booth contacted Roy Ratcliff, minister of the Madison Church of Christ in Wisconsin. Ratcliff set up weekly Bible lessons with Dahmer and baptized him on May 10, 1994. Ratcliff later shared that Dahmer told him he had been fearful of the minister's visit.

"He dreaded that I might say, 'No, you're too evil. You're too sinful. I can't baptize someone like you,'" Ratcliff said.

Booth said he contacted other preachers besides Ratcliff, "but they were kind of scared to go in."

Booth himself served more than four

years in a Kansas prison for what he called "thievery." Behind bars, he studied the Bible. However, he did not obey the Gospel until years later.

After prison, he drank, abused drugs and ended up in a ditch after a drunken night hunting raccoons. When a doctor told him in 1987 that his life was almost over, he remembered all the promises he had made to God in prison and began to contemplate his eternal salvation.

Booth called his nephew, a preacher named Phil Sanders, and asked what to do. Booth, his wife, Jenny, and three others studied with Sanders. All five were baptized in a pond behind Booth's house.

"An amazing change took place in Curt," Sanders, a speaker for the "In Search of the Lord's Way" television ministry in Edmond, Okla., wrote in a tribute after his uncle's 2005 death.

After his baptism, Booth led more than 1,000 inmates to Christ, including Dahmer.

Upon hearing of Dahmer's conversion, David Hartman, a member of the Wilshire Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, wrote to congratulate him.

Dahmer sent Hartman \$5 worth of stamps, asking him to mail him 25 copies of a Bible correspondence course for distribution to other inmates. In one letter, Dahmer mentioned being attacked in July 1994, months before he was killed.

"I don't know if you heard, but last Sunday I was attacked while in the chapel," Dahmer wrote. "Some guy tried to cut my throat open with a razor but didn't succeed. The razor broke, and my neck was only slightly scratched. I believe that it was only the protective grace of our Great Lord & Savior Jesus Christ that saved me from serious injury or death!"

CONTACT BOBBY ROSS JR. at bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org

CALIFORNIA

ANDERSON — The Anderson Church of Christ delivered buckets of seedlings to senior citizens recently, allowing them to grow tomatoes and peppers.

The church's Victory Garden Bucket Project is aimed at providing seniors living in apartments with healthy vegetables and herbs, *The Redding Searchlight* reported. The hope is for seniors to reap both nutritional and emotional benefits.

"It can kind of lift the spirit to see tomatoes make the full cycle from bloom to food on your table," member Tom Bryant told the newspaper.

KANSAS

WELLINGTON — Gary Bodine, minister of the Wellington Church of Christ, developed a plan for involving more members in doing good works.

Bodine calls it "Monday Night for the Master," and a number of congregations have borrowed the idea.

At Wellington, it works like this: Cooks prepare a hot meal that is served at 6 p.m. At about 6:40, participants gather for a devotional and instruction period.

Then participants break into small groups for activities such as visiting prospective and new members, writing encouragement cards and making repairs and doing lawn work at the church building.

For more information, call Bodine at (620) 326-7511 or e-mail gb4jc@sbcglobal.net.

KENTUCKY

HARRODSBURG — When minister Rick Leach and his wife, Laura, left the Northside Church of Christ in Jeffersonville, Ind., their former home stayed on the market for 15 months.

But then members of the Northside church did an "Extreme Home Makeover" on it, and a buyer made an offer within a week, Laura Leach said.

To "Pay It Forward," the Leaches' new congregation — the Mercer Church of Christ in Harrodsburg — did a make-over on the home of its former minister, Jason Pierce.

Pierce is now minister of the



RON COX

Vacation Bible School to feature 'Explosive Acts of Faith'

"Mad Scientist" Dwayne Simmons, professor of neuroscience at UCLA, entrances children at the Culver Palms Church of Christ in Los Angeles with information about Vacation Bible School. "Radical Reactions: Explosive Acts of Faith" is the theme of the event, which will be sponsored jointly by the urban Culver Palms church and suburban El Segundo Church of Christ.

Parsons, Tenn., church.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to help ministers who are transplanting, and it's especially good for the church to be involved," Laura Leach said.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE — Why open a Christian bookstore during a recession? Andrea Lorick said that's the question her daughter, Erica, asked her parents.

"Our answer was simple: It was time to stop dreaming and start doing," Andrea Lorick said. She and her husband, Eric, are members of the East Baltimore Church of Christ.

The mission of Agape Christian Books Gifts & Music "is to speak to the spiritual hunger of people today and empower Christians to enjoy their faith by learning more about our Savior," she said.

MISSOURI

TROY — The Fairgrounds Road Church of Christ on the outskirts of St. Louis has an average Sunday attendance of 80. But that number swelled at the church's

recent Vacation Bible School.

The three-night event drew a Thursday crowd of 137 children and adults, deacon of education Rod Dollins said. The church distributed fliers inviting the community to VBS.

"The theme 'In His Service' made a positive impression in the community," Dollins said. "Children who attended filled appreciation bags with snacks and other useful items, which were then distributed to local fire and police personnel."

OHIO

AMHERST — If Cleveland Browns rookie Colt McCoy is looking for a church home, the young people at the Amherst Church of Christ, west of Cleveland, want him to know he's welcome there.

"All of the teens wrote him a letter telling him a little about themselves and inviting him to worship with us when he moves to Ohio," said Barb Ziegler, wife of church elder Keith Ziegler.

The teens sent the letters to Brad McCoy, father of the former Texas Longhorn star quarter-

back. Colt's dad promised to share the letters with his son.

TENNESSEE

HENDERSONVILLE — Last month's Across the Nation page contained inaccurate information about the number of baptisms resulting from the Hendersonville church's "traveling evangelist" ministry.

In 2009, the ministry's first year, God blessed the effort with 57 baptisms and 472 prayer requests, mission committee chairman Jim Weiss said.

TEXAS

DALLAS — The Preston Road Church of Christ has more room for ministry. A new youth area, gymnasium, playground and children's wings have expanded the congregation's facilities to 70,000 square feet, administrative assistant Shanna Dusza said.

Also, the church has hired Dr. Kiran Robertson as medical director for the Christ's Family Clinic. The health-care clinic inside the church building serves the working poor, Dusza said.

SPOTLIGHT**Member crowned Miss Oklahoma**

EDMOND, Okla. — Emoly West remembers being 7 years old and watching the Miss America Pageant on television with her grandmother, the *Tulsa World* reported.

"That could be you one day," her grandmother told her.

Her grandmother was right.

West, 24, a member of the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Edmond, recently was crowned Miss Oklahoma.

The University of Central Oklahoma senior will compete in the Miss America Pageant in Las Vegas in January. She is the daughter of Memorial Road church members Jack and Stephanie West.

Her platform in the scholarship pageant is leadership and character development.

She is working toward a degree in dance performance with a minor in broadcast journalism, the *World* reported. She also hopes to become a sports correspondent at the Olympics.

Should she win the Miss America title, she would not be the first church member crowned Miss Oklahoma and Miss America.

In 2006, Jennifer Berry won the national pageant three months after she was baptized at the Skiatook Church of Christ, north of Tulsa.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY EDMOND LIBERTYFEST

Oklahoma church member Emoly West will compete in the Miss America Pageant in January.



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Emily Hopper and Jim Smith prepare to knock on doors at an apartment complex in Oklahoma City during the Cherokee Hills Church of Christ's "Back to the Bible" campaign.

Door-knocking campaign yields 35 baptisms

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

OKLAHOMA CITY — Two by two, Christians fanned out across the apartment complex, knocking on doors, handing out tracts and inviting people to church.

It might have resembled the campaigns of half a century ago. That is, until the group's coordinator, Brad Vaughan, got a one-word text message on his cell phone — "baptism."

Vaughan, who lives in Perry, Kan., traveled to the Sooner State to help members of the Cherokee Hills Church of Christ in a weeklong "Back to the Bible" campaign.

About 70 volunteers came from out of town, many of them from the Northwest Church of Christ in Lawton, Okla., southwest of Oklahoma City. For 35 years, Northwest members have traveled to communities to conduct "Back to the Bible" campaigns at the request of host churches.

Last year, Northwest partnered with other Lawton-area churches to reach out to their own city. That effort yielded 51 baptisms.

Nonetheless, Cherokee Hills

member Jerry Barton said he was skeptical about the group's chances in Oklahoma City.

"I said, 'You watch. We won't get 10 studies in 100 square miles,'" he said. He gladly ate those words when, after the campaign's first day, church members had set up 80 Bible studies.

Barton, a retired Federal Aviation Administration worker, spent most of the week knocking doors. Apartment dwellers, many of them in a transitional phase of life, tended to be more receptive than homeowners, he said.

On a break between rounds of door knocking, Dale Ferrier sat in a van borrowed from a church in Del City, Okla., and described how volunteers conduct Bible studies. Using New Testaments with underlined passages, they discuss with readers what the Bible says about subjects including baptism and manmade creeds.

"We give them what the Bible

says and let them make up their own mind," Ferrier said. "That's really all there is to it."

Knocking on strangers' doors can be intimidating, but "typically, two doors and you're fine," said Ferrier, a member of the Centerville Road Church of Christ in Garland, Texas. "Once they realize that you're not going to twist their arm and be confrontational, they're more than willing to talk to you," he said.

Edith Cliburn, 86, traveled from Franklin, Ky., to be a part of the campaign. She has participated in similar events since 1980, she said.

Emily Hopper, 13, also participated. Hopper, who attends the Cherokee Hills church, acknowledged that she had a few doors slammed in her face, but she wasn't discouraged.

"Because we're doing this for God, so there's not really anything to be scared of," she said.

Her father, Ed Hopper, added that the joy of a positive response far outweighs the negatives ones.

"When you see somebody walk up to the church building — that you knocked on their



Cliburn



Campaigners set up more than 270 Bible studies during the week.

door — it's an incredible boost," Ed Hopper said.

Calin Conley, 16, gave up a week of football camp to participate in the campaign. But that sacrifice was worth it when, after a Bible study, one of his students decided to obey the Gospel.

"When he said he wanted to be baptized, I couldn't get the smile off my face," Conley said.

By the end of the week, 31 peo-

ple were baptized. As they rose from the watery grave, coordinator Dave Sexton placed their photos on a poster in Cherokee Hills' foyer. In the weeks following the campaign, at least four more have been baptized.

Chad Lessly's photo was the seventh added to the board. Campaigners knocked on his door and left him a flier with a contact number for Bible studies. He called, and they answered. Soon he was baptized.

"Romans 10:9-10 is pretty much what told me I needed to be baptized into the truth," he said.

"I'm a new creature in the Lord."

The campaign also transformed the Cherokee Hills church, longtime member Bunny Chambers said.

"It has become easy to ask someone if they are interested in studying the Bible," Chambers said. "It has amazed us at how many people are saying, 'yes.' None of us will ever be the same."



Conley

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- I Want To Be A Worker For The Lord
- Never Grow Old
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- Why Not Tonight?
- Trust And Obey

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- Voices Are Calling
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- Sunrise In Glory
- O God, Our Help In Ages Past
- Eternal Father Strong To Save
- My God And I
- Who At The Door Is Standing?
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- Be Still My Soul
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- Alleluia
- Almost Persuaded
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- Sweet, Sweet Spirit
- Each Step I Take
- The Lord Bless You and Keep You

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- God Be With You Till We Meet Again

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- I Want To Know Christ
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PHOTO PROVIDED BY DALE JENKINS

Tennessee congregation collects 13,000 pounds of food

Julia Sumners, 5, daughter of Chris and Amy Sumners, helps sort nonperishable food items at the Spring Meadows church in Spring Hill, Tenn. The church, south of Nashville, collected more than 13,000 pounds of food in the recent Stamp Out Hunger campaign. "This food was donated from people all over Spring Hill in cooperation with the local post office," minister Dale Jenkins said.

Church mourns flood victims

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

On a recent Wednesday night, Adam and Leslie Jez and their 3-year-old son, Kaden, attended Vacation Bible School at the Foreman Church of Christ, in the southwest corner of Arkansas, just miles from the Oklahoma state line.

That Thursday, they met up with family at Albert Pike Recreation Area, about 70 miles northeast of Foreman.

Before dawn that Friday, Leslie Jez, 23, and Kaden lost their lives when a flash flood swept through their campsite on the edge of the Ouachita National Forest. They were among 20 victims of the June 11 flood, including Leslie's mother, Sheri Wade, 46.

"Kaden was the sunshine of everybody's life," said Billy Blakeney, minister of the Foreman Church of Christ, where funeral services were conducted June 15 for the boy and his mother.

Kaden's grandmother Dixie Jez is a faithful member of the congregation,



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAMILY

Kaden Jez, with his mother, Leslie Jez.

as is his father, who survived the flood. Adam Jez, an electrician, grew up at the Foreman church. Leslie Jez, a college student, was not a member but attended services with her family.

"Little Kaden attended our Bible class every Sunday morning with his grandmother," Blakeney said. "He came out of that class just beaming and singing, 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.'"

Blakeney described Leslie Jez as a "lovely lady" with a "beautiful personality." She was active in rodeos, the minister said.

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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY RONNIE CARIAGA

100 degrees plus no air conditioning equals VBS in the Philippines

Christians sang and sweated as they conducted Vacation Bible Schools for children in rural congregations in the Philippines. Ronnie Cariaga, a church member in Bacoor, Philippines, helped a group of young people conduct a VBS for the Paranaque Church of Christ. Word spread about the event, and churches in the cities of Langkiwa and Piela asked to be a part of the experience.

"So, we brought the same lessons and teachers to these congregations," Cariaga said. "Without chairs and a place to hold the VBS, amidst the scorching heat of the sun and hot temperature rising to 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) with just two electric fans, these kids came day after day to learn new things."

CAMBODIA

TANGKOK — Church members are "rebuilding" a congregation in this Southeast Asian village, missionary Bill Singleton said.

Launched in 2003, the Tangkok church reached a regular attendance of 200-plus people, Singleton said. But the church dwindled after it planted another congregation. The church had about 35 in attendance on a recent Sunday, Singleton said. The preacher, Poeu Sokgeah, cares for seven orphans.

"Keeping everyone fed has been a problem," Singleton said.

"Our concentration on Tangkok has caused us to get behind on baptism requests from other communities," he added, "and we must play catch-up for a while."

CUBA

TAGUASCO — Eleven people, including a former voodoo practitioner, were baptized recently in this town in central Cuba, said evangelist Edeldo Villa.

The new church is "the fruit not only of many days of evangelism but of many prayers as well," Villa said.

Villa is one of 34 Cuban evangelists supported by the Gulf Shores, Ala., Church of Christ, with assistance from the White Rock Fund in Texas.

MEXICO

MEXICO CITY — The 70-member Tierra Firme Church of Christ appointed its first elders recently.

About 150 people attended a Celebration Sunday to honor and pray for the new leaders and their wives — Alfredo and Norma Hernandez, Jaime and Joaquina Cabrera and Luis and Luisa Paco. Tom Phillips, an elder of the Palo Verde Church of Christ in Tucson, Ariz., and his wife, Vonnice, attended, as did leaders from other churches in Mexico City.

The Palo Verde church supports missionaries Sean and Jeni McClue, who work with the Tierra Firme church. During the Celebration Sunday, the church had two baptisms — one of them the McClues' daughter, Sarah.

This summer the McClues plan to return to the U.S. to begin an urban ministry in Phoenix.

NIGERIA

YOLA — Less than a year after enduring a two-day kidnapping ordeal, Dr. Robert Whittaker is back in Nigeria, treating the sick.

The British-born physician traveled to Yola, a town in northern Nigeria, recently with 10 students from the School of Biblical Studies in Jos. He treated about 200 patients. The

students conducted gospel meetings and baptized eight people — more than doubling the size of the town's Church of Christ, Whittaker reported.

PORTUGAL

LISBON — The eight members of the Angola mission team have arrived in this European capital and are immersed in intensive Portuguese language classes. The team plans to



Holland

move to Angola, a Portuguese-speaking country in southern Africa.

In Portugal, "it's incredible how many people I meet who, if they are not actually Angolan, lived

for a significant part of their life in Angola," said team member Nathan Holland.

For more information, see www.angolateam.org.

THAILAND

BANGKOK — Tensions between anti-government protesters and the Thai military turned violent recently, shortly after a team of U.S. Christians arrived there.

The eight-member team from Lubbock, Texas, traveled to Bangkok for Let's Start Talking,

a ministry that uses the Bible to help non-native speakers improve their English skills. Bangkok missionaries Andy and Kathryn Miller supervised the team.

The team cut its trip short and returned home. The Millers and their three children left Thailand for the U.S. a few days after the team. The Millers plan to return to Thailand in August.

"This problem is not going to go away overnight," he said, "and the scars will last forever."

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

DUBAI — John Cooper, a minister from Grand Junction, Colo., spoke to more than 325 people at the Dubai Church of Christ recently.

Most of the members of the legally registered church are expatriates working in construction in Dubai. The service began at 9 p.m., since Sunday is a workday in the Middle East and many church members work long shifts before coming to church, Cooper said.

The minister worked with Philip Ganta, an Indian-born church member who works with the church and a church-run preaching school in Dubai and also assists churches in southern India. During Cooper's visit, 13 people obeyed the Gospel, Ganta said.

SPOTLIGHT

A day in the life

MOMBASA, Kenya — "There are lots of challenges as a single father," Moses Gitau acknowledged in a recent account of a day in his life.

Gitau, evangelist for the Kisauni Church of Christ in Mombasa, lost his wife, Jane, to breast cancer last year. He compiled the hour-by-hour account, at the request of a supporting congregation in Oklahoma, to give American Christians insight into his daily routine. Following are a few entries:

5:30-6 a.m.: I wake up the kids and prepare breakfast. One of my boys, Mark, had a fever last night. Now his condition has worsened and he needs more medicine. I have to call my sister to come care for Mark.

6:30-7 a.m.: I escort Matthew to school. I make sure he enters the school compound.

7-9 a.m.: I clean the dishes, take my own breakfast and prepare for the next program. I feel worn out, but I am really happy because God will reward me. I am late leaving for the office.

10-11:30 a.m.: I leave the house, greeting the neighbors on the way. I take time to speak to some unemployed youths to encourage them. I drive to the church compound and greet the teachers, staff and children of Tumaini Academy. We are very happy about the development of the church and the school.

Noon-12:30 p.m.: I conduct a lunch fellowship/worship with the teachers and staff.

12:30-1:00 p.m.: I leave the church for beach evangelism, checking on Mark's condition on the way. I have been evangelizing and encouraging them to be firm in the Lord.

3:30-4 p.m.: I drive back to the church for volleyball evangelism. This outreach has helped many come to the church so we have resolved to sustain it.

6 p.m.: I leave for home.



Gitau

Church members help Haitian boy receive life-saving surgery

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

David Senatus survived the Jan. 12 Haiti earthquake with only a minor gash on his head.

Nonetheless, the disaster that killed more than 200,000 people almost cost the 15-year-old his life.

Senatus is one of about 725 Haitians sponsored by Hope for Haiti's Children, a Texas-based, church-supported ministry that helps pay for the children's education. A few months before the quake, a medical mission team from the U.S. visited some of the children and found that Senatus had a severe heart condition.

Debbie Vanderbeek, Haiti program director for Hope for Haiti's Children, contacted Dr. David Smith about the boy's condition. Smith, a church member who oversees another ministry — the Haiti Christian Development Project in Little Rock, Ark., — contacted the chief of cardiology at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

"On the day of the earthquake, we were about ready to finalize plans to bring David to the U.S. for surgery," Smith said.

In the weeks that followed, the paperwork hit a snag, he said, after another religious group was arrested and charged with kidnapping for attempting to take 33 Haitian children to an orphanage in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

When Smith led a medical mission trip to Haiti after the quake, Senatus' condition had worsened. His heart was failing, and he was having trouble breathing.

Workers with Hope for Haiti's Children labored around the clock to get the necessary documents for Senatus to travel to Arkansas. A series of coincidences — which Vanderbeek considers to be God's providence — led her to an organization called Corporate Aviation Responding in Emergencies, or CARE.

The group volunteered to airlift



HOPE FOR HAITI'S CHILDREN

Using a machine to help him breathe, David Senatus flies from Haiti to Arkansas.

Senatus to America.

"God put it all together," Vanderbeek said.

When Vanderbeek brought Senatus and his father to the airport, reporters from NBC were waiting. Dr. Nancy Snyderman, the network's chief medical editor, carried Senatus to the plane when he became too short of breath to walk.

Dr. Robert Jaquiss performed heart valve replacement surgery at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

"An adult who had his cardiac condition I think would certainly be dead by now," Jaquiss told NBC. "One of the magical things about children, though, is that they can overcome things."

As Senatus recovered, he was cared for by nurse Deann Martin, a member of the Downtown Church of Christ in Searcy, Ark. During his convalescence, the boy and his father stayed in the home of Tony and Robin Hill, members of the Sylvan Hills Church of Christ in Sherwood, Ark.

Senatus and his father have returned to their home in Haiti. Snyderman featured their story recently on NBC's "Today" show.

SEE THE VIDEO REPORT at christianchronicle.org/blog. For more information, see hopeforhaitischildren.org.

DOORS

Ghana

Ghana Bible College in Kumasi, Ghana, requests salary support for its professors. The school, launched in the 1960s, graduated 19 students in December from seven of Ghana's 10 regions and one

from Sierra Leone. The school also seeks funds to upgrade its facilities to meet government requirements. For more information, contact the Cedars Church of Christ, P.O. Box 5124, Wilmington, DE 19808 or call (302) 994-3800.

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INMATES: Prison ministry can be rewarding, devastating, leader says

FROM PAGE 1

said Baggett, state chaplain at Limestone for 13 years. "The fastest-growing Churches of Christ in the world are inside jails and prisons. We're growing by leaps and bounds."

The Rainbow Church of Christ in Gadsden, Ala., averages more than 100 baptisms a year at the Etowah County Jail and operates a transitional home for released female inmates.

Rainbow church member Ray Cox served as charter state director of the NewLife Behavior Network of Alabama, which is associated with Churches of Christ and promotes Bible study, substance abuse recovery, halfway houses and other support programs.

The number of baptisms produced by jail and prison ministries would "stagger the imaginations" of many Christians, Cox said. "But we could sure do a lot more," added Cox, who describes prison ministry as both extremely rewarding as many accept the Gospel and frequently devastating as many revert to their former ways.

Across the nation, 160-plus ministries associated with Churches of Christ baptized nearly 8,000 inmates in 2009, according to a survey by NewLife Behavior Ministries in Corpus Christi, Texas. Longtime prison minister Buck Griffith serves as president of that national ministry, which developed the curriculum used by the Alabama network.

Griffith told workshop participants that many church members oppose prison ministry, while others simply squirm when they hear reports of inmate baptisms.

Still others wouldn't mind the

church baptizing 100 percent of inmates, "as long as you or I hold them down until they quit bubbling," Griffith said.

"My phrase is, 'We've got to get over it,'" he said of worrying about such opposition. "That's just the way it is."

Each week, more than a dozen members of the Parkway Church of Christ in Fulton, Ky., conduct two men's Bible classes, a women's Bible class and a Sunday worship service for women at the Fulton County Detention Center.

The ministry, started less than four years ago, has resulted in more than 70 baptisms, minister Cecil May III said. "Our experience tells us that every church that has access to the local jail system should have some outreach to that facility," May said.

Nia Johnson, 25, a member of the University Church of Christ in Montgomery, Ala., teaches in the NewLife

ministry at Tutwiler Prison for Women, a maximum-security facility. Topics include anger management, parenting skills, addiction recovery and positive attitudes and behaviors.

"The first time I went in, I was scared out of my mind," said Johnson, a marketing and communications specialist for Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes.

But once she got to know the inmates, she said, they impressed her as ordinary people who made horrible mistakes and desperately need the saving power of Jesus.

"The hope I saw in their eyes, their enthusiasm, their thirst for knowledge really struck me," Johnson said. "I really just love being able to get to know some of the ladies ... to just share with them."



The faith-based honor dorm houses about 400 inmates.



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Inmate Tim M. is described as a "dynamic soul winner" who has helped convert more than 100 inmates in 2010.

BIBLES 'OPEN ALL DAY LONG'

At Limestone, a wooden sign with the phrase "In Remembrance of Me" adorns a simple, rectangular baptistery.

The tank, which takes about 10 minutes to fill, receives frequent use at Alabama's largest prison.

"Over the past many years, we have baptized literally thousands of people in that baptistery," said Baggett, a member of the Beltline Church of Christ in Decatur, west of Huntsville. "We have another baptistery at the other end of camp."

Volunteer chaplain Sam Drake, a member of the Madison church, works with inmates assigned to Limestone's faith-based honor dorm, where selected inmates focus on spiritual development.

Industrial-strength fans make a loud humming noise in the un-air-conditioned dorm. Words such as "Honor," "Respect" and "Integrity" are painted prominently on concrete-block col-



Inmates lift weights in the exercise yard outside the faith-based honor dorm at Limestone Correctional Facility, Alabama's largest prison.

umns amid hundreds of inmate bunk beds.

"There's more Bible studying going on here (at the prison) than there might be in the whole city of Huntsville," Drake said. "The Bibles are just open all day long."

Under state law, Limestone must provide equal opportuni-

ties for all faiths, from Christian denominations to Islam to Wiccan.

As state chaplain, Baggett said he works to accommodate all faith groups and treats each with the same courtesy and kindness he would appreciate himself.

However, Churches of Christ

See **PRISON**, Page 13



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Fences block inmates at Limestone Correctional Facility in Harvest, Ala., from the free world.

PRISON: Want to be baptized? Get ready quick!

FROM PAGE 12

maintain the strongest ministry presence at the prison, Baggett and the inmates said. A number of congregations provide volunteer chaplains and funding for expenses such as printing Bible lessons.

Gold, well-worn "Songs of the Church" hymnals — the ones with 728b, the most famous song number in modern Church of Christ history — rest in the backs of the chapel's wooden pews.

"One of the rules of this office is that if somebody says they want to be baptized, they'd better hold their breath," inmate David said, referring to how quickly baptism requests are fulfilled.

HE'S FINE IF HE DIES IN PRISON

On a recent afternoon, a man named Anthony became the 141st Limestone inmate immersed into Christ in 2010.

Anthony switched his regular prison attire for a special white jumpsuit with "Baptism Clothes" in black letters on the front and stepped into the water.

"Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" asked James E. Williams, prison minister of the Northwest Church of Christ in Huntsville, standing beside the small tub.

"Lean forward a little bit. You're a little long," Williams said after Anthony confessed his faith. "Grab your nose because I'm going to lean you back, OK?"

After baptizing Anthony, Williams proclaimed, "Praise God! You have done what the Lord has commanded you to do, and you are a member of the body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Congratulations, brother!"

Inmate Tim M., who has served 15 years at Limestone and will leave prison in October, introduced Anthony to Christ.

Baggett describes Tim M. as a "dynamic soul winner" who has played a role in at least 100 inmate conversions just this year.

"Tim often will leave here (the chapel) in the morning, and as he goes out the door, he'll say, 'I'm going fishing,'" Baggett said. "And he'll often come back with two or three people wanting to be baptized. He does a good job teaching."

Tim M. said he just shares the Scriptures. "It don't matter who the person is," he said. "I just walk up to 'em. And I just talk to 'em."

Inmate Timothy W., who once served time on death row, said he ignored Tim M.'s conversion attempts when he arrived at Limestone in 1997.

In fact, the "preaching, preaching, preaching" annoyed him, he said, and interrupted the soap operas he was trying to watch. But eventually, he was won over.

"I called my folks, and I said, 'I'm through,'" he said. "They said, 'What are you talking about?' And I said, 'Man, I'm giving it up to God.'"

Inmate Michael said he got in serious trouble in 1994 and, at age 23, found himself in prison. In 1995, he started studying the Bible, leading to his baptism.

"I really was just trying to find myself ... see where I went wrong, try to correct some of the mistakes I had made in the past," he said.

At Limestone since 1986, inmate Jackie must serve a dozen or more years before he has any chance at freedom.

Yet, since his baptism in 2001, he said he no longer worries about dying in prison.

"It doesn't matter to me which environment I'm in when I die," he said. "What matters is where I'm at spiritually. And as far as hope, I've got hope now."



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SCHOLARS: Christian higher ed priorities explored

FROM PAGE 3

the Churches of Christ," Hebert reported.

"Some respondents expressed understanding that this will necessarily bring about an expansion of mission to broader constituencies, while emphasizing that this needs to be done without compromising core values and beliefs," Hebert's paper said.

In the 2009 edition of *Churches of Christ in the United States*, 21st Century Christian identified 12,629 a cappella Churches of Christ with 1,578,281 adherents nationwide.

Those figures — the most recent available — represent 526 fewer churches and 78,436 fewer people in the pews than just six years earlier.

An increasing number of colleges and universities associated with Churches of Christ draw more freshmen from outside the fellowship than within, *The Christian Chronicle* has reported.

Ten years ago, Church of Christ members comprised 70 percent of freshmen at 18 Christian higher education institutions, according to a survey by Flavil Yeakley, director of the Harding Center for Church Growth in Searcy, Ark.

By fall 2009, that figure dropped to 53 percent.

When Christian colleges were founded, an organizing principle was that the institutions would help strengthen the church in specific geographic regions, Lipscomb President Randy Lowry noted during the panel discussion.

In return for the Christian college producing church leaders, Lowry said, there was "almost an unwritten contract" that the church would supply future students.

"Over time, the institutions have grown strong and somewhat competitive with each other," Lowry said.

"The church has changed a little bit in its relationship with the institutions, calling for the institutions to have a political, religious, doctrinal position that's just perfectly in line with theirs, or they won't support it."

THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY?

While drawing more students from outside Churches of Christ might be



KRISTI JONES

At table from left, Harding President David Burks, Pepperdine President Andy Benton and Lipscomb President Randy Lowry listen to Pepperdine Provost Darryl Tippens.

frightening, Lowry said, it also could be viewed as an exciting development.

"God is sending to us the people that God wants us to educate, and even though they might not be the profile we had in mind, they might be the profile God has in mind," he said.

For example, he mentioned a student from the Northeast who chose Lipscomb because she wanted to attend a "Christian" university, not because of its Church of Christ ties.

"You see, in her generation, whether we're Church of Christ or Baptist or Methodist ... didn't make a hill of

beans," Lowry said.

"Is that a threat or an opportunity?" he asked.

Dwayne VanRheenen, emeritus provost of Abilene Christian University in Texas, tried to put the challenges in perspective.

"When I look back, I see in our institutions something that I think most of us never dreamed of, never

envisioned, that we as members of Churches of Christ would have founded universities that are highly respected in American higher education," VanRheenen said.

'SOURCES OF LIGHT AND LEAVEN'

Andy Benton, president of Pepperdine University, said he remains convinced that Christian universities have a unique role to play.

"I believe that our Christian colleges and universities are good for the local church," Benton said.

In the view of David Burks, president of Harding University, an institution

that weaves a Christian worldview through everything it does — from academics to sports — will flourish in the 21st century and beyond.

"I'm basically very optimistic, if in fact we keep the main thing the main thing," Burks said, referring to the emphasis on biblical teaching and spiritual development.

O'Neal and Billy Hilyer, president of Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., were absent from the panel. The death of a friend kept Hilyer from attending, while a flight cancellation stranded O'Neal.

In his presentation, Tippens said most secular institutions resist "the basic human need for spiritual wisdom."

That gap provides an opening for Christian higher education at a critical time, he said.

"In my judgment," Tippens said, "we have a rare opportunity to be sources of light and leaven in the big lump of higher education — if we are courageous, willing to engage the big questions of the day, willing to do the hard thinking necessary to articulate a philosophical grounding of our enterprise and willing to relinquish our self-imposed isolation."

In his paper, O'Neal noted that Oklahoma Christian has adopted "Faith(fully)" as one of its mottos.

That slogan, he said, is "meant to signify that OC is seeking to fully embrace all that faith demands — whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy."

"Such ideals and concepts are not generally encouraged by today's Western culture," O'Neal said, "thus demanding that faith-based institutions must be countercultural."

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(Excerpt from *The Bible and "Social" Drinking* by W.D. Jeffcoat page 192)

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Celebrating *The beautiful game*

AFRICA'S FIRST WORLD CUP draws the world's eyes to the Global South – the new epicenter of church growth.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY SHINE 2010 (WWW.SHINE2010.CO.ZA)

The new Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa, is filled to capacity for an exhibition match between South Africa and Colombia. The facility seats 94,700 people.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Christians in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, stood in line for more than 10 hours to get tickets to the 2010 World Cup.

"It is an exciting time to live here and to see the patriotism growing among the locals," Judy Kendall-Ball said, adding a "Go Bafana Bafana" for good measure. That's the nickname of South Africa's team.

For the first time in its history, the FIFA World Cup took place on African soil, where Kendall-Ball and her husband, Ken, serve schoolchildren. The couple works with the poorest schools on South Africa's Eastern Cape province, providing a Bible-based, character-building curriculum.

From Columbia, Mo., to Salvador, Brazil, church members hosted watch parties for "the beautiful game," as soccer is widely known. Three

members of the Chibana Church of Christ on the island of Okinawa, Japan, rose at 3:30 a.m. to watch the U.S. play England, member Stephen Wolf said.

Though Tanzania is thousands of miles closer to South Africa than Okinawa, missionaries there said they wouldn't be able to see many games

on TV. Satellite and cable are hard to come by, said Brett Harrison, who serves on a mission team in Geita, Tanzania, with his wife,

Christie. Recently the

couple had a group of young men in their home and bought sodas. Usually, Tanzanians prefer fruit-flavored drinks, but Coca-Cola was sponsoring a contest for an all-expenses-paid trip to the World Cup.

"Every single guy here took a Coca-Cola," Brett Harrison said.

A STADIUM HORN SOUNDING CHANGE

But the significance of Africa's first World Cup goes beyond

penalty kicks and beverage marketing campaigns, religion scholars say.

When Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, president of the South African Council of Churches, attended a recent Christian conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, he carried a "vuvuzela." The traditional South African stadium horn has become an infamous part of this year's World Cup.

The council is an interdenominational group that fought against South Africa's apartheid policies. Desmond Tutu is a past president.

In an interview with the UK Evangelical Alliance, Maluleke said, "I see the vuvuzela as a desperate attempt by Africa to be heard."

"I thought there was a connection between that desire and this conference, which happens now at a time when ... the Global South (that is Africa, Asia, Latin America) happens to be the place where the church is growing fastest," he said, "and there's a lot of vibrant Christian mission going on there."

Dyron Daugherty, assistant professor of religion at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., agrees. His new book, "The Changing World of Christianity," details the global migration of the faith.

"Africa is today bearing the fruit of a century of concentrated Christian missions," Daugherty told *The Christian Chronicle*. "While missions to Africa certainly continue, there is arguably a greater need for Africans to evangelize the West than for Westerners to evangelize Africa."

AFTER GAMES, CHALLENGES REMAIN

The World Cup brings together the rich from around the world, but also the poor and marginalized, "the vulnerable people, the sex workers, the hawkers from all over the world," Maluleke said.

"I think that the church should take care of those who can't take care of themselves during this time," he added.

After the tournament ends, Africa's hurdles will remain, said Jeff Kenney, a Church of

Christ missionary in Sebokeng, South Africa.

"Beyond the thrills of a world stage, there are those whose lives still face the consequences of an immoral lifestyle and the reality of HIV/AIDS," he said. "(There are) still those who cannot see how they will feed themselves and their children today or even where they will find shelter for the next week."

Joshua Ankiah, a native of South Africa, returned there recently with his wife and two children to do mission work.

He and other church members distributed fliers about the Gospel on the beach near Durban, South Africa, where locals and visitors watched the World Cup on big-screen TVs.

"The atmosphere at the beach is exhilarating, bustling with foreigners," he said. "In a country where racial hatred still exists, we are hopeful and pray that the unity and camaraderie among the locals will continue well after the World Cup ends."

"In the meantime, we are truly enjoying the atmosphere."

Global SOUTH
The changing face of the church



Boys of summer: Major-leaguers share a common faith

BRAD ZIEGLER signs autographs with a reference to a favorite Scripture.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ANAHEIM, Calif.

More than three hours before the start of a Friday night game against the Los Angeles Angels, Oakland A's relief pitcher Brad Ziegler is hard at work.

Make that hard at play.

He's immersed in the arcade version of "RBI Baseball" in the visitors' clubhouse at Angel Stadium.

With a big smile, he apologizes for being late for an interview with *The Christian Chronicle* but explains that he had to finish the game with teammate Jerry Blevins.

Two years after pitching a major-league record 39 consecutive scoreless innings to start his career, Ziegler, 30, still can't get enough baseball — real or otherwise.

"Definitely," he says, when asked if he's a baseball fan as well as a player. "I love to watch games. They're on in the locker room all the time."

In fact, there's a game on the television in the weight room where Ziegler is doing the interview. But he turns down the sound so he can focus on discussing his Christian faith.

"I don't want to be kind of overbearing because I've seen how that can turn people off," said Ziegler, a member of the East Grand Church of Christ in Springfield, Mo.

But when he signs autographs — unless it's a team ball and space is an issue — he writes "1 John 5:5" by his name.

"I'll have people ask me, 'Well, what's that mean? What's that say?'" said Ziegler, whose father, Greg, a preacher, and his mother, Lisa, have served the Odessa Church of Christ in Missouri for

26 years. "I say, 'Go look it up.'"

"Hopefully, people will open up the Bible and see something profound that can touch their lives and make them want to dig a little deeper."

That Scripture reads: "Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

A few nights earlier, the right-handed submariner — who, at press time, boasted a career earned-run average of 2.37 in 150 major-league appearances — gave up a rare home run.

The batter: Texas Rangers slugger Josh Hamilton, an evangelical Christian whom Ziegler describes as one of his best friends in baseball. Still, the long ball stung.

In a moment like that, Ziegler said, a Christian shows how he handles adversity.

"I do my best not to show a lot of emotion on the mound, how frustrated I was," Ziegler said. "It bothered me like crazy, 'cause we were up one when he hit it and down one after he hit it."

"And I hate it. I feel like I let the team down. ... And at the same time, the most important thing is, I'm still representing Christ on the field. I try to emulate how he would react in a situation like that," he added, noting that Oakland came back to win that game.

"I'm sure I fall way short most of the time, but at the same time, it's an effort that's ongoing."

Throughout the 162-game season, Ziegler receives support from the East Grand church family — 1,900 miles from Oakland.

"I miss those people," said Ziegler, who has a daughter, Kaylin, almost 3. "It's very encouraging to get text messages



Oakland relief pitcher Brad Ziegler, right, visits with a teammate before a game.

and e-mails and Facebook messages all summer long, just knowing that people are thinking about me while I'm away."

In May, Ziegler launched the Pastime for Patriots Foundation, a charity to benefit family members of U.S. military personnel overseas and those who have recently returned from action.

His parents celebrated the charity's launch in Oakland — and ended up watching A's starter Dallas Braden, a frequent "RBI Baseball" competitor of Ziegler's, pitch the 19th perfect game in major-league history that weekend.

Greg Ziegler told MLB.com that he was proud of his son's initiative to buy baseball tickets for military families.

'I'm grateful that he accepts the responsibility to do something good with the way that he is blessed.'

Greg Ziegler
Brad's father and minister, Odessa Church of Christ in Missouri

"I'm grateful that he accepts the responsibility to do something good with the way that he is blessed," Greg Ziegler said.

"Brad has been given a lot of gifts and great privileges, and he's worked hard. I'm thankful he's interested in giving back and not just accumulating things for himself."

The pitcher said he wants military families to know they are not forgotten.

However, he said he's trying not to take a lot of credit for Pastime for Patriots.

"I've had a whole lot of things falling into place, a whole lot of people helping out that I didn't even know existed when we got this thing started," he said. "I feel like God's at work in a lot of ways, just putting these people in my life."

JOSH WILLINGHAM is 'the epitome of a great person.'

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON

In an indoor batting cage at Nationals Stadium, Washington catcher Ivan "Pudge" Rodriguez smashed line drive after line drive.

The sweet *crack* of wood (bat) striking cowhide (ball) reverberated through the Nationals' clubhouse before a Friday night game with the Florida Marlins.

A few feet away, left fielder Josh Willingham — who bats fifth in the Washington lineup, just ahead of Rodriguez, a future Hall of Famer — awaited his turn at the plate.

Before stepping into the cage, though, Willingham, 31, took time to discuss his faith with *The Christian Chronicle*.

"It's huge," he said of his faith's importance in his life.

Willingham grew up in Florence, Ala., at the Cross Point Church of Christ — formerly known as the Darby Drive congregation.

"One of the main things I remember, growing up in Florence at Darby Drive, is the church

had a really good youth group," said Willingham, who was baptized at age 12 after returning home from a youth rally. "That played a big hand in the faith I have now."

He, his wife, Ginger, and their young sons, Rhett and Ryder, still attend the Cross Point church in the offseason.

Years ago, Cross Point member Randall Fox played on a baseball

team coached by Willingham's father, David, a deacon at the church. Fox recalls that a young Josh would hang around the field and watch them play.

"Now, he's grown up, and we pay

a lot of money to go watch him play," Fox said. "Funny how that worked out!"

The 6-foot-2, 215-pound slugger has hit 20 or more home runs in a season three times and is on pace to do so again — and perhaps reach 30 — in 2010.

Willingham played high school baseball at Mars Hills Bible School in Florence, where his mother, Denise, has taught elementary students for 25 years and his father serves as vice president.

"I guess what I would say about Josh and his career is that he set his goals high, and he worked hard to attain them," Denise Willingham said.

"He wrote a note on a card in the fifth grade as to what he would be doing in the year 2000," she said. "He said that he would be playing college baseball and would sign a contract to play major-league baseball. The capsule was buried and then dug up in the year 2000."

That same year, after starring at the University of Northern Alabama, Willingham signed with the Florida Marlins. He made his major-league debut with the Marlins in 2004. Florida traded him to the Nationals after the 2008 season.

"He's the real deal," said retired Northern Alabama coach Mike Lane,

who won 908 games in 24 seasons. "He's one of those guys that I would always take our players to and say, 'This is the way that you behave.'"

"You can't make great players out of junk people, and Josh Willingham is the epitome of a great person. Therefore, he became

a great player," added Lane, standing by the Nationals' dugout while in Washington to watch Willingham play. "He's a family guy. He's well grounded. He's got great parents."

Willingham endured tragedy during the 2009 season when his younger brother, Jon, 27, was killed in a June car wreck. He returned home to be with his family and missed two weeks of the season.

"That was a real coming-of-age experience for Josh. I still have no idea how he put together the strength to speak at Jon's funeral," Fox

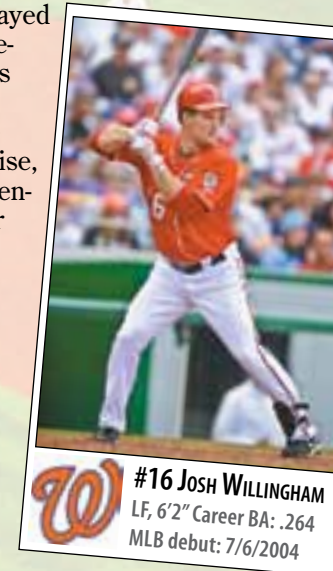
said. "He has a strong, solid faith." Asked about dealing with his brother's death, Willingham said, "It was definitely a tough situation. It's hard to find good in something like that. But you can definitely see how the Lord worked in that situation, which was very encouraging to me and my family."

Within the confines of a major-league clubhouse, Willingham said he's not "real loud" about proclaiming his faith.

Nonetheless, he said, teammates know what his beliefs are.

"You can't be too pushy," said Willingham, who participates in the Nationals' Sunday chapel program.

"There are a lot of different people here who have belief systems. But again, you have to let everybody know where you stand, so it's kind of what I try and do."



Left fielder Josh Willingham warms up before a game at Nationals Park, blocks away from the U.S. Capitol.

PHOTO AND PAGE DESIGN BY ERIK TRYGGSTAD

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- Kimberly Rivers Roberts
- John M. Perkin



ABILENE
CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY

AFRICA IN INDIANA

A host of Malawians and church members met Vice President Joyce Banda during her U.S. visit:



Shadreck Kamwendo and Momo Wilson

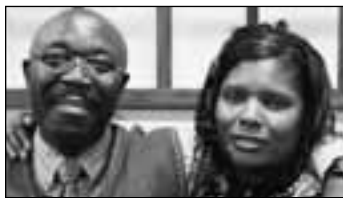
Kamwendo is a native of Blantyre, Malawi, and has lived in the U.S. for 14 years. He serves on a committee for the Joyce Banda Foundation. The vice president "looks out for the welfare of all Malawi," he said.

Wilson is the daughter of a British diplomat and a Japanese nurse who met in Malawi. She is studying at Butler University in Indianapolis and hopes one day to "go back home and help in some way."



Charlene Odle Winsor and Larry Ferrell

In the late 1950s, before he first visited Malawi, Dick Stephens attended the Central Church of Christ in Muncie, Ind., and edited and published the *Gospel Vidette*, a Christian publication mailed to more than 100 countries. Winsor and Ferrell were among his "pack rats," teens that helped stuff the boxes to ship overseas. Winsor now attends the Smyrna, Tenn., Church of Christ, and Ferrell is a deacon of the Withamsville Church of Christ in Cincinnati.



Priestly and Mary Nkhonjera

The Nkhonjeras are living in Lubbock, Texas, as Priestly Nkhonjera trains at Sunset International Bible Institute. The couple plans to return to Malawi to launch a new ministry training program in Malawi's central region, near Dedza.

MALAWI: Vice president seeks to empower women

FROM PAGE 3

"He was actually discouraging Jesus from doing good," she said. "And my brother Philip didn't know that God was just about to bless him forever."

Banda said improving the lives of Malawians is "a mammoth task."

But she urged the church members not to be overwhelmed by that task.

"The God that has placed it before you will see it through," she said, "and make sure that we achieve it together. And I want you to know that you can count on me as a partner."

MEETING THE VICE PRESIDENT

Banda began partnering with Green Valley members Dick and Suzi Stephens about eight years ago, before she was elected Malawi's first female vice president.

Banda oversees the Joyce Banda Foundation, which operates schools that help girls in Malawi receive an education and professional development.

Too many girls in Malawi marry in their teens and give birth to children they cannot afford to feed, she said. Some are in abusive relationships.

Encouraging girls to stay in school through age 18 makes a difference, Banda said. The vice president wants women in her country to be empowered economically and to have access to good maternal health care.

"That is what changes the well-being of the world," she said.

The Stephenses have worked in Malawi since 1993.

They founded The Malawi Project in 2000 to funnel humanitarian aid to various benevolence programs in the country, including medical care, orphan care and a food processing and distribution facility. Banda got to know the Stephenses through the orphan care program.



Mzumara



Dick Stephens



MELISSA LAWLER

Suzi Stephens, left, watches as her daughter, Polly Gibbins, greets Joyce Banda at Stephens' home in Indianapolis. Gibbins, who has traveled to Malawi with her mother, memorized a greeting in Chichewa, Malawi's national language. "Walemekemeka amayi. Ndakondwa kwabasi kuknonani. Zikomo, zikomo," she said. ("Your right honorable ma'am, I am so happy to meet you. Thank you, thank you.")

The Stephenses hosted a reception for Banda at their home. More than 200 people lined up to meet the vice president, including members of area Churches of Christ and Malawians living in the Indianapolis area.

Smart Mzumara was surprised when he got a Facebook message saying that the vice president of his homeland would be in his friends' front yard.

Mzumara works for an insurance company and is a longtime friend of the Stephenses. He has visited the Green Valley church and said he admires the couple's commitment to Africa.

"Whenever I call them, they're in Malawi," he said. The Stephenses spend about three months there each year.

One of Suzi Stephens' daughters, Cheri Griffin, said she was impressed with the vice president's efforts to end abuse

of women in her country.

"It was amazing to meet her and to see all the people who joined Mom and Dick along their journey that has become The Malawi Project," she said.

Such visits from high government officials are rare, Dick Stephens added.

"It points out the fact that God uses his people to accomplish impossible things," he said, "if we will only step out in faith and go all the way."

A NEW SCHOOL FOR MALAWI

The Malawi Project has a long list of accomplishments. The nonprofit has distributed more than \$150 million in medical aid and raised funds for an orphanage that houses 150 children.

Its Madalitso food processing plant at Lumbadzi, Malawi, produces meals for 85,000 people per day, Dick Stephens said.

Now church members in Indianapolis plan to launch a new ministry training facility in Malawi, partnering with Sunset International Bible Institute.

Malawi already is home to many preacher schools — and

nearly 4,000 Churches of Christ. The new school will focus on training and maturing church leaders from across Malawi and bordering nations.

Priestly Nkhonjera, a longtime minister in Malawi, is training at Sunset's campus in Lubbock, Texas, before returning to his home country to oversee the school.

Speaking to the church members, Banda thanked them for "engaging my brother Nkhonjera."

"We respect those organizations that come and listen to what we have to say," Banda said. Sometimes, she said, small ministries accomplish more good in Malawi than "huge organizations that come and try to do things on their own, without involving the people that know what to do."

"I'm now talking to a converted group of brothers and sisters," she told the church members, "and that's why I am congratulating you most sincerely — for knowing that we matter."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, see www.malawiproject.org.

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For more information, contact Bill Stinson at billyb.stinson@gmail.com or Randy Gray at chimalarandy@att.net or (817) 319-7936.



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BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

On June 15 Doug Wheelock strapped into a Russian Soyuz rocket at Baikonur, Russia, and blasted off for a rendezvous and docking with the International Space Station on June 17. For six months, he is the Commander of the International Space Station (ISS), his home until his scheduled December return to earth. The mission is ISS Expedition 25.

Wheelock is a colonel in the U.S. Army. He also is an aerospace engineer and test pilot. As an Army aviator, he has served as a battalion operations officer and commander of an Air Cavalry Troop in the 9th U.S. Cavalry.

Among his many awards are the Meritorious Service Medal (1st Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Achievement Medal (2nd Oak Leaf Cluster), National Defense Service Medal and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Master Aviator badge and Air Force Space and Missile badge.

He became a candidate astronaut at NASA's Johnson Space Center in 1998. He previously flew to the International Space Station in 2001 and 2002 and has logged many hours floating in space on several space walks.

Wheelock's connection to Oklahoma Christian University began in 2007 in Houston when he met Bobby and Kay Murcer. The former Yankees outfielder and Oklahoma church member was undergoing treatment in a Houston hospital for cancer, which claimed his life a year later. Wheelock, who grew up in Binghamton, N.Y., was a lifelong fan of the Yankees and his childhood idol, Bobby Murcer.

Through his friendship with Murcer, Wheelock learned about Oklahoma Christian University. In March the astronaut spoke at a donor appreciation dinner there. He shared his experiences in space and talked about his strong faith

in God and Jesus Christ. Wheelock is slated to speak to the Oklahoma Christian student body this fall from the ISS.

Wheelock is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and Georgia Tech graduate school.

Have your experiences in space afforded spiritual lessons?

Yes, absolutely. In fact, as I look back on my time in space, the images and emotions that remain with me are deeply spiritual.

The months and years of preparation for a space mission are filled with mental, intellectual and physical lessons that shape a very unique individual experience. But I am convinced that it is impossible to prepare for the spiritual awakening that occurs when you see our planet suspended against the backdrop of the vast emptiness of deep space.

The spiritual lessons are numerous, and perhaps the most profound is the indescribable beauty and mystery of God's creation. You see no borders, no barriers, no limitations, no conflict, no hate. It's just this big blue planet, an explosion of color, raging with life, in an endless sea of darkness. Cares of the world and human struggles seem to fade away and give way to awe and pure majesty, from this vantage point.

We are merely the caretakers of a fragile world protected by a thin atmosphere and covered with the matchless grace of an almighty God.

What part does prayer play for you on a space mission?

Well, quite simply, prayer is perhaps that most important element in my Christian walk and in my relationship with God. It is the way that I let God know how awesome he is and what a masterpiece he has created. It is a personal way I can confess my shortcomings and ask him for his forgive-

A conversation with Doug Wheelock



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

Doug Wheelock left earth June 15 and is scheduled to command the International Space Station through December.

ness and continued grace. It is the way that I can ask him for protection for my crew and for wisdom and guidance as their commander.

On a space mission, there are so many things that are outside of your control, and countless things that can go wrong, in a world with very little margin for error. Those are precisely the reasons why I try to be continually in a prayerful mindset.

The times that I am most vulnerable are when things are going well and according to plan. It is in those quiet hours that I am most prone to begin patting myself on the back, as if these are things that I accomplished in my own power.

It is easy to be prayerful when a rocket is getting ready to light underneath you, or when you

are engulfed in a fireball while re-entering the Earth's atmosphere. It is way more difficult to be prayerful when everything is going smoothly according to plan, when things seem "routine," when we as humans tend to be impressed with our accomplishments.

Scripture says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." How do your space experiences relate to that teaching?

That is one of my favorite passages, from the 19th Psalm.

I can just imagine David out in the fields, tending the sheep and looking up at the vastness of space and a sky filled with billions of stars. There is nothing left to say but, "Wow, how great thou art!"

My experiences in space

directly correlate with David's reaction to the majesty of God's creation. My human reaction is a combination of humility and tears. What an awesome God we serve! The heavens declare his glory! And, the sky displays his handiwork! Nothing can prepare you to adequately comprehend what your eyes see from space. It is indeed a masterpiece, the very same masterpiece that David described in Psalm 19. The two experiences are directly related.

As an engineer and scientist, how does the space experience affect you and your faith?

I love getting this question, especially from those searching for answers and truth — or those that are agnostic.

The question is usually posed as if science and the logic of engineering are mutually exclusive with a life of faith. My experience in space has done nothing but strengthen my faith in God and my belief in a divine creation.

In fact, I am convinced that it would require an unimaginable amount of faith to believe that all of this happened just by chance. I spent more than 20 hours outside of the Space Station on three space walks during my first mission, and the most profound sight is to view the Earth suspended in a vast, endless sea of emptiness.

To me, it would be absolutely impossible to have just happened. It looks more like brush strokes from the Master's hand. It is quite surreal and profoundly breathtaking.

Do you take a Bible into space? What are your favorite passages?

Well, due to weight and volume restrictions, I am not able to carry a full-sized Bible into space, but I have it in electronic form, as well as access to study devotionals electronically.

There are so many passages that I have committed to memory, and others that have special meaning to me.

See **WHELOCK**, Page 24



HEAR THE LORD OF THE LORD

September 26-29

Sunday p.m. **Everett W. Huffard**
How Can We Hear God Over All the Noise?

Monday a.m. **B. Chris Simpson**
Does the Word of God Really Matter on Monday?

Monday p.m. **Don McLaughlin**
What Does the Word of God Look Like?

Tuesday a.m. **Pat Bills**
Can't We Just Be Spiritual?

Tuesday p.m. **Ken Neller**
What If We Lost the Bible?

Wednesday a.m. **Daniel Cherry**
Don't We Need Something More Than the Word of God?

Wednesday p.m. **Jim Baird**
Can the Word of God Still Be Heard in 2010?

Howard Norton
Celebration of Ministry dinner on Monday night

Harding University 2010
Bible Lectureship



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

Doug Wheelock says his favorite verses "focus on God's promise of strength in times of weakness."

WHEELOCK: Earth's beauty is 'indescribable'

FROM PAGE 23

But, if I had to pick a couple of favorites, these would be my top three:

Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Isaiah 55:12: "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

God's word has such power, and for me, my favorite passages of Scripture are those that focus on God's promise of strength in times of weakness, restoration in times of brokenness and peace in times of turmoil and despair.

You said in a speech that "looking into the blackness of deep space is terrifying." Please explain.

To this day, thinking of that sight still sends a shiver through me.

As with many of my most vivid visual memories, this one is more pronounced during a space walk, when the only thing between you and eternity is the thin visor of your helmet.

In space, the environment is a complete vacuum. There are no molecules and no atmosphere to distort or refract light or any visual image. So, the sphere of the Earth and the moon give a unique perception of depth to the solar system, and coupled with the varied brightness of the stars, you soon find yourself in a very three-dimensional, vast and seemingly endless sea of darkness.

Looking away from the Earth, the Space

Station and the Space Shuttle and into the expanse of this darkness is indeed terrifying. There is no other environment that is more inhospitable, empty, void and less forgiving of mistakes than this. At this point, I distinctly remember my prayer being, "Lord, hold me close, and please don't let go."

Tell those of us who will never travel to space what touches you most deeply about the experience.

Of all the profound moments and awe-inspiring surprises that a journey to space affords, the most moving sight, and the one that touches me most deeply, is witnessing the indescribable beauty of our planet Earth.

The Earth is quite literally an explosion of color in an endless sea of darkness — a raging ball of life, suspended in the cold and lifeless grip of vast emptiness. The contrast is breathtaking.

I distinctly remember working during my first space walk and being so distracted by the colors of the Earth that I was anxious for "orbital sunset," thinking that I could work my tasks without distraction.

Not so. The Earth at night is dancing with plumes of lightning and fingers of Mesozoic lightning stretching for hundreds of miles over the surface. Flashes of aurora race toward and encircle the North and South poles, a stunning light show that looks more like brush strokes in a priceless masterpiece.

Then, out of the corner of my eye, a flash of light as a meteorite burns through our atmosphere directly below me.

This is the most profound moment; it is as if the Creator is still creating. The planet continues to rage, as "the Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament displays his handiwork."



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All candidates should submit a letter of application with teaching philosophy, comprehensive resume, transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work, and names and addresses of three references to: Dr. LeAnn Self-Davis, Dean of the School of Sciences and Mathematics, Freed-Hardeman University, 158 East Main Street, Henderson, TN 38340, ldavis@fhu.edu, (731) 989-6032 Office, and (731) 989-6996 Fax.

The position will remain open until filled, with employment to begin in August of 2010. All applicants need to be members in good standing of the churches of Christ according to university policy. See <http://www.fhu.edu/humRes/humRes.asp> for an application and further details. Freed-Hardeman University is an equal opportunity employer.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

CHRIST'S HAVEN FOR CHILDREN

KELLER, Texas — Christ's Haven is celebrating the completion of a \$3.5 million children's enrichment center, executive director Dwight Robarts said.

HIGHER EDUCATION

LUBBOCK CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

LUBBOCK, Texas — The first family of South Plains baseball is becoming the first family of softball. Larry Hays, former longtime baseball coach at Texas Tech, has resigned as Lubbock Christian softball coach.

Daren Hays, Larry Hays' son, will succeed his father as Lubbock Christian softball coach, the university announced.

Daren Hays returns to the Christian university's athletic department after 10 seasons at Texas Tech, the last two as director of baseball operations.

OHIO VALLEY UNIVERSITY

VIENNA, W.Va. — Former members of the Northeastern Christian Junior College, Ohio Valley College and Ohio Valley University a cappella choirs gathered on campus recently.

The singers concluded OVU's 50th anniversary year with the institution's first-ever choral reunion and retreat.

"This was a wonderful weekend," said Jerry Bryan, a 1962 graduate of Northeastern Christian Junior College, which merged with Ohio Valley when its Villanova, Pa., campus closed because of financial difficulties 16 years ago.

YORK COLLEGE

YORK, Neb. — More than 25 Sojourners recently completed several projects at York.

The retirees in recreational vehicles travel the county helping fellow Christians.

They relocated the York bookstore to its own facility, renovated the former bookstore space to house the admissions office and helped transform a former dormitory into a classroom building, said Steve Eckman, the college's president.

K-12 CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

PACIFIC CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

GRATON, Calif. — The K-12 Christian academy, founded in 1918, once served more than 150 students. But Pacific Christian saw enrollment plummet to only 24 enrollees in 2010, mission worker Vincent Boling said.

"With the pervasive and devastating downturn in the economy, the school is threatened with closure," Boling said.



CHRIS HOLLO, GRAND OLE OPRY

The Grand Ole Opry — live at Lipscomb University

Little Jimmy Dickens performs at Allen Arena at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. Devastating May floods left two premier cultural institutions — the Grand Ole Opry House and the Schermerhorn Symphony Center — without venues. Lipscomb partnered with the institutions to help allow summer performances to continue. The Grand Ole Opry moved two shows to Lipscomb in June.

"There are many local families who would love to have their children here if we could raise the help they need."

For more information, see the website at www.pacificchristianacademy.org.

RELIEF MINISTRIES

RAPHA INTERNATIONAL

FORT WORTH, Texas — In the past two decades, Healing Hands International and Rapha International have shipped medicine, food and relief supplies to more than 80 countries combined.

Recently, the ministries announced plans to continue that mission together.

Nashville, Tenn.-based Healing Hands

and Fort Worth-based Rapha have merged into a single humanitarian relief effort.

Rapha will change the name of its Texas facility to Healing Hands International at the Rapha Center, said Sid Allen, president of Rapha International.

The ministries "have come to that place in their history where the two organizations can accomplish their mission better together than independently," Allen said. "Better stewardship of resources and utilization of leadership are two good reasons why this merger makes sense."

Allen and his wife, Jenetta, founded Rapha in 1998 with Ron and Marilyn Holland to "demonstrate the love of Jesus through providing assistance, lifestyle

SPORTS

A Buccaneer's big season

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. — Accolades keep pouring in for East Tennessee State University baseball player Paul Hoilman after a remarkable 2010 season.

A mathematics major with an overall 3.93 grade-point average, Hoilman has been named Atlantic Sun Conference Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

The Buccaneer first baseman also earned Louisville Slugger First Team All-American honors. He was one of 30 semifinalists for the USA Baseball Golden Spikes Award, given to the nation's top amateur player.

Hoilman is a member of the Central Church of Christ in Johnson City. His parents, Danny and Luanne, and his grandmother Grace also are Central members.

"He's just a fine Christian young man who has grown up in the congregation here," church secretary Kathy Torgersen said. "The church is real proud of Paul."

Hoilman finished the season ranked in the top 25 nationally in hits (99), runs (79), doubles (24), home runs (24), RBIs (84), walks (51) and on-base percentage (.526). He led the nation in total bases (202) and slugging percentage (.860).



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ETSU

East Tennessee State slugger Paul Hoilman is a member of the Central church in Johnson City.

improvements and training for people around the world," according to a news release.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY HEALING HANDS INTERNATIONAL

Sid Allen, president of Rapha International, shakes hands with Randy Steger, president of Healing Hands International, in Fort Worth.

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

Randy

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



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NEWSMAKERS



RON HALL

Melinda and Chris Miller received the Christian Service Award at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.

AWARDED: Chris and Melinda Miller, the Christian Service Award by *The Christian Chronicle*. The Millers have ministered to the Otumoetai Church of Christ in Tauranga, New Zealand, for 15 years.

NEW MINISTERS: Mark Hammitt, the Weber Road Church of Christ, Corpus Christi, Texas. James Johnston, Second and Wallace Church of Christ, San Saba, Texas.

ANNIVERSARIES: 74th: Ordo and Vida Clothier, Lebanon, Ore. 72nd: Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Vestal Jr., Iowa Park, Texas. 69th: Hugh and Freda Bowie, Abilene, Texas. Leon and Iris Reese, Abilene, Texas. 63rd: Hugh and Elizabeth Stubblefield, McMinnville, Tenn. Bill and Margaret Ferguson, Houston. 59th: Dick and Detta Wright, Hastings, Neb. 53rd: Jerry and Peggy Arnwine, Mesquite, Texas; L. V. and Gail Perkins, Amarillo, Texas. 50th: Jerry and Linda Jackson, Sonora, Texas. Royce and Shirley McClure, Perryton, Texas. Bob and Sharon Wooldridge, Dallas.

BIRTHDAYS: 104th: Martha Palmer, Houston, Texas. 90th: Mary Avella Bruce, Union City, Tenn.; Alma D. Maddox, Natchez, Miss. 85th: Jesse DeBoard, Midwest City, Okla.

PASSAGES: Jack D. Duty, 75, June 9, Madison, W.Va., minister for more than 50 years, former member of the Board of Directors of Michigan Christian College (now Rochester College). Marion Ann Exum, 80, June 13, Lake City, Fla., wife of the late Jack Hardeman Exum Sr. Maurice L. "Reece" Grady, 86, May 22, Wausau, Wis., former Bible teacher, song leader and elder. Charles Edward McDonald, 77, May 31, Jackson, Tenn., minister for more than 50 years, founding director of North Atlantic Christian Magazine. Harold Rahn Raiford Jr., 51, May 23, member of the Oak Grove Church of Christ in Rincon, Ga. John D. Sudbury, 84, May 23, Edmond, Okla., former member of the Board of Trustees of Oklahoma Christian University and CEO of Eastern European Mission and Bible Foundation.



Sudbury

July 11-15 Christian Training Series 2010.

"How to Build a Great Church." Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, Tenn. Contact Samuel Hester at (731) 989-6625 or www.fhu.edu/CTS.

July 15-18 2010 Mid Atlantic Lectureship.

"Perfect Love Casts Out Fear." Hosted by the East Baltimore, Md., church. Contact (410) 248-9080, cocineb@aol.com or www.coceb.com.

July 17 International Lectureship for Churches of Christ (Ghanaian Congregations).

Cherry Hill Manor, College Park, Md. Contact (240) 330-6462 or churchofchristghmd.org.

July 23-24 Central Texas Bible Teachers Workshop.

Hosted by the Cameron Road church, Austin, Texas. Contact (512) 452-0639 or visit www.crccaustin.org/ctbtw.html.

July 25-29 Power Lectures. 18th Annual.

"Moses: The meekest man in all the land." Southaven, Miss., church. Contact (662) 393-2690 or visit www.southavencoc.org.

July 29-Aug. 1 Connect 2010 Conference.

"Breathe ... Bringing your campus ministry to life." Contact www.campuscrosswalk.org.

July 29-Aug. 1 Spiritual Growth Workshop.

"God Almighty Reigns". Orlando, Fla. Contact (352) 357-6616 or oacoc@comcast.net.

July 31-Aug. 1 100th anniversary of the Scott City, Kan., church. Contact Howard King (620) 872-2932.**July 31-Aug. 3 Campaign for Christ.** "Jesus is Able to Transform Lives." George R. Brown

Convention Center, Houston. Contact (281) 561-0881 or www.houstoncampaignforchrist.com.

July 31 - Aug. 4 Asian Mission Forum. Bohol Beach Club, Bohol, Philippines. See www.asianmissionforum.com.**Aug. 13-15 Founder and Friends Weekend.**

Upper Valley church, Quechee, Vt. Contact (802) 295-9631 or uvcoc@uppervalleychurch.com.

Aug. 7 OVU Teacher Training Workshop.

Contact kim.haynes@ovu.edu or (304) 865-6025.

Aug. 14 Canadian Churches of Christ

Historical Society Annual Meeting. Tintern church, Vineland, Ontario, Canada. Contact (519) 885-3702 or www.ccchs.ca.

Aug. 21 Arkansas Statewide Lectureship.

"That they all be one." Airport Holiday Inn, Little Rock, Ark. Hosted by Southeastern Arkansas churches. Contact Jodie Carter at (501) 240-4722.

Aug. 26-28 European Christian Workshop.

"The Kingdom of God." Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK. Contact www.europeanchristianworkshop.com, (615) 893-1520 ext 137 or stephen.woodcock@hotmail.co.uk.

Aug. 27-Sep 2 Polishing the Pulpit Workshop.

Sevierville Events Center, Sevierville, Tenn. Contact www.polishingthepulpit.com or (877) 338-3397.

Sept. 4-5 50th Homecoming, Weber Road church, Corpus Christi, Texas. Contact (361)

853-7701 or www.webercofc.org.

Sept. 10-12 Prayer Enrichment Workshop.

17th Annual. "Praying the Prayer of Faith."

Calhoun, La., church. Contact Keith Roberts at kroberts@calhounchurch.org, (318) 644-2216 or www.calhounchurch.org.

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EDITORIAL

Lessons in Gulf Coast oil spill?

In a natural disaster — such as the Haiti earthquake, the Indian Ocean tsunami or Hurricane Katrina — we as Christians know how to react. We pray for the victims. We rush help to devastated communities. We depend on omnipotent God to sort out the reasons why such tragedies occur.

But in the case of a manmade disaster, what should our response be?

As we write this, thousands of gallons of oil are spilling into the Gulf of Mexico, adding to the tens of millions of gallons already in the water after the April 20 Deepwater Horizon drilling rig explosion. BP has made repeated attempts to shut off the flow of oil and failed. Meanwhile, White House energy adviser Carol Browner has called the spill “probably the biggest environmental disaster we have ever faced in this country.”

The government authorized 17,500 National Guard troops to fight the oil spill, but only a fraction of that number has been deployed, according to reports. The governors of the Gulf states

say there’s little point in paying soldiers to stand on beaches and wait for oil to wash up.

Across the nation, a lot of us feel the same sense of frustration. We recognize the enormity of the problem, but what can we do?

Certainly, we should pray for the families and friends of those who lost their lives as well as those who face loss of incomes and livelihoods. We should look

for ways to help — be it giving money or donating our own physical labor and sweat to the inevitable clean-up effort.

Beyond prayer and charity, should Christians involve themselves in the bigger questions that this tragedy raises?

Christians have a place in ensuring

that businesses and politicians handle their roles responsibly. Accountability is a biblical concept. But let us not waste all our time on political vitriol. Let us not succumb to the temptation to cast blame at the expense of extending compassion and understanding — even to those most responsible for this disaster.

In a recent report, Religion-Link, a product of the Religion

Newswriters Association, raised questions “about the propriety of the nation’s dependence on fossil fuels, America’s penchant for consumption over conservation ... and even the purely theological issues of the emerging teaching on ‘creation care.’”

Have we helped bring this tragedy about, in one sense, with our unquenchable thirst for fuel? Are we as a nation caring properly for God’s creation?

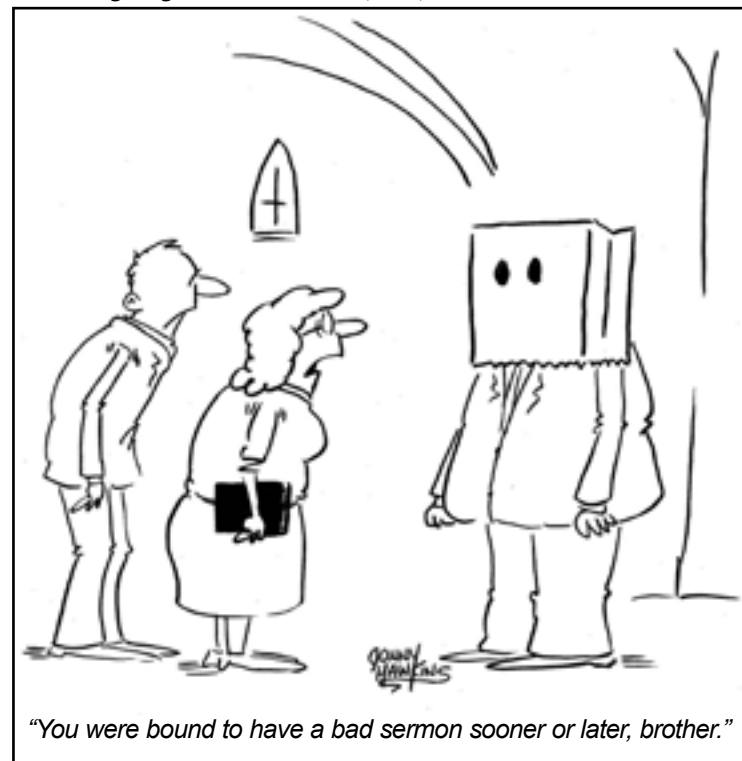
The Christian Chronicle posed that question to church members in 2007 in the midst of the debate over global warming. Responses varied. Some denied that the problem exists. Others said that, regardless of the cause, the root of the problem is sin — the squandering of blessings God has provided in an effort to make our lives on this planet more comfortable.

Brett Christensen, minister for the South East Church of Christ in Melbourne, Australia, summed up the responses we received from several Christians.

“We are stewards of what God has given us, and we must be responsible stewards,” Christensen said. “Beyond that, we should avoid activities that distract attention from the most pressing issue — reconciliation with, and submission to, God.”

Ever-Laughing Life

by Jonny Hawkins



TO OUR READERS

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An unlikely prison minister remembers the call

My first visit to a jail came when I was 20 — and I really had no business being there.

After all, what could a law-abiding, baseball-card-collecting, crossword-puzzle-creating college nerd (not much bigger than an Ewok from “Star Wars”) have in common with people who spent their days and nights behind bars? What would we talk about? “Hey, did you get 38 down in yesterday’s *LA Times*? And how about the bet the guy made in ‘Final Jeopardy’ last night?”

But when I walked into CCA Metro Detention Facility in Nashville, Tenn., that Sunday night back in 1994, I wasn’t following my intellect or even my conscience. I was following my heart, which at the time was securely in the possession of the 21-year-old blonde sitting next to me. She had been involved in jail and prison ministry for several years and wanted me to try it once.

When the guard opened the outside door, it was time to go back and see the guys. The girl wouldn’t be with me, as it turns out. This facility had separate services for men and women at the same time, so she went back into the women’s pods, and I went with Harold, Harold, and Harold — their real names, by the way — to the chapel.

The Harolds were going about the business of setting up a jail service, distributing song books, showing the communion trays to the guards, sorting through prayer request cards and correspondence courses, waiting for the guys to come in. I, meanwhile, was trying to disappear.

One of the first inmates through the door was, physically speaking, everything I wasn’t. Standing 6-foot-6 and probably weighing in the neighborhood of 400 pounds, he was the picture of everything I had imagined a prison inmate to be — scary big. I put on my “try to look friendly even though deep down I think I’m probably going to die” face and shook his hand. Excitedly, he shook my hand and took a seat on the front row. He seemed genuinely thrilled to be there, and especially happy that I was there, too.

“This is your first jail service, isn’t it?” he asked. I nodded.

“You nervous?”

“Yeah,” I squeaked.

“Well, don’t worry about it,” he told me. “If anybody wants to get to you, they have to get through me.”

I had serious doubts that my Toyota Corolla would be able to “get through” this guy, so my body’s flight response dimmed.

I took in the rest of the service. I helped pass the Lord’s Supper

trays. There were six responses to the sermon, including one request for baptism. (I found out later that these are fairly typical response numbers for a room with 35 men.) As the Harolds packed up supplies and the last of the inmates left the chapel, my new, really large friend said, “I hope we see you again.”

“I hope so, too,” I replied.

At the time, I had no idea why I said that, but reflecting on the conversation later, I realized that the sense of comfort and safety I felt as I was leaving CCA Nashville didn’t really have much to do with merely surviving the night. Facing a ministry career that would probably be defined by what I could or could not do, in prison work I had found a way — just by showing up — to share the grace of God with people who knew they needed it.

That night, I felt I belonged in jail.

In the 16 years since, I have bounced in and out of pulpits all over the country. I have gone to grad school, spent a year working with the homeless, displayed my talents (or lack thereof) before audiences large and small.

I have had the privilege of being midwife to roughly 300 new births into Christ, most of them in correctional facilities. I even got to spend a year helping one of the Harolds — Harold Cox, along with his wife, Helen, and Federal Prison Outreach Ministry director Ron Goodman — run their Madison, Tenn., prison ministry office.

Everywhere I’ve gone, I’ve tried to be involved in ministry to the incarcerated. I don’t go back over and over again because the work is easy. I’ve learned that there are times when jail work is genuinely difficult. Nor have I ever felt particularly duty-bound. There are souls to be saved everywhere you go, not just behind bars.

I keep going into jails and prisons because people need to experience God’s grace, mercy and forgiveness. They need love to be based not on what is in their past or what they might have to offer in the future, but on our shared humanity and potential eternity of fellowship in heaven.

Most of all, they need to know that no matter their surroundings, real security — real safety — is available in Jesus. And so do I.

BEN WILES is pulpit minister for the Pleasant Grove Church of Christ in Guthrie, Ky., and a volunteer at the county jail. He and the young woman mentioned in this piece, Laura, recently celebrated their 14th wedding anniversary.

Views



Ben Wiles

‘I keep going into jails and prisons because people need to experience God’s grace, mercy and forgiveness. They need love to be based not on what is in their past ... but on our shared humanity and potential eternity of fellowship in heaven.’

LETTERS

‘No replacement’ for a cappella sound

I agree completely that there isn’t enough emphasis on learning the four-part harmonies that are so beautiful in a cappella music (“Pepperdine aims to renew, refresh a cappella singing,” Page 3, July).

That’s what makes the Churches of Christ so unique, that we do sing with our hearts and in harmony without the aid of instruments. There is no replacement for that sound.

Kathy Wisor | St. Charles, Mo.

Christian colleges struggle where they’re most needed

I’m glad when small colleges like York can hang on without losing fidelity to core principles of the Gospel (“To recruit students, Christian colleges casting wider nets,” Page 3, July). I hope and pray Ohio Valley University, mentioned in the article as “fragile,” also stays in the game. The region where I live needs it, and my kids may attend there when they are college-age.

Adam Gonnerman | Kearny, N.J.

Praise for a ‘Capitol’ church

My, how pleased I was to read your reaction to the worship and fellowship at the 13th Street Church in Washington (“Inside Story,” Page 3, July). It was just such a blessing to be in the presence of these Christian brothers and sisters. Your story reminded me of what a cherished memory I have of this fine church over a 20-year period.

Mark Young | Yakima, Wash.

VOICES

How should Christians react to the Gulf Coast oil spill crisis?

Asked by managing editor Bobby Ross Jr.



I believe it should cause us to think about our responsibility as stewards of this planet. We need to move beyond red and blue politics and consider our responsibility as Christians to this planet and future generations.

Scott Elliott | La Grange, Texas



Instead of complaining that BP is not doing enough, we should be looking for ways to help. The fact that it happened is bad enough. Let’s be proactive and try and help. Complaining does no good. Praise God that we can help.

Sandy Ellis | Houston



This is the season for our fishermen to make the majority of their yearly income. Many families are already struggling. Making “care” boxes or supporting organizations like Second Harvest will help provide badly needed necessities.

Jenny Garrison | New Orleans



Maybe we should consider how Churches of Christ can be of assistance to the families affected by the spill — financially — and offer some sort of spiritual support.

James Snow | Detroit

Books address faith and financial crisis

BY DANIEL MCGRAW | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Most of us worry about money. From the rollercoaster stock market to the financial meltdowns in Europe, we have lost faith in financial institutions.

With large-scale unemployment and home foreclosures, we often dread the future.

In these uncertain times, many are turning to the Bible and wondering how our faith influences our finances. Two recent books tell us what the Bible says about money.

In **"Jesus and Money: A Guide for Times of Financial Crisis,"** Ben Witherington III presents a comprehensive examination of biblical teaching about property and riches.

More of a systematic theology on wealth in the Bible than a how-to manual on improving our finances, Witherington begins with creation. All things belong to God with humanity as God's appointed stewards over the earth. As a result, we are called to use these resources for the benefit of others.

Witherington works through the pages of the Bible, tackling difficult Scriptures that speak to wealth, money and prosperity, and challenges us to rethink the way that we view "our" possessions.

His treatment of the socio-economic conditions of the Bible is fascinating. In the Old Testament period, wealth was not measured in money but instead through land and herds. From Israel to Jesus, most made their living off the land, making them dependent upon God for survival.

Unfortunately, the wealthy often prospered at the expense of the poor. High taxes and rampant corruption burdened the needy. After paying taxes to Rome, local authorities and the temple, the average family barely eked out a living.

Witherington's major focus aims at deconstructing the "health-and-wealth gospel." He holds that its proponents take Scripture out of context, argue that God wants us to be prosperous yet ignore the passages about trusting

in God for daily bread. Biblically, wealth does not necessarily equate to godliness.

Jesus does want us to be rich, but rich in the love of God and service for others, Witherington writes. We are called to selfless giving, taking care of those less fortunate without any thought of return.

Just as the early church took care of all who had need, we too are called to be generous, to provide for widows and orphans and to take care of the less fortunate without any thought of return.

The most important question to ask is, "What would God have me do with this property that he has blessed me with?"

In essence, no follower of Christ should be left in need. Witherington calls this "Communitarianism," when our sense of connection and obligation to our brothers and

sisters, and to Christ, is so strong that we want to meet their needs and help them prosper. This stewardship is not a handout but an offering to God.

The final chapter takes up "deprogramming" ourselves from our culture. He argues we have simply "baptized" materialism in order to make ourselves feel better. He challenges us to differentiate between necessities and luxuries, and calls us to live within our means.

While Witherington's book is an excellent theological resource, it provides little practical application, leaving us asking, "How can we begin to live within our means so that we can give our finances over to God?"

In **"The Power to Prosper: 21 Days to Financial Freedom,"** Michelle Singletary provides practical tips on controlling our spending and getting our finances in order by calling us to change our financial habits so that we can be better stewards and live

below our means.

The central theme of the book is a 21-day fast from shopping, using credit and debit cards and dining out. She urges us to change the way that we view our money. She recommends replacing our anxiety about our own prosperity and our sense of entitlement with an acknowledgement of our blessings. We should not only strive for financial security but also use that security to bless someone else.

Singletary walks readers through making a practical budget, saving for the future and paying off debts. She also challenges us to bless the church and the needy through giving and mentoring others who struggle financially.

After the fast is over, Singletary challenges us to track our spending for 30 days in order to identify the destructive trends that derail our financial prosperity. Although this may be a struggle, it will profit those who choose to participate.

Readers may tend to focus on the term "prosperity," found throughout the book. Although Singletary focuses on tithing and helping others, there still

seems to be an underlying focus that we are trying to help ourselves prosper. The danger lies in trying to improve our financial picture for our own benefit rather than to give God glory and be good stewards.

As a campus minister, I frequently talk with students and young adults who fret about their future. Many worry about the lack of jobs and school debt. Older church members face similar circumstances.

Witherington provides the theological reasons, and Singletary offers the practical methods to help us see ourselves as stewards, change to live within or below our means, rise

to serve others and recognize our blessings.

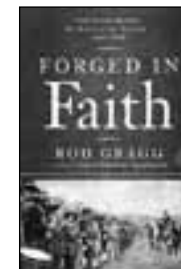
Tough economic times come and go, but God is constant, and he will see us through.

DANIEL MCGRAW is a campus minister at Southside Church of Christ in Lawrence, Kan., and hopes to plant churches in the future.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

FAITH AND HISTORY

Rod Gragg. **Forged in Faith — How Faith Shaped the Birth of the Nation, 1607-1776.** New York: Howard, 2010. 260 pages. \$24.99.



Historian Gragg presents evidence on how the Bible and the Judeo-Christian worldview weighed in the founding of the American republic. Using a documentary narrative style, the volume explores the links between major events in early U.S. history and religion.

Documented and indexed, Gragg begins with the founding of Jamestown and ends with the Declaration of Independence. He includes discussion of the role of faith in the Continental Congress and in the lives of the founding fathers.

END TIMES

Joe Beam and Lee Wilson. **The True Heaven — Not What You Thought, Better Than You Expected.** Abilene, Texas: Leafwood Press, 2010. 288 pages. \$14.99.



Inspirational speaker Beam and actor Wilson take up the commonly asked questions about heaven, including, "What happens when we die?" "Will we have bodies in heaven?" and "Who will be in heaven?" They also identify some of the myths that exist about heaven. Filled with biblical references and written in an easy-to-read style, the book contains a study guide.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Eugene H. Peterson. **Practice Resurrection: A Conversation on Growing Up in Christ.** Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010. 302 pages. \$24.



Regent College professor emeritus Peterson concludes his five-volume "Conversations on Spiritual Theology" by using the book of Ephesians as a guide to Christian formation. Peterson ponders both individual and congregational spiritual growth. Thirteen chapters explore aspects of growing up in Christ and building Christian maturity.

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SPEAKERS





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The Hartville Church of Christ in Hartville, Ohio, is seeking a full-time associate minister: a married man who is scripturally sound. We are in need of someone who can help our congregation grow, spiritually and in number. We have approximately 200 members, 3 elders, 8 deacons, and a full-time minister. Interested individuals may request an information packet by emailing hartvillecofc@sbcglobal.net. Please put "Associate Minister Inquiry" in the subject line. All responses need to be received by Aug. 31, 2010.

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The successful candidate will be responsible ministering to the youth and adolescent-age group in truth and in love. We would prefer a young married gentleman for this position.

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Please send resume to:

Tim Olive, Youth Deacon,
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The church of Christ on McDermott Road in Plano, Texas, is seeking an individual to help facilitate our children's education program. The ideal candidate must be a dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ with a deep love for the members of the body of Christ. He/She must have a passion for working with children and a demonstrated ability to teach children from birth to 5th grade.

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- A degree in children's ministry, early child development, or education with an emphasis on ministry preferred.
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Interested candidates may go to our website for a complete job description as well as additional information regarding this position. www.ccmcdermott.org. All information will be confidential. Please, no phone calls.

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What makes a good mentor? A few characteristics to consider

After writing about mentors last month, I had several inquiries about the qualities that help one be a good mentor.

My observations about mentors reflect my experiences with mentoring and my discussions with people who coach others to make the best use of their talents and gifts. I have read many of the things written on the subject, but I am concentrating on what I have observed directly.

I know many women who are effective mentors for their peers and for younger women. I know of many couples who help other couples in building stronger marriages and strengthening parenting skills. I know that it is unwise for a mature man to nurture a woman of any age except in a professional setting — and even then caution is important.

The first characteristic important to a mentor is **a genuine concern for other people**. That interest makes the mentor a talent-seeker. An effective mentor sees in a friend or colleague potential and capacity the person may not see in herself or himself. The mentor must become involved in the life and interests of the other person in order to build a relationship of trust and confidence. Out of that relationship, a mentor begins to gain a deeper insight into the personality and the gifts, so there is understanding to coach and nurture the gifts of the person.

A mentor must commit time to build a relationship that allows opportunities to understand the potential of the friend.

In addition to being a seeker of talents in people, a mentor must have **a special personality**. That personality must be warm. To be a warm person is to care for other people enough to be open and receptive. The busy lives that we live in the 21st century make it difficult for people to be warm — even to members of their own family. So becoming warm and caring is an intentional decision of those who want to be used in helping others to reach their full potential and to live fully.

Another personal element of a mentoring personality is being **completely forthright and honest**. A good mentor always speaks the truth in love, so that the person being mentored is constantly confident that the mentor's encouragement to follow a path or discouragement from following a path can be viewed as genuine.

Another aspect of the mentor's personality must be **empathy**. Empathy is stronger than sympathy. Sympathy

means understanding a feeling, but empathy means sharing the feeling of another person.

Insight



Bailey McBride

So warmth, genuineness and empathy must be central to the mentor's personality to be effective in mentoring others. The presence of these characteristics prevents the mentor from trying to fashion his friend in his own image. For example, women who have been stay-at-home moms may have difficulty mentoring

women who want a professional career in addition to being a wife and mother.

Because teaching has been so fulfilling for me personally, I have to be very cautious not to stress teaching as a career to a student I am seeking to help.

A good mentor must have **a positive view of life and have strong hope for the future**. A skeptic about life and human potential cannot offer counsel about future development and relationships to others. A Pollyanna-ish personality may make life seem more pleasant for awhile, but Pollyanna lacks the insight to understand limitations and impossibilities in others and in future circumstances.

So the mentor must have a healthy view of life with reality and optimism.

Mentoring requires **extreme confidentiality**. What goes on in these relationships must never be shared with any other person. I once hurt a very special friend when I alluded in a church Bible class to his situation — even with no mention of names or exact circumstance. The person was not in the class but heard of my illustration and believed I had broken his trust. He was never able to trust me again.

A really good mentor must think broadly and often must help research possible careers, educational needs, churches in a region or lifestyles in different places.

This aspect of mentoring is somewhat frightening, but really rewarding. These "what if" sessions create confidence and hope in the lives of both parties.

Being a mentor requires a commitment of time, emotional energies, patience and creativity. But it is a worthy work.

CONTACT bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org.



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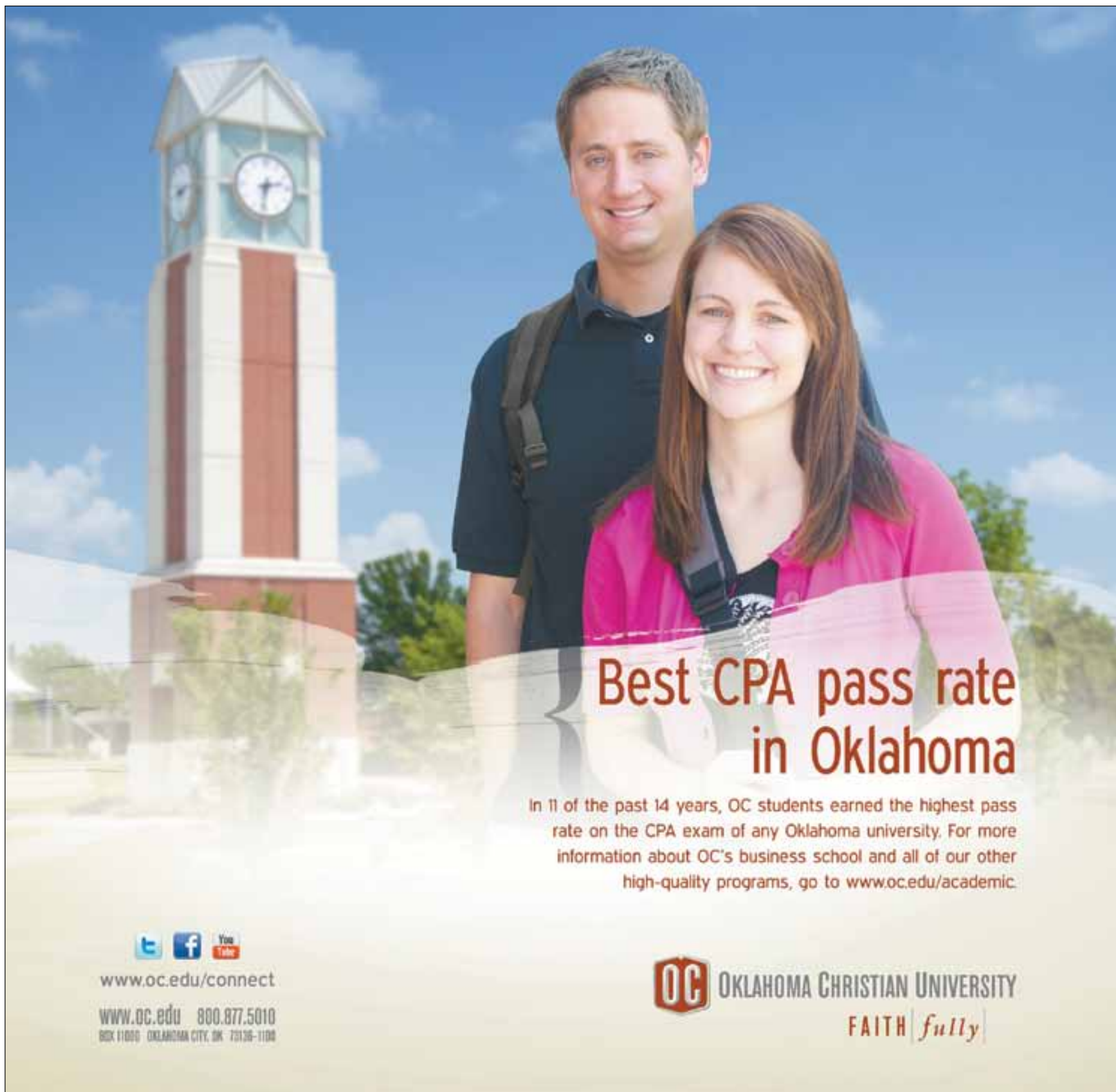
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