The preacher stood wearily on stage, wiping tears from his eyes.

The mayor, working to bring healing to a city of 1.3 million, sought solace on a front pew.

Allison Jean, mourning the fatal shooting of her son Botham Shem Jean by a police officer, waited as the 250-member congregation sang hymns such as “Trouble in My Way.”

Television and newspaper cameras captured the emotion — and the heartbreak — as the Dallas West Church of Christ gathered to worship three days after the inexplicable killing of 26-year-old Botham Jean in his own apartment.

This recent Sunday was no ordinary Lord’s Day for Christians grieving the sudden loss of a beloved song leader and Bible class teacher — and doing so under an immense media spotlight stretching from Texas all the way to the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia.

“Somebody like Bo — why?” church member Sherron Rodgers said, uttering the question on everybody’s mind. “Why did it happen to somebody like him? I’m just sad.

“He was a special, kind person who would never mess with anybody,” she added.

“He’d take off his jacket and give it to you. That’s the kind of person he was.”

By all accounts, Botham Jean was a devoted man of faith with a “beautiful” and “powerful” singing voice.

He was baptized at age 10 in his native St. Lucia and moved to the U.S. at age 19 to attend Harding University in Searcy, Ark.,
10,000 represents the hopes and dreams of Christians around the world craving Bible training. Ed-Mark received Sunset’s 10,000th Solar Player as an investment in the church in the Philippines.

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What churches can do when a hurricane strikes

The monster storm was threatening many of our fellow Christians.

More than 1.7 million people in the Carolinas and Virginia were warned to evacuate, and the homes of about 10 million were under watches or warnings for the hurricane or tropical storm conditions, The Associated Press reported.

As for the churches in this hurricane’s path, I asked a few ministers who’ve been there before to offer advice.

Kirk Garrison is minister for the Carrollton Avenue Church of Christ in New Orleans, which was at the center of relief efforts.

As one Christian rides out Florence, others prepare for long recovery

Videos posted by Robert Stanley show wind whipping through trees and bands of pounding rain.

The power’s out, he said, and a neighbor’s home was damaged by a falling tree.

“Still should be over us in a few hours,” Stanley said as Hurricane Florence made landfall. “It’s moving pretty slowly.”

Stanley, a deacon of the Pine Valley Church of Christ in Wilmington, N.C., and his family decided not to evacuate as the Category 2 hurricane approached the Atlantic coast.

Rather, he said, they wanted to be there to serve when the storm ended.

Speaking to The Christian Chronicle just before the storm hit, Stanley said that he and his family were prepared for days of flooding rain. They were also prepared, he added, to be the hands and feet of Jesus by assisting their neighbors in need.

“There are a lot of people that can’t afford to leave, and they’re going to need help,” Stanley said.

About four hours northwest of Wilmington, the Carolina Bible Camp opened as an evacuation center for those needing a safe place to stay.

At press time, relief ministries associated with Churches of Christ, including Disaster Assistance CoC, were preparing for a long response to the storm and its aftermath.

See UPDATES and find links to contribute to relief efforts at christianchronicle.org.
HURRICANE: Tips for churches from those who’ve been there

FROM PAGE 3

efforts after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Garrison’s tips:
1. “Get the church computers to a
   safe place.”
2. “Have a contact list of all
   members (cell phones) and where
   they are going when they evacuate
   as well as a phone number for
   there if possible. Cell service can
   drop when towers go off-line and
   everyone is trying to call somebody.
   Texts usually get through.”
3. “After the storm, call every
   member to assess needs and how
   they are doing. Take notes; people
   will ask.”
4. “If someone does stick around,
   have them visit the homes of those
   who evacuated and then call them to
   tell them how their house is doing.
   This can alleviate a lot of worry.”
5. “Don’t underestimate the impact
   of the trauma on those ‘being strong
   for their families. It lasts for years.”
6. “Change the Wednesday service
to prayer time, updates on members
and planning next steps.”
7. “Be patient with well-meaning
   people/congregations who send you
   their broken stuff.”
8. “Gift cards are better than used
   clothes, etc.”
9. “Have a point person who can
   walk people through the reme-
diation process and government
   programs.”

• Doug Peters is senior
   minister for the Grace Crossing
   Church of Christ in Conroe,
   Texas, which was active in
   disaster relief after Hurricane
   Harvey last year.

Peters’ tips:
1. “It is important for churches
   in the path of a disastrous storm to
   realize that they don’t have to do
   everything themselves.
   “They can partner with others —
   other churches, other people helping
   groups and even the local, county,
   state or federal governments.
   “Realizing that different groups
   bring a variety of gifts to the table is
   important. It is a time to set aside
   differences and partner with those
   willing to serve their neighbors.”
2. “Start praying early. Ask God
to reveal how you and your congre-
gation can best be used. How has
God strategically positioned you to
best serve?
   “Some have facilities to house
   storm victims in a shelter setting.
   Others can receive items and set up
   a donation/distribution center.
   “Others can mobilize members to
   house incoming volunteers/workers
   from outside the region in the wake
   of a storm.”
3. “Slow down long enough to
   consider spiritual and emotional
   needs as well as the physical needs
   of those devastated by a storm.
   “As you hand them food or
   clothing, also look them in the eye
   and ask how you can be prayerful
   for them. And then stop in that
   moment to put a hand on their
   shoulder and pray.
   “Let them know you have support
   groups and ministries that may be
   helpful in he days to come.”
4. “Let them know that you will still
   be there to serve and care after the
   initial publicity of the storm passes.
   “The news cycle will move on to
   something else, but they will still
   have needs. And their needs will
   evolve over time.”

• David Duncan is minister for
   the Memorial Church of Christ
   in Houston, which became a
   relief center after Harvey.

Duncan’s thoughts:
   “The material damage is the
   obvious loss in any type of storm,
   but that is only the beginning of
   the crisis. The emotional and spiritual
   losses are great, as well.
   “Churches need to be prepared for
   members and people in the commu-
nity to suffer with spiritual questions
   and emotional struggles such as
   PTSD for years to come.

“The storm is a tragedy, but
churches should be proactive in
sharing faith through deeds, words
and hugs with people who have
previously seemed unwilling to
share personal needs.”

In my time with The Christian
Chronicle, I’ve covered hurricanes in
Louisiana, Mississippi, Puerto Rico
and Texas.

Once again, my colleagues and
I will be watching developments
closely and updating readers on
losses and needs among Churches of
Christ. If you have news to share,
please don’t hesitate to let us know.

CONTACT: bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org.
CALIFORNIA
MALIBU — Is the Bible meant to be read as history or literature? Is it the verbatim word of God?
An in-depth study of ways to understand and engage Scripture is drawing a standing-room only crowd of young and old members and dozens of students to the University Church of Christ. The Sunday Bible class, taught by Al Sturgeon, John Wilson, John Barton and Dave Lemley, is averaging 70 to 80 attendees.
“This class has generated enthusiasm throughout the congregation and has sparked continuing conversation around the written word and its role in our lives,” church member Rick Gibson said. “The class offers an ‘open table’ conversation where anyone can bring their questions and even doubts to the table without facing judgment. No question is out of bounds.”

FLORIDA
JACKSONVILLE — About 400 men and women mobilized to take specific steps to improve their marriages during a recent weekend workshop offered by the San Jose Church of Christ, volunteer Trent Wheeler said.
The workshop featured Al and Lisa Robertson of the “Duck Dynasty” family. Al Robertson is an elder and former minister for the White’s Ferry Road Church of Christ in West Monroe, La.

LOUISIANA
CALHOUN — Attendance at the Calhoun Church of Christ’s recent 25th annual Prayer Enrichment Workshop averaged 60 to 75 per session, minister and elder Keith Roberts said.
About 25 volunteers organized the three-day workshop, which is designed “to help train and motivate God’s people to pray more effectively so we can win more people to Christ,” Roberts said.
Along with Roberts, presenters were Albert Lemmons, Shane Coffman, Dale Walker and Les Ferguson Jr.

OHIO
WESTERVILLE — A recent three-day garage sale by the Spring Road Church of Christ raised $6,000 to buy Bibles for distribution in India.
Children sold snacks and drinks and raised enough money to buy three bicycles for ministers in India. The money was given to Rick Johnson, a missionary supported by the church.
“Rick makes annual trips to India to preach and support local projects,” said Dan Arnold with the Spring Road church. Donations to help Johnson meet his goal of 10,000 bicycles can be sent to the West Freeway Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas.

TEXAS
ABILENE — Even at age 101, Lloyd Boyll shares his insights with the Minter Lane Church of Christ.
For years, he sat on the front pew. But even as his health keeps him at home, he sends his “Flashes of Light” to the senior adult Bible class each week. The writings detail his observations and experiences.

Doughnuts — and spiritual growth
Spiritual growth and service, not to mention doughnuts, are on the menu at God’s Girls, an annual event hosted by the Southwest Church of Christ in Ada, Okla. The recent gathering drew 200 girls and adult leaders. “It is such an encouragement to be reminded that we are all sisters in Christ and are not alone in life, no matter what we may be facing,” Southwest member Michelle Osborn said.

SPOTLIGHT
Walking to feed the hungry
CHICAGO — Sixteen members of the Northwest Church of Christ participated in Chicago’s 33rd annual Hunger Walk, a three-mile fund-raising walk that helps feed the needy.
The group raised nearly $2,500 for the church’s food pantry.
“That money will be used to purchase food, including holiday food, for the 50 to 60 families who we feed every week through our pantry,” said minister Patrick Odum, one of the walkers.
In all, more than 14,000 people packed the city’s lakefront for the recent Hunger Walk, organized by the Greater Chicago Food Depository. The charity supports a network of soup kitchens, pantries and shelters.
Dallas West Church of Christ member Sherron Rodgers, right, says she can’t make sense of Botham Shem Jean’s shooting death. “It was just cold-blooded,” she says.

Friends, relatives and fellow Christians pray at a vigil in memory of shooting victim Botham Shem Jean. The vigil hosted by the Dallas West church drew hundreds.

**BOTHAM:** ‘The No. 1 answer I want is: What happened?’

FROM PAGE 1

where he often led worship in chapel and served as a ministry intern with the College Church of Christ.

Officer Amber Guyger, who lived in the same apartment complex as Botham Jean, was charged Sept. 9 with manslaughter and booked into jail before posting bond. Lee Merritt, an attorney for the victim’s family, voiced frustration that Guyger remained free for nearly 72 hours after the 10 p.m. Sept. 6 shooting.

“This officer is absolutely getting special treatment,” Merritt said, demanding increased transparency in the investigation by the Texas Rangers and the Dallas County district attorney’s office.

According to an arrest affidavit filed by Texas Ranger peace officer David L. Armstrong, Guyger worked her shift Sept. 6 — a Thursday — and then returned home. At the apartment complex’s multi-level garage, she parked on the wrong floor and then mistook Botham Jean’s home for her own. After entering through his slightly ajar door, she confused him with a burglar and opened fire.

But for the victim’s mother, a former top government official in St. Lucia, many perplexing questions remain. The narrative about how her son died doesn’t make sense.

“The No. 1 answer I want is: What happened?” said Allison Jean, who was joined at a news conference Sept. 10 by attorneys and Allan Chastanet, the prime minister of St. Lucia, a nation of 178,000 people. “I have asked too many questions and been told there are no answers yet.”

At the microphone, Allison Jean was flanked by Botham Jean’s older sister, Allisa Findley, and his younger brother, Brandt. Noting that Botham Jean was her middle child, the mother said, “I stand in the middle to represent Botham.”

Botham Jean’s death refocused national attention — and even international attention, given the St. Lucia connection — on police shootings of unarmed black males by white police officers.

“I’m really hoping the justice system takes the right course and that Botham’s name is redeemed,” said the prime minister, who indicated he has known Allison Jean for a long time and praised the “incredible job” she did raising her son.

**THE PERFECT STORM**

Back at the Dallas West Church of Christ, minister Sammie L. Berry titled his hastily prepared Sunday sermon “Navigating Through the Perfect Storm,” taking his main text from Acts 27.

“Our hearts are saddened,” Berry told The Christian Chronicle in an interview before the assembly. “Our emotions are just swinging all over the place. We don’t know what to think. We have a lot of questions.”

Berry, described by the victim’s mother as Botham Jean’s “Texas father,” said the church would work to support the family and make sure that justice is served.

“Bo was an outstanding young man,” Berry said of Botham Jean, who had started preaching occasionally on Sunday nights. “You just can’t think of how this could happen to him. I mean, all he did was go to work, go to church, help people.

“We’re going to make sure that his name is lifted up. We’re going to make sure that we get answers to what happened,” the minister added. “We won’t allow this to be just brushed to the side and move on to the next case. He meant too much to his family. He meant too much to this congregation, to his college, to the place where he worked.”

Allison Jean told the congregation at a prayer vigil Sept. 8 — a Saturday — that her middle son “did everything with a passion,” including serving the Lord.

“I can never give up because I know that Botham is singing with the angels, and I want to be in that choir,” she said. “I want to see my son. I want to look upon his face.”

When Botham Jean was born in 1991, his mother said, “God gave me an angel.”

While much of the national conversation focuses on race, she said Botham Jean “never saw color. He never saw race. He wanted all of us to unite, to be together.”
‘LET US PULL TOGETHER’

Before leading the church in singing “Our God, He Is Alive” that Sunday, Jeremy Bonner compared Botham Jean to famous men of the Bible.

“He was the epitome of, ‘Send me, and I’ll go.’ He was found working like David. He was a sweet song leader like David,” Bonner said. “Like Samson, he is a martyr. Like John, he proclaimed the Lord. Like Paul, he taught and corrected in love. And like Jesus, he was loving and kind.”

“Amen!” voices in the congregation responded.

“Was he the best of friends? No. That would be an understatement,” Bonner added. “He was the best of brothers. He was a son. And most importantly, he was a servant of the Most High God.”

“Amen!” the church said again, erupting into applause.

Turning his attention to those whose loss was greatest, Bonner said, “I want you to know, Jean family, your son was the spiritual tip of the spear. God rest his soul. God have mercy on him.”

Mayor Mike Rawlings, who earlier met with Botham Jean’s family to express his condolences, stayed for the entire two-hour service.

At the end, Rawlings told the congregation he came not in an official capacity but as a citizen, “wanting to soothe some of my hurt because the city of Dallas is hurting so bad.

“To be able to sing with you, to be able to pray with you, to be able to listen to this wonderful sermon was just what I needed because I feel like, as mayor, I’m in the perfect storm,” he said.

The mayor drew cheers when he agreed with Berry that “we all need to be like Bo.”

“God bless you,” Rawlings said as he wrapped up his remarks. “Let us pull together. We will be a better city once we know the truth and once we come together and heal.”

A GIVING HEART

Tommy Bush, a retired executive minister, works with a small congregation in Romance, Ark., an unincorporated community about 20 miles west of Searcy.

The two became close friends and worked together to support missions in St. Lucia and Kenya.

“His theology — his philosophy — was to get as good a job as he could and to make money to be able to give,” said Bush, who came to worship with the Dallas West church and comfort Botham Jean’s family. “He had great ideas for serving poor children and orphans in St. Lucia.”

Bush said he prays the charged officer knows Jesus.

“I just hope that she has the indwelling presence of Christ,” Bush said, breaking into tears, “because Botham will be the first one in line to give her a hug and welcome her home.”
Botham Shem Jean's shooting death brought a huge outpouring of condolences. Jean, 26, grew up on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia before attending Harding University in Searcy, Ark. The 2016 accounting graduate was a member of the Dallas West Church of Christ.

A lover of people — and beloved

“He had a captivating smile. He loved people. He loved helping people.” — Sammie Berry Jr., minister and elder of the Dallas West church

“He cared about the Lord, and he wanted you to care about the Lord.” — Todd Gentry, Jean’s “Arkansas father” and college minister for the College Church of Christ in Searcy

“There are so many in the U.S. who have shown tremendous love to this boy. He was so loved.” — Bertrum Jean, father of Botham Jean

A baby brother

“You will always be my baby brother. I love you with all of my heart Botham Shem Jean. Until we meet again my love.” — Allisa Findley, Jean’s sister, in a Facebook post the day after his death

A servant at Harding

“He was involved in a wide variety of ways, primarily serving in places where help was needed. He had a passion for service and uplifting leaders. He was a man of great joy. His greatest service ... was constantly pointing back to God as our focus.” — Cana Moore, who attended Harding with Jean and is now student association president at Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn.

“Most of all, he was faithful. ... He was always in service of others, even when it wasn’t convenient for him. He was truly a gift from God, and our human words will never do him justice.” — Alexis Stossel, another Harding friend

A ‘soldier of Christ’ in St. Lucia

“Botham was a soldier of Christ, committed to singing, song leading and teaching. (He was a) very vibrant young man who was well-loved by many and had the souls of men at heart. I can say more, but my heart is too heavy. All the congregations on the island are in grief.” — Desma Charles, Jean’s aunt and member of the Gros Islet Church of Christ in St. Lucia

“It’s hard to describe Botham except to say he was like a prince on that island. He was just so loved.” — Debbie Gentry, Jean’s “Arkansas mother,” who traveled with him on mission trips to St. Lucia

“He was a great song leader and a big part of the Caribbean Lectures.” — Ken Dye, longtime missionary to the Caribbean

“Bo’s positive spirit will not leave PwC with his death. His memory will continue to inspire us to be better people. ... Bo has inspired us to be like Bo.” — Tim Ryan, U.S. chairman of accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, where Jean worked

“A light for his colleagues

“I am in deep pain for my brother and friend, also for his parents and other family members. This is so sad and such a loss for the Christian brotherhood, especially in this region and the Harding University community.” — Elton Terry, minister for the St. Thomas Church of Christ in the U.S. Virgin Islands

Botham Shem Jean leads singing during his time as a student at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., where he earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting in 2016. Originally from the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, Jean was a member of Harding’s Good News Singers, a resident assistant, an intern for the Rock House campus ministry and a leader in Sub T-16 men’s social club. He frequently led worship for chapel and for campus events such as Uplift.
Faculty Positions for 2019–2020

Seaver College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences at Pepperdine University invites applications for full-time tenure-track or fixed-term positions that may be available for the 2019–2020 academic year.

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Thank you!
mid breathtaking mountain scenery, thick jungle brush and raging rivers, 22 souls gave their lives to Christ through baptism in Papua New Guinea.

The baptisms were the result of a gospel campaign by local Christians along with missionaries from Australia and New Zealand. Each convert received a Bible and song book in their native language.

The team raised more than $20,000 for the mission trip from 37 Churches of Christ and individual Christians across Australia. It was a mission of “incredible, remote places” and “amazing, loving people,” said team member Rosie Cronin, secretary for the South Pacific Bible College in Tauranga, New Zealand. The team also encountered people struggling with “immensely heartbreaking and difficult circumstances,” she said.

Australian missionaries Tom and Rens Bunt began working in the Waria Valley of Papua New Guinea in 1984, returning every few years to encourage believers there. When Tom Bunt was no longer able to make the journey, Australians Steve Collins of the Warwick Church of Christ and David Payne of the Heidelberg West Church of Christ in Melbourne carried on the work.

“Sometimes here in Australia we can get frustrated with the thinking of man and long for Christ’s return for our own benefit,” Collins said. “(We) wonder why he has not come back yet.

“Then I go to Papua New Guinea and see how hungry people are to come to know the Lord. I realize that perhaps the reason he has not come back yet could be because of these ones he loves. It is his desire that none should perish.”

Preparation for the trip began a year in advance. Collins said that team members strive to meet the needs of the church in Papua New Guinea.

“Sometimes here in Australia we can get frustrated with the thinking of man and long for Christ’s return for our own benefit,” Collins said. “(We) wonder why he has not come back yet.

“Then I go to Papua New Guinea and see how hungry people are to come to know the Lord. I realize that perhaps the reason he has not come back yet could be because of these ones he loves. It is his desire that none should perish.”

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The Christian Chronicle is searching for a new Chief Executive Officer.

After 22 years of exceptional service, Dr. Lynn McMillon has announced that he will be stepping down as the President and CEO of The Christian Chronicle by May 31, 2019.

The Board of Trustees seeks a highly qualified candidate for the role of President and CEO to oversee and manage the day-to-day operations of the newspaper and work in harmony with its award-winning staff.

For full details of the role and job description, visit:

www.christianchronicle.org

If you know of someone qualified for and potentially interested in this important role, please forward this information to him or her and send your nomination to us at the address below.

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The Trustees and staff appreciate your prayers for this search process and for the mission of the Chronicle to inform, inspire and unite.
IN THE JUNGLES of Papua New Guinea, a Christian university student experiences the ministry of Pioneer Bible Translators.

A Bible for every tribe, every tongue

BY LYNN Mc MILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

For Rett Parker, Mum’s the word.

It’s many words, actually — an entire language of them, spoken by villagers in the Madang province of Papua New Guinea, a Pacific nation just north of Australia.

And soon, the people who speak Mum will be able to read God’s Word in their own language.

Parker, a senior at Oklahoma Christian University, spent his summer interning with Pioneer Bible Translators, a nonprofit working to translate Scripture into the world’s 1,600 languages that don’t have a complete Bible.

For Parker, a native of Broken Arrow, Okla., the journey to Papua New Guinea began when he enrolled in a Beginning Greek class as a freshman — because he needed the hours. This summer he learned the reality of the words “it never happens like that” — a favorite phrase of one of his mentors.

“I got malaria even though I took all my meds,” he said. “It rained so long and hard that we left Anguna (one of the villages where he worked) two days later than expected. Over a dozen outings with nationals that we planned got canceled, often without us knowing why.”

He viewed the challenges as opportunities to learn — and to let go of the “strong Western obsession for control,” he said.

As graduation approaches, he’s preparing for graduate school and considering his options. Regardless of where he ends up — on a far-flung island or in suburban America, he hopes to live a life of ministry.

Tell us about Pioneer Bible Translators. How did you get connected with them?

It’s a Bible translation organization that works with the other translation organizations to finish translating the Bible into all of the approximately 7,000 languages in the world.

Pioneer Bible Translators focuses on languages that don’t have a Bible or a church, and their goal is to see networks of churches using the Scriptures to grow, multiply and expand in all the people groups.

I heard about PBT when my Beginning Greek professor, Dr. Grant Testut, brought a recruiter from the organization into class one day. The recruiter told us about the work that PBT does and the help that they need. I didn’t act on that experience until a year later, when I really caught their vision at a Discovery Weekend they hosted.

How did you end up in Papua New Guinea?

Pioneer Bible Translators takes a strongly holistic approach to their ministry, so there are several different jobs and needs that they have.

I am interested in Bible translation specifically, and in Papua New Guinea PBT has a strong emphasis on many different methods of Bible translation — both in the villages of the bush language groups and in the towns. They even have people who work from the United States and fly in for periods of time.

Additionally, PBT has a strong support staff in Papua New Guinea, so I got see all the various roles that they play to help the Scriptures impact people, from finance to literacy, even internet work.

Plus, it seemed like it would be really cool to be out in the jungles of Papua New Guinea.

Is that what happened? Where did you work?

I spent most of my time in two different villages, Airingana and Anguna, learning from the missionaries stationed there.

The villages all had houses on stilts, made almost entirely from material from the jungle. Many used morata (leaves woven over a branch) for their roofs. The paths along the villages were often incredibly muddy because of all the rain we got.

You could get to Airingana by following a dirt road the logging companies made, but to get to Anguna you had to take a canoe down the river.

We spent most of our time in the houses of the missionaries, but we would often go on forays with the villagers out into the bush so that they could show us how they do things like harvest food and fish and get materials for houses.

We also spent time in Madang, the regional capital, which had a population of a little under 30,000. There we did most our work in PBT’s Papua New Guinea office.

What were your duties with PBT?

I was an intern, so my specific duty was to see what God was calling me to do in life — and whether or not Pioneer Bible Translators factored into those plans. The organization brings people into the field and gives them a taste of how translators work.

My coach and I tried very hard to be an encouragement to the missionaries, and we were generally able to help out with various things they needed.

What can you tell us about the people you encountered?

The Papua New Guineans were very excited and honored to have two white people visiting, so they often took us out to show us how they did various things, from harvesting yams and sago (a starch extracted from palm stems) to cutting and skinning trees for houses. It was incredible — all the knowledge they had about the jungle. Even the little kids could go out and cut limbum bark off the trees for flooring.

Many of the people we worked with were involved in the translation work, so they were inquisitive and eager to push the translation through. They had learned how to work through the text and ask the questions that struck at the meaning of it so that they could bring that meaning into their own language in their translation work.

They were relatively used to white people visiting, so they often took us out to show us how they did various things, from harvesting yams and sago (a starch extracted from palm stems) to cutting and skinning trees for houses. It was incredible — all the knowledge they had about the jungle. Even the little kids could go out and cut limbum bark off the trees for flooring.
people coming around, so they weren't surprised at all that we didn’t like their sago or couldn’t walk as fast at they could.

The missionaries were all so passionate about bringing God’s word to the people, but that didn’t stop them from being a wonderfully fun group. They joked and laughed and bonded. They were as serious about having the joy of the Lord as they were about advancing his kingdom. They also opened up their lives to us, giving us wisdom and guidance on all sorts of things, not just missionary work but also our daily Christian walk.

What did you learn from this experience?

I learned a lot about the process of Bible translation. It is long and complicated because of the necessity of ensuring a solid translation that the native speakers can understand, yet one that remains faithful to the original Greek and Hebrew of the Bible.

I learned that a myriad of other things come up around Bible translation, including literacy work; Scripture impact; financial, legal and logistical work; and a whole lot of handyman work.

But I also learned that’s it’s not some giant, insurmountable task. Without downplaying the creativity, analysis, and tenacity that goes into it, Bible translation is doable. And I learned that it’s something I can do.
God is on the move in the Muslim world.

We are praying for God to raise up workers we can prepare for ministry among God-seekers around the Mediterranean Rim. We are asking God for the work force, for partner churches who will share in this vision, and for individuals who will actively pray for expansion of His Kingdom.

Will you pray with us?
Please go to www.medrim.org and complete the simple signup to join the prayer movement.

IS GOD CALLING YOU? LET’S TALK! • missions@MRNet.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 position 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 Biblical Studies
Dr. Ken Cukrowski, Dean, ACU Box 29400, Abilene, Texas 79699-9400

The Department of Marriage and Family Studies invites applications for a tenure-track faculty position in a COAMFTE-accredited M.M.F.T. program beginning in Fall 2019. The candidate will teach MFT courses, supervise graduate interns, mentor student research and serve on committees; should possess a well-defined program of research as evidenced by peer-reviewed publications and presentations; and be able to integrate spiritual issues with teaching and therapy. The candidate must hold the Ph.D. in marriage and family therapy or a closely related discipline, exhibit competence as a classroom teacher, demonstrate eligibility for licensure as an LMFT in Texas; hold Approved Supervisor or Supervisor Candidate status with the AAMFT; and hold a degree from a COAMFTE-accredited program. The ideal candidate will be collaborative, culturally competent, and focused on mentoring diverse students to become excellent clinicians and researchers. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/mft.

College of Business Administration
Dr. Brad Crisp, Dean, ACU Box 29300, Abilene, Texas 79699-9300

The Department of Accounting and Finance invites applications and nominations in writing for an instructor or full-time, tenure-track faculty member to join the College of Business Administration beginning in Fall 2019. The candidate will be expected to teach upper-level finance courses, mentor students, and accept departmental, college and university committee assignments. To support ACU’s mission as a teaching institution, the candidate should exhibit excellence as a classroom teacher. COBA is accredited by AACSB International and faculty members are expected to maintain a program of intellectual contributions in the form of peer-reviewed academic presentations and publications. A terminal degree in finance or a related field is preferred; a master’s degree combined with significant professional experience in finance and commitment to ongoing professional development is acceptable. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/coba.

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 as 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 SITC can be found at blogs.acu.edu/sitc.

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 applications 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. All applicants must be professing Christians and be active, faithful members of a congregation of the Churches of Christ.

The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. ACU does not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities.
The Gospel in 10,000 boxes

SUNSET INTERNATIONAL reaches a milestone in its distribution of solar-powered players that read Scripture and teach Jesus.

BY ERIK TRYGGSTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

BAGUIO, Philippines

Filipino Christians gasp as Chris Swinford tells them what he found in a box in an African village.

Speaking to a packed auditorium at Philippine Bible College, Swinford talks about a church he once visited in the West African nation of Liberia. It’s one of 85 countries where the West Texas native has preached through his work with Sunset International Bible Institute, a Lubbock-based ministry that trains and equips Churches of Christ around the globe.

The Liberian village had little electricity and no plumbing, Swinford tells the Filipino Christians. The church’s leaders pointed him to an outhouse and told him to use “the good paper” in the box.

The “good paper,” Swinford discovered, was the Good Book — copies of the New King James Version of the Bible, sent to the village by a mission society.

Some of the pages were torn out. (That’s when the Filipinos gasp.)

“You know, those were Bibles,” Swinford told the Liberians. “They were horrified, but none of them knew.” Few of them could read their own language, much less English.

Back in the U.S., “I’m sure there was somebody who had a plan to say, ‘We’re going to send a box of Bibles to every village,’” Swinford says. But paper, English Bibles weren’t what they needed.
SOURCES: 
2. R. Swinford, “The Sunray Church, a little seed,” Grypp said as he presented ‘GOD IN A BOX’ Bibles to the Philippines’ 103 million souls. 
3. P. Kendall, “It makes you think about a lot of the mission work we do,” he says. “We do it with ourselves in mind.” 
4. A. Delacion was baptized just a few months after the trip to Liberia. 
5. S. Sunnans, “There have been few times in my life when I have recognized something so powerful,” he said, “something that is so potent in its potential to change the world.”

**POPULATION:** 104 million, RELIGION: 61 percent Catholic, 9 percent Protestant, 8 percent Animist, 7 percent Muslim, 1 percent Jewish, 0 percent atheist/agnostic.

**POWER OF THE SON, FROM THE SUN:** A little seed, Isaac sold sheep and goats to pay for the box,” he explains, and not to put artificial boundaries on God’s word. 

**CHURCHES:** P. Kendall, “In the Philippines ‘there are more churches here than preachers,’ he said. “There are more people who want to hear the Good News than there are churches in the islands.”

**EVANGELISTS:** P. Kendall, “It’s a tool for pioneers. Just last February, a Filipino Christian, after Swinford’s death, received a solar player after he went blind. He travels from a hospital in the provincial capital of Calabar, he plays the lessons on the bus for his fellow passengers and tells them about Jesus. At the hospital, he uses the solar player as he visits patients, and crowds gather to listen. “Jesus has actually told us not to cease preaching the Gospel,” Swinford said. “In Acts 5:42, it says we should not cease preaching.”

**MISSIONARY:** P. Kendall, “One of Sunset’s supporters once reported 136 baptisms in the two months after distribution of the players there.”

**POWDER OF CHRIST:** A. Delacion, a member of the Instruction Street Church of Christ in the Philippines’ capital, Manila. He hopes to plant a congregation in his rural village home. Delacion was baptized just a few years ago as he completed his mechanical engineering degree. His classmate, Jayce Tangaman, invited him to church and the rest is history.

**SUNSET INTERNATIONAL BIBLE INSTITUTE** has translated the Bible lessons included in its curriculum into dozens of languages, including Spanish and Amharic (spoken in Ethiopia) and transportation. Churches of Christ that provide money for the players make a substantial investment in their brothers and sisters overseas, Swinford said. There are villages in Africa with a $500 missionary that teaches the Bible. ‘Do we have preachers who take them to seven or eight congregations and play them? ‘Is it worth $500? When it’s winning souls in a village in Africa or a village in Central America’s it’s worth immeasurably more’

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The Power of the Cross

The Catholic Church believes that when Adam sinned (Genesis chapter 3) his trespass caused a reign of death that ruled over all men. That view is correct (Romans 5:17).

The Christian churches do not believe God would hold blameless men accountable for Adam’s sin, therefore they do not believe Adam’s trespass caused death to reign over anyone. That is why the Christian churches refuse to teach that little babies must be baptized to take away Adam’s sin.

That view is absolutely reasonable, true, and correct.

How can both views be valid? Because there was a Man of great love who had all power and authority to immediately annul Adam’s transgression by accepting the responsibility for his trespass himself. His name is Jesus. Jesus abolished Adam’s reign of death and established the reign of eternal life by giving up his own life on a cross to die as a sacrifice in the place of all other men. Jesus’ cross took place about 33 AD. However, the cross was an established fact in the mind of God before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:18–20). All of this is revealed in Romans 5:12–21, and it is clearly explained in this book. When you read the first part of the verses in Romans 5:15–21, it describes Adam’s sin and the terrible consequences of his trespass. However, the last part of each verse explains how the cross annulled Adam’s trespass, forgave all men from all sin, (if they will accept forgiveness on God’s conditions), and offers all men eternal life.

A seeker finds his voice

A SHY, SPIRITUAL mechanical engineer – not a preacher – is the perfect recipient for solar player No. 10,000, fellow Christians say.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MANILA, Philippines

He seems like an unlikely candidate to receive Sunset International Bible Institute’s 10,000th solar player.

And his country seems like an unlikely place to give it.

After all, Ed-Mark Delacion isn’t a preacher. He’s a mechanical engineer in Manila, the burgeoning capital of the Philippines, home to a growing middle class of techno-savvy young professionals. There’s a 7-Eleven on every corner, it seems, alongside McDonald’s and Jollibee, a Filipino fast-food chain. Most have free Wi-Fi.

But that changes just outside city limits, says Delacion. Some rural areas remain largely off the grid, unplugged from the noises of modern life.

That, he says, is where he wants to plant a church.

The 28-year-old Delacion grew up, like most Filipinos, in a Catholic home. As he moved to the city to study engineering, however, he felt his faith slipping away — an all-too common trend among the country’s youths, ministers here say.

He studied for his licensure exam with fellow student Jaydee Tangunan, a preacher for the Nagcarlan Church of Christ in the Philippines’ Laguna province. Occasionally, Tangunan invited his classmates to study at the nearby meeting place of the Instruction Street Church of Christ in Manila.

Tangunan soon learned that his friend was a spiritual seeker.

So did the Instruction Street church’s minister, Phillip Dumawa.

“After passing the engineering licensure exam, Ed-Mark continued to attend the church services even without Jaydee,” Dumawa says. “I thought that was really special. And so we started to study the Bible together.”

Delacion says, “I saw the loving nature of Christ” in his friend, and by studying the book of Acts, “I decided to be baptized, to be obedient.”

In the years since his baptism, he’s continued to study the Bible. He has regular studies with Tangunan, though they serve in different congregations.

“Ed-Mark is a very shy brother,” Dumawa says. “He doesn’t talk much, but when he talks he makes sense.”

He’s eager to perform whatever tasks the church needs, Dumawa adds. He’s also an encourager who finds ways to incorporate others into his work for the Lord.

For Delacion, solar player No. 10,000 will serve as his voice, his friends say. The hundreds of hours of Bible lessons it contains will help him bring the Gospel to his home village.

Tangunan, who also has a solar player, explains: “In the Philippines, there are young professionals who are not trained in Bible schools — like me, like Ed-Mark — and we want also to participate in the mission work. We want to teach. We want to be able to encourage others.”

The solar player enables them to do exactly that, says Tangunan, who listens to Bible lessons as he drives through Manila’s heavy, often grid-locked traffic.

“It’s got years of Bible school lectures in it,” Tangunan says. “So if we are unable to go to Bible school, then the solar player is essentially a Bible school in itself.”
MINISTRY TRAINING

LIBERIA BIBLE COLLEGE
MONROVIA, Liberia — Kenneth Bolden, director of Liberia Bible College, presided over recent graduation ceremonies held at the Smythe Road Church of Christ.

This was the first graduating class in a joint venture between Liberia Bible College and Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas.

Five graduates received associate’s degrees in biblical studies. Dan Goodyear, Sunset’s dean for West Africa, presented diplomas.

HIGHER EDUCATION

HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Harding School of Theology recently celebrated 60 years of theological study on the school’s campus in Memphis.

In his introductory remarks, vice president Jim Martin reminded guests, “HST exists to make a difference.”

The simple but heartfelt program began with an address by former dean Evertt Huffard, who spoke in chapel about the school’s history and relevance in the 21st century.

The audience of 80 later adjourned to Harding’s Oliver and Norma Rogers Research Center for light refreshments, as former dean Philip Slate spoke about the school’s focus since 1958 on global missions.

Three representatives of the school’s initial graduating class of August 1959 attended. Finis Caldwell, Mac Lynn and Corene Stevens, wife of the late Alvin Stevens, received a round of applause from guests.

At Lipscomb event, students ENGAGE the contemporary call to racial justice and healing

The recent second annual ENGAGE Youth Theology Initiative at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., involved a racially diverse group of 26 high school students from eight states. The students explored the contemporary call to racial justice and healing, the histories of both the church and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and what it means to live a life of Christian leadership and service, program director Claire Davidson-Frederick said. Among the participants were students from 13 Churches of Christ in six states.

SPOTLIGHT

Repairing the camp

SAFFORD, Ariz. — Ambassadors for Christ campus ministry students recently spent three days repairing the water system for the Arizona Church of Christ Bible Camp.

The system was destroyed when the lightning-caused Frye Fire burned across 48,000 acres in summer 2017.

“We hope to have the system up and running in order to collect water all winter for the camps next summer,” said Jessica Knapp, associate campus minister.

Faulkner’s Kearley Graduate School of Theology was recently accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools.

The accreditation is one that Faulkner now shares with prestigious seminaries such as Harvard Divinity School and Yale Divinity School.

“ATS accreditation represents an institution’s alignment with the highest standards in academic excellence and scholarship in theological studies,” said Scott Gleaves, dean of Faulkner’s V.P. Black College of Biblical Studies. “We went through an arduous, four-year self-evaluation of our programs in order to assess our alignment with the high educational and effectiveness standards of ATS.”

FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY
HENDERSON, Tenn. — Long-awaited work to restore Old Main on the Freed-Hardeman campus has begun.

Offices, classrooms and restrooms will be renovated. An elevator will be installed on the south side of Old Main where a 1950s addition joins the original building. The elevator will reach all five levels of the building.

Jacob Bowles, Quentin Koppenhaver and Taylor Usry work at the camp.
The family stayed in a mountain cabin and, like many attendees, mixed spiritual endeavors with tourist activities such as the Hatfield & McCoy Dinner Feud.

The week-long conference at the Sevierville Convention Center grew out of three preachers — Allen Webster, Mark Howell and Floyd Bailey — getting together to brainstorm sermons a quarter-century ago.

This year, Polishing the Pulpit hit a record attendance of more than 5,000 men, women and children from 40 states and 13 other countries, according to organizers.

"The mantra is 'Renew, Recharge, Refresh,' and that really sums up our goal," said Webster, minister for the Jacksonville Church of Christ in Alabama and one of the conference's four directors. "We want to encourage the leaders of the church and members of the church to continue to serve faithfully, worship faithfully and evangelize the world.

"So it's a combination of encouragement, motivation and instruction," he added.

Kelvin Pugh, minister for the Collinsville Church of Christ in Illinois, said he looks forward to the fellowship and variety of classes at Polishing the Pulpit.

"I think people are mostly looking for the truth, and it doesn't matter who you are," said Pugh, noting the racial diversity of attendees.

"You know you can hear sound, biblical preaching and get great information from the Bible from your classes," he added. "Whether it's a white brother teaching or black or Hispanic, it doesn't matter as long as the truth is being taught."

Tanesha Nelson, whose husband, Curtis, preaches for the Henderson Church of Christ in North Carolina, said she likes "the classes, the lessons, the fellowship — getting to know new people in all walks of life, all races."

With 175 speakers and 600 class sessions, Polishing the Pulpit features special tracks for preachers, elders/deacons, women, children/teens and topical areas such as evangelism and technology.

In putting together the program, the main focus "is that each speaker is known for teaching and practicing sound doctrine," Webster said.

Polishing the Pulpit is not a polemic event, he said, but it doesn't shy away from controversial issues.

"We just try to teach what the Scriptures say and look at the issues," Webster said. "This year, we dealt with everything from transgenderism to gay rights to racial tensions to things that our people are dealing with just as part of their communities.

"But we also dealt with instrumental music and women's roles and elders' roles and things like that," he added. "I think it's helping churches sort through some things in a non-judgmental environment where they just come in and say, 'What does the Bible say about these issues? How are other churches or elderships dealing with the change issues that they're facing?'"
Theological Divide

The water park at a main hotel is closed during Polishing the Pulpit because “all the directors and overseeing elders oppose mixed swimming because of the Bible’s teaching on modesty (1 Timothy 2:9), our responsibility to avoid being a stumbling block to others (Romans 14:3), and our need to avoid putting ourselves into the path of temptation (Matthew 5:28; 6:13).”

The conference program also points out that “suits and dresses are usual for worship services.”

“PTP would probably be a totally different group than who would attend a Pepperdine or an Abilene lectureship,” Webster said. “It’s more of a self-sorting situation where people at churches that are supportive of Pepperdine probably wouldn’t be supportive of PTP and vice versa. There just wouldn’t be much fellowship because there’s not much agreement. There’s significant disagreement on significant issues.”

Mike Cope, director of Harbor: The Pepperdine Bible Lectures, which each spring draws 2,400 members of Churches of Christ to Malibu, Calif., offered a similar take.

“When I look at the speakers at Polishing the Pulpit, I realize that I know very few of the names,” Cope said. “For me, it’s like showing up at a family reunion and realizing you don’t recognize anyone.

“I’m sure that’s how they feel if they look at the Harbor booklet,” he added. “Perhaps some of that is geographical. It’s a long way from East Tennessee to Malibu. But more than that, it reflects a diversity within Churches of Christ, including different visions of what it means to be a Restoration movement.”

Four teenage friends from Texas — Megan Cain, Peyton Cain, Caleb Hahn and Emily Sisco — attended Polishing the Pulpit. They said they appreciate the deep Bible study as well as the late-night youth events such as movies and putt-putt golf.

“We get more classes that are actual instruction rather than feel-good lessons,” said Peyton Cain, 18, a member of the Houston-area Katy Church of Christ. “It really does refresh you ... to know that this is what you need to do as a Christian. And then you go and try to live the best Christian life you can.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Philip and Patricia Slate
Preacher Position Opening

The Angleton Church of Christ, located 20 miles from the Gulf Coast and 45 miles south of Houston, Texas, is looking for a full-time pulpit minister. Our congregation is averaging 100-120 in attendance each Lord’s day. We are led by a Christ-centered eldership committed to the spiritual and numerical growth of its members and spreading the good news of the gospel message far and wide. Preference will be given to an energetic and well-rounded family man with minister experience who graduated from a preaching school or university associated with the church of Christ. He must love the Lord, be doctrinally sound and committed to a traditionally led worship service patterned after the first-century-based church. He must be capable of inspiring members of the church and a diverse community around them. He must be able to relate to all ages in a spiritual-based worship service. Compensation commensurate with qualifications and experience. Those interested in applying should email a copy of their resume with at least (3) references to:

David@angletoncofc.org

Minister Needed

Is there a congregation ready to send a minister to work in south-central Pennsylvania?

Small church needs a sponsored worker for a growing community. See online ad for more info.

Chambersburg Church of Christ
PO Box 221
Chambersburg, PA 17201
(717) 261-0835 (leave msg)
cofc@innernet.net
www.christianchronicle.org/classifieds

Full-time Youth Ministry Opportunity

Southwest Church of Christ in Pueblo, Colo., is seeking a full-time youth minister with a loving and supportive wife to minister to a youth group of 25+/. Qualified individuals should possess a Bible degree (youth ministry preferred). Applicants with a degree in another area of study will be considered if they have significant field-related work experience. The candidate should possess strong communication skills, interpersonal skills, and organizational skills. Our ideal candidate will demonstrate Biblical soundness, spiritual maturity, and an obvious love for children/youth. Email resumes to:

gdwyer339@aol.com
southwestcofc1@gmail.com

Visit our online listings at christianchronicle.org/classifieds

During the 56th annual Teenage Christian Conference in Texas, young believers sing for the ReGenHarmony album “Inhalation,” a new project of The Acappella Company.

Young vocal group hopes to revive interest in a cappella

ReGenHarmony is a singing group made up of young people ages 13 to 25, is set to release its first volume, “Inhalation,” in the coming months.

“There’s something about that polyphonic form that is so accessible and compelling to students,” he said. “It might be a hurdle to pick out the alto line of a traditional SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) block chords, voices moving in parallel motion, but give the harmony part its own unique rhythmic identity and all of a sudden the harmony part its own unique rhythmic identity and all of a sudden students will sing it with ease.”

The recording features the voices of nearly 80 students from across the nation who gathered in August for the 56th Annual Teenage Christian Conference, hosted by the Denver City Church of Christ in Texas. Sarah Baker, 19, a member of the Poteau Church of Christ in Oklahoma, was one of the singers. She believes the style will really appeal to a younger crowd.

“The style of music is a little different,” Baker said. “They’re not your basic hymns. It’s not music that is traditionally thought to be ‘churchy.’”

The members of ReGenHarmony hope the new group of young singers will appeal to a young audience, showing them that a cappella music is relevant — even in 2018.

SEE VIDEOS from ReGenHarmony and other a cappella groups in our weekly “Voices Only” feature at christianchronicle.org.
A POCKET-SIZE NEW TESTAMENT and a sharpshooter medal saved the life of a Church of Christ member in the trenches of France during World War I. A century later, his grandson remembers God’s protection.

Beautiful, shrapnel-stopping words of life

BY KEN BECK | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

LEBANON, Tenn.

A century-old, khaki-covered paperback New Testament with a hole torn through its pages makes a mighty case for the power of prayer and divine intervention.

The family heirloom, plus a cross-shaped medal and a disfigured metallic slug, are treasured by Andy Austin, a member of the Stanton Church of Christ.

They testify to the legacy of his grandfather, Thell Ross Neal, a Marine whose life was spared by the Good Book 100 years ago in the trenches of France during World War I.

“Without the word of God I wouldn’t be telling this story,” said Austin, who was a year old when his grandfather died. One of his earliest childhood memories, burned clearly in his mind, centers on his mother and her sisters all hugging and crying while holding the tiny New Testament they pulled from a trunk.

“Mama really loved him and talked about him a lot,” Austin said. “I feel like I know him from what she and my grandmother told me.”

Neal was born March 5, 1891, in the Smith County community of Grant, Tenn., about 12 miles east of Lebanon. In his early 20s he moved to Winterville, Miss., to work with his brother, Mack, on a cotton farm.

Known affectionately as “Daddy Ross” to his children and grandchildren, Ross Neal labored beside his brother until 1918 when America entered what would soon become known as “The Great War.”

Mack Neal, who was married and had a daughter, got a summons to go to war. His brother, who was single, offered to stand in for him. In New Orleans on Feb. 10, 1918, Ross Neal signed up for the Marines.

The 5-foot-8,134-pound Tennessee volunteer traveled to the newly opened Paris Island training facility in South Carolina. The hunting he did as a youth served him well, and he earned a medal for sharpshooting before he boarded the USS Henderson and sailed for France. The 27-year-old saw battle in Chateau-Thierry, Belleau Wood, Soissons and Marbache.

He saw friends get gravely injured.

While visiting one in a hospital, someone gave him a paperback New Testament.

Doctors who treated Ross Neal after the Battle of Saint-Mihiel credited this New Testament and medal with saving the young church member’s life. A piece of shrapnel remains intact in the pages.

See SHRAPNEL, Page 26
On Sept. 15, 1918, his division fought German troops in the Battle of Saint-Mihiel.

"Before we started our attack one of the officers said, 'Neal, put that sharpshooter's medal in your pocket. It offers a shiny target,'" Neal told The Nashville Tennessean as he recounted the ordeal in 1946. "I pushed the metal back in my blouse pocket behind a copy of the New Testament." The Germans mortars rained "a shower of shrapnel," said Austin, remembering details from his mother's retelling of the battle. "His good buddy on his right got hit and fell to the ground, and he hollered, 'Neal, help me!'

"He leaned over to help him up and another shell came and a shower of fallen branches fell on them. He reached to get a better grip and another shell went off and he was hit. He felt it hit his right hand first. He was hit in several places and passed out from a concussion.

"When he came to he was in a field hospital lying on an examination table in a tent. When he asked about his friend, they told him he was dead. While he had cuts on his hand, arm, side and leg, Neal was told by medics that they found nothing serious. But the soldier felt a strong pain in his chest. It likely was pneumonia from spending nights in the trenches, he was told.

"Then they saw the hole in his pocket," Austin said. "It was a solemn moment when they saw that fragment of shrapnel that had penetrated the New Testament but had been stopped by the medal over his heart. Everybody was stunned. The doctor told him, 'If you hadn't had that Bible, we wouldn't be talking to you right now.'"

THE PAIN OF THE POSTWAR YEARS

Back in Tennessee, Laura Etta Frakes had been praying fervently on her knees for Ross Neal's safe return. Frakes, a native of Gallatin, Tenn., had met the young man five years before he joined the Marines. Both were attending a gospel meeting hosted by the Silver Springs Church of Christ near Mt. Juliet, Tenn.

"The moment they met they fell in love," their grandson said. "They kept in touch while he was working in Mississippi, and he came home to visit. They talked about getting married, and then the war broke out."

After the near-death experience, Neal returned to the battlefield and served until the war ended on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918. He concluded his time in Europe stationed on the Rhine River, living with a German family during the occupation. He received multiple medals for his service, which ended in February 1922. Five months later he and Frakes married and spent their honeymoon in an antebellum mansion in Lebanon, Tenn., that later became Ligon-Bobo Funeral Home, where both of their funerals were held.

Neal worked as supervisor of a cotton farm and operated a general store in Bigley Bend, Miss. But his health rapidly declined. When the family returned to Lebanon in 1938, he was practically disabled.

"He kept having these spells that would come on him," Austin said. "Nowhere in his military records does it say it, but Mama believed he was exposed to mustard gas, and that affected his nervous system. ...

"Later on his doctor told my grandmother, 'He needs to be kept in constant motion.' So they put him in a rocking chair every day, and Mama Ross and the five kids took turns rocking him every day until he fell asleep at night."

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‘BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH’

The family worshiped with the Lebanon Church of Christ, now the College Hills Church of Christ. The Neals’ granddaughter, Liz Baines, is a third-generation member of the congregation and helps in a children’s class just as her mother, Frances, did for decades.

When World War II arrived, “the church knew Daddy Ross’s story, so the elders gave every male member who was in World War II a pocket-sized New Testament,” Austin said.

Ross Neal died Dec. 7, 1954, exactly 13 years after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was 63. He was laid to rest in Lebanon’s Cedar Grove Cemetery.

“Mama used to tell me, ‘My Daddy stood in for his brother,’” Austin said. “She never explained what she meant, but now I know she meant that he laid down his life for his brother. He put his life on the line in World War I for his brother.”

“I know that I wouldn’t be here if God hadn’t put the Bible between that shrapnel and my grandfather’s heart. He intervened between life and death right there, and from that life I got life, and I have a wonderful family. It’s a sacred thing to us. If you can’t see God’s hand in this story, you’re blind.”

Liz Austin Baines and Andy Austin hold a photo of their grandfather, Ross Neal, and the small New Testament with the sharpshooter medal that saved his life.
Ray D. Fullerton Jr., 97, passed from this life on Aug. 26, at home in Jarrell, Texas, surrounded by his wife and family. He was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Byron Fullerton and Jerry Fullerton, wife Mary Margaret Fullerton, son-in-law Terry Sandefur and foster daughter Barbara Moses. He is survived by wife Ronda Fullerton; sister Martha Ann Spradling; four children; seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren, one nephew and two nieces.

Ray was born on Jan. 31, 1921, in Tyler, Texas, to R.D. Fullerton Sr. and Ruth Wiggins Fullerton. He was the oldest of four children and grew up in Kingsville, Texas.

After graduating from high school, Ray attended Texas A&M and the University of Texas where he earned a bachelor’s degree in 1942. Afterward, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and completed officer candidate school. He and Mary Margaret Baucom were married on Aug. 31, 1943, in Corpus Christi. Shortly thereafter, he was sent overseas. Six weeks after D-Day, he and his unit, the 50th General Hospital, entered France. He served as the hospital’s personnel officer until World War II ended.

After the war, Ray and the family moved to Abilene where he became an instructor in the business department at Abilene Christian College and supervised two boys’ dorms while taking post-graduate classes. In 1950, he returned to the University of Texas where he earned a master’s in business administration.

In 1952 he began his life as a full-time minister. He preached for the Lovelady Church of Christ, the Highlands Church of Christ and the Belton Church of Christ. In 1957, the family moved to Goldsboro, N.C., where they established the Goldsboro Church of Christ. In 1967 Ray moved his family to North Ryde, a suburb of Sydney, Australia, where he was involved in establishing the Macquarie Church of Christ and the Macquarie School of Preaching.

Upon returning to the United States in 1972 Ray and Mary Margaret settled in Vails Gate, N.Y., where Ray preached until they returned to Texas in late 1976. They settled in Georgetown and continued their ministry with Ray preaching in Troy, Leander and the Briggs and Strickland Grove communities. After retiring from the ministry they joined the Georgetown Church of Christ where Ray was active in mission work for many years.

On July 3, 2002, Mary Margaret, his wife of 59 years, died. Through mutual friends he met Ronda Huntsberger at the Georgetown Church of Christ. They were married on March 11, 2006. Ray’s children extend their love and thanks to Ronda for the love, joy and care she brought to Ray during their 12-year marriage.

Charles “Charlie” Craddock, 82, May 2, Murrells Inlet, S.C.

Birthday
93rd: Vennie Walker, Sept. 10, Altus, Okla.

Anniversaries

65th: Dwain and Barbara Evans, Sept. 19, Houston.

Hugh Fulford, pictured with his wife, Jan, has preached for 60 years.

RETIRING: Hugh Fulford officially retired in 2000 after 42 years of full-time ministry with congregations in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Texas. Now, at age 80, he’s retiring again from “regular, every Sunday” preaching after serving the Mitchellville Church of Christ in Portland, Tenn., in recent years.


NAMED: Scott McDowell, as vice president of student life at Abilene Christian University in Texas. McDowell previously served as senior vice president of student life at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. Lori Hadley, as head of school at Mount Dora Christian Academy in Florida. Hadley succeeds Brad Moser, who was named president of Clarksville Christian School in Tennessee. Jeremy Smith, as director of sports information at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala. Smith, a 2007 alumnus of Faulkner, preached for the Greensboro Church of Christ in Alabama for the past seven years.
When an Angel needs gas

Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

— Hebrews 13:2, New International Version

MONROE, La.

I met an angel today.
She called the church about an hour before it was time to start worship. (For preachers, that’s a really important time, you know!) Her request was small: some gas to get back to Texas after a funeral. I wish I had had a better attitude. I told her where to meet, at a gas station close to me. I grumbled on the way. Who believes this story? I certainly don’t. I frowned. Why did she call me?

And who plans a trip without the funds to get back home?
I sat there for about five minutes. So self-important, I thought I’d just leave soon if she didn’t show up. I had things to do, and this imposition was just an interruption I could do without.

Then she drove up. I got out and pumped her gas. And while I pumped she talked with me. Her grandmother had died. She grew up in Monroe, but moved to Texas several years ago. She had to be back in Texas for work Monday. We talked about church and struggles .... and the gas tank was full.

She said, “Would you pray for me to have a safe trip home?” as she held her hand in my direction. I took her hand, prayed for her, pretty much ashamed of my own attitude about the whole situation.

I asked her what her name was.
She said, “Angel.”
I said, “I believe it.”
I’m a little ashamed to share this story, but I also think it is an encouragement to remember who Jesus called us to be.

So as not to take credit, funds given at Forsythe Church of Christ for benevolence created the opportunity for me to bless Angel in the name of Jesus.

I’m grateful. I hope I’m growing. I know I needed to meet Angel this morning.


In the Word

John Dobbs

In the Word

Monroe, La.

Jesus.

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There are hundreds of churches in the phone book.

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E D I T O R I A L

As the world watches, may we point to the Light

Let the spirit of the Lord, just let it rise among us. Let the praises of our king ...

That snippet of the contemporary hymn “Let it Rise,” led by Botham Jean during Sunday worship at the Dallas West Church of Christ, played across thousands of speakers as National Public Radio reported on the funeral for the 26-year-old Christian.

On television sets, computers and mobile devices around the world, millions of souls watched brief glimpses of Jean leading “10,000 Reasons” (“Bless the Lord, oh my soul”) at his alma mater, Harding University. News stations across the country carried footage of students at the Searcy, Ark., university holding candles and singing “Magnificat” (“My soul magnifies the Lord”) in honor of their fallen alum.

“It starts with a solo voice and turns into a chorus,” a reporter with WFAA in Dallas posted on social media, describing the Harding students as they sang “The Greatest Commands.

For the second month in a row, we’ve reported on tragedies that thrust our fellowship into the harsh glare of the media spotlight. Last month it was the Missouri duck boat tragedy, which claimed the lives of three Christians from two Churches of Christ — Steve and Lance Smith of Arkansas and Ray Coleman of Indiana.

As she talked about the terrible loss of her husband and her son, Pam Smith told CBS News about her family’s faith and the support they’ve received from fellow members of the Osceola Church of Christ in Arkansas.

So powerful was her testimony that one CBS anchor said, “Thank God she has that church.”

Stanley J. Hubbard, minister for the Kingsley Terrace Church of Christ in Indianapolis, spoke to us about Coleman’s life. As terrible as the duck boat tragedy was, he said, it focused worldwide attention on the fragility of life — and the amazing gift God gives us in each other.

Now the world turns its attention to Botham Jean and our faith community. We’re crushed and confounded by the act of violence that took his life. At his memorial service, we particularly were moved by the words of Dane Felicien, a fellow believer from the Caribbean.

“Botham was a worker of the Lord,” Felicien said. “Botham wanted everyone to be saved through the blood of Jesus Christ.

“Botham was not perfect. No one is perfect. The Bible teaches us that God, who is rich in love, mercy, grace, gave us salvation through the death of his only son Jesus Christ for the whole world ... to any who would choose humility to God’s word and a repentant heart.

“That is what Botham, a child of the most high God, would have wanted you to know.”

Amen. We pray that the harsh light of the TV cameras may point souls to the marvelous Light of our Savior.

It starts with a solo voice and turns into a chorus.
Christian ministries can cooperate

TOO MANY OF OUR CHARITABLE efforts operate with a scarcity mindset. God calls us to do better.

ATLANTA

Should Christian ministries view each other as competition for a limited pool of donations and volunteers? We know they shouldn’t. But they do. A lot.

What if replacing this scarcity mindset with a truly cooperative ministry model actually makes all of our ministries more effective?

Three ministries here in Atlanta decided to make an intentional effort to find ways they could help each other recently.

The ministries:

• **Teach One Reach One Ministries:** I founded this ministry, which is dedicated to providing free resources to other ministries in the U.S. and around the world that help children and teens build stronger faith foundations and reach their godly potential.

• **Atlanta Inner City Ministries (AIM):** an urban ministry program connected to the Lakewood Church of Christ in Atlanta.

• **Georgia Agape:** a faith-based not-for-profit that provides services for foster care, adoption and unplanned pregnancy counseling and assistance.

Although our ministries have similar goals, it would be easy for us to work independently of each other — and compete for the time and finances of Christians in the Atlanta metro.

For us, the cooperation began with Sharalyn Donald, a volunteer who oversees AIM’s Hope for the Family Christmas outreach program for parents in at-risk circumstances. (Donald’s husband is pulpit minister for the Lakewood church.)

Donald reached out to Teach One Reach One to see if we would be willing to provide a class that could introduce the parents to the concept of God as the ultimate parenting expert. The goal: giving attendees practical, research based, biblical things they could do to help their children. We gladly accepted.

Then Georgia Agape hired Donald to serve as their resource development coordinator. With her years of experience working with at-risk parents, their children and our state’s department of family and children services, she was an ideal fit for the position.

“I learned that Georgia Agape had a desire to expand the variety of training opportunities they were providing for current and prospective foster and adoptive parents,” Donald said. “I remembered the response from the parents who attended our most recent Hope For the Family workshops.”

She spoke with LaQuisha White, director of social services for Agape. They contacted me, and the three of us worked together to see how we could use the talents and resources God gave us to help our community.

The result: a workshop titled “Helping Hurting Children Heal: A New Paradigm for Christian Foster and Adoptive Parenting.”

White recalled, “Our parents were enthusiastic about having someone provide part of their ongoing training who was able to put together research, best practices and, most importantly, the faith piece in ways they could understand and use immediately.

“More than anything, foster parents need practical methods to parent hurting children. Being able to tell prospective foster and adoptive parents they will receive this type of free training increases the likelihood they will want to foster and also improves their retention rate.”

Teach One Reach One, in turn, benefitted from helping both ministries. Providing free workshops gave us an opportunity to reach our ministry goals with parents and volunteers from the other two ministries’ large, local client base.

Too often, the ministries Christians launch or oversee are asked to take on tasks for which God has not really gifted them. Instead of partnering, we try to do everything on our own, and a lot of what we attempt just isn’t done well.

Changing how we normally do ministry isn’t always easy. It’s best to look for areas of natural overlap when adopting a cooperative ministry model. Then, try to find the strongest areas of each ministry. Not only does this model help us serve better, it also saves money.

In our experience, partnering gave us access to people, skills and opportunities that we wouldn’t have had otherwise. We believe that our ministries were strengthened — and neither our funding nor our volunteer bases were negatively impacted.

In economic terms, you could call it “ministry bartering.” With a Christian mindset, though, the cooperative model views each ministry as a part of the body with specific strengths and needs.

And as we learn from 1 Corinthians 12, Christ’s body is made up of many parts, each with unique gifts to be used to serve the others.

**THEREASA WINNETT** is the founder of Teach One Reach One Ministries, online at teachonereachone.org. She and her family worship with the East Cobb Church of Christ in Marietta, Ga. Read her blog at www.parentinglikehannah.com.
To include your event for $25, contact Full CALENDAR: www.christianchronicle.org.

**October 2018**

**CALANDAR**

**October 4-7** CenterPeace (e3) Conference. Highland Oaks Church, Dallas. Centerpeaceinc@gmail.com. See centerpeace.net.

**October 9-12** Abundant Living Branson Retreat. Branson, Mo. Contact Kay Gowen at Gowen@harding.edu. See abundantliving seniors.com.

**October 20-21** 70th Anniversary & Homecoming. Germantown Church of Christ, Germantown, Tenn. See gtcoc.org.


**November 5-11** Pan American Lectureship. Majesty of the Seas Cruise, Havana, Cuba. (800) 533-7660. See lectureship.org.

**November 9-11** PeacePrints Parent Retreat. Watchtower Ranch, Strawn, Texas. Centerpeaceinc@gmail.com. See centerpeace.net/parents.

**November 12** Festival of Trees Gala. Christian Care Senior Living Communities. Dallas, Texas. Contact Holly Titsworth at HTitsworth@cccinc.net. See christiancarecenters.org.

**January 2019**

**January 17** Training Involvement Ministers. Athens Church of Christ. Athens, Texas. Contact Travis Irwin, (423) 920-3060, travisirwin@att.net. See churchinvolvement.com.

**January 18-19** 3rd Annual Church Involvement Conference. Athens Church of Christ. Athens, Texas. Contact Travis Irwin, (423) 920-3060, travisirwin@att.net. See churchinvolvement.com.


**FULL CALENDAR**: www.christianchronicle.org.

To include your event for $25, contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org.
‘An Interview with God’ mixes real-life struggles with surreal journalism

If you could ask God one question, what would it be? That’s the intriguing notion posed by “An Interview with God.” The faith-based film, written and produced by Ken Aguado and directed by Perry Lang, had a limited, three-day run in theaters across the U.S. recently. I was blessed to witness a very special piece of Christian cinema with believable characters and a challenge to think about life’s big questions.

The film focuses on Paul Asher (Brenton Thwaites), a religion columnist who recently returned home to New York after being embedded with U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. Asher’s marriage is crumbling and his veteran friend suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Asher also is under severe stress from his experiences overseas, with covert suicidal ideations.

Then he encounters a man who claims to be God. He grants Asher three half-hour interviews on consecutive days. “The Man,” as he’s identified in the script, is portrayed by longtime TV regular David Strathairn (who portrayed Edward R. Murrow in “Good Night, and Good Luck”).

Asher accepts the offer and attempts to conduct the interviews as a professional, dispassionate journalist. But, time and again, The Man turns each question in an interview as a professional, dispassionate journalist. "The Man," as he's identified in the script, is portrayed by longtime TV regular David Strathairn (who portrayed Edward R. Murrow in “Good Night, and Good Luck”).

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In “Darwin’s Secret Sex Problem: Exposing Evolution’s Fatal Flaw — The Origin of Sex,” Smith responds to Darwin’s challenge. Under what evolutionary circumstances, he asks, did the two reproductive-ready genders develop?

Or, in the words of Darwin, where did the “complex organs” of genitalia come from?

This is the “queen of evolutionary problems” as some evolutionists have termed it. Lower life forms basically cloned themselves with slight variations toward more complex forms, evolutionists would say.

Smith argues — with copious documentation and no satisfactory response from evolutionists — that a leap from asexual to sexual reproduction could never have happened. He shows that the first two fertile candidates of opposite sexes would first have had to “evolve” through mitosis separately and purposefully toward the distinct maleness and femaleness of functioning genitalia. Then, literal “strangers in the night,” these two impossibilities would have to find each other amongst all the other life forms and be able to reproduce healthy, fertile offspring of two genders also with functioning sex organs.

This book can be read on two levels. One is as a challenging, extensive literature review of evolutionist arguments — all of whom join Darwin with no explanation or reasonable mechanism to support the development of the first fully functioning, fertile males and females from asexual reproduction.

On another level, you don’t have to understand all the science to get the central theme: It’s impossible.

Even people who aren’t on the same page theologically as Smith acknowledge the effectiveness of his treatment, such as talk show host Chris Arren (“Iron Sharpens Iron Radio”) who says of the book, “He very convincingly identifies as Darwinism’s Achilles’ Heel something that is routinely overlooked by many of us who are firmly convicted Biblical Creationists and advocates of Intelligent Design (even published authorities among us) in our interactions with our opponents on the origin of life.”

Evolutionists regard creationists as believing in myths and tall tales. Smith’s relentless investigation leaves the reader with the inescapable conclusion that the most improbable fairy tale of all is the never-existant “missing link” between asexual life forms and resultant two-gender sexual species that could produce “after their own kind.”

F. LaGard Smith is the award-winning author of more than two dozen books and thousands of shorter published works. Her latest books are the co-authored “Leaving Mormonism: Four Scholars Tell Why They Changed Their Minds” (Kregel, 2017) and “A Conspiracy of Breath” (TSU Press, 2017). She worships with The Mountainside Church of Christ in Albuquerque, N.M. Learn more at latayne.com. Photo of Latayne Scott by Elizabeth Darnell.

LATAYNE C. SCOTT is the award-winning author of more than two dozen books and thousands of shorter published works. Her latest books are the co-authored “Leaving Mormonism: Four Scholars Tell Why They Changed Their Minds” (Kregel, 2017) and “A Conspiracy of Breath” (TSU Press, 2017). She worships with The Mountainside Church of Christ in Albuquerque, N.M. Learn more at latayne.com. Photo of Latayne Scott by Elizabeth Darnell.

On Film

Lynda Sheehan

Interview with God delivers deep and clear, complete yet simple thoughts on God acting in our lives, his wonderful plan for his children, and his great concern and love for us. The movie also embeds the power of prayer as the characters seek answers to their stress and problems.

The movie’s website, aninterviewwithgod.com offers a trailer, a free discussion guide and more. A novelization, available in paperback and digital, is the perfect way to rethink the film’s themes.

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F. LaGard Smith takes on ‘the queen of evolutionary problems’

Charles Darwin threw down a challenge that Christians — with varying degrees of success — have tried to address. “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications,” Darwin said, “my theory would absolutely break down.”

If from within Churches of Christ we had someone to take up that gauntlet, we might look to scientists. But it is the penetrating mind of a non-scientist scholar and legal expert who has risen to the occasion — F. LaGard Smith, bestselling developer of “The Daily Study Bible” franchise and literary combatant against various cultural issues.

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Evolutionists regard creationists as believing in myths and tall tales. Smith’s relentless investigation leaves the reader with the inescapable conclusion that the most improbable fairy tale of all is the never-existing “missing link” between asexual life forms and resultant two-gender sexual species that could produce “after their own kind.”

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Smith’s critique of Darwin: a unique perspective — fraught with flaws

The thesis of “Darwin’s Secret Sex Problem: Exposing Evolution’s Fatal Flaw — The Origin of Sex” is that the very nature of sexual reproduction in the living world renders it impossible for species to evolve into other species, and therefore serves as indisputable evidence that God himself has directly and instantaneously created every species that has ever lived.

The author, F. LaGard Smith, is a lawyer who attempts to take on science by “ignoring religious assumptions” and arguing on the basis of his understanding of science, for which task he has read numerous scientific writings — especially popular-level books.

As to the audience, Smith tries to cast a wide net, inclusive of scientific specialists and those who do not know much science.

The book has some commendable strengths:
• It expresses concern for the well-being of young people and the role of education and worldview in their formation as persons.
• Smith brings rightful criticism of those who would turn a biological theory (evolution) into a philosophy of how people should live.
• Although often obscured by its rhetoric, the book at times possesses the virtue of wonder at the natural world. Smith’s discussion moving from flatworms to damselflies to Norway rats to Argentine lake drakes might remind readers of the nature tour that Job experiences in Job 38-41.

The book also possesses many weaknesses:
• Its length, repetitiveness and organization will likely tire and confuse readers.
• The overly-polemical rhetoric more insults scientists than invites reasonable discussion.
• It is hard to know what to make of Smith’s self-description. In his introduction, he writes that he is “often wrong but never in doubt.”
• The imprecisions in scientific concepts (including species, speciation, fossils) cast doubt on whether the issues are understood clearly.
• The book never offers a comprehensive, coherent story that integrates the individual positions that Smith takes with all of the known scientific data.

Readers will understand that Smith believes in the fixity of species (that species are fixed and do not evolve into other species), mutability within species (change can occur within existing species) and the divine, unmediated, instantaneous creation of all species. What readers will not understand, for example, is how the entire fossil record, all known genetic analyses, and the geographic distribution of species fit into the comprehensive scheme that Smith does more to imply than state.

• The biblical alternative advocated is built upon misunderstandings that violate the book’s own claims to succeed in exegesis (drawing out a passage’s intended meaning) over eisegesis (importing one’s beliefs into a passage).

For example, the book’s assumed definition of creation fails to account for uses of the Hebrew verb bara’ (“create”) that refer to events that include natural agents, causes, and processes (Psalm 102:18; 104:30; Isaiah 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7; Ezekiel 28:13, 15; Amos 4:13). Also, the book’s discussion of soul in chapter 12 fails to do justice to the Bible’s references to animals as souls (for example, Genesis 1:20-21, 24, 30; 2:19; Leviticus 11:10, 43, 44, 46), as well as Paul’s clear, though often disguised, statement about the mortality of humans’ “soulish” (psychikos) bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44). Resurrection of the dead is not the same thing as the immortality of the soul.

• The book confuses biblical interpretation and inspiration, and, with this error in logic, identifies by name Christians who read the Bible differently and impugns their faith (“soulful” (psychikos) bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44)). Resurrection of the dead is not the same thing as the immortality of the soul.

For readers not well-acquainted with the issues, the book might give false hope.

“Darwin’s Secret Sex Problem” offers a unique perspective: the nature of sexual reproduction requires the fixity of species. For this uniqueness, the book might go on the shelves of readers who study a range of Christian perspectives on science.

For readers not well-acquainted with the issues, the book might give false hope. Not even young-Earth creationists uphold the fixity of species, but uphold instead “the fixity of kinds” — the belief that God created distinct “kinds,” that each kind (for example, the “Cat Kind”) includes numerous species within it, that kinds are fixed and cannot evolve into other kinds, and that species within a kind can evolve into other species that also remain within that kind.

Readers of this book, whether persuaded or not, can take opportunity to be prompted into further learning, as well as into greater love for neighbor and enemy alike.

**For readers not well-acquainted with the issues, the book might give false hope.**
Minister

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If I can help somebody, as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody, with a word or song. If I can show somebody that he’s traveling wrong, then my living shall not be in vain.”

That was one of Martin Luther King Jr.’s favorite songs, often performed by Mahalia Jackson. It reminds me of Paul’s charge to his young disciple in 2 Timothy 4:

“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. ... But you, keep your head in all situations ...”

I pondered those words a lot as I drove my daughter from Memphis, Tenn., to Harding University. As we made our way through Arkansas’ capital, I thought about the Little Rock Nine and their struggle to integrate the all-white Central High School in 1957. Sixty-one years later, in that same city, I pulled up to the Clinton National Airport with my African-American college senior to pick up her roommate — who was flying in from South Korea.

The next day, in Searcy, I was sitting in the office of Jimmy Carr, professor and senior vice president for Harding. We’ve known each other since the fall of 1978 when we both were members of the Call Street Church of Christ in Tallahassee, Fla.

He’s white. I’m black. We don’t agree on politics.

But we’re friends.

His brother, John, was my former minister in Tallahassee. Now my daughter lives on Dr. Jimmy Carr Lane, which was named after their father, an educational pioneer at Harding. The younger Jimmy Carr’s uncle, Lewis Ross, was an elder of the Gateway Church of Christ in Pensacola, Fla. Ross welcomed me to that majority-white congregation — so different from how I grew up.

“This has been a 40-year friendship,” Jimmy Carr said as we looked through photos in his office. He’s met an impressive group of people — Gen. Colin Powell, former independent counsel Ken Starr and (of special interest to both of us) Willie Taggart, the newly anointed head coach for Florida State.

Jimmy Carr also has a silver plate in his office — a community service award from the Arkansas Martin Luther King Jr. Commission for promoting multiculturalism at Harding and in Searcy.

“It is critical that all of us get along,” Carr said, “especially in the church. We are an example to the entire world.”

True to his friendship (and his last name, I guess), Jimmy Carr helped me find a car — an inexpensive, used one for my daughter. He knew the owner of a dealership. My grateful daughter quickly became the Uber of Harding University.

There was a real finality to it. I cried as I let her go and watched her walk back to her apartment with her fellow students of many races.

Lord, I pray we’ve taught them well.

I drove back to Memphis on Highway 64. I listened to sports radio and a Christian station where an announcer read an on-air petition calling for “prayers for our President.”

It really struck me — the challenge and the power God gives us to love everybody, especially those who might be different from us in their views, in their beliefs, in their skin tone. We all need prayer.

I ate at a restaurant on Beale Street, the home of the blues. My blonde-haired waitress disappeared for a while, and I learned that she’d just found out her great-grandmother died. I grabbed her hand, and we prayed right there.

My living shall not be in vain.

HAMIL R. HARRIS preaches for the Glenarden Church of Christ in Maryland. He was a longtime writer for The Washington Post and now freelances and teaches at Morgan State University in Baltimore.
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