S.C. church battles opioid ‘emergency’

ADDICTS FIND LOVE, hope — and Jesus — through ministries focused on recovery and discipleship.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

SURFSIDE BEACH, S.C. — Opioids, meet Jesus. The drugs behind a crisis that President Donald Trump recently characterized as a “national emergency” are no match for the savior of the world.

That’s a frequent message at the Grand Strand Church of Christ, which has become a haven for prodigal sons — and daughters — caught up in addiction.

“The whole congregation kind of took me in and just showed me as much love as they can,” said Jordan Taylor, a recovering heroin addict who served prison time for drug crimes. “I went through ups and downs, and they’d always accept me with open arms. “They would never judge me or anything like that,” added Taylor, who was baptized after showing up for the church’s Celebrate Recovery program and studying the Bible.

The church in this beach town battles an epidemic — linked to opioids that include heroin and prescription painkillers such as oxycodone and fentanyl — that has caused drug overdoses to skyrocket nationally.

Christian family from Georgia has three ‘Little Big Shots’

“Hello, Mr. Steve,” sing Nya, Kaden and Brooklynn Johnson as they joke with comedian Steve Harvey on NBC’s “Little Big Shots.” The three siblings, who worship with the West Hill Church of Christ in Valdosta, Ga., sang The Temptations’ hit “My Girl” on a recent episode. When they sing, “they take their character along with them,” their father told The Christian Chronicle.

SEE OUR INTERVIEW, Page 23

‘Before you kill me, first hear me’

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS is on the rise in India, but church members say the struggles have deepened their commitment to share the Gospel.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

WICHITA, Kan.

“T hey have mouths, but cannot speak; eyes, but cannot see.” From the safety of a kitchen table in suburban Kansas, Joseph Ghorpade reads Psalm 115 — a passage he’s found effective when sharing his Christian faith with Hindus in his native India. The psalm speaks of “idols of silver and gold,” not unlike the ornate statues that coat the monumental towers of Hindu temples, representing millions of gods and goddesses claimed by the religion.

“These words are the power of the Lord to save the dying person,” Ghorpade says, pointing to the pages of his well-worn Bible.

But sharing those words in his homeland can be dangerous.

A preacher-training school in southern India, associated with Churches of Christ, reports the deaths of two students and a Christian convert in the

See OPIOIDS, Page 10

See PERSECUTION, Page 14

Joseph Ghorpade shares the Bible verses he uses when he speaks to Hindus in India.
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At 50th anniversary of Detroit riot, churches model unity

No more ‘us and them’

By Bobby Ross Jr. | The Christian Chronicle

Detroit
The boys — one black, one white — were 10 years old.
Ive Edwards lived close to where the chaos started. Smoke filled his nostrils as arsonists set his hometown ablaze. Looters ran by his window. Army tanks rolled down the street. The pop-pop-pop of gunfire pierced his ears. Afraid of stray bullets, he dove under his bed.

Greg Guymer witnessed the turmoil from Detroit’s outskirts. Helicopters whipped overhead, soldiers’ legs dangling out like a scene from Vietnam. Fear paralyzed him, but his grandfather admonished him to hide in the basement if the war zone approached.

Fifty years after the 1967 Detroit riot, Edwards and Guymer recounted their experiences as two congregations sought to model Christian unity in a nation that still struggles mightily with race — as illustrated by the recent fatal clashes between white supremacist groups and counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Va.

Even before Charlottesville, the predominantly black Oakland Church of Christ and the predominantly white First and Georgia Church of Christ in Chickasha, Okla., and her family made the hour-long drive up the turnpike to join us at the Memorial Road Church of Christ for Songfest.

The evening of beautiful a cappella, sung by choral groups from across the metro, was part of an effort by predominantly black and predominantly white congregations to fellowship intentionally and get to know each other better.

We call it United in Christ.

Earlier that Saturday, 1,200 miles away, deadly violence erupted as white nationalists clashed with counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Va.

“I’m disgusted,” said my friend Jeremie Beller, congregational minister for the Wilshire Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, as he addressed the mostly black audience, “and it’s important that you hear a short, white guy say that.”

Many of those spewing this Saturday night.

Mays, a member of the 1st and Georgia Church of Christ in Chickasha, Okla., and her family made the hour-long drive up the turnpike to join us at the Memorial Road Church of Christ for Songfest.

The lyrics, sung by the incredible Terri Mays, were especially powerful and poignant this Saturday night.

“My Jesus can calm your storm.”

The lyrics, sung by the incredible Terri Mays, were especially powerful and poignant this Saturday night.

National Guardsman Gary Ciko checks buildings for snipers during the 1967 riot, which resulted in 43 deaths and 1,189 injuries.

Christians knock doors, plant seeds in Charlotte

By Hamil R. Harris | For the Christian Chronicle

Charlotte, N.C. — She spent the morning knocking on doors that wouldn’t open.

So, as Veaches Cooper walked into the meeting place of the Northside Church of Christ for lunch, she clung to the words she heard from the pulpit on the first day of the Crusade for Christ: “I am planting seeds, one soul at a time.”

“This is the first time in my 36 years that I have experienced something like this,” said Cooper, who spent five days in Charlotte as part of the Crusade, a campaign that has taken place in a major U.S. city every two years since 1979.

Although more than 2,500 believers from Churches of Christ across the country joined their Charlotte brethren for the Crusade, it was easy to feel “less than,” participants told The Christian Chronicle.

A more well-known crusader, Billy Graham, has a parkway named in his honor here. Multi-level buildings bearing crosses, representing multiple denominations, line the streets of North Carolina’s largest city, population 2.5 million. Churches of Christ aren’t nearly as plentiful here as they are to the west in Tennessee. The

See Battle, Page 4
A subsidiary of Oklahoma Christian University

It sometimes seems like we’re losing. We aren’t.

As we listened to the vocal groups, including Women In Need of God Sing (WINGS), and the United Men’s Chorus, I glanced at my two girls, ages 9 and 3, sitting in the pew, thumbing through their coloring books. What kind of future are we leaving for them? With all of this anger boiling over into beatings, murder, police becoming targets, it seems we’re going backward.

Our small efforts to unite just aren’t working. Our world feels like a war zone, and we’re losing. I’ve been reading about a time in World War II when our soldiers must’ve felt like they were losing. It was called the Battle of the Bulge. After the D-Day invasion at Normandy, the Allies were advancing into Nazi Germany in December 1944. Desperate for victory, Hitler mustered more than a quarter-million troops and thrust them into the heavily forested Ardennes, attempting to split the Allied forces.

Hitler threw everything he had into the fight, conscripting children as young as 12 and old men into military service as part of his “total war” against the Allies. For a while it appeared to be working. An estimated 80,000 Americans were killed, wounded or captured. There was a bulge in the Allied lines, moving back into France, hence the name.

But the tide turned, thanks in no small part to the bravery of American soldiers including Gen. Anthony McAuliffe, who had a one-word answer for the Germans who demanded he surrender the town of Bastogne: “Nuts!” Soon, the German supply lines were exhausted. Their forces were devastated. They never recovered. The Allies won.

What if we’re in a Battle of the Bulge right now? What if the forces of racial hatred — some of them old men, some just boys — are acting out of sheer desperation, masking fear with a false sense of empowerment?

What if they know, deep down inside, that their time is up?

Isn’t our oldest adversary fighting this same battle? Satan knows he’s beaten. Jesus has set us free. The Evil One’s days are numbered, so he will inflict as much pain and suffering as he can until God finally ends him. It’s pathetic, really.

But sometimes that suffering seems so bad that we think the devil’s gaining ground. He isn’t. His only tools are death, decay and worldliness.

“But take heart!” Jesus tells us in John 16. “I have overcome the world.”

As the Songfest concluded, my 3-year-old, Lucy, was squirming and fussing. My wife took her to the foyer. Before the final prayer, all of us stood and sang, “Let the glory of the Lord rise among us.”

I looked for my wife. She had stopped on the way back to our pew — because Lucy had spotted “Mr. Jerry” and insisted that they say hi.

Jerry Way, our church’s prison ministry director, is African-American. On Sunday mornings he leads the devotional for our preschool kids during Bible class. They sing “Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock” and “This Little Light of Mine.”

It turns out Lucy had been squirming and fussing because she wanted to see Mr. Jerry. She leaped into his arms and hugged him like she had found a long-lost friend.

“That made my day,” Jerry told me. “Mine too.”

“My Jesus can calm your storm.”

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ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Terri Mays and fellow church members sing during the United in Christ Songfest in Oklahoma City.

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ILLINOIS
COLLINSVILLE — More than 100 people attended the recent inaugural service of The Crossings Church Collinsville in the ballroom of the Doubletree Inn.

The congregation is the third St. Louis-area church plant by The Crossings Church, a Church of Christ in Wentzville, Mo., staff member Wes Woodell said. A fourth church plant is planned in 2020.

TEXAS
ALLEN — “Aunt Melba” Warrach was a huge fan of country and western music.

Into her 90s, she loved to wear cowboy boots, blue jeans and rhinestone-studded denim jackets, recalled her nephew Harold Tidwell.

“Before she moved to Christian Care, her preferred mode of transportation was her late husband’s pickup truck,” said Tidwell, an elder of the Greenville Oaks Church of Christ in Allen, north of Dallas.

Perhaps it’s fitting that Aunt Melba died on the same day as one of the stars she adored: Glen Campbell, the legendary singer of “Rhinestone Cowboy” and “Wichita Lineman.”

Both were diagnosed in their latter years with Alzheimer’s disease.

Warrach, 97, “passed away very peacefully” Aug. 8 at the Bluebonnet Memory Care unit at Christian Care Centers’ newest senior living community in Allen, her nephew said.

As part of its Caregivers series, The Christian Chronicle profiled Aunt Melba in a front-page story earlier this year.

MICHIGAN
BRIGHTON — Every Tuesday, more than 100 people visit the Brighton Church of Christ to receive donated clothing, household goods and toys.

“We have no restrictions, no interviews,” minister Adam Mathews said. “Some are immigrants who send clothing home. Many are poor, using our ministry to clothe their families.”

HOUSTON — The growing Vietnamese Church of Christ meets at the Northwest Church of Christ’s youth house while raising funds to construct its own building.

The congregation started with the conversion of three leaders of a denominational church.

The group already has purchased a building site.

To contribute to the effort, send checks earmarked for “Vietnamese building fund” to the Northwest church at 6720 West Tidwell Road, Houston, TX 77092.

DETROIT: A defining moment for city

SOURCE: Detroit Historical Society

HISTORY: For much of the 20th century, Detroit was a booming manufacturing center, attracting workers — both black and white — from the South. This diversity aggravated civil strife. Throughout the 1950s, homeowners’ associations, aided by mayors Albert Cobo and Louis Miriani, battled against integrating neighborhoods and school.

INDUSTRY: Deindustrialization within the city limits took many jobs to outlying communities, even as a number of auto companies went out of business. The east side of Detroit alone lost over 70,000 jobs in the decade following World War II. Construction of the city’s freeways, newer housing and the prospect of further integration caused many whites to depart for the suburbs. From 1950 to 1960, Detroit lost almost 20 percent of its population.

AFTERMATH: White flight in 1967 doubled to 40,000. It doubled again the next year. Yet many Detroit residents remained. The city saw growth in activism and community engagement. Organizations were founded to address the root causes of the disorder. As the city’s demographics continued to shift, voters elected the first black mayor in the city’s history, Coleman A. Young.

A 45-minute drive — not to mention differences in culture and doctrine — stood between the congregations. Through meals and conversation, the elders and preachers got to know each other. The idea, Hill said, is to foster reconciliation, not assimilation. “God made people and all of their rich diversity,” he said. “The goal is not that we act like that’s not there, but rather that we live in Christ and the predominantly white Rochester Church of Christ — both north of Detroit — saw a need to bridge the divide. “Love conquers hate because God is love,” said Edward Cribbs, minister for the 300-member Oakland church. “The Oakland and Rochester congregations are endeavoring to bring to the forefront the issue of race and reconciliation. The events in Charlottesville remind us that our efforts are long overdue.”

Adam Hill preaches for the Rochester church, which has an average attendance of 550. He said “the ministry of reconciliation must be learned again and again by every generation. “The truth is that the devil is not going to give up without a fight,” Hill said. “The gospel will not allow churches to remain silent about loving one another and recognizing the dignity that each of God’s children has been given.”

WOUNDS STILL PRESENT

A police raid on an unlicensed bar — known locally as a “blind pig” — ignited the 1967 riot, “a culmination of decades of institutional racism and entrenched segregation,” according to the Detroit Historical Society.

A brick thrown into the rear window of a police cruiser launched five days of unrest from July 23 to 27 that ended with 43 dead, 1,189 injured and 7,231 arrested, the Detroit Free Press reported. Nearly 700 buildings were destroyed.

It took 17,000 members of the Detroit Police Department, the Michigan National Guard, the Michigan State Police and U.S. Army paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st airborne units to quell the largest civil disturbance of 20th century America.

A half-century later, the riot — which some prefer to call a rebellion — remains a defining moment in Motor City.

“Even today, the wounds that were exposed in those riots are still present in our city,” Hill wrote in a message to his congregation. “In the world around us, it often seems that division, fear, and opposition are the norm; however, God’s people have been called to something different … something better.”
The Oakland church has a history of promoting racial unity: The late Vernon Boyd, who was white, was the longtime minister and later an elder for the black congregation. For decades, he touted biracial worship and cross-cultural ministry. He died last year at age 84.

Meanwhile, a Detroit-area group called Unity for Christ has worked for more than a decade to break down racial barriers and reach Michigan’s diverse population with the gospel.

That group is led by James Snow of the Redford Church of Christ in Detroit and Roger Woods of the Walled Lake Church of Christ, northwest of Detroit. Unity for Christ has facilitated the distribution of food and school supplies to thousands of families and organized an area-wide worship assembly every other year since 2006.

For many years, the Oakland church has hosted the annual “God’s Family Banquet” to bring together black and white Christians.

“We as a church should be striving to maintain the unity of the Holy Spirit,” Cribbs said. “We know that as a result of the death of Jesus Christ, walls have been broken down — walls that once separated men and women, Jews and Gentiles, slave and free.”

BECOMING PART OF THE SOLUTION

The men — one black, one white — are 60 years old.

Edwards is an elder of the Oakland church. Guymer is an elder of the Rochester church.

On a recent Sunday, the two stood side by side before the Oakland congregation, each trying to make sense of a world that can seem out of control — then and now.

“I know that God has led me to the path where I am now,” said Edwards, who grew up to join the Michigan State Police, where he fought the racial prejudice and harassment he experienced as a teen.

But in Christ, he stressed, there’s no “us and them.” There’s just “us.”

On the same Sunday, Oakland elder Duane Foster and Rochester elder Pete Piazza made a similar presentation at the Rochester church.

They, too, recalled the sirens. The soot. The shock.

And they invited their fellow Christians of all ethnicities to be a part of the solution.

“If there can be any joining of the city of Detroit and its surrounding suburbs, that voice is going to have to come from the church,” Foster said.

“Amen, said Piazza.

“Please prick our hearts and our minds,” he prayed to God. “And let us go out as your children and be the example, as Christ was the example ... promoting unity and reconciliation.”
The riot, in retrospect

HUBERT G. LOCKE was a Church of Christ minister and Detroit Police Department employee in 1967.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

DETROIT

Hubert G. Locke’s picture made the front page of The Christian Chronicle after the Detroit riot of 1967.

At the time, the 33-year-old Locke served both as the minister for the Conant Gardens Church of Christ and as an administrative assistant for the Detroit police commissioner.

The police role grew out of Locke’s civic activism to improve the black community’s relationship with the mostly white police force.

“A magnificent outpouring of Christian compassion,” the Aug. 11, 1967, Chronicle quoted Locke as saying in reference to the Conant Gardens congregation and seven other Churches of Christ donating five tons of food and clothing to riot victims.

Locke later wrote “The Detroit Riot of 1967,” a book detailing how the riot unfolded hour by hour.

He retired about 17 years ago as the dean of the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington.

Now 83, he lives in the Seattle area and attends a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) congregation. Looking back 50 years, he said he did not recall the quote about the “magnificent outpouring of Christian compassion.”

“Quite candidly, I don’t remember the Churches of Christ being at the center of the church effort that went on in the riot aftermath,” Locke said in a telephone interview.

“The Churches of Christ have not had a particularly commendable record when it comes to race relations,” he added.

“Every 10 minutes, day or night, for a week police cars, fire trucks, or ambulances raced by, sirens screaming. Even our neighborhood, which received no physical damage, was in a state of near shock.

“In the riot area itself, of course, where unemployment and lack of education were greater problems, fear and terror were the rule.

“A number of our friends who owned small businesses in the area are now bankrupt. Some people are so discouraged that...
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Overdoses claim 142 American lives each day — “a death toll equal to September 11th every three weeks,” a presidential commission reported in August. Opioids are tied to two-thirds of those deaths.

“We have an enormous problem that is often not beginning on street corners; it is starting in doctor’s offices and hospitals in every state in our nation,” the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis said.

‘IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE’

While dealing with neck and back issues, Kevin Williams became addicted to prescription painkillers. He fell into a deep depression and contemplated suicide. He knew his neighbor kept a 9 mm pistol in a closet. He figured he could find it.

“The only thing that really stopped me was knowing I had a wife and two little girls, and if I did that, what mark would it leave?” Williams said.

Leslie Williams eventually took control of her husband’s medication, hiding the pills in their house and — when he started finding them — taking them to work.

But the Christian couple concealed the problem from the Grand Strand church, their home congregation.

“I wanted to protect my family. I wanted to protect Kevin,” Leslie Williams said. “I spent a lot of time crying, questioning why God placed this challenge in our family and why he was making us walk this path.”

On a recent Sunday, the couple took seats on the church stage. In a brief interview with minister Jay Thornell before his sermon, they opened up about their emotional journey.

The turning point, Kevin Williams told his fellow Christians, came when he accepted that only God could cure his inner pain.

“God is helping me with the mental problems,” he told the congregation of about 275 souls. “The church here has helped me with it.”

If a typical middle-class family with deep faith — like the Williamses — can fall victim to drug addiction, it can happen to anyone, Thornell said.

“I wanted to encourage our church to continue to be brave enough to help rather than condemn people who are trapped in sin,” he said. “Because while the details of our own story may vary, we are all in desperate need of a savior.”

DRUGS WERE HIS GOD

A man named Jackie Gass inspired the Grand Strand church to join the opioid fight.

Seven years ago, Gass — a long-time alcoholic and drug addict — walked into the church building. The grandson of an Arkansas preacher, Gass had been raised in Churches of Christ. He had served in the Navy and managed Walmart stores. But for most of his life, drugs were his god.

“Alcohol and marijuana were my 10

Johnny Christensen

“I came to church, and I felt the love and comfort when I came here. When Celebrate Recovery started, I think it was God’s way of bringing out the best in some people. It gave them more room to grow and to become a better person. They can reach out to the community more willingly now. They’re more empathetic.”

Charles Baker

“Celebrate Recovery led me on my recovery for my addictions based on the actual words of Jesus and not the worldly views of others. It’s so powerful that words don’t give it justice. The feeling and love of Jesus is just so powerful. It was really able to deflate my ego, take away my pride and help me to grow in Christ and help me to reach out and help others.”

Jan Cox

“The reason I’m here was when I asked him (minister Jay Thornell) what his vision for the church was, he said, ‘I want this church to be a place that if it disappeared tomorrow, this neighborhood would notice.’ And that was exactly the place I was looking for. It has met every expectation I had. In fact, it’s overwhelming in some ways.”

Brad Schmitz

“There’s a group of guys here that I can lean on, and they’re always there for me. I can give them a call at any time, and they’re there. We can talk like real people. It’s like a high school friendship; you can just pick up and talk like you’ve left off. I’ve just made so many connections. I think it’s probably the heart for others that people have. It’s genuine.”

The postcard-perfect beach of Myrtle Beach, S.C., belies the drug and crime problems that afflict the tourist destination. Two Refuge of Hope recovery houses supported by the Grand Strand Church of Christ are helping addicts find hope and healing.

Sinners Welcome,” says the sign outside the Grand Strand Church of Christ in Surfside Beach, S.C.
entry drugs, and then I moved on to harder and harder stuff,” he said.
When Gass first came to worship and said he’d be back, Thornell had his doubts.
But the man kept returning.
“He had finally reached the end of his rope,” Thornell said. “He just kept banging on my door, wanting to be taught, wanting to grow, wanting to learn.”
Gass said church members greeted him not with condemnation or judgment but with “the open arms of the Father.” They welcomed the prodigal son home.
Four years ago, Gass got the elders’ approval to start a Celebrate Recovery ministry at the Grand Strand church.
The Christian 12-step program, part of a national network, helps those struggling with hurts, habits and hang-ups. About 50 to 60 people join the gathering each Monday night.
“Before Celebrate Recovery, it would have been really hard for me to imagine our church reaching out to a recovering heroin addict,” said Jim Barton, who helps leads worship at Celebrate Recovery meetings. “It just wasn’t something in our DNA.”
But now?
“Celebrate Recovery gave us a rallying point that was a real outreach to the community,” he said.
Thornell said he “always believed it was in this church’s DNA to be welcoming and loving to broken people struggling with addictions. Celebrate Recovery gave us a bigger forum to develop those spiritual muscles.”

**CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE OUT**

With the church’s financial and spiritual support, Gass opened two recovery houses for addicts in nearby Myrtle Beach.
The Refuge of Hope houses are in a downtown area that Gass calls the “gates of hell.” When seven people were wounded in a June 18 shooting live-streamed on Facebook, the gunfire could be heard at one of the houses.

“Brothers and sisters, we live in a world and a city that are broken,” Gass told the Grand Strand congregation recently. “And no matter how well-intentioned, the solutions that politicians offer serve as little more than Band-Aids.

“What the city of Myrtle Beach needs is the gospel of Jesus Christ,” he added. “Politicians offer solutions that work on the outside of people to suppress bad behavior or relocate it or drive it underground. But only Jesus Christ can change the lives of men and women from the inside out.”

Grand Strand church members help with a worship assembly and meal at the Refuge of Hope each Sunday night. When recovering addicts decide to be baptized, the Atlantic Ocean is a block and a half away.

“I think the Pacific coast might be a bit bigger, but we have the second-largest baptistery,” Gass said with a chuckle.

On a more serious note, he said, “My goal isn’t to make someone sober and then send them out, because nine times out of 10, they’re going to end up getting high or drunk again. My goal is to turn them into a worker, a fisher of men, someone that has purpose in Christ.”

**NO MORE DOPE OR DESPAIR**

Wister and Helen Basden found that purpose.
The couple met through the Grand Strand church’s recovery ministry, which Wister Basden now leads.
Before, he was a heroin junkie, selling drugs and robbing people to support his habit.
“You see the people begging on the street for change?” he said. “I looked like that. I smelled like that. I wouldn’t take baths for weeks. I didn’t have time. I spent 24/7 looking for dope.”

Helen Basden was “addicted to very sick men,” her life in a vicious cycle of constant despair.

“I figured I could love these guys enough to break down all their stuff,” she said. “I obviously found out I can’t. That’s where my issues arise.”

Through Celebrate Recovery, they found faith — and each other.

“Sin took me down a dark path,” Wister Basden said. “It took me so far down that I accepted that ... I’d die that way. But God had different plans.”

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ARGENTINA
BUENOS AIRES — As immigrants come to this South American nation from Latin American nations including Haiti, Venezuela, Colombia and Peru for higher education, some study the Bible through the Let’s Start Talking ministry offered by the Caballito Church of Christ.

“Immigrants often do not have the family ties Argentines have and are open to a place they are made to feel welcome,” missionary Joel Banks said. “We are very glad that more people are becoming Christians in Buenos Aires, no matter what part of the world they were born in.”

GUAM
ASAN — “The Church of Christ here has never been moved, scared or panicked,” minister Alex B. Coloma told The Christian Chronicle after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to test fire ballistic missiles near Guam, a U.S. island territory in the Pacific Ocean.

Coloma, who ministers for a Church of Christ that meets in the village of Asan on Guam’s western shore, said he was comforted to learn recently of North Korea’s apparent change of plans regarding the test.

“We keep on praying that all the people of Guam are now at peace and going back to their normal daily routine, despite the word war,” Coloma said. “Our brethren have trusted God so much. He is always, and still is, in control.”

SIERRA LEONE
FREETOWN — Emergency workers have pulled more than 400 bodies from the debris of a mudslide in this West African capital.

“My house flooded,” said church member Johnny Kamara. “(We) lost my late elder brother’s son, wife and children from the landslide. This a terrible loss for our country.”

Kamara and fellow Christians plead for assistance for victims of the disaster.

SPAIN
BARCELONA — “The world is terrified,” said Juan Antonio Monroy after back-to-back attacks in Barcelona killed 14 people. Monroy, who lives and worships in the Spanish city of Madrid, is an evangelist for Herald of Truth, a ministry associated with Churches of Christ.

“Islamic terrorists have many victims among the civil population in Spain, France, England, Germany and other European countries,” Monroy said. Churches of Christ in Spain “pray for the family of the assassinated persons and for the injured, some of them in critical state. We can do no other thing. And I ask Christians in America to join us in prayer.”

Sadness and service in Africa

MACHEKE, Zimbabwe — “It was such a tragic loss,” said Kara Scharrer after the recent death of a 17-year-old girl in the Zimbabwe Orphan Program, a ministry of Nhowe Mission in this southern African nation.

Dozens of local believers gathered for the girl’s funeral, including Scharrer, her husband, Erik, and their four children. The family is serving for six months at Nhowe Mission. Dr Erik Scharrer, an emergency medicine physician with the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, is working at the Brian Lemons Memorial Hospital as the whole family serves the mission’s school and orphanage and Zimbabwean Churches of Christ.

In happiness and heartache, “God is so good,” Kara Scharrer said, “and we have seen his hand through everything here.”

WEBSITE: ourzimbawejourney.blogspot.com

At the funeral, Kara Scharrer and her children share a meal with Christians including Mercy, right, who serves with her husband as caretaker for 40 orphans who live at Nhowe Mission.

Students at the Nhowe Mission school gather to hear Erik Scharrer give a devotional talk during the school’s chapel.

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PERSECUTION: Militants believe they have ‘ideological ally’

In addition to preaching and training ministers, Pagidipalli and the Christians he works with offer services to people of all faiths in their communities — clean water projects, a free medical clinic, care for orphans and widows and disaster relief. Likewise, Ghorpade and his coworkers minister to those rejected by India’s caste system — including colonies of people suffering from leprosy, also known as Hansen’s disease.

In serving, Pagidipalli says, he and his fellow believers are trying to live up to the words attributed to one of their nation’s greatest heroes, Mahatma Gandhi: “If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ, as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today.”

Meanwhile, Indian Christians pray continually for those who persecute them, Pagidipalli says, that they might “fully see Christ and understand what a blessing Christian life is.”

And it is a blessing, he says, despite the persecution its followers endure. Among Christians in India, “there are concerns and unanswered — never going to be answered — questions while on earth, but we press on with deepest faith in the Lord.”

“One thing is absolutely clear: there is no other way to heaven but through Jesus. None of our students or brethren are seeking another way, an easier way, to heaven. “If Jesus, his apostles and many early Christians were killed for their faith, why should we expect an easier way?”
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[Image of the globe with flags]
The ABCs of Faith

A CHURCH-RUN TUTORIAL program produces top-tier students — and baptisms — in the Philippines.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MANILA, Philippines

Hannah Faith knows her ABCs — and a lot more.

“Letter A,” she begins, in high-pitched, staccato syllables. “‘A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother,’ Proverbs chapter 10 verse one.

“Letter B: ‘Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth or turmoil,’ Proverbs chapter ... (she thinks for a moment) 15 verse 16.

“Letter C: Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right ... ”

And on she goes — barely stopping to breathe — straight through the alphabet.
After four solid minutes of reciting from memory, she reaches “Letter Z: ‘Zion heard, and was glad.’”

Braided pigtails bobbing, she triumphantly chirps out the Scripture reference: “Psalms chapter 97 ... verse eight!”

Her classmates whoop and cheer.
She’s 4 years old, by the way — this girl named Faith who studies math and reading and memorizes God’s Word in a place called Friendship.

The 45-member Friendship Road Church of Christ hosts a weekday tutorial program for Faith and 26 other children in its building — a simple, cinderblock-and-sheet-metal structure in Marikina, a suburb of the Philippines’ capital city. The program is part of Metro Manila Ministries, a church-supported nonprofit founded and overseen by Filipino and American Christians.

Nearly 13 million people inhabit Manila and its surrounding communities. An estimated 4 million live in the city’s slums. That includes the urban poor who live as squatters — inhabiting ramshackle structures on land they don’t own — in the communities of Friendship and nearby Twinville. The threat of eviction by the government is ever-present.

Many of the children here never attend school, and those who do are unready for the academic rigors. As young as age 5, they drop out and beg or peddle on the streets, rummaging through the trash looking for anything they can sell. Some steal and get hooked on sniffing glue.

Drugs and gangs are part of life here. Last year, the country’s newly elected president, Rodrigo Duterte, launched a controversial Drug War, targeting the cartels with tactics that have claimed thousands of lives and raising the ire of human rights groups.

Even in a place called Friendship, it’s easy to despair, says Danni de Vera, minister for the Twinville Church of Christ and evangelist for Metro Manila Ministries.

But here he sees hope for the future — a small hope, Faith-sized.

Providing children as young as 3 with...
Remy Kingsley

“It’s a form of evangelism for the community,” says Kingsley of the tutorial programs sponsored by Metro Manila Ministries. She and her husband, Dale, founded the nonprofit to empower souls in the Philippines. The Kingsleys make annual mission trips to the islands with their children. They’ve raised two kids and adopted two Filipinos. Their son, Philip (in photo) lives in Canada and serves with the Gentle Road Church of Christ, a church plant in inner-city Regina, Saskatchewan.

Rhecel Allonar

“They are so amazing and adorable,” Allonar says of the 3- and 4-year-olds who attend the tutorial center of the Twinville Church of Christ and sits on a stone balcony — intricately carved and filled with potted plants on a neatly trimmed row of hedges.

Lorenz Bianan, age 12, lives in a squatter community near the Twinville Church of Christ. He was the first graduate of the church’s tutorial program, sponsored by Metro Manila Ministries. Now a top performer in school, he influenced his mother, Joy, to be baptized and share the Gospel.

Faith, Joy and Microbiology

Nine years after launching the first tutorial center, there are small signs of change and faith — even joy — in Manila’s impoverished communities.

As church members studied the Bible with the students, parents and church leaders, they discovered that the classes help preaching the Gospel.

Ministry is effective here in Manila, says Kingsley. “I want to study microbiology,” he says. “I want to be a bench-warmer.”

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What were your feelings on the day you were drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals?

I was just sitting with my dad at home when it happened. To hear analysts talking about me on national television during the draft was just crazy! But I was relieved when my name was called because of the uncertainty of the draft. I know that I still have a lot of work ahead of me, and I still have to go out and make the team, but I'm thankful to have been blessed with this opportunity in the first place.

What does football mean to you?

Football truly has become a lifestyle for me, especially now that I've been drafted. The sport has been my ticket to an education, connections to my closest friends, and an opportunity for a career while at the same time pursuing my dream. Football has also taught me to be an example for people around me. The sport has truly placed me in the spotlight, whether I wanted that or not, for others around me to see my actions, especially the youth in my hometown community and at Westside Church of Christ.

How do you maintain Christian values in view of the pressure you face on the national stage?

God will humble the proud. That's happened to me before, and I'm so thankful that he did. I'm reminded of just what happens to the proud when I read biblical stories about people thinking they're above God and choosing to act in a way that doesn't honor their lifetime commitment they've made to him. In the end, they get leveled.

Before football, or any title I might have in life, I'm a Christian. And, as a Christian man, it's my duty to further the Kingdom in any environment. There are no excuses.

What obstacles have you overcome?

The No. 1 obstacle that I — and, I believe, everyone — have to overcome is oneself. Everyone experiences his or her own struggles and temptations. The only person that can be ultimately responsible for those consequences is you. I know my decisions have held me back before. I've been tempted by Satan, but it was my choice to indulge myself in those activities when things were going wrong.

Jordan Evans has a lot of question marks after his name these days. On April 29, the 6-foot-2-inch, 22-year-old linebacker for the University of Oklahoma went to the Cincinnati Bengals in the sixth round of the National Football League draft.

But making the draft doesn’t mean making the team, and as his first season in the NFL begins, Evans is the subject of chatter among the Cincinnati faithful, who like his speed and agility but question whether or not he can make the big tackles required to compete at the national level.

For Evans, just like all Christians who play pro sports, there's also the faith question. Will he honor the commitment he made at age 14 when he was baptized? Will he stand firm in his beliefs and stay humble when his image is beamed into millions of living rooms — where many Americans spend their Sundays worshipping at the altar of the NFL?

His family has a strong foundation of faith, say members of the Westside Church of Christ in Norman, Okla. His father, Scott, also played football for the Sooners. Neither he nor his wife, Tenika, grew up in the church. Both were baptized later in life.

They have raised three athletically gifted children — Jordan and sisters Jessika and Jacie — but they make sure that sports don't take precedence over church.

The family is active in Leadership Training for Christ and conducts one-on-one Bible studies with neighbors. The girls participate in youth events including the Equipping Women for Exceptional Service camp.

Just after the NFL draft, Evans spoke with The Christian Chronicle about faith, football and the days ahead.
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Jordan Evans’ father, Scott, was a three-time all-Big Eight defensive tackle for the Sooners from 1988-90. The family worships with the Westside Church of Christ in Norman, Okla.

**EVANS:** Baptizing sister reminds Christian athlete ‘of the importance of the decision’

(from page 21)
went wrong. I know that it’s a daily battle to be the best Christian man I can be, but I believe that when I surround myself with the right people and live a life for him, the path in my life ends up being a lot more straight.

**Who are the main spiritual influences in your life?**
In the beginning and throughout my early childhood, it was my mom, but it’s transitioned to dad since I’ve become more of a man. My dad would always incorporate biblical stories in order to explain how to handle girls, money, fame or anything else.

**Can you share any important church-related experiences from your life?**
Being baptized on July 18, 2009, was the most important experience for me. I had been having conversations about baptism with my parents, but I was stubborn and prideful, believing that I wasn’t a sinner. I believed I wasn’t really doing anything wrong.
But one night I was watching “Saving Private Ryan” — the scene with the American soldier dying and calling for his mom.
I thought about how I wasn’t perfect, how I knew the message and needed to be obedient because who knows when my last day will come? This realization came late at night, but when I told my dad, he got up and drove me straight to the church to be baptized at 11:45 at night.
Another important date came when I baptized my sister, Jacie. I was reminded of the importance of the decision and my impact on my family spiritually.

**Do you have any advice for high school and college athletes?**
“First, Matthew 6:33. (“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”) If you seek him first in all things, then I believe he will truly take care of you.
I also live by the motto: “Leave no doubt.” I try to apply this in the classroom, on the field, as a friend and in whatever I’m doing. This motto will help you to make sure people know that you’re a Christian by your actions, and you can have peace knowing that God will see that and reward you for that courage.

**Any other favorite Scriptures?**
I also look to Luke 7 and try to remember that God will take care of even the least in the Kingdom.
Little voices get Big Shot in the spotlight

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Their personalities and charm made them lovable, but it was their voices that shot the Johnson kids — Nya, Kaden and Brooklynn — into the spotlight.

The three siblings wowed the world with their voices earlier this summer when they appeared on the NBC show “Little Big Shots.”

“It was exciting,” Brooklynn Johnson, 10, told The Christian Chronicle. It was also quite natural for the threesome, who spend their Sundays alongside their parents, singing in the pews of the West Hill Church of Christ in Valdosta, Ga.

The entire Johnson family, including mom Alisha, dad Frank and two younger siblings who didn’t appear on the show — Braylen, 6, and Laila, 4 — performs together at venues all across the South.

The Johnson kids first auditioned for the show in March of 2016. They talked with producers several times, and sent in multiple videos, but they were eventually told they did not make the show.

A few weeks later, they posted a video on Facebook thanking those who had supported them through the audition process. In that video, they performed an a cappella rendition of The Temptations’ 1964 hit “My Girl.”

“It quickly went viral, catching the attention of the host of “Little Big Shots,” comedian Steve Harvey.

“That just happened to be one of Steve Harvey’s favorite songs,” Frank Johnson said. When Harvey himself shared the video, “that put us on the rollercoaster going back up.”

The producers of the show called them back, and within a month, they were flying from Georgia to Los Angeles to appear on the show.

“It was surreal,” their mother said of the experience. “We did a lot of work to get there. And then, to be disappointed and hear they didn’t make it — and then for things to turn around so quickly, we just couldn’t believe that it was happening.”

Nya Johnson, 13, and her brother Kaden, 11, said it was like a dream come true for all of them to meet Steve Harvey.

“We’re used to watching him on TV and him making us laugh, but to be close to him and interact with him in person, it was really fun,” Nya said.

There were a lot of giggles as the kids talked with Steve Harvey during the interview portion of the show. The kids told the comedian they had written a short ditty for him. (The lyrics were, simply, “Hello, Mr. Steve,” sung in three-part harmony.) They invited Harvey to add some bass to the song, and his attempt set off waves of laughter.

“It was really funny because he was on a wrong note,” Brooklynn said.

The Johnson kids then took the stage on their own, singing “My Girl.”

“I think the highlight of that whole experience was how well they were able to handle the spotlight,” their father said.

Harvey, who also hosts talk shows and game shows including “Family Feud,” talks openly with his audiences about taking leaps of faith and the importance of using one’s God-given gifts. Moments before the kids performed, he spoke directly to Frank and Alisha, the parents said, telling them they had done a great job raising their children.

While it was a whirlwind experience getting to the show, the months after seemed to drag on and on. The family wasn’t supposed to tell anyone that they would be featured on “Little Big Shots,” so they watched every episode, waiting.

Nearly 11 months later, their show finally debuted.

“The world was able to see what we’ve been seeing in our kids all along, which is the spirit of God,” Frank Johnson said.

His wife added, “We’re definitely proud of them and the accomplishments they’ve made. They take their character along with them, and we’re proud of that.”
**Milestones**

**Anniversaries**

Robert and Marida
Watlington, 65 years

Bob and Marida met at Abilene Christian College in 1950. They married Sept. 5, 1952. During their marriage they lived in the Texas towns of Fort Stockton, San Diego, Snyder and now Mesquite. They have two children: David (Sherry) Watlington and Lori (West) Soward; four grandchildren; three great-granddaughters; and one great-grandson.

For 58 years they have been in the life insurance profession. Bob was an elder in Snyder for 24 years. Marida taught Bible classes for 30 years. They are active in the Prime Timer ministry and various works at the Meadow View Church of Christ in Mesquite, Texas. Congratulations, Bob and Marida!

**Wayne and Alice**

Bill and Margaret Grant, 65 years,
August 29, Dover, Ark. Harry and Mary Darron, 60 years, Sept. 3, Pittsboro, N.C.

**Honoring**

**Dick Hays**

“Remember your leaders and imitate their faith” (Hebrews 13:7). Dick Hays has lived out this verse to me and to many others during his almost 87-year life. Growing up in a rural area near Nashville, Tenn., his life has spanned boyhood on a dairy farm, years as a standout athlete in high school and college, a stint in the military and the career of school teacher, administrator and coach. Of course, his most important roles have been that of husband, father, grandfather and beloved church shepherd.

Dick grew up attending the Rural Hill Church of Christ, and at a very early age he developed a love for sports. At Antioch High School in Nashville, he played football, basketball and baseball. While the most significant thing that happened during his high school years was meeting Clemmye Moran (his future wife), some would mention his being the president of the student body. He was also named All-City and All-Nashville in basketball. I recently learned that Dick was drafted by the New York Giants for their AA baseball team. He declined the offer, instead attending Austin Peay State University (APSU) on an athletic scholarship.

At APSU Dick lettered in all three major sports, receiving 11 total participation letters and being selected All-Conference in each sport. He was also elected governor of APSU in 1951 (the highest honor for a student), and he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in education. The best decision he made, according to Clemmye, was to marry her later that year. They will celebrate their 67th wedding anniversary on Dec. 20. In 1952 he enrolled at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville on a fellowship to earn his master’s degree in education.

He began his teaching and coaching career at North Nashville High School, but midway through the first season he was called to serve in the Army at Ft. Jackson, S.C. After his military service, he returned to North Nashville High School, later working at Antioch High School, Apollo Junior High, Cameron Junior High, and Glencliff High School. He retired from the public school system in 1980, but his retirement was very short-lived. He became principal at Ezell Harding Christian School (EHCS), Antioch, Tenn., in 1981, and he remained there 11 years before retiring permanently in 1992.

This brief, yet colorful, history shows that Dick’s passion has always been to encourage and assist students as they grow and learn, especially in the arena of living life and living it well. Thousands of young people whom he encouraged to live better lives (both churched and unchurched) see him today and respectfully call him “Coach.” As a Christian educator (EHCS) and as a shepherd at Tusculum Church of Christ in Nashville, Dick has been able to touch peoples’ lives in ways that he never could have imagined.

Dick received many awards over the years, including: Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Sports Hall of Fame, APSU Athletic Hall of Fame, Outstanding Leadership in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and Dedicated Christian Service and Example to the Youth of Nashville.

Dick has meant so much to me personally and to our church family at Tusculum over the years. We nearly lost him twice — in a swimming pool accident in 1973 and in an accident falling off his roof in 2009. Through all of this, Dick has been an example of faith, courage, service, and love — both to his family and his church family. Dick and Clemmye have raised two great children: Patricia (Tricia) Hays Parker and Gerald (Jerry) Wayne Hays, who have beautiful Christian families as well.

Dick is one of the quietest and most humble men I know, but when the moment requires, he can offer the wisdom of one who has walked with Jesus and wants to share that life with all he meets. Great job, Dick!

To use a combination of sports analogies and Bible verses to finish this tribute to a man I love nearly as much as my own father:

“Dick, you have run with perseverance the race marked out for you. You have fought the good fight. You have kept the faith. You might be closer to the goal line than many of us, but who really knows? We are all excited about the ‘real prize’ that awaits you whenever our Lord decides to call you heavenward. Thank you for encouraging so many of us to ‘give it all we’ve got.’ I’m so glad we’re on the same team! It has been an honor to serve under you and beside you these last 23 years.”

— Kerwin Everson, Shepherd Tusculum Church of Christ family, Nashville, Tenn.

**Newland, 60 years**

Wayne and Alice (Cutts) Newland recently celebrated their 60th anniversary. They were married in Tabernacle, N.J., on Aug. 24, 1957.

Alice and Wayne met at David Lipscomb College (now Lipscomb University) where they both graduated in the late 1950s. Their careers were spent in public education, mostly in New Jersey, where she taught kindergarten, and he administered programs for children with special needs. Taking early retirement and escaping to Maine in 1988, Alice stayed retired, spending her time quilting and caring for a family of refugees from South Sudan. Wayne worked another decade with educational associations, and he then retired again in 1999. He has been pursuing study of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement history and doing some writing and publishing.

The Newlands live in Falmouth, Maine, and are active members of the Greater Portland Church of Christ. They have one son, one daughter and one granddaughter.

Congratulations, Wayne and Alice!

**Mary “Avanelle” Elliott Baird, 1919-2017**

Mary Avanelle Elliott Baird, 97, was born on Sept. 18, 1919, at home in Tillar, Ark. She was welcomed into the world by her mother, Willie Adelle Breedlove Elliott, her father, David (continued on Page 25)
The family of Arnelious Crenshaw Jr. accepts the Christian Service Award from Oklahoma Christian University President John deSteiguer.

HONORED: Arnelious Crenshaw Jr., minister for the Northeast Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, with the Christian Service Award from Oklahoma Christian University. His family accepted the award on his behalf. Crenshaw, Northeast's minister for more than 30 years, is undergoing treatment for a brain tumor and was unable to attend.

PROMOTED: Janet Rucker, vice president for university communications and enrollment, Harding University, Searcy, Ark. Rucker added admissions and financial aid to her previous role overseeing communications and marketing.

RECOGNIZED: Tammy Jerkins, Macy's/Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year. Jerkins is a member of the South 14th Street Church of Christ in Leesburg, Fla.

NEW PULPIT MINISTER: Taylor Cave, South Walker Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. Cave succeeds Paul Sparks, who is retiring after 37 years as the congregation's preacher.

NEW BOARD MEMBER: Michael Flowers, Members of Churches of Christ for Scouting. Flowers is a member of the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

Carroll Sites
1935-2017

Carroll Franklin Sites, 82, was born in Sheridan, Ark. on July 4, 1935. He was the youngest of ten children born to William Hamilton Sites and Cora Blanche (Knowles) Sites. He passed into heaven peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family.

He graduated from Sheridan High School in 1953 and attended Arkansas State Teacher’s College in Conway, Ark. He and Sarah Loreta Pinkston of Cave City celebrated their 62nd year of marriage on July 17.

Carroll served 42 years in the United States Air Force and the Arkansas Air National Guard, retiring as a full Colonel in 1996. Carroll’s preaching career spanned 52 years. He preached at Lorance Drive and Park Hill in the Central Arkansas area and Higden Church of Christ in Greers Ferry for 28 years, where he also served as an elder for 24 years. Mission work led him and his wife to Ukraine, Scotland, Kosovo and South America. Carroll began preaching on the radio in 1974 and has had two ongoing programs: “Words of Truth” and “Nuggets of Truth,” which will continue to air through archived sermons. He held hundreds of gospel meetings across the country and served on the Southern Christian Children’s Home Board many years, including 9 years as Chairman.

He is survived by a daughter, Debbie Ann (Tim) Grooms of Sherwood, Ark., and a son, Jimmy Carroll (Amanda) Sites of Nashville, Tenn.; four grandchildren: Kendel (Carrie) Grooms of Maumelle, Ark., Jeffery (Amy) Grooms of Providence, R.I., Christin Sites of Nashville, Tenn., and Jonathan Sites of Nashville, Tenn.; and three great-grandchildren.

(More Milestones, Page 29)

Entries should be submitted to milestones@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5071. Rates and guidelines are available upon request (credit card preferred).
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

GREATER ATLANTA CHRISTIAN
NORCROSS, Ga. — After two decades as president of Greater Atlanta Christian School, David Fincher will move into a chancellor role at the end of this school year.

“All my life, I have been grateful to God for the chance to share in both the teaching and vision-casting for what an amazing Christian school could be,” said Fincher, who arrived at GACS as a 21-year-old teacher in 1972.

Scott Harsh will succeed Fincher, becoming the third president in the school’s 50-year history, board chair Fernando Nasmyth said. Harsh has served GACS for 21 years as a teacher, principal and administrator.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

YORK COLLEGE
YORK, Neb. — A York College campaign, Beyond 125, raised $16.8 million for scholarships, campus improvements and programs, eclipsing the campaign’s goal of $10.7 million.

The campaign began in York’s 125th year. As the 128th year begins this fall, the college’s future has never been more secure, President Steve Eckman said. “By every measure, response to Beyond 125 exceeded expectations, and that means students have a better place to learn, grow and prepare for life,” Eckman said.

SOUTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
TERRELL, Texas — Richard L. Barclay, senior minister for the Stonecrest Church of Christ in Atlanta, will be the new director for SWCC’s annual lectureship, now in its 80th year.

Barclay succeeds James O. Maxwell, a longtime SWCC vice president and minister emeritus for the Roswell Church of Christ in Kansas City, Kan.

Southwestern President E.D. Seamster Jr. made the announcement.

TITUS campers huddle in prayer

Heritage Christian University in Florence, Ala., hosts TITUS (Teens in Training for Useful Service) Camp, drawing more than 50 participants from six states. Above, a group of campers pray together. Heritage alumnus Ray Reynolds founded the camp in 2005. The spiritually focused leadership camp caters to teens who are ready for ministry experience.

CRUSADE: Believers offer hope at a time of ‘great uncertainty’

Charlotte metro has a dozen congregations, and only six have 100 or more members.

Cooper, who lives in Memphis, Tenn., worships across the state line with the West Oak Grove Church of Christ in Hernando, Miss. She traveled 600 miles to be a part of the Crusade.

As she waited for lunch with her fellow “foot soldiers,” as they’re called here, E.L. Riley, associate minister for the 200-member Northside church, chuckled about a recent back-to-school giveaway. Church members prepared 200 backpacks of school supplies for children in need — no easy task, he said.

Meanwhile, “the church down the street had about 2,000.”

But the Crusade isn’t about numbers, added Clyde D. Mayberry, ministering evangelist for the Northside church.

“This is a conduit to build relationships in the community that we serve,” Mayberry said. “Many churches make the mistake to think that most of the soul-saving is done at the crusade. Most of the work is done after the crusade is over.”

‘A HARD NUT TO CRACK’

Echoing Mayberry’s sentiments was Leonardo Gilbert, national outreach director for the Crusade, who described it as a three-phase event.

In the two years before a Crusade, national leaders organize “mini-rallies” in the host cities, Gilbert said. During the Crusade week, thousands of “foot soldiers” knock on doors and make contacts. Finally, local Christians take the contacts and do follow-up work.

“Souls are still being saved in San Antonio,” said Gilbert, referring to the host city for the 2015 Crusade.

A key element of the Crusade was nightly worship, hosted this year in the Charlotte Convention Center. For decades, Jack Evans, former president of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, spoke at the services, urging attendees to abandon man-made doctrines and embrace Bible-based Christianity.

Recently, he passed the pulpit to Orpheus J. Heyward, minister for the West End Church of Christ in Atlanta. In “a time in our country where there is great uncertainty,” Heyward said, the people of Charlotte need the simple, powerful
In Charlotte, a seed takes root — in a reporter’s son

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

YOUR WORK IS NOT IN VAIN

Eventually, doors did open for Cooper and her fellow Christians as they crisscrossed the Charlotte metro and other communities. Foot soldiers knocked on 4,300 doors, including those in the neighborhoods surrounding the Southern Hills Church of Christ, southwest of downtown, and the Crawford Road Church of Christ, just across the state line in Rock Hill, S.C.

Each night, visitors heard the Gospel at the convention center. Baptisms followed — about 10 during the week, added to the 44 since the campaign was announced in 2015.

Even one of the security guards on duty at the convention center was immersed — after getting permission from her supervisor.

“This is the culmination of a lot of effort by the ministries in the Charlotte area,” said Derek Franklin, minister for the Crawford Road church. “It has been the fulfillment of a lot of hard work, and my hope No. 1 is that people will come to know the Church of Christ and know what we stand for.”

To that end, the crusaders distributed 40,000 pounds of potatoes to people in need during the campaign and hosted a health fair at the meeting place of the Sugar Creek Church of Christ in Charlotte.

Growth here may be slow, but it happens, said Mayberry, who has seen the membership of the Northside church increase from 60 to 200 in his years with the congregation. Thanks to the Crusade for Christ, he’s sure that growth will continue.

“I want to say thanks and to tell you that your work is not in vain,” he told the foot soldiers as the Crusade concluded. “We will water the seeds that you planted. This was the perfect time to come.”

HAMIL R. HARRIS

Road Notes

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

Your boy is ready.

That’s what Freeman Green, a minister from Daytona Beach, Fla., told me Monday night during the Crusade for Christ.

He was talking about Isaiah, my 10-year-old son. I’ve been feeling like I need to spend more time with him while I can. We used to go to Disney World almost every summer, but I complained a lot in those days. Now, two of my four children are adults, I am divorced, and not a single award in my living room can replace the memories of times past.

I brought Isaiah along to the Crusade. It’s not Disney, but it’s real. We got the chance to knock on doors, worship the Lord with hundreds of our brothers and sisters and witness people give their lives to Christ in baptism.

The goal of the Crusade is to plant seeds. I didn’t realize one of them was growing, right next to me, about to sprout. Isaiah wanted to be baptized.

He had been thinking about it since we arrived. We were loading food for a giveaway when one of the organizers asked Isaiah to make space in the U-Haul for two pallets of potatoes. That required moving a portable baptismal pool.

Isaiah kept looking at that pool, and he asked the man driving the truck about baptism over and over.

He wasn’t baptized Monday night. I thought maybe he had changed his mind. But Tuesday was a different story. He sat next to me, and as soon as minister Orpheus Heyward made the invitation, he bolted up to give his confession.

Unfortunately, my phone battery was dead. Luckily, a friend filmed the baptism and I posted it on Facebook. My heart was filled with joy as more than 1,000 people shared that moment with my family on the internet.

I know that God blessed me to be here for this moment.

I also know that Isaiah is serious about his walk with Jesus. On the way home, he said, “Dad, I noticed that the only time you read your Bible is when you are getting ready for a sermon.”

It cut me to the heart, but I needed that honest rebuke from my son — from my brother in Christ.

HAMIL R. HARRIS

preaches for the Glenarden Church of Christ in Maryland.
EDITORIAL

This time of crisis

The civil insurrection now occurring in our cities is a complex phenomenon, spawned by years of neglect, abuse and disdain of human dignity. Its flames are fanned by bigotry, prejudice and extremism of all kinds.

In this time of crisis, the church is called on to exercise its mediating influence whenever possible. We must do more than treat the symptoms. The church must use its influence to help break down racial prejudice, injustice and bigotry. We should take the lead in promoting better race relations — both by teaching and example.

Our relations with African-American brethren in the past have too often consisted of inviting them to a gospel meeting once a year and giving them an occasional page of news in our papers. Or where we have shared in the work, our attitude has been one of superiority and paternalism.

We must accept our African-American brethren fully into our various activities as equals. We must let them know unmistakably that they are brethren to be fully accepted by all Christians.

There are encouraging signs. We applaud these forward steps and hope that they signal a renewed attitude of brotherhood and fellowship toward Christians of other races. We must never forget that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

THIS EDITORIAL is excerpted, almost verbatim, from the editorial that appeared in The Christian Chronicle on Friday, Aug. 11, 1967.

FROM OUR READERS

A single father says thanks

God bless everyone who donates and prays for us. (See “Hope for single parents,” Page 1, July.) We love and appreciate all of your blessings and kindness, which have made our little family whole again. There are no words to express our gratitude and gratefulness toward everyone. Thank you.

NIEL ZIERDEN and his two children moved into the Mount Dora Children’s Home in Florida after his wife died in a 2016 accident. The ministry is associated with Churches of Christ.

Opinion

Do our media habits avoid ‘the very appearance of evil?’

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.

— Philippians 4:8, New International Version

Once, I accidentally made a pretty huge gash in my left hand. There was lots of blood, nausea, an eventual scar and a pain that was wretched.

On another occasion, a doctor made a similar gash in my foot to remove a piece of glass. There was lots of blood, a similar scar, but absolutely no pain.

The difference was, of course, anesthetic.

It’s a daily challenge to be in this world and remain insulated from its spiritually destructive components. I cannot imagine going through a day without having to constantly remind myself of what conversations, media and relationships are appropriate for somebody who’s following Jesus. I want God’s Word to be my filter in the nitty-gritty decisions of everyday living.

Sometimes I think we really do mean the big commitment statements we post in our Facebook profiles (“I would give my life for Christ,” “My favorite book is the Bible,” “Growing in Christ is my No. 1 goal”). Yet the inconsistencies in our little decisions don’t sting because we’ve become environmentally and culturally anesthetized.

How can we sing “I am mine no more, I’ve been bought with blood,” or “Purer in heart, oh God, help me to be,” and fail to feel the sting of the destructive media influences that are in direct opposition to these themes?

We find ourselves laughing at all kinds of wickedness as we welcome it digitally into our living rooms, bedrooms and dormitories. We listen to vulgarity and profanity and hardly are aware we’ve heard them — even as they erode the values that we’ve profess all along.

It’s helpful for me to constantly remember and repeat the phrase, “Entertainment is optional.” It’s not a requirement for life. It’s far less necessary than retaining my limbs or my eyesight — things that Jesus told us to rid ourselves of if they were causing us to sin, for losing them is better than losing our souls.

I can go to heaven without ever turning on the television. But I can’t go to heaven if I’m not “abstaining from the very appearance of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

So many times, I look back and know that a particular decision I made was completely out of alignment with the big profession I have made for my life. Those times are my biggest regrets.

Christ can’t remain in my heart if he’s not affecting my agenda, dominating my calendar, making my choices and shaping my plans.

As the world becomes more and more ungodly, we are lulled into a kind of comfortable moral drowsiness that makes us unaware of the tools in the hands of the devil.

We find ourselves laughing at all kinds of wickedness as we welcome it digitally into our living rooms, bedrooms and dormitories. We listen to vulgarity and profanity and hardly are aware we’ve heard them — even as they erode the values that we’ve profess all along.

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Christ can’t remain in my heart if he’s not affecting my agenda, dominating my calendar, making my choices and shaping my plans.

CINDY COLLEY lives in Huntsville, Ala., with her husband, Glenn, who is pulpit minister for the West Huntsville Church of Christ. She is the author of books for ladies and teen girls, and she invites women to study with women in churches around the world in “Digging Deep,” a Bible study sharing online study materials and a monthly podcast. The study begins Sept. 1. For details, see www.thecolleyhouse.org.
Looking for a ‘sound congregation?’
You’d better skip the one in Corinth

Do you know of a sound congregation in Boca Raton (or Hilton Head, Nashua, Honolulu)? We’re going to be there this weekend.

I see messages like that posted to Facebook all the time. I wonder what Christians did before social media — or church directories, or telephones, or a completed New Testament?

“It’s A.D. 54. I’ll be traveling through Corinth this weekend. Do you know of a sound congregation where my family can worship?”

Check with the apostle Paul, someone tells me. He wrote a letter recently. He addressed them as “the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

I decide to stop by on my way to Athens. But I’m shocked! They’re divided. Some of the most arrogant, prideful people I’ve ever met worship there. I heard — and I got it from a good source — that a man is shaking up with his father’s wife and the church is doing nothing. In fact, they’re proud of it!

They have all kind of marriage problems in this congregation. People also are confused about eating meat offered to idols.

Speaking of eating, I’ve been to a lot of churches, but this is the first one that had a potluck where members refused to share food. Seriously, the lady with the best banana pudding refused to give it to anyone but her little group. (Did they even have banana pudding in A.D. 54? Regardless, she didn’t know me, so I didn’t get dessert.)

You should’ve seen their worship. People were talking and singing at the same time. Some were speaking in a language I couldn’t understand, and nobody was there to tell me what they were saying. And I think one or two of them were drunk!

During Bible class, there was a discussion about the resurrection. Several argued that it was impossible — once you’re dead, that’s it. I can’t believe they permitted someone to say that in a church that Paul called “sanctified by Jesus.”

Would it be better for my family to worship in our motel than go to this church? If I were moving to Corinth, should I raise money to start a sound congregation there? I thought Paul said the church belonged to God and that they were saints.

If I started the Sound Church of Christ in Corinth, would Paul hold a gospel meeting for us? If he later held a gospel meeting for that other church in Corinth, should I mark Paul for preaching for an unsound church because of all the sin and error in that congregation? Should I post on Facebook, Twitter, and in every brotherhood paper that Paul is unsound because he preached for that group?

What if I, instead, move to Ephesus in A.D. 96? The church there is active, sound. They cannot bear those who are evil. They’ve tried false apostles and found them to be liars. And they hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which Jesus also hates. No one would write me up for worshipping with this sound congregation.

Jesus, however, says they’ve left their first love. Unless they repent, he’ll remove their lampstand. (Revelation 2:4-5)

Is it possible that Jesus’ evaluations and our evaluations are different?

If I started the Sound Church of Christ in Corinth, would Paul hold a gospel meeting for us?

JERRE BARBER has preached since 1961. He attended Freed-Hardeman University and earned a bachelor’s in Bible from Lipscomb University. In 2007, he and his wife, Gail, started interim ministry. The Shady Acres Church of Christ in Sikeston, Mo., is the seventh congregation they have served. He blogs at www.newshepherdsorientation.com and www.betweenpreachers.com.
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Hicks provides a painful, but powerful, return to ‘The Shack’

In “Meeting God at the Shack: A Journey Into Spiritual Recovery,” John Mark Hicks invites us to look at ourselves honestly and to seek God in recovering from the hurts we have experienced — and the hurts we have caused.

The book is a resource of spiritual reflection based on “The Shack,” the 2008 bestselling novel by William Paul Young. A film version made its debut in theaters earlier this year. Young’s story is about a man who is recovering from the murder of his young daughter. He has a series of encounters with God at a shack that help him come to grips with the “Great Sadness” in his life. The novel is controversial because of Young’s portrayal of the Trinity in unconventional ways, among other elements of the story. I wrote a review of “The Shack” for The Christian Chronicle in May of 2009, a year following the death of my son (mentioned on page 146 in Hicks’ book).

A professor of theology at Lipscomb University, Hicks does not present an academic discourse on “The Shack,” though it is not light reading! Instead, he opens his heart to relate to other struggling people who are living in the shadows of pain. “The Shack,” Hicks writes, was part of his own spiritual journey as he endured tragic losses, including the 2001 death of his son, Joshua.

“I think the question the novel addresses is this: How do wounded people come to believe God deeply loves them?” Hicks writes. “Meeting God at the Shack” is divided into two parts. In the first, “Looking Life in the Eye,” Hicks follows the imagery of the Shack, the place that symbolizes “where we hide our secrets — our sins, our resentments, our envies, our fears, our hurts, our sorrows and our anger against God. These are the secrets we don’t talk about.” Each chapter winds its way through themes of fear, anger, unforgiveness and the consequences of avoiding our Shacks. This is done in a highly personalized manner.

The second part of the book, “Encountering God in a Fresh Way,” explores some of the thematic elements of “The Shack” that have caught readers by surprise. There is no shortage of critics who see all kinds of various dogmas being promoted through the pages of Young’s novel. “Meeting God at the Shack” examines some metaphors that are uncomfortable for some, but the emphasis is on what can be learned about relating to God.

In the conclusion of the book there is an emphasis on recovery. Hicks writes, “Sin is an addiction before which we are powerless on our own (Romans 7), and we all express our brokenness in some form of specific powerlessness.” In these concluding chapters are beautiful reminders of God’s gracious love for those who are struggling — even those who are struggling to trust him.

At the end of the book are discussion questions, a couple for each chapter. Also, there are three reading plans if one would like to read and discuss this book in community.

I could see value in going through this book together in a grief or addiction support group. I feel sure any honest individual could gain insight from this starkly honest book.

Obviously, one should have already read “The Shack” before exploring this book. Otherwise, the primary framework and references that make this a rich and profitable read would be missed.

I highly recommend this book — both for those who are familiar with “The Shack” and for those who have yet to enter into the world of Mack and his encounter with the place of sadness he has allowed to grow in his heart, his shack.

Farmer shows us what home-grown fellowship can produce

This is a book about feeding the body and the soul. It’s about nurturing a garden and each other.

In “The Marvelous Pigness of Pigs: Respecting and Caring for All God’s Creation,” Joel Salatin, a third-generation family farmer in rural Virginia, gives us ideas on stewardship from a Christian and conservation standpoint. He makes a strong case for choices like growing your own produce, raising your own chickens and utilizing local farmer’s markets as opposed to buying mega-farm products shipped from who-knows-where and treated with who-knows-what.

I especially like the questions he asks about things churches can do instead of relying on processed foods. What if our fellowship meals consisted of produce, meat and baked goods that members have grown, raised and prepared themselves? What if we stock our food pantries with healthy, local products from members?

What if, instead of growing grass and paying to have it mowed, we plant gardens that involve the community — offering evangelism, relationships and service opportunities?

Salatin makes a great case for going back in time to when food was not a quick detour on the way to something else, but a process that involved all members of a family and was celebrated. The lessons abound, both for individual families and for the church.

In a world growing more and more out of touch with where food comes from — and with so much unhealthy eating going on while others literally starve — this is a timely book with some great ideas we would do well to consider and implement.

CORY SHIPMAN and his family worship with the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. They raise chickens and share eggs and the produce they grow with their community. They enjoy game meat from Cory’s hunting and locally grown beef from a church family.

What we're reading

What are you reading? Contact erik@christianchronicle.org.
Preacher Search
(Central Texas)

Small congregation in Normangee, Texas, is seeking a minister to help guide our growth and knowledge of our Lord. Local minister has retired. We are located 12 miles from Hilltop Lakes, Texas, (golf, fishing, boating, camping, etc.), and 33 miles from Bryan. We have less than 40 members, no elders, and 15 children who are ready to serve. Our roots are deep and more than 100 years old. Please send resume and questions to:

wophoto@windstream.net

Full-time Evangelist

Okemah Church of Christ in Okemah, Okla., is searching for a full-time minister with a love for evangelism. Candidates should have a genuine love for people spanning from young to elderly and be willing to visit shut-ins and make hospital visits. We are a congregation of 70 with an emphasis on youth and young adults. We are a congregation of 90+ with elders. We are located 12 miles from Hilltop Lakes, Texas, (golf, fishing, boating, camping, etc.), and 33 miles from Bryan. We have less than 40 members, no elders, and 15 children who are ready to serve. Our roots are deep and more than 100 years old. Please send resume and three references to:

Okemah Church of Christ
Attn: Elders
PO Box 407
Okemah, OK 74859

Full-time Minister

Palo Verde Church of Christ located in Lake Havasu City, Ariz., is looking for an experienced member of the Lord's body to be a full-time preacher. The right candidate should come with experience in sound doctrine, preaching and holding classes to help spiritually feed the flock and also the ability to outreach into a community that is in need of God's word. We are a small congregation who is on limited budget. Would like to have someone married, semi-retired or willing to work outside ministerial duties if needed.

Dennis Grosser
(928) 486-7370, ddgrosser@yahoo.com
www.lakehavasucitycocom

Preacher Wanted

Enterprise Boulevard Church of Christ is seeking a full-time, energetic pulpit minister. Our area is fast growing and ripe for the harvest. Parsonage available.

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2801 Enterprise Blvd
Lake Charles, LA 70601
Fax: (337) 430-0093
office@blvdchurchofchrist.org

MINISTER NEEDED

The Porterville Church of Christ is in search of a full-time minister. We are a strong congregation of 125 members who are active in community service and support an active youth program (including a Bible Camp and state-wide youth rally). Please send resume with your experience and education, as well as, your view of the role of the minister and visual access of a recent sermon. Salary is negotiable.

Pulpit Search Committee
1000 N Newcomb
Porterville, CA, 93257
www.church@pvcoc.org
(559) 784-5498 or (559) 361-1198

Spiritual Leader

Small congregation needs spiritual leader to help teach us and spread the Word. Currently, we do not have any elders and all church business is overseen by a three-man committee. A large mobile home parsonage is available, hours and salary negotiable. If you are interested in learning more, please send resume to:

Eastwood Church of Christ
4199 Hwy 80
Haughton, LA 71037
(318) 294-2451

Deadline for next two issues: September 8 and October 6.
Contact: Tonya Patton at: tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org.
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Cindy Defer (575) 887-0933
humanresources@lakeviewchristian.com

Full or Part-Time Minister - Prescott Valley, Arizona

The Prescott Valley Church of Christ in Prescott Valley, Ariz., is looking for a full or part-time minister. Prescott Valley is in the beautiful mountains of Northern Arizona with a mild climate in both the winter and summer months. We are a congregation of around 25 members with the potential for growth. We are a caring congregation who truly has a great love for one another, our community and our faith. Presently, we can provide some salary, as our resources are limited, but with growth, benefits could be forthcoming.

Our ideal candidate is either a retired or semi-retired person who could devote time and energy to building the congregation and especially creating and using social media platforms to attract younger congregants. Prescott Valley is a city of around 40,000. Please email your resume and a paragraph describing the strengths you will bring to our congregation to:

Mark Green
kramred@hotmail.com

Please include references from your current and/or previous congregations.

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Church of Christ
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PO Box 487, Reserve, NM 87830
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The Board of Trustees of Ohio Valley University invites nominations or applications for the position of President, effective July 1, 2018.

Potential candidates or interested parties are encouraged to contact Cecelia Goff, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and Chair of the Presidential Search Committee, at:

(304) 865-6132
Cecelia.Goff@ovu.edu

Tennessee Children’s Home

Middle is seeking a full-time teacher to work at their on-site school for the 2017-2018 school year. Candidate must be able to plan, organize and implement an appropriate instructional program in a learning environment that guides and encourages students to develop and fulfill their academic potential. Qualified candidates:

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6. knowledge of relevant technology

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To apply, call Dana Lawson, 486-2274 x225, or visit us online at:
www.tennesseechildrenshome.org
In Jesus’ presence there is blessed assurance — and brutal honesty

A song that has become one of my favorites is by Dick and Melodie Tunney. One verse describes the feelings that occur in the presence of our Lord:

In His presence there is comfort, in His presence there is peace. When we seek the Father’s heart we will find such blessed assurance, in the presence of the Lord.

Although the song focuses on the ascended Lord, it does not mention the importance of truth in the presence of Jesus. I am struck by Jesus’ total honesty with the people in his presence. He seldom leaves people complacent with their lives because he always tells them of their condition. Jesus possesses high standards and never hesitates to speak honestly to people.

When Jesus is invited to dinner by Simon the Pharisee, a woman “who had lived a sinful life,” as Luke’s gospel tells us, washes his feet with perfume, tears and kisses. Simon questions why Jesus would allow such a woman to touch him. Jesus tells the parable of two men, one forgiven a small debt and one forgiven a massive debt. If both are forgiven by the lender, which of the two would love the lender most? Of course, it’s the one with the biggest debt, Simon answers.

Then Jesus sets the record straight: Simon had not given Jesus a welcoming kiss, nor did he have a servant wash Jesus’ feet — both serious breaches of hospitality. In the presence of Jesus, Simon had to see himself as a poor host and as a man who too easily passed judgment on the woman and even Jesus. In the Gospel of John, we see Jesus ask a Samaritan woman for a drink of water. There at the well, she has her whole sinful life exposed as Jesus talks to her. She realizes that he is no ordinary man. She tells her friends about Jesus, and the whole community believes.

In the Gospel of Mark, when a rich young man asks Jesus how he can gain eternal life, Jesus tells him to obey the commandments. He’s done this, he says. Jesus feels love for this young man — so he must tell him what he still lacks: “Go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”

The Savior confirms the young man’s works, but shows him the reality of his own materialistic values. Jesus’ 12 disciples often are forced by the Savior’s words to see the truth of their character.

Peter — though he is one of the first to confess that Jesus is the son of God — begins to sink when he tries to walk out on the water to Jesus, as we read in Matthew. Jesus reveals to Peter the doubts and fears that hold him back. Later, Jesus predicts that Peter will deny him three times, despite Peter’s insistence that he won’t.

He does, of course. This time, it isn’t the words of Jesus — just a look — that forces Peter to realize the truth of his denial.

After Jesus resurrection, and before his ascension, he asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” It’s a solemn reminder of Peter’s weakness.

In the presence of Jesus there is comfort, peace and blessed assurance. But there’s also honesty and truth — truth that convicts us to change.

CONTACT: bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org
News of faith in the South Pacific

On the island of Tanna, in the South Pacific nation of Vanuatu, members of a Church of Christ that worships under a thatched roof thumb through an issue of *The Christian Chronicle*. Send us your favorite photos of Chronicle reading — wherever you roam — and look for them here in future issues. Email your high-resolution images to erik@christianchronicle.org.

**TO OUR READERS**

The good work of real news

Have fellowship with every good work; give something to it.”

That was the wisdom of Otis Gatewood (1911-1999). When he spoke those words in a graduate missions class I was taking in the summer of 1963, he planted an indelible mark in my heart.

I was young, and Gatewood was a pioneering missionary among Churches of Christ following World War II. In 1947, he left ministry in Utah to share the Gospel in postwar Europe. Hans Novak reportedly received the shoes off Gatewood’s feet when Novak had none. I was blessed to be Novak’s helper in 1960 and heard this and many other Gatewood stories. Gatewood even received the Distinguished Service Cross from the German government for his humanitarian work.

What Gatewood said had all of the credibility in the world to me and still does. He also said, “Don’t make missionaries beg for money; be generous with them.”

I think of Gatewood’s sage advice whenever I ask you to financially support *The Christian Chronicle* — and you do! You are an inspiration to me because you believe in the positive mission of the *Chronicle* to bring you news that matters every month.

You have fellowship with us in this ministry. Together, we praise God by celebrating the good that so many people and churches are doing for him. I personally learn of more ways to have fellowship with Christian brothers and sisters by reading our stories.

Thank you for understanding the work of the *Chronicle* and for faithfully sending your support. We are humbled, and we are eternally grateful.

**CONTACT:** lynn.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org

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