Igor Kozlovsky endured 700 days of anguish, torture, sickness and inhumane living conditions at the hands of his captors, the pro-Russian separatists who seized control of his homeland in eastern Ukraine.

The 63-year-old author, theology professor and preacher for Churches of Christ was an outspoken critic of the war that has divided the Eastern European nation since 2014. Militia men accused him of espionage against their self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic.

Seized outside his home on Jan. 27, 2016, Kozlovsky spent a month in a crowded basement with other prisoners.

At one point, his captors placed a cloth bag over his head, locked him in handcuffs and forced him to hold a pair of grenades, which they claimed they had found behind a bookshelf in his apartment. For hours, they beat him with “something that felt like an international newspaper for Churches of Christ”. 

**Tears and fears: Church teen killed by Arkansas police**

**LOVED ONES STRUGGLE** to understand 17-year-old’s decision to open fire.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A thin sheet of snow and ice covered the ground outside the Levy Church of Christ as hundreds of mourners filed into the auditorium.

Charles Smith Jr. — “C.J.” to friends and relatives — lay in an open casket adorned with red and white flowers and flanked by a giant memorial banner featuring the 17-year-old high school senior in his blue cap and gown.

Some sported dark suits and fancy dresses. Others wore jeans and T-shirts emblazoned with Smith’s smiling face. Loved ones choked back tears as they approached the coffin and kissed the teen on the way to their pews.

The death of any young person is tragic, be it from cancer or a car wreck.

The circumstances of Smith’s final moments, though, are particularly perplexing to those trying to make sense of the baptized believer’s untimely passage from, as one funeral speaker described it, “earth to glory.”

“Like many of us from time to time, he made bad judgments,” Duncan Martin, minister for the Southside Church of Christ in Little Rock, said in Smith’s eulogy. “But bad judgment does not deserve a death sentence. If that were true, this auditorium would be empty today.”

**0 say, can you sing: Teen performs anthem**

Morgan Womley, 15, from the Heritage Place Church of Christ in Birmingham, Ala., sings the national anthem at a hockey game attended by thousands of teens from Churches of Christ. The outing to the Huntsville Havoc-Birmingham Bulls game came as part of the annual Exposure Youth Camp.

After two years in captivity, minister released
Whatever your circumstances are let us help you change your world. Join the growing number of people taking the initiative to change their world by studying in-depth at SunsetOnline.

“I wanted to go to Sunset but because of my obligation to my family I couldn’t go so I started looking at other colleges and universities to see if they could compare to Sunset’s curriculum, after laying them side by side I found that they couldn’t match what Sunset has to offer so the only remedy was to take courses online. It’s been a wonderful privilege to be at Sunset” - Ray Speers.
The faith and hard work of immigrants from Norway, Africa

**SIoux Falls, S.D.**

Mud clung to the cuffs of my suit pants. I feared that I might slip and drop the casket, so I sent up a silent prayer for stability.

A glaze of melting snow coated the ground that Tuesday afternoon as my cousin, Stephen, and I — aided by a cadre of white-haired Lutherans — carried our 97-year-old grandmother to her final resting place. She’s next to grandpa now. He’s been waiting for her for 21 years.

Outside the serene confines of Woodlawn Cemetery, a storm of fiery, foul language was about to overtake the media. Once again, the topic was immigrants — from Haiti, Africa and, of all places, Norway.

I don’t want to make a fuss. That is, after all, the unofficial state motto of South Dakota. But I do feel compelled to share my family’s experiences as the descendants of immigrants and my own experiences from time spent with immigrants in countries around the world.

My grandma, Margaret Loen, was the granddaughter of Norwegian immigrants. They quietly, dutifully, worked the soil of South Dakota’s Miner County. She met Irvin O. Tryggestad, whose parents came from Norway in 1910.

One day he asked her, “Do you want to marry me or would you rather be a Loen?”

Five years ago, Arlington’s burgeoning Hispanic population inspired Great Cities Missions — best known for training and recruiting missionaries for Latin America — to plant a Spanish-speaking congregation in the heart of Dallas-Fort Worth.

That church plant shares space with the English-speaking Hillcrest church and is known as the Arlington Iglesia de Cristo — Spanish for “Church of Christ.”

On a recent Sunday, the Latino body took another step in its growth and development by merging with another Spanish-speaking congregation.

Elders of the Hillcrest church welcomed the merger. Most Sundays, the English-speaking service is at

Juan Carlos Bautista and other Christians hold hands as they pray during an assembly marking the merger of two Spanish-speaking churches.

**Texas Hispanic churches merge**

**COMBINED CONGREGATION** marks another step in the growth of Spanish-speaking church plant.

**Bobby Ross Jr. | The Christian Chronicle**

**Arlington, Texas**

Besides a Family Dollar store, the shopping center across the street from the Hillcrest Church of Christ features a Latino market called Supermercado El Rancho.

Those with dirty clothes can’t miss the nearby lavandería (“laundromat”).

Five years ago, Arlington’s burgeoning Hispanic population inspired Great Cities Missions — best known for training and recruiting missionaries for Latin America — to plant a Spanish-speaking congregation in the heart of Dallas-Fort Worth.

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Elders of the Hillcrest church welcomed the merger. Most Sundays, the English-speaking service is at

**Ministry couple shows love for inner city – and each other**

**Hamil R. Harris | The Christian Chronicle**

**Baltimore** — More than once, Eric and Andrea Lorick have arrived for Sunday worship only to find their church’s parking lot roped off with police tape, officers swarming the asphalt that, only hours earlier, had become a killing field.

The Inner City Church of Christ, the congregation the couple has served for four years, meets in a gritty Baltimore shopping strip between a Subway restaurant and a liquor store.

Despite the drug dealers, crime, vice and at least two homicides since the church opened its doors here, the Baltimore couple can’t think of a place they’d rather minister.

“Everybody was planting churches in the county, but nobody was planting

See **INNER CITY**, Page 27
FROM PAGE 3
(Grandpa’s jokes would improve only slightly in the years to come.)
Grandma worked for the phone company during World War II and later taught special-needs children. Grandpa was an elementary school principal.
They taught their three sons the value of education and hard work. After college, my dad joined the Air Force, which sent him to grad school at Texas A&M. There, he first encountered Churches of Christ and began a journey that led to his baptism in Alexandria, Va.
He married a girl from East Tennessee. In a few short years, they had two kids of their own. We moved to Macon, Ga., when I was 5. Dad worked for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, taught Bible class and wrote funny stories about a possum named Bubba. Mom was my high school’s secretary.
My sister, Amy Bowman, and I try to honor the legacy of work and faith given by our parents, grandparents and our Norwegian ancestors. Amy works in children’s education for the Brentwood Hills Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn. She and her husband, Lamar, helped Dad take care of our mom as she died from cancer five years ago. Amy’s my hero.
For the past 16 years I’ve been blessed to travel to more than 60 countries for The Christian Chronicle, many times on my own dime, covering Churches of Christ. I’ve been to Haiti four times and have visited 17 African countries.
In Maryland, children of immigrants from Ghana sing during Bible class at the University Park Church of Christ.
I’ve encountered amazing souls — packed into buses in massive cities and walking the dusty roads of rural villages. The people there work long, hard days for little reward or renown.
What’s more, they’ve taught me about true goodness, about what it means to really give your life over to Christ, about real joy.
I’ve also worshipped with Churches of Christ composed of Haitian immigrants in Florida as they bathed their homeland in prayer after the 2010 earthquake. My colleague Bobby Ross has covered a Liberian congregation in Rhode Island. Just outside our nation’s capital, I spent a Sunday with a congregation of Ghanaians in Hyattsville, Md. We sang songs in their language, Twi, and for a moment I felt like I was back in Africa. Then we went to lunch at Golden Corral. It was surreal.
“We have one mind, one focus,” said Kingsley Boateng, one of the church’s leaders and a research fellow for the National Institutes of Health. Another member told me that, regardless of where we meet, “we are all the Church of Christ.”
Even in Scandinavia, where belief in God is almost shunned, African immigrants are working hard to make a difference. In Stockholm, Sweden, Ghanaian native George Opoku and his Swedish wife, Gabrielle, planted a Church of Christ in their home and struggle daily for the Gospel.
It’s an honor to tell the stories of what God’s doing among Christians in the far-flung reaches of the globe and right here in our midst. I pray that the work I do has meaning, that it helps point people to Christ.
And I pray that Grandma’s legacy of faith and hard work will live on in another Margaret Tryggestad, the one who lives in my house, the one who just turned 10.
I pray that Maggie and her little sister, Lucy, will practice the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control that defined the life of their great-grandmother.

CONTACT: erik@christianchronicle.org.
ARIZONA
PHOENIX — After 46 years with the same congregation, Merlon “Mack” Thompson is retiring as the head minister for the Tonto Street Church of Christ.

In 1960, 19-year-old Thompson was baptized in West Texas. Not long after, a deep passion began to stir within him — a burden to help other Christians with the challenges they faced.

In 1964, he started preaching. Thompson attended Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas, and graduated in 1967. He has ministered in Texas, Alabama and Arizona.

MISSISSIPPI
KOSCIUSKO — Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. once described 11 a.m. Sunday as “the most segregated hour of Christian America.”

“God be praised that it cannot be said about the Church of Christ in Kosciusko,” the church said in a recent Facebook post. “Today marks the beginning of a permanent, unified effort to serve the Lord.”

The predominantly black Tipton Street and predominantly white South Huntington congregations have merged. They will be known as the Kosciusko Church of Christ.

TENNESSEE
MURFREESBORO — The final numbers are in: The North Boulevard Church of Christ baptized more than 120 people in 2018 — more than 250 if you count baptisms from foreign missions.

Over the past four years, the congregation has emphasized discipleship and evangelism. Many members are now involved in discipleship groups and Bible studies, including several ministers who door-knock on a regular basis.

“We looked around our rapidly growing community and saw that our churches weren’t growing,” senior minister David Young said. “That means there are more and more lost people around us each week, each month, each year who aren’t hearing the Good News. We decided we aren’t OK with that.”

TEXAS
KELLER — The Keller Church of Christ recently hosted its second annual Tabitha Camp. Under the direction of Kathleen Whitson, 24 campers in fifth through ninth grades enjoyed special training classes and participated in various service activities. Campers celebrated with a banquet, where they received certificates of completion, minister Cory Collins said.

The church earlier hosted Titus Camp, which served 18 boys in sixth through ninth grades.

Thompson

Happy 125th birthday! Fort Worth, Texas, congregation celebrates

Brittany Lawson signs during the recent 125th anniversary celebration of the Southside Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas. About 750 people came together to worship the Lord and celebrate his faithfulness, minister Steve Cloer said. Former members attended, and former ministers participated, including Kyle Kiser, John Scott, Sean Fitzgerald, Mike Brown, Bryan Barrett and Hardeman Nichols. There was a children’s balloon release of 125 balloons filled with Scripture, a time capsule buried, a memorial tree planted and a special concert by the music group First Day, Cloer reported.

Photograph by Olaf Growald

Tabitha Camp participants show off the certificates they received.

Photograph by Cory Collins

John and Beth Gipson

Photograph by Keith Harris

50 years of service

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — The WindSong Church of Christ — formerly the Sixth and Izard congregation — recently honored John and Beth Gipson for 50 years of service and ministry. John Gipson has been involved in ministry since his senior year at then-Abilene Christian College in Texas in 1953. He has had a tremendous impact on the lives of many and blessed the ministry of countless preachers with his articles, WindSong pulpit minister Keith Harris said.

“What a blessing to be able to draw from his many years of ministry experience and enjoy such wonderful support,” Harris said. “John and Beth have been an amazing blessing to the WindSong church.”
The New Mexico Christian Children’s Home is currently seeking married couples for House Parents in Training. NMCCH is a private, not-for-profit, Christian organization serving children in need since 1954 and is supported by the generous donations of churches and individuals.

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Best practices: Lads to Leaders, LTC participants offer advice for newbies

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Don’t force your kids to do everything, but don’t be afraid to challenge them to try something new.

Christians with years of experience participating in Lads to Leaders or Leadership Training for Christ programs offer that advice to parents of third graders about to embark on their first journey to the annual conventions.

On Easter weekend, tens of thousands of believers from Churches of Christ across the U.S. and several foreign countries will gather in more than a dozen locales to test their Bible knowledge, perform skits and puppet shows, practice song leading and sign language and more.

“When we began, we told the kids to do two pre-convention events and one at-convention event,” said Paul Kelsey, a member of the Sylvan Springs Church of Christ in Alabama who has been a part of his church’s Lads to Leaders program for 19 years. Now his children participate in as many as eight projects during the year and do three or four at the annual convention in Nashville, Tenn.

In the winter months, Sylvan Springs members practice on the Sunday afternoons leading up to Easter, Kelsey said. Then, “a week or two before convention, we visit a sister congregation down the road and lead their worship. The girls have a ladies’ devo beforehand.”

This year’s Lads to Leaders theme is “In Remembrance of Me,” a study of 1 and 2 Corinthians. After the Easter conventions, the ministry will host its first-ever convention in Castle Rock, Colo., on April 20-22, said Roy Johnson, the ministry’s executive director.

“It is not about entertainment or having a fun weekend,” Johnson said. “It is about learning to debate, give a speech, or write an article on a timely subject.”

Leadership Training for Christ, meanwhile, will focus on the “King of my Heart,” as children study the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel.

Jan Lemmons and her husband, Paul, have been involved with the LTC Southwest Region for 24 years. The convention is Easter weekend in Tucson, Ariz. Their four children participated in as few as three and as many as 14 events, she said. Most participants average four to six events.

Jack Zorn, founder of Lads to Leaders, receives an honorary doctorate from Harding University president Bruce McLarty, right, during the Christian university’s 2017 fall commencement. In 1968, Zorn launched the training program to help Churches of Christ develop future leaders. Now more than 20,000 believers participate in the program.

“We have a great person who works with special-needs children to allow them to be a part,” she added. “Our most popular event is signing and interpreting for the deaf.”

JOIN THE CONVERSATION: Share your advice for first-time Lads to Leaders and LTC participants at www.christianchronicle.org.
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At first, the Levy Church of Christ’s connection to Smith seemed merely circumstantial: He died in a shootout with police just 30 feet from the urban congregation’s ministry center.

Only later did Levy church leaders discover that Smith — portrayed in news reports as a gang member facing decades in prison if convicted on robbery charges — attended the Southside Church of Christ, a sister congregation.

North Little Rock police stopped a vehicle occupied by Smith and two other individuals just after 1 a.m. Jan. 7 — a Sunday morning.

According to police spokesman Sgt. Brian Dedrick, officers found a gun on the teen while patting him down. A struggle ensued between the officers and Smith, and the teen fired at least one shot, Dedrick said. Officers returned fire, fatally wounding Smith.

A five-minute dashcam video released by police three days after Smith’s death seemed to confirm the official version of events.

“Since the incident, a great deal of erroneous information has appeared on social media outlets,” Police Chief Mike Davis told reporters as he shared the video. “I want to make sure we clear that up today.”

However, those inclined to distrust authorities remain highly skeptical.

“Don’t look at the video because the video was fixed,” a black Christian named Earnest Franklin said to applause at the funeral.

RACIAL DIVIDING LINES

As happens frequently in America — even 50 years after the 1968 assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. — responses to the shooting split largely along black and white lines.

“Fundamentally, it tells us how powerful race is in dividing opinions and perceptions of events in the United States,” said John A. Kirk, director of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock’s Joel E. Anderson Institute on Race and Ethnicity.

“Race seems to trump religion in this regard,” Kirk added. “Take, for example, the fact that African-Americans represent the most reliable core base of support for the Democratic Party, while white evangelicals represent the most reliable core base of support for the Republican Party.”

In recent years, high-profile police shootings of young black men have sparked coast-to-coast demonstrations emphasizing that “black lives matter.”


“I am ever shocked by the apathy displayed by white Christians,” Brice said in an email, lamenting what she characterizes as the “systematic murder of black bodies.”

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Eager to support the grieving family and contribute to the fragile peace in its community, the Levy church opened its building to...
crowds who came to light candles and pay respects to the fallen teen at the nearby street corner.

“Certainly, our desire and our goal is to serve everyone, to be sensitive to all, and to pray for everyone who is involved,” minister Danny Dodd said of his 600-member congregation, which is about 80 percent white and 20 percent black.

In his sermon a week after the shooting, Dodd preached from Romans and reflected on the tension between Jews and Gentiles then — and blacks and whites now.

“We don’t need to stumble,” he told the congregation. “The answer to all of these things is found in Christ. It's not going to be found in political agendas. It's not going to be found in passing laws. ... All of us — red and yellow, black and white — need to let the Word speak to our hearts where we are and deal with our attitudes.”

The Levy flock includes police officers, but none was involved in the fatal confrontation with Smith.

Smith had played basketball in the Levy church’s gymnasium, and deacon Ted Bowsman — who oversees the community-building ministry — recognized the teen’s mother and grandmother from past outreach events. The Levy church, in the shadow of government-subsidized housing projects, hosts annual giveaways of school supplies and winter coats.

“I knew the names and the faces,” Bowsman said of Smith’s relatives. “We had a connection.”

A BROTHER IN CHRIST

Smith often brought friends to worship at the Southside church, which has Sunday attendance of nearly 200, Martin said after preaching at the funeral.

“Nobody made him come to church,” the minister told The Christian Chronicle. “He’d been coming to church for the last three years on his own. He started off by himself, got a feel for the church, and then he just started bringing all his friends.

“Every Sunday, we never knew how many he was going to have — sometimes four, sometimes 10, sometimes 20,” the preacher added. “And they would say, ‘I’m with C.J. He brought me to church today.’ He was a good guy.”

In a poem read at the memorial service, a cousin said, “The C.J. that I know was a God-fearing young man ... with a heart of gold.”

“C.J. loved his mother, sisters and grandmother so much,” his funeral program declared. “He considered himself the ‘man of the house.’ He loved being with his family, going on road trips, out to eat and being with his church family.

“C.J. was very loving, funny, kind, and had a million dollar smile!” the obituary said. “He was loved by many and will be missed dearly.”

Such descriptions stand in contrast to the suspect shown in the video struggling with police and crying out, “I can’t go to jail.”

“C.J. had just gotten out of some trouble, and I don't think he was saying ‘I can't go to jail’ because of himself; I think he was saying it for his momma. Because he had just put her through some stuff, and they got out of debt, and he was afraid.”

The Southside preacher praised the Levy church for its role after Smith’s death. “They've bent over backwards,” Martin said. At a vigil after the shooting, “they had children on the (parking) lot doing drugs, and some guy was in a car doing doughnuts, and they easily could have said, ‘No, we don’t want no part of that.’

“But they’ve opened the doors, and everything the family requested, they’ve given it,” he added. “So you couldn’t ask for any more.”

Besides hosting the funeral, the Levy church — with help from the Southside church and the 15th Street Church of Christ in North Little Rock — catered a family meal afterward.

“FEBRUARY 2018
ACROSS THE NATION
THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE 9

Minister Danny Dodd preaches at the Levy Church of Christ after the shooting.

Bowsman

Candles, balloons, teddy bears and flowers are among the items left at a makeshift memorial for Charles Smith Jr. — known as “C.J.” — outside the Levy Church of Christ. Smith died in a shootout with police just 30 feet from the church’s ministry center.
MERGER: ‘We are bringing together three churches’

From Page 3

9 a.m., with Bible classes at 10:30, followed by Spanish-speaking worship at 11:30.

But on this Lord’s Day, about 200 Christians joined together at a bilingual celebration assembly and then ate grilled cheeseburgers and carne asada — a Hispanic specialty with fajita beef — at a multicultural potluck.

“When today we are bringing together three churches,” Hillcrest elder Alfred Wood told the combined group.

“When you consider how many different countries, cultures, races and the ages of brothers and sisters that are represented here, how can this diverse body come together and grow?

“Some say it can’t,” Wood added.

“Amen!” the crowd replied.

When God Answers Prayers

In the 1950s, Arlington — once a small, rural community — became a boomtown as the opening of a General Motors plant sparked a population explosion.

Amid an influx of young families, the Hillcrest church opened on the east side of town — growing so rapidly that, even with a 450-seat auditorium, it required two Sunday morning services.

“When I came and visited around 1968, you went in the auditorium and sat shoulder to shoulder,” Wood said. But over the decades, longtime members who raised their children in the congregation moved away.

“The neighborhood around the church struggled economically. The nearby population grew more and more Hispanic.

Church leaders tried to sell the building and move to a more desirable area. However, nobody made a suitable offer. God, it seems, wasn’t finished with the Hillcrest church in its original area.

“This has always been home to me,” said Johnnie Nelson, 71, a Hillcrest member for 60 years. “So I was thinking about how many days, months, years we’ve prayed for growth. And God just gave it to us.”

But that growth didn’t come in the way members might have envisioned.

“They don’t sell the building because God knows that we need it,” said Jesús Rodriguez, a native Puerto Rican who moved from Arizona to Texas with his wife, Carmen, to help plant the Hispanic congregation.

Nationwide, the Latino population has topped 57 million, up from 22 million three decades ago, census data shows.

“We want to see more churches planted by Hispanic teams in predominantly Hispanic communities in major U.S. urban centers,” Scott Emery, a former missionary to Chile who is Great Cities Missions’ director of U.S. teams, said in 2015. “We are in need of good candidates for such teams and in need of partnering churches willing to support them.”

In Arlington, the number of Hispanic residents exceeds 116,000 — representing nearly 30 percent of the city’s 393,000 residents.

Much of Henry’s work is typical for any minister: sermons, classes, bulletin articles, outreach, visits, weddings, funerals and interactions with the English-speaking congregation.

But there’s an added dimension to his ministry in a congregation in which the native speakers have
Members of the Spanish-speaking congregations — newly merged — and their English-speaking host church enjoy a fellowship meal after Sunday worship.

become the minority in the church hallways.

“I regularly work to help brothers and sisters understand each other across language and culture,” Henry said. “My goal here is that we all work through life together learning more and more what it means that we’re all made in the image of God. … The Spanish comes in handy when trying to help folks cross the bridge of the unfamiliar.”

NO SPECIFIC ROADMAP

Since 2012, the Arlington Iglesia de Cristo has grown to about 75 members. The children and teens — most of whom speak English — meet in combined Bible classes with the Hillcrest youth. The English service averages Sunday attendance of about 65.

Gabriel Rodríguez, son of Jesús and Carmen Rodríguez, serves as youth minister for the Hispanic and Anglo teens and leads worship for the Spanish-speaking assembly.

“Everything is in English,” Gabriel Rodríguez said of the combined youth classes. “If I have any kids that have trouble with English, I accommodate that by translating or allowing them to speak Spanish to me. But all of my kids — pretty much 100 percent of them — understand English really well.”

On this recent Sunday, the Hispanic church plant merged with the Freetown Road Iglesia de Cristo, a group of about 60 served by preacher Juan Carlos Bautista.

After meeting in the annex building of a Church of Christ in Grand Prairie, the Freetown Road group had outgrown the available space. But there is plenty of room for the merged body at Hillcrest.

“Our members are more young families,” Carmen Rodríguez said. “They have people who are a little older with more experience … and a little more wise in their responsibilities as members of the body of Christ. So we sincerely hope that our members can learn from them to have that same attitude, to get more involved and see the potential of everything they can do and become leaders in the group.”

While Hillcrest hosts the Hispanic church plant, four other congregations help sponsor it: the Granny White Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn.; the Legacy Church of Christ in North Richland Hills, Texas; the North Davis Church of Christ in Arlington; and the Woodland West Church of Christ in Arlington.

Hillcrest’s elders said they envision a day when the English and Spanish congregations might truly become one body — with elders from both groups working together to lead a combined church.

But the elders said they don’t want to create problems — with either language group — by moving too quickly. For now, the focus is on making sure that everyone who worships in the Hillcrest building considers it their own.

“We don’t use ‘they’ and ‘us,’” Smith said. “The hardest thing we had to do was get them (the Spanish-speaking group) to feel comfortable with this building. They would say, ‘Oh, this is your building; we can’t do this or that.’ And we kept saying, ‘Yes, you can. You’re part of us.’”

A 15-minute free period before Bible class each Sunday is designed to enhance fellowship between the Hispanic and Anglo members.

“In that time, we can all be together in the halls, sharing a doughnut and getting to know one another,” Smith said. “We need to wear our nametags more often. I think for the next couple of months (after the merger), we certainly need to do that.”

Keeping the focus on God will allow everyone — regardless of native language — to move forward with no fear of the future, Henry suggests.

“We have no specific roadmap,” the minister said, “besides seeking to have servants’ hearts toward each other and giving ourselves over to the guidance of God.”

ARLINGTON, TEXAS

Population: 392,787

White alone: 156,158 (39.8 percent)
Hispanic: 116,472 (29.7 percent)
Black alone: 83,328 (21.2 percent)
Asian alone: 23,322 (5.9 percent)
Two or more races: 9,791 (2.5 percent)
American Indian alone: 1,548 (0.4 percent)
Other race alone: 1,226 (0.3 percent)
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone: 942 (0.2 percent)

SOURCE: City-Data.com, 2016 population figures.
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.

The Department of Communication and Sociology invites applications for a tenure-track position at assistant professor level beginning August 2018. Applicants must have a Ph.D. in sociology. Areas of specialization are open, but we particularly seek applicants who can teach undergraduate statistics and research methods. Our faculty is engaged in research with undergraduate students on a broad range of topics. All applicants should demonstrate a record of excellent classroom teaching, the potential for scholarly endeavors, and collegial service. Applicants must have strong communication skills and interest in the development of students. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/sociology.

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.

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 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.
ALBANIA
TIRANA — In this increasingly busy Central European city of nearly half a million people, a Church of Christ is making time for moms.

The Mothers of Preschoolers ministry has helped mothers in the church become more active in congregational activities and has brought in mothers from outside the church, said missionary Bledi Valca, whose wife, Valbona, oversees the work with fellow Christians. Fourteen mothers attended a recent meeting, Bledi Valca said.

GERMANY
MAINZ — Ministry for youths and refugees were among the topics at the European Vision Workshop, which brought together 100 leaders from 58 Churches of Christ across Europe and around the globe.

Despite the notion that Europe is a “post-Christian” continent, “there are many works ... that are producing church growth and spiritual development that (are) not widely known,” said Bill McDonough, director of Arkansas-based Partners in Progress.

“European workers were able to tell their stories of success in saving their youths from the world, evangelism among Islamic refugees, how to evangelize successfully among denominational churches without sacrificing what the Bible teaches, and training men to lead churches with the goal of preparing them for the eldership,” McDonough said.

The workshop was a cooperative effort of Partners in Progress, Sunset International Bible Institute, World Bible School and World English Institute.

NIGERIA
UYO — Prison ministry in this West African nation is yielding new souls and new preachers, said evangelist Monday John Akpakpan.

“Seven discharged prisoners are now preaching the Gospel with little or no support,” Akpakpan said. “Our plan now is to give skills acquisition training to the converted prisoners.”

JAPAN
AOMORI — Two Churches of Christ in this northern Japanese city on the tip of Honshu Island hosted a mission team from the Mito Church of Christ recently.

Missionaries Joel and Kristin Osborne, Hiroaki Akahoshi and three other members of the Mito church made the eight-hour journey north to serve and encourage the Hachinohe and Misawa congregations.

Half of the church in Hachinohe came to worship with Mito church in July,” the Osbornes reported, “and to discuss how we can partner together to encourage that small church and support evangelism in that city.”

TOGO
YOBOME — The prodigal son came to life in this West African village, thanks to a group of children who participated in a play retelling Jesus’ parable from Luke 15. The play was part of a Children’s Day program that drew 76 kids from the area for a day of games, songs and refreshments, said evangelist Kokou Adjaho.

“Half of the church in Hachinohe came to worship with Mito church in July,” the Osbornes reported, “and to discuss how we can partner together to encourage that small church and support evangelism in that city.”

A legacy of love for global missions
SALATIGA, Indonesia — For Jack Exum Jr., serving the Lord at home and abroad is a family tradition.

His father was a renowned author and evangelist among Churches of Christ in the Southeast and across the U.S. Jack Exum Sr. also served as a missionary in Northern Ireland and Canada.

Jack Exum Jr., a graduate of the Preston Road School of Preaching in Dallas, has ministered for churches from Georgia to Saskatchewan — even overseas in Ukraine — and now preaches for the Keene Church of Christ in New Hampshire.

He and his wife, Wiwik, make regular trips to her homeland, Indonesia, to minister among the nation’s 261 million souls.

The couple recently traveled to the Central Java province, where they worked with Churches of Christ in Solo, Sanggrahan and Lempong.

“We encouraged brethren to grow in grace, to avoid the pitfalls of legalism,” Jack Exum Jr. said. “And we found out more about the struggles and needs of the church in this area of the world in preparation for our next trip.”

Throughout the trip, “the Lord opened doors,” he added. One such opportunity was an invitation to speak at an “Oikumene,” a gathering of preachers and members of various Christian denominations, in Salatiga.

“The leader of the group said, ‘We don’t usually speak on sensitive topics like salvation and grace, but we would like for you to return and speak more about this when you can,’” he said. “Normally, people don’t feel comfortable speaking out or asking questions, even in a class, but our topic resulted in a good session of discussion.”
RELEASED: Captivity can ‘cleanse’ a soul, but not in a good way, minister says

From Page 1

sticks,” he said, but he continually denied their charges. After the beating, his arms and legs were swollen to “twice their normal size,” he said. He couldn’t walk for days.

That was probably the worst of the 700 days, Kozlovsky said. The best was Dec. 27, 2017, exactly 23 months after he was taken from his family. He and 74 other captives were freed as part of a prisoner exchange.

It was “my second birthday, the best page of my life,” the minister said in an interview with The Christian Chronicle from the Ukrainian capital, Kiev.

After his baptism years earlier, he once again felt reborn.

No Freedom of Thought

He should have listened to his wife. He knows that now.

Kozlovsky, a former deputy minister of religion for eastern Ukraine’s Donbass region, worshiped with and nurtured the Cup of Life Church of Christ in Donetsk, a congregation of young believers.

Many of his fellow Christians fled westward after militants took control of the region, shortly after a similar uprising in Ukraine’s Crimean Peninsula, later annexed by Russia.

In the Donetsk People’s Republic there is “no freedom of thought or expression,” Kozlovsky said, “no room for differences of opinion.” Separatists claim that the Russian Orthodox Church is the region’s only true church and see other Christian groups, especially those planted by foreign missionaries, as tools for Western propaganda, full of spies, according to news outlets allowed inside the occupied territory.

Militants have seized church buildings, including two used by Churches of Christ in the city of Gorlovka.

At one congregation, the Central Church of Christ, separatists interrupted Sunday morning worship and evicted the church’s members. In Donetsk, militants seized the meeting place of the Petrovsky Church of Christ and used it as a barracks.

Kozlovsky, unemployed after the militias seized the university where he taught, stayed in Donetsk to care for his 37-year-old son, Slava, who has Down syndrome and is confined to a wheelchair due to partial paralysis. Kozlovsky’s wife, Valentina, thought they should leave, but her husband feared the transition would be traumatic for their son.

Valentina Kozlovskaya was in Kiev on business when her husband was captured. Their son watched, alone and helpless, as soldiers ransacked through their apartment. Kozlovskaya rushed home to Donetsk and, after several attempts to secure her husband’s release, quit her job and moved with her son to an apartment in Kiev.

Jeff Abrams, minister for the Tuscumbia Church of Christ in Alabama and Chronicle correspondent, visited Kozlovskaya in October.

Abrams’ congregation hosts an annual Camp Amerikraine for children, and the minister makes regular visits to support Churches of Christ in the nation of 45 million souls.

“Being in this humble home, I could sense just how much this wife needs her husband and how much this child needs his father,” Abrams said. “And being among Ukrainian Christians, I can sense just how much the church needs the return of this dynamic leader.”

Abrams planned a return trip for mid-January and collected funds from American Christians to support the family. The minister hoped to speak to Kozlovskaya again.

To his joy, he also got to speak to his wife.

Wearing a Ukrainian flag, Igor Kozlovsky receives flowers and balloons at Kiev’s Boryspil International Airport after his Dec. 27 release from a prison in Donetsk. Just after his release he called his wife and then spoke to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, who accompanied Kozlovsky and other released prisoners on a helicopter flight. Church members gleefully greeted Kozlovsky at the airport.

He also said that captivity such as this has a way of ‘cleaning or washing a person,’ but not necessarily in a good way. Your values, your relations with others, your attitude toward people and various circumstances can be washed away. You are changed.”

As he recovers from his ordeal and considers the future — returning to teaching, perhaps writing a book — Kozlovsky said he’s thankful for the prayers of Christians across Ukraine and around the world. They gave him hope.

Now he prays for the other prisoners still in Donetsk.

“We must be disciples of love,” Kozlovsky said. “Everyone is different and has different life stories, opinions. We may disagree, but we must never turn to guns. It is important to talk, not fight.”

We Must Be Disciples of Love

Despite the brutal treatment and inhumane conditions, Kozlovsky said that the hardest part of his captivity was separation from his wife, Slava and Sasha (another adult son who lives in Kiev).

“He felt as if he were responsible for their anguish,” Abrams said. “He was concerned about their safety and well-being.”

Kozlovskva also learned that he could endure more than he realized. Prayer and yoga helped, he said. He did his best to counsel his fellow prisoners.

“All men have limits,” Abrams said, and Kozlovsky “saw those without Christ essentially destroyed during their confinement.

“He also said that captivity such as this has a way of ‘cleaning or washing a person,’ but not necessarily in a good way. Your values, your relations with others, your attitude toward people and various circumstances can be washed away. You are changed.”

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After his release, Igor Kozlovsky stands with one of his sons, Sasha, and his wife, Valentina, in Ukraine’s capital city, Kiev.
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For a position profile and more information, contact Marquita Moss, Interim President and Search Committee Liaison at searchcommittee@columbiachristian.com.

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Talk about a late-night devo!

Each year, the highlight of the three-day Exposure Youth Camp comes on the final night. That’s when teens fill the balconies of the 10-floor Embassy Suites hotel and sing praises to God.

More than 2,500 voices joined in the recent Atrium Singing. At press time, a Facebook video of the singing had drawn more than 80,000 views.

In all, 2,260 teens attended Exposure Youth Camp — a 24-percent increase over the previous year, said Dale Jenkins, the event’s emcee and minister for the Spring Meadows Church of Christ in Spring Hill, Tenn. “There were 116 responses, including roughly 20 baptisms,” Jenkins said.

The event featured keynote speakers Kelvin Teamer, David Shannon, Clark Sims, Paul Spurlin, Jon Podien and Philip Jenkins. Lucas Jenkins, son of Philip Jenkins and grandson of Dale Jenkins, introduced his father to the crowd.

Breakout classes had presenters including Keith Parker, Ralph Gilmore, Lonnie Jones, Jeremy Hinote, Phillip Hines, Jeremy Pate and Kyle Butt. The teens break into teams for interactive events and devos.

Exposure Youth Camp organizers reserve all the rooms at the Embassy Suites and three other hotels. It’s the largest annual youth event among Churches of Christ in Alabama.

SINGING VIDEO: www.christianchronicle.org. The next Exposure Youth Camp will be Dec. 27-30. For more information, see www.exposureyouthcamp.com.

High-rising voices sing praises to God

HUNTSVILLE, Ala.

Kelvin Teamer, evangelist and teacher for the Church of Christ at Boulcrest in Atlanta, delivers a keynote address.

David Shannon, president of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., speaks to the teens at Exposure Youth Camp.

Lucas Jenkins, 6, introduces his father, Philip Jenkins, at the youth event. Lucas is the grandson of Dale Jenkins, the event’s emcee.

Philip Jenkins, youth minister for the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ in Tennessee, offers a keynote lesson during the Alabama youth retreat.

George Brock baptizes his sister Hilda at the pool in the Embassy Suites hotel in Huntsville, Ala.

PHOTOS BY PADDY FLANAGAN

Teens fill the balconies of the 10-story hotel for the annual Atrium Singing.
‘Noah never gave up’

INSPIRED BY THE OLD TESTAMENT patriarch who endured a trial of water, Christians on the Caribbean island of Dominica show resilience after a devastating hurricane.

By Erik Tryggstad | The Christian Chronicle

I

On the island of Dominica, after the devastation of Hurricane Maria, Wallace Hood stands on the foundation of the Good Hope Church of Christ. The small congregation’s building was completely blown away by 160 mph winds.

A faint rainbow is visible over the community of Massacre, Dominica. The bent power pole is one of hundreds on the island. Four months after Hurricane Maria, many communities are still without power or running water. Unemployment also is high.

The Massacre (pronounced “mass-SOK”) Church of Christ worships in the open air on a Sunday morning.

Unemployment and food prices are high. “It will be years before the island returns to any state of normalcy,” said Jon McKenzie, youth and family minister for the Bridgewood Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas, which has worked with the Massacre Church of Christ in Dominica for nearly 40 years. The storm tore the roof from the Massacre church’s building and completely destroyed the meeting place of two other Churches of Christ in the communities of Good Hope and Castle Comfort. The Bridgewood church is raising funds for rebuilding and relief.

McKenzie and other Bridgewood members visited Dominica recently to assess needs and encourage Christians there. Despite the massive task ahead, “what we did see among all the damage was a positive spirit of perseverance that could not be missed,” he said. “The people of Dominica are strong. They will pick up and clean up from the damage. They will rebuild homes and lives.”

Their determination is inspired by Scripture, said Robert Nicholas, a longtime member of the Massacre church who was baptized in 1974.

“‘Noah was in a struggle like us, with a lot of water,’” Nicholas said, referencing the Old Testament patriarch from the book of Genesis. “‘Noah never gave up. He trusted God.’

‘God told us that this time is coming, that this is just the beginning of sorrow. He tells you, “Hold on, don’t give in.” You have to go through trials.’

Another Massacre member, Craig Hamilton, added that surviving the hurricane has taught him to “not hang my hats on material stuff.”

‘Noah never gave up’

The Massacre (pronounced “mass-SOK”) church meets on the island’s west coast, north of Dominica’s capital, Roseau.

Travis Talkington, left, and Wallace Hood, right, both from the Bridgewood Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas, survey damage to the roof of the Massacre Church of Christ along with Dominica church member Kurnel Simon, center.
Imagine spending over a year riding the waves of a global flood in an ark filled with eight people and thousands of animals! Noah did just that. Along the way, he discovered that God saves those who are faithful to Him. And he found out that there is always a reason to be thankful. His faithful life is sure to inspire young people today to learn the same lessons. So let’s get those last few animals loaded up and find our spots as we take off on *NOAH'S ARK ADVENTURE*

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**Lesson 2:** God Sends a Flood (Genesis 7)
**Lesson 3:** God Saves Noah (Genesis 8:1-19)
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A conversation with Lee and Leslie Strobel

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

He’s an investigative reporter by training and a believer in Christ by choice.

While working for The Chicago Tribune, atheist Lee Strobel put his skills to work as he examined the evidence for a historical Jesus. The conversion of his wife, Leslie, was his inspiration. His study, and his wife’s patient support, resulted in his own conversion to Christianity in 1981 — and his 1998 book, “The Case for Christ: A Journalist’s Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus.” Critics hailed Lee Strobel’s “bulldog-like tenacity” as he interviewed 13 religious scholars for the book.

Twenty years later, Lee Strobel has authored 25 volumes, including “The Case for Faith,” “Finding the Real Jesus” and “Surviving a Spiritual Mismatch Marriage,” co-authored with his wife. His latest, “The Case for Miracles: A Journalist Investigates Evidence for the Supernatural” is slated for release March 27. He has also written books for young adults and children that give guidance for sharing their faith. In 2017 “The Case for Christ” became a motion picture released by Pure Flix Entertainment.

Lee Strobel earned a journalism degree from the University of Missouri and a Master of Studies in Law from Yale Law School. After his conversion, he received an honorary doctorate from Southern Evangelical Seminary in recognition of his contributions to Christian apologetics. He has ministered for churches in Illinois, California and Texas and currently teaches at Houston Baptist University. He and his wife have two children.

What argument against faith do you most commonly encounter? How do you respond?

Lee Strobel: According to polling I’ve conducted, as well as personal experience, the most common objection to Christianity is: How can a loving God allow pain and suffering in the world?

I give a robust answer to this question in “The Case for Faith.” Briefly, we need to make the point that God is not the creator of evil. He created the world to be good, but he gave us free will. Why? Because only if we possess free will can we truly love God and others. And since the beginning, we have used our free will to bring pain and suffering into the world.

But it’s important to note that although suffering isn’t good, God can use it to accomplish good — to draw people to Christ, to sharpen our character and to lovingly discipline his followers for their own benefit, so they might learn the right path to take. Further, the day is coming when suffering will cease, and evil will be judged. What’s more, our suffering in this world will pale in comparison to the glory in store for God’s followers in heaven.

In the end, we decide whether to turn bitter or turn to God when pain enters our life — and inevitably we find seeking God to bring the peace and courage we need, as Jesus talks about in John 16:33.

Leslie, describe the experience of seeing your husband go from atheism to faith in Jesus.

Lee Strobel: Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us that, when a person comes to faith in Christ, “the old has gone and the new has come.” I certainly saw that in Lee!

After his two-year investigation convinced him Jesus really is the unique Son of God, he whole-heartedly embraced Jesus, and Lee’s values, character, morality, world view, philosophy — everything, in fact — began to change for the good.

Our daughter, Alison, who was 5 at the time, saw the difference over several months. She came up to me one day and said, “I want God to do for me what he has done for Daddy.”

What can parents do to build faith in their children?

Lee Strobel: We should live out our faith in an authentic and honest way in front of our kids.

We should make our homes a safe place where our kids can express their fears, reservations and questions about God. If we don’t, their unstated questions can multiply into doubts that can erode their soul.

We should expose our children to faith-building resources, which is why I’ve produced children’s editions of most of the books in my “Case” series. Finally, we should pray fervently, consistently, and expectantly for our children as they face an increasingly skeptical and even hostile spiritual world.

What have you found to be an effective way to develop the faith in non-believers?

Lee Strobel: I do more listening than talking, trying to discern the real root of their disbelief; I respect them as people who matter greatly to God; I recognize that they’re on a journey that might take time; and I let them know I will be their friend regardless of their ultimate decision about God. In other words, I develop no-strings-attached friendships where there’s space for honest conversations about matters of faith.

Often, I’ll ask them: “If you could ask God any one question and you knew he would give you an answer right now, what would you ask?” This tends to expose some of their deepest objections to Christianity.

But I don’t merely respond with an apologetic answer. Instead, after they’ve asked their God question, I’ll say: “Out of all the millions of possible questions you could ask, why did you choose that one?” This question digs beneath the surface and often reveals the true obstacle in the way to this person encountering Jesus.

What most strongly undermines our faith?

Lee Strobel: Often, there are legitimate questions that can erode our faith in Christ — but many times the real source of our problem goes

Leslie and Lee Strobel visit the campus of Oklahoma Christian University.
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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.

Available from: NextStepChristianRecovery.com

STROBEL: In churches, ‘the status quo isn’t working’

FROM PAGE 21

beyond mere intellectual obstacles.

Sometimes there are psychological reasons. For instance, studies have shown that a person’s relationship with their father can influence how skeptical they are about God. After all, if an earthly father has hurt or disappointed a person, it makes sense he or she would not be interested in building a relationship with a heavenly Father.

Other times, there are moral reasons for our faith fading. We would rather choose sin than God’s commands, and so we can find ourselves rationalizing our improper behavior by expressing doubts about God. Pride can also undermine our faith. Sometimes we think we know better than God, and so we choose our own path rather than his.

What counsel would you give churches in raising their evangelistic temperature?

Lee Strobel: Leaders in the church must themselves own and model and value that spiritually lost people matter to God. Those leaders must instill that value into the congregation.

Every church should have a “point person” responsible for evangelism, whether he or she is a volunteer or a part-time or full-time staff person. This individual’s job isn’t to do evangelism on behalf of the church but to empower and enable the congregation to share their faith with others.

One hundred percent of the congregation should be trained so they can naturally and effectively share Jesus with others. Both those words are important — naturally and effectively.

Those gifted or impassioned about evangelism should be equipped and encouraged to have a disproportionate impact on reaching the community for Christ. And churches should launch ministries and events to reach their community with the Gospel. One effective innovation in this area is for churches to host “spiritual discovery groups” where non-believers can meet periodically with Christians in their journey toward Christ.

My ministry associate, Mark Mittelberg, has authored a book on this six-stage process, called “Becoming a Contagious Church,” and my associate Garry Poole has written the definitive book on doing these spiritual discovery groups, called “Seeker Small Groups.” Both of those are invaluable resources for church leaders.

Describe your 1:1:1 challenge.

Lee Strobel: I got this idea from South Korea, where the “1-1-1 Prayer Movement” started. The idea is that the congregation agrees to pray for one spiritually lost person for one minute at one o’clock each afternoon. When this movement is launched, six to eight weeks before Easter or Christmas, a focus of the prayers would be that God would open an opportunity to invite that friend to Easter or Christmas services at church.

I’ve seen this kind of campaign bear significant fruit when we’ve done it in Illinois and California. It gets the entire church involved in praying for lost people, just as Jesus did on the cross and Paul did in Romans 10:1.

What major trend do you see in churches today?

Lee Strobel: Church leaders are realizing that the status quo isn’t working. Eighty percent of American churches are plateaued or declining in attendance; 10 churches a day are closing their doors for good. We can’t continue to go down that road.

On the other hand, many church leaders are making renewed commitments to reaching their community for Jesus. I see fresh passion for helping churches become vibrant and authentic catalysts for evangelism.

We live in difficult times, when skepticism and even hostility toward faith is growing. I’m encouraged that churches are taking up that challenge and creatively figuring out how we can be stronger salt and brighter light in our culture. The “spiritual discovery group” approach that I mentioned earlier is just one example of an innovative approach to evangelism that’s well-suited to our times.

WEBSITE: leestrobel.com

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Lee Strobel

WEBSITE: leestrobel.com
Snow fun: Christian campuses in the South get a rare chance for frigid frivolity

Makeshift sleds appeared on campuses across the Southeast — from Harding University in Searcy, Ark., left, and Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., right — as a recent cold front brought snow and ice.

The blanket of white reminded Freed-Hardeman’s president, David Shannon, of a snowy morning 30 years ago. Shannon, then a student at the university, flung open his window and yelled “Snow!” to the campus. “In my excitement, I broke the window,” he said, “costing me a $25 repair fee.” He advised students to “save a window” by sharing their snowy pictures online. Many did.

Campus Ministry

Gulf Coast Getaway

Panama City, Fla. — More than 1,500 believers gathered to be “Reconciled,” the theme for the annual Gulf Coast Getaway. Don McLaughlin, preaching minister for the North Atlanta Church of Christ, delivered keynotes focusing on topics including racial tension in culture and the church. Chris Shields, campus minister for Rochester College in Michigan, led worship.

During the event, students raised $16,000, matched by another donation for a total of $32,000, for Christian Relief Fund. The nonprofit will use the funds to drill a water well in Kenya and assist in a church plant.

“The event “is one of the many traditions I’m proud of within our brotherhood,” said Tyler Ellis, campus minister for the Laurel Church of Christ in Knoxville, Tenn.

“Elders of the South Huntingdon Street Church of Christ in Kosciusko, who oversee the property, also hope to launch a School of Biblical Studies on the property, which has a library of 35,000 volumes.

Spotlight

Heritage president is a Brothers in Christ

Florence, Ala. — W. Kirk Brothers will serve as the fourth president of Heritage Christian University, a 100-student school that in 2018 celebrates 50 years of educating preachers, missionaries and Bible teachers for ministry.

Brothers spent 23 years in church ministry before joining Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., as an associate professor of Bible in 2010. He makes annual trips to the Central American nation of Panama to teach a course at the Bible School of the Americas and has helped establish future minister training camps across the region. He has participated in mission efforts in India, Israel, England and Ukraine.

Since 1988, Brothers has participated in ministry and leadership training camps across the U.S. He has served as director and co-director of the Horizons Leadership Camp at Freed-Hardeman for six years. He first taught graduate classes at Heritage Christian in 2005.

“I want to leave behind as many leaders for the Lord as I can when I depart this life,” Brothers said. “Heritage plays a unique role in training servant-leaders for the Lord. Her staff and faculty are as credentialed, experienced and dedicated as any in the brotherhood.”

He earned graduate degrees from Freed-Hardeman, Lipscomb University and Southern Seminary. He and his wife, Cindy, have two daughters. He begins the transition into his new role this summer.
**A graduation behind prison walls**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.**

Bagpipes. Pomp and circumstance. It felt like a typical graduation ceremony. But this graduation took place inside the guarded walls of the Tennessee Prison for Women. It was the first time Lipscomb University awarded bachelor’s degrees at the prison to “inside students.” The graduates were part of the Lipscomb Initiative for Education, or LIFE, which offers women in correctional facilities the chance to study alongside students from the university associated with Churches of Christ. The women were the third cohort to graduate through the program. They received face-to-face instruction from university professors and studied with Lipscomb undergraduate students at the prison. All students involved earned college credit.

**Nashville, Tenn.**

Lipscomb administrators, including president Randy Lowry and provost Craig Bledsoe, present degrees to the graduates. Professor Richard Goode founded the LIFE program.

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Cherokee Home for Children is seeking a motivated, committed Christian to become our next Director of Development. The successful candidate will be a faithful member of the Church of Christ, have a proven track record of dedicated service, and a solid working knowledge of fundraising in the nonprofit sector. He will travel and speak/preach extensively across the state of Texas. Benefits include a competitive salary, fully paid family insurance, housing/utilities, matching retirement plan, paid vacation, as well as the opportunity to work with joyful committed Christian servants in the beautiful Hill Country of Texas.

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Visit our website at: www.chc4kids.org

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**Everett White, Executive Director**
Email: sroberson@acch4kids.org
Job description available upon request.
Look us up on our website: Acch4kids.org

Must be a members of the Church of Christ.

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**CHEROKEE HOME FOR CHILDREN**

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A deacon in his prime

ON A CHURCH COMPUTER running ‘invisible’ software, Jon Pace discovered the largest-known prime number.

BY CHELLIE ISON and ERIK TRYGGESTAD
THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Recently, a Tennessee church deacon made a discovery that’s a pretty big deal.

How big? Well, it’s a number that’s 23,249,425 digits long. That’s as many letters as you’ll find in seven entire copies of the King James Bible — with enough letters left over to get from Genesis to about four-fifths of the way through Psalms.

As of Dec. 26, 2017, it’s the largest-known prime number — a number, larger than 1, that is only divisible by 1 and itself. The primes begin with 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13 and keep getting bigger, all the way up to this newly discovered, massive number.

The number was calculated by a computer program running in the office of the Germantown Church of Christ in Tennessee, near Memphis. For the deacon who installed the program, Jon Pace, the discovery was the culmination of a 14-year quest for previously unknown prime numbers.

“I printed it,” Pace told The Christian Chronicle. “It took a while.”
And a lot of paper — 69 and a half pages of large, 11 by 17-inch sheets, printed in a 2-point font.

“It’s really cool,” Pace said of the discovery. “I go from being in the et al credits to being the first named person on the certificate.”

That would be the certificate of the Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search, a global community of numeric enthusiasts who use computers to calculate Mersenne prime numbers. These numbers — named after Marin Mersenne, a 17th century French friar who studied them — are expressed as one less than a power of two.

For example, to calculate the number Pace found, you’d have to multiply the number 2 by itself 77,232,917 times and then subtract 1.

Pace, who serves as administrator for the Germantown church’s computer network and is a finance manager for FedEx, got interested in the Prime Search project after he read an article about it in 2003.

“Jon is a very humble guy and just as sweet as can be,” Porter told the Chronicle.

“We’re like, ‘Yeah, it is a big deal.’”

On the day after Christmas, Pace received an email from the head of the company that owns the Mersenne software. One of the church computers had discovered a number that, after six days of computations, was confirmed as the 50th Mersenne prime number. At least four other computer programs have since checked and verified the discovery, Pace said. The search project gave the number the designation M77232917.

The church deacon said he’s a little shocked by his newfound fame. News outlets across the country, including National Public Radio, have contacted him about the discovery. He was even featured on a TV program in Brazil.

Carol Porter, a fellow member of Tammany Oaks Church of Christ in Littleton, Colo., as one of 110,000 applicants selected out of 110,000 applicants for a Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Springs was accepted into the program’s director. Baker succeed Charles Caudill, who led the organization for 24 years and becomes president emeritus. Baker had served as World Christian Broadcasting’s vice president of development since 1999.

CHosen: Christa Springs, 2015 alumna of Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., as one of 1,200 volunteers for the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Springs was selected out of 110,000 applicants from around the world.

NEW ELDERS: Matthew Vail, Tammany Oaks Church of Christ in Mandeville, La. Lorn Benson and Jakie Gibbs, Columbine Church of Christ in Littleton, Colo.

Above: A portion of the number discovered by Germantown Church of Christ deacon Jon Pace. It is also expressed as 2\(^{77,232,917}\) - 1.
See the entire number and find links to the Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search at www.christianchronicle.org.
**Milestones**

**Minister Anniversary**

**Paul and Patsy Shero**

40 years

Southgate Church of Christ in San Angelo, Texas, celebrated 40 years with Paul and Patsy Shero as faithful servants of the Lord’s church this past December. Paul has been the pulpit minister since 1977 and is still going strong. His wife Patsy has been teaching cradle roll and leading ladies’ Bible classes for 40 years as well. As Paul will attest, God’s love and Patsy’s leadership and constant support have been the sources of his success. When the Sheros moved to San Angelo their two daughters were very young. They are now grown, and Paul and Patsy get to enjoy spending time with their seven grandchildren.

As a congregation, we are blessed and honored to have served with Paul and Patsy for the past 40 years and pray for many more years to come.

**Anniversaries**

70th: **Reed and Betty Munsell**, March 21, Hastings, Neb.

67th: **Charles and Bonnie Sheppard**, Jan. 25, Abilene, Texas.

**Memorials**

**Rachel Baggott**

1961-2017

On Dec. 21, 2017, Rachel Baggott passed away at the age of 56. Born in Dallas on June 18, 1961, she is survived by her husband of 33 years, Barry Baggott; two sons, Andrew and Matthew, all of Nashville, Tenn.; her parents, Hubert and Florene O’Rear; her brother, Patrick (Laura) O’Rear, all of Friendswood, Texas; parents-in-law, Burt and Sammye Baggott of Nashville, Tenn.; sister-in-law, Pam Baggott of Elberton, Ga.; and brother-in-law, Dennis (Sherry) Baggott of Rincon, Ga.

Rachel received her bachelor’s in journalism from Abilene Christian University, where she graduated as salutatorian. She then studied French and missions at David Lipscomb College and, 10 days after her marriage to Barry, moved with him to Lyons, France, for further language study and to work with the Church of Christ there. In 1987 she and Barry moved to the French-speaking country of Ivory Coast, West Africa, where they served as missionaries for 16 years, sponsored by the Crieve Hall Church of Christ. She served in countless ways: evangelizing, teaching women and children, mentoring new converts, providing hospitality on an almost daily basis and much more. She was also a gifted writer, producing materials in French that are used in ladies’ Bible classes throughout the French-speaking world. Both in Africa and after returning to the United States, she was above all a devoted Christian mother who always put her children’s needs before her own.

**Geames Wesley Guyton**

1937-2018

Geames Wesley Guyton, 80, passed away on Jan. 3, 2018, at the Medical Center of Central Georgia in Macon. Geames was born on March 16, 1937, in Macon, to the late Geames Wesley Monroe and Diamond Jewell (Stephens) Guyton. He retired as a mechanical engineer from Robins Air Force Base. He was a master craftsman in woodworking, and his greatest work was building his own home. Geames was of the Church of Christ faith.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Nancy (Colquitt) Guyton of Macon; sons, Brian (Kristi) Guyton, Brent (Becca) Guyton and Barry Guyton; daughter, Amanda (Jason) Wilcox; brother, Ken (Janie) Guyton; grandchildren, Jason Paul Wilcox, Samuel Truan Wilcox, Amelia Monroe Wilcox; and several nieces and nephews.

**Donald Ray Solomon**

1936-2017

On Monday, Dec. 11, 2017, Donald Ray Solomon took his final step in a life-long journey to meet his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He was born in Coalfield, Tenn., on Nov. 2, 1936. A four-year stint in the Air Force readied him for a career as an air traffic controller. In 1960 he was baptized in El Paso, Texas, where he met Jo Ann Menges. They were married in June 1960. They were blessed with two daughters, Rae Ann and Amy.

Don entered the Sunset School of Preaching in 1969. Following a two-year ministry in Australia, Don accepted a position as pulpit minister in Crossett, Ark., from 1973 to 1976. After eight years conducting the AIM program, Don and Jo returned to the mission field, moving to Dundee, Scotland, and New Castle, England. In 1990 Don and Jo Ann moved back to the States to Willard, Mo., and he served as a pulpit minister for six years and then as the outreach minister at the Grapevine Church of Christ in Texas. He later served in Portland, Texas, as pulpit minister.

Don is survived by his daughters, Rae Ann Barnes and Amy Jo Smith, and his six grandchildren.

**Donald M. Worten**, 90, Nov. 21, Lubbock, Texas.

**Memorial Gifts**

*The Christian Chronicle* appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in memory of Dr. Fred J. Alexander, Jack Greenwood, Carrell Hannah, and Bobby Porter.

Submit announcements for births, weddings, honors, retirements, memorials and tributes to milestones@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5071. Submissions start at $25.
them in the city,” Eric Lorick said.

For a quarter-century, the Loricks worshiped about seven miles to the northeast, with the East Baltimore Church of Christ, a 300-member congregation outside Baltimore’s Interstate 695 beltway.

Eric Lorick loved serving as a leader and elder of the East Baltimore church, but he felt the need to plant a congregation in the heart of an urban community. So, despite being in his 60s, he decided to help plant the Inner City church — with his wife’s help, of course.

“My wife is my co-laborer in Christ,” Eric Lorick explained. “We have been together since our high school prom.” To supplement their humble ministry income, Andrea Lorick works for the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

‘SAINTS BEST NOT SLEEP’

In the past four years the congregation has grown from 12 to 70 souls, worshipping together in their storefront auditorium.

The small church has launched a heavenly host of ministries, including a program for women called Sister 2 Sister fellowship, a young adult network and a Bible education ministry to train future church leaders.

Last year, the church sponsored a youth ministry event featuring frank discussions on sexually transmitted diseases and abstinence. At a back-to-school party, children in the church’s community received backpacks of school supplies and lessons from the congregation’s schoolteachers.

The church also hosted a “Bible Bowling” event, focused on the book of James, that included a trivia challenge and actual bowling.

It’s the “sweetest congregation in Baltimore,” said church member Jessica Veale in a Facebook post after the church’s second anniversary in 2006. The hard-working members also make it a church where “saints best not sleep,” she added.

Andrea Lorick agreed. Most of the members hold down several jobs, she said, yet still make time to help in ministry and outreach to their community.

“One sister even drives the church van,” the minister’s wife said.

Most of the people they serve are single mothers and their children, she added. From time to time, the church has a shortage of Bible class teachers.

Her husband said, “Inner city ministry is not for everybody. You have to deal with crime, people with limited resources and other issues.”

But the work is vital, said fellow minister Kevin Bethea, who preaches and serves as an elder of the East Baltimore Church of Christ.

“Church planting will be the savior of the Churches of Christ,” Bethea said. “Across the country, churches are dying, so it is important to plant churches where the people are.”

A CHRISTIAN ANCHOR FOR BALTIMORE

Nonetheless, the Loricks were all smiles on a recent Sunday night as they welcomed members of Churches of Christ across Maryland for a a cappella concert featuring the singing group Victory.

There was no crime scene tape in the parking lot that night — just lots of cars. The church’s 200-seat, second story auditorium was packed. As various vocal groups took turns lifting up songs of praise, the church members and visitors clapped and praised God.

“It wasn’t just a singing program; it was a function of inspiration,” said Ed Maxwell Sr., minister for the Suitland Road Church of Christ in Suitland, Md. Maxwell said he and fellow church members were glad to show support for the Inner City church and, hopefully, provided “inspiration to those on the front lines of the work.”

The neighborhood, accustomed to crime and vice, seemed a little more calm and a little more joyful, attendees said.

“I love my Inner City family in Christ!” church member Yolanda Robinson posted online. “My husband and I have been here almost a year, and we hope to stay. Baltimore needs a good, Christian anchor!”

WEBSITE: www.cocinnercity.org

Members of Churches of Christ throughout Maryland and visitors gather in the second-story auditorium of the Inner City Church of Christ for an evening of a cappella.
Friday & Saturday, March 2 – 3, 2018

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The dark side of giving: Our resources must honor God, not exploit the poor

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

— 1 Timothy 6:6-10, New King James Version

Money is the root of all evil.” That’s one of the great, misquoted passages in the Bible. Many of us use it to argue against wealth and a desire to make money. But Scripture does not argue that money is the root of all evil, it argues that the love of money is the root of all evil.

When I look at the state of churches and Christians across the country, I see a love and admiration of money that is toxic. Christians talk about the importance of helping those in need, but often the money they give becomes a tool to marginalize and exploit. Although the giver feels fulfilled, the giving itself reinforces poverty and undermines the work already being done in impoverished communities.

Like many Christians, I grew up understanding the significance of financial giving. We set aside a portion of what God gave us and gave it back. Christians with more resources than others gave more, and they were lauded as examples of selflessness. But I also saw a dark side to this philanthropy culture. I saw bigotry that mirrored the vicious stereotypes many of us have of mothers on welfare and incarcerated fathers. I saw paternalism and ignorance about the plight of the disenfranchised. I saw a refusal to interact with the most needy.

Our nation places too much emphasis on the size of our resources to combat society’s problems and not enough on the substance of those problems.

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Our nation places too much emphasis on the size of our resources to combat society’s problems and not enough on the substance of those problems.
FROM OUR READERS

‘Christians only’ on campus

I read with great interest your article about the decline at universities associated with Church of Christ students who self-identify as members of Churches of Christ (January, Page 1).

I find it interesting that many in a movement that has called for our religious neighbors to become “Christians only” see that, when this actually happens, it is a cause for alarm. All around us, churches that are growing usually have a non-denominational aspect to them and seek the name of Christian and wear it proudly.

Do they always understand Scripture exactly as Churches of Christ historically have? No. But rather than see this as an opportunity to have conversations with those who might look at Scripture and faith with fresh eyes, many feel threatened because they are not “of us.”

Have we in Churches of Christ become so stagnant in our pursuit of restoration that any kind of correction we might encounter — or other form being “Christians only” see that, when this actually happens, it is a cause for alarm. All around us, churches that are growing usually have a non-denominational aspect to them and seek the name of Christian and wear it proudly.

We would love to have our children attend a Christian college where faculty and students are committed to teaching and learning Bible truths.

If schools associated with Churches of Christ are truly seeking more enrollees from Churches of Christ, the financial aid must support this. We believe in the biblical principle of avoiding indebtedness. Why not offer full financial aid must support this. We believe in the biblical teaching and learning Bible truths.

Thoughts on ‘full-service churches’

David Tant has some good things to say, and I agree totally with the Scriptures he quotes. (See “Should we be a ‘full-service church?’” Page 29, January.) However, he misses it when he indicates that those who seek to meet the needs of people are pleasing man and not God.

The Scriptures are filled with commands to help the poor, the widows, the foreigners, the prisoners and the fatherless. “Full-service churches” seek to follow Jesus who went about doing good (Acts 10:38). Jesus not only preached the Gospel, but he also demonstrated God’s love by feeding the hungry, healing the sick and releasing those in oppression and bondage (Luke 4:18-19).

Doing good by helping human needs is a way to let our light shine (Matt. 5:16). Social service and preaching the gospel are complementary, not contradictory.

Calvin Warpula | Pittsfield, Ill.

A case for spiritual warfare

CHRUCHES OF CHRIST spend little time considering the reality of Satan, demons and angels. We pray to an unseen Lord to make a difference.

Satan’s greatest accomplishment may be that he has convinced us that he and his demons aren’t real.

I am 60, and I grew up in Churches of Christ. Dad had a Bible degree from Abilene Christian University. He was a missionary when I was in pre-school. We moved back to central Texas as I began kindergarten, and I spent all my school life before college in Mason.

Dad preached on and off throughout my life and was an elder for more than 40 years. I was raised in a very conservative home with a very godly father.

But as a Christian for almost 50 years, I’m a little taken aback by how we avoid spiritual warfare. I have written two books on the topic and have been invited to speak in many cities because there is so little material on it.

Knowledge of the truth is power, and I think we should bone up on this topic to enhance our prayer life.

Consider Colossians:

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see — such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.” (Colossians 1:15-16, New Living Translation)

Although I’ve never heard a sermon on the topic of kingdoms, rulers and authorities in the unseen realm, the concept is spelled out specifically here in this straightforward passage.

The unseen world is real. Angels are real. Satan is real. And, though it might be uncomfortable for us to admit, this other-dimensional realm has rank, order, authorities and territories. Fascinating.

I personally believe that the reality of the spiritual realm should have a marked effect on our prayer life. We pray to an unseen God to change things in the seen world.

STEVE HEMPHILL spent nearly 30 years as owner of a technology company in Northeast Texas before he became an author and speaker. Contact stevehemphill1@me.com. For daily Bible verses and thoughts on spiritual warfare, see Heartlight.org/spiritualwarfare.
A disconnect from the divine: Young poet ponders ‘when God isn’t there’

WHY does God seem so distant? Why is my worship so empty?”

Most of us face those questions at some point in our Christian lives. David Bowden takes us on a search for answers — focusing on five circumstances in which we feel God’s absence — in “When God Isn’t There: Why God Is Farther than You Think but Closer than You Dare Imagine.”

If you’ve attended one of the Winterfest youth events, you’ll recognize Bowden as the spoken-word poet who performs original compositions about life, faith and daily struggles. He’s a 2010 graduate of Oklahoma Christian University and received the school’s 2017 Young Alumnus Award.

His book wasn’t what I expected — a reflective memoir recounting a Christian’s struggle to rely on faith during difficult times, similar to the fare he offers on his YouTube videos.

Instead, Bowden recalls stories, both personal and secondhand, when God felt distant and unreachable. He responds by offering practical reasons and explanations for those experiences. For many of us, these times of trial make us wonder if we’re questioning our very belief in God and cause us to second-guess the strength of our faith.

But Bowden argues that those who believe in God the most and have felt his presence the most deeply are the most likely to notice his absence in their lives.

As our faith in God grows, our awareness of the gap between us and God also grows. Bowden emphasizes the certainty of God’s omnipresence, describing it as a hint and an aroma that increase our desire to stand in his presence.

As I read this book, I felt my own views on this perceived spiritual separation begin to shift. My feelings moved from a sense of guilt over the inability to completely connect to a sense of peace, to knowing that my feelings of disconnection are simply a longing to be wholly in God’s presence.

Throughout the book, Bowden references examples of miracles Jesus performed during his time on Earth — miracles that prompted those in attendance to beg for more signs. The physical aspect of the miracles, Bowden argues, would never fully satisfy the witnesses. Only when Jesus’ followers realized the eternal magnitude of his miracles did they realize that the only sign they truly needed was Jesus himself.

Bowden does a good job of exploring new thoughts on the true focus of worship, the places God resides in times of both joy and suffering and the grace God offers us. For me, this book was a wake-up call — a realization that my search for, and spiritual trajectory toward, God is never-ending. I will never feel complete in this search as long as I’m still living on this earth.

The book has wide-ranging applications for those who feel that they’re struggling in their faith and for those who feel they have it all together. It challenges us to change our ways while we take a deep, honest look at our motivations in life.

Bowden makes bold statements regarding his interpretation of biblical texts. He includes reference numbers that correlate with notes at the end of the book. His research comes from the Bible and other religious books and sources.

Although the reader may not agree with every idea he shares, Bowden provides important insight on the struggles many of us have experienced but that few of us feel comfortable talking about. “When God Isn’t There” is encouraging, convicting, thought-provoking and definitely worth the read.

KATIE HOLROYD, a native of Siloam Springs, Ark., is a senior public communication and leadership major and student news editor at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City.

Small book is a vital resource for nurturing newborn believers

A new Christian grows through observable, developmental stages as he matures in Christ. These stages are as significant as a baby’s experiences growing into adulthood.

God has given churches the responsibility to help new Christians grow and mature. What plans does your church have to help spiritual newborns during this critical time in their new Christian walk? What are some positive things we can do to help those who need the “sincere milk of the word,” as we read in 1 Peter 2:2, in order to grow up in Christ?

Philip Slate, longtime missionary among Churches of Christ in the U.S. and Europe, has written a small book, “RISEN: The First 40 Days of Your Christian Life,” to assist new believers in this critical journey. Slate encourages baby Christians to develop a new spiritual identity within the fellowship of the family of God. He speaks simply, yet eloquently, to new Christians about the first steps on the journey ahead.

Slate presents a single thought for each day, reinforced by relevant Scriptures. On each day readers are challenged by wise counsel to grow up into the image of Christ and to become incorporated into the body of Christ where they live.

“Christians are not meant for the monastery but for the marketplace,” he writes on Day 29, “Being in the World but Not of the World.”

People of faith are “not to be hermits but to be hunters for people whom they can serve in the name of Christ,” he writes. “Be on your guard against the potential evil influences found in various magazines, movies, various kinds of music and television. They may not be all bad, but therein lies part of the problem. Learn to discern.”

Each of our three children was born at a hospital that had an excellent critical care unit staffed to ensure the well-being of mothers and babies. What foresight have we given to making our churches places that help nurture our spiritual newborns?

Books such as Slate’s — combined with classes, discussion groups, Bible reading guides and spiritual mentors — may go a long way toward reducing our high mortality rate among spiritual newborns.

DALE HARTMAN has served with the Eastside Church of Christ in Midwest City, Okla., for 39 years. He is a minister and elder of the church. He and his wife, Sheila, served for 12 years as missionaries in Sydney, Australia.

What are you reading? Send submissions to erik@christianchronicle.org.
Job Listings

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

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

Gospel Preacher
The SUNSET CHURCH OF CHRIST in Taylor, Mich., is looking for a gospel preacher who loves God and his neighbor. Your life here will be alongside 200 other Christians, one fine ministry involved with our youth, a passionate missionary to the largest Muslim population in America, four hard-working servants and three prayerful Shepherds. Send resume, one or two audios or videos of you and a one-page handwritten description of your purpose in God’s Kingdom to:

Sunset Church of Christ
c/o Elders @ Sunset 24800 Ecorse Rd
Taylor, Michigan 48180

Family/Youth Minister (full-time):
Camelback Church of Christ, a 200-member congregation in central Phoenix, Ariz., is looking for a personable, family-oriented, mature Christian minister to teach and minister to our youth, youth families and other members of our congregation and to preach engaging sermons that address current issues of today. For more information go to:
CamelbackChurchofChrist.org
and click the ‘Family/Youth Minister link.

Full-time Youth Minister
The Bono Church of Christ is seeking applications for a full-time youth minister. Bono is a suburb of Jonesboro, Arkansas. We have 300+ members and an average of 25+ teens in our youth group. To find out more about our church visit, our Facebook page or our website. Please send resumes to:

darrellparks2@gmail.com

Bilingual Minister
The Church of Christ in Pecos, Texas, is seeking a bilingual minister for our Spanish-speaking congregation. Graduated 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
pecoscofcoffice02@windstream.net

Minister Search
THE ABERDEEN CHURCH OF CHRIST in Aberdeen, Md., is seeking a minister who loves the Lord, has a few years of experience and will come to love God’s family by teaching, preaching, and counseling. Our congregation is 100+ with elders, deacons, and a minister. Aberdeen has a small-town atmosphere with excellent schools. We offer a competitive salary relative to experience and education. If interested please send your resumes and recorded sermons to:

Aberdeen Church of Christ
90 Mt. Royal Ave., Aberdeen, MD 21001
aberdeencc@verizon.net

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. Salary is $800/wk. If interested please contact:

Richard Ecord
(785) 566-3462

Full-time Pulpit Minister
Multi-generational, rural congregation of 70, in Arnett, Oklahoma, is looking for a full-time minister. Ideal candidate will have ideas and experience preaching and teaching both adults and youth as well as connecting and engaging the community. Nice parsonage included.

Arnett Church of Christ
505 S Jefferson
Arnett, OK 73832
Galen Coffin at: (580) 541-0273

Experience 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

Minister Needed
Is there a congregation ready to send a minister to work in south-central PA?
Small church needs a sponsored worker for a growing community.
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 Preacher Needed!!!
Oro Grande Boulevard Church of Christ is seeking a full-time pulpit preacher. We are a congregation of 35-40 members with three elders. Retirement or other support needed. Located in beautiful Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

Ron Johnson
rjohn43611@gmail.com

Deadline for next two issues: Feb. 9 and March 9.

Classifieds start at $325, discounts offered to smaller congregations.
Contact Tonya Patton at: tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org.

Visit our online listings at: www.christianchronicle.org/classifieds.

THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE
FEBRUARY 2018
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Full-Time Minister

We are a congregation of about 60 members searching for an experienced, energetic, passionate and mission-minded minister. The ideal candidate must have an in-depth knowledge of God’s Word, along with the ability to effectively communicate Biblical truths for the edification and growth of the congregation. We are seeking a man with pulpit experience, having completed a Bible degree or preacher-training program from an accredited program. Additionally, the candidate must be a person known for spiritual and personal integrity.

We are located in Westfield, New Jersey, 30 miles southwest of New York City in densely populated Union County. Our multi-cultural, socio-economically diverse membership comes from the surrounding communities and counties.

Preferred qualifications that are important to us:
- counseling experience (formal training is a plus)
- active community involvement, including VBS
- compassion for the emotionally, physically, and spiritually weak
- organizational skills, computer savvy, ability to relate effectively with congregation
- married, preferably with children
- willing and able to lead in evangelistic and pastoral work (internal and external)
- willing to serve under the guidance and authority of the trustees of the congregation in the absence of elders
- willing to make a commitment for at least five years or more.

Please send a resume, audio/video/link of a sermon, three references and a written philosophy of ministry to:

Echo Lake Church of Christ
Winston Redwood
419 Springfield Ave, Westfield NJ 07090
wredwood02@msn.com

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Great preachers I have known: Attention to detail and love of the Word required

I need preaching that helps me to know God better. I don’t need preaching about culture and politics. I need to know God and his holiness. The world gives me its values. Preaching should guide me to God and his directions for holy living.”

That was the e-mail I received when I was part of a search committee looking for a new pulpit minister. In a world heavily influenced by media and the hype of pop culture, believers recognize that the church needs preaching inspired by the message of God.

I don’t have many early memories of preaching, since I attended church infrequently until I was 12 years old. But I was fascinated by words, stories and messages. I especially loved the stories of Bible characters. I still do.

Delmar Owen was preaching for the East Side Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla., when my family moved there. Delmar was an effective speaker who was developing his voice. Reflecting back, I think he was beginning to recognize the power of biblical preaching to transform. He was working with elders who respected him and valued his growing skills as a preacher and spiritual leader. He was studying the great preachers of an earlier age.

When I went to college at Lipscomb in Tennessee, I was thrilled to hear Batsell Barrett Baxter preach Sundays and occasionally in chapel. He always dealt in profound truths, but his illustrations were easy to grasp. I heard him give a baccalaureate address on the theme of one love replaced by a greater love. He began by telling how much he liked Zane Grey novels as boy, but in his vast library not one Zane Grey novel could be found because his love for God has replaced his early interest in western novels. His illustration made his point very memorable, and that was a hallmark of his preaching.

Through years of working with the college ministry at my home congregation in Oklahoma, I have had the chance to learn regularly from young preachers of great ability. For nearly 10 years, Shon Smith worked with college students here. I heard him preach twice a week. He often began with a story related to sports. Although not everyone in his audience loved sports, his humor and drama connected him to everyone. His details were vivid and fresh. In teaching postmodern believers, he understood the importance of explicating texts with meaningful illustrations and a clear focus on Jesus the Savior.

Another preacher who made a lasting impact on my life is Howard Norton. I first met him 47 years ago. He was part of the group that served as missionaries in Brazil. Howard always begins by reading a passage of Scripture, which he either mines for full meaning or builds on a key phrase. His messages are always positive even when he is warning or admonishing. He has a strong voice, but his delivery is conversational.

His knowledge of the Bible allows him to draw on Old Testament stories, teachings of Jesus or other New Testament writings to provide illustrations. His series on Philippians was so clear and direct that I am reminded of it whenever I reread the book. Great preaching helps the Kingdom to grow by touching the mind and spirit. But great preaching is possible only when the preacher is immersed in the Word and when he is filled with the Spirit. Preachers also need the support of the church leadership to protect their time for study and to encourage personal growth and development.

CONTACT: bailey.mcbride@christianchronicle.org

Additional openings are available in the following areas:
CANNON-CLARY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS
DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING AND PHYSICS
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS
DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY PRACTICE
PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Please visit harding.edu/hr/jobsfaculty for further information on these positions. To learn more about open staff positions, visit harding.edu/hr/jobs. Harding is committed to hiring a diverse faculty and staff. Women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and veterans are encouraged to apply.
If you’re reading this newspaper, you’re not seeing it all

For all of you who read The Christian Chronicle when it arrives in your mailbox each month, we’re thankful. But a lot of news happens between print editions of this newspaper, and not all of the news we report fits into these pages.

The Chronicle has a great way for you to get the latest headlines from Churches of Christ — delivered to your email inbox. Twice per month we send updates on stories we’re following to thousands of readers.

We recently redesigned our email newsletter to improve its readability and functionality. It serves readers as a gateway to our online publication.

The newsletter requires readers to sign up through our website, www.christianchronicle.org. Go to the site and scroll down, almost to the bottom of the page, past the features and classifieds to the gray box that reads “Don’t miss out” (pictured below). Enter your email address to start receiving the newsletter. Look for it on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

In each issue you’ll find links to the big stories we’re following, thoughtful columns from a variety of writers and online-exclusive features including Voices-only, our weekly selection of the best a cappella music videos on the internet.

Your email address will not be shared with anyone outside the Chronicle’s staff. We also promise not to fill your inbox with emails you don’t want.

Thanks again, loyal readers. It’s a pleasure to serve you.

CONTACT: chellie@christianchronicle.org

Why we support The Christian Chronicle

Did you know that 111 donors (individuals, couples and families) have contributed to The Christian Chronicle for 20 consecutive years — or more? Stanley and Betty Lobley are among them.

Dedication to God and family — both spiritual and physical — defines the lives of the Lobleys, members of the Edgemere Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas. Stanley Lobley served for many years as a deacon of the Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio. Now, at age 90, he continues to serve ministries including Sonshine House, a Wichita Falls program that feeds and clothes those living in poverty. He has worked with the ministry for 20 years.

He and his wife have three children and three grandchildren. They have donated to the Chronicle for 25 consecutive years.

Stanley Lobley says he’s known about the Chronicle for “years and years” — all the way back to his days at Abilene Christian University in Texas.

The best reason to support the Chronicle, he adds, is the vital role the newspaper plays as an information source for Churches of Christ.

Although he enjoys many sections of the paper, his main reason for reading it is to learn “what any particular church is doing at the moment, mainly the mission work.”

He urges Christians to read the Chronicle — even pieces that express views contrary to their views. “Don’t expect every article to be in accord with your thinking,” he says.

Be a part of our mission! Send your tax-deductible gift by check to The Christian Chronicle, P.O. Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100; use our online form at www.christianchronicle.org, or call us at (405) 425-5070.

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FOR FREEDOM

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. GAL 5:1

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