

‘We are not giving up’

AFTER MASS SHOOTING, *Tennessee church begins long work of recovery*

BY BOB SMIETANA | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ANTIOCH, Tenn.

It's just before 9 a.m. on a Sunday in early October as a handful of church members gather for Bible class in the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ fellowship hall.

There's a yellow basket of flowers in front of the podium where teacher Danny Carter looks over his notes. A simple wooden table stands to his right, set up for communion later that morning.



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK

Melanie Crow, 38, died in the attack on the Burnette Chapel church.

As people trickle in, they greet one another with a smile or a hug, as if they've come home to a family reunion.

For a moment, life regains a sense of normalcy. But on a sign outside the church is a reminder of the tragedy that struck this close-knit family just a few Sundays earlier. “Remembering Sister Melanie,” it reads.

On Sept. 24, Melanie Crow, 38, had been among the worshipers at Burnette Chapel, a small congregation in a quiet neighborhood on the outskirts of Nashville.

That Lord's Day, when Crow walked out the door after services, she had no way of knowing how quickly her time on Earth would be over.

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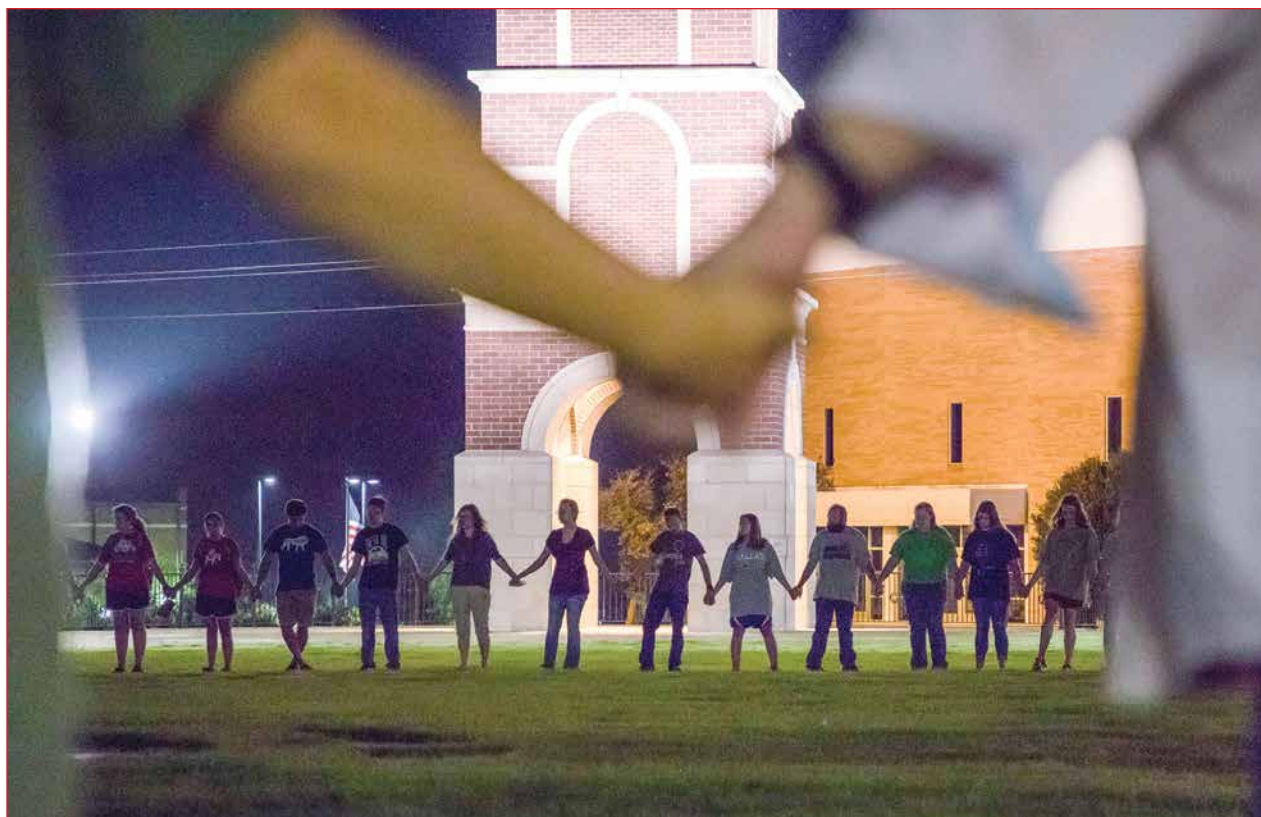
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See **SHOOTING**, Page 8



JASON BRAMBLETT

Students at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., gather for a special prayer after a mass shooting targeted the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ. The attack left one member dead and seven others wounded.

Patience, forgiveness urged in grieving process

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

The gunman took the love of Mavy Stoddard's life. She refused to let him take her hope.

“God's been good to me,” said Stoddard, whose husband, Dorwan, 76, died when a would-be assassin opened fire on then-Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords outside a Tucson, Ariz., supermarket on Jan. 8, 2011. “My faith got me through all this without falling apart.”

But even now — nearly seven

years after the Arizona attack in which six were killed and 13 others injured — Mavy Stoddard breaks down sometimes.

“Just this last Sunday, I spent 15 minutes crying and feeling sorry for myself,” said Stoddard, 82, who lived despite suffering three bullet wounds. “But 15 minutes is all I will allow myself anymore.”



Stoddard

For survivors of the recent mass shooting at the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ in Antioch, Tenn., healing will take time and patience, said Stoddard and other Christians who have experienced past tragedies.

“I would tell them they need to load up on patience and mercy and grace,” said Les Ferguson Jr., a minister whose wife, Karen, 44, and son Cole, 21, were shot to death in the family's Gulfport, Miss., home on Oct. 10, 2011.

See **HEALING**, Page 7

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Pat Boone insists he 'never left' Church of Christ

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Pat *who?* As Pat Boone stepped to the microphone at the recent Religion News Association national conference, not everybody recognized him. “I know who you are,”

Boone, 83, said a fellow speaker told him. “I thought you died.”

The crowd of religion news journalists gathered in Music City —

myself included — laughed.

Decades ago, Boone was a household name — a pop singer for whom Elvis Presley opened in the mid-1950s. A star in record, film and television work, Boone had a “squeaky clean image” and “was known as an actor who wouldn’t kiss a woman on the screen other than his wife,” as a 1994 *Los Angeles Times* story noted.

For members of Churches of Christ in the 1950s and ‘60s, Boone was a big deal because he was one of *us*.

“Boone grew up in the very bosom of Churches of Christ and, at twelve years of age, was baptized by M. Norvel Young,” Restoration Movement scholar Richard T. Hughes wrote in his 1996 book “Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America.”

As a boy, I first heard about Boone from my parents while watching a rerun of a 1969 “Beverly Hillbillies” episode in which the entertainer appeared as himself.

Mom and Dad mentioned

See **BOONE**, Page 4

Puerto Rico: ‘We’re trying our best to cope’

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Despite the devastating floods of Hurricane Maria, Christians in the Puerto Rican community of Arecibo are thankful for the gift of water — clean water.

“We have running water where we live, and I saw a tanker distributing water near where the church meets in Arecibo,” Jim Gullette, a minister who works with the congregation, told *The Christian Chronicle* a week after the Category 5 storm made landfall.

Across the U.S. territory, home to 3.4 million souls and 22 *Iglesias de Cristo* (Churches of Christ) many have limited supplies of water, and gasoline and limited access to electricity and cell phone service.

See **PUERTO RICO**, Page 10



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Micah 6 Community director Coleman Yoakum walks through a neighborhood garden in Pontiac, Mich., part of the ministry’s efforts to provide fresh food in the inner city.

Fighting ‘the leprosy in my neighborhood’

A COMMUNITY HIT HARD by the demise of the automotive industry — and drugs — offers challenges and opportunities for inner-city ministry.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

PONTIAC, Mich.

You can’t be a Christian and do drugs. You know that, right?” Actually, Coleman Yoakum didn’t know that.

Yoakum grew up in an unchurched household in rural Arkansas. He had this crazy dream: He’d go to film school, make movies and fund an expensive drug habit.

But in high school, he came to live with a youth minister named Mac Sandlin, who introduced the teen to Jesus, steered him right — on drugs

and other matters — and encouraged him to attend Harding, the Christian university in Searcy, Ark.

“Mac seemed to have a pretty cool life, so I decided, ‘I’ll be a Bible major,’” recalled Yoakum, who had trouble passing his first theology test, which asked students to list all 66 books of the Old and New Testaments.

More than a decade later, Yoakum, 30, frequently hangs out with drug addicts.

Five years ago, he and a group of friends from Harding moved to the Detroit area to launch Micah 6 Community. Through endeavors such

See **MICAH 6**, Page 23

A coach’s real success

FAITH AND HUMILITY define the life of Oklahoma’s most celebrated coach, still coaching with ALS.

BY MURRAY EVANS | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

JENKS, Okla. — When Jenks High School went looking for a football coach in 1996, the large district in suburban Tulsa took a chance on a former assistant coach with no head-coaching experience — one who had just left the profession and moved to Kansas to pursue a career in the oil industry.

Even then, something stuck out about Allan Trimble.

“He’s so humble, he truly doesn’t fully grasp it,” said Mitch Wilburn, preaching minister for the Park Plaza Church of Christ in Tulsa and a close friend of Trimble, who is an elder of the congregation. “To Allan, he’s just Allan. He doesn’t get that he’s Allan Trimble. That’s just part of the charm.”

Trimble’s aw-shucks demeanor belies the fact he’s the most successful coach in Oklahoma prep football history. His Jenks Trojans have 13 state titles and a 235-36 record entering the 2017 season. There’s hardly a coaching award that Trimble hasn’t won.

But there’s little doubt his career is winding down. This season is the

See **COACH**, Page 25



Trimble

BOONE: 'There's only one Lord, one church, one baptism'

FROM PAGE 3

that Boone had been a member of Churches of Christ at one time. What they didn't tell me — or if they did, I don't recall it — is the story of Boone's falling out with many in our fellowship a half-century ago.

According to Hughes' book, Boone created a "storm of controversy within Churches of Christ when he revealed that he had received the Holy Spirit and now spoke in tongues." James Bales, a Bible professor at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., wrote a 1970 book titled "Pat Boone and The Gift of Tongues" in which he sought to expose Boone's errors.

In 1969, Boone went on television with Pentecostal preachers Oral Roberts and Rex Humbard, said John Mark Hicks, a professor of theology at Lipscomb University in Nashville.

"By the middle of 1970, Boone was essentially 'disfellowshipped' (or blackballed) among Churches of Christ by the major editors and power brokers," Hicks said. Boone and his wife, Shirley, "were officially excommunicated from the Inglewood Church of Christ (in California) in April 1971."

Boone came to the Religion News Association conference to promote "A Historical Pilgrimage to the Holy Land," a 10-day trip he will lead in May 2018 celebrating the 70th anniversary of Israel. I caught up with him for a few minutes after he spoke.

"I credit my days in the Church of Christ, a cappella, with a major influence on my singing career,"



ALEX WASHINGTON

Pat Boone, a supporter of Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., at the Boone Special Collections and Archives in the university's Payson Library.

said Boone, who sold more than 45 million records. "As a teenager, I would be singing at church and at gospel meetings."

Boone attracted national attention by winning "American Idol"-style singing competitions on Ted Mack's "Amateur Hour" and Arthur Godfrey's "Talent Scouts." He "rocketed to stardom and fame" with two gold records in 1955, as Hughes' book points out.

Boone's "moral and religious scruples quickly earned him a national reputation as a fundamentally wholesome and clean-cut kid — something unique in the world of Hollywood," Hughes observed. "Needless to say, Churches of Christ prized Boone as an important

symbol of their own rapid ascent to middle-class social respectability."

The entertainer traces his later strains with Churches of Christ to his embrace of the charismatic movement: "It was kind of an awakening through Christendom that so much of the churches had ruled out the supernatural, which was very much a part of first-century Christianity, because miracles are happening everywhere."

But the church where Boone had served as a deacon, Sunday school teacher and song leader "felt they had to decide between the doctrine and me, so they chose the doctrine and declared us no longer members because they thought I was heretical or something."

Hugh Fulford preached for

Churches of Christ in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Texas for 42 years. Fulford recalls seeing Boone at the Lipscomb summer Bible lectures in 1961.

"In the early 1970s, while living in Lebanon, Tenn., I preached some sermons on the Holy Spirit and mentioned a number who had defected to the charismatic movement, including Pat Boone," said Fulford, who retired from full-time work 17 years ago but still preaches for the Mitchellville Church of Christ in Sumner County, Tenn.



Fulford

Despite his "defection," Boone has remained an active supporter of higher education institutions associated with Churches of Christ.

After the Inglewood church disfellowshipped him, Boone later served as an elder of the Church on the Way, a "Spirit-filled" congregation in the Los Angeles area.

However, the entertainer — who remains a *Christian Chronicle* subscriber — insists he never left the "Church of Christ."

"There's only one church. I never left," he told me. "Some disfellowshipped me, but I never disfellowshipped them. There's only one church, one Lord, one baptism. So I've never left anything."

CONTACT: bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org. See expanded column at www.christianchronicle.org.



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Phone: (405) 425-5070; Fax (405) 425-5076

Mail: P.O. Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100

Delivery: 2801 E. Memorial Road, Edmond, OK 73013



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

Editor in Chief: Erik Tryggstad
erik@christianchronicle.org

Chief Correspondent: Bobby Ross Jr.

bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org

Digital News Editor: Chellie Ison

chellie@christianchronicle.org

Advertising Manager: Tonya Patton

tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org

Administrative Assistant: Lynda Sheehan

lynda.sheehan@christianchronicle.org

Administrative Assistant: Joy McMillon

joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org

Administrative Assistant: Melinda Wilson

melinda.wilson@christianchronicle.org

Staff Accountant: Louise Beyer

Editor Emeritus: Bailey McBride

bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

TO SUBSCRIBE: See www.christianchronicle.org, email joy.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5070.

LETTERS: letters@christianchronicle.org

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SPOTLIGHT

God's hand seen

PLATTSBURGH, N.Y. — With generous donations from several congregations, the Plattsburgh Church of Christ was able to purchase a 14-passenger van with a wheelchair lift and less than 20,000 miles on it, minister Doug Kashorek said.

"God's hand was clearly seen in all of us," Kashorek said.

The church will use the bus for an after-school program for home-less kids in conjunction with the Department of Social Services, the minister said.

Coordinated by a nonprofit group known as The Oasis Project, the program matches adult volunteers with at-risk kids who enjoy a snack and receive help with homework, Kashorek said.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY DOUG KASHOREK

The van recently purchased by the church.

RACH VENDETTI

Tennessee church member commissioned as a U.S. Navy chaplain

Fellow Christians celebrate the commissioning of Lt. Stephen Pate, a member of the Sycamore View Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn., as a U.S. Navy chaplain. Joining the prayer are two of the church's shepherds: Navy Lt. Cmdr. (retired) Jim Berryman and Air Force Master Sgt. Patrick Parson. "I feel that my ministry is a direct extension of Sycamore View," Pate said. "While chaplains are not missionaries in the strictest sense, I see myself as sent from this church to further the kingdom of God." He will be one of 10 Navy chaplains from Churches of Christ.

CONNECTICUT

TRUMBULL — As the Trumbull Church of Christ prepares to celebrate its 145th anniversary on Nov. 5, it has received a special gift.

Vaughn Abercrombie, a great-grandson of Charles Abercrombie, donated his Scottish immigrant great-grandfather's original Bible

to the congregation, member Paula Pancoast said.

"Our history goes back to the 1800s, and we have a portion of our building dedicated to displaying artifacts from the beginning of the congregation," Pancoast said.

For more information, see www.trumbullchurchofchrist.org.

KANSAS

WICHITA — A dozen Wichita-area congregations joined together recently to receive training on practical ways to start personal conversations about Jesus.

A total of 185 elders, deacons, ministers and church members were present. The training was coordinated by the RiverWalk Church of Christ and hosted by the Emporia Avenue Church of Christ.

Steve Ridgell of Hope for Life/Herald of Truth ministries served as the trainer.

Jim Fly, the RiverWalk church's minister for evangelism and outreach, said: "We investigated various potential training efforts and contacted congregations around the country for suggestions. We also invited about 30 local congregations to join a steering committee. ... After considering the input, we chose the Hope for Life program since it addresses the contemporary challenges of helping local church members make initial connections with local people who do not yet know Jesus."



Fly

TENNESSEE

COLUMBIA — More than 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies were given away at the recent Community Day/Back to School Bash hosted by area Churches of Christ.

"God is really blessing our efforts," said Deltric McCullough, minister for the Macedonia Church of Christ.

TEXAS

HUNTSVILLE — Hundreds of people from the community were blessed with free clothing at the Huntsville Church of Christ's annual giveaway.

The church auditorium was transformed into a shopping space with clothing and accessories for the entire family, minister Jeff Dunn said.

"This church has a heart to serve 'the least of these' in whatever way we can find," Dunn said.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY PAULA PANCOAST

A Bible that belonged to an original elder was donated to the Trumbull church.



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Dr. Gregory Straughn, Dean, ACU Box 29210, Abilene, Texas 79699-9210

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Dr. Tom Winter, Director, ACU Box 27866, Abilene, Texas 79699-7866

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Las Vegas-area churches pray after shooting

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Las Vegas-area Churches of Christ prayed for their community and accounted for members after 58 people were killed in the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

"It's just really a tragic thing to happen," said J.B. Myers, minister and elder of the Bright Angel Church of Christ in Las Vegas.

"It's devastating," agreed Tressie Robinson, church secretary for the North Las Vegas Church of Christ.

Neither Myers nor Robinson knew of any members of Churches of Christ directly affected.

But Robinson said her son, Tedrick Rogers, works at the 44-story Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino, where the shooting occurred.

According to The Associated Press, a gunman on the 32nd floor of the hotel-casino rained heavy fire down on a crowd of over 22,000 at an outdoor country music festival Oct. 1. Besides those killed, more than 500 others were wounded.

Robinson said she was relaxing at home after attending Sunday night worship when her son texted his sister, Rakka Robinson, to say he was OK.

Only after receiving the text — which at first confused the family — did they learn of the shooting.

"My son was in his restaurant office doing his paperwork so he could leave," Tressie Robinson said. "All of a sudden, he said they just heard gunshots, and people were running and screaming."

When she talked with him on the phone, she thanked God that he was alive: "I just said, 'Lord, thank you, Jesus.'"

Mike Cope, senior minister for the Golf Course Road Church of Christ in Midland, Texas, posted on Facebook that he was in Las Vegas that weekend for a John Fogerty concert.

"I ran past Mandalay Bay ... before we left," Cope said. "Such a tragedy."

HEALING: ‘Realize all the answers aren’t going to come quickly’

FROM PAGE 1

Melanie Crow, 38, was killed and seven other Burnette Chapel members wounded — including minister Joey Spann — when a masked gunman targeted the congregation Sept. 24.

To members’ shock, the man arrested by police — 25-year-old Emanuel K. Samson — was someone they knew.

Just a few years earlier, Samson had attended services at the Nashville-area congregation and even helped with Vacation Bible School. His motive remains unclear.

“They’re just going to have to slow down and realize that all the answers aren’t going to come quickly,” said Ferguson, now the preacher for the Lake Harbour Drive Church of Christ in Ridgeland, Miss. “This is a process, and it may be a long, drawn-out process. There’s nothing that’s going to fix it.”

Jeremy Weekley preached for the Fourth Street Church of Christ in Selmer, Tenn., after the former minister’s wife, Mary Winkler, fatally shot her husband, Matthew, with a 12-gauge shotgun on March 22, 2006.

“I went in, and the healing process is just like it is for any kind of tragedy or any time you lose a loved one. It takes a while,” said Weekley, who served the Fourth Street congregation for nearly a decade. “You don’t ever get over those things. You just learn how to get through them.

“The leadership there basically told the congregation, ‘It’s OK to feel however you feel, but our No. 1 priority is to serve the Lord,’” added Weekley, now the pulpit minister for the West End Church of Christ in Knoxville, Tenn. “So the focus was never really on the tragedy that had happened. Their focus was on just taking care of the flock.”

HARDEST THING SHE EVER HAD TO DO

Dorwan Stoddard — “Dory” to his friends — was a faithful member of the Mountain Avenue



Dorwan and Mavy Stoddard hold hands at a Mountain Avenue Church of Christ event several years ago. Dorwan Stoddard — “Dory” to friends — died in a Jan. 8, 2011, mass shooting that targeted then-Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords at a supermarket.

Church of Christ in Tucson. He took charge of maintaining the church building and leading the benevolence ministry with his wife.

As former President Barack Obama told the nation in 2011, Dorwan Stoddard’s “final act of selflessness was to dive on top of his wife, sacrificing his life for hers.” As he tried to protect her, he was shot in the head, witnesses said.

The two married later in life after losing previous spouses.

“Dory and I had an absolutely perfect — if there is such a thing — marriage. We did have a 15-year honeymoon,” said Mavy Stoddard, who moved to Idaho to be closer to a daughter and attends the Linder Road Church of Christ in Meridian, west of Boise. “He loved the Lord as much as I did. We did everything together. We traveled all over the Western world.”

Jared Lee Loughner, described by authorities as a mentally unstable college dropout, avoided the death pen-

alty by pleading guilty to the Arizona mass shooting in 2012. He’ll spend the rest of his life in prison.

After a year of praying, Mavy Stoddard said, she forgave Loughner. “It was the hardest thing I had ever done, but I forgave him,” she said.

But later, she realized she had forgiven the act but not the man.

“One day sitting in church here, the minister mentioned hate,” Mavy Stoddard said. “And I thought, ‘You still hate that young man.’ ... For me, after all those years, I fell apart. It took a while, you know, but you do have to forgive the person as well as the act.

“That’s the question a lot of people asked: ‘How?’” she added. “And I told them, ‘God doesn’t forgive you unless you can forgive your fellow man.’”

‘STILL WRESTLING’ WITH FORGIVENESS

In Les Ferguson Jr.’s case, he has struggled with forgiving a killer — Paul Ellis Buckman — who died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Buckman, 70, had attended the Orange Grove Church of Christ, where Les Ferguson Jr. preached, until he was charged three months earlier with sexually assaulting Cole Ferguson, who had cerebral palsy.

“Forgiveness will come easier for some folks,” the minister said. “For some folks, kind of like me, it will

be an ongoing battle. (Oct. 10) was the sixth anniversary of our tragedy, and I found myself having to forgive the guy all over again.”

Ferguson has penned a book titled “Still Wrestling: Faith Renewed Through Brokenness,” which will be released April 10, 2018, by Abilene Christian University’s Leafwood Publishers.

“It was a catharsis for me,” Ferguson said of writing the book. “It let me pull out some of my own anger and frustrations and tell my story in a format that initially I was the only one looking at. So I could process it, and it could be as raw as it needed to be for the moment.

“I wrote it to take my bad junk and turn it into something positive and useful for others,” he added. “Nobody else may have my exact tragedy. But there’s a lot of people out there who are broken and hurting and questioning God and wondering where to go next and what to do with it all.”

SEE WHAT GOD CAN DO

In the Selmer case, Mary Winkler was convicted of voluntary manslaughter and served a short time behind bars.

She eventually regained custody of the couple’s three daughters.

The Fourth Street church, meanwhile, moved forward as the story of the preacher’s family played out on television and in the tabloids.

“What I usually tell people is this: I had a front-row seat to see what God can do even in the midst of tragedy,” Weekley said. “God is going to take care of the church ... regardless of how bad the circumstances may be. And if you trust him, he’s going to lead you through it.

“What I saw through the leadership there and the people at Fourth Street was, they might have had different opinions on how they felt about things,” he added. “But when they got together as God’s people, they worked together as God’s people. They concentrated on that, and I think that was a huge part of the healing process.”



Les Ferguson Jr. shakes hands with Vicki Bingham at the Lake Harbour Church of Christ in Ridgeland, Miss.

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“That’s the question a lot of people asked: ‘How?’” she added. “And I told them, ‘God doesn’t forgive you unless you can forgive your fellow man.’”

‘STILL WRESTLING’ WITH FORGIVENESS

In Les Ferguson Jr.’s case, he has struggled with forgiving a killer — Paul Ellis Buckman — who died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Buckman, 70, had attended the Orange Grove Church of Christ, where Les Ferguson Jr. preached, until he was charged three months earlier with sexually assaulting Cole Ferguson, who had cerebral palsy.

“Forgiveness will come easier for some folks,” the minister said. “For some folks, kind of like me, it will



Weekley

SHOOTING: Gunman would have been welcomed by church, minister says

FROM PAGE 1

A masked gunman parked outside the little-known Tennessee church and waited for the assembly to end.

The man charged in the shooting — 25-year-old Emanuel K. Samson — was no stranger to the congregation.

A few years earlier, he'd been a regular, attending services at Burnette Chapel, helping with Vacation Bible School and sitting down for meals with church members.

Then he'd disappeared. No one had seen him for years.

Since leaving the church, his life had become troubled, according to news reports. He'd threatened suicide and had two incidents of alleged domestic violence.

As the worship service ended, Crow was first out the door. She would be the only person to die. But others would face a barrage of gunfire.

Catherine Dickerson followed not far behind Crow. She stopped outside to talk with Peggy Spann, whose husband, Joey, is the minister at Burnette Chapel.

As they talked, shots rang out from the direction where Crow had walked. At first, no one knew what was happening. Dickerson heard a “pop, pop, pop” but thought a car was backfiring. Then the gunman came into view, dressed in black, his face covered in a mask.

Dickerson bolted. She collapsed after being shot in the leg. She lay still on the ground, playing dead as the gunman entered the building.

Joey Spann, the minister, yelled out a warning before being shot in the chest.

“Move!” he told fellow church members.

‘GOD WANTED US TO BE THERE’

Armilla Bishop hid beneath the front pew, praying that her daughter would be safe.

Carter, the church's treasurer and a longtime Sunday school teacher, ran down the hallway to a children's classroom, where his wife was serving. There he found that one of the kids



PHOTOS BY BOB SMETANA

“Preaching was real good that day,” minister Joey Spann says with a smile as he reflects on the ordinary, peaceful worship assembly that preceded the chaos.

already had barricaded to the door.

He returned to the scene of chaos in the auditorium. All told, seven church members besides Crow would be shot that day, including Donald William and Marlene Jenkins, both in their 80s, and Linda Bush, 68, who'd returned to church that week after a long absence.

There might have been more casualties, had it not been for 22-year-old Robert “Caleb” Engle. A soft-spoken, gentle giant with a deep faith and a wry sense of humor, Engle wasn't supposed to be in worship that morning. But at the last minute, he and his girlfriend, Bailey Inman, had changed their plans to be away.

“God wanted us to be there,” he told *The Christian Chronicle*.

Engle confronted the gunman and subdued him, suffering a separated

shoulder and other injuries in the process.

“He's down,” Bishop heard Engle shout. “Is everyone OK?”

After checking on her daughter, Bishop, a nurse, and fellow church member Minerva Rosa tended to the wounded. Peggy Spann called out for her husband.

“He's killed me. I'm dying,” Joey Spann told his wife. “I'm sorry.”

Bishop was having none of it.

“I've got him,” she told Peggy Spann, reassuring the minister's wife and tending to Joey Spann's wounds. Bishop applied pressure to staunch the bleeding.

“I'll take care of him,” the nurse said.

Police arrived soon and took Samson into custody. The wounded were rushed to nearby Vanderbilt University Medical Center and TriStar Skyline Medical Center. Another nearby church, New Beautiful Gate Church and Ministries, opened its doors so that members could be reunited with family members.

Still, there was one more shock to come, when police informed church members of the suspect's identity.

“I knew him,” said Bishop, who has been a member at Burnett Chapel for 18 years. “I had given him a ride before. I have eaten lunch with him before. I thought, ‘What in the world?’”

Joey Spann, a bivocational minister who teaches Bible at Nashville Christian School, said he would have welcomed Samson to the church with open arms. If he had troubles, the church would have helped him.

“If he had come walking up that sidewalk without that mask on — we'd have hugged him and asked, ‘Man, where have you been?’” Spann said.

A CHANCE TO REBUILD

Since the shooting, the church has begun the long, slow work of recovery.

The first step was finding a place to worship. The main auditorium was off-limits after the shooting, since police still considered it a crime scene. And it was a shambles after the shooting.

The congregation does not have elders. Church leaders such as Carter didn't want to call off services or use another church's facilities. That would have felt like giving up.

“We are not giving up,” said Carter, 65.

So members, along with volunteers from other Churches of Christ and Lipscomb University, got to work. They set up chairs in the fellowship hall and moved some of the pews from the church into that space as well, lining the walls with them.

Three days after the shooting, the church held its Wednesday night service, as usual. The room was packed with church members and visitors alike.

Scott Sager, Lipscomb University's vice president for church services, helped lead the prayers: “We want to claim the promise that if you're for us, no one can be against us.”

The following Sunday, 140 people gathered for worship — about three times the normal attendance at services. The following Sunday, about



Samson



Engle

100 people showed up. Spann hopes it's a sign of things to come.

Like many small congregations, Burnette Chapel has had its struggles. Money is tight, the building is aging, and the congregation is getting older. Attendance had dropped in recent years.

"The people here love each other, but we're an older church," Spann said. "You look around, and there was that fear that, maybe it's dying. Not dead, but declining."

Things changed after the shooting, he said. The church now has a chance to rebuild its ministry.

And despite their challenge, the church had a deep well of faith to draw on. Church members have weathered this storm, he said, because they are older, and many are mature in their faith.

They won't give up easily, he said. And they're willing to forgive and love Samson — despite what happened.

Not that forgiveness is easy, he said. Spann said his granddaughter was at church on the Sunday of the shooting. She'd gone out of the building around the same time as Crow — but headed in the opposite direction.

"If he killed her, I don't know where I would be," Spann said.



A few weeks after the shooting, Danny Carter teaches an adult Bible class in the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ fellowship hall.

Despite the evil the Burnette Chapel congregation experienced, the minister said, God has not abandoned the church. "God will make this right," he said.

GRIEF, ANGER AND FORGIVENESS

Other church members are dealing with a mix of grief and anger. They want to forgive, but it's not easy, Bishop said.

There's a real sense of betrayal — that someone who'd been part of

the family caused so much pain. And the church, once a place of refuge, became a place of suffering and terror. Even those who weren't shot did not escape unscathed, Bishop said.

A lot of anger is focused on Samson and his actions.

"You were part of our family — and you took someone from our family away from us," Bishop said. "And you hurt some other people forever."

Since the shooting, Bishop has had a hard time sleeping. Every little noise can set her off, she said. And she thought about staying away from church for a while.

"I can't let him take the rest of my family away from me," she said. "I felt I had to be back to support my church."

In the weeks to come, the church hopes to organize counseling sessions to help church members cope with the trauma they've experienced. It's a process that could take months or even years.

Recovering from the physical wounds will take time as well. At a recent service, Spann gave an update on church members who had been wounded. The Jenkinss had been transferred to a rehab center. Engle's arm remained in a sling. Bush and Dickerson had been treated and released.

Peggy Spann remained hospitalized. Doctors had discovered two major blockages in her arteries after the shooting and scheduled open-heart surgery. Had she not been shot, those blockages could have caused a fatal heart attack, her husband said.

Joey Spann deals with his own challenges. Along with his bullet wounds to the chest, he lost a finger in the shooting. And a pinched nerve causes him tremendous pain. At a recent Sunday service, he made his way down the center aisle at church with a walker — pausing to greet church members and visitors alike — his enthusiasm undaunted by his pain.

Meanwhile, work continues on the church building itself. It's unclear how much of the damage insurance will pay for. And the damage from the shooting revealed other issues with the building.

That's a lot to deal with, Dickerson said.

Then there's the lingering worry that something else could happen.

"Being back in the building is kind of scary," said Dickerson, who is helping with plans for making repairs. "When I have been down there, I have made sure the doors are all locked."

She said she'll be glad when the main church building is reopened. It will be a way of reclaiming that space — to say that the church remains strong, despite its recent trauma.

"It is important that we do get back to the sanctuary quickly," she said.

Until that happens, church members will keep plugging along, doing what needs to be done and having faith that God is not finished with them yet.

Said Carter: "You just have to keep moving."



Shooting victim Catherine Dickerson, pictured at home, shows a Bible from the 1870s that one of her ancestors donated to the Burnette Chapel church. While she has attended the church for only about six months, her family has long ties to the congregation.

PUERTO RICO: Minister reports slow movement in relief efforts

FROM PAGE 3

Healing Hands International, a nonprofit associated with Churches of Christ, sent a shipment of water filters to the island and plans to send more.

"There is movement" in recovery efforts, Gullette said, "but it is slow without gas and communication. A sister from Tennessee brought an offering from the Brentwood Hills Church of Christ in Nashville. The money is being used to purchase food and supplies for flood victims."

Nearly four feet of water flooded the Arecibo church's newly constructed building during Maria, Gullette said, so church members who could reach the facility worshiped outside on Sunday.

Archie Luper, a church member in Florida, has worked with the Arecibo church for 19 years and has taken teams from the Madison Church of Christ in Tennessee and the Ventura Church of Christ in California to assist in construction there. Now he's raising funds to help with relief.

Though structures and furnishings can be replaced, "there is so much work that needs to be done," Luper said, "not only locally for the church in Arecibo, but also in the Arecibo community (and) island-wide among Churches of Christ."

THE VIEW FROM SAN JUAN

In Puerto Rico's capital, San Juan, grocery stores are out of drinking

water, said Vanessa Jarvis, a member of the Park Gardens Church of Christ.

Though relief supplies are reaching the island, distribution is a challenge, she said. So is access to electricity and communications. Standing on the roof of her storm-damaged home, she's sometimes able to get a cell signal strong enough to send messages to the *Chronicle*.



Jarvis

"We are praying that we may be able to see improvements," Jarvis said. "There are shelters and elderly homes that are experiencing challenges as well," she said. "We are all trying our best to cope with the situation and thank God each day for his blessings."

THE VIEW FROM THE MAINLAND

Christians from Puerto Rico who live on the U.S. mainland spent nerve-racking days waiting for news from family members after Maria made landfall.

For Roberto Seda, that news came from an unexpected source — a phone call from Pennsylvania.

Seda's uncle, Fernando Diaz, lives in Manatí, on Puerto Rico's northern shore, close to where the eye of the hurricane passed as it headed out to sea.

Unable to get a phone signal, Diaz,



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JIM GULLETTE

Members of the Arecibo Church of Christ worship outside on Sunday after Maria.

an avid ham radio operator, made contact with a fellow radio operator in Pennsylvania, who phoned Seda's family to let them know he was OK.

Seda was born in the southern Puerto Rican city of Ponce and moved to the mainland at age 7. Now living in Oklahoma, he and his family worship with the Central Church of Christ in the Oklahoma City suburb of Moore.

His grandmother and several cousins live in the Ponce area and survived the storm.

Now "it's kind of a waiting game," said Seda, who uses Facebook to keep up with Puerto Ricans in his

grandmother's community. Seda's father, a retired U.S. Army officer in Lawton, Okla., hopes to travel to Puerto Rico soon to help the family. But flights to the island — and rental cars on the island — are scarce.

Meanwhile, Seda says he's praying for the first responders, who have traveled to Puerto Rico from across the nation, and that power and water will be restored island-wide soon.

After that, his family, like the rest of Puerto Rico, faces the massive task of rebuilding.

"I can only imagine how massive this relief effort really is," he said.

CALIFORNIA FIRES: Church members become — and serve — evacuees

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

At least two families from the Sonoma Avenue Church of Christ in Santa Rosa, Calif., have likely lost their homes to wildfires that raged across the state in October.

"You know it is a scary thing. The fire that's coming this way, they haven't contained it," church member Loreena Hester told *The Christian Chronicle* at press time.

The church's building is close to the wildfires, which claimed at least 23 lives. A few miles down the road, the Petaluma Church of Christ opened its doors for evacuees. The church's building was far enough

from the fires to be considered a safe place for those leaving Santa Rosa.

Cots filled many of the rooms and volunteers brought food, blankets and other supplies for those who made the building their temporary home.

George Robertson, minister for the Petaluma church, said he and other church members started welcoming friends and family members who needed to evacuate into their homes.

Soon, "our house overflowed and so we decided to open our church building," Robertson said.

He and church members worked with local officials to make the building an official evacuation site. County and mental health services



GEORGE ROBERTSON

The Petaluma Church of Christ opened its doors to California fire evacuees.

worked with church members to provide for the needs of evacuees. Members of churches across the region helped prepare meals.

"We've had people in shock and those who are very subdued,

realizing that they may have just escaped death," Robertson said. "And they're worrying about do they have a home to go back to."

The communities under evacuation aren't full of million-dollar homes or wealthy individuals — just average families, the minister added.

"We've been able to pray with some, sit and be the ears that listen," he said. "It's been really neat to see our community love one another. That love of Christ is actually being demonstrated in this."

SEE EXPANDED AND UPDATED coverage and find links to church-supported ministries assisting in disaster relief at www.christianchronicle.org.



KIERA KINNAIRD

Ministry interns distribute food, water, stuffed animals and Bibles in a Mexico City neighborhood after a devastating, 7.1-magnitude earthquake claimed 200-plus lives.

Safe but shaken

MEXICO CITY — One month after a devastating earthquake in this Central American capital, “there is still a lot of cleaning up and rebuilding to do here,” said Lalo Rocha.

The 7.1-magnitude, Sept. 19 quake near San Juan Raboso killed more than 200 people and damaged thousands of buildings — including the meeting place of the Metropolitan Church of Christ in Mexico City, where Rocha serves as a missionary along with ministry interns in the Adventures in Missions, or AIM, program of Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas.

Eight walls in the Metropolitan church’s building are damaged, Rocha said, and the structure will be unusable until it is fixed.

“In the meantime, we are looking at different options to continue our church gatherings and services,” he said. “Again, this will take a long time.”

The church members are using that time to serve their damaged

neighborhood, making lunches and passing them out at a nearby hospital where long lines of people waited — sometimes overnight, outside — for their loved ones to be treated.

The Christians also prepared relief supplies for Morelos, “a state that got hit even harder than Mexico City,” Rocha said. “There are many people

in Morelos that have lost everything. We are excited to be able to help in this way — by sharing the blessings that we have.”

Kiera Kinnaird, a member of the 12th Street Church of Christ in Seagraves,

Texas, is a member of the AIM team in Mexico City. She helped distribute food, stuffed animals and Bibles after the quake.

“When we ran out of food, people continued to come up to us ... not asking for more food, but rather more Bibles and prayers,” Kinnaird said. “I am in awe.”

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



Rocha



Kinnaird

CAMEROON

BUEA — Christians were caught in the middle of violent clashes in this West African nation recently as thousands of people in the country’s Anglophone (English-speaking) regions demonstrated in the streets against the Francophone (French-speaking)-controlled government. At least six protesters died in clashes with security forces, according to news reports.

During the protests “the Churches of Christ decided to assemble and have Lord’s Supper in our own homes because there was a decree that no one should go out,” said Brittney Hostetter, a missionary serving with her family in Buea, a city in one of Cameroon’s western, Anglophone provinces.

The missionaries ask for prayers for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

KENYA

KISII — A gospel meeting in this East African nation “ended today in style — with eight baptisms!” said minister David Marube.

The recent National Fellowship meeting for Churches of Christ brought together members of more than 30 congregations for three days of singing, prayer, eating and Bible study, Marube said.

“Only members of the church with their families are expected to attend,” Marube said, “but some non-Christians, too, choose to attend and this becomes a great opportunity for us to show them the love of Christ.”



Marube

NEW ZEALAND

NAPIER — Mark Wilson spent three weeks among “an eclectic mix of some of the most wonderful, friendliest Christians you would ever hope to find” in this seaport town on New Zealand’s North Island, he said.

The Church of Christ in Napier, a congregation of about 25 to 30 Christians, has struggled to hire a new minister, said Wilson, an evangelist from Helena, Mont. The church asked Wilson to “analyze and discuss their situation, and, after

getting a good feel for things there, to try to assist them with finding a good missionary/preacher to work with them.” Wilson also presented Bible lessons and sermons on “new creation hopefulness,” he said.

PHILIPPINES

QUEZON CITY — Minister Raj Buo was the guest speaker at the 31st thanksgiving celebration of the Palosapis Church of Christ in the Cubao region of Quezon City. About 55 attendees heard Buo preach on “Walking with the Savior.”

Buo

“It is so encouraging being with brethren and hearing their stories on how they continue to walk in the path of the faithful Savior through all these years,” said Buo’s wife, Dea.

ROMANIA

PITESTI — More than 40 Christians — some in high school and college, others retired — took part in the two-week Pitesti Bible Training School, said missionary Harvey Starling. Teachers were Marc Curfman and Wayne Stubblefield.

“The school is designed to give an opportunity for intensive study for the preachers, for Bible class teachers and for those who simply desire to truly increase in knowledge of Bible truth,” Starling said. Some students use their vacation time to take part in the school.

The Midway Church of Christ in Madison, Ala., supports the work.

UGANDA

KAMPALA — More than 100 representatives of Churches of Christ from across this East African nation gathered in its capital city for the biannual National Conference.

The three-day gathering allowed ministers and church leaders “to encourage each other, pray together, share together and have communion,” said Isaac Sanyu, a minister in Kampala. The theme, “Do not crave for food that spoils, but that which lasts,” was based on John 6:26-35. Ugandan minister John Sakwah was the main speaker.

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BELIEVERS FROM RUSSIA TO THE U.S. *sing the musical compositions of Christian composer Konstantin Zhigulin*

They are not my songs; they are the church's

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Konstantin Zhigulin wrote his first two hymns within the first week after he and his wife, Lina, were baptized in the Siberian city of Barnaul.

The Russian couple, both classical musicians, compose songs of praise with slight Slavic influences that sound as if they've been sung by Christians for centuries. To date, their spiritual compositions number more than 150.

Before his conversion, Konstantin Zhigulin studied flute and piano. After he encountered Christ, he added biblical studies to his repertoire, enrolling at the Institute of Theology and Ministry in St. Petersburg, Russia. He and his wife completed their degrees at the school, which is associated with Churches of Christ, in 2007.

Now they conduct singing workshops across their homeland — plus Germany and the U.S. Though he composes primarily for the Russian church, more than 50 of Konstantin Zhigulin's hymns have been translated into English. Some are sung in American churches. He draws from sacred and secular music — from medieval and baroque to soft rock. His lyrics, of course, draw heavily from Scripture, with the goal of showcasing God's love and mercy, he says.

Since 1995 he and his wife have been active members of a cappella groups, learning and teaching new hymns. In 2005 Konstantin Zhigulin founded the ensemble Psalom. The group has produced multiple CDs and visited more than 250 congregations in the U.S. The Cole Mill Road Church of Christ in Durham, N.C., supports the work along with other churches and individuals.

How did you become interested in composing church music?

When I first turned to the Lord, the song "Remembrance" came to me. Many congregations started singing it connected with the Lord's Supper. The music I wrote was the sole expression of my faith in God and a welcome expression of faith for many who came to the Lord in Russia in the 1990s.

Jeff Matteson, a preacher, was a big



SOPIA SIVOLAP

Baptized in Barnaul, Russia, Konstantin Zhigulin has composed more than 150 hymns.

help to me. He worked with me and mentored me at the very beginning of this path. Many people have had a part in these songs coming to be. In congregations in Russia, lots know these songs by memory, and they are sung like they've already been around for ages. So, I can't really call them my songs anymore. They are the church's songs.

Are there musical characteristics that Russian Christians prefer?

Just like in other countries, there are many different styles. Church music should express our faith and testify to God as presented in the Bible. Music should proclaim God's forgiveness, his mercy, his love, his majesty, his might and his judgment. In addition, the song leader needs to clearly understand the church assembly and what part the song service has in it.

The right relationship of form and content creates room for worship for the congregation, a space for bowing down before God. The church will

always prefer songs of conscious worship over those that momentarily entertain with a pretty melody or that are hurried and flashy. The church wants songs that proclaim the truth about God, that speak of his will and our desire to accept and fulfill it.

The problem often is that a congregation doesn't have someone able to really dig into this, or that we haven't understood that the search is needed and that it will bring good fruit.

In your opinion, do Christians need training in singing?

A person who sings is a free person. Do you recall how Paul and Silas were singing while imprisoned

(Acts 16)? They had greater freedom than those who were guarding them! And they were singing!

Mass culture today is a culture of listening, not of singing. We no longer sing at wedding receptions, preferring to hear something pumped out of speakers. We don't sing at the graveside. Instead we are silent, as though we have lost our voice.

All of this, of course, has an influence on the life of the church. For many who visit us during worship for the first time, communal singing is a revelation.

Over the course of many years, we have developed an annual singing school where we teach basic music skills and strive to develop in each student a love for congregational singing. Ideally, developing these skills occurs continually in their local church. Only then is growth stable.

Sadly, few congregations have someone who will take charge of such a ministry. Still, we aren't discouraged, believing that the Lord will bless and place people in these roles.

What are your favorite hymns that you have written?

Every song is special to me in its own way. I think one of the most

important songs

I've written is

"Lament for the Innocents." Jeff Matteson wrote the lyrics in response to the Sandy Hook school mass-shooting in 2012.

Romans 12:15 tells us to mourn with those who mourn. It's in

these moments we become who we are to be. Especially when it is children, we mourn. We discard nationality, ethnicity and language. All conventions are torn away.

I know that many congregations in the USA love the song "My God and

See **SONGS**, Page 14

'The church will always prefer songs of conscious worship over those that momentarily entertain with a pretty melody or that are hurried and flashy. The church wants songs that proclaim the truth about God ...'

Konstantin Zhigulin, musician and composer

Job Listings

Full-Time Minister - Burlington, Iowa

Searching for a minister to work with a Church of Christ in the Midwest serving Southeast Iowa for over 100 years. Smaller congregation with 35-45 in Sunday morning attendance. Ideal candidate is experienced in reaching out to and being involved with the local community. Annual Salary \$35,000.

Mike Alberts
(319) 392-4587
mlalberts@mchsi.com

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Cindy Defer (575) 887-0933
humanresources@lakeviewchristian.com

Full-time Youth and Family Minister

The Laurel Church of Christ is searching for a full-time Youth and Family Minister. We hope to connect young people and their families to the knowledge of God's Word that can unlock the answers that so many are longing to find. We strive to partner with families in our common goal of seeing our kids grow up to serve God in a mighty way here in this life and ultimately to spend eternity together with our God.

elders@laurelchurch.net
See full job description at:
www.christianchronicle.org/classifieds

Seeking high-energy minister

National Park Church is seeking a high energy minister to join our church family in glorifying God, proclaiming the gospel of Christ Jesus, and leading the lost to faith in Him. An ideal applicant will have a minimum of five years experience and a bachelor's degree from a Christian university. This person will be part of a leadership team. National Park Church, a Church of Christ family, is a friendly, inclusive, and dynamic church located in beautiful Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas. For job description, application, and photographs, contact:

Mike Moody
moody.md@sbcglobal.net

Full-Time Minister

The **Gateway Church of Christ in Homestead, Fla.**, is seeking a full-time minister for a growing church of 50 plus. Applicant must have strong communication skills and a heart to help grow the congregation. Please send resume with contact information along with a video or attachment of two recent sermons.

Jim Harris
Preacher Selection Committee
harriscontractor@aol.com
(786) 255-4999

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
church@pvcoc.org
(559) 784-5498 or (559) 361-1198

Youth Minister/Worship Leader

The Fairview Heights Church of Christ is seeking a youth minister/worship leader to serve our congregation located in the metropolitan St. Louis area. We desire an experienced man to work with our youth, lead worship, occasionally preach and be involved in congregational ministry efforts to reach our community for Christ. If you are interested, please send us your resume, references and a brief philosophy of ministry to:

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Fairview Heights, IL 62208
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East Chestnut Church of Christ
3601 East Chestnut Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46803
eastchestnutchurch@yahoo.com

SONGS: The best lyrics often are straight from Scripture, unchanged

FROM PAGE 13

King." The lyrics for this song were written by Mark Shipp of Austin on themes from Psalm 84.

A few songs are unique in that their lyrics are practically unchanged from the biblical text: "The Lord's Prayer," "The Lord is Risen from the Grave" and "You are the Light of the World." The English versions of these songs were worked on by Brad Cawyer, a wonderful musician from Dallas.

How is your wife involved in your ministry?

Lina has always been a part of the ensemble Psalom. She has an amazing gift in her voice.

For a number of years Lina has been the choir director at St. Petersburg Christian University, and she trains the choir for a church in nearby Pavlovsk. She also teaches in the annual singing school. Her support of me is no small thing.

Who uses your music, and how can American Christians learn more about it?

This music is used by congregations, performing groups, small ensembles and choirs at Christian universities. Many of the songs are translated into English, German, Estonian, French, Albanian and Greek – which makes them useable all over the world.

Most important to me is that these songs are finding their place in congregational worship.

Sheet music is available on Psalom's website. Many songs are included in the Russian-language songbook "Music of the Heart," published by Eastern European Mission for churches in Russia and Ukraine. Some songs in English are published in the U.S. as part of the project "Timeless: Ancient Psalms for the Church Today." Also, there is a multi-volume set of songbooks of my music that James Tackett of Austin Christian Acappella Music made possible.

WEBSITES: psalom.org, congregationalworship.org

Deadline for next two issues: November 3 and December 8.
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Fishers of men, farmers of nuts

AT 50, AFRICAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE *strives for self-sustainability – in its students and its campus*

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

TUBUNGU, Swaziland

Joy Lea Brazell came to African Christian College on a mission — to shut it down.

The school, then known as Manzini Bible College, was struggling to survive when Brazell, an American preacher, traveled to this tiny southern African kingdom to visit the campus.

“A match would probably end this place,” Brazell thought as he walked among the thatched-roof buildings, separated by walking paths — cut like tunnels through dry, shoulder-high elephant grass.

Members of Churches of Christ founded the college in 1967 as a place to train black Africans. Swaziland’s massive neighbor, South Africa, was under the system of apartheid. But by the time Brazell visited in the early 1990s, that system was crumbling. Soon, South Africans would choose an anti-apartheid revolutionary, Nelson Mandela, as their nation’s first black president.

Perhaps there was no longer a need for the small Swazi school, which couldn’t seem to retain teachers — or students. So the college’s supporting congregation, the Montgomery Boulevard Church of Christ in Albuquerque, N.M., sent Brazell to assess the work.

His task: determine whether or not the college was worth saving.

If not, close it.

After inspecting the grounds — and spending hours speaking with students, faculty and church members — Brazell returned from southern African with a message for the church’s elders:

“We can’t let this thing fail!”

“He chose the hard way,” said

Herbert Mhango, a minister for the Chilenje Church of Christ in Lusaka, Zambia.

Mhango praised God for that decision as he led a devotional during the African Christian College’s recent 50-year Jubilee Celebration.

“When he came here, he saw the spirit of God at work,” Mhango said of his fellow minister. “I think the hand of God touched him. He decided that this is a school worth sacrificing for.”

ACADEMIA, MEET MACADAMIA

Mhango, a 2002 graduate, spoke under a large tent on the 200-acre campus, now a place of concrete,

metal-roofed lecture halls, dormitories, farm buildings and a brand new library — with finely manicured grass and an orchard of macadamia nut trees.

Inside the tent, the college’s faculty, alumni and trustees welcomed officials from the local police department, the kingdom’s government and Lisa Peterson, U.S. ambassador to Swaziland. Outside, bearing flags representing each of the 13 nations that have sent students to the school, African Christians swayed in the sunlight as they sang praises to God.

One by one they strutted into the tent as the crowd sang out the names of their countries. Exuberant voices trilled “*ay-yi-yi-yi-yi*” as they planted each flag behind the podium.

The school’s graduates aren’t ministers alone. They’re preaching pig farmers in Zambia, soul-saving school teachers in Kenya and benevolence minister baristas in Uganda.

The college needed organization — and more funds — to survive, Brazell decided. Missionaries including Thayer Salisbury helped

CONTINUED



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Christians from across southern Africa — some dressed in the traditional, red attire of the Swazi people — listen and take notes as Texas minister Jerry Taylor preaches on “The Unimaginable Power of God” as Ndumiso Dlamini translates into the Swazi language, siSwati, during Sunday worship on the campus of African Christian College in Swaziland.

Kingdom of Swaziland

POPULATION: 1.4 million **LANGUAGES:** siSwati, English; **RELIGION:** Zionist (mix of Christianity and ancestor worship) 40 percent, Catholic 20 percent, other Christian groups 30 percent, Muslim 2 percent, other (including Buddhist, Hindu) 8 percent.



HISTORY: Various Bantu people lived among the mountains and hills of modern-day Swaziland. Sobhuza I consolidated the kingdom and became its first monarch in the early 1800s. The British took control of the region in 1903. After World War II, the country's people drafted a constitution, and after elections, the nation became an independent, constitutional monarchy in 1968.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST: In 1960, missionaries Eldred Echols and Al Home visited Swaziland to explore the possibility of establishing a preacher-training school. Instead, they launched what is now Southern Africa Bible College in Benoni, South Africa. Missionary Nic Dekkar arrived in 1966 to plant churches and launch Manzini Bible School, now African Christian College. Jesse Brown and Shorty Winfield assisted in the work. Today the kingdom has about 30 Churches of Christ.

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE: The school enrolls 35-40 students per year, taught by three full-time and three adjunct faculty and about 15 visiting lecturers per year from the U.S. and Africa. The college has 12 additional staffers. Students earn **Bachelor of Theology** degrees with one of three specializations: ministry, leadership or counseling. The Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa granted the college candidacy status in 2015. The school is registered with the Swaziland Higher Education Council. In addition to academic studies, students serve on campus by tending the college's macadamia nut orchard, which produces revenue to help support the school.

WEBSITE: www.africanchristiancollege.org
SOURCES: CIA World Factbook, "Churches of Christ Around the World" by Mac Lynn, interviews. Globe via Wikimeida Commons.



Vusmamdla Dlamini, a 1990 ACC grad, holds the flag of Swaziland at the Jubilee event.

CONTINUED
develop the curriculum, focusing on the Bible instead of doctrinal issues. Administrators also took steps to provide students with marketable skills. As the school entered the 21st century, business-minded Christians including Ira Hill came from the U.S. to teach courses on entrepreneurship. The college itself also needed to be self-sustaining, Brazell reasoned. He raised money for the Tree of Life project — a macadamia orchard. The students, as they studied to be fishers of men, learned to be farmers of nuts. A fire nearly destroyed the young orchard on Sept. 11, 2001 — the same day terrorists attacked the U.S. The students replanted and learned how to prune and nurture the trees with assistance from American Christians including Jim Marnach, a hazelnut farmer from Oregon. Hill helped to secure an agreement with HEB, a



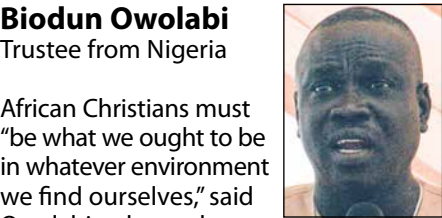
Lihle Shongwe, 17, and other members of the Matsapha Church of Christ sing hymns before Sunday morning worship begins on the last day of the ACC Jubilee celebration.

Texas-based chain of grocery stores, to sell the macadamia nuts. Hill and his wife, June, launched efforts to get retired American Christians involved in ministry around the world. Two of their contacts, Larry and Susan Carter, answered the call. "I had to get out a map to find Swaziland," said Larry Carter, who ran a sporting goods store in Martin, Tenn., before he and his wife agreed to oversee the college for two years. Recently, they celebrated what Susan Carter called "the 10-year anniversary of that two-year commitment." In 2012, the Carters' son, Brad, moved his family to the campus. He serves as the college's president. "Our vision is to be a truly African college — not totally or primarily dependent on outside funding," Brad Carter said. Now a nonprofit, the college has added trustees from Africa — including church leaders from Swaziland, South Africa and Nigeria. In the past half-century, graduates have filled pulpits and pews in Churches of Christ across southern Africa, said Samson Shandu, a Swazi native and former teacher at the college. Students also come from various denominations. Some are baptized during their time here. "When it started there were so many problems," Shandu said of the college. "But because God is great and knows what he wants, this is why it is what it is."

'TAKE THE BOOK ... LEAVE THE MONEY'
After the flag ceremony, the celebrating Christians got a sermon — and a grammar lesson — from Phineas Magagula, Swaziland's minister of education. He quoted Jesus' words



Shandu



Biodun Owolabi
Trustee from Nigeria

African Christians must "be what we ought to be in whatever environment we find ourselves," said Owolabi as he spoke on "Raising a Generation of Faithful Youth" during ACC's Jubilee. Owolabi serves as president of West Nigeria Christian College, 4,300 miles northwest of Swaziland, and serves on ACC's board.



ACC president Brad Carter talks to a TV reporter about the college's 50-year history.

to the apostle Peter in Matthew 16:8, *"upon this rock I will build my church,"* and, like a teacher, deconstructed the phrase. The verb tense, he said, emphasizes the ongoing nature of evangelism. "In other words, God called out people from different nationalities to build his own church," Magagula said. "So what we're celebrating here is the Church of Christ," he added. "I was very much fascinated when I saw different flags of different nationalities from all over Africa." Ethnically charged conflicts — from apartheid to the Rwandan genocide to post-election violence in Kenya — have plagued the continent. African Christian College students hope their campus can play a small role in fostering harmony. "We come here from very, very different countries," said Foley Meki, a first-year student from Blantyre, Malawi, "but the most amazing thing is that we are all just like a family. We



Members of Churches of Christ across southern Africa celebrate at African Christian College, singing "God is So Good" in languages including Chewa, Shona, Zulu and siSwati.

don't even see the differences." Magagula praised the "men of God" who founded the school for their vision. He also praised the vision of Swaziland's first king, Sobhuza I, who, during his reign in the early 1800s "had a vision of the white man coming with a book and money," Magagula said. "In his wisdom, he advised Swazis to take the book and leave the money," Magagula said. That book, the Bible, "directs each and every one of us to live as God intends us to." During their time at African Christian College, students aren't allowed to ask visitors for financial support. Personal resourcefulness is one of the college's five key outcomes, Brad Carter said, along with academic excellence, Christian character, servant leadership



Magagula

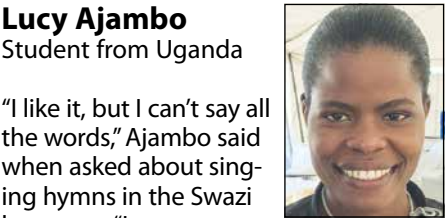
and global awareness. After Magagula, alumni representative Mwenge Mufuzi addressed the crowd. The class of 2000 graduate from Zambia, who preaches for the Lotus Gardens Church of Christ in Pretoria, South Africa, quoted Hebrew 12:2 as he urged the college's students to focus on Jesus, who endured the cross *"for the joy that was set before Him."* "When we focus on what is beyond us," he said, "even if we might not have the financial support, we might not have what we might need to make our lives sustainable. If we can see what is beyond us we can get strength for today from looking at the future, at what God has prepared for us."

TEARS AND CELEBRATION
Brazell, 75, planned to attend the Golden Jubilee but died unexpectedly in Lawrence, Kan., just days before the celebration began.



Makanakaishe Sithole enjoys a cupcake during ACC's 50th anniversary celebration.

On Saturday night, a day after the flag ceremony, the African Christians gathered again in the tent to worship and hear a message from guest speaker Rick Atchley, minister for The Hills Church of Christ in Texas. As the service concluded, they shed tears for Brazell, their longtime patron and friend, before breaking into a chorus of *Yey Wena*, a siSwati, a cappella hymn that means "Hey You!" The ground shook and the tent pulsed as the Christians sang, shouted, cheered and stomped, calling *bhuti, sisi, mama, baba* (brother, sister, mother, father): *"Hey you! Why are you seated while we are praising the Lord?"* "It is amazing that today we are experiencing the unimaginable," Herbert Mhango said. Because of Brazell — and many other dedicated believers from around the world — African Christian College continues "to change lives, to change the face of Africa."



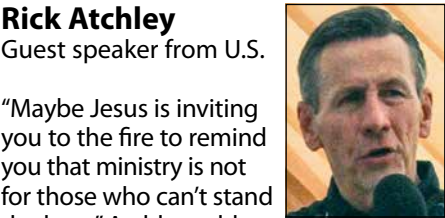
Lucy Ajambo
Student from Uganda

"I like it, but I can't say all the words," Ajambo said when asked about singing hymns in the Swazi language. "In every-thing, there's a challenge." The first-year ACC student from Jinja, Uganda, wants to study counseling. "I have this idea of helping people in times of stress and sharing the Good News with people."



Manuel de Oliveira
Dean of Students

"My dream was to be a missionary in Portugal," said de Oliveira, who came to African Christian College to train in 1976. But God had bigger plans, he said. De Oliveira and his wife, Pam, have served in Portugal's capital, Lisbon, and in the Portuguese-speaking nation of Mozambique. Now they work with ACC.



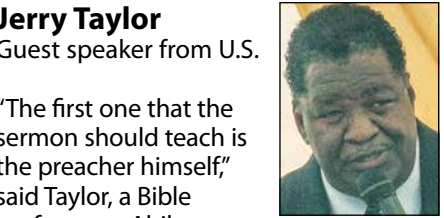
Rick Atchley
Guest speaker from U.S.

"Maybe Jesus is inviting you to the fire to remind you that ministry is not for those who can't stand the heat," Atchley told fellow preachers, citing the miraculous catch of fish in John 21. The minister for The Hills Church of Christ near Fort Worth, Texas, and Jerry Taylor spoke to church leaders at a workshop before the Jubilee.



Agnes Adontsi
Alumni from Lesotho

"The time has come when the Word can't just be taught, but must be lived," said Adontsi, a 1979 ACC grad, during a "Women in Christian Service" class. The preacher's wife talked about a feeding program for kids and other ministries of the Church of Christ she serves in Lesotho, a small kingdom encircled by South Africa.



Jerry Taylor
Guest speaker from U.S.

"The first one that the sermon should teach is the preacher himself," said Taylor, a Bible professor at Abilene Christian University in Texas, speaking to fellow preachers at the "Teaching God's Word Today" workshop. "We must ask God to help us understand the evil that exists also within us."



Taurai Mirimi
Student from Zimbabwe

"*Ubuntu umuntu ngabantu*," said Mirimi, quoting a Zulu-language phrase that means "A person is a person because of other people." He spoke to visitors from the U.S. about Jesus' prayer for unity in John 17. The senior student said that ACC embraces its diversity and serves as "an image of a little kingdom of God."

‘They have love; they don’t look down on people’

CHILDREN IN SWAZILAND are inspired by a team of African-American Christians from the U.S. during college’s Jubilee

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

TUBUNGU, Swaziland

As their parents praised God under the big tent up the hill, children in this southern African kingdom learned Bible lessons and ninja skills.

Members of Dreams Come True, a team of African-American students and recent graduates of Abilene Christian University in Texas, shepherded more than 100 little souls during the 50-year Golden Jubilee celebration and lectureship at African Christian College.

Back in Abilene, the team runs DCT Summer Blaze, a program of “sports and wisdom training” for inner-city youths, as camp director and founder Paris Robertson described it. With guidance from their mentor, ACU Bible professor Jerry Taylor, the young believers developed a curriculum focused on “the five dimensions of wellness: physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and intellectual,” Robertson said.

Taylor has taken team members to the West African nation of Ghana to work with children there during events at Heritage Christian College. When he was asked to speak at the college in Swaziland, Taylor invited the Summer Blaze team to come along and run a day camp for the kids. For some team members, including Robertson, it was their first trip outside the U.S.

On both continents, the fun and games are based on the Bible, said Darren Hagood, the camp’s spiritual director. He taught the children life lessons from Scripture, including the story of the Old Testament patriarch Joseph.

“Joseph’s brothers were jealous because of all the swag his father gave him,” Hagood told the African children during one of the Bible lessons. They nodded in agreement, though one leaned over to his



Darren Hagood, spiritual director for Texas-based DCT Summer Blaze, teaches the game “ninja” to children in Swaziland during African Christian College’s Golden Jubilee.

neighbor and asked, “What is swag?” A few words needed explaining (“swag” means unearned gifts or “freebies,” by the way), but most of the children — even the very young ones — knew enough English to communicate with the Americans.

When asked what he liked about the day camp, 10-year-old Mluleki Mhango from Zambia gave a simple answer. “I like running around there — running like a ninja,” he said,

pointing impatiently to the field next to him.

The interview, it seemed, was keeping him from ninja practice.

As for the older kids, “there is a universal language of teenager. They all act the same anywhere you go,” said Robertson’s wife, Lexus, a member of the Summer Blaze team. “At first it was slow getting them to open up.”

After a day or two, many of the teens

became more comfortable and grew close to their new American friends.

“They are so kind. They have love. They don’t look down on people,” said 17-year-old Lihle Shongwe, a member of the Matsapha Church of Christ in Swaziland. She drew encouragement from the Bible lessons — especially the ones about Joseph.

“Even though his brothers mugged him, he held onto God. He trusted,” Shongwe said. “I wish well of this group, and hope to see them again.”

That feeling is mutual, said team member Gloria Hagood, who was impressed by the resourcefulness of the African youths.

“We use a lot of equipment back

at home. Here, they’re using their shoes to make a line,” she said. “We were planning what we were going to do for ‘capture the flag’ and they were writing it down on the ground. They’re using whatever they have.”

It reminded Paris Robertson of his own childhood.

“We used to use crates and nail them to a pole to play basketball at my grandmother’s house in the country,” he said,

His wife also remembers days when “we didn’t have money to buy balls or jump ropes,” she said. Nonetheless, “we were so happy when we were young.

“Now Kids in Western society don’t know how to have fun without their iPad or mobile device.

“We stopped being resourceful.”

Too often, Western society sees Africans as poor and miserable, said team member Alicia Taylor, daughter of Jerry Taylor. That’s “a narrative that’s been forced on them throughout the years of depletion” by foreign powers, she added.

On her third trip to Africa, she feels an ancestral “pull to the people, to the

land, to the air,” she said. She’s also impressed by young Africans who want to earn degrees and use them to build their nations’ economies and stabilize the political climate.

“That’s something we can take back, as African-Americans, to use in the States,” she said. “We want to show young people that look like us that you can do it. You

don’t have to look to anyone else to make it happen. ... The cause is greater than you.”



Paris Robertson



Alicia Taylor



Lexus Robertson



“There is a universal language of teenager,” said Lexus Robertson. During the Golden Jubilee, youths from the Matsapha Church of Christ demonstrate that point.

PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

SPOTLIGHT

Blue Ribbon School

MOUNT DORA, Fla. — Mount Dora Christian Academy Elementary School, which is associated with Churches of Christ, has been recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School by U.S. Education Secretary Betty DeVos.

It's one of only 12 schools in Florida and 342 schools nationally to receive the designation as an exemplary high-performing school.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MOUNT DORA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mount Dora Christian Academy Elementary School teachers celebrate the honor.



SHANE COFFMAN

United Voice Worship Conference draws 200 singers, leaders

John Malone with the a cappella group Committed from Athens, Ala., sings during the recent United Voice Worship Conference. More than 200 singers and worship leaders attended the conference, hosted by the Bammel Church of Christ in Houston. Sean Palmer served as the emcee, and Don McLaughlin and Orpheus Heyward spoke. The conference featured multi-racial worship, fellowship and conversation.

ADDICTION RECOVERY

SOZO RECOVERY CENTER
JESSIEVILLE, Ark. — SOZO Recovery Center — a faith-based recovery program for male addicts and alcoholics — has topped 25 baptisms since its founding five years ago, director Bob O'Dowd said. SOZO is a nonprofit subsidiary of the Hot Springs Village Church of Christ.

"This program of fully immersing our residents into the life of the congregation is succeeding where other programs have failed," O'Dowd said. For more information, see www.sozorecoverycenters.com.

the Pacific Northwest.

The new outreach at the University of Washington is called Sojourn Campus Ministry and involves a team of six.

Daniel and Holly Jarchow are the team leaders. Daniel serves full time, and Holly works as a speech pathologist. Devon Sears is the other full-time minister, and his wife, Diamond Sears, is a special education teacher. Ethan Pollard is also a teacher, and his wife, Heather Pollard, works at a school.

HIGHER EDUCATION

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
ABILENE, Texas — Dub it "editing in paradise."

Cheryl Bacon, chairwoman of ACU's Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, recently took time off to help university trustee Eddie Sharp write a book on ministry. At the same time, she got a taste of Hawaiian hospitality.

For more than two decades, Bacon had been urging Sharp, minister for the University Avenue Church of Christ in Austin, to write a book to help ministers be more effective.

Bacon took it a step further by obtaining a sabbatical to focus on the book, allowing her to edit all of Sharp's eight chapters and write two herself. That's where the trip to Hawaii came in.

"Eddie does wonderful funerals and is extremely pastoral and caring to people in times of crisis," Bacon said. "I told him, 'You need to write a book about that. There are young ministers out there who need to hear what you have to say.'"

BACon

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY
MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Donald Trump Jr. spoke at Faulkner's recent annual benefit dinner to help raise money for student scholarships.



The president's son praised Faulkner for maintaining its Christian values, its desire for truth and justice and its mission to build up young men and women over the decades.

"This is an exceptional place. There are not many like it, and that's why Faulkner is so important today," Trump Jr. said. "The example of Faulkner is what I want to talk about because Faulkner can save higher education by its example."

HERITAGE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
ACCRA, Ghana — A team from Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., recently visited Heritage Christian College.

The mission group from the U.S. came to the Ghanaian campus "to interact with some students and staff of HCC and see what the Lord is doing through HCC," according to Heritage Christian's newsletter.

The Lipscomb group earlier had visited the Village of Hope, a children's home and Christian school in this West African nation.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

SOJOURN CAMPUS MINISTRY
SEATTLE — The Wolflife campus ministry at Arkansas State University collaborated with the national Campus for Christ organization and Kairos Church Planting to launch a new campus ministry in



Bruce McLarty, president of Harding University in Searcy, Ark., greets the Matanzas Church of Christ in Cuba. Tim Archer translates McLarty's words into Spanish.



Ally Davis and Micaeleigh English visit with some of the Cuban teens after the Good News Singers performed at a national Christian youth conference on the island.

Harding sings the Good News in Cuba

MATANZAS, Cuba

The Good News Singers, an a cappella worship ensemble featuring students from Harding University in Searcy, Ark., sang at a recent national Christian youth conference in Cuba.

Harding President Bruce McLarty and his wife, Ann, joined the 10 singers and the group's director, Chuck Hicks, on the trip.

Tim Archer, Spanish-speaking ministries coordinator for Hope for Life/Herald of Truth Ministries, met the group on the island. In recent years, Archer has translated for Tony Hernandez, preacher for the Mantanzas Church of Christ, during the minister's presentations at the Harding Bible Lectureship.

"To think that an a cappella group from Harding University would be able to cross cultural barriers and befriend a nation of believers is beyond anything that we could have done on our own," said Braden Bowman, one of the Good News Singers. "God was with us on our journey, and with his spirit, we were able to reach a group of brothers and sisters like never before."



The Good News Singers from Harding University in Searcy, Ark., perform at a national Christian youth conference in Cuba.

MICAH 6: ‘They embody the best of God’s kingdom’

FROM PAGE 3
as a fresh food store and community gardens, the inner-city ministry works to improve lives in a neighborhood hard hit by the automotive industry’s demise. The church Micah 6 Community planted meets in the back of the small food store. “Our congregation is about 45 people who are all struggling with addiction in some way,” said Yoakum, who never did drugs despite flirting with the idea. The church “recently launched a second service that doesn’t allow children ... in order to be a place that the sex offender community is allowed to attend.”

Adam Hill, who preaches for the Rochester Church of Christ in nearby Rochester Hills, Mich., is a fan of the ministry, which takes its motto from the end of Micah 6: “*Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly.*” “They take seriously the great commands: to love God and to love our neighbor,” Hill said. “Through their missional generosity and hospitality, the neighborhood around them is surging back to vibrant life. “Pontiac has more than 200 churches in the phone book,” the minister added. “Maybe they didn’t need another church; maybe they needed neighbors who loved the way Jesus said to love. They embody the best of God’s kingdom.”

Besides Yoakum — who directs the ministry — other Micah 6 Community team members are Dylan Pyeatt, the church plant director; Bethany Blackburn, who heads up Sprout Fresh Food Store and other food initiatives; Christian Frink, who manages the gardens; and Carrie Hauser, who takes care of finances.

In an interview with *The Christian Chronicle*, Yoakum talked about the challenges and opportunities:

• **On how they started gardens that produce thousands of pounds of fruits and vegetables:** “We spent the first year and said, ‘We’re just going to sit down and get to know the neighborhood.’ We figured out pretty fast that most of



Coleman Yoakum, right, accepts a delivery at Micah 6 Community’s food store.

our neighbors don’t have cars. Sixty percent of our neighbors don’t have reliable transportation. The nearest grocery store is a mile and a half away, and depending on who owns it at any given time, it may or may not have a good produce selection.

“But we live in a neighborhood where there’s a ton of vacant property around where there used to be houses that burned down or got demolished. So we went to the county because that’s who owns them all, and we said, ‘How much for a vacant lot?’ ... And so we bought eight of those (for \$10 each) and just sort of started.

“And a lot of the older folks remember having gardens when they were kids. And then they’re raising their grandchildren. So we had a lot of volunteers who were 7 and 70, who taught us how to do most of the growing that we do now.”

• **On the relationships formed with neighbors:** “We have an open-door policy at our house where people can come in and out, drink coffee, take showers, do laundry. Because we had so many friends who were squatting in vacant houses that didn’t have any utilities in them.”

• **On what Micah 6 Community is trying to accomplish:** “There’s this really great Mother Teresa quote. She’s working with these lepers in Calcutta, and somebody says, ‘Everybody here dies from leprosy. You’re not healing anybody.’ And she says, ‘That’s

totally true, but sometimes the people here who have leprosy are getting way more love than they’ve ever gotten in their lives, and it took getting leprosy for that to happen.’

“The leprosy in my neighborhood is addiction. Everyone is either in or trying to get out or has spent serious time in and has gotten clean. We love seeing people who make strides.”

• **On whether the ministry sees more misery or happy endings:** “Let’s talk about Cheryl. ... She came to us drunk and was like, ‘I need community service hours for this, that and the other.’ And we do a lot of community service hours because we’re super flexible.

“So Cheryl just started kind of helping around the house with stuff and working in the gardens and painting a lot. Through that, we just got to know Cheryl really well, and she’s been clean now for two-and-a-half years. She runs the Alcoholics Anonymous group that meets here (at the food store) on Sunday afternoons. We’ve connected with a lot of her family. She’s going back to school. So far this is a happy ending. “But then we had Robert. One of

our first times we switched to evenings for church here, he was squatting in a vacant house catty-cornered from the building and said, ‘I heard singing, so I came over to figure out what this was.’ He came over here from the homeless shelter. Tanya, his girlfriend, lived in the house with him. Together, they were pooling their Social Security money and disability money to be able to afford a deposit on first month’s rent on an apartment.

“They had \$700 in cash, and Robert took it all and gave it to his crack dealer. So it was all gone. And just sort of walking that out, Robert had finally gotten up to two years clear. They had a great apartment. He got a job. But he went back to jail, and he’s now back out and not making good choices. I guess with everybody, there’s not an ending until you die. We have happy chapters, for sure.”

• **On the faith required to pour one’s self into such a ministry:**

“I tell people all the time, ‘I would much rather live out of something that looks like it came from a Pottery Barn catalog, like, very nice furniture that’s very uncomfortable so people won’t stay for very long.’

“That’s my natural setting. ... But I don’t think it is the best way to live, and I don’t think it’s how we were designed to live. So knowing that, I have to create a situation where I don’t have an option, and so living here and telling people they can come by anytime, I think that is better than me living closed up in a fancy apartment somewhere.

“It’s better for me, and it’s better for the world, so that’s what I have to do is create that for myself. Lucky for me, everyone else on the team is crazy enough to do it with me.”



PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

“Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly.” Micah 6 Community takes its motto from that chapter of the Old Testament.



HARDING

U N I V E R S I T Y

FACULTY POSITIONS AVAILABLE

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

CANNON-CLARY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION. Seeking a full-time faculty member. The successful candidate will have a doctorate in an area of education or a closely related area and should have teaching experience in a K-12 school setting. Experience teaching in higher education and research and statistics is preferred; working with accrediting agencies such as CAEP would be helpful. Candidates should hold a current teaching license. This position includes teaching responsibilities, advising, serving on committees and other assigned tasks.

Submit an introductory letter, curriculum vitae and contact information to Dr. Cheri Smith, chair of teacher education, at csmith19@harding.edu or Box 12254, Searcy, AR 72149.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING AND PHYSICS. Seeking full-time faculty member in civil engineering. The successful candidate will have a Ph.D. in civil engineering or closely related field. Responsibilities include overseeing, planning and accrediting of the civil engineering program in coordination with department chair; curriculum development; and teaching of undergraduate lecture and laboratory courses.

Submit a letter of application, curriculum vitae and statement of teaching interests to Dr. Zane Gastineau, chair, at zgastineau@harding.edu or Box 12290, Searcy, AR 72149.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH. Seeking full-time faculty member in the College of Arts and Humanities. The successful candidate will possess a minimum of a master's degree, although a Ph.D. or terminal degree is preferred, and have teaching experience in university-level composition and general literature along with teaching and/or professional experience in some or all of the following: script writing, professional editing and publishing, and creative writing. Responsibilities will include teaching general courses as well as advanced studies courses as they are available.

Submit a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to Dr. Terry Engel, chair, at tengel@harding.edu.

Additional openings are available in the following areas:

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

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Please visit harding.edu/hr/jobsfaculty for further information on these positions. To learn more about open staff positions, visit harding.edu/hr/jobs. Harding is committed to hiring a diverse faculty and staff. Women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and veterans are encouraged to apply.

A century of song leading

CHURCHES OF CHRIST in Nashville mourn as they celebrate the lives and music of two well-known worship ministers.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Churches of Christ in Music City are mourning the loss of two well-known voices — with combined song-leading careers of more than 130 years.

James L. Jackson, longtime professor of music and chairman of the music department at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., died Sept. 16. He was 84.



Jackson

“The heavenly chorus has gained another powerful bass-baritone who will brighten up the skies with his smile alone,” Doug Smith of Palestine, Texas, posted on Jackson’s online obituary.

Jackson, a native of Farmersville, Texas, was a choral conductor for 60 years and served as a worship minister for Churches of Christ in his hometown and the Texas cities of Farmersville, Mineral Wells, Eastland, San Angelo, Garland, and Dallas in addition to Nashville.

A U.S. Army veteran who served in France, he earned degrees from Abilene Christian University in

Texas, the University of North Texas and the University of Oklahoma. He and his wife, Pat, married in 1960.

After his retirement from Lipscomb, he worked as a consultant for the Tennessee State Department of Education. He also started the Gran-Timers, a senior adult ministry of the Granny White Church of Christ in Nashville.

In 2007 he organized the Bellevue Community Chorus and directed the group until December 2013, when he became Director Emeritus of the chorus.

Another longtime worship leader in the Nashville area, Paul Brown, died Oct. 9 at age 88.

Brown, a native of Murfreesboro, Tenn., led singing for Churches of Christ for 70 years — with congregations including the West End Church of Christ in Nashville, the Fourth Avenue Church of Christ in Franklin, Tenn., and most recently the Vultee Church of Christ in Nashville.

“He was a brilliant man,” said family friend Lynne Herndon, “and had such a wonderful voice.”



Brown

Writer, editor, Christian activist
Billie Silvey dies of cancer at 74

LOS ANGELES — Billie Wesley Silvey, writer, editor and Christian activist, died of cancer Sept. 20, one day before her 75th birthday.

Silvey was a Christian for over 60 years, a journalist for more than 50 years and a Los Angeles resident since 1965.

From an early age, she aspired to be a writer. Silvey attended West Texas State in Canyon, then went to Abilene Christian University from 1963 to 1965. There she met and married Frank Silvey and was editor of the campus newspaper, the *Optimist*, from 1964 to 1965. They moved to Los Angeles in 1965 to

attend Pepperdine University.

Associate editor of *20th (later 21st) Century Christian Magazine* for 24 years, she served as outreach minister for the Culver Palms Church of Christ, executive director of Culver Palms Life Skills Lab and case manager and grant writer for Westchester High School Healthy Start. She spoke for church groups across the nation.



Silvey

EXPANDED OBITUARY: www.christianchronicle.org

COACH: ‘God is blessing me,’ says church elder battling ALS

FROM PAGE 3

second for the 54-year-old Trimble since he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease after the former New York Yankees great who died from the condition. It’s an incurable, progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord.

About 6,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed each year with the condition, according to the ALS Association. Only half of those with the disease live three or more years after diagnosis. Twenty percent live five years or more and up to 10 percent will live more than 10 years.

Upon receiving the diagnosis, Trimble initially decided to retire, but he and his wife, Courtney, soon changed their minds.

“We kind of settled in on, as long as God is blessing me with this platform ... that probably that’s where we should be, while we can still be there,” Allan Trimble said. “I think the Lord is carrying me through this, along with my wife. I have a lot of great friends who help me. It will be interesting to see where it goes.”

‘THE LITTLE THINGS’ MEAN MORE

That humble, servant attitude was evident during Trimble’s days as a college football player at Northeastern State University, said Oklahoma Christian University President John deSteiguer, who lived in the same dorm as Trimble and engaged him in many a competitive ping-pong match.

Trimble was able to connect with a wide range of people on the NSU campus, deSteiguer said, and was “kind and spiritual and always had time for folks” — qualities that have served him well in his roles as a coach and elder.

“He loves his wife and his daughters (Tylar and Tori) and his church and his players and puts all of those people first, and he’s had this unbelievable success on the field,” deSteiguer said. “Al’s influence and



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JENKS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Allan Trimble talks with reporters before the unveiling of Allan Trimble Stadium.

impact on young people is pretty remarkable to behold. It’s obvious that he cares about them personally, spiritually and ... as a person. That draws people to him.”

Trimble said in September that he thought this season would be his last because of his diminished energy.

But one thing the disease hasn’t touched is his wry sense of humor, as evidenced by how he broke the news of his diagnosis to Wilburn during the summer of 2016. Wilburn said he was sitting on his front porch when he received the phone call.

“I’ve really done it up this time,” Trimble told Wilburn, who recounted the story with tears welling up in his eyes. “There was a little hint of humor in there. He has maintained that through all this.”

Because of his success, Trimble’s platform for influence has been outsized, but it’s even more so now, as he has continued coaching while battling ALS.

He’s juggled his duties as a coach and as an elder, with medical treatments designed to delay some of the effects of the disease.

Cutting back on his busy schedule

has proven to be a challenge.

“He doesn’t know how to say ‘no,’” Courtney Trimble said.

Since his diagnosis, Allan Trimble appreciates “the little things” more, particularly the relationships with players, friends and fellow Christians, he said. He has reminded himself to make an extra text or phone call, or to return an email to let those people know how important they are to him.

FAITH, FAMILY, FOOTBALL — IN THAT ORDER

Coaches often preach to players about dealing with adversity, but Trimble is delivering that sermon without having to say a word, said Jenks High School’s athletic director, Tony Dillingham.

“The kids know,” Dillingham said. “They love the man. They will give every last bit of effort that they have. That’s what we’ve always asked of them, but I think that there’s even more from their mindset than maybe there has been previously with what our typical demands are. There’s also this sense of pride because you’re playing for this guy.”

When Trimble went public with his ALS diagnosis in June 2016, Dillingham said Jenks’ administrators began discussing ways they could honor the Trojans’ coach.

They settled on renaming Jenks High School’s football stadium in Trimble’s honor, and in August, they officially changed the facility’s name from Hunter-Dwellely Field (its moniker since the late 1920s) to Allan Trimble Stadium.

During the renaming ceremony — held before the Trojans played in a preseason scrimmage — Jenks’ school superintendent, Stacy Butterfield, spoke of the lessons Trimble had imparted on players that have come through the program.

“He has changed lives of countless students through leading by example and not only telling them, but also showing them what it means to be humble and how to find fulfillment through serving others,” she said. “Even in the midst of his courageous fight with ALS, Allan has remained steadfastly committed to the things that matter most in his life — faith, family and football.”

And it’s in that order. Not long after he made his diagnosis public, members of Park Plaza joined with the Jenks community in conducting a prayer service for Trimble at the high school gym. Nearly 3,000 people attended.

Trimble spoke and told those gathered that, “Long before I’m a football coach, I’m a follower of Jesus.” He encouraged them to “just put God at the center of everything we do.”

MAKING BETTER PLAYERS, BETTER KIDS

ALS has given Trimble perspective, he said, that he might not otherwise have about faith, coaching and influence.

“I thought I maybe wanted to be a football coach someday, but, ultimately, I think God has kind of just called me into mentorship,” Trimble said. “That’s kind of where I’ve settled.”

“The Xs and Os have been kind of secondary. I know that’s easy to say, but, honestly, I think we’ve done our work mainly, hopefully, making better players and making better kids and that’s kind of how we’ve been rewarded with such good success.”

LEARN MORE about Coach Trimble’s journey living with ALS at www.trimblestrong.org.



deSteiguer



Wilburn

Milestones

Showcasing the moments of your life and the lives of loved ones.

Birthdays

100th: William David Vestal, Jr.
"Jack", Nov. 8, Iowa Park, Texas.

Anniversaries

Doyal and Ruth Lindsey **75 years**

Doyal and Ruth Lindsey, Springfield, Mo., are celebrating their 75th wedding anniversary. They were married on Nov. 21, 1942, and currently attend the Sunset Church of Christ. Their faith in God and Christian life has influenced many people.



Doyal "Spike", an X-ray technician for over 50 years, retired from St. John's Hospital in 2001 at the age of 79. Ruth retired from French's in 1986. They love visits from their children and grandchildren and attend many of their grandchildren's activities. Doyal likes to work in the yard; Ruth loves writing, sewing and jigsaw puzzles.

God bless you and congratulations, Doyal and Ruth Lindsey!

64th: Jim and Ann Rogers, Oct. 10, Edmond, Okla.

Memorials

Shirley Birdsall Alexander **1932-2017**

Shirley Birdsall Alexander, 84, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Sept. 11, 2017. She was born Nov. 16, 1932, in Wichita Falls, Texas, to Nova Graham and Gilbert Alton Birdsall. Shirley grew up in Texas and Louisiana and graduated from Kenner High School in Kenner, La., in 1950. She earned her undergraduate degree from Harding

College in Searcy, Ark., in 1954. After graduating from Harding, Shirley worked as a teacher at Great Lakes Christian College in Beamsville, Canada, from 1955 to 1957. She went on to attain her Master of Library Science from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La., in 1959. After graduation, Shirley worked in the Louisiana State University Law Library from 1959 to 1962 and went on to be the library director at the Harding College Library from 1962 to 1975.

On July 4, 1975, Shirley married Cecil B. Alexander and moved to Rochester, Mich., where she helped Cecil rear his two children, Lisa and Mark Alexander. She continued her career as a librarian, working in the documents library at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., from 1978 to 1979 before going to work as a cataloger and library director at Michigan Christian College in 1980, where she remained until 1986. Shirley and Cecil moved to Abilene, Texas, in 1986, and Shirley began working as a cataloger in the documents library at Abilene Christian University, where she remained until her retirement in 1994. She was a member of the American Library Association. Shirley lived in Abilene until 2015, at which time she moved to New Braunfels, Texas, to be near family.

Shirley's love of learning continued throughout her life. She was an avid reader of all genres. In addition to books, she also subscribed to numerous publications and would frequently share articles of interest from these with others. Shirley was also passionate about genealogy and spent many years researching family history. In addition to reading and genealogy, Shirley loved to travel. She visited many places both in the United States and abroad. She had an adventuresome spirit and was never afraid to set out on trips alone. She never met a stranger. Shirley made many friends over the years and maintained those relationships throughout her life. She was a very loyal and faithful friend who cared deeply about others. She enjoyed time spent with family over the holidays and other special occasions. Her nieces referred to her affection-



ately as "Tia." She will be greatly missed by all who were blessed to know her.

Shirley is survived by Lisa Alexander of Searcy, Ark., and Mark Alexander of Abilene, Texas; brother, Graham (Sue) Birdsall of New Braunfels, Texas; nieces, Julie (Trey) Quigley of New Braunfels, Texas, and Amy (Tim) Leach of Midland, Texas; great-nephews, Josh (Aurora) Quigley of Littleton, Colo., Taylor Quigley of Dallas, Texas, William (Kimberly) Leach of Dallas, Texas, and Patrick (Courtney) Leach of Fort Worth, Texas. She was preceded in death by her husband, Cecil B. Alexander, and her parents, Nova Graham and Gilbert Alton Birdsall. The family would like to extend their deep appreciation for her loving and compassionate caregiver, Bianca Salazar, as well as Hope Hospice of New Braunfels, Texas. Memorials may be made to Hope Hospice, 611 N Walnut Ave, New Braunfels, TX 78130 (www.hopehospice.net), or to World Christian Broadcasting, 605 Bradley Ct, Franklin, TN 37067 (www.worldchristian.org).

James Leonard Jackson **1932-2017**

Dr. James Leonard Jackson passed away Sept. 16, 2017, and is survived by his wife, Pat Carter Jackson, of Nashville (married 57 years); son, Jon (Sloan) Jackson; daughter, Juli (Alan) Beck; and five grandchildren.

In 1950 he graduated valedictorian of Farmersville, Texas, High School. He earned a B.S. from Abilene Christian College ('54), an M.Mus. from University of North Texas ('60) and a D.Mus. from University of Oklahoma ('70).

James served as choral director in public and private schools in Texas. He taught music classes at the University of Oklahoma, Christian College of the Southwest, and Community College. For the last 17 years of his teaching career he served as professor of music and chairman of the Department of Music at Lipscomb University.



From 1955-57 he served in the U.S. Army in France. Beginning in 1948, he served churches of Christ as minister of music, youth minister, education minister, deacon, and elder. He organized and directed choral groups for over sixty years.

Luther M. Upton **1929-2017**

Luther M. Upton was born on April 28, 1929, in Wynnewood, Okla., and died on June 6, 2017, in Tulsa. Luther was the ninth of 10 children and described himself as the last of the Oklahoma pioneers growing up on his family's farm near Checotah.

He was the first in his family to graduate from college - from Oklahoma A&M (now OSU). Soon after this he was stationed in San Antonio, Texas, while in the Air Force. On the same Sunday that he was baptized, he met Barbara at church. They both decided to study at Freed-Hardeman College, where Luther concentrated on taking classes in Bible and religion. He soon began preaching part time at area churches. Luther and Barbara were married in 1955.

Luther then devoted his life to full-time ministry. He began preaching for churches in Rogers Springs, Tenn., Shidler, Okla., and Falfurrias, Texas. About this time, their only daughter Dena was born. Luther preached for congregations in Portland and Bishop, Texas, and then spent several years in the Kansas City area. He worked with the Raytown Church of Christ and Kensington Park Church of Christ before returning to Oklahoma. After preaching in McAlester, Okla., Luther left full-time paid ministry in 1979, but never slowed down in his work for the Lord. He spent his retirement years as church deacon, elder, Bible class teacher, and personal evangelist. He passionately loved the Lord as was devoted to his family.

He leaves behind his wife Barbara, daughter Dena, son-in-law Ted, granddaughter Elisabeth, and grandson Lukas (see Sept. 2016 issue of *The Christian Chronicle* article "Young Man with Autism has a Heart for the Homeless"). He also leaves behind his brother James and other extended family, including three special nieces who supported him in his final days: Tammy, Marla, and Linda. Memorial services were held at Park Plaza Church of Christ where Luther was a beloved member. Mitch Wilburn, minister, and Marvin Phillips, Luther's brother-in-law, conducted the service to honor the life of this faithful servant of the Lord.



NEWSMAKERS



JEFF MONTGOMERY

Harding University President Bruce McLarty, left, visits with Don Meredith, who is retiring after 49 years of service.

RETIRED: Don Meredith, after 49 years of service as head librarian and professor at Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn. The HST library is one of the premier Southern theological libraries, and under his leadership it has expanded to 147,000 volumes, added nearly 50 percent to its size since 2006 and entered the modern world of digital media.

ACCEPTED: A. deSteiguer, 2017 alumnus of Oklahoma



deSteiguer

Christian University, into the prestigious Master of Science in Global Mental Health program, jointly run by King's College and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



McCarthy

APPOINTED: Katie Beth McCarthy, as executive director of the Alabama Network of Children's Advocacy Centers. McCarthy earned her law degree at

Faulkner University after receiving her master's in counseling and bachelor's in communication from Freed-Hardeman University.

NEW PULPIT MINISTERS: Ralph Bryant, Lake Havasu Church of Christ in Arizona. Andrew Hill, Westside Church of Christ in Bakersfield, Calif.

Pulpit Minister

The **Pearsall Church of Christ in Pearsall, Texas**, is seeking a pulpit minister. Parsonage is available and salary is negotiable. If interested, please contact:

Derrick Byrd
(830)267-1022
derrick.byrd@devineisd.org

To learn more about our congregation:
www.pearsallchurchofchrist.org



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Looking for an
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The Bell Fork Road Church of Christ is searching for an energetic evangelist minister to serve full time. Our desire is for a family man with a love of GOD's word and people and also able to work well with a versatile congregation of all races and ages.

Church of Christ
Attn: Chris Kelsey, chairman
321 Bell Fork Rd
Jacksonville, NC 28540
sylvialeatherwood@gmail.com
(910) 346-6107

University City Church of Christ Seeks Evangelist

The University City Church of Christ in Gainesville, Fla., is seeking a dynamic and passionate evangelist to be part of our college, youth, and recovery ministry team.

We are an established, diverse, and active 350-member congregation with one of the top college ministries in the country, a K-4th grade "Faith City" educational program, an active middle school/high school youth ministry, an established Lads-to-Leaders program, and a substance abuse recovery ministry. We are actively involved in two foreign missions, a prison ministry, and other efforts seeking to serve the spiritual and physical needs in our community.

The evangelist/minister we seek should be able to effectively share God's Word from the pulpit, in the classroom, and in more personal settings. He will be a well-versed student of the Bible and should be able to interact on a personal level with all segments of the congregation and community.

UCCC Minister Search Committee, UCCSearch@gmail.com



Malibu, California

Faculty Positions for 2018–2019

Seaver College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences of Pepperdine University invites applications for tenure-track or visiting positions that may be available for the 2018–2019 academic year.

All successful candidates will have a PhD or equivalent, a teaching philosophy, research agenda, and an active commitment to the University's Christian mission.

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Finance	Public Speaking & Rhetorical Analysis	Studio Art-Painting & Drawing
		Vocal Studies & Director of Opera

For comprehensive descriptions of the positions and to apply visit:
seaver.pepperdine.edu/about/administration/dean/facultyemployment/

National Capital Area Church Seeks Preaching Minister

The Arlington Church of Christ in Arlington, Virginia, is searching for a preaching minister after our pulpit minister retired. Our membership reflects the diverse educational, linguistic and racial profile of the national capital area, an especially attractive place to live. We are looking for someone who (with God's help) will preach regularly in English, provide leadership for our ministry team, and help our congregation move into the next stage of its life. The man we select will probably have advanced university training in a relevant field and years of experience in full-time preaching.

Compensation, commensurate with qualifications, is competitive and includes a ministry fund and a housing allowance. **Before Nov. 15, 2017**, please send (by email) a resume and a digital copy or an on-line link to a video or audio recording of one or more of your sermons. You can learn more about us at: www.arlingtonfamily.org.

Arlington Church of Christ, Attn: Dennis Hlasta
(703) 528-0535, dhlasta@arlingtonfamily.org

EDITORIAL

No more tearing down

Two months ago we ran a Views column by Jerrie Barber, who has preached the Gospel for 56 years. He talked about what constitutes a “sound” congregation and pointed out that the church in ancient Corinth, which received two letters from the apostle Paul, was nowhere close to “sound” as most of us would define it.

(If you missed it, please give it a read on our redesigned, easy-to-use website. Scroll down to “Views” at www.christianchronicle.org and check out our exclusive videos and more. And thanks for allowing us that shameless plug!)

We got a lot of great feedback to Barber’s piece from our readers, including Carl Royster of 21st Century Christian. He serves as system administrator and data compiler for the directory “Churches of Christ in the United States.” (We call him the “deacon of the count” for the whole country.)

Royster gave us permission to share his response. Much of what he says here speaks to our mission at *The Christian Chronicle* as well:

“I do love this column! What is really sad, however, is the fact that it rings so true.

“I have spent many years collecting and reporting data through the ‘Churches of Christ in the United States’ directory. The biggest misnomer that I have encountered so many times is that the directory is some kind of list of “officially approved congregations,” even though I have consistently stated that it is nothing of the sort.

“I cannot even begin to count the number of times I have heard things like, ‘They’re not a Church of Christ because ...’ or ‘We don’t want to be in your directory because you have *that* congregation in there.’ Of course, what they often don’t realize is that someone else from another church is saying the same thing about them!

“Some brothers and sisters are looking at the directory as taking — or wanting it to take — a doctrinal position. ... (The directory) is a historical, statistical collection of data for a specific religious body — not a list based on doctrinal views.

“I have even heard reports of some going overseas to undermine the efforts of other Churches of Christ that are taking care of widows and orphans and training church leaders and preachers, all because of the differences in doctrinal beliefs.

“I cannot help but wonder what things could be like if just half the energy used to point fingers and tear down others was used instead to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

“Not one of us is perfect. No congregation has everything right. Yet, we are all loved equally by a gracious and caring Father.

“Should we not strive to show the same kind of love to each other?”



ZAHIA MENDEZ

‘We live because of God’ — a backyard Bible study

Outside their Texas home, the Mendez family listens to God’s Word. Zahia Mendez, a fifth grader from the Western Heights Bilingual Church of Christ in Dallas, submitted this photo in the visual art category for this year’s North Texas Leadership Training for Christ conference. “We live because of God,” she wrote, citing words from Acts 17:28. “And we should seek him and spread his words to let them know that we are his offspring.”

Avoid those who degrade ‘the other side’

Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent.

— Proverbs 11:12, English Standard Version

We have a problem communicating with people on the other side of the issue — whatever that issue may be.

Rather than listening and responding politely, people call names, degrade others, belittle their neighbors — or worse. Before we can discuss our differences, we must first address how we are to treat one another.

We are heavily influenced by the voices with which we choose to surround ourselves. This is not limited to our group of friends. The voices include radio, TV and social media.

There are some very unhealthy voices in our society, and if we read or listen to them on a regular basis, then it is very likely we will adopt their unhealthy ways.

Conservative or liberal, Democrat or Republican, we should seek to listen only to people of character. We should avoid those who degrade other human beings. We should not listen to voices of anger that seek our attention, hoping to spread that anger. Tune out any voice disrespectful to human beings created in God’s image.

Instead, we should surround ourselves with people who display the fruit of the Spirit — “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

Character matters, and it is important that we find trustworthy voices who treat other human beings with dignity and respect — people who are willing to listen and learn.

In so doing, we imitate what we digest and begin to treat our neighbors as God intends.

In the Word



Scott Elliott

SCOTT ELLIOTT ministers for the La Grange Church of Christ in Texas.

After the flood, cups of cold water

'WE CAN'T GIVE OUT ENOUGH supplies to catch up with God's blessings,' says relief worker serving in south Texas.

"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."
— Matthew 10:42, New King James Version

LEAGUE CITY, Texas

How do you prepare for a disaster? Having no control of a storm is very daunting. The psychological impact alone is almost more than a person can bear.

Views



Jane Smith

For that reason, Christians should be ready to come in and hold up those who are devastated and lost.

My dad, J. Bridges, believed this. He once told me that Christians should be the first on the scene of a disaster and the last ones to leave.

I'm a volunteer with Disaster Assistance CoC, an outreach mission of Churches of Christ that has been on the scene of more than 55 disasters across the U.S. We're working with the League City Church of Christ in Texas, between Houston and Galveston, in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. So far our truck is the only one on the scene handing out food and water, day after day.

Here, I've encountered so many souls who have touched my life with their stories of survival and inspired me with their response to our efforts:

- In the flood-ravaged town of Dickinson, Texas, I met Tom. He told me he how he inflated a small children's swimming pool and used it as a life raft, placing his two grandchildren in the pool and walking next to it, out of his house, into neck-deep water. He spent an hour and 45 minutes walking, swimming and wading to get his grandkids to safety. He did not want the water or food I offered him. He asked me to give it to his neighbors because he



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JANE SMITH

After Hurricane Harvey, a garage door in flood-ravaged Texas proclaims the Gospel.

already had been blessed beyond measure.

- "My grandkids are safe," he said.
- I was blessed to meet a 6-year-old girl whose family lost all their belongings. I asked her what she wanted. She wanted her books. All of hers had gotten wet. Needless to say, she now has all the books she can read.
- I met a lady named Ruth who refused our relief supplies. Like Tom, she wanted her neighbors to have her part.
- "I only got about two feet of

water," Ruth said. "They got four feet." I try to go by every other day and check on Ruth.

- I met a man named Harvey Smith who is a veteran. He wanted me to give supplies to his neighbors. He said, 'We will be fine.' I took his wife a Crock-Pot. It's new, and it's clean. She cried.
- Another lady was living in a camper in her driveway. We offered her supplies, and she did finally take a Gatorade. She mentioned how hot it was in the camper, so I took her a toaster oven so she would not have

to use the camper oven. She was amazed that it was new and free.

- One day my new friend, Rachel from Indiana, and I stopped on the street and asked a lady if her family needed water. We learned that she had two flooded homes — hers and her son's.

She asked, "What kind of church is a Church of Christ?" I told her we are a New Testament, Gospel-based church. Her son was amazed that we were not pushing our faith on them, but that we gave them food and water and asked nothing in return. I told him that we try to show the mind of Christ to everyone we meet. The son talked for 30 minutes. We listened.

- The contractors working to rebuild homes have been awesome. When we visit, they're quick to tell us that they're not the home owners. Nonetheless, we offer them water, food, masks and paper towels. I have never been told "God bless you" so much in my life.

I am especially thankful for all of the volunteers that come our way. Understandably so, many have had to return to their homes. More volunteers are needed and will be for a long time.

This work cannot go on without volunteers — and a lot of prayers.

So many blessings come to us as relief workers. We can't give out enough supplies to catch up with God's blessings.

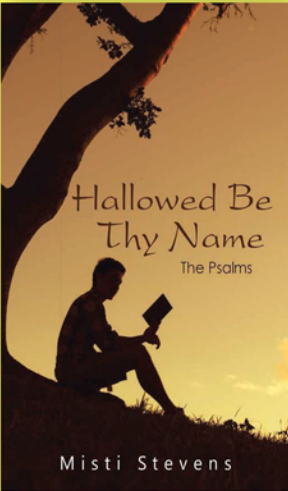
Just today, a contractor named Sonny Wilson gave me cash to buy sheetrock for an elderly woman. I asked him if there was anything else he and his crew needed.

"Just a cup of water," he said.

This time I cried.

JANE SMITH is a member of the Church of Christ of Floresville in Texas, southeast of San Antonio. She volunteers with Disaster Assistance CoC, supported by board members and elders of the Lake Jackson Church of Christ in Texas. Find links to the ministry and other church-supported nonprofits responding to disasters at www.christianchronicle.org.

Hallowed Be Thy Name: The Psalms



In *Hallowed Be Thy Name: The Psalms*, Misti Stevens offers a faithful translation and brief commentary of the book of Psalms, where God's names appear over 1,200 times in distinct forms and meanings—the God of Jacob, Adonai, Yahweh, Elohim, the Mighty God, the Great I AM, and more. Through a simple presentation of the King James Version text with the meanings of names substituted in, you will be given a rich, thoughtful look into who God was to the psalmists and who He is to us. It is hoped this presentation can help you forge a closer relationship with your Father in heaven.

*We can hardly say we know someone
if we don't know them by name.*

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Weldon Langfield

"I was single for 12 miserable years because the preacher said I couldn't marry. He was having an affair the whole time."
- Name withheld

"The book was eye opening to other views of MDR which are often explained away by many. I appreciate the research and sincere desire for truth presented by the author."
- Name withheld

"You have done a really good job of placing before the reader a wide, well-documented... mass of material."
- James Woodroof, former minister, College Church of Christ, Searcy Arkansas, author, *The Divorce Dilemma*

"This is the best book ever written on the issue... You closed all loopholes."
--Charles Hodge, author, *On the Banks of Onion Creek*

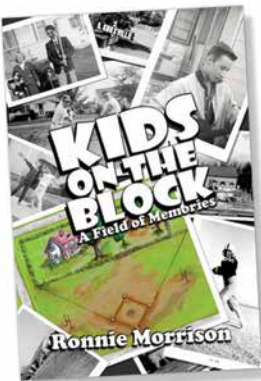
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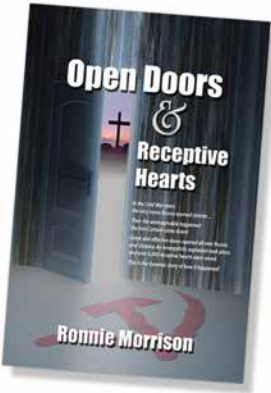
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— PRINT AND DIGITAL EDITIONS AVAILABLE ON AMAZON —

Because creation matters to God, it should matter to us, authors write

Christians often are reluctant to talk about climate change, even as we are reminded daily of the groaning of creation.

Scripture, however, is clear about our accountability. Whether or not we believe global warming is real, it is vital for us to be aware of the effect we have on this earth.

“God created the world as a temple in which to dwell, a place where God and humanity would enjoy each other, delight in the wonder of the cosmos, care for it, and rest within it,” write the authors of **“Embracing Creation: God’s Forgotten Mission.”**

Each of the three authors — John Mark Hicks, Bobby Valentine and Mark Wilson — has training in theology, and Wilson has 36 years of experience in conservation, retiring from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2012. Hicks teaches theology at Lipscomb University, and Valentine is a former minister for the Palo Verde Church of Christ in Tucson, Ariz.

The authors have a deep love for God and his Word — and want us to take seriously our task of caring for creation as God intended.

Our mission is more than saving souls, the authors write, and our goal is more than getting to heaven. Human beings have an important role in the vast order of creation — one that dates back to the Bible’s first words in the book of Genesis.

Though creation is broken, it is still good, they remind us. We find beauty and experience God in sunsets and majestic views. As part of creation ourselves, we also yearn for redemption. The authors encourage us with reminders of how “God communes with us and confirms our hope” through baptism, the Lord’s Supper and the worship assembly.

The book is written in two parts: “The Biblical Narrative” and “Living the Narrative.” At the end of each chapter are a helpful conclusion, bullet points and questions for further discussion, making this book a good candidate for small-group Bible studies.

The authors walk us through Genesis 1,

creation care and redemption in Israel and then to the promises of Abraham, ultimately fulfilled in the new creation found through Jesus.

One of the main premises is that “creation is the object of God’s redemption through the resurrection of Jesus,” they write. God is creating the new heaven and earth as “an inheritance for redeemed humanity.” The authors remind us that God’s promise to “make all things new” in Revelation 21 means restoration and renewal — when God will once again dwell with humanity.

What does this mean for us now?

The authors drive home that creation belongs to God. We are invited to participate as partners and stewards. Because creation matters to God, it should matter to us, and that is displayed in how we take care of it. As the authors write, “Partnering with God toward the fulfillment of the mission of God is ministry in the Kingdom of God.”

The authors tell us that cultural and religious misconceptions about the changing climate often keep us from speaking up about it. At the end of the book, they offer suggestions and resources on how we may more actively care for creation.

As we partner with God in these efforts, we can “advocate for proper care of God’s creation, help where we can, and in so doing serve as witnesses to good stewardship for the earth God loves,” they claim.

I am thankful for this book and its charge to remember our responsibility for creation.

I believe that many of us *think* we care, but this book challenged me to step further into loving God’s good work the way he has called us to. I highly recommend “Embracing

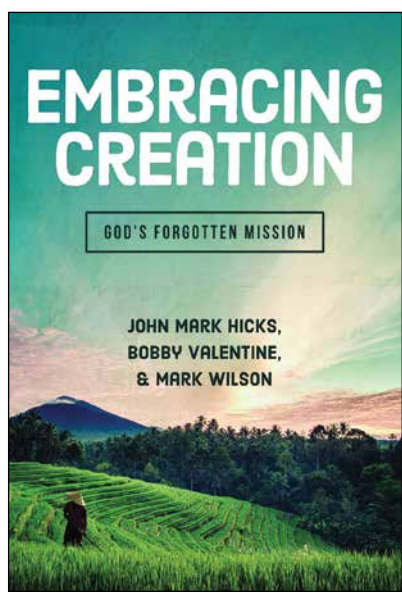
Creation” for all believers. Read and be spurred to action as we wait for healing and renewal.

KATHERINE GOULD is an educator who works with English as a Second Language students in Lewisville, Texas. A graduate of Lubbock Christian University and Abilene Christian University’s Graduate School of Theology, she has served as a missionary in China and is involved in youth and worship ministry with the Garden Ridge Church of Christ in Lewisville.

In Print



Katherine Gould



John Mark Hicks, Bobby Valentine and Mark Wilson. **“Embracing Creation: God’s Fogotten Mission.”** Abilene, Texas. ACU Press, 2016. 216 pages. \$14.99.

Jones discusses divorce and remarriage with objectivity

In **“Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage: Seen Through the Character of God and the Mind of Jesus”** Jerry Jones — a longtime minister for Churches of Christ and cofounder with his wife, Lynn, of Marriage Matters — carefully works through the relevant biblical texts with an obvious commitment to objectivity and shows us his research.

He points out the problems of some of the traditional ways of reading the texts. He also suggests an alternative paradigm through which to view the subject — reading the New Testament through the eyes and heart of God and Christ.

The book has three principal sections: the study of 1 Corinthians 7, a study of the Gospel passages and a conclusion. The in-depth academic study of 1 Corinthians is understandable, even for those who have not studied the text so deeply. Jones considers the occasional and situational nature of the Corinthian teaching as Paul’s response to a question from the Corinthians.

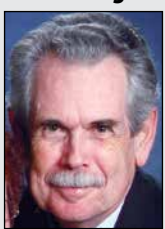
The comparative study of the Gospel texts is thorough — at times exhaustive — with multiple references to Old Testament backgrounds. Jones takes into account historical, cultural, linguistic and grammatical factors.

One could wish for more detail in the brief conclusion, but Jones has cast enough doubt on the traditional understandings of 1 Corinthians 7 and the Gospel texts to cause the reader to want to seek an alternative.

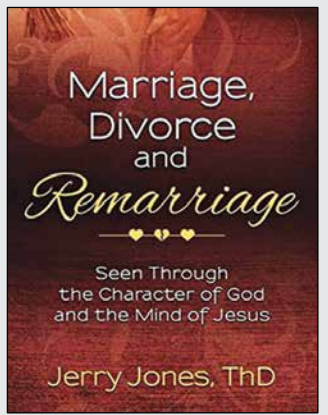
That alternative, calling us to God’s nature, character, desire and purpose, gives a fresh perspective — not only to the texts related to the study, but to many other texts where we struggle with literal readings when God is trying to show us something more profound, something with more impact and more hope for changing lives.

BOB YOUNG has preached for Churches of Christ for 50 years, including the Main and Oklahoma Church of Christ in McAlester, Okla. He works with congregations in Latin America and Hispanic churches in the U.S. He also preaches and teaches in English-speaking churches.

What we're reading



Bob Young



Jerry Jones. **Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage: Seen Through the Character of God and the Mind of Jesus.** Joplin, Mo., College Press, 2016. 251 pages

Minister Needed

Is there a congregation ready to send a minister to work in south-central PA? Small church needs a sponsored worker for a growing community.

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Youth and Family Minister

The Weber Road Church of Christ, Corpus Christi, Texas, is seeking a Youth and Family Minister. Sunday attendance of 280 includes 60 children in an active youth program. Seeking a man with degree in Bible or Ministry and three to five years experience.

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Malden Church of Christ in Missouri seeks a full-time minister. Rural congregation, 50-60 faithful members, led by the Lord and two elders. Compensation commensurate with qualifications and experience. Contact:

Rod Dill at (573) 281-8625
or
Jerry Reaves at (573) 276-8071

Minister Search

The Battle Mountain Church of Christ in Nevada is currently in search of a minister willing to support their efforts in spreading the gospel to rural Nevada. Applicants must be Biblically grounded, display enthusiastic Christian leadership, and be willing to accept the challenges that come with a small congregation. The Battle Mountain congregation has been worshipping together for over 35 years and is comprised of roughly 20 members.

For more information:
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The senior vice president will be instrumental in developing and overseeing a comprehensive enrollment management plan, as well as developing and managing the implementation and execution of an integrated marketing and recruitment plan. To learn more or to apply for this position, visit lipscomb.edu/hr.

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Oct. 22 Together With Love Area Worship. Red Lion Hotel on Janzten Beach, Portland, Ore. (503) 667-0773.

Oct. 29-Nov. 1 52nd Pan American Lectureship. Managua, Nicaragua. Sponsored by Jackson Street Church of Christ. (800) 533-7660. lectureship.org.

Nov. 3-5 100th Anniversary and Homecoming. Casa Grande Church of Christ. Casa Grande, Arizona. (520) 836-6282. churchofchrist-cg-az.com.

Nov. 4-8 Michigan Renewal Lectureship. Waterford Church of Christ, Waterford, Michigan. Kerry Williams. kww71@yahoo.com. (248) 674-1553. waterfordcoc.org.

Nov. 8-12 Acappella Company Recordings. Ardmore, Oklahoma. tammy@acappella.com. (831) 332-8595. praiseandharmony.com.

Nov. 9-12 North Carolina State Lectureship. Highpoint, North Carolina. Hosted by Kivett Drive Church of Christ. (336) 883-2835. ncstatelectureship.com.

Nov. 26 National Racial Unity Day. Churches of Christ. David Duncan, dduncan@mcoc.org (713) 464-0271 or Gary Smith, gsmith@fwcoc.org.

Nov. 30 Festival of Trees Gala. Christian Care Senior Living Communities, Dallas, Texas. Donna Taylor (972) 686-2401. advancement@ccinc.net. christiancarecenters.org/events.

Jan. 2-5 National Conference on Youth Ministries. Atlanta, Georgia. ncymbboard@googlegroups.com, ncym.org.

Jan. 12-13 Medical Missions Seminar. International Health Care Foundation, Fort Worth, Texas. Hosted by IHCF African Christian Hospitals. (501) 268-9511. fleta.mooney@ihcf.org or ihcf.net.

Jan. 12-14 Winterfest 2018. Arlington, Texas. Arlington Convention Center. Dudley Chancey, dudleychancey@oc.edu or winterfest.org.

Jan. 19-20 Church Involvement Conference and Involvement Ministry Training. Athens, Tenn., Church of Christ. travisirwin@att.net. churchinvolvement.com.

FULL CALENDAR: www.christianchronicle.org
Contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle to include your event on the calendar for a nominal fee.



Engineering Dean

Lipscomb University in Nashville invites nominations and applications for Dean of the Raymond B. Jones College of Engineering to begin Fall 2018. A doctorate in an engineering discipline as well as academic experience is required; industrial and administrative experience preferred. The candidate should be an active member of the churches of Christ.

Engineering has 200 undergraduates in three ABET-accredited degrees – civil, mechanical, and electrical and computer engineering. The college has 11 full-time faculty with six staff, and is home to the Peugeot Center for Engineering Service in Developing Communities. Housed in the new Fields Engineering Center, the college has collaborative learning spaces, teaching laboratories, faculty offices, conference rooms, an Innovation Lab, and a machine shop. Engineering is one of ten colleges at Lipscomb University, a private Christian R3 Research University located in the Green Hills area of Nashville. Established in 1891, Lipscomb is a thriving academic community offering 175 fields of undergraduate study, master’s and doctorate programs to 4,600 full-time and part-time students. See posting for more information:

<https://lipscomb.peopleadmin.com/postings/2037>

Greg Nordstrom, Ph.D., Chair of Search Committee
Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering
One University Park Drive, Nashville, TN 37204
greg.nordstrom@lipscomb.edu

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The model candidate will exude a collaborative, positive and “team” attitude in his/her leadership style and be a faithful member of the church of Christ. Finally, the candidate will enthusiastically embrace and support the mission of Mount Dora Christian Academy and Children’s Home as outlined in the Statement of Faith and Community Covenant.

Dr. James E. Moore, President
301 13th Ave
Mount Dora, FL 32757
Office: (352) 383-2155
james.moore@MDCAcademy.org

see online listing for more details



Tenure-Track Faculty Position Available Fall 2018

Faulkner University’s Thomas Goode Jones School of Law is seeking well-qualified applicants for a tenure-track faculty position commencing August 1, 2018. We are particularly interested in candidates with academic interest in the fields of Criminal Law, Evidence and Business Organizations. Candidates must possess a strong academic background and demonstrate potential for excellence in legal scholarship and teaching. Faulkner University is a Christian university and gives preference in hiring qualified candidates who are members of the churches of Christ. Additionally, the law school is actively recruiting candidates who would add to the racial and gender diversity of the faculty. This is a full-time, 10-month, academic appointment.

Additional details regarding this position, including application requirements, are available on Faulkner’s website:

<https://www.faulkner.edu/about-faulkner/human-resources/current-openings/>

Enriching the lives of Christian seniors

SAMPLE ARTICLE

Starting Over
After the Death of a Long-Term Spouse

by VIRGIL FRY

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be.
The last of life,
for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand,
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half.
Trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

Robert Browning's words resonate with those who choose a long-term marriage commitment. Many of us entered our marriages with the firmly planted

ideal that this is the partner we would be with for our entire lives.

We managed through the newlywed years. We struggled in the middle years. We balanced careers, children, uncertain finances, setbacks and heartaches. In our hearts and minds, the future pointed toward togetherness. Old age would be the "golden years"—special moments when schedules slacken, love for each other blossoms in new ways and, in an ever-changing world, we would have each other...

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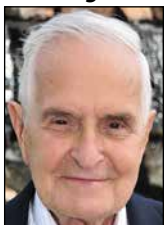


Faith, family, country and heavenly citizenship: It's time to give thanks

Although our nation has its problems and is drifting away from the great Christian principles that marked its beginning, this country still blesses its citizens with freedom to worship and serve God.

That's why, as we approach our national Thanksgiving holiday, I am thankful to have been born in the United States — where I have enjoyed freedoms and opportunities few nations offer.

Insight



Bailey McBride

In this great country it is still possible for people to lift themselves up by their boot straps. Hard work and persistence allow people to live comfortable lives. This nation supports people with disabilities, creating a place where they can live useful, meaningful lives.

Like most other Americans, I have much to be thankful for. Above all else, I am thankful to be a child of God and therefore led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:13-16).

I was blessed to have a mother of great faith who early in my life introduced me to God and nurtured my spiritual development throughout my teenage years.

I am thankful that I have always had a great many friends who encouraged living fully as a child of God. Stafford North was my speech teacher in college and a colleague in teaching for 50 years. His faith and dedication to God have been an inspiration throughout my adult life. He still serves as an elder and promotes the good works of churches everywhere.

I am thankful that the Danube Church of Christ in Vienna, Austria, welcomed me for 14 weeks in 2016 where I had a chance to know other believers and learn their stories. The Haskews, the Koois and the Rybinskis were gracious and thoughtful at a time when I was struggling to find a way to live and serve God. Their love was unqualified and gave me strength and vision for a new life.

I am thankful for *The Christian Chronicle*. When I was in my 20s and 30s, it was a way of knowing about the church in other places, especially outside the U.S.

After 1981, the *Chronicle* became a part of my identity. The opportunity to write "Insight" for all these years has blessed me. It has kept me thinking about life and looking for the best ways to draw people closer to God.

I'm thankful for the thousands of believers who partner with us to make this ministry work — to our trustees, our donors, our advertisers and all of our readers. You make it possible for this publication to find and tell the great stories of our congregations and church members.

I am thankful for the church where I have worshipped for 51 years. It has been a force for good in Oklahoma and throughout the world. It has strong leadership devoted to teaching God's Word and encouraging spiritual growth. Its leaders have been willing to try new approaches to better serve the needs of the community. The church has strong programs for women and encourages them to serve. Its mission outreach has grown year by year. The 2017 special missions contribution raised more than \$800,000 in addition to the funds for missions in the regular budget. The church has blessed me.

Of course I am thankful for my precious family. My three children married great people; my eight grandchildren are full of life and making their way. My five great-grandchildren are sweet and cuddly.

Since the birth of my first child in 1961, family has been the greatest blessing of life. As the family grew, I used to worry about being able to love so many different folks. But God gives us a heart that expands its capacity to love as we use it.

In November we are reminded to be thankful. But in every day of life, we should count our blessings and give thanks to God for his abiding love and care for every aspect of our lives.

CONTACT: bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org



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Christian news: A mountaintop experience

The majestic Rocky Mountains near Colorado Springs, Colo., make the perfect backdrop for an afternoon of faith-based journalism, courtesy of *The Christian Chronicle*. Send us your favorite photos of *Chronicle* reading — wherever you roam. Email images to erik@christianchronicle.org and look for them here.

TO OUR READERS

Can we agree to disagree?

I read the *Chronicle*, but I don't always like what I read," a brother in Christ once told me during a visit to Nashville, Tenn. "Brother, that makes two of us," I replied.

It's true. I don't agree with every person we quote in these pages. Frankly, the ideas expressed here bother me sometimes. They bother me enough to make me think, to dust off my Bible and prayerfully ponder what it says, to ask for God's wisdom and discernment.

We try our best to remain true to the vision of our founder, Olan Hicks, who wrote 74 years ago that *The Christian Chronicle* "is to be built on character. It means to stand for right

and truth, for fairness and impartiality, for zeal according to knowledge. It is a newspaper and is to be conducted on the principles of news reporting."

As we report, we strive to inform, not to endorse. It saddens me when a reader angrily declares they are withdrawing support from us because we gave ink to a person or an idea they consider doctrinally unsound or because of a viewpoint that made them uncomfortable.

Truth is, I hear far more praise than criticism for what we do. The No. 1 compliment we get is that we merely report without condemning, without telling our readers what to think.

My favorite readers are the ones who tell me, "I didn't agree with that story, but I thank you for telling it."

That's what keeps me going.

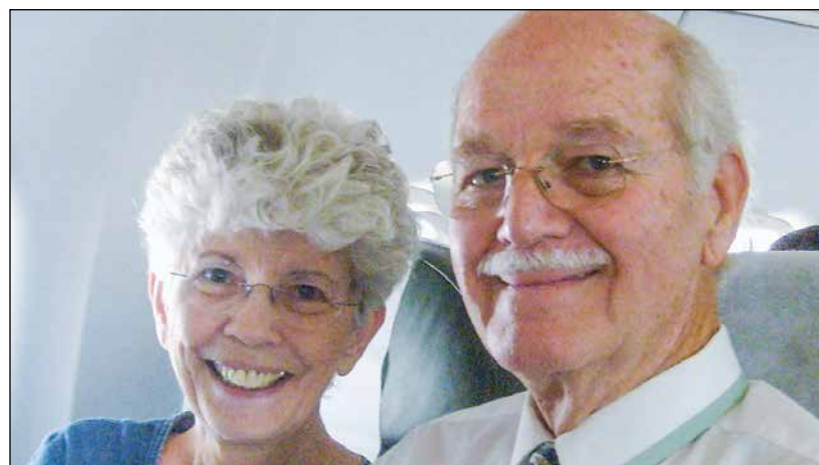
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Philip and Patricia Slate

Did you know that 111 donors (individuals, couples and families) have contributed to *The Christian Chronicle* for 20 consecutive years — or more?

Philip and Patricia Slate are among them.

The couple of 60 years met on a blind date. Patricia (Pat) later quoted the book of Ruth at their wedding, saying, "Where thou goest I will go." Little did she know that meant Asia, South America, Africa and Europe.

Philip Slate began preaching at age 16. The Tennessee native attended Lipscomb University, where he found his first copy of the *Chronicle* lying on a table in the student center. The newspaper, along with *The California Christian*, influenced his decision to work wherever the Lord needed him.

He married Pat shortly after graduating in the spring of 1957. They began a lifelong partnership of sharing the Good News. They taught Bible classes in North Carolina — during the second week of their honeymoon.

"We did expect to do church work in an area that was not saturated," Pat Slate said. "We talked about that before we married, but we were thinking more

domestically, like the Northeast."

Instead, the pair served for 10 years in the British Isles, where they helped plant the Wembley Church of Christ. They spent seven years in London and three at Oxford University, where Philip Slate studied while the couple worked with a small church.

During their time in Europe, "I used the *Chronicle* first to inform me about what's going on in the brotherhood at large," Philip Slate said. He and his wife continued to use it — through six decades of teaching, preaching and evaluating missions in 40 nations.

"Peter said, 'Love the brotherhood,' and I feel that we need to know what's involved in the brotherhood," Philip Slate said. "So it's been my chief means of knowing what's going on in the world. I have used stories from *The Christian Chronicle* in my sermons and classes to try to broaden other people's views of the church. I think it's good for people to know they're part of a worldwide brotherhood."

The Slates worship with the Germantown Church of Christ in Tennessee, and they make sure a copy of the *Chronicle* always is available in the church library.

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INSIDE

CALENDAR.....	32	MILESTONES.....	26
CURRENTS.....	17	NATIONAL.....	5
DIALOGUE.....	13	PARTNERS.....	21
EDITORIAL.....	28	PEOPLE.....	24
INSIGHT.....	34	REVIEWS.....	31
INTERNATIONAL	11	VIEWS.....	29



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