A new day for Puerto Rico

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

As Hurricane-battered U.S. territory rebuilds, a Kentucky church sends help and encouragement. ‘There are no words ... to thank you,’ a grateful sister says.

ARECIBO, Puerto Rico

Punishing, back-to-back hurricanes that wrecked this U.S. territory nearly a year ago swept away homes, decimated crops, knocked out electrical systems and ravaged families.

Hurricanes Irma and Maria failed, however, to kill the spirits of those in this poor, coastal community who lived through the mayhem and work to rebuild.

Sandra Rosa Vargas is one.

On a recent weekday, the 62-year-old great-grandmother walked arm in arm along a pitted neighborhood sidewalk with a teenager who came with her Kentucky church to offer help and encouragement.

The two connected instantly, 13-year-old Ashton Brophy said, as Vargas shared stories of her life and offered to teach her new friend how to cook. “I just really love Mrs. Sandra,” Brophy said of the widow whose oceanside home of rocks, seashells and cinder blocks had its roof peeled away by winds that registered roughly 150 mph.

“She is just very sweet. ... She made lunch for us, rice and salad and chicken. She was telling me all about her grandbabies,” the teen added. “I just want to do everything

See PUERTO RICO, Page 8

PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

At the border, a prayer for ‘forgotten people’

AMID DEPORTATIONS and family separations, Christians in the U.S. and Mexico must balance the law and the needs at their door.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

REYNOSA, Mexico — Virginia Chaves knows what people think of her.

“We have a bad reputation,” says the 51-year-old Mexico City native, who worked for years as a housekeeper and a nanny in the U.S. — illegally. She mowed yards and raised four children.

Her employers threatened to hand her over to immigration if she complained about the conditions or the pay. By 2010, she’d had enough, she says. She turned herself in and was deported.

Now, in this border town just south of McAllen, Texas, she stands outside a respite center run by the Catholic church.

She says she’s trying to get a passport so she can return to the U.S. legally and see her kids. Three are in their mid-20s. The youngest is 18. They’re educated, she says. They’ve made lives for themselves.

“I’m a hardworking lady,” Chaves says. “I didn’t depend on the government when I was in the U.S.

“Even dogs labor to eat.”

Her words are eerily evocative of the Canaanite woman’s response to Jesus in Matthew 15: “Even the dogs eat the crumbs

See BORDER, Page 14

PHOTOS BY BOBBY ROSS JR.

Just south of the U.S. border, Dale Fielder of the Pharr Church of Christ in Texas prays with Virginia Chaves.

PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Reidland church member Kelly Walden paints the home of a Hurricane Maria victim in Arecibo.
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Utah conference affords healthy, respectful dialogue

PROVO, Utah

This is definitely not Church of Christ country.

Utah boasts fewer than 1,100 adherents of Churches of Christ — to go along with, oh, 2 million or so Mormons.

Suffice it to say that my wife, Tamie, and I were outnumbered during a recent visit to Brigham Young University, the flagship university of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Nonetheless, we had a terrific time and got to know kind people with different beliefs from our own.

“I understand Campbell is a pretty important name in Churches of Christ,” Joel Campbell said, smiling, as handshakes and introductions were made. “No relation that I know of, though.” His comment was a reference to Alexander Campbell’s role in the Restoration Movement.

Joel and Jolene Campbell hosted us for a night and showed us sights such as Bridal Veil Falls waterfall in the scenic Provo Canyon.

In the quaint tourist town of Park City, the Campbells and Rosses browsed bookstore shelves and souvenir shops and discussed politics and religion over pizza.

As we talked about our respective faiths and current events, we discovered shared convictions. Our

‘We do not go to church anymore’

A YEAR AFTER A MASS SHOOTING, members of the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ ‘gather to worship’ — and make the most of each gathering, says minister and survivor Joey Spann.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

NASHVILLE, Tenn.

‘I don’t know how they can ever fire me now,’” Joey Spann said of his church.

“I mean, how could they tell me I have to go when I just show them my hand?”

The minister for the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ in the Nashville suburb of Antioch held up his left hand — missing an index finger — and waited for scattered laughs and applause from an arena packed with his brothers and sisters in Christ.

Spann’s signature, deadpan humor has helped the 66-year-old minister cope with the aftermath of the mass shooting 10 months ago that claimed the life of a church member and cost him his finger. He shared his church’s experiences with a crowd of more than 1,500 on the first night of Lipscomb University’s Summer Celebration.

Ministers, elders and their wives from congregations across the nation surround members of the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ as Lipscomb University President Randy Lowry prays with the church’s minister, Joey Spann, on stage during Lipscomb’s Summer Celebration.

Violence in Haiti won’t stop mission

CHRISTIANS TRAPPED during riots say ‘we’re not giving up’ on Caribbean nation.

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Amid fires, gunshots and chaos, an Alabama mission team prayed for a safe way home from Haiti.

“You just trust in your faith. You just trust in God, and that’s what we did,” Debbie Dupuy told The Christian Chronicle after the team was back on U.S. soil.

Dupuy and her husband, Arvy, members of the Cornerstone Church of Christ in Florence, Ala., were part of a 14-member team that included members of their congregation and the nearby Petersville Church of Christ. The team spent a week in the Caribbean nation working with Liberté Ministries.

As the team prepared to fly home on July 7, they learned of growing unrest in Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince, after the government announced a sharp rise in the prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene — all vital to commerce in the impoverished nation.

The news sent Haitians into the streets, burning grocery stores and other businesses and setting up roadblocks to disrupt commerce.

The U.S. embassy encouraged Americans to shelter in place.

Debbie Dupuy helps feed a boy in Haiti.

PHOTOS BY KRISTI JONES

PHOTO PROVIDED BY DEBBIE DUPUY

Joey Spann holds up his left hand — minus the index finger he lost in the shooting 10 months ago — as he speaks at Lipscomb University.

PHOTOS BY KRISTI JONES
BYU: ‘Silence is not going to make the stories go away’

Speaking on a Brigham Young University panel on news media coverage of faith were, from left, Holly Hollman, Hannah Clayson Smith, Bobby Ross Jr., Sahar Aziz, Terry Mattingly and Emma Green.

The Atlantic.

ADMIRATION AND DISABILITY: ‘Stop asking reporters where they go to church’

But this guidance from Mattingly does resonate with me: “Stop asking reporters where they go to church.”

Mattingly’s advice seems wise, said Emma Green, a Washington, D.C.-based staff writer who covers politics, policy and religion for The Atlantic.

As religious communities, we have to be so sensitive to the fact that we’re going to be criticized,” Hollman said.

“We want to be out in the public square. We want to be respected,” she added. “And some of that is going to be based upon how we treat other people with respect, how we take criticism and what we’re willing to reveal about ourselves and our traditions and beliefs.”

Sahar Aziz, a Muslim civil liberties advocate and law professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey, urged: “Do your due diligence on the journalists. Read their stories. Find out. Because you can then predict the questions. Don’t answer their question. Answer the question you want them to ask, and take control of the interview. It’ll frustrate them to no end, but you will technically be cooperating.”

As a journalist, I can’t endorse that advice.

But according to Sage, Mattingly and others, advice seems wise, said Emma Green.

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But this guidance from Mattingly does resonate with me: “Stop asking reporters where they go to church.”

He elaborated: “Instead of asking them that question, ask them how long they’ve covered religion. What they tell you back about their own journalism experience or what they’ve done to train for this beat will help you know what kind of information you need to get for them.”

For example, a veteran religion writer probably doesn’t need a primer on basic Christian theology.

But a political reporter making a rare foray into theology?

Depending on the specific story, it might not hurt to explain concepts such as grace and forgiveness.

My advice: Treat a journalist who calls as a neighbor and a child of God — not as “an enemy of the people,” as some politicians like to characterize the news media.

Be careful and thoughtful, yes. But don’t forget to be kind and respectful, too. Just as you would when making new friends like the Campbells.

CONTACT: bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org.
**SPOTLIGHT**

**Crusade kickoff**

FORT WORTH, Texas — The West Freeway Church of Christ hosted the recent kickoff assembly for next summer’s Crusade for Christ.

More than 240 Christians came together to worship God, West Freeway minister Britt Farmer said.

The Crusade for Christ will take place June 22-29, 2019, in Fort Worth.

Launched four decades ago in Chicago, the crusade occurs every two years. Each time, it draws hundreds of volunteers and leads to dozens of baptisms in a different major city.

For more information on the Crusade for Christ, see churchofchristcrusade.org.

ARIZONA

PARAGOULD — In 1841, on the highest point of Greene County, Ark., James Monroe Hyde — barefooted and in overalls — began preaching.

Thus began the Pine Knott Church of Christ.

“That was 177 years ago, and Pine Knott is still going strong, and the descendants of James Hyde are still here,” church member Savannah Johns said of her great-great-great-grandfather.

James Monroe Hyde was the first preacher.

The Pine Knott church is the fourth-oldest Church of Christ west of the Mississippi River that still meets every week, Johns said.

The congregation marked its recent anniversary with a homecoming celebration featuring a sermon by Jay Lyles, a great-great-great-grandson of Hyde.

“Jay talked about looking back and missing our family members who have passed on, but how we also need to look forward,” Johns said. “So here’s to the next 177 years and more!”

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES — The Southside Church of Christ recently honored minister Carl Baccus for 62 years of service — no, that’s not a typo — to the congregation.

Baccus obeyed the Gospel in 1948 at the Lawrence and Marder Church of Christ in Dallas. After high school, he came to California to attend Pepperdine University.

He placed membership with the Figeroa Church of Christ, where his father in the faith, R.N. Hogan, was the minister. Baccus served as an assistant minister at Figeroa for a few years.

In 1956, Hogan and the Figeroa leaders sent 19-year-old Baccus and a small group to minister to new converts near the Jordan Downs projects. The congregation quickly outgrew every building it occupied and became the Southside church.

Baccus

TENNESSEE

NASHVILLE — The Granny White Church of Christ is getting a new name. As of Sept. 1, the congregation will be known as the Church of Christ in Green Hills.

The congregation began in 1903 when the Nashville Bible School moved to David Lipscomb’s farm, the site of what is now Lipscomb University.

When the present building was constructed in 1953, the name chosen was Church of Christ at 3805 Granny White Pike. Over the years, usage abbreviated the name most often to Granny White.

“Younger families with no knowledge of local history questioned the wisdom of such a name, even though it comes from the name of the road,” elder Dennis Loyd said.

At church’s 60th anniversary event, the prize is ... a mimeograph machine

Laughter breaks out at the 60th anniversary celebration of the Northlake Church of Christ in Tucker, Ga., as church secretaries are honored. The light moment came as secretary Betty Glenn was presented with the prize — a mimeograph machine.

The Northlake church was born in the summer of 1958 when the Druid Hills Church of Christ in Atlanta planted a satellite congregation in suburban Decatur, east of Atlanta. “God has been using us now for six decades to do his work in this community and around the world,” said Joe Glenn, a charter member who also served as an elder and pulpit minister. See a gallery of anniversary photos at christianchronicle.org.

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Responding to that *other* crisis on the border

**DEVASTATING FLOODS** in south Texas change the agenda for mission teams from Churches of Christ.

**BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE**

McALLEN, Texas

For weeks, the world’s attention focused on this south Texas city and others along the U.S./Mexico border.

News of mothers separated from their children as they illegally crossed the Rio Grande River sparked outrage and debate. On morning TV programs, national correspondents stood under umbrellas in front of government-run detention centers and reported on the crisis as rain poured — and poured, and poured.

In the midst of the immigration debate, as much as 18 inches of rain fell on south Texas, much of it in 72 hours. Cars and homes filled with water. Rivers overflowed. In nearby Harlingen, fish swam in the streets.

The floodwaters rose so fast that “a lot of these people woke up and they were stepping in water,” said Guillermo Perez, a member of the Church of Christ North in Pharr, Texas. He and a team of Christians spent nearly a week stripping more than a foot of soaked drywall from homes in Weslaco, a small town in Hidalgo County — one of six counties named in a state disaster declaration by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott.

The mission team, from the First Street Church of Christ in Lampasas, Texas, already was scheduled to serve among the colonias — Latino neighborhoods just north of the Mexico border — before the storms hit.

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The Church of Christ North houses volunteers in two mission centers and coordinates the teams’ work — from building and repairing homes for those in need to conducting Vacation Bible Schools for children. The teams partner with Spanish-speaking Churches of Christ along the border.

As cars and homes in Weslaco flooded, the church’s coordinators asked some of the mission teams if they would consider changing their agenda to relief work. The team from the First Street church, which included four teenagers, obliged.

“We gave them a choice,” said Dakota Thornton, the church’s family and youth minister, as he stood, drenched in sweat, in a small, gutted house in Weslaco. Five people lived here, including two who are disabled.

“When they saw this,” Thornton said, “they wanted to help.”

**THE HELPED BECOMES A HELPER**

“Bienvenidos” (welcome) reads a bulletin board in the fellowship hall of the Bridge Avenue Iglesia de Cristo. On a folding table just beneath sits an arsenal of electric screwdrivers and stacks of red T-shirts that read “Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team.”

The meeting place of the bilingual congregation is a staging area for relief in Weslaco, where nearly 2,200 homes received 18 inches of water during the floods, said response coordinator John King.

“And 80 to 90 percent of the people here don’t have flood insurance,” he added. So far, 510 families have applied for assistance from church members.

King, an elder of the North Bay Church of Christ in Portland, Texas, volunteered to serve as on-site coordinator for the Ohio-based Disaster Response Team, which distributes aid — some of it provided by other nonprofits — and assists churches in relief and reconstruction projects.

Last year, as Hurricane Harvey devastated the Houston area, “my house in Ingleside took a hit,” King said. He worked alongside Disaster Response directors Mark and Laura Cremeans, showing Jesus’ love to his home community.

It was tough, but rewarding. At one point, “I popped off to Mark, ‘Man, it would be nice to do this every day,’” King said.

That, he said with a chuckle, was a big mistake.

**MORE HELP NEEDED**

About 50 volunteers — including Bridge Avenue ministers Cary Gillis and Hugo Camacho — sweated side by side as they unloaded two tractor-trailer rigs full of food, cleaning supplies and other emergency items provided by Nashville, Tenn.-based Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort, or CCDRE.

Another nonprofit, Disaster Assistance CoC, set up relief centers in the buildings of the 8th and Harrison Church of Christ in Harlingen, the Harvey Drive Church of Christ in McAllen and a congregation in Mercedes.

In addition to providing meals for flood-affected residents and relief workers, the ministry has hosted several “Drive-thru Distributions.” During a recent distribution, volunteers gave out 850 personal care kits, 850 cases of water and more than 3,800 meals, said director Mike Baumgartner.

More funds and more volunteers are needed to continue the work, said disaster relief coordinators including Ken Leonard, associate director of development for CCDRE.

“Texas is tired after Hurricane Harvey, the roughest disaster in its history,” Leonard said. Moreover, “the Texas Valley is remote. It really isn’t on the way to anything, and many volunteers combine disaster relief with another destination.”

**WHY HOMES MATTER**

Back in Weslaco, after stripping damaged drywall and sprinkling an anti-fungal agent on the house’s water. Rivers overflowed. In nearby Harlingen, fish swam in the streets.

Workers, the ministry has hosted several “Drive-thru Distributions.” During a recent distribution, volunteers gave out 850 personal care kits, 850 cases of water and more than 3,800 meals, said director Mike Baumgartner.

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The work is difficult and dirty, but it can make a big impact on families in need, said Efrain Garcia, construction coordinator for Church of Christ Pharr.

“This is one of the (places) that we can really make a big difference ... their home,” he said. “This is where these families meet, and this is where they live every day.

“If we can affect the home and show them what it is to serve, it also allows for gospel conversations.”

**FIND LINKS** to contribute to flood relief and to volunteer at christianchronicle.org.
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Branches RC is located in Corona, Calif., and was founded by Phil Pafford, a graduate of Harding University. Our facility provides an escape from the stress and pressures associated with addiction, while allowing men to work beside excellent counselors to realize “their way” has not worked and to assist then in a paradigm shift in the way they think - helping men renew a positive view of themselves and put a reliance on God into their lives.

**Don’t try to fight addiction alone…Call us today!**

**(951) 817-4486**

Visit our facility at:  www.BranchesRC.com
Puerto Rico: Christians help with recovery

I can to help her.”

Twenty-six other mission team members from the Reidland Church of Christ in Paducah, Ky., shared Brophy’s sentiment. They traveled nearly 2,000 miles to demonstrate their love and concern for their Puerto Rican brothers and sisters.

“I just heard about the destruction here and how bad things have been for them,” said Alethia “Ali” Williams, 14, who came with the Reidland group. “I felt really bad, and I knew I had the ability to help. … I knew God was calling me to go.”

Maria makes a direct hit

Two weeks after avoiding the worst-case scenario with Irma, this Caribbean island of 3.3 million people took a direct hit from Maria on Sept. 20, 2017.

The Category 4 storm wiped out Puerto Rico’s electrical grid and caused roughly $90 billion in damage.

An estimated 4,645 people died as a result of Maria, according to a Harvard University study.

Here in Arecibo, a city of 100,000 about 50 miles west of San Juan, 4 feet of water washed into the newly constructed building of the Church of Christ that missionary Jim Gullette and his wife, Connie, have served for 21 years.

On a recent Sunday, the English-speaking Christians from Kentucky joined the Spanish-speaking congregation for a bilingual worship assembly in the repaired facility on Puerto Rico’s northern coast.

The church members sang “This is the day (that the Lord has made)” in each language, while men leading the communion prayers alternated between English and Spanish.

“Here we were — two different languages, two different worlds, with one heart and one spirit,” said Joni Goodman, 41, a Reidland church member who joined her 13-year-old son, Cayden, on the trip. “I just cried throughout the whole service. It was so sweet, so emotional. The spirit of God was just alive.”

Arecibo church member Rosa Mastache Dominguez prepared homemade meals such as shepherd’s pie for the mission team. She choked with emotion as she voiced appreciation for the Kentucky group.

“For the entire congregation,” Dominguez said that Sunday morning, “there are no words that we can say to thank you for the help you’ve given after Hurricane Maria.”

A Hurting Community

Just across the street from the Arecibo church, nightfall brings signs of drug trade and prostitution. It’s not a safe place to linger after dark, the Kentucky group was warned.

The area was hurting before Maria, Gullette explained, but the storm made the depression worse.

“All these homes on the right are pretty much abandoned now,” the missionary said as he drove along a nearby roadway. “Some people had no place else to go, so they’ve repainted and cleaned out the debris. But you can see down the street that there’s hardly any cars.”

Many businesses closed. Half the streetlights still don’t work. A Walgreens pharmacy blocks from the church just reopened, as did a Pueblo supermarket that had to be rebuilt.

After Maria, Christians from Alaska to Florida sent about $100,000 in donations to the Arecibo church, said Gullette, who is supported by the South Plains Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas.

Besides Reidland, congregations dispatching mission teams include the Shawnee Trail Church of Christ in Frisco, Texas, the Madison Church of Christ in Tennessee and the North Hills Church of Christ in Pittsburgh.

Even before Maria, Brian Brophy, the Reidland church’s associate minister, and his wife, Alicia, traveled to Puerto Rico to explore organizing a mission trip to the island.

The hurricane only intensified the congregation’s desire to show the love of Christ on an island where nearly half the population lives in poverty.

Besides construction projects, the Kentucky team sponsored a hot dog cookout and children’s carnival — featuring a bouncy house, games and face painting — to encourage neighborhood children and their families.

“Things such as drinking water and security that I take for granted,” said Charidy Dobbins, a 33-year-old nurse who cleared debris and helped install a new roof at the home of Arecibo church member Annea Soto.

Soto served fresh papaya to the group working at her house and made lunch for everyone — frying bread with beef inside on her stovetop.

“I have waited a long time,” Soto, speaking through a translator, said...
of the repairs. “God put the brothers and sisters from the Church of Christ in my path.”

MISSION FOR ALL AGES

To fund the trip, the 200-member Reidland church produced what its leaders called “a fun and over-the-top lip dub video for social media.” The lip dub was a mashup of 10 contemporary Christian music hits on the themes of mission and love for others, said Brian Brophy, who is Ashton’s father and Reidland senior minister Terrell Lee’s son-in-law.

“The neat thing is, we just put out the word, and not a penny of this is really coming out of our pockets,” Lee, the church’s preacher for 34 years, said of the trip’s funding. “People saw the video, and they responded.”

The mission team ranged from 10-year-old Jude Williams to 70-year-old Martha Crocker, both of whom helped paint a Maria victim’s damaged home.

Crocker is a former Florida resident whose own home sustained $150,000 in damage during Hurricane Charley in 2004.

“No matter what age you are, you can minister to other people and not be afraid, even though you don’t speak the language,” said Crocker, who wants to be an example for other older people. “I hate painting more than anything in the whole world because after (Charley) I painted and painted and painted,” she added.

“But when I prayed about coming here, I said, ‘Lord, use me how you want to.’”

God must have a sense of humor, she said with a chuckle, because he gave her a paintbrush. The home owner, Julio Candelario, showed his gratitude by ordering four large pizzas to feed the group at lunchtime.

As the volunteers ate, Arecibo church member Edwin Quinones told them Puerto Rico can’t afford to repay its debt of appreciation. But he said, “We ask for blessings for you because we know the Lord can pay you back threefold.”

“A big palm branch and an almond tree branch hit the roof, and then it all blew off. I watched it happen,” said the mother of three, grandmother of 10 and great-grandmother of nine, who witnessed the destruction from a cousin’s nearby home.

A Bible open to Malaquías — “Malachi” in English — sat on a DVD player in her living room.

Vargas grabbed a hammer to help with the construction, pausing occasionally to straighten frames and artwork on her red walls.

“I love this girl,” she said as she wrapped her arms around Ashton. As the teen and other mission team members loaded into their van at the end of the day, Mrs. Sandra wiped tears from her eyes. She kissed her hand and blew the kiss toward the group as the vehicle drove away.

INTERPRETER: Lynda Sheehan
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NIGERIA
ENUGU — “Nigeria has become a killing field,” human rights activist Mike Ozekhome said recently after violent attacks in central and southeastern Nigeria.

Clashes between nomadic Fulani herdsmen, who are mostly Muslims, and farmers who claim Christianity as their faith are becoming more and more deadly, according to news reports. At least 86 people died in recent attacks.

The Olepe Ette Church of Christ in Nigeria’s Enugu state is one of the congregations requesting prayers for peace, reports The Seeker, a publication of Fayetteville, Ark.-based Gospel Tracts International.

SRI LANKA
COLOMBO — More than 90 percent of this island nation’s 21.2 million souls speak Sinhala and Tamil, Sri Lanka’s official languages. A small number speak Telugu, a language indigenous to southern India.

One Telugu community in Sri Lanka has “not had anybody to teach them Bible in their native language for the last 40 years,” said Asee Darla, a minister for Churches of Christ in Nellore, India. “So we are arranging a FM Radio program for them in both Telugu and Tamil languages.”

Church members also are training native preachers in Sri Lanka for ministry through One Kingdom, a Louisiana-based ministry supported by Churches of Christ. For more information, see www.onekingdom.org.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
PORT OF SPAIN — A four-night revival, hosted by the San Juan Church of Christ on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, resulted in “one soul restored and between eight to twelve visitors each night,” said minister Mahase Bissoondath. The church has experienced five baptisms recently as a result of its radio program, the minister added.

UKRAINE
KIEV — “A funny thing happened to me at graduation,” said James A. Sherman, who traveled around the globe to train preachers in this Eastern European capital.

“It was not until I looked at the order of services that I noticed my name (in Ukrainian) and that I was the keynote speaker.”

Nonetheless, the preacher from Shady Valley, Tenn., addressed the graduates of the Bear Valley Bible Institute school in this Eastern European capital after teaching classes on the books of James, 1 and 2 John and courses on preaching.
BILLIONS OF PEOPLE WANT IT + EVERYONE NEEDS IT.
HELP WEI TEACH IT!

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Healing in Honduras

MEDICAL BRIGADE has ‘eye-opening’ and ‘overwhelming’ experience.

By John R. Irby | For The Christian Chronicle

Dolores, Honduras

It wasn’t exactly the World Cup, but a recent gathering in this small Central American town seemed a bit like a sporting event.

Hundreds of adults and children dressed in multi-colored shirts and hats stood in long lines, tickets in hand, waiting to enter the arena.

Inside, plenty of goals were scored, and points were put on the scoreboard — but not by kicking a ball past a keeper into a net.

On a warm day in this village of about 5,000 souls, a medical mission team treated nearly 950 patients on the grounds of a community center and school. Mission UpReach, a nonprofit associated with Churches of Christ and based in nearby Santa Rosa de Copan, hosted the clinic, coordinating a team of more than 50 volunteers who traveled from the U.S. to serve God by helping the less fortunate.

Dressed in blue medical scrubs, the volunteers acted in the role of coaches — or possibly even referees — as they directed people into lines, waiting areas, checkpoints and exam rooms to assess the patients’ needs. The represented congregations included the Pine Tree Church of Christ in Longview, Texas, and the Southside Church of Christ in Shelbyville, Tenn. A few joined the brigade from other states and from Mission UpReach’s Honduran staff.

Dr. Carmen Cecilia Santos Mejia, a physician from Santa Rosa de Copan, offered recommendations and made diagnoses. While the town of Dolores has a small health center, residents have limited access to medicines and thorough examinations, she said.

She found a variety of concerns, including poor nutrition and respiratory problems in children and high blood pressure and diabetes-related illnesses in adults.

Beth McCullough and Jade Goins, a soon-to-be freshman at Motlaw State Community College in Lynchburg, Tenn., enjoyed the experience, even if it was a bit “overwhelming” and “eye-opening” concerning the poverty and needs of the people, they said.

McCullough’s husband, Kyle, an X-ray technician, took blood pressure and pulse readings. The biggest concern he had was the low pulse rates in 6- and 7-year-olds.

Phil Berry, a former member of the Pine Tree church who now lives in Florida and is a veteran volunteer on brigades, the mission gives him the dual joys of serving and reconnecting with old friends in Honduras.

Things are going very smooth today,” said Berry, who served as a sort of pedestrian traffic cop to control hallway flow during the three-day medical effort. Many people just needed Tylenol, vitamins and other basic medications, he said, but some have previously undiagnosed conditions such as diabetes.

Another veteran volunteer, Betty Deslatte of Longview, helped fit villagers for reading glasses.

Mission trips “have been my calling,” she said. “It has always been in my heart to do mission work. It is not only a wonderful opportunity to help other people, but it also helps those of us who volunteer through our experiences and the time we share together.”

SEE AN EXPANDED VERSION of this report, including details about Mission Upreach’s dental ministry and construction projects, and learn more about the nonprofit at christianchronicle.org.

Samantha Simpson hands out toothbrushes to demonstrate proper brushing techniques during a medical clinic in Dolores, Honduras.

Just how dangerous is Central America?

Immigrants who illegally cross the border into the U.S. (see our related story on Page 1) often do so because life in their home nations has become too dangerous. Among those nations is Honduras — a country where many Churches of Christ in the U.S. send teams including teenagers to serve.

The Christian Chronicle asked church members with experience in Central America to help us understand the difference between the dangers of mission work and daily life.

“There are definitely some dangers faced by the residents of these countries that are not faced by visitors,” said Andrea Granados, who has extended family in El Salvador and has visited there eight times.

“One problem that affects the people seeking asylum (in the U.S.) and does not affect us is when gangs take over a neighborhood and start issuing death threats against the residents if they don’t pay them rent,” she said. “That happened to my sister-in-law and her family. ... My brothers-in-law and nephews had to quit attending school because it was a considerable distance and along the way were gangs that would try to force them to join.” See more comments and join the discussion at christianchronicle.org.
**BORDER:** ‘You can’t just pass by somebody who needs help’

*From Page 1*

*that fall from their master’s table.*

Today she’s fed by another Jesus — Jesús González, a recent graduate of a school, supported by Churches of Christ, that prepares Spanish-speaking ministers and their wives to serve congregations on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border. Weekly, González brings food and water to the people who congregate outside the respite center.

Across the Rio Grande River, in McAllen, news of mothers separated from their children as they crossed the border sparked a national debate. At protest rallies and on social media, Christians who advocate amnesty for the undocumented clashed with supporters of President Donald Trump’s call to build a border wall to protect U.S. citizens and jobs.

Amidst the fiery rhetoric, González spends this Friday morning handing out foil-wrapped sandwiches of chorizo sausage, egg and beans on homemade bread, plus plump jalapeños in Ziploc bags. Two of the recipients are from Honduras — a country in which many say they have endured daily violence and death threats, forcing them to illegally enter the U.S. These men, however, say they left mainly because there were no jobs.

González doesn’t talk politics. And he doesn’t see the humble meals he provides as a means of helping people break the law. It is, he insists, simply a response to God’s command to serve those in need.

“It breaks my heart when I see people who are hungry,” he says. “I feel like I have to do something.”

The *controversial parent/child separations* took place far from the eyes of most Christians, says Dale Fielder, an elder of the Church of Christ North in Pharr, Texas, a few miles east of McAllen. The facilities that hold the detained children are government-run and tightly guarded, he says. Few people are allowed inside. Christians must find other ways to serve.

So Fielder and two other church members — José Cabello and Robert Bazán — made the short trip to Reynosa to help González distribute the sandwiches.

The men represent an ever-widening, yet intertwined, body of believers who worship with Churches of Christ (or Iglesias de Cristo) across the Rio Grande valley — on both sides of the border. Continually they grapple with the complicated ministry of serving the documented and undocumented alike.

“When you break the law, you go to jail, and they provide food and shelter,” Cabello says. “Why should Christians not do the same?”

Cabello ministers for the 70-member Palmview Iglesia de Cristo in Texas and directs the South Texas School of Preaching and Biblical Studies, where González recently completed a three-year program.

Church of Christ North overseas the school. The 70-member, English-speaking church began as a house church in Pharr in 1989. Even then, its members realized that they would soon be the minority in the Rio Grande valley, Fielder says.

So the church reached out to Spanish speakers and planted Iglesias de Cristo among the impoverished *colonias* of south Texas, including Palmview, where Cabello preaches.

Now the Pharr church supports nine missionaries north of the border and nine more in Mexico, from Reynosa to Monterey. The church also coordinates service projects in the colonias. Fielder serves as missions coordinator. Bazán, a bilingual minister from south Texas, is training to succeed him.

As the border debate has intensified, the Pharr church has hosted seminars for the Spanish-speaking churches in south Texas, bringing in attorneys to address topics from immigration law to U.S. driving regulations for church buses. (A bus over-loaded with churchgoers could get pulled over by police, Fielder says.)

The preaching school now issues ID cards to its students — partly to give them a sense of connection to the school and to encourage them to complete their studies, Cabello says.

But also, “if they get pulled over, it gives them a connection to the school,” Fielder adds. “It shows they have roots in the valley.”

The church members don’t ask those they serve in the U.S. if they’re in the country illegally, Fielder says.

“We’re not going to help someone get across the border,” he says.

And yet, “our understanding of God is to take care of their needs.”

**It all happens in darkness.**

For many immigrants, Reynosa represents one final, dangerous step in a long and perilous journey from Latin America.

As they eat their sandwiches, the souls clustered outside the respite center describe encounters with coyotes — smugglers who prey on illegal immigrants, offering passage to the U.S. for $1,500 per person. The coyotes store their customers in “stash houses” until the time is right to move them across the river.

This has gone on for decades in Reynosa, but few church members see it, says Alejandro Barrios, minister for the Balcones Iglesia de Cristo, one of the congregation’s planted through the Pharr church’s ministry.

In recent months, however, the heated war of words to the north has heightened the 100-member church’s awareness of the problem — and its resolve to help, Barrios says. Church members have provided aid for about 10 immigrants and are on the lookout for more, hoping to do what they can to keep them safe from human traffickers and the city’s deadly drug cartels.

Barrios shares the information and other news about the Balcones church with Fielder and the other ministers from the U.S.

While in Reynosa, the ministers also spend time with Mateo Dimas, who preaches for the Iglesia de Cristo Lampasitos.
**Mary Barrios | Reynosa, Mexico**

There are many crises in this border town that affect Christians in addition to immigration, says Barrios, wife of Balcones Iglesia de Cristo minister Alejandro Barrios. “It seems adultery is rampant,” even in church, she says. Drug abuse also is a problem. Mary Barrios helps teach the women about the difference between submission taught in Scripture and repression.

She also tells of a former drug addict who came to Christ and has gotten the church involved with a rehab center, resulting in more than 20 baptisms.

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**Robert Bazán | Pharr, Texas**

“We have a stereotypical way of looking at immigrants as a threat,” says Bazán, missions coordinator trainee for the Church of Christ North, which serves congregations on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border.

“My wife works for immigration,” he says, and she has seen that many who cross the border illegally have tried “to do it the right way” but find only closed doors.

Bazán knows what that’s like. The south Texas native felt the doors closing in his life a few years ago. So, “I know this sounds kind of awkward,” he says, “but I wrote a letter to God.”

He grew up a nonbeliever, raised by a Catholic mother. His dad was in and out of jail. For a while “I was just completely lost in the things of the world — alcohol, parties,” he says. Then, while training to become a police officer, he received a Bible from a friend. It changed his life.

Regardless, they’ve come to love the people they’ve served in the past week, says Lorelai Dixon, 17, who begins her senior year of high school this fall.

“I’ve met so many nice people who love you like family,” the 17-year-old says. “And they make good tamales.”

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**Dale Fielder stands in front of a section of a partially built border wall near the south Texas town of Penitas.**

Church. The members of the First Street Church of Christ spent a week pulling soggy drywall from flood-damaged homes in the colonias of Weslaco.

The team, which includes four teenagers, also gave shoeboxes of toys and candy to children during a Fourth of July celebration. Healing Hands International supplied the boxes through its MAGI (Making A Godly Impact) program.

Lee knows that some of the people he helps aren’t in the U.S. legally.

“To some degree, you’ve got to look past that,” he says. “You can’t just pass by somebody who needs help.”

The team, like the country, is diverse in its views. A few members express support for President Trump’s call for a stronger border and has massive gaps to allow farmers to access their land.

“If you wall it off, you’re basically ceding that land to Mexico,” he says.

That can’t be his concern right now, says Fielder, 70, who took the reins of the Pharr church’s Hispanic ministry when his longtime friend, Craig Cooper, the ministry’s founder, died of a heart attack last March.

After decades of serving alongside Cooper, Fielder says he’s amazed by the faith he’s seen in his Hispanic brothers and sisters on both sides of the border.

And after a year of overseeing the ministry, he’s equally amazed by the challenges of the job — supervising construction projects, coordinating mission teams and raising support for the missionaries.

When he took over as director, “I didn’t sleep for two months,” Fielder says. But time and again, he’s seen seemingly insurmountable obstacles washed away by the power of prayer. Help seems to come from nowhere.

At the last minute, a person materializes who can drive nails or supervise an entire construction project.

“We just walk up to the wall and it falls down,” he says with a chuckle. “Sometimes we have to put our noses on it, but it falls.”

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**Marilu Cabello | Palmview, Texas**

“Jesus said, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’” says Cabello when asked about helping people who might be in the U.S. illegally. “If I’m hungry, am I not going to feed myself?”

The Mexican native and her husband, José, came to the U.S. legally in 1997. José Cabello’s father was born in the U.S., which helped him secure residency.

He worked as a watermelon packer.

They both were devout Baptists, but after a clinic overseen by Churches of Christ treated their son for a serious illness, they began studying the Bible and became members of the Palmview Iglesia de Cristo. José Cabello graduated from the Texas School of Preaching and Biblical Studies in 2001 and recently succeeded the school’s director, Carrol Robertson.
HAITI: In midst of chaos, mission team sees faith

FROM PAGE 3

Two members of the team had already left. The remaining 12 stayed in a guarded compound with missionaries from other faith groups — also waiting for the chance to return to the U.S.

“It became a very unsettling time,” Dupuy said. “We were trying to stay safe, keep our team safe and not feel too alarmed.”

Two days after they were scheduled to leave Haiti, Arvy Dupuy filmed a video from the compound’s roof. As smoke billowed in the background from fires in the streets below, the church member told family, friends and fellow Christians that the team was OK.

They spent just one more night in the compound. Then, escorted by police, the team made it to the airport early on July 10.

It was a frightening end to a heartwarming mission that included two Vacation Bible Schools, one of which brought together more nearly 800 Haitian children. The team also taught adult Bible classes for two Churches of Christ and worked with the Liberté Ministries preaching school.

A high point of the trip, Debbie Dupuy said, was the day they helped Liberté purchase a section of land that will someday house an orphanage.

Team members collected 12 stones and stacked them on the plot of land — a symbol from the Old Testament recorded in Joshua 4. They prayed a blessing over the land and the children that will someday fill the orphanage.

“We know that we have to train up a generation. We have to start with the young ones and train up a generation,” Dupuy said. “It’s just a beautiful thing to watch and see what happens when God’s people go in and teach and train.”

She’s home, but Haiti is still at the forefront of her mind. Despite the ordeal, she plans to return to Haiti.

“We’re not giving up. There’s too much good,” she said. “There are too many people being taught. It just humbles us to see their faith.”

She hopes that the unrest won’t keep others from serving too.

SEE UPDATES, VIDEOS at christianchronicle.org.
Montreal's heart has grown cold to the Gospel.

The largest French-speaking city in North America can be a lonely place to be a Christian.

“Our society, it’s secular,” said Horald Shabanaj, an Albanian immigrant and member of the Ville-Émard Church of Christ in the Quebec capital. “People don’t care about God. There is a strong temptation to do things other than coming to church.”

A 2016 article in The Economist characterized Quebec this way: “The Catholic heritage is everywhere, in street names, monuments and church buildings which often have been converted to secular use. But Catholic practice has plummeted. The province’s main metropolis, Montreal, is as non-religious a place as any in secular Europe.”

While 75 percent of the province’s people still identify as Catholic, only 11 percent say they are regular worshipers, the article noted.

It’s against this backdrop that the Ville-Émard Church of Christ ministers. That’s “Église du Christ” in French, as the sign out front proclaims above spray-painted graffiti. The church meets in a one-time funeral home a few doors down from a Hindu temple and across the street from a Vietnamese restaurant. There’s a Tim Hortons, the quintessential Canadian coffee and doughnut shop, at the corner.

The close-knit congregation, five minutes from downtown and close to a subway station, brings together Christians of about 15 nationalities, from Chinese to Haitian to Ukrainian.

“Everybody comes from different countries and cultures,” said Nadja Grabovari, Shabanaj’s wife. “But we share one God, and that’s what brings us together every Sunday in our worship and singing praises to him. That makes us closer as a church.”

The 60 members worship in French and English each Sunday.
However, many have moved away. So it’s a big work we do, even if it’s a little place.”

A TIME TO ENCOURAGE

For three decades, the Edmond Church of Christ — a 1,200-member congregation north of Oklahoma City — has supported Saumur and his wife, Diane, who have two daughters, Myriam, 21, and Lydia, 19.

The last three years, the Oklahoma church has sent a short-term mission team to Montreal to not only one another as Christians as we keep the faith. The group flew to Montreal, about 40 miles north of the New York state line, on a Friday. That Saturday, they bought groceries at a Walmart and prepared a fellowship meal for their Canadian brothers and sisters. Ron Pearman and Diane Saumur grilled burgers. Bev Pearman and Sue Martin prepared side dishes and desserts. Sanders prepared Bible lessons that Saturday morning and preached Sunday. Tara Colley taught the women, and Gaye Draper worked with the children. LeeAnne Draper taught lessons that Saturday morning and preached Sunday.
Before Shawn LeBlanc became a Christian, he drank. He did drugs. He partied. He played drums in a rock band.

But LeBlanc’s lifestyle changed after a colleague at the mattress factory where he worked in his hometown of Moncton, New Brunswick, encouraged him to read the Bible.

“I said, ‘I don’t have a Bible,’” recalled LeBlanc, now one of the ministers for the Central Church of Christ in Winnipeg, capital of the province of Manitoba in western Canada. “So, he gave me one, and it started from there,” the 50-year-old native Canadian added. “It took me about two months, and I read through the entire thing.”

LeBlanc was 34 when he was baptized. Eight months later, he started preaching.

Eventually, he attended Great Lakes Bible College in Waterloo, Ontario, where he studied in English — and learned Greek — after having attended a French-speaking high school.

“I knew I was a part of the body of Christ, and this is how I wanted to serve him,” LeBlanc said of entering full-time ministry. “But I wasn’t sure I could do it. I had a lot of encouragement along the way.”

LeBlanc was serving a congregation in St. John, New Brunswick, on Canada’s east coast when the opportunity came to move to Winnipeg in 2016. The St. John church, where he worked for seven years, averaged Sunday attendance of about 13.

Little did LeBlanc know that the Central congregation — with about 300 members — ranks as Canada’s largest Church of Christ.

The change — both in terms of numbers and responsibility — has been a blessing and a challenge, LeBlanc said.

“And I’ve been here, it’s been go, go, go, and I love it,” he said.

ABOUT 30 NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED

LeBlanc moved into a preaching role held for 38 years by Wayne Turner, who retired from full-time ministry but remains one of the Central church’s five elders, along with Jim Hobbs, Gary King, Glen Knutson and John Muller.

LeBlanc’s wife, Chieh, is from Singapore.

Joining LeBlanc on the ministry staff is Jay Manimtim, who has a Filipino background and retired from the Canadian Armed Forces with 20 years of service. His wife, Linda, also is Filipino.

The Central church’s diversity stood out when LeBlanc came to interview for the ministry position, he said.

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135,000 immigrants since 1980. Those immigrants have come from countries including the Philippines, India, Great Britain, Germany, China, Nigeria and Pakistan.

The Central church reflects the cosmopolitan nature of Winnipeg, home of the National Hockey League’s Jets.

“We have an annual international dinner,” said Chad Celaire, a 15-year Central member and former youth minister who gave his life to Christ while playing basketball for Rochester College in Michigan. “The last time we did our dinner, I think there were 30 different countries represented in our church. I say it’s the United Nations.”

**FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP**

Many students who attend the nearby University of Manitoba are among the Christians of various nationalities who look forward to the church’s regular potluck meals, said Eva King, wife of elder Gary King.

“We eat like crazy,” Eva King said with a chuckle. “Members and visitors alike … all come to eat with us because there is always going to be food and fellowship.”

“So, what you’re saying is that the way to the heart is through the stomach,” Gary King quipped with a smile.

Besides its diversity, the Central church’s emphasis on sharing the Gospel with its community impressed LeBlanc.

The congregation makes connections with neighbors through Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered addiction recovery ministry, and FriendSpeak, which uses the Bible to help immigrants improve English skills. Besides those programs, the church serves the poor with a clothing closet that covers much of its basement.

“A lot of the programs that we have really do a lot as far as trying to reach the people of Winnipeg,” LeBlanc said. “For example, Celebrate Recovery and FriendSpeak have brought a lot of people who come on Sunday morning,” he added. “Some of them have been converted. … It’s really done a lot to get them from point A to point B, into the church, sitting down and worshiping and listening, and that’s appealing. That’s all I want.”
Full-Time Family & Youth Minister
The Woodinville Church of Christ is seeking a full-time Family & Youth Minister, for a mature, 250-member-strong congregation with five elders, 16 deacons, a full-time pulpit minister and a very active fellowship. We seek someone to enthusiastically reach out to teens and their families and assist in guiding our teens to a committed relationship with Jesus. We would prefer someone with seven years of experience including leading year-round outdoor adventure opportunities. Salary is commensurate with education and experience.

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Please submit your resume and sermon audio sample to the Family & Youth Minister Search Committee: searchcommittee@woodinvillecofc.org

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The Naperville Church of Christ is looking for a full-time youth minister to provide leadership, shepherding and oversight of our church's youth group, consisting of both junior and senior high students. Our racially diverse church consists of about 400 members shepherded by six elders, with a youth group of about 30. Our church is well known in our community for our local ministries: teaching English as a second language (Friend Speak), serving the homeless (PADS), and our support for local food banks and the Extended Hands ministry supporting seniors and the economically disadvantaged in our community. In addition, the Naperville church supports several evangelistic efforts in this country and around the world. Strong candidates will display an excellent knowledge of the Scriptures, understand contemporary youth culture, and have experience counseling and leading youth through adolescence into young adulthood. Candidate education should include a bachelor's degree or the equivalent in experience.

For more information please contact: Duke Given at dgiven@napervillechurch.org

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The Annapolis Church of Christ in Maryland is looking for a well-rounded preacher who is capable of inspiring members of the church and the community around them. The church has elders and deacons. Interested men should mail or email a letter of introduction, resume, recent sermons, and examples of recent classes taught. Go to annapolischurch.org/preacher for full job description.

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CALENDAR
Sept. 7-9 Annual Prayer Workshop and Homecoming. Calhoun Church of Christ in Louisiana. See calhounchurch.org/pw.html.
Sept. 11 Eastern European Mission’s Franklin Event. The Factory at Franklin in Tennessee. See eem.org/events.
Sept. 13 Eastern European Mission’s Tyler Event. Bushman’s Celebration Center, Bullard, Texas. See eem.org/events.
Sept. 30-Oct.3 Harding University Bible Lectureship. Searcy, Ark. www.harding.edu/events/lectureship.
Oct. 4-7 CenterPeace (e3) Conference. Highland Oaks Church, Dallas. See centerpeace.net.
Nov. 5-11 Pan American Lectureship. Majesty of the Seas Cruise, Havana, Cuba. See lectureship.org.

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THROUGH PRISON MINISTRY, a Christian couple hears great confessions from the inmates they serve:

‘Incarceration has saved their lives’

BY LYNN Mc MILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

I would never have listened to you out there.”

Norman Dean hears comments like that as he shares his faith behind bars. The Oklahoma native and his wife of 46 years, Kathy, have spent the past two decades studying the Bible with inmates at county jails and state prisons. The ministry fills their retirement years with vigor, excitement and gratitude, said the Deans, who worship with the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

“What keeps our students coming back week after week is they often perceive a great need in their lives,” Norman Dean said. “Some have been incarcerated a number of times. ... The ones who come to our studies and stay often tell me that incarceration has saved their lives.”

Norman Dean writes the lessons he uses. His wife and her teaching teammate serve in women’s facilities, prayerfully attempting to share the message of salvation — as much as they can in the time they have. They never know if they’ll see their students again.

“It’s important for volunteers to be consistent,” she said. “They have been let down so often in their lives. I am sure I would be a totally different person if I had grown up like so many of them have.”

Among the female inmates’ biggest concerns are their children, Kathy Dean said.

“They don’t always talk about them, but we pray for their children — and that the children will know their mothers love them. There are always lots of tears shed during those prayers.”

What attracted you to prison ministry?

Kathy: I had never considered going into prison ministry until Norman got involved. With a firm nudge, he encouraged me to join a group of ladies going into a local women’s facility to “see what it was like.” That first visit was over 20 years ago, and to this day that is how I spend my Sunday evenings.

Norman: I go to a county jail and a prison to distribute Bible devotional material and to advertise our Bible correspondence program. I also go to three other jail and prison facilities to conduct or assist with Bible studies.

Tell me a bit about what you do in prison ministry.

Norman: I go to a county jail and a prison to distribute Bible devotional material and to advertise our Bible correspondence program. I also go to three other jail and prison facilities to conduct or assist with Bible studies.

The correspondence program is an excellent work that allows inmates to study the Bible at their own pace by mail, without cost. It is from this program that many of our face-to-face studies and baptisms begin.

Kathy: When we go into the women’s facility each week, my coworker and I actually lead a worship service consisting of praying, singing, and Bible study. We also teach the Bible’s instructions on giving since we are not allowed to take up a collection.

Handing out Bible correspondence courses to the inmates is another important part of what we do.

Are there security risks?

Norman: Some people might think that there is a personal safety risk. After the anxiety of my first trip into a prison, however, I don’t think I’ve ever had a safety concern. I suppose the biggest risk might be seeing the Good News we share with others not being accepted and followed.

Kathy: I’ve never been afraid while in a facility.

You serve in separate facilities but still see this as a shared ministry? How does that work?

Kathy: Currently, Norman and I are going into facilities on Sunday nights that are quite near each other, so we are able to travel together. When he returns to get

me, we discuss how our classes went that night. It is always exciting to us when we have a student who wants to become a Christian. This shared ministry has brought us closer together.

Norman: Kathy and I share Bible study handouts we’ve developed and answers that we might give to a particular question that comes up in a study. We share the enjoyment of seeing lives changed as a result of the study of God’s Word.

What are your favorite stories from two decades of ministry?

Norman: This episode happened in the parking lot outside one of our Oklahoma prisons. After a Bible class one night, a coworker and I were coming out of the prison to our car only to find an escaped inmate trying to hide underneath the car parked next to ours.

We spent the next 15 minutes trying to convince him that it was in his best interest to walk back inside and turn himself in at Central Control. He finally agreed, and we escorted him back into the prison.

After the initial shock, the whole situation became rather humorous.

Kathy: I once gave an inmate a ride home on the day she was released from prison. She brought along a dog that had been hanging around the prison to be her new pet. The administration there was going to call animal control, and she was very concerned about the animal. I couldn’t say no to that.

We also made a stop at KFC on the way to her house because that is what the girl had been dreaming about for months. That was a great day.

What have you learned about inmates?

Kathy: I’ve learned that the women I have studied with are people just like I am. They often come from difficult situations and circumstances that
MINISTER NEEDED
Church of Christ located in Eureka, Calif., is looking for a minister. Weekly salary, Victorian house and travel allowance are provided. 1610 1 Street, Eureka, CA 95503. If interested, submit copy or link to recent sermon, cover letter and resume to:
Church of Christ
c/o Steven Roper
2300 Hillcrest Avenue
Fortuna, CA 95540
Ph 707-726-9371
Steven-Roper@Redwoods.edu

Do you have a passion for preaching the Gospel?
A servant heart that desires to teach others how to reach the lost in this world? With a specific vision and plan on how to grow the church spiritually?

If so, then we want to hear from you!
Sunset Church of Christ is a dynamic, energetic, established congregation in Taylor, Michigan, looking for a full-time preacher to become part of our growing family. You will work alongside a 200+ membership that consists of many young and middle-aged families and some wonderful seniors. We have a strong children’s and youth program led by an Involvement Minister, as well as a minister for seniors and visitation. Additionally, we work extensively with a missionary to the largest population of Muslims in the US, located in nearby Dearborn, Michigan. Sunset is led by a dedicated group of Godly elders and deacons who serve and live by example. We have a family atmosphere that strives to be more than Christian in name and a body that desires to live every day for Christ. The ideal candidate will have experience working with a culturally diverse congregation, a firm reliance on the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, and a demonstrated ability to inspire and relate God’s Word to motivate people to action.
If this sounds like you, please send your resume, audio/video files, and a one-page description of your purpose in God’s Kingdom to:
Sunset Church of Christ
c/o Elders
24800 Ecorse Rd.
Taylor, MI 48180
RWREEVES@COMCAST.NET (Subject: Minister Search)

CARTEAKERS NEEDED
COPPER BASIN BIBLE CAMP to live on-site at Copper Basin Bible Camp in the cool pines of Prescott, Arizona. Seeking mature couples/families for property oversight and facilities management. Compensation is residence and utilities. Apply to:
Board@copperbasinbiblecamp.org

PRISON: Assume people of other beliefs are there

FROM PAGE 23
contributed to their being in prison.
I often wonder how different my life would have been if I had experienced a background like theirs.
Many of these women realize that they need to make changes in their lives. It is surprising to me the number of women who have said that coming to prison saved their lives. Their old ways are not working, and they want to find out if God is the answer they are seeking.
Norman: Inmates have the same sin problem that we have. They have failings, disappointments, family issues, misplaced priorities and addictions similar to ours. I’ve learned that inmates deserve the same opportunity to hear the Good News that we have. They deserve a second chance, and their future, just like ours, is very bright as children of God.

What would you like to communicate to our churches about prison ministry?
Norman: One, the need for us to be present in every jail or prison facility is important. We can assume that people of other faiths, teaching questionable doctrines, are already there, thus making our presence urgent.
Two, although going inside a facility to study the Bible is important, work can also be done by writing letters of encouragement, sending and grading Bible study lessons, sending birthday cards, caring for families who are affected by incarceration, etc.
Three, any ex-offender who desires to fellowship with us should be warmly received by our churches upon their release.
Four, God changes lives every day behind the walls and razor wire. Evidence of that is that several of our prison ministers serving inmates throughout Oklahoma are ex-offenders themselves.
CAMPUS MINISTRY

CAMPUS MINISTRY UNITED
WESTVILLE, Mo. — About 400 church members with ties to campus ministry attended the recent Campus Ministry United Workshop hosted by the Crossings Church of Christ. “That’s the largest attendance we’ve ever had at a CMU Workshop,” said director Wes Woodell. All lessons from the event are available through the ministry’s website, campusministryunited.com, and on iTunes. Search for “Campus Ministry United Podcast.”

HIGHER EDUCATION

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY
HENDERSON, Tenn. — Billy Smith, dean of the College of Biblical Studies, is retiring from the position he’s held for 25 years, effective Aug. 10.

“We are hosted by a Christian university and open to anyone, said director JuanRaymon Rubio. This year 83 youths gathered on the campus of Lubbock Christian University to learn about — and participate in — servant leadership under the theme “Here am I, send me.”

More than 60 worship leaders from seven nations spent a week refining their skills during the workshop, hosted by Acappella Ministries and its founder, Keith Lancaster.

YOUTH MINISTRY

NATIONAL HISPANIC ENGLISH YOUTH CONFERENCE
LUBBOCK, Texas. — Contrary to its name, this annual camp is bilingual and open to anyone, said director JuanRaymon Rubio. This year 83 youths gathered on the campus of Lubbock Christian University to learn about — and participate in — servant leadership under the theme “Here am I, send me.”

“One of our main goals was to encourage students to remain in the faith after graduation,” Rubio said. “We are hosted by a Christian university, but we encourage any type of higher education for our students.”

K-12 SCHOOLS

WESTBURY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
HOUSTON — The spare change of students, their families and friends added up to more than $8,400 for ministries in Honduras and Haiti. It’s the 20th consecutive year that Westbury, a 500-student school associated with Churches of Christ, has sponsored the fundraising drive. In that time, students from age 3 to senior high have collected about $180,000. Funds collected this year will go to Mission Lazarus, a ministry focused on community development in Honduras and Haiti, and Hope for Haiti’s Children, which helps children born into poverty become Christian leaders.

WORSHIP MINISTRY

WORSHIP LEADER INSTITUTE
MADISON, Tenn. — Lunch came with a side of a cappella at Rivergate Chick-fil-A in Nashville, Tenn., as participants in the Worship Leader Institute became a flash mob, breaking into a rendition of “Every Praise is to Our God.” A few customers even joined in — and later thanked the singers. (No word on if they responded with the customary “My pleasure.”)

More than 60 worship leaders from seven nations spent a week refining their skills during the workshop, hosted by Acappella Ministries and its founder, Keith Lancaster.

MINISTER SEARCH - Olathe, Kansas

The 151st Street Church of Christ is actively seeking a new preacher. Less than a year ago, with a membership of 360, the 151st Street congregation planted a new congregation with 150 of our members going with the plant. Our current preacher is now retiring, so we are looking for a replacement who will help us regrow until we can plant again. The ideal candidate will be a “people person” who is positive, uplifting, and scriptural in his preaching, and exemplary in his personal life.

Located in the Kansas City suburbs, we are an active, conservative congregation with about 225 members, served by five elders, 18 deacons and two ministers. We have a high level of involvement among our members and emphasize putting the good of the body ahead of personal opinions and preferences.

The story of the church plant was recently featured on the front page of The Christian Chronicle (https://christianchronicle.org/when-god-comes-with-a-loud-thud/). Please visit our website to learn more about the congregation (https://www.151stocf.com). To apply for this opening, please send a resume and sermons (or links to sermons) to search@151stocf.com.

Minister

We are seeking a minister to work with our current pulpit minister with the intention of transitioning into the full-time minister position. This minister will work with our current pulpit minister and elders to serve the West Olive Church of Christ by providing a balanced ministry of preaching, teaching and assisting the elders in implementing our vision to help the congregation grow to its full potential in membership and spiritual growth in Christ. We are a congregation of 450 members in a growing community west of Phoenix, Ariz.

General Requirements: The ideal candidate should be a married, middle-aged man with at least ten years of experience. He should be of strong personal faith and be doctrinally sound and well grounded in the Scriptures. He should have an evangelistic heart to share the Gospel with those who are lost.

Principal Responsibilities: Responsibilities of this position include preaching, teaching and participation in the life of our church family.

How to Apply: Those interested in applying should mail a copy of their resume with picture and at least three references to the attention of:

West Olive Church of Christ
Attn: Elders
10935 W Olive Ave
Peoria, AZ 85345
TEACH BETTER.
LOVE BETTER.

CERTIFICATION IN
CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

Become a better teacher! OC's Certification in Children's Ministry Program fits your budget and lifestyle. Complete the program in as little as nine months - online and on your schedule. All classes are online leading up to a two-day capstone seminar on campus.

For more info about joining the next cohort, email barbara.price@oc.edu or call 405.425.5391.

www.oc.edu/cmcertificate

EUROPEAN VISION WORKSHOP

Lift Up Your Eyes & See God’s Purpose in Europe
Bratislava, Slovakia
October 3-6, 2018

Presenters include Jeff Jenkins, Keith Lancaster, and speakers from around Europe
Use the QR code or visit sunset.bible/evw

Partners in Progress
“The thing that happened to us, we believe, was Satan's attempt to actually stop the church,” Spann said. “When he attacked Burnette Chapel, he attacked every body of worshippers, wherever they may be. “That's why I think so many people are touched by what took place at Burnette Chapel. When we were attacked, you were attacked.”

Lipscomb, a 4,700-student school associated with Churches of Christ, honored the congregation with its annual Kopio Award. The flame-shaped award takes its name from a Greek word that describes someone who “works until utter exhaustion for the glory of God,” said university president Randy Lowry. The word appears in texts including Matthew 11:28, in which Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

“We don't know what exhaustion can really be until we're in the moment,” Lowry said.

The accolade, he added, is appropriate for Burnette Chapel, a church that has endured “a story that's tragic and yet a story that, woven into it, has moments of grace and forgiveness — and a sense that God is working in a larger way with this church and all of those who were affected by this moment.”

That moment happened just after Sunday morning worship on Sept. 24, 2017. A masked gunman waited outside in his car for the service to end. He shot and killed Melanie Crow, a 38-year-old mother of two children, in the parking lot and unleashed a barrage of bullets. Seven other church members were injured, including Spann.

Before Lowry presented the award, reporter Eric Egan of WKRN read snippet's from the TV station's coverage of the tragedy, highlighting the bravery of Robert “Caleb” Engle, 22, who confronted and subdued the gunman, and Micah Carter, 8, who barricaded the door of a children's classroom.

In March, Samson was indicted on 43 criminal charges, including murder, civil rights intimidation and 24 counts of aggravated assault. He pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial.

During the Lipscomb event, Nashville Chief of Police Steve Anderson appeared in a video testimonial, praising the Burnette Chapel church.

“In the face of tragedy last year, they clung to each other; they clung to their faith; they shared their story,” Anderson said. “And all through this tragic event they have been a rock.”

Actually, “we're not,” Spann said as he accepted the Kopio Award. “We're just normal Christians. But I guess normal Christians have some rock in them — and it's Christ Jesus.”

The shooting has “changed us in the fact that we do not go to church anymore,” Spann said. “We gather to worship. We come together. I'm reminded of the first century Christians and how every time they gathered had to be an exciting thing and a special thing because there were those who were trying to take it away from them. And they made the most of each gathering. Well, we do that at Burnette Chapel.”

Now “it’s extremely common to hear the word ‘love’ at church,” Spann said. “We're not a super church. We're just a group of Christians that meet together in Christ's name. But we love each other. We've been through something important, and I guess we'll be tied together from now on.”

After Spann spoke, a small group of Burnette Chapel members gathered in front of the stage. Preachers, elders and their wives from Churches of Christ across the nation surrounded them as David L. Solomon, chair of Lipscomb's Board of Trustees, led a prayer, quoting the words of the apostle Paul in Colossians 3: Bear with each other and forgive one another ... Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

“Father, we don't know why this happened,” Solomon prayed. “We don't understand why the pain and loss of this fellowship had to be endured.”

Yet “we look at how this fellowship has walked through this, the way Joey has shared into the Antioch community words of love, words of forgiveness and words of thankfulness for this fellowship.”

In March, Carter was named Cub Scout of the Year for 2017 by the Middle Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Police arrested 25-year-old Emanuel K. Samson, who had attended the church before disappearing a few years prior to the shooting.

Since leaving the church, he had threatened suicide and had two incidents of alleged domestic violence, according to news reports. Police found a note in Samson's car referencing a 2015 shooting at a black church in Charleston, S.C.

“I don't understand, Lord, but I'll keep going’

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Milestones

We Remember
Arnelious Crenshaw Jr.

On Aug. 28, 2017, we lost a great spiritual leader and friend — the late evangelist Arnelious Crenshaw Jr.

As we approach the first anniversary of his physical death, his family pays tribute to this powerful, humble man of God!

“Remembering you with love and thankfulness on this first anniversary of your leaving us. God had a purpose for you, and He blessed you to open the Word and bless many. I am at peace with the legacy you left us to follow. The way you opened up the parables and teachings of Jesus helped all who were privileged to hear you understand more fully what Jesus was teaching. You opened our eyes to our individual evangelistic responsibility as children of God to share the good news every day.

We must continue to move forward as we remember our past while planting seeds for future generations to follow. I cherish the time we had together with our children, grandchildren, family and friends, and all those He put in our lives to be a blessing in the Kingdom. Missing you every day, loving you always.” — Dolly

“Oh, Don Vito Corleone, godfather, it’s so hard to believe a whole year has passed since your departure. We’ve never known this present world without you, but are thankful for the memories. Mom and Dad were our first and best teachers about right and wrong, love, and having joy and peace always in Christ Jesus, but, dear brother, as your faith and knowledge of God’s Word grew, ours did too! You were always eager to share your revelations from God’s Word, and we were excited to learn them. Thank you for being the greatest storyteller of all time. As you made so vivid the Godfather trilogy, you did even greater with the Holy Scriptures, lifting them right off the page and implanting them directly on our hearts — Proverbs 3:1-8. We love you always, Bud, always!” — sisters Gwen, Rosalind, Lutricia, Valerie and Ruthie

“You are considered blessed if your father leaves a financial inheritance. Many would speak well of him and how lucky the children must be. As we reflect on this journey of life without our daddy, the common societal view couldn’t be any further from our collective truth. Daddy would always say, ‘You can’t go wrong going back to Scripture.’ Reflecting on what a rich legacy means, we revisit the writings of the Psalmist in chapter 112:1-3. We are the daily manifestation of God’s choice to use daddy to teach us the importance of our Kingdom relationships, fear of the Lord and bringing glory to His name as we navigate among the people. We are and will be his spiritual legacy.” — children Artisa (Walter), Ollie Mechelle (Kevin), Jennifer (Jeramie), Arnelious Crenshaw III

“A year already, it seems like just yesterday we saw you earn your wings. We love you so much, and words can’t express how tough it has been without you, but we are taking care of one another just like you taught us to. This year has brought all of us through high and low moments, but because of the foundation that you laid in our lives and familial relationships, we hold each other up and reflect on our many memories of you often. We love you so much and thank you, too, for the hilarious memories, life lessons and unconditional love.” — grandchildren Sydni, Anthony, Kori, London, Livia, Leila

“Arnelious Crenshaw Jr. was our uncle, godfather, and spiritual influence who demonstrated his love deeply for his nieces and nephews. We cannot take credit for the family we are born into or in some cases adopted into, as it is the divine providence of God. We consider it a blessing from God to identify as part of a rich family of faith, hope, and love. Uncle was someone we could always count on during our moments of joy, those in-between times, and especially times of personal struggles. As our spiritual advisor and family counselor, we thank you for giving guidance whenever it was needed, providing words of inspiration that are forever engraved in our hearts. For every important occasion — performing wedding ceremonies, parenting and career advice, home purchasing, or simply conversations on the porch — you were always there. Thank you, Uncle. Our lives are blessed because you helped to order our steps in the way of the Lord. Acts 10:2 (KJV) — ‘A devoted man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. We remember.’ — Melody, Tommy, Lee ShaNe’, Joseph, Courtney, Nekia, Henry, Ronnie, Josh, Sarah, Roman, Naomi and all of your great and great-great nieces and nephews.

“We remember how our Father blessed you with the ability to transport your listeners back into the ancient world in order to introduce us to Biblical principles. Then you would return us back to present the challenge of applying God’s Word. It was also from the parables of Luke 15 that the love of the Father was preached to us through Arnelious Crenshaw Jr... ‘Not from our western eyes, for the Bible was written through eastern eyes. Wrestling truth from familiarity.’ He simply exposed the text. We remember the many nurturing sessions filled with prayer and careful investigation into our Father’s will.

Nehemiah 8:8 (KJV) – ‘So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. ’ This was the essence of preaching to Arnelious Crenshaw Jr.” — family ministers Tommy Palmer, Ron Ward, Kevin Overton

O Thou Man of God
Ω άνθρωπος του Θεοΰ

Special Request
Bryan Perrin

#1 on Mayo’s heart transplant list — Bryan Perrin!

After much prayer and six major surgeries, Bryan came from Kentucky to Minnesota six months ago to await a heart transplant at the Mayo Clinic. Because of Bryan’s rare blood type, doctors predicted that it would be months before he received a match. He is still waiting, and it’s been very difficult.

The family is again having to make some major life changes. Bryan is moving into Rochester’s “transplant house” with others who await transplants. Between medical expenses for Bryan, several family medical emergencies, home expenses back in Kentucky and living expenses in Rochester, the financial situation is overwhelming.

(Continued on Page 29)
Milestones

(Continued from Page 28)

This journey has left them with not enough money to pay bills, with their only income being Bryan’s minimal social security disability check.

The Rochester Church of Christ asks you and your church family to pray for the Perrins and help them financially. Please send tax-deductible gifts to the Rochester Church of Christ (note “A gift for the Perrins” on checks). Otherwise, write checks to “Perrin Family Benefit Fund.” One hundred percent of your gift will go to the Perrins!

The Perrins are very grateful to those of you who have so graciously helped the last six months. Weekly updates have been shared at gigattaattgig.blogspot.com.


Learn more about the Rochester Church of Christ and our Hands of Compassion ministry that hosts Mayo patients who come from all over the world at www.rochesterchurchofchrist.org.

New President and CEO

Mesquite, Texas — The board of directors of Christian Care Centers, Inc., has named Sabrina R. Porter as the company’s next president and chief executive officer, effective Aug. 20, 2018. Porter has been the president and CEO of Juliette Fowler Communities in Dallas since 2012.

“Christian Care Centers has selected a very strong leader that knows the industry well,” said Harold Tidwell, chairman of Christian Care Trustees. “We believe she will move our ministry forward with the speed required to capitalize on the opportunities in front of us. As president and CEO, Mrs. Porter’s priority will be to use her vision and strategically plan for the growth and future of senior living for Christian Care Centers, Inc.”

In her 39 years in healthcare, Porter has served in numerous roles ranging from certified nurse aide to administrator, and from executive director to vice president of resident and community relations. As a Stephen Minister leader, she has also served as spiritual life director.

Porter is a graduate of Northwood University. She is a member of The Women’s Foundation of Texas and serves on the board for Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boy Scouts of America, Leadership Southwest, National Benevolent Association and Best Southwest Chamber.

She is a founding board member of Transformation Vision Cedar Hill and Hope Mansion, a girls in crisis pregnancy home. Sabrina’s leadership culminated in being named LeadingAge of Texas’ 2017 Dr. Herbert Shore Outstanding Mentor of the Year Award. Sabrina is married to Joel Porter, and they have three children. Their family are members of the Cedar Hill Church of Christ.

Founded in 1947, Christian Care Centers, Inc. is a family of faith-based, not-for-profit, Life Plan Senior Living Communities throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Christian Care Centers, Inc. consists of three campuses: Christian Care Senior Living Community in Allen, Christian Care Senior Living Community in Fort Worth and Christian Care Senior Living Community Mesquite, serving approximately 1,500 seniors annually.

Porter succeeds Phil Elmore, who joined Christian Care Centers, Inc. as president and CEO in February 2004. Elmore transformed Christian Care into a sustainable model for the future of senior living. He will serve as Chief Operating Officer during this time of transition until his retirement. Elmore has been a colleague and friend of Porter and was part of the succession committee in her selection process.

Porter shares: “A vision often starts with a simple decision, to care. The Bible tells us the story of Esther. My story is very similar. We were girls who lost loved ones and/or missed out on our childhood at a young age, didn’t start off with wealth, influence or vision and had a quality of compassion. We care deeply for others. God puts people around us to help, teach and guide us to our destiny and I believe like Esther that God placed me here to guide, inspire, influence and impact many lives.”

With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. — Matthew 19:26

For more information, see www.ChristianCareCenters.org.

Anniversaries

Joe and Carolyn Deem
65 years

Paul J. “Joe” and Carolyn Deem celebrated their 65th anniversary on June 13, 2018. They were married in Charleston, W.Va., in 1953 while Joe served in the U.S. Air Force. After a brief stint in Germany, they lived in the Charleston area for 31 years before relocating to Jupiter, Fla., in 1984. Joe and Carolyn have been active with congregations in both West Virginia and Florida, most notably the Pine Grove Church of Christ in Winfield, W.Va., the Jupiter-Tequesta Church of Christ in Jupiter and the Stuart Church of Christ in Stuart, Fla. Joe has served as a song leader wherever they have attended and served as an elder with the Stuart congregation. Carolyn has been involved in numerous servant and benevolent ministries as well.

A celebration was hosted in Port St. Lucie, Fla., by their five children and nine grandchildren: Tim and Sabrina Deem (Brian and Amanda) of Mount Dora, Fla.; Roger and Sandy Deem (Meredith and Lauren) of Charlotte, N.C.; Tim and Cindy Orr (Katie and Allison) of Port St. Lucie, Fla.; Randall and Cindy Deem (Lexi and Cameron) of Jupiter, Fla.; and Allison Roman (Trevin) of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Congratulations, Joe and Carolyn!

Memorials

Maurice Hinchliffe
(1930-2018)

Maurice Martin Hinchliffe, 88, left his home at Lake Mexia and entered his home in heaven on June 6, 2018. He was born April 11, 1930, in Mexia, Texas, to David J. and Mollie Guthrie Hinchliffe. He and his twin sister, Margaret, were greeted at home by seven brothers and sisters. After graduating high school, he joined the U.S. Army and proudly served his country as a sergeant in the Korean War.

He walked 20 miles daily, five days a week for 32 years as a city mail carrier in Mexia. However, his major purpose in life was as a Christian and being an uniring servant for his Lord. This was the job to which he happily committed his life.

Maurice married the love of his life, Sadie Jewel Carter, on March 31, 1961, and was a devoted husband for 57 years. He was loved, admired and enjoyed by numerous people, especially his grandchildren, who spent long hours playing with their Pappy.

He served the Lord in numerous ways. Maurice drove the church bus for children, attended campaign missions for Christ, taught World Bible School, supported Foster Children’s Home, served prison and jail ministries, and officiated several weddings. Hinchliffe spread the Word on campaigns in the South American nation of Guyana plus Ghana, South Africa, England, Scotland, Barbados, the West Indies, Australia, Belize and throughout Central America. He also campaigned throughout the United States, making 19 missions from 1977 to 2006. For 31 years, Hinchliffe accomplished a total of 45 campaigns spreading the Word of Christ. Many of those he helped convert ultimately became ministers.

He loved fishing on the Navasota River and Lake Mexia, playing 42 and visiting his neighbors and friends with his grandchildren. Maurice will always be remembered as a great father, grandfather and friend to a multitude of people. He was the end of a great and glorious era.

He was preceded in death by his parents; grandson Josef Eric Mohundro; brothers Bernie, Howard, Jimmy, Norman and Winfred Hinchliffe; sisters Mary Crow, Margaret Hinchliffe and Addie Hinchliffe; and son-in-law Finis Peyton.

Maurice is survived by his wife, Jewell Hinchliffe of Mexia; daughters Kay Sellers (David) Mohundro of Nacogdoches and Gail Sellers Peyton of Teague; grandchildren Eric Batts, Preston “Pep” Batts, Hillary Batts Chandler and Amanda Sellers; great-grandchildren Ryan Pipkin, Caitlyn Payne, Alyssa Harris, Tyler Batts, Rhiannon Gresham, Eva Chandler, Khade Gresham and Preston Batts; and great-great grandchildren Kinsleigh Pipkin and Rustin Harris.

JoAnn Harber, 85,
May 30, San Antonio,
Texas.

Winona Skaggs, 78,
June 20, Edmond, Okla.
What is a ‘salvation issue?’

The term ‘salvation issue’ typically pops up when individuals differ on a point of Christian teaching.

One says, “Oh, this isn’t a salvation issue. Let’s agree to disagree on this.” The suggestion is that this particular teaching is not important to one’s salvation. Conversely, if something is a salvation issue, then we must get it right in order to be saved.

I’ve been wondering whether I should use the term. After mulling this over, I’m leaning against it. Let me give three reasons for my reluctance:

First, “salvation issue” seems to me to be a well-intentioned but ultimately unhelpful shorthand. Many who use it believe that some biblical commands are more important than others. They use “salvation issue” to focus on God’s key commands, while creating freedom for Christians to have different views on lesser commands.

I applaud the intention. After all, Jesus said the two greatest commands are to love God and to love our neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40). Elsewhere, he noted that practicing the “weightier matters” of justice, mercy, and faithfulness is more important than giving “a tenth of your spices” (Matthew 23:23).

However, using “salvation issue” as shorthand to separate important commands from lesser ones begs the question: Who decides the list? An Australian church member ponders the issue.

Using the term as shorthand to separate important commands from lesser ones begs the question: Who decides the list? An Australian church member ponders the issue.
Freedom of association demands godly wisdom

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.
— Proverbs 22:24-25, King James Version

Freedom is that God-given power we have to make choices — to choose where we go, what we do and with whom we will associate.

But the people we allow into our lives can have a profound impact on who we become. We must use our freedom wisely.

I remember the words one of my brothers in Christ, Clyde Sales, used to say on this subject. If your goal in life is to be an alcoholic, you can do three things to accomplish this goal: Find a group of people engaged in the practice of abusing alcohol, go associate with that group, and imitate their behavior. If you do these things, you will achieve your goal — and likely destroy your life and the lives of those around you.

Fortunately, this pattern also can be true for good behavior. If you want to succeed in life, find a group of dedicated individuals who practice the moral standards they preach. Associate with them, and model their positive behaviors. Chances are that you, too, will be known as a person of character, a success story in all the ways that matter.

All of us, from high school students and up, have seen examples of what happens when freedom is used to make bad choices. We know people who showed promise in athletics, in academics or in the arts who exercised their freedom in such a way that these gifts were wasted and never fully developed. Let’s use our freedom to maximize the abilities God has given each of us.

And let’s always be mindful of the liberating freedom we have in Christ. It is liberating to know that Jesus has freed us from the bonds of sin. It is also liberating to know that, in order to obtain and enjoy this freedom, we all have to do is be obedient to the commands of Jesus we find in the Bible.

We must grow and nurture our faith in God, using wisely the freedoms he has bestowed on all of us.

WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS FREEDOM. The apostle Paul shares that truth in 2 Corinthians 3:17. The spirit of the Lord works in each of us. Allow that spirit to work.

MICHAEL E. FLOWERS is a deacon of the Genessee Avenue Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio. This devotional is adapted from a speech he gave to the church’s 2018 high school graduates.

FROM OUR READERS

Racism in the pews requires our better angels

The July issue touched me with great joy and a little sadness.

The Chronicle has been a great blessing to me with its unending commitment to spreading the good news and growing pains of our increasingly international brotherhood. I have been continually encouraged by the reports of the tireless works of the many engaged in the many mission efforts of the church, both foreign and domestic.

The sadness came when I was confronted with the persistence of racism in the pews (“We still have two brotherhoods,” Page 3). Fortunately, I was also reading Jon Meacham’s new book, “The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels” by which I was reminded that America has seen some really dark times because of racism and come out of each a stronger and better people.

If one of God’s instruments can successfully resist the efforts of the evil one to divide, then surely we, for whom Christ died, can accept no less.

CHUCK REED | Rawlins, Wyo.
**Our word choices frame the way we view our past. Jesus calls us to reframe with words of life.**

I love words. I’ve always loved words. In first grade my school hosted a poetry contest. We all wrote poems and made artwork to go with them. My poem won first place. My art was woefully lacking. I didn’t care.

In “Reframing the Soul: How Words Transform Our Faith,” Gregory Spencer lays out the way words work. We don’t just remember the past, he writes; we frame it with words. We use words to frame our entire world — and our souls.

Jesus calls us to reframe our lives with words of grace instead of law, words of love instead of retaliation.

Spencer, professor of communication at Westmont College, a Christian liberal arts school in California, writes with rare and refreshing genuineness and approachability, allowing his own flaws to shine alongside his many moments of greatness. He creates an aura of heartfelt conversation in a living room over a cup of good, strong coffee.

Words, he suggests, provide windows for our world. Through them we look upon the landscape of our lives and gain understanding of what we feel, hear, touch, taste, experience. Words are the means of describing all that we perceive — and the basis for how we relate, or fail to relate, to our neighbors and communities.

The words we choose for our window frames affect the landscaping of our lives — whether we fill our frames with words of grief and despair or gratitude and hope, whether we have peace with ourselves and love for others or see relationships as zero-sum games. Our landscapes change as our window frames change.

Our souls will follow suit.

Make no mistake — this is not a slap-a-smile-on-your-face, namby-pamby book about making your life great again after a divorce, a terrible illness or a shocking revelation about the past.

“Reframing the Soul” dives deep and shows all of us who yearn to live the calling to “be holy because I, Yahweh your God, am holy” how the words we use are far more powerful than any sticks and stones tossed our way.

Spencer suggests four essential areas in which the words we choose frame and form our souls:

- **remembering the past**
- **anticipating the future**
- **dwelling with ourselves**
- **engaging with others**

The words we choose do not change what happened in the past or preempt the future, but they do frame our perceptions and, therefore, emotions and responses and the ways in which we walk with ourselves and others.

If I look back on a life of loss and sorrow — with words of hatred and blame for those who took and hurt — I will likely anticipate more of the same. I will act protectively and engage others with words that question motives and criticize mistakes.

If, however, I am able to see a larger landscape, I might learn to see that those who wounded me have stories — stories that don’t necessarily excuse their behavior, but perhaps explain how they knew no other way.

Reframing the past does not necessarily lead to changes in relationships with the wounding in the present, Spencer writes. But it can lead to new ways of anticipating the future, dwelling with ourselves and engaging others.

As a therapist, mentor, friend and minister, “Reframing the Soul” offers me fresh, new language to go deeper into the narratives of those I walk with, whether they speak the language of God or not.

As I finished the conversation of words, I had a renewed view of the landscape of my life, a refreshed sense of peace in myself and a vibrant vision of my future.

Life, as it were, is all together more God-sighted and resonating.

I do love words.

CHRISTINE FOX PARKER is a marriage and family therapist, speaker and co-editor and contributor to “Surrendering to Hope: Guidance for the Broken.” She worships with the Grand Central Church of Christ in Vienna, W.Va. See more of her writing at www.christinefoxparker.com.

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**Preacher covers every verse of Mark’s fast-paced gospel**

David Stewart, a longtime minister for Churches of Christ in Arkansas and Kansas, has written a very usable commentary on the Gospel of Mark.

In many commentaries, the very thing you would most like to know seems to get skipped over — or is dealt with in an unclear way.

Not so in “A Commentary on Mark.” Every verse is covered, and after each chapter an application section contains illustrations and suggestions for preaching and teaching this gospel.

Regarding the author of Mark, Stewart mentions the young man in chapter 14 who fled naked, except for a linen sheet over his body, after the arrest of Jesus. Stewart is not certain this is Mark. However, he does make the point that Mark, also known as John Mark, probably came from a wealthy family and was closely associated with Peter — who may have been the source of much of Mark’s information.

Regarding Mark’s style, Stewart points to the gospel’s fast pace, accentuated by the adverb “immediately,” its vivid portrayal of events (probably reflecting the testimony of Peter), its “sandwich technique,” inserting one story into another, and its use of the “Messianic Secret.”

When you read Stewart’s comments on a verse, you don’t go away scratching your head. He does support his points with references to Greek and Hebrew, but not in a way that hinders the reader.

He does not buy into destructive scholarly approaches to the text, but instead draws on the best of mainstream academic study.

He makes use of ancient sources such as Tacitus, Josephus and various rabbinic texts, and also brings in Restoration scholars such as J.W. McGarvey and W.K. Pendleton.

This is an excellent commentary for those who want straightforward, informed exposition of Scripture in touch with modern scholarship.

Other noteworthy commentaries on Mark by scholars from Churches of Christ are Earle McMillan’s from 1973 and Alan Black’s from 1995.

Stewart’s work is a fitting addition to these.

PAUL POLLARD is a distinguished emeritus professor of Bible and biblical languages at Harding University in Searcy, Ark. He is an elder of the College Church of Christ in Searcy.

What are you reading? Send submissions to erik@christianchronicle.org.
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 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 agency. The ideal candidate will have academic credentials and professional experience for teaching public relations courses in the ad/PR major. Though not required, applicants who bring a second area of interest in sports communication, social media or film are particularly encouraged to apply. A terminal degree is strongly preferred, but applicants who are ABD will be considered. Research and service expectations support the university’s status as a premier comprehensive university. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/jmc.

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

The Department of Teacher Education invites applications for a tenure track faculty position at assistant or associate professor. An earned doctorate in the field of education with an emphasis in one or more of the following areas is required: special education, reading and/or ESL. Must provide evidence of exemplary practice in K-12 settings. Applicants should demonstrate a strong background in effective teaching strategies for diverse populations; ability to create and enhance collaborative partnerships with public school personnel; and strong potential for continued professional service and scholarship. Commitment to the mission of preparing Christian teachers to serve in diverse settings is fundamental. Information about the department can be found at acu.edu/education.

School of Information Technology and Computing
Dr. John Homer, Director, ACU Box 29304, Abilene, Texas 79699-9304

The School of Information Technology and Computing (SITC) invites applications for an open-rank position in any of the following fields: computer science, information technology and information systems. Start date is Spring 2019, or when the best candidate is available. Preferred applicants will have a Ph.D. and ability to teach in one of the foregoing fields, or a master’s degree with significant industry and teaching experience. Primary responsibilities will include teaching undergraduate students in the SITC, mentoring students, service assignments, and research. Rank, tenure eligibility and salary will be determined based upon qualifications and experience. Information about the School can be found at blogs.acu.edu/sitc.

School of Nursing
Dr. Becky Hammad, Dean, ACU Box 28035, Abilene, Texas 79699-8035

The School of Nursing invites applications for an instructor or assistant/associate professor of nursing beginning Fall 2018. Applicants should maintain an active nursing license, be eligible for RN licensing in the state of Texas and have a M.S.N. degree. Preference given for a Ph.D. in nursing, a D.N.P. or related doctoral degree. Applicants from a variety of nursing sub-specialties (medical-surgical, pediatrics, critical care, nursing informatics, etc.) are encouraged to apply. The successful candidate is expected to work collaboratively with the nursing faculty toward the Christian mission of the university. Applicants should be committed to excellence in teaching and learning, facilitate exceptional student learning environments, value mentoring of students, and engage in service for the university, profession and community. Information about the school is available at acu.edu/nursing.

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.
So many print publications, including those focused on faith, have suffered and died in recent years, yet *The Christian Chronicle* remains strong. For that, we praise God. We also thank you, our quarter of a million readers. In the past 22 years I have been blessed to witness a growing relationship of mutual respect between you and the *Chronicle*. We thank all of you who contribute financially to this work, and we are eternally grateful for your generosity.

Now I humbly ask that you help us ensure the future of this publication by including us in your estate planning.

As we have worked steadily toward providing reliable, well-written and inspiring stories of churches across the nation and around the world, you have consistently expressed your understanding and appreciation of the positive role the *Chronicle* plays in keeping our 13,000 autonomous congregations connected and well-informed.

By now, you know that we work hard to keep costs down and to be the very best stewards of your money that we can be. Dedicated Christians serve as our trustees, keeping vigilant watch over everything the *Chronicle* does. You'll find their names in the staff box on Page 4.

One of the easiest ways to make a significant difference in the mission of this publication is to name the *Chronicle* as a beneficiary of your retirement plan.

Most plans, including 401(k), 403(b) and Traditional IRAs, are funded with pre-tax dollars or tax-deductible dollars. Since these dollars have not been previously taxed, when they pay out from the retirement plan the IRS requires taxes to be paid.

When the owner of a retirement plan passes away and their children receive the retirement plan funds, the children must pay income taxes on the amount received as the funds come out of the plan.

For individuals who intend to make a charitable gift through their estate plan, it often is tax-efficient to name a charity as a beneficiary of the retirement plan assets and to give other estate assets to family members.

Often family members will not pay taxes on these other assets, and the income-tax exempt charity (*The Christian Chronicle*) will not pay income tax on the retirement plan gift as well.

Naming the *Chronicle* as a beneficiary of your retirement plan is as simple as calling the custodian of your retirement plan and asking them to update your beneficiary designation.

Today, more and more people are making gifts from their IRA directly to charity using the Qualified Charitable Distribution. This allows a taxpayer who is at least 70 and a half — who is forced to take mandatory withdrawals from their retirement plan — to give a non-taxable gift to a charity rather than taking the money themselves and paying taxes on the distribution.

I know that a lot of this sounds complicated and laden with jargon. We’re here to help. Please call the *Chronicle’s* attorney, Stephen Eck, at (405)425-5080 for a free, no obligation consultation, or email me directly and allow us to discuss a plan that works best for you.

We humbly ask you to join the ranks of your brothers and sisters in Christ who in recent years have blessed *The Christian Chronicle* in this manner.

Thanks again for your support of this ministry. Because of you, the *Chronicle* can be set on an even more solid foundation for the future.

CONTACT: lynn.mcmillon@christianchronicle.org
College of Business, Faculty Positions

College of Business, Department of Management, Entrepreneurship and Marketing, and Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics

The mission of the Lipscomb University College of Business is to "develop business leaders who embrace the values and virtues of Jesus." Lipscomb University is centrally located in Nashville, Tennessee, a vibrant and rapidly growing business and health care center. The university is associated with the churches of Christ, and members with an advanced degree in business are encouraged to apply.

Position Available: Beginning January 1, 2019, or later as mutually agreed.

Faculty Positions: Two tenure track positions are available: 1) health care administration (F0098P) and 2) finance/economics (F0055P). These positions offer an exciting opportunity to join an innovative, faith-oriented and student-centered business program. The college is highly rated by Bloomberg/Business Week and Poets&Quants. Qualifications include:

- An earned doctorate degree (PhD, DBA, DHA or equivalent). Doctoral students nearing graduation will be considered.
- Demonstrated teaching experience in business.
- Record of scholarship to qualify the faculty member as Scholarly Academic (SA) under AACSB accreditation standards. Recent doctoral graduates are qualified for five years.
- Industry experience strongly preferred.

Rank and Salary: Experience and qualifications will determine academic rank, and salaries are nationally competitive by AACSB standards.

Application Information: Interested candidates should submit contact information for three references, a curriculum vita, a teaching portfolio, and a letter of application that briefly addresses scholarly interests, career goals, and teaching philosophy. Review of applications will continue until all positions are filled. Electronic submissions are encouraged at: https://lipscomb.peopleadmin.com/

Contact: Andrew S. Borchers, DBA, Professor and Associate Dean of the College of Business, Lipscomb University at: andy.borchers@lipscomb.edu
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