Flames and prayers in California

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Welcome to Pepperdine, where we have 60 mph winds and fires surrounding us and still go to class.”

Avery Wannemacher posted those words to Twitter from the Malibu, Calif., campus of Pepperdine University. Despite recent waves of wildfires in southern California, the university associated with Churches of Christ was unharmed — and the students unexcused from class.

After all, wildfires are a way of life in the Golden State, though the numbers from December were staggering — 242,000 acres burned, 18,000 homes destroyed, 95,000 people evacuated and 9,000 firefighters exhausted.

The fires came dangerously close to the home of Jeff and Kim Seaman, members of the Fallbrook Church of Christ, an hour north of San Diego. It was the 10th anniversary of their previous evacuation during the wildfires of 2007. Fortunately, their home was undamaged, and the couple offered prayers for their fellow Californians.

Robert Perez, minister for the Santa Paula Church of Christ in Ventura County, and his family evacuated as the Thomas Fire approached his home. The Perezes and other members gathered at the church’s building. A few slept in their cars in the church’s parking lot in case they had to again flee the flames.

“The fire was so close to the church, I think it scared the members,” Perez told the Washington Post.

SEE UPDATES at www.christianchronicle.org.

For Christian universities, a cause for alarm

SHARP DECLINE SEEN in number of freshmen who identify with Churches of Christ.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Since today’s college freshmen were infants, roughly 1,200 Churches of Christ in the United States have closed, and the number of men, women and children in the pews nationally has shrunk by 200,000.

In the same 18-year period, universities associated with the fellowship — from Abilene Christian University in Texas to York College in Nebraska — have seen a 51 percent decline in students who identify with Churches of Christ.

Just 2,177 freshmen who enrolled at 14 such universities in fall 2017 gave their religious affiliation as “Church of Christ” — down from 4,411 in fall 2000, a national survey found.

At the start of the 21st century, two out of every three freshmen at those dozen-plus universities — 66 percent of 6,643 total first-year students — cited their heritage in Churches of Christ.

Now, that figure stands at two out of every five freshmen — 39 percent of 5,603 total first-year students — revealed the annual survey conducted by Trace S. Hebert, a higher education researcher at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn.

“In previous generations and during much

See UNIVERSITIES, Page 24
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Should Jesus be the reason for the season?

What do you teach your kids about Christmas? It’s a question I have pondered through pretty much all of my adult life, and one about which I have had many conversations. On one hand there’s Santa — the jolly old guy everyone loves — and on the other there’s Jesus — our Savior. It’s a subject that I’ve found many in Churches of Christ are simply uncomfortable addressing.

I don’t remember many conversations about Christmas growing up. Mainly, I just knew that Jesus wasn’t actually born on Dec. 25. After college, when I began working and had more experiences around people from other religious backgrounds, I began to question what I would someday teach my own children.

Around the time my son was born, I set out in search of a more solid answer. I read my Bible and asked ministers, elders and other Christians whom I believed to be wise. What did they teach their families?

Many just said, “Oh, we don’t know when Jesus was born. We should celebrate him every week, not just once a year.”

In front of a row of burning tires, a Honduran protestors carries the flag of his country. Missionary Jarrod Brown had to cross the roadblock to reach the Choluteca airport.

Despite protests and roadblocks, life and ministry go on in Honduras

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Jarrod Brown and his family left early for the airport, concerned that the roads would be blocked by protestors the next day.

“I was wrong. They were blocked today,” said the president of Mission Lazarus, a development nonprofit supported by Churches of Christ. So Brown and his children, bags in tow, crossed piles of burning tires to meet his wife, Allison, and reach the airport in Choluteca, Honduras.

Church members across the Central American nation were caught in the midst of protests. Angry Hondurans claim that current President Juan Orlando Hernández stole the Nov. 26 election from opposition candidate Salvador Nasralla, who ran on a popular anti-corruption platform, the Miami Herald reports.

After leaving Choluteca, the Browns saw more roadblocks on the streets of the capital, Tegucigalpa, as they boarded a plane for the U.S. The same day, the U.S. embassy issued a statement advising citizens.
CHRISTMAS: A chance to talk about Jesus

FROM PAGE 3

since we are only instructed to celebrate the
death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, she
would rather not join in a worldly holiday and
risk her own salvation in doing so.

One friend pointed to Romans 14:5-6: “One
person considers one day more sacred than
another; another considers every day alike.
Each of them should be fully convinced in their
own mind. Whoever regards one day as special
does so to the Lord.”

Others mentioned taking this time of year, a
time when so many are open to hearing about
Jesus, as an opportunity to reach the lost.

I came away from that season more
classified than when I started.

Recently, the question of what to teach my
children resurfaced in my mind. As I again
began searching for information on the topic,
I noticed we here at The Christian Chronicle
have said very little about the subject over
the years. The only article I could find in our
archives about Christmas was from 2005.

So I went back to Facebook and asked the
question.

Wayne Newland, from South Portland,
Maine, said he sees things today much
different from the churches he attended as a
child 80 years ago.

Those of us who ‘grew up in the church’
remember when little or no attention was
paid to Jesus’ birth, let alone at Christmas
time,” Newland said. “Newer folks cannot
understand that.’

The congregation he now attends doesn’t
shy away from Christmas-themed hymns in
December. They usually have wreaths on the
front doors.

Jay Kelley, from Levelland, Texas, said
since Christmas Eve was on a Sunday in
2017, his congregation hosted an abbreviated
service to allow members time to travel to be
with their families.

“I guess you could say we recognize
Christmas as a cultural holiday and a time
for families to get together and for people to
reconnect,” he said, “but we don’t see it as a
special day to worship the Lord.”

Stephen Puckett, from Melbourne, Fla., said
he also grew up in a church where Christmas
was celebrated with the “secular, material-
istic” version of the holiday and no mention of
Christmas at church. The congregation he’s
a part of now encourages a focus on sacrifice
and giving during this holiday season.

Scott Elliott, from LaGrange, Texas,
said those who celebrate Jesus’ birth are
following an example from the Bible.

“We do not know when Jesus was born, but
the Bible does record his birth and it records
angels, shepherds and wise men celebrating
this birth,” Elliott said. “This is a biblical
example of people celebrating the birth of
Jesus.”

Ultimately, he added, we have to make up
our own minds about what we will or will not
celebrate.

“According to Romans 14:5-6, we have the
freedom to celebrate Christmas as long as
we honor the Lord,” he said. “What we do
not have the right to do is pass judgment on
other Christians who choose to celebrate or
not celebrate this holiday.”

As I compare the opinions I received six
years ago to those I received recently, one
thing I notice is that Christians seem more
open to the idea of allowing Jesus to be a
part of this season. As some said, if it can
open a door to a conversation, we shouldn’t
slam that door.

As for what I’ll teach my children, my
husband and I are still working on that.

CONTACT: chellie@christianchronicle.org

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site, sign up for our email newsletter to get the latest headlines
delivered to your inbox.
FORT WORTH, Texas — For over a decade, the Wilkerson-Greines Activity Center was the proud basketball altar where the Dunbar High School Wildcats held services.

On a recent Sunday night, the 5,000-seat arena again buzzed as another local team — members of area Churches of Christ — posted up on the Robert Hughes Sr. floor for a worship assembly demonstrating racial unity in the body of Christ.

Churches from Tarrant County — and beyond — gathered for a unified service in response to the politically charged racial divide that threatens spiritual waters, organizers said.

More than 1,300 church members streamed into the activity center to lay the spiritual groundwork for bridging the not-so-imaginary racial divide that often exists in churches across the United States.

The event was the second annual areawide racial unity service, following a first endeavor hosted by the Southside Church of Christ in Fort Worth in 2016.

“The whole idea of a unity service stemmed from the tragic police shooting that put the national spotlight on Dallas when several officers were killed,” Southside minister Steve Cloer said. The first unity service was put together rather quickly and resulted in a capacity crowd in Southside’s 650-seat auditorium.

“This time, with better planning, over 140 preachers were involved, and somewhere in the vicinity of over 1,300 members of the body of Christ were in attendance,” Cloer said.

Richmond Avenue Church of Christ minister Victor Norris, who attended Dunbar, said: “This has been one of the biggest crowds since the Dunbar glory days. This crowd was united for a need for racial unity with the blood of Jesus. That’s a slam dunk!”

Gerald G. Turner from the Lancaster Church of Christ in Texas leads singing.

CORRECTION: On last month’s Across the Nation page, The Christian Chronicle incorrectly reported the source of a donation that allowed the Valley Cities Church of Christ in Sayre, Pa., to buy a building. The donation came from the Flushing Church of Christ in New York.
Office of the Provost  
Dr. Robert Rhodes, Provost, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103

ACU is accepting applications for dean of its College of Education and Human Services. The college provides nationally accredited training programs grounded in current research and informed practice related to the educational and service needs of individuals across the lifespan. The college comprises five academic units: the School of Social Work, the Department of Teacher Education, the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition, and the Department of Occupational Therapy. Strong candidates will have a commitment to the mission, values and goals of the university. They will have an appreciation and understanding of the nature and role of Christian higher education and the relationship between learning, scholarship and faith. Applicants must have an earned doctorate; a record of excellence in teaching and research as a tenured associate or full professor; service as an exemplary teacher, mentor and advisor of university students; experience in academic administration including evidence of exceptional leadership in progressively responsible positions; experience with the processes and demands of secondary accreditation; experience as a practitioner in a discipline of the college or a related field; ability to work collaboratively with faculty, staff and administrators within a department, college and university; knowledge of and experience with the interdisciplinary nature of the departments of the college and the communities they serve; and willingness and ability to work effectively with university development in fundraising. Information about the college is available at acu.edu/cehs.

College of Arts and Sciences  
Dr. Gregory Straughn, Dean, ACU Box 29210, Abilene, Texas 79699-9210

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track faculty member to join six colleagues beginning Aug. 1, 2018, in an ACEJMC-accredited program in a state-of-the-art facility. About 150 students are enrolled in advertising/public relations, convergence journalism or multimedia majors within the department or in an interdisciplinary graphic design/advertising major. Students in the advertising/PR major spend two semesters working at Morris+Mitchell, a student-run ad/PR agency. The ideal candidate will have academic credentials and professional experience for teaching public relations courses in the ad/PR major. Though not required, applicants who bring a second area of interest in sports communication, social media or film are particularly encouraged to apply. A terminal degree is strongly preferred, but applicants who are ABD will be considered. Research and service expectations support the university’s status as a premier comprehensive university. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/jmc.

College of Education and Human Services  
Dr. Donnie Snider, Dean, ACU Box 28276, Abilene, Texas 79699-8276

The Department of Occupational Therapy invites applications for two full-time, tenure-track members to join the Master of Science in occupational therapy faculty beginning Aug. 15, 2018. We are a faith-based, innovative program incorporating spirituality and utilizing a Maker Lab, including 3-D printing, in our occupational therapy curriculum. The ideal candidate will have: three to five years teaching experience; an earned doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D., D.Sc. or Sc.D. preferred but will consider an OTD); clinical experience and expertise in mental health, pediatrics, and/or physical disabilities; and a strong interest in research and service to the university. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/occupational-therapy.

The Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition invites applications for a clinical education coordinator within our Master of Athletic Training degree program, a 12-month, full-time faculty position beginning June 1, 2018. This position is designed to assist the program director in the operation and administration of the athletic training major and all levels of athletic training students at ACU. Duties will include teaching and mentoring within the M.A.T. program, clinical oversight, and record and insurance coordination. The successful candidate must be BOC certified prior to appointment with completion of a doctoral degree preferred. Candidates with significant doctoral course work completed may be considered for appointment if the candidate does not hold a terminal degree, a terminal degree must be completed by June 2020. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/kinesiology.

See acu.edu/academics/provost/positions.html for complete descriptions of these positions. In a letter to the appropriate dean or chair, applicants should address their qualifications for the position. They should include in the application a statement of how faith informs their teaching; a discussion of their spiritual journey; a curriculum vitae; transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work; and names, addresses and phone numbers of five references. Review of applicants will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Nominations of and applications from qualified women and minorities are especially encouraged. ACU is affiliated with the fellowship of the Churches of Christ. All applicants must be professing Christians and be active, faithful members of a congregation of the Churches of Christ and deeply committed to service in Christian higher education. The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. ACU does not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities.
Minister, wife serve church for 50 years

AUSTIN, Texas — The Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ celebrated 50 years of service to the congregation by minister Roger McCown and his wife, MaryBeth. The couple first came to the church in 1967 from Harding University in Searcy, Ark. They left a few years later as missionaries to Guatemala supported by the congregation. In the 1980s, they came back to Brentwood Oaks, and Roger McCown has served on the ministry staff since, preaching for many years. MaryBeth, meanwhile, has taught fifth-graders for 30 years.

“This church knows how to bless its servants,” Roger McCown said of the Dec. 3 celebration. As part of the special day, church members did random acts of kindness in the couple’s honor, children’s minister Jackie Boyd said. “Everyone documented their act — some included photos — and then, while we sang ‘Let the Beauty of Jesus Be Seen in Me,’ everyone came down to lay those acts of kindnesses in a tray,” Boyd said. “It was a visual pouring out, giving back, paying it forward of the kindnesses the McCowns have shown to so many for so many years. It was a beautiful thing to behold.”

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This town of about 18,000 souls, 90 minutes east of Houston, didn’t receive the media attention bigger cities got after Hurricane Harvey dumped 30 trillion gallons of water on Texas, destroying or damaging nearly 200,000 homes.

After other hurricanes hit Florida and Puerto Rico, Nederland and other small Texas communities seemed to be left, for the most part, on their own.

The Nederland Avenue Church of Christ began relief efforts immediately after Harvey, serving nearby cities including Beaumont and Port Arthur. Michael Williams, the church’s minister, encountered families dealing with the loss of their home, furniture, everything.

“A woman told me it was surreal to see your whole life just sitting out on the curb,” Williams said.

After the TV cameras moved on, the church continues to serve.

And other churches have assisted — one of them 1,200 miles away. Presley Roan, a 16-year-old member of the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ in Raleigh, N.C., is a fan of Home Free, an a cappella country band. Tim Foust, who sings bass for Home Free, is a native of Nederland.

Roan corresponded with Dena Foust through the website and learned that she was a member of the Nederland Avenue church.

Home Free, is a native of Nederland. His mother, Dena Foust, runs her son’s merchandise website.

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Roan also learned that Dena Foust and her daughter, Emily Forse, were coordinating their church’s disaster relief efforts. The 16-year-old saw an opportunity for ministry.

“When God calls you to do something, you shouldn’t hesitate,” Roan said. “You just do it.”

The Brooks Avenue church began a collection of relief items for the Nederland area. Church members, friends and family gathered cleaning supplies, household goods, baby items, school supplies and more — specific items that Dena Foust said the affected families needed.

Soon, the Raleigh church had a large trailer filled and on its way to Nederland, hauled by James Green and fellow members of the Brooks Avenue disaster relief team. The volunteers delivered the donations to churches in Nederland, Beaumont and Port Arthur. Then the North Carolina church members stayed to help with the clean-up efforts.

“You go to a neighborhood of 200 houses, and every one of them is empty,” said team member James Green. “It’s hard to believe.”

Another member, Darby Austen, added, “The first couple days, you’re in shock because of the devastation, seeing folks lose everything. People were so grateful for the help, so while there was plenty of sorrow, there was a great amount of joy.”

Brad Forest, an elder of the Brooks Avenue church, said, “We were doing this for Jesus, and we were doing this for these families, and it felt like we were doing everything with a purpose.”

The relief team is back home, but the North Carolina church is still helping out, sponsoring an ongoing effort to provide fast-food gift cards for families still living in hotels and tents.

Home Free, meanwhile, set up a YouCaring fund to collect donations for hurricane relief — managing it themselves to make sure 100 percent of the money goes to the churches and communities where it’s needed. At press time, the site had raised $88,300 of its $100,000 goal.

Home Free also recorded a cover of the Little Texas hit “God Blessed Texas” to raise money for relief. The video features church members, wearing T-shirts for Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort and delivering supplies to those in need.

Dena Foust said she has seen a difference in her community — something beyond the wreckage.

“Sometimes it takes something like this to bring people together,” she said. “Now, people seem more appreciative of what they have; they don’t take things for granted and they’re coming together to help each other.

“God’s taken care of us, that’s for sure.”

Members of the Brooks Avenue disaster relief team from Raleigh, N.C., traveled to Nederland, Texas, to bring supplies and assist in relief efforts after Hurricane Harvey.

God blessed Texas — and North Carolina

TWO CHURCHES, 1,200 miles apart, come together to provide relief after Hurricane Harvey.

BY TOBY ROAN | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

NEDERLAND, Texas

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RUPEES FOR RELIEF: Church members in India collect funds for Texas hurricane victims. See “In the Word,” Page 28.
Young and old alike appreciate the group, said Tucker, 30, a member of the Lower Paw Paw Church of Christ in Lower Salem, Ohio. “Anytime that you are able to worship with your brothers and sisters in Christ, you’re uplifted,” Miller said. “For the young, our group allows them the opportunity to lead services in some capacity, whether it be in songs, prayer or speaking. For the old, it gives them joy and hope that the younger generation is following Christ. It sends a big message.”

Tucker agreed: “I’ve had youth come up to me after preaching or song leading for the first time — hugging me and thanking me for giving them the opportunity to do that. I’ve had older members of the church come up to tell me how inspiring it is to see the 60 to 70 youth come to their congregation and fill their building up where they have to break out folding chairs.”

‘SERVANT-MINDED HEARTS’

Mary Hennen, a member of the Grand Central Church of Christ in Vienna, W.Va., said she has known Miller and Tucker for many years, mostly through Bible camp.

“Anthony and Josh have both always been ‘good kids’ with kind, compassionate, servant-minded hearts,” Hennen said in an email.

“Not too many of our youth continue on the path of righteous living, active faith, etc. That’s why this ministry is so important … recognizing that people often find a path easier to travel when we’re walking along with someone (with feet, we do walk with the Lord, too).”

Overall, the number of men, women and children in West Virginia and Ohio church pews has dropped 17 percent in the last 12 years — from 70,655 in 2006 to 58,793 in the latest count. Those statistics are taken from “Churches of Christ in the United States,” a national directory published by Nashville, Tenn.-based 21st Century Christian.

‘JUST START AND BE PATIENT’

Miller and Tucker said they’d urge church leaders in other parts of the country to consider forming traveling youth groups. “Find a few other youth leaders, like we have done, who make coming to events a priority,” said Miller, who works as a delivery technician for a medical equipment business. “Youth today need to know that there are others in like faith that they can lean on for comfort, strength and lifetime friendships.”

Tucker advised that travel distances must be kept in mind, especially when deciding which churches to visit during the school year. “We can only meet once or sometimes twice a month because of the youth being in school,” Tucker said. “If we have a church that’s an hour away, we try to put them in the summer so the youth can be out a little later.

“My advice for anyone who wants to start something like this is to just start and be patient,” he added. “Our first few years, there were only five to 10 youth before it really started to take off.”
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Friday & Saturday, March 2 – 3, 2018

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“Our Unfinished Business”

Jeff Jenkins
“Making the Most of Our Time”

Mike Vestal
“Living in Favor with God and Man”

Steve Higginbotham
“Passing the Baton”

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www.affirmingthefaithok.com
FOR FIVE DECADES, Sylvia Duncan has shared the Gospel with her international campus community.

‘We are preparing the soil, planting the seed’

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

After more than 50 years of ministry to students from around the world, Sylvia Duncan lives the words of Galatians 6:9: “Let us not become weary in doing good.”

Duncan, 88, is a longtime member of the Stillwater Church of Christ in Oklahoma, which meets near the campus of Oklahoma State University. A graduate of the university and a former accountant, she serves as a trustee and secretary for the University Center Foundation. She has taught Bible classes for children and women and has spoken at church events near and far — including the Caribbean Lectures.

She and her husband of 69 years, Aaron, also are longtime participants in the church’s international ministry, which reaches out to students who come to the university from Asia, Latin America and many other locales. She is a 32-year member of the Stillwater Sister Cities Council — a goodwill partnership between Stillwater and the city of Kameoka, Japan.

“My husband celebrated his 97th birthday in July,” she said. “He doesn’t teach a class anymore but is present in classes and often shares his wisdom.” The couple has two children, two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

How did you become involved in international student ministry?

In the 1960s, Aaron and I became aware of the increasing number of internationals attending Oklahoma State. We became friends with several students from India. In an effort to meet more, we arranged for an annual fall international welcoming reception at the church building.

Early on we realized that many of the students needed help with their English. Then, in 1980, an Oklahoma Christian University graduate, Jim Batten (now chancellor of Ibaraki Christian University in Japan), wrote a 50-lesson series on the Gospel of Luke. We advertised our conversational English classes in the OSU campus newspaper, which resulted in many Wednesday evening, one-on-one classes that Aaron and I began teaching.

What do international students need that churches can provide?

They need friendship. They also need help with English, help adjusting to life in a new culture and help understanding the many things we take for granted.

Today, most internationals have a better grasp of English than our first students had. Even so, there is still a need for them to develop listening and pronunciation skills and a need for vocabulary building.

Of course, their real need is to learn about Jesus. We use the Bible as the text for our classes, both the Easy-to-Read and the New International versions. Currently, one very dedicated friend, Sarah Wiley, teaches many one-on-one classes each week, meeting with her students at Panera near the OSU campus. In addition, we have group classes meeting at the church building on Sunday and Wednesday evening.

Do you recall particular students from the past and their stories?

Three families come to mind.

A Venezuelan doctor and his wife were older students whom we took on a trip to a mission conference. While in Tennessee, Parker Henderson was preaching at a gospel meeting, and both the doctor and his wife were baptized.

The second was a family of two sisters and their brother from Beirut, Lebanon. For the past 30 years, they have been like our own children. We attended the wedding of one in Italy and often receive calls from them seeking our advice and prayers.

The third is four generations of an Ecuadorian family that have often made our home theirs through the years. And we have visited them in Ecuador. One granddaughter has returned to OSU for her doctorate and brought her two preschool children. They are in our children’s classes on Wednesday night.

How can we effectively minister to internationals?

Develop a genuine friendship. Show them that you love them as individuals. Make them feel welcome in America — and especially in your home and at the church building — by introducing them to others. Early in your acquaintance, be sure to get all their contact information and share your phone number, e-mail address, and home address. Urge them to contact you if they have a need. Concentrate on remembering their names and the names of their children. Always call them by name. Invite them into your home for meals.

I use the New Testament books — especially Luke, John and Acts — as the text for their reading with the two-fold aim of helping them with English and teaching them about Jesus. Use a dry-erase marker board in a class setting or paper and pencil in one-on-one studies to help them visualize concepts, word meanings and homophones for better learning and retention. Make sure they understand and, if they don’t, that they feel free to ask questions.

I think it is helpful to have a knowledge of apologetics and the basics of various world religions to aid in answering some of their questions.

Try to communicate on their level, but try to remember that their worlds are often quite different from our own. They may appreciate your cultural background in your conversations with them, but make sure you’re not wearing a blindfold.

We are preparing the soil, planting the seed, nurturing the seedling and helping them grow strong and healthy in their faith.

‘They need friendship. They also need help with English, help adjusting to life in a new culture and help understanding the many things we take for granted. ... Of course, their real need is to learn about Jesus.’

Sylvia Duncan, on needs of international students
The Amazing Growth of the Restoration Movement and the Key to its Success

Also find scores of studies on fundamental Biblical topics, apologetic resources, and charts.

jongoarywilliams.com

DUNCAN: Many students are visiting Chinese scholars

FROM PAGE 11 and do not give the false impression you know all the answers. Simply let the “gospel be the power of God unto salvation.” (Romans 1:16) Do not be too discouraged if every student does not accept Christ. As recorded in the gospels, when Jesus taught, some believed and some did not.

We are preparing the soil, planting the seed, the Word of God. He will give the increase.

We have tried to have an international worship service once each month, followed by a potluck. We also have occasional social activities such as picnics and holiday parties. For many years, each November we have taken our internationals to the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoman City for their annual Thanksgiving dinner.

Why have you stayed with this ministry so long?

God keeps sending new internationals to Stillwater. To some degree, I can “go into all the world and teach the Gospel, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe the teachings of Jesus.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

This past fall there were 1,833 internationals from 103 countries on the OSU campus, not counting their families. The opportunities are abundant to teach the Gospel to those who have not heard it.

At first we advertised our classes. In recent years that has not been necessary. Students constantly bring new students. This is the way God constantly provides. It’s eternally important to teach the Gospel, but I also enjoy all the friendships that have grown during the years.

As long as I am physically able and mentally competent, I want to continue teaching. Currently, the majority of our students are Chinese. Many of those are visiting scholars — usually here for only one year. They are Chinese university professors who will return to their positions of influence.

The Chinese are especially respectful of the elderly. Seeing my white hair, they are generous in their expressions of respect and thanks, which keeps me energized.
CROATIA
ZAGREB — Churches of Christ played a role in this Central European nation’s celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, said minister Mladen Dominic.

“The central celebration was in National Theatre in Zagreb, and Churches of Christ were one of the organizers,” Dominic said. Among the attendees were representatives of Catholic and Orthodox churches plus leaders from the Jewish and Muslim faiths and political officials.

Participants received copies of the New Testament and the book “Unfinished Restoration.” Eastern European Mission, a church-supported nonprofit, provided the books, and members of Churches of Christ distributed them, Dominic said.

INDIA
MUMBAI — For Churches of Christ in this densely packed city of 20 million souls, there’s no place to go but up.

So that’s exactly what members of the Chamber Church of Christ did when their growing congregation needed to expand its small building. The church added a balcony to its auditorium, thanks in part to funds provided by Christians in Spearsville, La.

The church meets on land that formerly was a refugee camp after the post-colonial division of India and Pakistan in 1947, said Bill Adcox of India Mission Fund, a ministry of Churches of Christ.

Seventy years later, the Chamber church’s elders work diligently to share Christ with the city once known as Bombay, Adcox said.

“Their autonomous spirit,” he added, “has boded well for this group to blossom and bloom spiritually in this tough, Bombay environment.”

PAKISTAN
TOBA TEK SINGH — An evangelist named Shahid asked for prayers after violence claimed the life of a teenager in the Punjab province of this predominantly Muslim nation.

In the city of Toba Tek Singh, where Shahid helped launch a small Church of Christ, a teenage boy was beaten to death by his Muslim classmates, who claimed he had contaminated their water supply by drinking from it. Shahid planned to meet with the boy’s family and the church.

“This activity will help us to share the Gospel with those who are in need of it and (those who) take interest in knowing the truth,” Shahid said.

TANZANIA
VWAWA — Members of nine Churches of Christ lined the walls and sat on the floors of a church building to take part in a recent weekend seminar, said missionaries Richard and Carol Rogers.

The preacher for the Swahili-speaking congregation in the village, Vwawa, is a first-year student at the Chimala Bible Institute.

The Rogers, who have served with Chimala Mission for a year, added that one of the biggest needs they hear of from Tanzanian Christians is training for women who want to teach children’s Bible classes. Carol Rogers is developing lessons to help the aspiring teachers, her husband wrote in The Challenge of Africa newsletter.

TOGO
LOME — Preachers in this West African nation are fishers of men and farmers of pigs, thanks in part to a recent workshop hosted by Healing Hands International.

Ebenezer Udofia, a Nigerian-born worker for the church-supported ministry, taught a pig-breeding workshop for the community. Ministers including Komi Ekpe Attah attended. Attah also reported the recent baptism of a young man reached through his congregation’s radio ministry.
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Christians share frustrations, victories at European retreat

Hawatthia Jones, a missionary in Guatemala, speaks to a youth class during the annual Euro American Retreat in Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany. The retreat brought together European Christians and missionaries from Churches of Christ in Europe and around the globe. For missionaries, including Brandon Price, the retreat provides a place “where we feel completely surrounded by people who fully understand us,” said the church member who works in Kharkov, Ukraine, “people who share the same bizarre love and heartache for a life overseas, people who know what it is to struggle with time zones and languages and support and ministry in Europe. It’s a place where we get to listen to and share with other missionaries about what God’s doing in our lives, to be comforted by shared frustrations, to be encouraged by shared victories, to be mentored by those who have gone before us, to laugh, to cry, to worship together with one voice.”

PROTESTS: For believers, turbulence and opportunity

FROM PAGE 3

to “postpone or cancel unnecessary travel within Honduras at this time.”

On social media, Jarrod Brown posted, “I would agree.”

In the western Honduran city of Santa Rosa de Copán, missionaries Phil and Donna Waldron asked for prayers as the election results were announced.

“The situation in Honduras is escalating,” said Donna Waldron, who works with Mission UpReach, another nonprofit supported by Churches of Christ. The Waldrons expected to lose power and internet access after the announcement of election results but assured supporters that the ministry’s staffers would be safe.

Roadblocks and protests are part of life in many Central American nations, including Honduras and neighboring Guatemala. In 2009, a military coup in Tegucigalpa removed Honduras’ president from power and prompted the quick evacuation of church mission teams, including one working with Mission Lazarus.

During the current protests, life has continued as normal for many Christians in Honduras. Baxter Institute, a ministry training school that produces ministers for Churches of Christ throughout the Spanish-speaking world, hosted its annual graduation. More than 1,000 believers gathered for an area-wide worship service with guest speaker Bruce McLarty, president of Harding University in Searcy, Ark.

The protests are born out of the Honduran people’s frustration with corruption, said Allison Brown, writing in a blog post about her adopted country’s woes. The roadblocks, riots and looting ultimately are counter-productive, she said, but they show that Hondurans “don’t buy in to the smokescreen created by political agendas, that the citizens aren’t taking it lying down, that their spirit is not defeated by helplessness or hopelessness.

“God is not to be thwarted, no matter who leads Honduras ... “Pray for peace. Pray for this turbulent time to be an opportunity for the Christians of Honduras to demonstrate unity of purpose, wisdom and influence because their identity — their real identity — is not on earth but in heaven.”

SEE UPDATES at www.christianchronicle.org.

Church member dies after killer bee attack

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Christians in the South American nation of Guyana are mourning the loss of Deokaran “Diamond” Mangal, a song leader for the Plaisance Church of Christ.

Mangal, 59, made a living transporting lumber with a horse and wagon. He used some of his earnings to help pay his grandchildren’s school fees. He and his wife, Mona, were stung multiple times by Africanized honey bees that were swarming under the wagon. Mona Mangal recovered, but her husband was hospitalized in Guyana’s capital, Georgetown.

“While he was hospitalized, the church was praying earnestly,” said Witfield Collins, a minister and Mangal’s son-in-law. “Everyone had hope of him recovering.”

After four weeks, however, Diamond Mangal died in the hospital. “The church was overwhelmed with sadness,” Collins said, “and it took a while for everyone to fully recover from the shock.”

The Mangals were active church members known across the community, said Sandra Lam, another church member in Georgetown.

Charles Box, minister for the Walnut Street Church of Christ in Greenville, Ala., makes regular mission trips to Guyana and has taught Bible classes for the Plaisance church — in person and through Skype videoconferencing.

“Diamond led singing many times when I (was) preaching there,” Box said. “I have been in his home many times. He has helped us with works we were doing. He has helped us load our truck for mission trips to the interior of Guyana.”

PHOTO PROVIDED

Diamond and Mona Mangal in Guyana.
Since 2007, approximately 56,400 have heard the Gospel of Christ in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh through the WEI-India ministry. Approximately 22,500 WEI students have studied the Bible in 50+ year-round WEI schools operated by Churches of Christ throughout India.

Support for this ministry is in jeopardy for 2018. $30,000 is needed to continue this fruitful work. Currently, this work is under the oversight of the Maryville Church of Christ eldership. If you would like to support this work, please send a check to the Maryville Church of Christ.

Recent Baptisms Statistics:
2014: 83 WEI Students
2015: 102 WEI Students
2016: 35 WEI Students
Jan-Oct 2017: 53 WEI Students
2007-2017 Total: 674 Baptisms of which 30% were either friends or relatives of these WEI students.

WEI-India c/o
Maryville Church of Christ
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Maryville, TN 37802-5293
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For one teen, wearing a Darth Vader mask and talking “Star Wars” with youth ministers helped smooth his introduction to church.

Wilton Carraway Jr., associate minister for the Ward Street Church of Christ in Wallingford, Conn., said the movie connection inspired Cody Dion’s confidence. “Now he brings it everywhere and has been attending church regularly and finding his voice even though he has the mask on,” Carraway said. “He’s a super young man.”

Dion wore the mask to a recent youth rally that drew 120 teens from 22 congregations to the Manchester Church of Christ. Attendees came from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island. Manchester youth minister Cameron Franklin organized the rally. The theme was “Harvest.”

Hoss Ridgeway from the El Campo Church of Christ in Texas spoke. Garrett Alexander from the Roxbury Church of Christ in the Boston area led singing.
In rapidly changing southern Africa, a church practices big-city ministry.

One Sunday in Gaborone

Gabonone

S

One Sunday in Gabonone.

After a sermon by South African minister Machona Momyamane, far right, members of the Broadhurst Church of Christ stand and join in a prayer for renewal led by minister Dennis Malepa, far left.

After a member of the Broadhurst congregation asks for prayers for his health, minister Dennis Malepa anoints him with oil and asks God to watch over the Christian.

Young adults look up Scripture references on their mobile phones during the Sunday sermon.

In English and Setswana, a sign welcomes members and guests to the Broadhurst Church of Christ. Behind the gate, young adults participate in an outdoor Bible class.

As Machona Momyamane, left, preaches in English, Godsemondile Lesobea translates into Setswana, mirroring Momyamane’s emotional pronouncements.

BROADHURST, Botswana

SOURCE:

Momyamane Patrick Sekhosa, Dean Troyer, and Mike Tanaro came to Botswana in 1974, encouraged by U.S. missionary Tex Williams. The workers helped launch the first Church of Christ in the capital, Gaborone.

HISTORY: Tribes of bushmen occupied Botswana for centuries before Bantu speakers entered the area in the 10th century. The discovery of gold and diamonds in the region in the 1860s brought an influx of Europeans. The British proclaimed the land a protectorate called Bechuanaland and ruled until independence in 1966. Today the country is known as one of Africa’s most stable nations and has the continent’s longest-continuous multi-party democracy. It is relatively free of corruption and has a good human rights record, the BBC reports.

In English and Setswana-language Bibles are used by members of the Broadhurst church.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST:

Momyamane Patrick Sekhosa, Dean Troyer, and Mike Tanaro came to Botswana in 1974, encouraged by U.S. missionary Tex Williams. The workers helped launch the first Church of Christ in the capital, Gaborone.

Evidently, there was a festival in Botswana. The monstrously slow immigration line was packed with South African musicians and TV stars. At one point, a frustrated visitor, upon being told where to wait for the fourth or fifth time, yelled, “Stop telling us where to stand! We know where we are!”

I wasn’t here for the festival. I rode along with two South African evangelists — Machona Momyamane and Zonge Xoshe — as they delivered a large meeting tent to a newly planted Church of Christ in a town called Molepolole. The Broadhurst Church of Christ, the mother congregation of Botswana, planted the church with assistance from Gospel Chariot Missions.

During our brief stay, Broadhurst members housed and fed us, treating us like family. Despite the vast ocean that separates us, we swapped stories of mutual acquaintances, politics and sports.

On Sunday morning we worshiped with the Broadhurst church, where longtime minister Dennis Malepa serves. I was surprised to learn that many of the church’s members had spent the previous morning jogging around the building as part of a community health fair.

Too often I think of African Christianity as something that takes place in the wilderness, beneath thatched roofs. But the Broadhurst church is one where young professionals look up scriptures on their mobile phones, where song leaders gather during Bible class to run through PowerPoint slides for worship — practicing hymns in English and Setswana. This church plays a vital role in reaching Africa’s ever-growing, ever-modernizing urban centers.

During the service, I was blessed to lead prayers for the Lord’s Supper — a Sunday morning experience shared by believers around the world.

“Where we are!”

CONTACT:
erik@christianchronicle.org.
“When I compare it to eternity, it’s really not that long at all.”

LUCINDA WILSON, Texas inmate, serving a life sentence after being baptized and confessing to a murder. (May, Page 3)

“I need to do this.”

CASSIE HOLDER, on her decision to share her experience as a victim of sexual assault during her time at a Christian university. She was inspired by the #metoo movement. (December, Page 1)

“I went through ups and downs, and they’d always accept me with open arms. They would never judge me or anything like that.”

JORDAN TAYLOR, recovering heroin addict, on the support and salvation he found through the Grand Strand Church of Christ in Surfside Beach, S.C. (September, Page 1)

“The ladies I’ve met … just kind of blow me away. The spirit it takes to have the attitude they do when they come here is really incredible to me.”

CASSIE HOLDER, on her decision to share her experience as a victim of sexual assault during her time at a Christian university. She was inspired by the #metoo movement. (December, Page 1)

2017
The year in quotes

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

JOEY SPANN, minister for the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ in Antioch, Tenn., on Emanuel K. Samson, the suspect in the church shooting that claimed a member’s life. (November, Page 8)

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

EDWARD CRIBBS, minister for the Oakland Church of Christ in Southfield, Mich., on racial unity efforts 50 years after the 1967 Detroit riot. (September, Page 7)

“It’s the least we could do to try to help. God bless.”

TED BELL, deacon of La Grange Church of Christ in Texas, talking to a flooding victim while distributing food and supplies after Hurricane Harvey. (October, Page 1)

“The ladies I’ve met … just kind of blow me away. The spirit it takes to have the attitude they do when they come here is really incredible to me.”

REDA HICKS, member of the Memorial Church of Christ in Houston, on the refugee women who form microbusinesses through a nonprofit with which she serves. (March, Page 8)

“This is a glimpse of the kingdom, that’s what it is. You see the upside-down kingdom in action because those often overlooked are given special honor.”

CHRISS BENJAMIN, minister for the West-Ark Church of Christ in Fort Smith, Ark., on the church hosting a “Night to Shine” party for special-needs individuals. (March, Page 3)
“If God’s people don’t do anything, then we have to answer to God for that. Our salvation depends on our willingness to defend victims.”

RON CLARK, minister for the Agape Church of Christ in Portland, Ore., on the responsibility of churches to victims of sexual harassment and assault. (December, Page 24)

“When the drug addicts got here, they taught the rest of us how to be honest.”

MAC OWEN, former church elder, recovering addict and national director of Celebrate Recovery, on churches’ response to the U.S. opioid epidemic. (October, Page 3)

“I took it by mistake, of course. We had it delivered by the State Department back to the Brussels Church of Christ.”

U.S. REP. TED POE, member of the Bammel Church of Christ in Houston, on accidentally taking a songbook from a worship assembly in Belgium. (February, Page 8)

“No es una casualidad. Es una causa.”

INGRID ESPINOZA, making a play on words, translated as, “It’s not a coincidence. It’s a cause,” as she describes the circumstances that led her and her husband, Fray, to the Church of Christ in Cúcuta, Colombia. The couple, from Venezuela, was suffering from their country’s harsh economy until they found the newly planted church, serving as a relief center. They studied the Bible and were among the church’s first baptisms. (June, Page 15)

“Here’s Help for Christians with Addicted Loved Ones

When does helping turn to enabling? When does partnering with God morph into “playing God”? When does true love become tough love? This Christian mom details how she was brought to her knees by vain attempts to fix her drug-addicted son. She describes her spiritual journey to recovery that resulted in a new relationship with Jesus Christ.

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“There are no rice Christians! Just because there are a lot of benevolent activities going on in India, that does not mean people are going to change their religion for a bag of rice and then die for their faith. That doesn’t make any sense!”

DR. MANI PAGIDIPALLI, minister and surgeon in India, on the increasing persecution endured by Christians in his homeland. (September, Page 14)

“Really great information for the truth-seeking heart.”

- Name withheld

“Reading this work was refreshing and I again experienced the joy of liberation from false and binding restraints put on divorced Christians...”

- Name withheld

“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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The ideal candidate for any of the above positions will exude a collaborative, positive and team-oriented attitude in his/her leadership style and will be a faithful member of the church of Christ. Further, the candidate will enthusiastically embrace and support the mission of MDCA & CH.

About the Organization: Mount Dora Christian Academy & Children’s Home has been serving children and families since 1945 and is affiliated with the churches of Christ. Our beautiful 70-acre campus is located in the heart of Central Florida. For additional details on these openings, please go to [https://www.mdcacademy.org/open-jobs/](https://www.mdcacademy.org/open-jobs/).

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FAIR HAVEN CHILDREN’S HOME
STRAFFORD, Mo. — Successes of children in Fair Haven’s care are easy to identify: The baptisms. The participation in Leadership Training for Christ and Happy Hollow Bible Belt. The school honor roll mentions.

At the same time, the 53-year-old ministry faces challenges as it works to provide homes for boys and girls, executive director Barney Crawford wrote in a recent newsletter.

“Because of the continuous financial challenges facing Fair Haven, we have had to become innovative in generating funds for this ministry,” Crawford wrote. “Many churches who were once faithful supporters of Fair Haven have diminished or closed their doors. A number of our loyal supporters have passed on to await their eternal reward.”

A board comprised of the elders of the Water Mill Church of Christ in Springfield oversees Fair Haven.

HIGHER EDUCATION

FAULKNER UNIVERSITY
HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — A mass shooting preparedness seminar at Faulkner’s Huntsville campus drew about 50 participants from area Churches of Christ, organizers said.

The university offered the recent seminar in response to the Nov. 5 attack that claimed 26 lives at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas.

The event brought together church staff members and law enforcement officers to prepare crisis plans, Faulkner Police Chief Everette Johnson said. Robert Thetford, a retired FBI agent, led the seminar.

Topics included legal aspects of protection, active shooter incidents, situational awareness, security considerations, emergency protocols and threat indicators.

SOUTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
TERRELL, Texas — The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has determined that Southwestern Christian College is in total compliance with governing rules and policies, the college announced.

The confirmation came after a review of Southwestern’s institutional effectiveness and definition of credit hour. Both had been highlighted as problematic, and warnings were issued, officials noted.

Faculty members worked hard to secure full compliance with corrections that now allow Southwestern to concentrate more on reaffirmation of accreditation, a news release said.

“I’m very happy,” President E.D. Seamster Jr. said of the lifted sanctions. “This is the best academic news I’ve had since becoming president.”

MINISTRY TRAINING

FISHERS OF MEN
HERNANDO, Miss. — Specialized training in person-to-person evangelism is the focus of Fishers of Men. In 2017, the ministry equipped nearly 700 Christians to share the Gospel, director W. Timothy Wilkes Sr. said.

Dress for success: Lipscomb group outfits boys with ties

Randolph Wilkerson, left, a student at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., helps an eighth-grader at Music City’s Head Middle Magnet School adjust his new necktie. Lipscomb’s Collegiate 100 chapter, including student Kindrick McLemore, center, set a goal of collecting 150 ties for the middle school boys. But the group of primarily African-American students exceeded expectations with 464 ties.

Heart surgery, then a playoff win

AUSTIN, Texas — Stan Caffey didn’t let open-heart surgery keep him from coaching the Brentwood Christian School football team.

Caffey called plays from his hospital bed for two games, then returned to the sidelines for the Bears’ first-ever playoff win, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

“He has our boys believing in themselves, and many of these boys had never played football before three years ago,” said Burcham, whose school has nearly 700 students. “What has been really special is that we have had in the range of 2,000 people at our home games.”
UNIVERSITIES: Enrollment trends cause concern

FROM PAGE 1

of the 20th century, Church of Christ affiliated institutions were beneficiaries of a certain type of ‘brand loyalty’ from C-of-C congregations, church leaders, church members, and alumni from affiliated institutions who would encourage young people to go to an affiliated institution of higher education,” Hebert wrote in a recent report to the Christian universities’ presidents. “The C-of-C enrollment data revealing declining numbers of C-of-C enrollees in affiliated institutions suggests that the era of brand loyalty has substantively diminished from what it once was,” added Hebert, associate dean of Lipscomb’s College of Education.

Ken Hoppe, president of Crowley’s Ridge College in Paragould, Ark., said he has witnessed that declining brand loyalty. “Our fellowship’s declining numbers nationwide are having a negative impact on the number of college-bound freshmen available to attend our Christian colleges and universities from within our fellowship,” Hoppe said. “Another trend that we are seeing is a decline in parents’ commitment to send their college-age children to colleges and universities affiliated with the Churches of Christ.”

A SMALLER POOL — AND A WIDER NET

The 2000 edition of “Churches of Christ in the United States,” a national directory produced by 21st Century Christian, counted 13,155 congregations and 1,645,645 adherents across the nation. The Nashville-based publisher’s latest online numbers show 11,966 congregations (a 10 percent decline since 2000) and 1,445,856 adherents (down 12 percent).

Students hold hands as they pray at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn. Eighty percent of Freed-Hardeman students identify with Churches of Christ.

Interestedly, families outside our fellowship see and value these benefits and want their students at Oklahoma Christian University.

For many students and parents, the price tag of Christian higher education seems to be a major concern.

“More and more members of the Churches of Christ are (more) concerned with taking on student loan debt and the cost of college than in previous years,” said Paul J. Casebolt, director of admissions and retention services at Florida College in Temple Terrace, Fla.

“Christian families tend to be — and for good reason — more fiscally conservative than the typical family,” Casebolt added. “Media coverage of the student loan crisis makes people see them as less of an investment in the student and more of an anchor hanging around their necks upon graduation.”

Hebert’s survey includes 14 U.S. universities that are regionally accredited, serve traditional-age undergraduate residential students and are associated with Churches of Christ.

Those universities “are showing they can hold their own” by recruiting more students from outside Churches of Christ, Hebert told The Christian Chronicle. While combined freshman enrollment fell 16 percent since 2000, rising graduate enrollments have helped balance out overall numbers.

“The larger concern, as I stated in the report, is what happens to the church long-term when you don’t have the same number of students and alumni coming out of these universities, serving and planting churches and helping grow the population,” Hebert said. “I’m a bit of a history buff … and as I look back, I see the beneficial, symbiotic relationship between these institutions and the growth of the church in decades past.

“That’s no longer the case, or it’s greatly diminished, I should say, from what it once was,” he added. “It’s going to become even more diminished if these trends continue in the direction that they’re going. A kingdom-minded person about Churches of Christ should be very concerned about this.”

HOW TO LABEL A CHRISTIAN

A complicating factor in assessing the data: the self-reported nature of students’ religious affiliations.

From Hebert’s report: “One of the challenges in tracking this data is that some students who attended the Churches of Christ prior to leaving home identify themselves as ‘Christian’ or ‘non-denominational’ or some other designation on their enrollment paperwork.

“This has always been a known variable,” he added, “and it is understood that at any given point during this longitudinal study the actual number may be somewhat different than what was reported by the institutions based on the best information...
they had at the time.”

Indeed, several university officials cited the labeling difficulty in their comments to the Chronicle.

“The biggest trend we are seeing across all religiously affiliated students is that they are much less likely to select a denominational affiliation,” said Kristin Paredes, dean of enrollment management at Seaver College, the undergraduate school at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif. “Instead, students are more likely to select ‘Other Christian,’ which means the ‘Other Christian’ group on campus is on an upward trajectory.

“Students are also noting that they attended a Church of Christ in the past or they have extended family who are currently attending — even though they might not be,” Collins added.

At Lubbock Christian University in Texas, freshmen who identify as members of Churches of Christ “represent by a wide margin the largest group of students who enroll,” said Warren McNeill, vice president for marketing and public relations.

“The second and third largest groups are those who identify as ‘Christian’ and ‘non-denominational,’” McNeill added.

Likewise, Rochester College in Rochester Hills, Mich., is “noticing substantial increases related to students identifying with ‘non-denominational’ churches,” said Lora Hutson, communication specialist and associate professor of mass communication.

“Rochester College continues to recruit students, both regionally and nationally, regardless of their specific church affiliation,” Hutson said. “We partner with local, regional and national church and parachurch organizations in our recruitment efforts.”

THE REASON IT MATTERS

Christian university presidents supply the religious affiliation data to Hebert on the condition he can release aggregate figures but not individual institutions’ numbers.

The Chronicle asked the universities for their individual figures, but most declined to provide them. Exceptions included:

- Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., which reported that 80 percent of its first-time freshman identify with Churches of Christ.
- And Ohio Valley University in Vienna, W.Va., which noted that its proportion of freshmen from Churches of Christ has dropped from 48 percent a decade ago to 27 percent this school year.

“The reason it matters to Freed-Hardeman to recruit students who are members of the Lord’s church is because we love the church and want to see these young people grow in strong, faithful Christian adults who love the Lord and his church,” Freed-Hardeman President David Shannon said.

“Ironically, this is also the reason we love to see students come who are not members of Churches of Christ,” Shannon added. “It gives us opportunity to see hearts turn toward God. Just this past week, we witnessed one believer baptized into Christ on Thursday and another on Friday.”

Joy Jones, Ohio Valley University’s provost, wrote: “In reality, we understand that there are not sufficient numbers of C-of-C-affiliated students to populate the brotherhood schools. We are increasing our efforts and working to recruit ‘faith-based’ students that will be a good fit for a Christian university.”

In Nebraska, President Steve Eckman describes York College as a mission field.

“Many of our students come here ‘unchurched’ and leave here with a different perspective and direction,” Eckman said. “All we can do is plant and water, and God is going to give the increase. All we can do is expose them to the spiritual dimension of life. Many of our students have never experienced this before.”

Kevin Campbell, vice president for enrollment management and student engagement at Abilene Christian, said the Texas university remains committed to its Church of Christ heritage. Like many of its sister institutions, ACU requires its faculty and board members to maintain active membership in a Church of Christ congregation.

“We recruit every Church of Christ student in our region that we can find and we believe can be successful at our institution,” Campbell said. “At the same time, we have also expanded our recruitment with other conservative Christian students who desire a Christian education. Many of the students we pursue in addition to the Churches of Christ are members of non-denominational churches, community churches, Disciples of Christ, the Christian Church and Baptist churches.”

Matt Paden, chief of staff at Lipscomb University, said: “Our goal in recruiting new students is that Lipscomb be a place that is a ‘good fit’ for them spiritually, academically and socially. We are very bold about our focus on faith, our core Christian values and our heritage, and we believe Lipscomb University is a place where young people from Churches of Christ and other backgrounds can, and do, grow in their faith.”

Ervin D. Seamster Jr., president of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, was unavailable for comment after a recent surgery.

Administrators at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., did not respond to the Chronicle’s requests for comment.

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE: To read expanded comments from the Christian university leaders quoted, visit www.christianchronicle.org.

SOURCE: Lipscomb researcher Trace S. Hebert’s study reports on freshman enrollment trends in 14 universities associated with Churches of Christ. The universities supply the figures to Hebert on the condition that he not release individual institutions’ figures.

<table>
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<th>Church of Christ freshmen</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
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‘Many of our students come here ‘unchurched’ and leave here with a different perspective. All we can do is plant and water. … All we can do is expose them to the spiritual dimension of life.’

Steve Eckman, York College

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

Anniversaries
70th Ray and Barbara Lewis, Nov. 23, Spokane, Wash.

Memorials
Dr. Anthony Lee “Tony” Ash
1931-2017

Dr. Anthony Lee “Tony” Ash, 86, of Abilene, Texas, died Dec. 6, 2017, after a short illness. Ash earned an Associate in Arts degree at Florida Christian College and married Barbara Bailey, of Huntsville, Ala., in 1955. Subsequently, he graduated from Florida State University with a B.A. degree in speech in 1956, followed by an M.A. in Bible from Abilene Christian University in 1959, and a Ph.D. degree in church history from the University of Southern California in 1966.

For nearly 50 years, Ash researched, read, studied, lectured and wrote about noted theologian C.S. “Jack” Lewis. A professor of Bible, missions and ministry for more than 40 years at ACU, Ash also was the author of more than a dozen books. He recently completed Walking With C.S. Lewis, a new 10-part video series about 12 of the best-known works of the renowned author and theologian. The series was introduced at ACU in September 2017.

Ash was a professor at ACU from 1962-72, before serving as a professor at Pepperdine University and chair of its Religion Division from 1972-75. He taught at the Austin Graduate School of Theology in Austin, Texas, from 1975-85, then returned to ACU in 1985. After teaching, writing, and preaching for more than 60 years around the world, he retired in 2015.

He is survived by his wife Barbara after 62 years of marriage. He lived in Abilene for more than 40 years and was an active member of the University Church of Christ. Earlier, he was a pulpit minister in Austin at Westover Hills Church of Christ, then in Abilene at Minter Lane Church of Christ, the 11th and Willis Church of Christ, and more recently was interim minister at HWY 36 Church of Christ.

The family suggests contributions to the Siburt Institute at ACU (online at acu.edu/giveonline) or mailed to Gift Records, ACU Box 29132, Abilene, TX 79699-9132.

Helen M. Young
1918-2017

Helen M. Young, founder and first president of the Associated Women for Pepperdine (AWP) and former first lady of Pepperdine University, died on Nov. 30, 2017. She was 99.

“Who could ever forget his ability to quote Scripture faster than most angel in the lives of so many.”

Edward Fudge, controversial scholar on topic of hell, dies at 73

HOUSTON — For more than 30 years, Edward Fudge’s outside-the-mainstream teaching on hell sparked discussion and debate in Churches of Christ and among religion scholars.

Fudge, 73, died Nov. 25 in Houston. A member of the Bering Drive Church of Christ in Houston, he authored "The Fire that Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment." His life was the subject of the 2012 film, “Hell and Mr. Fudge.” The movie traces Fudge’s days as a young Alabama preacher who contradicts traditional views on hell and loses his pulpit.

His wife, Sara Faye, described her husband as “non-judgmental, humble in spirit, kind in manner and as Jesus described Nathaniel, ‘a man in whom there is no guile.’”

Wesley Brown stands next to the old “colored” stairs at the West End Church of Christ in Atlanta just before his retirement from the pulpit in 2007.

Wesley Brown, pioneering minister for a once-segregated church, dies at 82

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Wesley Brown was the first black preacher for a church that, at one time in its history, wouldn’t let him through its front door.

Brown, minister for Atlanta’s West End Church of Christ for 33 years, died Nov. 13. He was 82.

Years before his tenure in the church’s pulpit, Brown attended gospel meetings at the church. He had to use the building’s “colored entrance” and sit in the balcony. “Some accepted, some didn’t,” Brown told The Christian Chronicle in 2007, speaking about life in the segregated South. “Some people grumbled about it. Some of us just went along and prayed that God would knock down that barrier. And he did.”

Although the West End church was all white when it launched in 1929, its leaders wanted to evangelize Atlanta’s growing black population.
Milestones

(Continued from Page 26)

City and was well known for her faith in Christ, her warm hospitality, and her generous heart.

The sixth child in a family of seven siblings, Young grew up in a household dedicated to sharing Christ through serving the church, promoting Christian education, and loving without prejudice the privileged and the poor. After years of witnessing her parents plant and serve various congregations of Churches of Christ, Young followed their example, loving and serving family and congregation.

Young initially began her college career in 1935 at Church of Christ sister school Harding College in Searcy, Ark., but after two years, her mother encouraged her to risk going west to the new George Pepperdine College in Los Angeles to complete her undergraduate business degree. In 1938 Young met Pepperdine history professor M. Norvel Young. With permission to pursue a courtship from the college’s president, Batsell Baxter, the two fell in love and were married at her home church in Oklahoma City on Aug. 31, 1939, soon after her graduation and on her 21st birthday. This union marked the beginning of a love and minds of thousands of guests who came to her home for almost-daily breakfasts, dinners, and receptions.

Young’s writing and teaching influenced many generations of women in Churches of Christ. She was named by historian Richard Hughes “perhaps the most visible and influential woman among Churches of Christ in the second half of the 20th century.” She traveled around the world speaking for women’s seminars, lectures, and retreats. Many who heard her still say, “She changed my life and thereby the lives of my children and family.” Young taught college courses at Pepperdine in sociology and marriage and family, as well as a course entitled “The Bible and the Modern Woman.”

As Pepperdine’s first lady, Young established the Associated Women for Pepperdine to use the power of women in support of Christian higher education, raising funds for student scholarships and influencing young people to consider Pepperdine as their college choice. AWP has raised millions of dollars since its launch in 1958.

In 1992 the completed endowment of the M. Norvel and Helen Young Chair in Family Life marked a pinnacle honor for the husband and wife team that will provide a legacy of support and educational leadership at the University for endless decades.

In 1996 they became the first benefactors of what would eventually become the Boone Center for the Family, a University outreach dedicated to strengthening the family. In September 2005, the M. Norvel and Helen Young Center was formally dedicated on the Drescher Graduate Campus in Malibu.

Throughout her time at the university, Young was honored with countless awards and recognitions, including the Pepperdine Alumni Service Award, the Graduate School of Education and Psychology Dolores Award for Special Service, and the Pepperdine Medal of Honor. For her impact on Christian education, Young received high honors from Church of Christ sister schools Lubbock Christian University, Oklahoma Christian University, Harding University, and Lipscomb University.

Young is survived by her daughters, Emily and Sara, and son, Matt; 13 grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her husband of 59 years, Norvel; her daughter, Marilyn Stewart; her granddaughter, Monica; and her six siblings.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Jan. 5, 2018, at Firestone Fieldhouse on the Pepperdine campus in Malibu. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that gifts be made in Young’s memory to the AWP. Donations may be submitted at http://c-fund.us/e7u, or sent to Associated Women for Pepperdine, 24255 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA 90263-4567.

Memorial/Honor Gifts

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in honor of Bobby Ross, Jr., Erik Tryggstad and the Chronicle staff and Margaret Tryggstad, and in memory of Robert Frick, Maurice Pierce and Bobby Porter.
In 2018, who are the Churches of Christ?

“Do you worship with a Church of Christ?”
“No, I go to a non-denominational church.”

That’s the response we heard over and over as we spoke to students at universities associated with Churches of Christ during Winterfest.

The students had traveled to Gatlinburg, Tenn., to recruit high schoolers for their universities during the biggest youth gathering in our fellowship. Yet they didn’t claim to be part of our fellowship. More concerning, perhaps, was their assertion that our fellowship is no longer non-denominational, that we’re not following the call to strip away man-made doctrines and practice simple, Bible-based, New Testament Christianity.

It is time — past time, really — for us to reexamine our identity, to dive into God’s Word without the blinders of our preconceptions and ask what God requires of us. We must include our youths in this study — not as passive pupils but as participants.

As we enter 2018, we’re preparing a new series of reports and features on Churches of Christ in the United States to coincide with the latest edition of the directory produced by 21st Century Christian. Preliminary numbers show the same, steady decline seen in previous editions.

Rather than allow the conversation to devolve into hand-wringing and finger-pointing that ultimately tells us nothing, we want to focus on the very nature of our fellowship. In 2018, who are the Churches of Christ? What defines us? Do we still call for restorative grace and simple Bible-based Christianity?

As we embark on this series, we ask for your prayers. We believe it’s time — past time — for difficult conversations about our fellowship, and we ask for guidance as we continue this newspaper’s mission to inform, inspire and unite God’s people.

India’s Christians send help after Harvey

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

— 2 Corinthians 8:1-2, New King James Version

Macedonia, described by the apostle Paul, had two outstanding characteristics: many people ready to abandon idolatry for the living God and a faith in Christ bearing the fruit of a deep, mature generosity.

I’ve been a missionary in India for 10 years — and served in Africa for 10 years before that.

For decades, since the groundbreaking work of J.C. Bailey and others, the Lord’s church has had outstanding success in India. But as I travel the U.S., seeking support for our India work, the prevailing opinion seems to be that Indian churches are perpetually weak in the faith.

Finally, the Lord has opened a door for everyone to recognize the astounding effectiveness of mission investments in India. These impoverished congregations are maturing into the fullness of Christ, standing firm in a nation every bit as idolatrous as Greece.

Recently, I was with Ron Clayton in Markapur — one of the countless villages where he and his wife Karen have worked since 1979. We were commiserating about the horrible aftermath of the recent hurricanes that brought devastation to many churches, friends and supporters of our India work.

We asked the Indian preachers to pray for them.

They agreed. Then it happened.

One preacher balefully lamented: “Brother, I wish we could help you. You have helped us all these years!” Ron asked them if their congregations might take up special contributions to help the afflicted American churches.

As the translator spoke, they began to smile. These evangelists enthusiastically and gratefully embraced the opportunity to help.

We talked about Paul’s request that Gentile churches make contributions to help hurting Judean churches. It was right for those who had received the Gospel to help the afflicted churches which had sent the missionaries, as Paul writes in Romans 15:27.

The Indian preachers immediately spread the word to other ministers and congregations. They were bursting with excitement!

Two weeks later, brother Chakravathi, who works with two rural churches, walked into our Hyderabad office and proudly presented a glass jar filled to the brim with Indian money. Underneath its label, “Church of Christ: Bommanampadu Area Disaster Relief Fund,” it held 22,321 Indian rupees, or about $339.50 — given by low and outcast Christians who earn, on average, $1 per day. In the jar was nearly a year’s income.

This was the first of many Indian churches who sent gifts through us for hurting American churches. A leper congregation sent $8. Four widows from one church sent $29. On and on. These churches are the modern expression of Paul’s work.

And, like Paul, I want to let you know of the great grace God has bestowed on the churches in India. In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounds in the riches of their liberality.

This is unique, this widespread and thrilling display of spiritual maturity. Seldom, if ever, in the Restoration Movement have mission churches responded to needs of the American churches that sent them the Gospel in the first place. I get the shivers thinking about their sacrifice and maturity in the faith!

DAVID NANCE has preached and served in ministry for 38 years and has worked in India since 2007. He is a graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching and earned a master’s from Harding School of Theology and a doctorate from Southern Christian University. Learn more about his work and India missions at DavidNance.org and IndiaMissions.org.
Should we be a ‘full-service church?’

**OUR CONSUMER CULTURE** drives us to search for a congregation that offers multiple ministries and programs. But the Gospel gives us no such mandate.

The religious world is one of fierce competition — just like the world of car sales.

Dealerships compete for business by offering friendly salespeople, an up-to-date service center, free loaners, comfortable waiting rooms.

Sometimes, we treat churches the same way. I get calls asking what our congregation offers. Do we have a sports program? A youth minister? Day care? A mothers’ morning out program? Divorce recovery? Praise bands?

Are we a full-service church?

Then I see preachers on TV, with high-priced suits, asking for money to buy private jets for their work.

Unlike them, I don’t stand before an audience of 10,000 or 20,000 on Sunday — not even 1,000. I don’t have a staff to write my sermons, do my research or make hospital visits. I don’t have a drawer full of amusing stories to liven up my sermons or material to preach on the gospel of health and wealth.

Then who am I, and what do I have to offer?

I am just a preacher of the Gospel of Christ, “not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). I have ‘determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified’” (1 Corinthians 1:13).

I preach for a congregation of people who love the Lord and who love one another. I preach for people who come to worship assemblies and classes to learn, to worship, to encourage one another, to express thanksgiving to our God. The congregation may not be large, but the members have large hearts.

Do I want people to feel good after they leave? Certainly, but the Gospel doesn’t always make people feel good. Thousands were “cut to the heart” when Peter convicted them of sin in Acts 2. People rushed upon Paul and stoned him more than once for preaching the Gospel.

If emotion is what it is all about, then I guess the mega-churches and their entertainment would win the debate. But as I search the New Testament, I find no such mandate for God’s church.

There are times when preaching the truth may make people feel bad or guilty. Paul instructed Timothy to “preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables” (II Tim. 4:2-4).

We see this in churches that go into communities to find out what people want a church to offer and then design a church around what pleases people rather than what pleases God.

The true competition isn’t between churches for the most worshippers, but between God and Satan for the souls of the lost. Satan is a great strategist. He knows how to please people. He knows how to get preachers to tell people what they want to hear. He knows how to mix the Bible with pop psychology. He knows how to wow the crowds with great entertainment and pleasing sermons.

He even has his own preachers. “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

If it’s OK with you, I’ll stick with being a simple preacher, preaching the simple Gospel. I don’t think of myself as being either eloquent or powerful, just someone who loves the Lord and loves the souls of men.

Thanks to those who put up with and encourage me.

**DAVID TANT** is a retired minister for the Roswell Church of Christ in Georgia. He is active in mission work in Asia and among the islands of the West Indies.
In an age of male misconduct, a mother speaks for chivalry

Evelations about the inappropriate behavior of powerful men dominate the news these days. As parents, this is an opportune time for us to intentionally train our sons to be gentlemen — honest, valorous and loving. But raising boys who embody these characteristics can seem daunting and overwhelming.

In “Knights in Training: Ten Principles for Raising Honorable, Courageous and Compassionate Boys,” Heather Haupt shares her experiences as the mother of three sons through the lens of chivalry, a code of conduct similar to that of medieval knights. Haupt challenges parents to help their sons to overcome the entitled, impolite, disengaged and dependent stereotypes of young men in today’s culture.

Parents, she writes, can embrace the unique traits inherent in boys and can — through imagination and playtime — appeal to boys’ need for adventure, their impulse to move and their eagerness to show off their strength in a way that helps them practice chivalric ideals.

She offers 10 principles, a “Knight’s Code of Chivalry,” and suggests practical ways for parents to teach, model and apply each one. Haupt does not support her claims with Scripture, though her Code echoes Christian principles such as honoring God, obedience, honesty, defending the weak, respecting others and generosity.

Haupt provides a link to an online “Code of Chivalry” poster and progress chart. The book also includes a list of age-appropriate chores and book recommendations that emphasize adventure, chivalry and character.

MANDY NEVius lives in Broken Arrow, Okla., with her husband, Drew, and their son, Cedar. They worship with the Park Plaza Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla.

What are you reading, watching or listening to? Send your review submissions to erika@christianchronicle.org.

The Muslim next door: Cox calls us to delicate task of loving our non-Christian neighbors

Monte Cox has to be as precise with his pen as Robin Hood is with his bow and arrow — hitting the same target twice.


Cox, dean of the College of Bible and Ministry at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., has the very delicate task of balancing truth and love as he talks about our relationships with believers of Islam, Hinduism, Shinto, Baha’i and many other non-Christian beliefs.

As a professor at a university associated with Churches of Christ, he has to present the main religions of the world from the perspective of a faith started by the One who claims that he is the only way to God. Cox has to be careful not to hold the followers of any faith accountable to any discrepancies — or even wickedness — that their faith may teach.

In that, Cox hits the bullseye both times — with arrows of truth and love.

As a native of Iraq and a former Muslim, I was most intrigued by the chapter titled “Our Muslim Neighbors.”

Due to today’s rhetoric, dealing with the Islamic faith and the Muslim people — two subjects that, I am convinced, need to be totally separated from each other — is a daunting task. A preacher feels like he is between the rock of what he is supposed to say and the hard place of what reality is.

Although the Islamic faith, based on its scriptures, theology and early history (and not on its followers, most of whom did not choose to be Muslim) introduces itself as a militant faith, it is equally important to point out that most of its followers are peace-loving, moral people and good citizens. Cox does well in noting the claims of a few members of the Islamic faith that their religion is good and benevolent, while exposing the scriptural grain of salt that begs to differ.

His exposition on the object of worship in Islam (Allah) is very professional. Coincidentally, I taught a class called “Is Allah God?” at Harding just after the book was published. Cox’s views practically matched what I taught, and his account of Muhammad’s life and the early history of Islam can hardly be argued against by any Muslim.

He labors to avoid portraying Muhammad as evil, but neither does he show him as an inspired messenger. Cox skillfully avoids the trap of considering Ishmael to be the Muslim version of Isaac in terms of God’s promise. That promise is a biblical doctrine, not Quranic. In other words, Cox’s study on Islam is admirably objective.

One section on jihad, however, has a clear Muslim undertone. Although most Muslims today believe and teach that they are not called to wage a holy war against non-Muslims — and although the word itself means “struggle” in general — the context of the word wherever it is mentioned in the Quran does refer almost exclusively to the actual war. Although Cox gives four cases when the jihad is justified (all of which sound like synonyms for self-defense), the Quran commands Muslims to fight non-Muslims — and even Jews and Christians.

Whether Muhammad intended for Islam to be militant, or whether he delivered the violent passages only to mobilize his community to avenge themselves against those specific people who had persecuted them, no one knows. We do know, nonetheless, that Islam spread through the conquests of the early Muslims way beyond Arabia, led by Muhammad’s companions who sat at his feet.

Cox claims that his work is intended to introduce Christians to world religions. In terms of Islam, I can say that “Significant Others” gives the reader a thorough, accurate and useful tool to understand the faith.

In my travels, I work to equip Christians to develop the right motives, to show their Muslim neighbors the love of Christ and the truth of his gospel. I am asked, more often than not, about Islam — its history, theology, and people.

If that is what you seek, read this book.

WISSAM AL-AETHAWI, a former Iraqi soldier and engineer who grew up Muslim, is a Christian missionary to the heavily Arab community of Dearborn, Mich. A graduate of Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas, he serves on the ministry staff of Sunset Church of Christ in Taylor, Mich., southwest of Dearborn.
Not just another ‘Why I left the Church of Christ’ book

FORMER CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE EDITOR Harold Kent Straughn shares an insightful memoir, told across the branches of the Restoration Movement

Editor’s note: In 2018 we celebrate 75 years of The Christian Chronicle. This month, Tom Olbricht reviews the memoir of a former Chronicle editor. We want to hear more stories from our former editors, writers and staff. Send your memories to erik@christianchronicle.org.

A prospective reader might think that Harold Kent Straughn’s “Anecdotes That Transform: Little Stories That Changed my Life Without my Knowing It” is just another arrogant, disgruntled, intellectual memoir by someone who left Churches of Christ.

It is true that some authors have been invited out of our fellowship or have left on their own — expressing ill-will over their upbringing.

Others have been invited out but have stayed, thinking that they were as committed to the heritage, or more so, than their detractors.

Straughn is neither. He shares why he has moved among the branches of the Restoration Movement but consistently expresses appreciation for his upbringing.

Straughn grew up in a cappella Churches of Christ and served as editor of The Christian Chronicle from 1966-68. In later years he ministered among the Disciples of Christ and, to a lesser extent, among the instrumental Christian Churches/Churches of Christ.

In his memoir we obtain indispensible insights into developments in the various wings of the movement — especially having to do with print media and communication.

Unlike Robert Fulghum in “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten,” Straughn is of the conviction that what one needs for fulfilled living occurs over an entire lifetime. He identifies seven “Life Spirals,” similar to the seven ages in Shakespeare’s “As You Like It,” but delineated differently.

Straughn draws from an amazing pool of experiences. A native of Kansas, he shares stories about the expansion of a cappella Churches of Christ in Oklahoma, Missouri and his home state. He later attended Harvard Divinity School and was involved in church activities in an African-American area of Boston called Roxbury. In Austin, Texas, he wrote for Sweet Publishing.

He lived on Long Island and ministered for the West Islip Church of Christ, planted through the Exodus Movement — an effort by Churches of Christ to plant congregations in the Northeast. He later ministered for Disciples and Christian Church congregations in Oklahoma. In 2009, he moved to Salt Lake City, where he engages in counseling and other ministries with a Unitarian church.

Throughout the memoir, Straughn shares stories that have transformed his life. He identifies his mother as “a person who confronted many challenges and crises and weathered them all with grace and perseverance.”

In contrast, he writes, “I have encountered a distressing variety of politicians and preachers who try to make a big deal out of the smallest changes in our culture. ... I only wish that more leaders possessed the strength of character that mom exhibited all her days.”

He shares a story from Germany when he brought a diverse group of believers and professors together to react to a program by the church-supported Herald of Truth ministry.

“I found this experience to be quite exhilarating,” he writes, “to bring together people of good will from widely diverse backgrounds, where they could offer their views based on sincere convictions and world-class scholarship. Building bridges instead of walls became a kind of mission for me the rest of my life.”

He shares a touching story about LeMoine Lewis, a Bible professor at Abilene Christian University in Texas, who regularly shined the shoes of his house guests before Sunday worship.

“I have participated in several ceremonies of the washing of feet,” he writes, “but none have left a more powerful impression of humility and lowly service than our major professor shining our shoes on a Saturday night.”

For those seeking such stories — plus some in-depth insight into the history of the Restoration Movement over the past 70 years — Straughn’s book is a must-read.

New and noteworthy

FOR CHILDREN


The story of a honey guide bird named Phillip, written for children ages 4 to 10, honors an abandoned child in Arusha, Tanzania, cared for by Christians at Neema House, a ministry supported by Churches of Christ.

Fortson, who founded the ministry with her husband, Michael, named the baby after Phillip Wood, one of the 239 passengers on a Malaysia Airlines flight 370 that disappeared over the Indian Ocean in 2014. Proceeds from the book’s sale benefit Neema House.

For more information on the ministry, see www.neemavillage.org.

DEVOtIONAL/BIBLE STUDY


“Names are important in our culture. Families take great pains to name their children, often honoring previous relatives or friends who have made a difference in their lives,” writes Stevens, a Christian writer and graduate of Florida Christian College. “It should be no surprise, then, that the names of God are just as important.”

In her book, Stevens invites believers to know God by all his names so that they can forge a special relationship with their heavenly Father. She offers commentary of the book on Psalms, where God’s names appear more than 1,200 times in distinct forms and with distinct meanings.

“We can hardly say we know someone if we don’t know them by name,” she writes. “So, how well do you know God?”
**Job Listings**

**Lakeview Christian Hospice Care, Carlsbad, N.M.**
Has a unique opportunity for ministry. We are seeking a full-time chaplain to work with our dying patients and their families. This position allows you to minister to people at a sometimes difficult time, listen to family life reviews, hear incredible stories, and support patients and families. Must be willing to work in patient’s home, work comfortably in a multi-denominational environment, have knowledge of the grief process and an understanding of hospice philosophy.

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

**Looking for an Energetic Evangelist**
The Bell Fork Road Church of Christ is searching for an energetic, evangelistic minister to serve full time. Our desire is for a family man with a love of GOD’s word and people and also the ability 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

**Bilingual Minister**
The Church of Christ in Pecos, Texas, is seeking a bilingual minister for our Spanish-speaking congregation. Graduate from preaching school or Christian university associated with Churches of Christ preferred. Experience a plus, but will consider a recent graduate. Candidate must be fluent in English.

Church of Christ
PO Box 1332
Pecos, TX 79772
pecoscofcoffe02@windstream.net

**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.

See on-line ad for more info.

Chambersburg Church of Christ
P.O. Box 221, Chambersburg, PA 17201
(717) 261-0835 (lv msg)
e-mail: cofc@innernet.net
www.christianchronicle.org/classifieds

**FULL-TIME PULPIT MINISTER**
Jackson Street Church of Christ is seeking a full-time Church of Christ pulpit minister. We prefer a four-year bachelor’s degree from a Christian university with a minimum of five years preaching experience. Visit us at:

www.jacksonst.org
Send resume and three Sermons (CD or DVD) to:

Jackson Street Church of Christ
Attention: Elders
1408 Jackson Street
Nashville, TN 37208

**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:

Fairview Heights Church of Christ
Attn: Youth Minister/Worship Leader
9955 Bunkum Road
Fairview Heights, IL 62208
joe@fairviewheightschurch.org

**Worship Minister Wanted**
Garden Ridge Church of Christ is looking for a full-time worship minister to lead our congregation of about 400 in worship. Garden Ridge is located in Lewisville, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. Interested applicants may send resumes to:

grworship@gardenridge.org
For a full job description, visit the church website at:

www.gardenridge.org

**Retired minister looking for opportunity to serve.**
Over 40 years experience including campaigns to Ghana and Jamaica for 25 years. I stress atonement of Christ and evangelism. I’m seeking fill-in work on Sundays or regular work with a small congregation. Prefer 120 miles radius around Tyler, Texas.

Eugene Greer
(903) 630-2196

**Searching for Full-time Evangelist - Gainesville, Florida**
The University City Church of Christ, (home of the University of Florida and Santa Fe College) is seeking a full-time evangelist to join our ministry team. The candidate’s strength will be in one-on-one evangelism and teaching others how to reach the lost. His ministry will be preaching and teaching with a passion for evangelism and community outreach. Past experience and proven successes are important. We are a congregation of 300-plus and utilize a Team Ministry concept. Preaching duties are shared with our three current ministers, and our church family is led by six shepherds. Our ministers help facilitate college, youth, and recovery ministries and devote themselves to teaching, preaching and developing worship.

If you have an interest in helping our church family grow, please submit a resume to our Search Committee at: UCCCSrch@gmail.com.

**Full-Time Pulpit Minister**
We are searching for a full-time pulpit minister who is able to relate to sinners. Jesus loves sinners. He should have the mind and heart of Christ. If you would like to be considered please send your resume to:

Green Ridge Church of Christ, Attn: Elders
PO Box 424, Greenbrier, TN 37073

**MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY**
Tiny congregation looking for sound Christian leadership. Retirement or other support needed.

Church of Christ
Attn: Billy McCarty
PO Box 487, Reserve, NM 87830
(575) 533-6574

**Full-Time Minister**
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

**Experienced Minister**
Small mission-field church in NE Indiana seeks an experienced minister to begin work in July 2018. We are in a county with 101 beautiful lakes, Camp Indogan, and Pokagon State Park. We can provide a salary of $340 per week. Preachers with partial support, semi-retired, or willing to do secular work part time are encouraged to apply at:

Steuben County Church of Christ
PO Box 156
Angola, Indiana 46703
Jan. 2-5  National Conference on Youth Ministries. Atlanta. ncymboard@googlegroups.com, ncyym.org.
Jan. 19-20  Church Involvement Conference and Involvement Ministry Training. Church of Christ, Athens, Tenn. travisirwin@att.net, churchinvolvement.com.
Jan. 27  ElderLink Houston. Bammel Church of Christ, Houston. acu.edu/events.html.
Jan 30  Eastern European Mission’s Daytona Event. Daytona, Fla. eem.org/events.
Feb. 4-8  Freed-Hardeman University Bible Lectureship. Henderson, Tenn. fh.edu/lectureship.
Feb. 9-11  Lubbock Christian University Homecoming. Lubbock, Texas. lcu.edu.
Feb. 16-18  Winterfest 2018. Gatlinburg, Tenn., Gatlinburg Convention Center. dudley.chancey@oc.edu, winterfest.org.
April 2-3  KERYGMA: A Conference for Preachers by Preachers. Memorial Church of Christ, Edmond, Okla. grady.ing@oc.edu.
April 23-26  Ohio Valley University Lectureship. Vienna, W.Va. (304) 865-6128, gk.pennington@ovu.edu.
May 1-4  Pepperdine University Bible Lectureship. Malibu, Calif. peppeid.edu.
Sept. 30-Oct. 3  Harding University Bible Lectureship. Searcy, Ark. (501) 279-4449, harding.edu/events/lectureship.

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

JANUARY 2018
THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Full-Time Minister

15th Street Church of Christ in Ottawa, Kansas, is seeking a full-time minister. Small town congregation of 60-70. Church has been established for over 100 years. We have a need for the Word of God to be taught. If interested please contact:

Richard Ecord  
(785) 566-3452

Full-Time Minister

The Grove, Oklahoma, Church of Christ seeks a full-time minister who passionately desires to preach, teach and equip members for service to God. We are a congregation of 80+ members. The ideal candidate should be educated by a biblical school, college or university affiliated with the Church of Christ. He and his family must be willing to relocate to Grove, Oklahoma. There is no parsonage available.

If you desire to be considered for this position, please submit your resume, contact information, salary requirements, three professional references to:

The Grove Church of Christ, Attn: Minister Search Committee  
1001 S Grand Ave, Grove, OK 74344
For further info: grovecoc@sbcglobal.net or (918) 786-2495

January 30, 2018

Full-Time Minister

The East Main Church of Christ is seeking a full-time pulpit minister. East Main is a congregation of 240 members located in Northeast Mississippi. We have five elders, eight deacons and are seeking a minister that is “energetic, determined, and motivated to reach the lost and interact with members to build meaningful Christian relationships.” The congregation has an active membership who is involved in conducting Bible classes, leading youth activities, engaging in benevolence, participating in foreign and domestic mission efforts, and in providing a great number of staff during our week at Maywood Christian Camp. The eldership is looking for a minister that has five years of successful experience, but will consider applicants with less. If interested send a cover letter, resume, and a recent sermon (audio or video) to:

East Main Church of Christ  
PO Box 1761, Tupelo, MS 38804  
eastmainc38804@gmail.com, (662) 842-6116
I relish the coming of a new year, even if I cannot anticipate what the time will bring.

This past year was amazing, with many unexpected blessings. Back in 2015 I felt the pain of losing the wife of my youth. I went to Vienna, Austria, and explored how I could aid friends who were part of the Danube Church of Christ. I spent 10 weeks there in 2016 and rediscovered the joy of working with godly people.

Shortly after returning from Vienna, I began having meals with Linda Samples. We became good friends, and I was impressed by her faith and her strength in facing many difficulties life had brought her. We both realized that God was the most important force in our lives. I returned to Europe in November for the Euro-American Retreat and spent a month with the Danube church. During those weeks, I realized how God had blessed me by bringing Linda into my life, and I resolved to seek to spend the rest of my life with her.

We were married June 1, and blessings continue.

A new year is a good time to take stock and make plans. Since I was 12, I have loved learning from the Bible. For the past two years, I have concentrated on Isaiah. During the first part of 2018, I plan to pull my thoughts together on that book. Then I want to begin to study Jeremiah.

The words of these Old Testament prophets help to reveal so much about the nature of God and his expectations. The messages from God are powerful invitations to know him better and to see how he continues working in our lives.

I urge every reader to plan for Bible study next year. Choose a topic to explore, or study a book of the Bible you don’t know much about. Do what will be challenging and nurturing. We must all keep growing closer to God.

Strengthening our relationships is very important. Since April 2015, I have been too focused on myself. In the coming year I want to make a greater effort to reach out to my family — my six children (three by marriage), 12 grandchildren (four by marriage) and five great-grandchildren.

But I want to expand my circle of relationships and strengthen ties with longtime friends and new friends. I know that close relationships are good for the mind and soul.

I encourage you to strengthen your relationships. If there are broken relationships, make a special effort to mend and repair those connections. We all need to develop the spirit of Barnabas, who was ready to help and encourage in every way possible.

I have always been active in my church. I teach one quarter each year, and that is beneficial for me and increases my understanding of God’s Word. But there are many other ways to serve that can make me more sensitive to the needs of brothers and sisters.

I need to broaden my knowledge of missions and the opportunities around the world to let people know the Savior.

Please resolve for 2018 that you will be more active with your church family and the programs which serve that community as well as the community around you.

Life is always changing and challenging us. We do not have control of circumstances, but we have control of our attitudes and our responses.

Do not simply drift through the new year, but with a heart surrendered to God, move through the New Year with purpose and resolve.

CONTACT: bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org
Taking the Chronicle to new heights
Carol Copeland of Omaha, Neb., gives The Christian Chronicle a leisurely read while zip-lining in Alaska. Send us your favorite photos of Chronicle reading — wherever you roam. Email images to erik@christianchronicle.org.

TO OUR READERS

On Giving Tuesday, you proved us wrong

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

You have blessed us. Recently, we asked you to be a part of our #GivingTuesday online campaign. Our goal was $9,000 — more than we’ve ever raised online in a single day.

Understandably, we were a little anxious. All of us know how difficult it is to ask for money — whether it’s for a high school mission trip, a relief effort or anything else. We must humble ourselves and acknowledge that we need help in order to continue our work.

Although we trust in God’s provision, we worried that we might not reach our goal. But you, our readers, proved us wrong.

You gave $14,010.

We’re so thankful to our matching donors and all of those who helped us reach and exceed our goal.

As you know, quality journalism means ever-rising costs — not only to cover stories but also to print and deliver the news. Thank you for believing in us and supporting us.

If you were unable to contribute on Giving Tuesday, there’s still plenty of time to contribute to this good work. We hope you will consider making an end-of-year, tax-deductible gift — online, by phone or by mail — to help us move into 2018.

We also ask that you pray for the work of the Chronicle and for our staff. In 2018, we celebrate 75 years of working to inform, inspire and unite Christians around the world.

We praise God for allowing us to make it this far and pray that we will be able to continue this work for many more years. All of us at The Christian Chronicle consider it a privilege that you allow us a place to tell the good news of Christians around the world.

Foster’s Home for Children in Stephenville, Texas, is looking for a Case Manager that will monitor two homes with up to eight youth in each home. The proper candidate will have a Bachelor’s Degree in a behavioral science or a Bachelor’s Degree with childcare experience.

Foster’s Home is a Church of Christ funded children’s home that uses the Sanctuary Model of trauma informed care. Salary commensurate with experience. Please visit fostershome.org for more information on Foster’s Home and the job application. For more information please call:

Harriet Frazier at (254) 968-2143
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worldbibleschool.net/connect

THE NEXT GENERATION TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

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