More than 1.8 million refugees have risked their lives to reach Europe since 2014. Many have found Jesus – and are transforming the continent’s churches.

‘God sent them to us’

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

VIENNA, Austria

“It was not our choice to come here. We were getting together one day at the house church, and the information leaked out. “The police came to the house and arrested all the people. We didn’t even get to go back home. We ran away.”

Speaking through a translator, Masoud and his wife, Mahboubeh, share the harrowing events that brought them 3,000 miles from their native Iran to this European capital a year and a half ago. A lifetime ago.

Baptized in April, the couple worships with the Danube Church of Christ, a small congregation that meets on the east side of Vienna.

This city of 1.7 million souls is home to thousands of refugees from the Middle East. Many are here because of the bloody conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Masoud and Mahboubeh are here because of Jesus.

The couple, known for their bright, near-constant smiles, struggles to be heard over the gleeful noises of children playing at their feet.

Can we reach millennials?

FLORIDA CHURCH PLANTERS look to the Bible as the model for sharing the Gospel with a new generation.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Roslyn Miller’s heritage in Churches of Christ runs deep.

However, Reclaimed Church — the congregation she’s helping plant in Orlando, Fla. — is not a mirror image of her childhood church.

The Florida believers meet in “missional communities” in homes rather than a dedicated facility. Everyone comes with a song, a prayer, a Scripture or a word of encouragement. An extended time of fellowship over larger-than-traditional portions of bread and the cup marks the weekly communion.

“This work was born when my husband, Andy, and I and two other families were distressed over the decline of Churches of Christ in number and influence,” said Miller, 54, the daughter and sister of preachers. “So we discussed what we could do to change that trend.”

In the last three decades, the number of adherents in Churches of Christ has dropped to 1,443,738, according to a national directory published by 21st Century Christian. That figure represents a 14 percent decline from 1,684,872.

See MILLENIALS, Page 8
One of the highlights of the Sunset Vision Workshop will be the Banquet Dinner with Michael Shank, author of Muscle and a Shovel. Michael will help encourage us with his message, Restore Our Love for Local Evangelism. The Banquet is free, but seating is limited. Tickets will be given to Workshop attendees while they are available.

Register today!

www.sunset.bible/workshop
A storm bridges churches divided by race, doctrine

W e give people steaks to get into the church, but then we serve them hot dogs.”

That was one takeaway from a conversation I had with Lee Bragg. He’s from Wewahitchka, a small town in the Florida Panhandle.

He drives a big rig to make a living. He’s also associate minister for the Cherry Street Church of Christ in Panama City.

While I was covering the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, brother Bragg was kind enough to speak with me at 6:30 a.m. as he drove a load to Montgomery, Ala.

We talked about the storm, which severely damaged the church’s building. But we also talked about our shared faith — and the issues that we face as Christians.

Some of us are good at bringing in the lost, but we’re not training them in the faith. As a result, “a lot of people go to church, but they don’t worship God,” Bragg said.

“The message is still the same: You need to love and have a relationship with God. You need to be his child.”

That’s a truth we can all agree on, despite our differences. And in the Florida Panhandle, our differences seem to stand out. I know that because I grew up there.

I cried as I watched Michael come ashore, A storm bridges churches divided by race, doctrine

Inside Story

Hamil R. Harris

BY HAMIL R. HARRIS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Fast and intense, like a boxer with a nasty left hook, Hurricane Michael surged to record-breaking strength as it slammed into the Gulf Coast.

The Category 4 storm cut a swath of destruction as it crossed Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, claiming 36 lives. Its path crossed the homelands of dozens of Churches of Christ — some of them large, suburban congregations, others small, rural churches that meet in homes and trailers. Some are predominantly black, others white. A few are racially diverse.

Hurricane Michael's vast impact. Fast and intense, like a boxer with a nasty left hook, Hurricane Michael surged to record-breaking strength as it slammed into the Gulf Coast.

A cross stands under a shattered skylight in the damaged building of the Palo Alto church in Panama City, Fla.

Despite Michael’s fury, ‘souls will be saved,’ church members say

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

John Kincaid, a volunteer driver for Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort, rises after a few hours of sleep in Panama City, Fla.

18 wheels and a heart to serve

AFTER HURRICANE MICHAEL, a retired Christian steers a big rig full of food and supplies to hard-hit Florida.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Despite Michael’s fury, ‘souls will be saved,’ church members say

BY HAMIL R. HARRIS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Kincaid

A cross stands under a shattered skylight in the damaged building of the Palo Alto church in Panama City, Fla.
grinding up trees, homes and property in a place that I know so well and love so much.

As a student at Florida State University in Tallahassee, I took many a Trailways bus trip home during Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks to Pensacola. I traveled through Panama City and Gulf Breeze along Highway 98. My favorite stop was Fort Walton Beach, where you could get dinner at the Waffle House.

Waffle House, as you probably know, has the reputation of staying open even in the worst conditions. The Federal Emergency Management Agency even uses a “Waffle House Index” to gauge how well an area will recover from hurricanes.

How bad was Michael? At the height of the storm, 30 Waffle Houses shut down, USA Today reported. That’s bad.

Instead of weekend getaways to the beach, or even routine shopping trips to Winn-Dixie, Publix or Family Dollar, folks got in long lines for food distributed from pallets. Many people had no cell phone service, no television, no internet, no air-conditioning. No power.

As I watched news about the storm, I thought about all the Churches of Christ in its path. I have visited some of them over the years. I grew up Baptist but was baptized in 1978 after studying the Bible with the Call Street Church of Christ in Tallahassee.

I soon learned about the various divisions in our fellowship — some of which have roots in Florida. The Crossroads movement, now known as the International Churches of Christ, was born there.

There were (and still are) predominantly African-American congregations in the Panhandle. Florida also is home to many conservative, non-institutional Churches of Christ that don’t agree with the support of parachurch organizations.

When I would visit home, I would sometimes attend four different types of congregations to see everyone I wanted to see.

As terrible as this hurricane was, I think it has crystallized my thinking on what’s important — despite the differences that divide us.

As a body of believers, we’re all growing old together. I’m so thankful for the opportunities I have, writing for this publication, to make new friends from across our diverse brotherhood and to learn more about the souls inside all those buildings I saw only through the windows of buses — buildings with signs that read “The Church of Christ Meets Here.”

Today, we’re all bound by adversity — whether it comes in the form of rapidly shifting culture or a rapidly spinning hurricane.

But we collectively savor our common belief in God and his Word.

“It is still about faith, repentance and baptism,” brother Bragg told me. And it’s also about doing more than “going to church” after we are baptized.

Another minister I talked to, Raymond Williams Jr. of the Church of Christ at Eastside in Panama City, said that he’s seen a spirit of cooperation among congregations that are often divided by race and doctrine.

“It is about helping people and seeing the pain in devastation,” he said. “When folks see someone else hurting, they want to help.”

One of my favorite hymns is “God’s Family.” I leave you with some of its lyrics — and prayers for recovery after the storms of life.

When a brother meets sorrow, we all feel his grief. When he’s passed through the valley, we all feel relief.

Together in sunshine, together in rain. Together in victory. Through His precious name.

And sometimes we laugh together. Sometimes we cry.

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.
ARKANSAS
NORTH LITTLE ROCK — “Singing with the Spirit” involves more than getting the words right.
Guest presenter Myron Bruce emphasized that message at a recent singing workshop hosted by the WindSong Church of Christ.
“Myron did a remarkable job as he shared with us the importance of singing not just songs but singing with understanding,” said Keith Harris, the WindSong church’s preaching minister. “Our praise to God must be something that we understand as we engage our minds in worship.”

CALIFORNIA
The Figueroa Church of Christ recently embarked on a 30-day “No Junk Food Challenge.”
Minister Vincent Hawkins came up with the idea as a way to combat diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity in his congregation.
For a month, participants eliminated two junk foods of their choice each week. Some members have changed their eating habits significantly since the challenge ended, Hawkins said.

MINNESOTA
RICHFIELD — “Extol” served as the theme for the recent Minnesota State Ladies Day, which drew 53 women from seven congregations to the Richfield Church of Christ, elder’s wife Renae Delamarter said.
Jana Rucker, vice president for university communications and enrollment at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., spoke.
“Jana challenged us to have our own mission statement and use it to guide our ‘marketing’ plan for God — to extol (praise enthusiastically),” Delamarter said.
Rucker described the event as “such a balm to my heart and soul.”

NEBRASKA
YORK — In the beginning, the clothing exchange organized by the East Hill Church of Christ took up a single room and served 100 people.
Now, the twice-a-year undertaking requires every inch of floor space at the church building and benefits more than 1,500 people.
More than 80 volunteers — including York College students — helped make the most recent exchange day a success.
“Our goal is to be the hands and feet of Jesus by giving away clothing,” said Kimberlee Tandy, one of the organizers. “There are no income requirements, no background checks, no forms to fill out. We simply ask them to show up.”

OHIO
LEWIS CENTER — The Alum Creek Church of Christ has received a $50,000 grant to allow its minister, Adam Metz, to participate in the National Clergy Renewal Program.
The church is one of 148 houses of worship nationally awarded the competitive grant, which is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and administered by Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.
Metz will receive time away from daily ministry to engage in reflection and renewal. Metz, who has served the Alum Creek church for 15 years, plans a three-month sabbatical.
Pepperdine student killed in California massacre

BY CHELLE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A Pepperdine University student was among the victims of the Nov. 7 mass shooting that claimed 13 lives at a country music venue in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

The family of Alaina Housley, 18, confirmed that the freshman English major was at the Borderline Bar and Grill when a gunman walked in and opened fire.

“Words can’t describe our grief over losing our daughter, Alaina,” Arik and Hannah Housley said in a Facebook post. “She was everything we could hope for in a child: kind, smart, beautiful and respectful.”

Twelve people, including Housley and a sheriff’s deputy, were killed before the gunman turned the Glock 21 .45-caliber handgun on himself.

Housley had gone to Borderline with a group of friends. They were enjoying “College Country Night,” a night when the dance hall opens to those 18 and up, when the chaos started. Sixteen Pepperdine students were in the crowd. All were quickly accounted for, except Housley.

Pepperdine, which is associated with Churches of Christ, organized a prayer vigil to offer support for Housley’s loved ones and others grieving those who died.

Across the nation, universities such as Abilene Christian, Harding and Freed-Hardeman offered prayers and condolences for Pepperdine, their sister institution.

“There are no words that can make the situation better, but I think prayer is the most powerful thing you can do,” Heather Corbin, a sophomore who attended a vigil at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., told The Tennessean.

Hours after the shooting, Housley’s family posted on social media asking for prayers because they had not been able to reach her.

Housley was a Regent’s Scholar and member of the Pepperdine Choir.

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You serve a world needing to be freed from captivity and called to covenant with God. We’ve planned the 2019 lectureship to encourage and feed you.

FHU student Ellie Leonard was commissioned to create the painting shown here. She entitled the piece Marvel and explained, "My goal was to portray the immense power God exercised through Moses. Though Moses was the vehicle, this was God’s moment."

For a complete schedule and registration, visit www.fhu.edu/lectureship.
baptized believers and their children reported in the same survey in 1990.

“We began to discuss this scenario: If we had no church background and read the Bible today for the first time — and wanted to follow it and be the church presented in the New Testament — what would that look like?” Roslyn Miller said.

Their conclusion: They could be the church they read about in the New Testament and minister to the young adult generation known as millennials — many of them fitting the definition of religious “nones.”

Since traditional churches seem to turn off many millennials, one member of the church-planting team suggested ‘Reclaimed’ as the name.

“We see ourselves as being reclaimed by Christ to wholeness and spiritual life and, in turn, reclaiming the mission and practices of the church of the New Testament,” Roslyn Miller explained.

The North Boulevard Church of Christ in Murfreesboro, Tenn., pays Andy Miller’s salary, while Roslyn Miller serves on the University of Central Florida faculty. The other two couples on the church-planting team — Joshua and Robin Walden and Brad and Elizabeth Young — rely on secular jobs.

The Tennessee church’s senior minister, David Young, said his congregation is “willing to try anything that will bring people to Jesus as long as it’s consistent with Scripture.”

The church planters intend to attract college students “through various mission and service projects and then build churches from those activities,” Young said.

“We want these churches to multiply quickly.”

UNDERSTANDING MILLENIALS

Generations of Faith

Roslyn Miller’s great-grandfather, John Scott May, served as a church elder in Obion County, Tenn.

He’d teach the men on one side of the auditorium, while his wife, Delia, studied the Bible with the women on the other side.

“If the men got bored listening to my great-granddad, they could tune him out and listen to my great-grandmother,” quipped Miller, relating an anecdote shared by her dad, Cecil May Jr., retired dean of the Bible college at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala.

Four generations of the extended May family worship with Churches of Christ in Arkansas, Florida and Oklahoma. To give a picture of the family’s experience, The Christian Chronicle interviewed Miller, her father, one of her preacher brothers, her faithful Christian daughter and her nonbeliever son.

“Undoubtedly, there was greater uniformity among Churches of Christ a generation or two ago compared to now,” said Cecil May III, 59, who preached for the Parkway Church of Christ in Fulton, Ky., for 23 years. He recently moved to the Levy Church of Christ in North Little Rock, Ark., where he serves as connecting minister.

“After some stress and angst, I like to think that many churches have dealt with differences by a new respect for autonomy,” May III added. “But it also results in churches not having as much cooperation as previously.”

Growing up, Cecil May Jr., 86, said he was taught about grace and “a real undenominational concept of church.”

“I think lines of division, including even refusal of any association, have been drawn over too many differences,” said May Jr., an elder and Bible teacher for the University Church of Christ in Alabama’s capital city.

“In the early days of the Restoration Movement, there continued to be love, association and friendly discussion in the spirit of ‘Come, let us reason together’ instead of ‘Let’s drive the dissenters out of the brotherhood,’” added the grandfather of five and great-grandfather of three. “Most of our problems would be solved if we listened to the ‘meekness and humility’ parts of the admonitions to correct one another.”

BIBLE PRINCIPLES AND LOVE

At age 30, Bethany Cowdrey sees challenges for Churches of Christ but said congregations she has attended “strive to follow God and his word and demonstrate kindness.”

Cowdrey, the Millers’ daughter and May Jr.’s granddaughter, attends the Edmond Church of...
Christ in Oklahoma.

“I believe the most important issue today is finding the balance between upholding biblical principles while manifesting Jesus’ love, grace and mercy,” Cowdrey said, citing a variety of Scriptures that stress obedience and compassion.

“For some reason, people seem to think that you have to take one side or another, but that is not the case,” she added. “If we are truly following Christ’s example and his church, then they are inseparable.”

FROM FIRM BELIEVER TO ATHEIST

Cowdrey’s brother, Jonathan Miller, 27, grew up active in church life and mission trips. He recalls being a “firm believer in God.”

As a student at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., he enjoyed church services and devotionals with friends. At some point, though, he lost his faith. His questions about the “young earth creationism” he learned as a boy contributed to his journey to disbelief.

“There’s quite a few people from my youth group, along with other childhood friends in the CoC that I can think of, that still believe in God but rarely are involved with their local church,” said Jonathan Miller, who lives in Ocala, Fla.

He said he can’t speak to why young people who believe in God leave the church, but for nonbelievers such as himself, “Their reasons for leaving Christianity have less to do with aspects of church and more to do with a personal change in philosophy of why they no longer believe in God.”

Still, Jonathan Miller said, “In my view, there are still too many churches stuck in the old traditional ways of doing things that simply won’t appeal to how the culture of younger generations has been changing. But I know that there are those who are also trying to change for the better, which I think younger people will appreciate when they see it.”

As for his own faith — or lack thereof — he said he always will remain open to the idea. “But,” he said, “it’s hard for me to see at this point what it would take for me to go back to being a believer.”

May Jr., Jonathan Miller’s grandfather, said: “He is struggling with his faith right now. We are praying that he will come out at the right place.”

EVANGELIZING MILLENNIALS

Back in Orlando, Roslyn Miller prays, too, for her son while working to reach other millennials with the Gospel. Getting past denominational language and a denominational mindset in Churches of Christ might be helpful, in her view.

“Even many members of our fellowship talk about ourselves in denominational language: ‘I grew up Church of Christ’; ‘she is not Church of Christ’; ‘he is CoC,’” Roslyn Miller said.

“For the population we have chosen to evangelize,” she added, “it was important enough to make clear our non-denominational nature that we decided not to use the name that each of us ... grew up with and dearly loves for its biblical simplicity.”

Brad Young, one of the church planters for Reclaimed Church in Orlando, Fla., speaks during a Sunday gathering. The church meets in homes and does not have a building.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROSLYN MILLER

LCU Department of Humanities invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of History. The department offers a B.A. degree and a minor in history. The candidate will be expected to teach upper- and lower-level history courses, especially U.S. history general survey courses and early colonial history, to advise and mentor students, and to serve on committees as needed.

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For a complete list of duties, qualifications, and components for the application packet, visit LCU.edu/OpenPositions

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WHAT MAKES A GOOD SERMON? David Wilson discusses the questions ministers should ask — and the vast diversity of styles.

Preaching that hums, pleads and roars

BY LYNN McMillon | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

David Wilson exhibits the trifecta of great gospel preaching: a love of God, a love for his people and a love for the truth. Affectionately known as “The Expositor,” Wilson offers a unique blend of talents and experiences that enable him to explain the Word of God in an exciting and informative manner. He is senior minister for the Kings Church of Christ in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The multicultural, multigenerational church of 500 members meets in East Flatbush and is launching a second site in Brownsville.

Educated at Southwestern Christian College, Oklahoma Christian University and Amridge University, Wilson counts among his mentors the late Arnelious Crenshaw and has helped focus the Kings congregation on community service and outreach.

In addition to preaching, he is an accomplished gospel songwriter. His compositions and arrangements are used by a cappella groups throughout Churches of Christ including S.W.C.C., Redeemed and Exodus.

He is supported by his loving wife, Cathi, and his children, David, Dyahnah and Dominic.

As The Christian Chronicle focuses on race relations in Churches of Christ 50 years after the tumultuous events of 1968, Wilson shared his thoughts on the characteristics of predominantly African-American churches. He also discussed the process of sermon preparation and the goals of preaching.

We offer this Dialogue in hopes of a deeper understanding among Churches of Christ across the nation.

There’s a unique preaching style in predominantly African-American congregations. Can you tell us a bit about that?

Stereotypes aside, there is a vast diversity of preaching styles within African-American pulpits.

Some are awesome storytellers who apply biblical principle through mind-blowing and heart-touching illustrations. Some are powerful defenders of the faith, proving the uniqueness of the church. Some are hermeneutically focused expositors who build two-way sermonic bridges between the contemporary and ancient worlds. Some are therapeutic counselors, providing answers, guidance and encouragement, meeting the audience in the context of their crisis.

Some preach in a rhythmic hum while others lecture in a conversational voice. Some roar like lions and then plead like beggars.

This diversity is not only in style, but also in degrees of effectiveness and relevance. All black churches are not poised for growth. Visionary leadership, community sensitivity and relevant biblical teaching are important factors. This results in different levels of spiritual health, ministerial competence and member maturity.

I have been told that a challenge to fuller integration of churches is the concern of some African-Americans that their unique culture will be lost in the process. Is that accurate?

I have heard such, but I wouldn’t presume to answer for all African-American churches.

Personally, I am not convinced that the integration of churches (assuming that means black and white congregations) is a directive or mandate of God through Scripture. I am not against it, but neither do I think that it is our primary mission.

Our unity is not about worship services but the embrace and manifestation of godly principles. Singing and praying together means nothing if we cannot be unified in our communities, our workplaces and in our Christian mission. Our unity is not about worship services but the embrace and manifestation of godly principles. Singing and praying together means nothing if we cannot be unified in our communities, our workplaces and in our Christian mission.

As a preacher, how do you define your role in the church?

Paul’s instruction to Timothy and Titus are sound directives for any preacher, in particular an evangelist.

The evangelist is charged with preaching the Word in 1 Timothy 4:1-5 and Titus 2:1-9. This is a solemn charge that should stir the heart of an evangelist.

1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-16 teach that the evangelist is to develop leaders. “Set things in order” is a clear statement of authority and responsibility. It goes hand in hand with the obligation to preach the Word.

The gifts of evangelists and pastors are to empower the church for works of service. The evangelist is tasked with the function of both ordaining qualified men to be elders or deacons and disciplining them if they disqualify themselves (1 Timothy 5:17-25).

While it is problematic for a leader to become dictatorial, it is equally problematic to regulate such a high calling to a hired hand, paid to preach.

What should be the goal of preaching today?

The Great Commission and Paul’s charge to Timothy encapsulate my philosophy of preaching.

• Evangelism: Preach and teach the Word with the goal of bringing someone to a decision to follow Christ. People need salvation
PREACHING: Focus on ‘the supreme philosophy’

FROM PAGE 11

desperately. Preaching Jesus and him crucified is still the solution.

• **Edification**: The life of Jesus is a transformative example. Christians must be taught how to live the abundant life in Christ through exposition of the Word.

• **Correction**: Christianity is the supreme philosophy above all other lifestyles, perspectives or practical doctrines. Learning this supreme philosophy often requires us to confront old ways and worldly attitudes. This is what preaching is designed to do — confront and expose sin and bring a believer to repentance and greater commitment.

• **Hope**: The Word is filled with hope. People need hope. This is the essence of the Gospel, the good news of salvation. Helping people to see past their present crisis, to envision and anticipate healing, deliverance and peace is the joy of preaching.

How do you determine what needs to be preached to your congregation?

During the summer I begin thinking of the next year’s theme for the church. I consider the church program in general, ascertaining what challenges or tasks are before us. I consider what is happening in the world and how the Word can help us to make sense, reveal God and find hope. I consider the mission and values of the church, asking the hard questions of our impact and focus. I consider the spiritual maturity of our membership and what ways growth is expected of them.

I believe that preaching should have purpose beyond a command to repentance and greater commitment. That reason should not be lacking. The meaning should have purpose beyond a command to repentance and greater commitment.

I believe that preaching should have purpose beyond a command to repentance and greater commitment. That reason should not be lacking. The meaning should have purpose beyond a command to repentance and greater commitment.

A clear target is needed for relevant, pointed preaching. If I’m not clear on what needs to be done, then it will not be done clearly.

• **What text best serves that purpose?** This can be the most difficult part unless I’m in a series. It is also essential to avoid violating the Scriptures’ intent to serve my own. That is the difference between exposing the Scripture versus exploiting it.

• **What does the text say?** Sound exegesis is essential for building faith and developing maturity. Doing our best to be honest with the Word is to preach with integrity and conviction.

• **What do I share from the text for my preaching task?** The goal is to preach a sermon. The meaning should be shaped, presented and expounded succinctly and clearly.

• **What do I want the audience to do?** I believe that preaching should have purpose beyond a command to preach. That reason should not be discovered at the time of invitation; it should have been there from the start of the lesson. A practical application makes biblical study fruitful and the sermonic moment relevant. People listen differently when something is expected of them.

Most importantly, every part of this process is bathed in prayer.

**Website**: www.kingschurchofchrist.org

**David Wilson**, senior minister
**FIJI**

SAVUSAVU — About 25 to 30 children in this South Pacific village spend their Fridays playing outdoor games and learning about Jesus.

The Kids Fun Friday program, taught by Sunday school teachers from the Church of Christ, has focused on the creation story from Genesis in recent weeks, said missionary Albert Whippy. “It is encouraging to see kids learning from the Word of God ... and receiving encouraging comments from their parents.”

**MEXICO**

MAZATLÁN — In this seaside city on the Pacific, members of Churches of Christ loaded shopping carts with beans, rice, milk, tuna and cooking oil to help brothers and sisters in need. The church members organized the purchases into dispensas, a Spanish word meaning “pantries,” for distribution to church members in Villa Union.

“Villa Union has a congregation of brothers that is about six years old and in a very poor community,” said Jim Taylor, a missionary who works with Churches of Christ in the region. “They depend on fishing and sometimes fishing isn’t so good. So, we help out by purchasing food for the members in the church.”

**TOGO**

LOME — Gospel campaigns in this slender West African nation are good for souls and bad for motorbikes.

Atsu Martin, an evangelist for Churches of Christ, reported 76 baptisms as a result of campaigns in six villages: Atakpame, Anie, Osea, Tando, Tovegan and Akepe. “The total is an example of the power of the Word in touching the hearts of people,” said Len Feuerhelm, a deacon of the Wilshire Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, which supports mission work in Togo.

A couple of evangelists supported by the church reported motorbike accidents in the course of their duties, Feuerhelm said, “thankfully with little human injury — but sometimes not so fortunate for the motorbikes.”

**ZAMBIA**

LUSAKA — Efforts to introduce World Bible School students to Churches of Christ are on the rise in this southern African nation, said evangelist Kennedy Mukuka.

The Lusaka Central Church of Christ hosted a day-long workshop for students who study WBS online. Fifty-one people participated, up from 18 at a similar event in April.

“For most students, it was the first time they came in contact with the Church of Christ in Zambia,” Mukuka said. “I was exhilarated to have John Chiwone, a young man we baptized in August, participate actively in the workshop. He was one of those that made presentations after group discussions. He really did such a great job that he captivated everybody present.”

**Families open their homes — and their Bibles**

A family in the western Honduran town of Ocotepeque studies God’s Word with members of a small team from Doors Slammed Open Ministries. The Church of Christ in town, served for 20 years by minister Jorge Rodriguez, meets at 3 p.m. on Sundays, so the team, members of The Park Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla., “led Bible studies for members who needed encouragement to remain faithful and to be reminded of the importance of fellowship and the church,” ministry director Monte Lalli said. "Allen Everett shared the Gospel with families who had visited and only begun to study the Bible." The team also attended a Bible school graduation ceremony in neighboring El Salvador. See doorsslammedopen.wixsite.com.

**SPOILIGHT**

**Bibles for Belgrade**

BELGRADE, Serbia — When Christians in this central European capital handed out free Bibles, recipients “hugged and kissed them like the most precious gold that they have,” said minister Drasko Djenovic.

Members of the Karaburma Church of Christ in Belgrade and workers with the Ikonos Association set up a booth at the annual Belgrade Book Fair, distributing more than 400 Bibles during the eight-day event. They also gave out nearly 2,000 teen Bibles, 3,000 children’s Bibles and 2,000 pieces of gospel literature. Eastern European Mission, a nonprofit that serves Churches of Christ, provided most of the materials.

The reactions of the recipients, especially the children, “were precious,” Djenovic said. Orthodox theology students sought out the church members’ booth for Serbian-language copies of three books from Sunset International Bible Institute, translated and published by EEM.

During the fair, the church members met an elderly blind woman who longed to study the Bible. “Just by accident,” the group had a copy of the New Testament on CDs. The woman received the gift with tears of joy, Djenovic said.

Young volunteers worked shifts of eight to 12 hours at the fair, the minister said. One traveled 80 miles to serve during the event.

“Our goal was to spread seed among the people of Serbia,” Djenovic said. “We trust that the Holy Spirit will start to work in the hearts of at least some of them, that they might give their lives to Jesus.”
GOD SENT: Baptism of Iranian couple starts ‘a chain reaction’

FROM PAGE 1
It’s Fellowship Sunday, and the Danube church’s apartment overflows with visitors from Albania, Romania and the U.S. who just attended a ministry workshop in nearby Slovakia. And kids.

“When we came here, we thought Christianity was the official religion,” Masoud says. He and his wife expected cathedrals.

“They only came here and said, ‘OK, you are just like the church in our country!’” he adds with a laugh.

They actually thought about going somewhere else. Maybe a more “official-looking” church would help their asylum case.

But soon, “none of this mattered,” Mahboubeh says, “because we fell in love with the people.”

FROM IRAN TO AUSTRIA
Masoud and Mahboubeh grew up in a devout Iranian city known for its shrine to a prominent imam, visited annually by millions of pilgrims of the Shiite Muslim faith.

They worked as professional photographers. Soon after they married, Mahboubeh found herself struggling under the weight of her new family’s expectations. They practiced a stricter form of the faith than she was used to. It created tension in their marriage. They struggled.

A friend noticed and shared with them a secret she had kept from the couple for two years. She was part of a house church that studied the Bible. Would they like to visit? They agreed. Sundays are workdays in Iran — too suspicious. In the church they found purpose and began to feel a new sense of peace in their marriage.

Then the police came. Friends helped the couple escape and gave them money to pay someone to drive them out of the country. They soon connected with a network of smugglers and paid for passage to Germany.

They’re not sure what route they took to reach Europe, probably through the Balkans. They spent three days in the back of a transport truck — doors closed, not knowing where they were.

Finally, they arrived in Germany, joining the ranks of 1.8 million refugees who have arrived in Europe since 2014, the United Nations reports. They applied for asylum and learned about a European Union rule called the Dublin Regulation, designed to keep refugees from applying to multiple governments. They would have to make their case in their first point of entry to the EU. Years ago, before the persecution, they had visited Austria.

After five months in Germany their lives were uprooted again — this time to Vienna.

Among the refugees here was a family friend from their hometown. They asked him about churches they could visit. Their friend had a friend who had visited a church that met in an apartment. He knew the way. It’s small, he told them, but the people are friendly.

‘I WAS STRUCK BY THEIR HUNGER’
The Danube Church of Christ was doing its best to share Jesus with the influx of asylum seekers at its door but had little to show for it, says Will Kooi, a member of the Vienna Team Mission.

Four couples from the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City launched the mission in 2007. One of those couples, Jake and Amanda Haskew, remains. Kooi and his wife, Holly, joined them as missionary apprentices and became part of the team in 2014.

Members of the church — a mix of Austrians and expatriates from the U.S. — had visited refugee centers and conducted Bible studies, Will Kooi said. The needs at the shelters seemed endless, and what the Christians had to share seemed too humble to make a difference.

Then Masoud and Mahboubeh arrived.

“We were so happy,” Will Kooi says. After two years of attempts to work with refugees, “to have some just walk in our door, already interested in the Bible ... it’s really just like God sent them to us.”

They weren’t refugees for long. The church embraced the couple, who soon became known for their bright smiles and their willingness to serve.

“I was struck by their hunger,” says church member Tamika Rybinski.

“Looking at them during the lessons would bring tears to my eyes. Mahboubeh would physically lean toward the Word of God. It was obvious it was speaking to her, like Jesus was calling out to her. My heart yearned for her to know Jesus.”

The language barrier was a problem, so the couple found an interpreter, another refugee from Iran, and brought her to church services. Soon, they decided to be baptized — something they had wanted to do back home but never could.

After their baptisms, “a chain reaction started,” Rybinski says. The couple invited fellow asylum seekers to church and studied with them. Some asked to be baptized.

So did their interpreter.

“I start coming here, and everything starts changing in my life,” the interpreter says, pausing from translating the couple’s story to share some of her own. “It wasn’t just with my finances or my refugee process. In my heart, inside me, something really changed.”

Now the church has a growing Iranian contingent on Sundays. The Koois’ 2-year-old, Lucy, darts among them, jumping into their arms, as the church members sing hymns.
Church offers a place at the Lord’s Supper for immigrants from Africa, Middle East

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

VIENNA, Austria

Bibles in English and Farsi line the shelves of the Pohlgasse Church of Christ in this European capital.

A Nigerian Christian passes them out to his brethren from Africa and the Middle East on a Saturday afternoon as Cleddy Varner begins a lecture on the Lord’s Supper — part of a monthly program designed to teach new converts about the church’s practices.

“As I get older, the Lord’s Supper gets closer to my heart,” says Varner, an 83-year-old member of the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. “I can hear the hammer hitting the nails. I will actually flinch.”

His audience knows pain. Many have suffered for their faith.

“Christians aren’t safe in Afghanistan,” says one student, Habib, who worships with the congregation and studies the Bible with fellow refugees from his homeland. Some were part of underground churches there, forced to flee because of persecution.

Others are Muslims fleeing their nation’s decades-long conflict with the Taliban. Many arrive in port cities such as Athens, Greece, and encounter Christian groups there before moving to Austria.

When they come to Vienna, “we all, as a team, help bring them to the Lord,” Habeeb says.

The Pohlgasse church has a history of serving and saving immigrants, says Reggy Hiller, the daughter of missionaries Bob and Ruth Hare. She has spent most of her life in Europe and works with the church. Many of the church’s converts are migrant workers from African nations including Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Nigeria and South Sudan. Now an influx of refugees from the Middle East is adding a new cultural dimension.

Madeline Phiri moved to Vienna from Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, about a year ago. A friend introduced her to the church, and she was surprised to find Middle Easterners worshiping alongside Africans.

“It’s something different,” she says, and it proves that “we are just the same, no matter what country we come from. We worship one God.”

At least 50 Farsi speakers have been baptized in the past few years, Hiller says. Some stay in Vienna, where they have launched a Farsi-speaking church. Others have moved to the Austrian city of Salzburg and have planted a new Church of Christ there. Still others have spread across Europe.

In a way, the Middle Easterners are like fruit that’s already ripe and fallen from the tree, says Gerhard Krassnig, an Austrian who works with the Pohlgasse church.

“They’re already picked,” he says, “but they are not picked up yet and finished.”

If Christians don’t seize the opportunity to minister to the refugees and train them, “who’s picking them up?” Krassnig says. Some may go back into Islam. Others may adopt the capitalistic agnosticism practiced by an ever-growing number of “post-Christian” Europeans, he says.

Time is short, as evidenced by one student at the Saturday class, Navid. He fled here from Iraq, but he can’t stay due to his visa status. He must return to France, where he’s lived as a refugee before, and seek asylum there. During his time with the church in Vienna, “I learned very much about Jesus,” he says. “I have a better understanding, better now than before.”

Samuel Ekata, a native of southern Nigeria, occasionally preaches for the congregation. He’s happy to be part of a church that’s rapidly expanding in cultural diversity.

“When it comes to Christianity, this should not be a barrier,” he says. The church should practice unity and respect for all cultures and strive to be “a respite for all.”

“At the end of the day,” he says, “we all get into the same place.”

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Missionary returning to Ukraine needs overseeing church, partial support and support for Ukrainian preacher. Preacher for 33 years; missionary full-time for six years and part-time for 12 years. Moving full-time to Ukraine in March 2019 to plant a new church in a city of 232,000.

Doug Berry
(509) 761-1375
kremenchukmission@gmail.com
www.kumhome.org
ATHENS, Greece

From right to left, Miriam traces her finger over the words of the prophet Isaiah. “In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment,” she reads in Farsi, the language of her homeland, “but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,’ says the Lord your Redeemer.”

Those words are dangerous — not only in the Farsi-speaking nations of Iran and Afghanistan but also here in the ancient capital of Greece, where Miriam and thousands of other Persians have flooded into refugee camps, fleeing conflict and persecution in the Middle East.

The perilous journey here — stuffed into containers trafficked through the Balkans or crammed onto rickety wooden boats on the Turkish coastline — has left many disenchanted with Islam. Many say they’ve had visions of Christ. But leaving their family’s faith still is seen by many, even in the refugee camps, as betrayal.

Nonetheless, Persian churches are growing here. In the shadow of the Acropolis, footsteps from where the apostle Paul preached about “an unknown God,” small groups of Iranians gather to pray. Faith groups, including Churches of Christ, have opened their doors for the refugees. Baptisms are frequent, and church members study with the new believers, who are eager to share their faith and make new disciples, no matter the cost.

That’s what brings Miriam and a handful of Iranians together on a Tuesday morning. Bibles open, they sit on cushions around a low-slung, Asian-style table in a room lined with woven bamboo. A Korean believer has opened the home to refugees.

Infants in their faith, the refugees say they have experienced the “surge of anger” Isaiah writes about. Now, through Jesus, they have found the “everlasting kindness” and compassion in the prophet’s words.

Miriam grabs a Farsi New Testament, her own, and sets it on top of the Bible, still open to Isaiah. She flips to a passage in the Gospel of Matthew. It’s highlighted in bright yellow and underlined, adorned with stars and hearts. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls,” she reads. “When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

“I love this because Jesus is speaking...
A man named Petro and his wife do their best to answer the barrage of questions from refugees about the Bible study, which doubles as a English lesson. They look back to the final chapter of Matthew on a dry-erase board. “Holy Spirit,” “disciple,” “obey.” They debate whether or not to use a small nail to hang the board on the wall. One of the Turkish quips, “It’s OK. If we make just one error, we correct it back to ‘agape’” — a token of his love for her.

A few weeks later, she got a letter from the missionaries with the story of the Pearl of Great Price and an oyster shell necklace bearing a tiny pearl.

It was the smallest of miracles, she says, in a long chain of miracles that brought her to Athens — and to faith.

She shows the letter, sealed, wrinkled and folded, as she speaks.

For the record, the teachers ask their students to practice using the phrase “I will” in a universal language.

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“I will go to the church,” Miriam says.

“I will practice English until next week.”

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“Somebody is helping them,” she says.

To her, “I cried,” Miriam says, “because I laugh with God for this.”

Oh, that the difference between ‘being saved’ and ‘being a disciple!’

Another point to the word “spiritual” from American missionaries. “That’s a very, very harsh at times,” Alexander Melirrytos, right, and a translator deliver a sermon to the Gyfouda Church.

In Hungary, about 800 miles north of Athens, Ibrahim, far right, and fellow Persian believers sing during a Sunday night worship service with the Gyfouda Church of Christ before three Iranians are baptized.

Nearby sits Sahid, a newly baptized Iranian believer who helps out during the week at the church. “I love my church,” he says, “I pray for God to just keep my heart true,” she says. “If our hearts become too cool, I can’t keep the faith.”

A few more steps away, in the seaside suburb of Glyfada, another Church of Christ gathers for Sunday evening worship — and the baptism of three refugees from Syria.

“I have seen these people today,” the minister says, “I haven’t seen yet that I have a new church.”

In Greece, Alexander Melirrytos preaches on 1 John 1:7. “That mean he above me, that mean he above me,” the Iranian man nods.

Do you believe Jesus is the son of God?” The Iranian man nods.

“Jesus, that he will be your savior and Lord.” The Iranian man nods.

“We know that Jesus is the Son of God, and you studied the Truth,” Rosuas says. “That’s the day of salvation.”

As the new believer rises from the water, his Persian brethren hoot “Sye-ye-ye” and sing a Farsi version of “Hallelujah.”

“This is the Day God has Made.”

The Iranians Christen their guests to other hymns in their native language. One of the believers, Ibrahim, sings a song he composed. Only hours earlier, a fight between rival Christians and Muslims in Athens forced Ibrahim from their home. “We’re looking for a new place for him to stay.”

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“All together now,” he says. “Sometimes we might be mean to each other, but we love each other.”

While I wrote it. Does it make sense?”

“I believe I am not only helping to build the kingdom of God, but also I’m helping restore the faith in Europe.”

A few months ago, the Gyfouda Church planted a new church at a small migrant camp in Moria, Greece, to give them a place to gather as they navigate a legal path to freedom. “I’ll practice English until next week.”

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Night falls on Athens — and on the 50,000 refugees living among the people of Greece. Hellenic Ministries offers meals and ministry to hundreds at a time.

After ‘the worst of evils,’ God is ‘redeeming this situation for good’

These are people that are listening to their dreams,” says Matt Gulley. The Harding graduate is sitting at a table in a downtown Athens building that looks out on the Acropolis. A few tables away, a small group of Persians conducts a Bible study. Soon, the large auditorium will be filled with Middle Eastern refugees who come here on Monday nights for food, praise and prayer.

The building is the home of Hellenic Ministries, a faith-based organization founded in 1980 by Costas Macris, a Greek missionary to Indonesia who wanted to serve those suffering in his native country. “Geographically, Greece is at the heart of things,” says Gulley, who has worked with Hellenic Ministries since 2008. Greeks have a long history of hospitality to refugees from conflicts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

Among the latest wave are countless souls who claim they’ve seen “a man of light, bright shining light” or other images that have led them to study the Bible, Gulley says.

Such visions seem foreign to many Western Christians, he says, but for refugees they serve as “a tool in their journey ... a part of their story.”

In the past eight years, he’s seen “the power of the Gospel to truly transform a person’s life, a marriage, a family.” The asylum seekers “are making a true sacrifice, and they are testifying to the true difference of living in the light and not in the darkness.”

After the refugees file in for dinner, a Persian praise team sings hymns and minister Leonid Ivanov preaches. “We see terrible things going on today: tsunamis, earthquakes, wars,” Ivanov says. “What does Jesus say about that?” He reads passages from Matthew 24 about the signs of end times, focusing on Christ’s supremacy through the storms of life. Regardless of the world’s problems, “the Gospel is always being preached,” he says.

Ivanov is a Russian-language minister for the Glyfada Church of Christ. He’s also a refugee himself — a native of Donetsk, Ukraine, forced from his home by the conflict with separatists there.

Like the Middle Easterners, he came here with nothing. The church helped him and his family. Now, “my voice is not mine,” he says. “It’s for God.”

On a porch outside the auditorium, three young Americans play with some of the refugees’ children as they wait to serve dinner. The trio is here with Let’s Start Talking, a church-supported ministry that helps non-native speakers improve their English using the Bible.

In only three weeks, the workers have heard stories of “the worst of evils” that brought the asylum seekers here, says Zach Burgan, a Harding grad from Nashville, Tenn. “I don’t think God made this happen,” he says of the conflicts ravaging the Middle East, “but he’s reconciling it. It feels like he’s redeeming this situation for good.”

Workers with Hellenic Ministries agree, including Nico Spies, an administrator for the feeding program. He’s seen stories in recent months about attacks by immigrants and growing political opposition to their presence in Europe. “They’re writing about refugees coming into Greece in large numbers,” Spies says, and too many Greeks are coming to the belief that the asylum seekers “want to invade Europe and take over the heritage of Greece and the traditions ... but they never mention about how many of them get impacted by the Christian culture and the Christian people here.”

Hellenic Ministries works with Persian churches across the city, Gulley says. Some meet in homes with just a few souls. Some have 30 members. Some have 150.

Among the untold numbers of converts in Athens is a man named Muhammad, an Afghan who lived in Iran before fleeing to Greece.

After ladling out bowls of hot fasolada — a Greek, white-bean soup — at Hellenic Ministries he rests on a couch and talks about his long journey to faith — and his long journey ahead.

“It was here that I heard the Gospel for the first time ... and read the Bible,” he says. “Many things appeared to me.”

He takes particular comfort in Paul’s words from Romans 3: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

He’s become a gifted preacher, Gulley says. He speaks to fellow refugees about love and repentance — and, most impressively, forgiveness for those who persecute. It’s a message he dreams of taking home.

“I have same feeling as Isaiah and Nehemiah,” he says, referencing the Old Testament prophets who mourned and wept for their people. He knows that going back will require a miracle.

But “I have many friends who are believers,” he says. Each is a miracle. “I believe God can do more.”

HEAR IBRAHIM’S SONG and see related videos at christianchronicle.org. Some names in this piece were shortened or changed for security purposes.
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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 Fall 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.

Apply online at acucareers.acu.edu/cw/en-us/listing. Application requirements include a statement of how faith informs your teaching; a discussion of your spiritual journey; a curriculum vitae; transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work; and names, addresses and phone numbers of references. Review of applicants will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. ACU is committed to building a culturally diverse faculty and strongly encourages applications from women and minority candidates. The university is affiliated with the fellowship of the Churches of Christ. All applicants must be professing Christians and be active, faithful members of a congregation of the Churches of Christ and deeply committed to service in Christian higher education. The mission of ACU is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. ACU does not unlawfully discriminate in employment opportunities.
Job Listings

Classification start at $325; discounts offered to smaller congregations. Contact Tonya Patton at tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org. Deadline for next two issues: Dec. 7 and Jan. 11.

Bible Chair Director - Eastern Okla. State College
Opportunity to impact college students for the cause of Christ. The Church of Christ Bible Chair has a position open for Bible Chair Director at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton, Okla. We have a core group of young Christians needing leadership as well as a campus full of students needing Christ. Are you up to the challenge?

(918) 448-8933 michael.williams@bpix.com

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

Ministry Search
Duarte Church of Christ is looking for a faithful minister with knowledge and experience. We prefer married to an involved wife. Interested persons should submit resume or recorded sermon to:

Duarte Church of Christ
1330 S Highland Ave
Duarte, CA 91792
S J Brown (626) 482-1097
Progress91792@yahoo.com

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

John Lewis, (443) 977-6124
jlewis@annapolischurch.org

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

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

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

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

West Olive Church of Christ
Attn: Elders
10935 W Olive Ave
Peoria, AZ 85345

Full-Time Pulpit Minister - Brighton, Michigan
The Brighton Church of Christ is seeking a full-time pulpit minister to assist the congregation in continuing God’s work. We are looking for an enthusiastic man that loves the Lord and His Word and can relate to all age groups and loves to bring others to Christ through preaching, teaching, and visitation. It is a priority that he be outreach-focused and be willing and able to conduct personal Bible studies to help lead the lost to Christ and grow the congregation. Our preferred candidate will be married and have at least two years of post-secondary education with a degree or certificate and multiple years of pulpit and evangelistic experience in the churches of Christ.

If interested, please submit a cover letter, resume, and two recent sermons either in audio or, preferably, video format, along with personal and professional references.

For more information, please visit: brightonchurchofchrist.com

Visit our online listings at christianchronicle.org/classifieds
**Students pack 254,000 meals in two hours**

**SEARCY, Ark.** — Harding University recently teamed with Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield and The Pack Shack to pack 254,000 meals in under two hours for the food insecure in White County and surrounding areas.

The meal-packing event involved roughly 600 volunteers, including campus organizations and athletic teams.

“I think this event is a huge answer to prayer,” said senior Lexi Hoagland, the student organizer. “God worked in cool ways through Harding to help impact our community. I hope the meals that were made ... can let our neighbors have peace of mind knowing where their next meals will come from.”

The meals were distributed to food pantries, churches and nonprofits throughout the area.

Arkansas ranks No. 2 in the nation for food insecurity, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Roughly one in five residents do not know where they will receive their next meal, according to a recent report.

Hundreds of Harding University students donate their time to help pack 254,000 meals in under two hours. Churches of Christ in the area were among those who helped distribute the meals.

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**BIBLE CAMPS**

**CENTRAL FLORIDA BIBLE CAMP**

**EUSTIS, Fla.** — On a recent Saturday, Central Florida Bible Camp took time to “Celebrate.” That was the special theme as about 150 supporters celebrated the camp’s past, present and future and conducted a ceremonial groundbreaking for a new girls’ cabin.

The camp has reached a milestone in its “Forward” capital campaign, raising $500,000 to go along with a matching $500,000 donation. "This is a milestone effort in CFBC’s 62-year history," said Ron Brackett, camp director.

“The projects planned for all three phases of the campaign include construction of four new cabins, a new pool and a new activities center.”

The total estimated cost will be $3 million — $1 million for each phase, Brackett said.

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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**FOSTER'S HOME FOR CHILDREN**

**STEPHENVILLE, Texas** — The SOAR (Safety, Ownership, Advancement, Responsibility) House has opened at Sherwood & Myrtie Foster’s Home for Children.

“It is rapidly filling up with 18- to 22-year-olds who have aged out of foster care and who need a safety net underneath them while they navigate their new role as adults,” President and CEO Glenn Newberry reported in the children’s home’s recent newsletter.

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**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**ROCHESTER COLLEGE**

**ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich.** — Citing “the progress it has made toward a stronger future,” Rochester College will change its name to Rochester University, officials announced.

A transition to the new name will begin immediately and be completed in August 2020, President Brian Stogner said.

“For nearly 60 years, Rochester College has strived to provide an outstanding Christ-centered education to our students,” Stogner said. “We have always been at our best when we have worked together, believed in ourselves and stayed committed to our shared vision, faith and principles. That’s what brought us to the milestone we’re at today, and it’s what will be needed as Rochester University continues its exciting journey.”

At one time, the institution was known as Michigan Christian College.
a few hours of sleep before sunrise and the arrival of church volunteers to unload the 53-foot-long trailer.

For nearly two decades, Kincaid has combined his love for trucking and his love for Jesus while making countless cross-country deliveries for Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort, which is supported by Christians nationwide.

His journey to Panama City began in rush-hour traffic in Music City the previous evening. The grandfather of five showed up at the ministry’s 87,000-square-foot warehouse — a former Lowe’s store in south Nashville — about 5 p.m.

Earlier, hundreds of Nashville-area Christians had responded to a phone tree request for volunteers and taken familiar spots beside the warehouse’s conveyor-belt line. The members of Churches of Christ — many of them retired — packed 1,500 emergency food boxes filled with canned goods and other nonperishable items.

As the ministry’s executive director, Mike Lewis, explained, that number of boxes is “enough for five trailer loads.” A New King James Version of the New Testament is placed in each box, along with a handwritten note of encouragement from a volunteer.

Besides 300 food boxes, items forklifted onto Kincaid’s truck included 1,000 units of detergent, 400 packs of insect repellent and 252 cases of bottled water. That’s not to mention various quantities of baby supplies, blankets, bleach, brooms and wheelbarrows.

After checking his paperwork and inventory list, Kincaid bit into a Nestle Drumstick vanilla caramel sundae cone — a favorite treat that he found in a warehouse freezer.

On a rainy, 53-degree evening, he buckled his seatbelt and flipped on the windshield wipers. He took a wide turn — as semi-trucks must do — onto a side street by the disaster relief organization’s headquarters, waving his appreciation at a fellow truck driver who stopped and gave him room to maneuver his rig.

The starting odometer reading: 200,569. An old, scratched Charley Pride CD played as Kincaid, a member of the Rural Hill Church of Christ in the Nashville suburb of Antioch, steered the truck onto southbound Interstate 65 and into a clogged sea of red brake lights.

“I stay active. I don’t mind driving,” said Kincaid, a former two-term member of the Metropolitan Council of Nashville and Davidson County.

A quiet man who seems most comfortable talking about his passion for renovating old cars, Kincaid briefly explained his secrets of driving. They include “keeping it between the white lines” and “making sure you keep the truck where you can stop if somebody slows down quickly in front of you.”

Before he retired, Kincaid’s varied career pursuits ranged from police work to the Army National Guard to state government service to real estate to, yes, long-range trucking.

“I’ve done a little bit of everything,” he said as traffic thinned out between the Nashville area and the Alabama state line. “But I’ve always paid my bills and fed my family.”

‘IT HELPS PEOPLE’

Of all his jobs, Kincaid noted with a chuckle, mowing lawns proved the most profitable.

But besides law enforcement, he enjoyed driving a truck the most. He still does, even if he no longer gets paid for it and insists on covering his own expenses on disaster relief trips.

“I don’t care about a vacation, but I enjoy going places,” Kincaid said, explaining his motivation for driving the disaster relief truck to Panama City — after trips the previous two weeks to Jacksonville, N.C., and Wilmington, N.C., following Hurricane Florence. “It’s church work, and it helps people.”

Kincaid and his wife, Anita, have been married for 53 years. At the Rural Hill church, they are “bedrock members” who answer the call whenever a need arises, minister Dan Dozier said.

The Kincaids raised two sons and have lived in the same house for 51 years on rural property where John spends long hours in his auto-repair shop. This Christmas, he and Anita planned to spend it together at home.
Anita Kincaid makes sure her husband is well stocked with food and snacks for his road trips. Finding a place to park the big rig at restaurants can be difficult, and he doesn’t much care for truck stop food. So she buys individual packages of cookies, breakfast cereal and easy-to-open canned goods.

Friends occasionally tag along with John Kincaid, but he warns them that he takes a break only every few hundred miles and sometimes forgets to eat.

On the Panama City journey, he stopped to use the restroom at an Alabama rest stop at 7:53 p.m. and grabbed a quick bite to eat in a gas station parking lot at 10:46 p.m. — still 160 miles from the Emerald Coast, according to the GPS.

“Ice-cold Diet Mountain Dew that he sages,“ quipped Kincaid, sipping an Emerald Coast, according to the GPS. 10:46 p.m. — still 160 miles from the home in nearby Lynn Haven, Fla.

As they sought God’s protection, the family of five and 12 guests who huddled with them prayed and sang songs such as “Sing and Be Happy,” “God Is So Good” and “Awesome God.” The men blocked the front door with furniture as oak trees lifted off the ground and fences collapsed in the wind.

Afterward, Daniel Cherry said, the scene was “post-apocalyptic — just everything you’ve seen in the movies.”

The church, which averages Sunday attendance between 350 and 400, had prayed for God to open a door to serve the community in an awesome way, Rachael Cherry said.

They just didn’t expect the Lord to do so in the form of a hurricane just 2 mph shy of a Category 5 storm, she said. But in Michael’s wake, the church transformed its family activity center into a disaster relief hub—despite insulation visible through suddenly gaping holes in the roof.

The first Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort truck arrived just three days after the storm. A second truck — the one driven by Kincaid — came a few days later as the original food and supplies quickly disappeared.

In all, Churches of Christ Disaster Relief — which relies on 18 volunteer drivers — has dispatched about a dozen tractor-trailer rigs to locations devastated by Hurricane Michael.

“We’ve given away a lot, but they keep coming in and supplying us with more, so it doesn’t look like we’ve given away anything. It’s a good thing,” said Sandy Holley, a Jenks Avenue church volunteer, voicing gratitude for Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort and other relief ministries and individual Christians.

Jenks Avenue church member Kenneth Jordan, a Vietnam veteran who retired from the Air Force, cried as he surveyed the damage at

See JOURNEY, Page 26
A LONG JOURNEY

After Kincaid’s call, Daniel Cherry and his 14-year-old son, Corbin, arrived quickly at the church.

The preacher guided Kincaid to the best place to position the tractor-trailer rig. Church volunteers — including deacon Austin Boyd, who brought his forklift-equipped tractor — showed up and began unloading the boxes shortly after 8:30 a.m.

Others focused on clearing debris at the church pavilion to make way for relief volunteers who will be needed during Panama City’s recovery.

“It’s going to be a long journey,” Daniel Cherry said as he thanked Kincaid.

At 10:13 a.m. — his trailer empty and the church volunteers preparing for victims to arrive at the resource center at 11 — Kincaid waved goodbye.

He cranked his engine once again. “On the road again,” he said, winking. “We ought to make a song about that.”

Just after 8 p.m. that night — roughly 27 hours after his journey started — he arrived back at the ministry’s Nashville headquarters.

The final odometer reading: 201,482. (He took a slightly shorter route on the return.)

Kincaid completed his paperwork, dropped the truck keys in the proper compartment and slipped back into the warehouse to grab one more Nestle Drumstick vanilla caramel sundae cone before heading home.

“I’m tired,” he acknowledged.

However, he planned to read for a couple of hours — a Western novel by Louis L’Amour — before going to sleep.

“It’ll take me a couple of days to recover,” he said of the exhausting road trip.

But after that, he was certain he’d be ready to go again.
of where the Cherry Street Church of Christ worships. The mainstream congregation’s building also was damaged, said associate minister Lee Bragg, and will need to be rebuilt.

Between the two houses of worship meets the Church of Christ at Eastside, a 70-member, predominantly black congregation. Although that church’s building survived, members’ homes sustained damage and went days without power, said minister Raymond Williams Jr.

“This hurricane was the worst that I have ever seen,” Williams told The Christian Chronicle. “Trees, buildings and homes were destroyed, and there were curfews. There was looting, and at night all of the lights were off.”

Closer to the Gulf, the Emerald Beach Church of Christ in Panama City Beach lost power and water, but, surprisingly, had no significant damage, said Sean Coley, the 23-year-old pulpit minister for the 220-member congregation.

Even in Chattahoochee, Fla., 75 miles northeast of Panama City on the Florida-Georgia border, church members felt the fury of Michael.

“We have been through a number of storms, but — no question — this is the worst storm that we have ever experienced,” said David Bateman, minister for the Chattahoochee Church of Christ.

Despite the damage — and the differences in beliefs — “we are so blessed and fortunate that we can work to rebuild,” Bateman said. “God uses events like storms to his advantage to make people better.”

‘GOD’S LOVE WILL BE SHOWN’

In its wake, Michael left trees tangled among fallen power lines, beaches covered in debris, roofs peeled back from the homes and sanctuaries they once covered.

The destruction left by Hurricane Michael will be felt for months — years even.

“We have a long road ahead of us,” an Emerald Beach member posted on social media. “Many congregations have reached out and are planning to help in Bay County.”

Disaster recovery groups associated with Churches of Christ mobilized soon after the storm made landfall. Ohio-based Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team is working with the Palo Alto and Jenks Avenue congregations in Panama City — both damaged by the storm — to coordinate work crews and distribute supplies. Texas-based Disaster Assistance CoC is providing meals for storm victims and relief workers in Panama City and Mexico Beach, Fla. Volunteers with the ministry continue to work in North Carolina as that state recovers from another storm, Hurricane Florence.

Throughout the path of the storm, churches are using their buildings as relief sites. Among those are the Franklin County Church of Christ in Eastpointe, Fla.; the Church Street Church of Christ in Blakely, Ga.; the Caverns Road Church of Christ in Marianna, Fla.; and the Goodson Road Church of Christ in Camilla, Ga.

The cleanup will continue for months to come. Church members including Hudson, the minister in Panama City, told the Chronicle that they intend to work as long as necessary to help their neighbors in need.

“All we got is our faith,” said the 80-year-old minister, “and that is what is going to sustain us.”

Members of the Emerald Beach church echoed that sentiment.

“God’s love will be shown to this community over the next months,” they posted on social media. “Souls will even be saved because of the efforts of the Lord’s church.”

In another post, members of the Cherry Street church said that the storm has encouraged them not only to reach out in love to their community, but also to rebuild their meeting place — stronger than before.

“Sometimes God’s plans are different from ours,” church members posted. “He’s telling us, ‘Let’s go, people. Get that new thing built. What are you waiting for — a storm to blow it down?’”

FIND LINKS to serve and contribute to hurricane relief at christianchronicle.org.
Milestones

Anniversary

Garry and Sylvia Regester — 70 years

Garry Regester and Sylvia Lanham were married Nov. 10, 1948, in Upshur County, West Virginia. During their marriage they have worshipped in Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Garry served as deacon with the Newark and Cedars Churches of Christ in Delaware. He worked and retired as a superintendent for the James Julian Construction Company. Garry preached or was a teacher when there was a need. After retiring he began preaching and teaching for small congregations. Sylvia supported him by typing his lessons and raising their five children. A stroke greatly affected his speech for a while, but he overcame it by persistently retraining his voice. He then continued to teach and preach for the next 20 years until the present. His life’s goal has been to convert both his immediate and extended family, and he has had significant success.

These faithful Christians are the parents of Mary Maddox, Wanetta Conner, Margaret Steiner, David Regester and Hilda Balascio. Their grandchildren are: David Conover, Karen Davis, Christina Steiner, Tim Steiner, Scott and Paul Maddox, Laura Natale, Emily Boles and Joe Balascio. Their great-grandchildren are: Katianne, Rachel and Andrew Davis, Deacon and Brady Conner, Nathan and Owen Steiner and Caroline Natale.

Together, Garry and Sylvia have overcome trials and hardships but always endured in faith and love for the Lord and service to the Church and their family. Congratulations, Garry and Sylvia!

Memorials

B. Wayne Hinds 1931-2018

A founding faculty member of Lubbock Christian University who co-wrote the university’s alma mater died on Tuesday, Oct. 16, 2018.

B. Wayne Hinds, 87, was also the founding director of the LCU A Cappella Chorus. He joined the university in the role of music department chairman in 1957 and directed the A Capella Chorus for more than 40 years until his retirement in 1998. He also founded the Royal Blue Band and the Meistersingers Chorus.

“No one did more than Wayne Hinds, from our earliest days until his retirement, to shape the student experience of LCU,” said Steven Lemley, LCU’s fourth president, in a release from LCU. He said 53 years after being a student in the A Cappella Chorus, he can vividly remember Hinds’ “careful and precise direction.”

“I suspect all of us who were members of his chorus are still comforted by those songs, their words and sounds, when they come back to mind in times of difficulty and anxiety. Wayne Hinds provided not only a standard for excellence, but he also enriched our faith — and still does,” Lemley said.

With his wife, Yvonne, Hinds wrote the university’s alma mater. He wrote the music, while she wrote the lyrics. The duo also traveled the United States for concerts and arranged more than 25 mission trips abroad.

LCU President Tim Perrin described Hinds as an “LCU legend,” stating that the choir director caught the vision of LCU at the college’s founding and invested his life in the college’s growth and development.

“He was a great choral conductor, but he also was so much more than that. He changed lives, and his influence will endure because of the thousands of students he taught and inspired. We extend our love and sympathy to Yvonne and the Hinds family,” Perrin said.

Laurie Doyle, professor of fine arts at LCU, said Hinds was instrumental in making sure music served at the core of the LCU identity.

“His years of travel with the chorus recruited for and advertised the new college in a tremendous way. He worked with hundreds of students over the years and inspired their love of music, their dedication to the university and their faithful belief in the power of Christian fellowship,” Doyle said.

Marilyn Riemer 1931-2018

Marilyn Riemer was born on Dec. 20, 1931, and passed away on Aug. 28, 2018, at the age of 86. She was preceded in death by a son Stephen and is survived by her husband Fred, who preached for various Churches of Christ in the northwestern part of the United States. She is also survived by two sons: David (Jennifer) of Concord, Calif., P. Clinton (Janene) of Camas, Wash.; a daughter, Linda (David) DeWhitt of Gresham, Ore.; as well as five grandchildren. Marilyn and Fred would have been married 63 years on Aug. 30, 2018.

Marilyn served God as a minister’s wife, a teacher of children’s and ladies’ Bible classes and a helper of struggling Christians and of elderly people. She is remembered for her quiet spirit and her dedication to God’s word.

She and Fred moved to Gresham, Ore., in June 2017 to live with their daughter and son-in-law and worship with the Metro Church of Christ in Gresham.

Submit your wedding announcements, birth announcements, memorials or tributes to milestones@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5071. Submissions start at $25.
‘I’m still standing’

BY ELISE MILLER | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Only God can take a young boy from Africa and a dying church in America and mesh their stories.

That’s the firm belief of Gordon Wells and the congregation he serves in Hanover, Pa. And despite a recent stroke, they share the belief that his story isn’t over.

Wells, a native of Cape Town, South Africa, described himself as a timid child, too quiet and shy to even greet guests who visited his home.

Jesus changed that, he said. Although his father deserted Wells’ family during his childhood, one member of a nearby congregation saw great potential in this timid boy living in a broken home.

At age 15, Wells was baptized at the Eastridge Church of Christ in Cape Town. One year later, he preached his first sermon. Though he drifted away from Christianity for a brief period of time, he returned to his faith in the early 2000s and decided to turn his life around.

After completing mission work in Liberia, Wells quit his well-paying job and moved his family to Tennessee, where he studied at the Memphis School of Preaching, which is associated with Churches of Christ. Two years later, the family returned to Africa, and Wells became a preacher for the Eastridge church.

Meanwhile, the Church of Christ in Hanover entered a time of crisis after Barry Becker, its pulpit minister for 38 years, died unexpectedly in December 2018.

At age 15, Wells was baptized at the Eastridge Church of Christ in Cape Town. One year later, he preached his first sermon. Though he drifted away from Christianity for a brief period of time, he returned to his faith in the early 2000s and decided to turn his life around.

After completing mission work in Liberia, Wells quit his well-paying job and moved his family to Tennessee, where he studied at the Memphis School of Preaching, which is associated with Churches of Christ. Two years later, the family returned to Africa, and Wells became a preacher for the Eastridge church.

Meanwhile, the Church of Christ in Hanover entered a time of crisis after Barry Becker, its pulpit minister for 38 years, died unexpectedly in December 2018. Even with healthy preachers, Churches of Christ struggle to survive in Pennsylvania, and attendance at Hanover soon began to dwindle — from 35 members to 15 to five. The congregation needed a spark.

In 2013, Wells submitted an application to preach for the church. But the tiny congregation wasn’t sure they could find the funds to bring him to America. They continued the search.

A year passed. Each time the church reviewed the qualifications of its applicants, Wells popped back to the top of the list. Despite inevitable complications in getting Wells to America, the church decided to make the sacrifice and hire him.

That decision required an immigration attorney — and a long wait. Finally, in 2017, Wells and his family arrived in Pennsylvania. Attendance soon began to increase. So did the church’s optimism.

But earlier this year, Wells grew seriously ill and suffered a stroke. It was another devastating blow for the church, but as member Andy Boyer explained, “When a congregation of the Lord’s church begins to grow, it is like waving a red cape in front of bull. Satan becomes furious.”

Wells lost control of the right side of his body. His speech was slurred, and he could hardly walk. The Hanover church was steadfast in prayer, members said, and never lost hope.

On Sunday, June 17, walking with a cane, Wells returned to the pulpit and preached his first sermon following his stroke. His voice began to fade by the end of the sermon, but he persisted. Wells has preached and taught Bible class each Sunday since and continues to recover. He no longer needs the cane, and his voice is growing stronger.

Now the church faces the challenge of paying for their minister’s hefty medical bills. Members have launched a GoFundMe page and request assistance from church members nationwide.

“But we won’t give up!” said church member Hugh Friedline. “God can do all things, and he is bigger than our money problems.”

The church takes inspiration from their minister, who, a week after his return to the pulpit, preached a sermon titled “I’m Still Standing!”

MORE INFORMATION: christianchronicle.org
We support real, Bible-based marriage — and real journalism

As Christians and as journalists, we’re committed to reporting stories in a fair and impartial manner. That was our intention with our coverage of the E3 Conference hosted by the Highland Oaks Church of Christ in Dallas (Page 3, November).

Several readers had contacted us before the conference, which focused on how Christians can minister to those who experience same-sex attraction. Given those readers’ questions, we sent a writer to witness the event firsthand and interview organizers and attendees.

The purpose of our report on the E3 Conference was not to endorse any source’s viewpoint but to represent the full spectrum of the discussion that occurred. The place for deep Bible study, prayer and reflection on the issues the conference addressed is not on a newspaper page, but in churches and hearts. We pray that God will use the information that we provided as a starting point for discussion among congregations and church leaders.

We are extremely heartened by the positive response that the article received from many — including some who voiced concerns about the ideas presented at the conference but welcomed our reporting on them.

At the same time, we are disappointed that a few readers chose to cancel subscriptions because they did not agree with everything that was said by sources quoted in the article. We humbly ask that you read the article again and reconsider your decision. For those wanting us to take a stand in a news story, we’re not going to do that. Our commitment to faith-based journalism won’t allow it.

But here on an opinion page, we can say this: We as a newspaper remain committed to the Bible’s firm teaching on marriage as a sacred union between one man and one woman.

We love everyone, including those who experience same-sex attraction, but we resist any effort to change what the Bible teaches to conform to changing societal morals.

May God bless you all.

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Opinion

Responses to coverage of same-sex conference

I have been a subscriber to your paper for many years. At times I have disagreed with the stance of some of the articles, but that disagreement has usually been based on traditional viewpoints and opinion and not errors in biblical teaching.

After reading “Love Wins’ at same-sex conference,” I am appalled that this gross error in God’s teaching was even allowed to be printed. God’s stance on homosexuality has always been the same and will always be the same — it is not acceptable and must not be condoned.

I am 100 percent for welcoming and studying with persons identifying as LBGTQ as long as it is understood that they must overcome those desires and gain something much better — a new life with Jesus Christ! Just as Jesus told the woman caught in the act of adultery in John 8:11, “Leave your life of sin,” so must all followers of Jesus leave behind habitual, continual lifestyles that are unacceptable to God.

My earnest, heartfelt prayer is that you will use your wonderful voice for the brotherhood to uphold God’s eternal truths. I will also pray that you will be granted wisdom and discernment to lovingly teach that God has “standards” that must be followed.

JERRY C. NANCE | Stephenville, Texas

“Love wins.” But what does love require when dealing with wrongdoing? I’m not talking about feelings of attraction but about acting on those feelings — a crucial distinction I did not see in the article. The Old and New Testaments are uniform in their rejection of homoerotic behavior.

Yes, love respects every human being as a divine image bearer. But the love to which all Christians are called is a matter of the will — a loyalty that supersedes feelings. Unconditional love must be a steeled commitment to another’s true good.

WOODY WOODROW | Austin, Texas

Thank you for covering the CenterPeace E3 Conference. May I share a specific blessing your article gave us?

Six of our 13 shepherd couples attended E3. All six have an LGBTQ+ loved one or friend. Staff and two individual members also attended.

Among some members, concerns grew about E3’s agenda. Of course, the shepherds who had not attended couldn’t know the E3 agenda. Our shepherds met to open dialogue across the leadership.

Your article corroborated what attendees said:

• Yes, some speakers held a fully affirming position.
• But Sally Gary clearly stated, others repeated and the presence of speakers holding traditional positions confirmed that the conference agenda was opening dialogue, not shifting doctrine.
• The conference clearly called for loving care of LGBTQ+ Christians and their families.

Your article helped make space for calm at a troubled time. I believe if your article had been out of balance in either direction, it would have been less helpful.

RON JOHNS JR. | Willow Park, Texas
Should we avoid controversies in the Lord’s church?

JESUS PRAYED FOR UNITY, but never at the expense of fidelity to his own teachings. In all things, we must seek truth.

A person would have to be like the proverbial ostrich with his head in the sand to be unaware of conflicting views among the Lord’s people these days. Even mature Christians sometimes disagree on important issues in areas of worship, leadership, marriage, worship, the roles of men and women, salvation and fellowship.

In some respects, this has always been true. If you spend time reading books and articles by members of our fellowship over the years, you will see disagreement among supposedly sincere, well-meaning believers. Such division has never been ideal. It is important to acknowledge that the tensions existing among us are our doing and not the Lord’s (Psalm 145:17).

Of course, those who love the Lord don’t like this reality. We hate division among Christians. No one likes tension. It is a never-ending challenge to safely navigate through the issues and controversies that place the kingdom of God in such strain.

Jesus prayed for unity among Christians in John 17:6-26. We should go out of our way to find unity — although never at the expense of the Savior’s own words and teaching. How else do we explain the New Testament’s insistence that God’s people have no fellowship with those who do not hold fast to the truth? (Matthew 7:15-20; Romans 16:17-18; 2 John 7-11)

It seems odd to me that we understand Jesus’ command to love one another but fail to appreciate his insistence that everything he taught matters (John 15:9-14; Luke 9:26).

The same Lord insists on both unity and fidelity to Scripture. They are never in conflict (John 18:37).

It is my prayer that you will consider a few thoughts from this humble writer regarding the stresses that exist in our fellowship today:

- **Disagreement about what God has said (and what God would have us to do and not do) have been around since Satan tempted Adam and Eve.**

  Satan is an instigator of disharmony. He wants nothing more than to see us divide over what we think God said or didn’t say. We should always be on guard (1 Peter 5:7).

  Even as the apostles and early Christians were involved in the greatest evangelistic enterprise the world has ever known, they encountered soul-jeopardizing questions and controversies. They had to learn to discern the Lord’s will in such matters (Acts 15:6-29; 1 John 2:20, 26-27). And then they had to apply inspired truth and principles to the issues they encountered.

- **Our disagreements are grossly exaggerated by the armchair critics among us.**

  Some ask, “Since Churches of Christ are a divided fellowship, how can they purport to hold up the banner of religious truth and unity to the rest of the world?” The claim is even made that we are more divided than our denominational neighbors.

  It is difficult to take this claim seriously since denominationalism is divisive in its very nature. It is sad to my heart that these accusations sometimes seem loudest among some in the church itself.

  Jesus told us to seek unity on the basis of truth (John 17:13-21). The alternative is unity on the basis of falsehood or opinion, which everyone knows is impossible. Surely this is not what the Lord, the embodiment of truth, desires (John 14:6).

- **Disagreements often are a sign that we are trying to get things right.**

  I was reared in a denominational church where Bible authority was an issue of concern, but only on the most basic level. Since that time, I have had numerous Bible discussions with people across the theological spectrum. I became a Christian because I saw in the hearts of God’s people a desire to discern the Lord’s will for salvation, worship and other issues.

  Churches of Christ are a people who are asking the right questions: “What is God’s will on this matter? What does the Bible teach on this question?” Sometimes these questions do not get asked among our religious neighbors. I am always thrilled when I meet people from other churches who want to know the answers to these questions.

  The best people I know on this earth are members of the Lord’s church. If controversy is an indication that we are not getting it right (which I am not ready to concede), at least we are trying to get it right.

- **Working out our disagreements and finding the truth together are noble goals — instead of pretending that our disagreements don’t exist.**

  I want to challenge the notion that we should not engage in discussions of issues and controversies — that we should get on with “the more important business of saving the world.”

  Why can’t we do both? Why is one more important than the other?

  If baptism has become a point of controversy among us, and if baptism is necessary to salvation (and therefore essential to evangelistic work), is it not imperative that we confront and discuss issues relative to baptism? Doctrinal clarity strengthens us in our evangelistic task.

  Once the lost are saved, what do we teach them relative to morality, marriage, worship, church organization? Each of these topics leads to numerous questions that have proven to be controversial. To ignore controversy in these matters results in having nothing to teach new converts concerning God’s will for their lives.

  The apostles and New Testament writers dealt with these issues because it was vital for the early church to go on to maturity. It is unrealistic to think that maturity can result today without dealing with questions and matters involving controversy.

  Here is a better idea: Let’s deal with division and controversy in the church from a position of maturity. We have the capacity to do this. Let’s study the Bible. Let’s deal with one another from a position of love and good intentions. Let’s handle matters of controversy with a desire to understand God’s will.

  Let’s be people who want to be taught of the Lord (1 Peter 2:2).

  And when it’s time to make a stand against error, let us do so from a position of confidence, knowing that we have done all we can do to investigate and discern the will of the Lord (Ephesians 5:8-17).

BRIAN GISELBACH preaches for the Wood Avenue church of Christ in Florence, Ala. This Views piece is excerpted from a column he wrote for plainsimplefaith.com. Read the original version there or find a link to it at christianchronicle.org.
I have been a single parent for quite some time now. So, as I was starting to read “Going Solo: Hope and Healing for the Single Mom or Dad,” I was not sure I would find it helpful.

The author, Grammy Award-winning music executive Robert Beeson, begins by focusing on the initial heartbeat, pain and anger of his circumstances. That’s not the stage I’m in.

However, it was very helpful to read his testimony. Beeson is open and honest about what led him to become a single parent through divorce. I gained some beautiful reminders of how to let go of grief and choose to trust God as I move forward.

The journey of raising kids as a single parent can be a roller coaster of chaos at times. Various circumstances can come up throughout the journey that create grief and anger toward someone who may have done us wrong — or circumstances out of our control.

In one of the chapters, Beeson gives an in-depth discussion of the importance of being still, surrendering our brokenness to God and allowing him to direct our path. Not only does Beeson provide encouragement through his own journey, but he also provides Bible verses in every chapter. It’s encouraging to have words we can cling to from our heavenly Father.

I was refreshed by the author’s faithful and hopeful perspective on the kind of relationship I want to develop with my children. He focuses on what I can do to have those loving and honest relationships despite the circumstances.

One of the things that stood out to me is how important it is, as parents, to remember to take care of ourselves. Often, as we parent alone, the to-do list is long. Time is hard to find. Add to that our desire to compensate for our kids’ having only one parent. We want to cover whatever wounds or grief they may feel.

For me, these concerns make it easy to lose sight of my own needs. I often feel selfish taking time for myself. This book is a good reminder of the importance of taking care of ourselves so that we can show up as parents in the healthiest way. Beeson shares some healthy habits he created for himself and his family that gave me great ideas for my own family.

I am thankful for the opportunity to read this book. I found it to be very hopeful and encouraging.

I also loved how honest “Going Solo” is about the realities of parenting on our own, how it is not an easy path. The guidance and insight Beeson provides — and his turning to God to find hope and faith — is easily relatable to anyone on the single parenting journey, no matter the circumstances that brings you there, whether it is by death, divorce or choosing to parent on your own.

I would recommend this book to anyone who is on that journey. “Going Solo” renewed the hope in my story and gave me some great tips and perspective on what I want for my family.


COURTNEY HUNTER is a Licensed Practical Nurse who lives in the Oklahoma City area with her two children. She works for a cardiology practice while she completes a Registered Nurse degree. She worships with the Ridgecrest Church of Christ in Midwest City, Okla.

In crush of holiday gatherings, book focuses on what matters

This is the time of year that seems to center on family — and food.

Every few days, it seems, there are gatherings with friends, coworkers and family members close and extended.

As a result, I find myself constantly asking, “What should I cook?”

For me, it’s certainly true that smells trigger memories faster than other senses. Pecan pie reminds me of my grandmother. Stuffing with sage reminds me of my mom. I could go on and on.

It seems like we pull out all the stops when it comes to cooking and baking during the holidays. We don’t even consider having people over for a simple meal of soup and grilled cheese. It has to be the full spread!

But what kind of unnecessary pressure are we putting on ourselves?

In “Come and Eat: A Celebration of Love and Grace Around the Everyday Table,” Bri McKoy helps us stop and think about what a holy place a table is.

McKoy, who works for Compassion International and regularly shares wisdom and recipes at food blog OurSavoryLife.com, reminds readers that it does not matter who is sitting around the table or what they are eating. What matters is that eating together is a time when people can connect, open up to one another and invite Christ into their midst.

The book is an easy read and includes recipes and tips for conversation starters and opening up your home to others. It reminds me that it doesn’t matter how clean my home is or what I’m serving. What matters is that I’m inviting others to share a meal and their lives.

For anyone who is hungry and craving more connection with others, more opportunities to serve and more ways to live out God’s kingdom, “Come and Eat” offers gentle nudges to get started while reminding us that fellowship in God’s love is always the most remembered, most cherished nourishment.

SHILOH JONES is a social worker in Denver, where her husband, Josh, serves as youth minister for the University Church of Christ.

What we’re reading


What are you reading? Send submissions to erik@christianchronicle.org.
FACULTY POSITIONS AVAILABLE

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

Initial application should include a letter of interest and curriculum vitae. To complete the application, three church references, three professional references, and a transcript of the highest degree are required.

Salary and rank are determined based on credentials and experience.

CENTER FOR WORLD MISSIONS. Seeking a full-time, nine-month faculty member to begin Aug. 1, 2019, for the Andy T. Ritchie Jr. Distinguished Chair of Discipleship and Church Planting. M.Div. or similar degree required, D.Min. or Ph.D. preferred. Ten years or more church planting experience in the United States preferred. Responsibilities will include teaching upper level evangelism and church planting courses as well as general textual Bible courses for freshmen and sophomores. The ideal candidate would also demonstrate the ability to engage, inspire, recruit and mentor prospective teams of Harding graduates to plant churches. As an endowed chair, this position provides a salary commensurate with the qualifications and experience of the candidate and full funding for travel expenses, visiting lecturers and seminars related to the task of raising up domestic teams of church planters.

Submit application materials to Dr. Monte Cox, dean, College of Bible and Ministry, mcox@harding.edu or HU Box 12280, Searcy, AR 72149. Applications should be received by January 1, 2019.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY. Seeking a full-time, nine-month faculty member to begin Aug. 1, 2019. The individual will be responsible for the technical supervision and instruction of biology labs, oversight and management of laboratory resources, and other support roles as needed by the department. Preference will be given to applicants with a master’s degree.

Submit application materials to Dr. Rebekah Rampey, chair, department of biology at rrampey@harding.edu or HU Box 12251, Searcy, AR 72149.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES & DISORDERS. Seeking a full-time, nine-month faculty member. Candidates holding a Ph.D. (or willingness to immediately pursue a Ph.D.) are preferred. Qualified individuals must hold CCC from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Experience with adult neurogenic disorders (including TBI) and voice disorders is highly desirable. Teaching opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate level and opportunities for clinical education are available.

Submit application materials to Dr. Melanie Meeker, chair, department of communication sciences & disorders, at mmeeker@harding.edu or HU Box 10872, Searcy, AR 72149.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS. Seeking graduate faculty to teach online courses in the new Master of Science in Information Systems. Qualifications include an earned terminal degree (ABD considered) in information technology, information systems, cyber security, computer science, data analytics, information assurance or a closely related field. Online instruction experience required. Course design experience preferred.

Submit application materials to Dr. Christopher Davis, chair, Graduate School of Business, at cdavis1@harding.edu or HU Box 10774, Searcy, AR 72149.

Please visit harding.edu/jobs for further information on these positions and to learn more about open staff positions.

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Assistant Minister - Johns Island, S.C.

The Church of Christ on Johns Island, S.C., is currently taking applications for an assistant minister to work with the elders and senior minister of a growing congregation. Ideal candidate must be spiritually knowledgeable and willing to perform the duties of a minister to include preaching, teaching, evangelizing and ministering to the flock. Candidates must also have a degree in theology or be a graduate of a Bible school/training. Resumes can be mailed to:

Johns Island Church of Christ, Attn: Elders
2850 Murraywood Rd, Johns Island, SC 29455
Jichurchofchrist@comcast.net

Minister Wanted - Ypsilanti, Mich.

The Ypsilanti Church of Christ is seeking to fill our vacant minister position; this includes pulpit, class and evangelistic duties. We are a diverse congregation with a current average attendance of 120.

If you desire to be considered for this position, please submit your resume with three sermons (audio and/or video) to:

ypsicofc@gmail.com

For more information, contact:
Bob Bowen at (734) 482-6213.

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.

Individuals interested in the role are strongly encouraged to submit a resume and cover letter by Dec. 15, 2018, to:

info@christianchronicle.org

or

The Christian Chronicle
c/o CEO Search Committee
PO Box 11000
Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100

The Trustees and staff appreciate your prayers for this search process and for the mission of the Chronicle to inform, inspire and unite.
A Church of Christ — with an elder who lost a grandparent in the Holocaust — mourns after an anti-Semitic massacre.

‘We come together in grief and outrage’

NEW YORK

On Saturday, Oct. 27, a man entered a synagogue in Pittsburgh and gunned down people who had gathered to worship. Eleven people lost their lives at the hands of an anti-Semitic murderer.

Seventy-six years earlier, Hedwig Cahnmann died in the Belzec extermination camp in Poland. She and her husband, Sigwart, were two of nearly 6 million lives snuffed out by the Nazis.

Their grandson, Stephen Cahnmann, is a newly appointed elder for the Manhattan Church of Christ, a multicultural, multinational congregation of believers that meets in the heart of New York City.

Steve grew up in a Jewish home and came to know Jesus as an adult. Over the years his faith has grown into a deep commitment to the messianic message of Jesus.

But being a Christian has never meant leaving Judaism for Steve. He cherishes his heritage; it deeply informs his Christian faith. Steve and his wife, Emily, have led the congregation in an annual Passover Seder for many years. In June, when their son Hans turned 13, they held his bar mitzvah in the church’s meeting place.

Every year during the Seder, Steve reminds the participants to honor and remember those who have suffered racial hatred, ethnic cleansing and genocide. He tells of his grandparents. His words build a bridge from New York to the Belzec camp of 1942.

Through Steve’s words, people who are strangers — living in another land, in another time, speaking a different language — become known and loved. They are no longer foreigners. They are no longer statistics. They are Steve’s grandparents, who suffered and died because of their faith.

Now we come together in grief and outrage in the presence of this great evil that has befallen the people of Pittsburgh.

We mourn for the families of Daniel Stein, Joyce Feinberg, Richard Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil Rosenthal, David Rosenthal, Bernice Simon, Sylvan Simon, Melvin Wax and Irving Younger.

We are horrified to imagine murderous hatred infiltrating the sacred space where our Jewish brothers and sisters gathered to worship YHWH, the God of Abraham and Sarah; of Isaac and Rebekah; of Jacob, Rachel and Leah.

As Christians, we stand with the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh. We stand with them because our congregations are filled with people like Steve Cahnmann, who didn’t abandon their Jewish heritage when they became Christians.

We stand with them because we are the disciples of a Jewish man who did not come to abolish the law or the prophets.

We stand with them because we share the Hebrew Bible — what we call the Old Testament — and through it we have learned that the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

We stand with them because we know the value of congregational life and we respect all those who gather in worship.

We pray that the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our distress, will comfort those who grieve today. We pray that the peace that passes all understanding will guard their hearts and their minds.

We pray that God will heal our land, that guns will be turned into plows and bombs into pruning tools. We pray that neighbor will not take up weapons against neighbor and that wars will cease to the ends of the earth. We pray that the almighty God will be with all who suffer and wipe away every tear from their eyes.

We pray today.

AMY BOST-HENEGAR is associate minister for spiritual enrichment for the Manhattan Church of Christ. She blogs at amybosthenegar.com.

Dialogue on issues affecting our faith assemblies is vital

And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.’

— Mark 16:15-16, New King James Version

COLERaine, Northern Ireland

The church has always, either by choice or circumstance, been challenged by societal change. I believe it is part of our survival mechanism to stay relevant to cultural adaptations while preserving the principles of our faith.

However, some of the changes facing faith groups today have to do with morality, which, from the faith perspective, is defined by the narrative of our Scriptures.

Essential to dealing with these matters is dialogue. To some, this is the art of common sense. To others, it is regarded as a compromise to the principles of their faith.

I am sympathetic to those who feel they need to fight the battle against error behind the walls of their denomination while they remain vigilant against breaches in their defenses.

I remain confused, however, as to how one implements a strategy of evangelism without responding to the basic call of our commission to “go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” To do otherwise is to allow the seeds of hate and division to take root in our communities.

Recently, I invited a number of leaders from various religious groups to consider a program of dialogue in which we discuss some of the current issues affecting our faith assemblies.

A presentation and discussion will launch the program as we look at the issue of same-sex marriage and homosexuality. Groups represented will be Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Bahá’í.

If you are not already doing so, let me encourage you to stimulate dialogue in the spirit of love and respect. We cannot ignore the issues facing our churches today.

The narrative of our faith is often challenging. Nonetheless, it is a guiding light which enables us to navigate through life.

To those who have a focus on restoration of the New Testament church, be assured that it happens every time a seed of truth is planted and received in the hearts of men and women. At least in Ireland it is.

Your prayers are always appreciated.

BERT RITCHIE preaches for the Coleraine Church of Christ. He is an organizer and participant in interfaith efforts to foster reconciliation and peace in Northern Ireland, divided by animosity and violence during the years of The Troubles. He and fellow Christians organize Camp Shamrock, an annual gathering that brings children from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds together to learn about Jesus.
**CALENDAR**

**Nov. 17-22**  81st Annual Southwestern Christian College Lectureship. Terrell, Texas. Contact Dr. Richard L. Barclay. swcclectureship1949@gmail.com. See swcc.edu.

**Nov. 27**  Giving Tuesday. Support The Christian Chronicle at christianchronicle.org/donate.org.

**Dec. 4-6**  Seniors Ministry Conference. Abundant Living. Searcy, Ark. gowen@harding.edu. See abundantlivingseniors.com.


**Jan. 18-19**  Third Annual Church Involvement Conference. Athens Church of Christ. Athens, Tenn. travisirwin@att.net. See churchinvolvement.com.


**Feb. 3-7**  Freed-Hardeman Bible Lectureship. Henderson, Tenn. Contact Kristi Burleson at lectureship@fhu.edu. See fhu.edu.


**April 20-25**  75th Annual Church of Christ National Lectureship. St. Louis. See national-lectureship.net. contact@nationallectureship.net.

**FULL CALENDAR:** www.christianchronicle.org. To include your event for $25, contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org.

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The Lord Is Come!

Signs of the season are everywhere: lights, ornaments, decorated trees, and wreaths swathed in red ribbon. Amid the to-do lists and hustle and bustle, it’s easy to see Christmas is in our midst, but it’s easy to forget why we celebrate.

Let's remember God's greatest gift—His Son, our Lord and Messiah, Jesus Christ—whose presence in the world for just a few short years changed it for all of eternity. Lubbock Christian University humbly bears His name and strives to follow the example of the original Life-Changer, one student at a time.