Becoming a mother is a beautiful and exhausting thing. You hand over not just your time and attention, but also your very body. Like many first-time moms, Jasmine Bolay has been up all night. She's stressed over her choices. She's cried and laughed and cried again. And in all of it, she's found motherhood to be a sacred gift. Bolay is an “Everyday Saint” of the Round Rock Church of Christ in Texas.

The sacred gift of motherhood

BY ERICK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

LINCOLN, Neb.

S hackled at the waist, wrists and ankles, Carey Dean Moore walked down the hallway of the Nebraska State Penitentiary to the room where his earthly life would end.

He had requested that no guard hold his arm or lead him. He wanted to walk on his own.

On the execution table, covered with a white sheet, Moore’s left arm was connected to intravenous tubing. He turned his head toward members of his family, present among the witnesses, and mouthed, “I love you.”

The first injection of a four-drug cocktail was administered at 10:24 a.m. Moore took short breaths and gasped for air. His chest heaved several times. Then it stopped.

The warden lowered a curtain over the media’s viewing window as corrections officials confirmed that the drugs had taken effect. Fourteen minutes later, the curtain was raised. Moore, 60, was pronounced dead at 10:47 a.m.

A few days later, Bill Hance, prison minister for the Lincoln Church of Christ, got a letter dated Aug. 13, the day before the execution. It was from Moore, who marked the time as, “3 a.m.?”

“Are you surprise(d) to hear from me?” wrote Moore, who spent 38 years on death row for the 1979 murders of two cab drivers. “Have I been executed? Oh, I pray I have, brother in Christ!

“I love that verse, ‘to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.’ YES!”
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God changes the ‘other’ into ‘brother’

FRANKFURT, Germany

They burned books here.

On May 10, 1933, a group of National Socialist students marched into Römerberg Square, right in front of Frankfurt city hall and built a massive bonfire of books they considered un-German — works by scientists, communists, philosophers. Books on religion. Books by Jews.

Across Germany, torch-wielding mobs in university towns did the same.

Eighty-five years later, after the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II, the pavement here bears a dark metal circle inscribed with the words of 19th century German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, one of the writers banned by the Nazis: “Where they have burned books, they will end in burning human beings.”

After the war, members of Churches of Christ in Germany, some of them military — came here and shared Christ with the Germans. One of their first converts was Klaus Goebbels.

His grandson, Christian Derendorf, worships with the Kelheim Church of Christ and was gracious enough to show me around Frankfurt during a long layover on my way to South Africa.

That dark memorial hung in my mind as I prepared a Missions Sunday sermon for a church in Arkansas recently.

Lipscomb fights stress of finals with kittens

In the midst of his preparation for final exams, Joseph Toro, a freshman at Lipscomb University, gets a boost of encouragement from a furry feline during a “Dead Day Stress Relief Event.” Each semester, the Nashville, Tenn., university, which is associated with Churches of Christ, has a “Dead Day” with no classes before finals begin. So Lipscomb’s chapter of UShine, a faith-based mental health program, brought in stress-relieving kittens from the Williamson County Animal Shelter.

Prayers for Paris: Protests and attacks show need for Jesus in France, church members say

Protesters broke windows and burned cars just a few doors down from the home of minister Roland Mohsen and his wife, Rose.

“We are safe,” Rose assured friends in a Facebook message. “Keep us in prayer.”

The couple, longtime servants of the Déodat Eglise du Christ (Church of Christ) in northwest Paris, are praying for their city of 2.2 million souls, which has endured weeks of violent protests.

A new tax on diesel fuels sparked the protests. Opponents donned yellow vests and said that the tax was the last straw in a series of fiscal policies by President Emmanuel Macron that they see as unjust, favoring the upper classes.

“Descending into the streets is more ‘normal’ in this country than elsewhere, but the looting of shops is alarming,” said Robert Limb, minister for the Moulin-Vert Church of Christ in Paris.

No church members have yet been severely impacted by the protests, Limb told The Christian Chronicle.

Across France, church members expressed sorrow for the outbreak of violence — followed by deadly shootings at a Christmas market in the city of Strasbourg.

Philippe Dauner, minister for a Church of Christ in the coastal city of Marseille, said that the terrorist attack “reminded us of the importance of our presence here in a country where — in order — atheism, Islam and the Christian faith are in strong competition for French souls.”

Minister, wife escaped deadly California wildfire ‘with the clothes on our back.’

On a Thursday morning, minister Joe Glenn got a call at his Paradise Church of Christ office.

A friend in the 50-member Northern California congregation, which Glenn has served for nearly 15 years, warned the preacher, “We’ve been ordered to evacuate.”

A fast-moving wildfire was roaring toward the community of 27,000, about 180 miles northeast of San Francisco.

“I looked outside and saw ashes falling like snowflakes,” said Glenn, 81, a 1962 graduate of then-Abilene Christian College in West Texas.

The minister called Pat Glenn, his wife of 57 years, at their home behind the church building and told her they needed to leave in a hurry.

They loaded their rescue dogs, Bambi and Cheska, and their cats, Bib and Boo, into the couple’s cars. Then they joined their son, Curtis Glenn, who was driving his truck, in a clogged procession out of town.

See PARADISE, Page 8
‘OTHER’: We struggle with Jesus’ words to the Canaanite woman

FROM PAGE 3

I could’ve listed dozens of reasons for supporting mission work. But I kept thinking of that circle of hate.

I decided to preach on how God uses global missions to change the “other” into “brother.”

Take, for example, the migrant caravan at the U.S. border. I hesitate to bring it up because of the charged political climate, but that’s the point.

For some of us, the souls who are wearing out their soles as they walk from Honduras are the “other” — the threat at our doors. They’re law-breakers and drug dealers.

But some of us use the caravan to demonize another “other” — those with legitimate concerns about border security, terrorism, human trafficking. We paint them as cold, ignorant and heartless. They’re not.

Amidst the polarizing noise, very few of us are getting reliable information about who these people are and why they’re coming here.

I was at the U.S./Mexico border just a few months ago, covering a story about the Church of Christ North in Pharr, Texas, and their outreach to Spanish speakers on both sides of the border. Just south of McAllen, in Reynosa, Mexico, I met a Mexican woman named Virginia who had worked in the U.S. illegally and raised four kids there.

“I know what you think of me,” she said, but she wanted me to know that, when she was in the U.S., she worked hard and didn’t take anything from my government. After all, she added, “Even dogs labor to eat.”

At that moment, Virginia was no longer the “other” to me. She was a real person, and her words reminded me of the Canaanite woman’s response to Jesus in Matthew 15:

“Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

It’s from a story that really disturbs me. You see, this woman (a Canaanite, someone the Jews were warned to stay away from in the Old Testament, an “other”) wants Jesus to cast out a demon from her daughter, but the disciples try to send her away. Finally, Jesus says, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

Ouch! That can’t be right, can it? Biblical scholars have tried, in vain, to water down Jesus’ words. Part of the problem, I think, is that we’re so focused on the woman that we forget the actual audience — the disciples. These are, after all, the same disciples who, one chapter earlier, tried to send away a multitude that had gathered to hear Jesus. His response: “You give them something to eat.” They did, and he blessed it.

Oh, and there were 12 baskets — baskets of crumbs — left over.

A few verses later, Jesus walks on water, and Peter attempts to join him. As he looks away from Christ and sinks, Peter cries out, “Lord, save me!” much like the Canaanite woman cries out, “Lord, help me!”

In the end, Jesus praises the woman’s faith and grants her request. I think he also challenges his disciples to see her as more than an “other.” She’s not just a Canaanite; she’s a fellow recipient of God’s mercy. Jesus takes a name spoken in hatred and redefines it.

(He does this a lot. Remember that other group of people loathed by Jesus’ followers, the Samaritans? What’s the first word that comes to mind when we think of them now?)

Back in Frankfurt, one of the most striking features of that book-burning memorial is the building next to it — Old Nikolaichurch, which dates back to the 1300s. What did the people who worshiped here have to say about what happened in 1933?

Did they sit in silence? Did they participate? Did they later join the Confessing Church, the group associated with Dietrich Bonhoeffer that stood up to the evil of the Nazis?

My tour guide, Christian, visited the U.S. with his wife in 2017 when that white nationalist rally took place in Charlottesville, Va., resulting in the death of a counter-protester.

He couldn’t believe what he saw on TV — young men marching with torches, yelling “Jews will not replace us!” His country still wears the scars of that hatred, even 85 years later.

We can’t allow that again. In 2019, we must not shut out the world and live in fear of the “other.” I pray that God — through our mission work, through whatever means necessary — will help us see his children as they are: brothers all, in need of a Savior.

CONTACT: erik@christianchronicle.org

Christian Derendorf visits the book-burning memorial in Frankfurt, Germany.
More than 200 Detroit-area Christians stress unity at annual God’s Family Conference

Rogers Woods, minister and elder of the Walled Lake Church of Christ in Michigan, leads singing at the recent God’s Family Conference hosted by the Oakland Church of Christ in Southfield, Mich., near Detroit. More than 200 Christians attended the annual conference and related God’s Family Banquet, Oakland minister Edward Cribbs said. Attendees remembered the late James E. Thompson, who served 50 years as senior minister for the North Broadway Church of Christ in Mt. Clemens, Mich. Thompson died Oct. 6 at age 79.

CALIFORNIA

REDLANDS — Members of the Redlands Church of Christ have voted 70-5 to merge with Eastland Christian Church of Anaheim.

Redlands minister and elder Steve Kay said the decision came after a year of prayer, study and strategizing about declining membership. Congregation leaders determined that no a cappella Church of Christ is growing in Southern California, Kay said. “We do it very well here at Redlands,” he said, “but visitors just don’t want it.” The congregation will become the fifth campus of Eastland Christian Church, which plans to spend $1.1 million renovating the Redlands facilities.

“Eastside is a dynamic and energetic church, reaching the lost and especially reaching the youth,” Kay said. “We do it very well here at Redlands,” he said, “but visitors just don’t want it.”

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The groups were created by former leaders of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts “who broke from those organizations when the spiritual commitments of those organizations began to change,” elder and minister David Owens said.

“We will be the first in central New York to offer these programs,” Owens added.

NEW YORK

LIVERPOOL — The Wetzel Road Church of Christ is launching Trail Life USA and American Heritage Girls groups for its children.

The groups were created by former leaders of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts “who broke from those organizations when the spiritual commitments of those organizations began to change,” elder and minister David Owens said.

“We will be the first in central New York to offer these programs,” Owens added.

The Wetzel Road Church of Christ is launching Trail Life USA and American Heritage Girls groups for its children.

“Churches of Christ across the northern Plains face a number of challenges, but isolation is one of the biggest,” said Scott Laird, minister of the Great Falls Church of Christ in Montana. “This workshop provides an opportunity for leaders who share the struggles of the North to come together and encourage each other in the work of the Gospel.” Participants came from Colorado, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota as well as the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

TENNESSEE

GATLINBURG — The Gatlinburg Church of Christ is making progress on replacing its building, which was destroyed in the November 2016 wildfire that claimed 14 lives.

Construction is ongoing, and the church hopes to complete its new building by the spring, minister Roger Comstock said.

“The new building is located at the site of the old building,” Comstock said. For now, the congregation is meeting in a temporary location. For updates, see gatlinburgchurchofchrist.com.

SPOTLIGHT

‘Lamp Lighters’

KENT, Wash. — The Springbrook Church of Christ works to equip young families for raising God-loving children.

Boys and girls are urged to develop their gifts through Leadership Training for Christ Northwest, which features an annual convention hosted by the Richland Church of Christ.

In addition, a “Lamp Lighters” workbook authored by member Thomas Morse is given to parents as a guide for nightly devotionals.
A poignant moment at the recent third annual “Unity” areawide worship gathering came when a combined chorus sang.

The Lubbock Christian University chorus joined with the Fort Worth areawide unity chorus to sing “Let It Rise,” Botham Jean’s favorite hymn, and “The Lord Bless You and Keep You.” Sammie L. Berry, minister of the Dallas West Church of Christ, Jean’s home church, offered a few words of encouragement in memory of the Harding University alumnus and led a special prayer for racial unity.

Jean, 26, a native of the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, was shot to death in his own apartment Sept. 6. His high-profile death refocused national attention on police shootings of unarmed black males by white police officers.

An estimated 1,200 to 1,400 Christians attended the racial unity event organized by Fort Worth-area congregations, Southside Church of Christ minister Steve Cloer said.

“Around 40 to 50 participants led the worship service that was primarily songs, Scriptures and prayers across racial unity lines,” Cloer said. “This was done in English and Spanish.”
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PARADISE: Minister reflects on his family’s escape from fire

The family escaped the blaze — which would destroy the church building and most members’ homes — “with the clothes on our back,” Joe Glenn said. More than 8,800 structures — mostly homes in Paradise — were leveled as the blaze charred the region, according to the Los Angeles Times.

In a telephone interview from a Motel 6 in Williams, Calif., about 65 miles southwest of Paradise, the minister talked with The Christian Chronicle.

Question: Tell me about Paradise and the church there.
Answer: Up until the fires hit, it’s beautiful in Northern California. Paradise is a retirement community, so you have a lot of older folks. We had about 50 members. One Sunday, we might have 40. And the next Sunday, we might have 60.

We had a beautiful building. An elder had put in a stained glass up at the top of the building, and the sun would shine through the auditorium. About 12 years ago, we remodeled the inside of the building and put chairs in, with beautiful blue carpet.

Q: How close was the fire when you left?
A: By the time I got out of the building, all the streets were full of cars. It was about 9 o’clock in the morning, but with all the smoke, it was as black as midnight.

Q: Was it scary?
A: I would say it was scary. But we were so concentrated — my son in his truck and my wife and I in our cars — and we just crept until we could get out of town.

We were going to go to Chico, which is where my daughter lives. But the fire wouldn’t let us, so we ended up heading toward Yuba City. And my wife was calling, trying to find a motel room, and we finally found one over here.

As we were driving down the road, flames were coming across the hills. It took us an hour and a half to go what usually takes us eight minutes to go because we were in bumper-to-bumper traffic getting out of town.

Q: What goes through your mind when you see what has happened to Paradise?
A: Fox 40 in Sacramento flew a drone across the city, and it was on TV. It looks like Hiroshima. It looks like an atomic bomb has been dropped. Your heart goes out to 40,000 people — 27,000 in Paradise and the rest in Magalia, where my secretary and her husband and several of our members lived.

So far, the homes of only two people in our church survived. Every other house is burnt up.

Q: Were those who suffered losses — the church, your family, other members — insured?
A: The church had excellent insurance. We had insurance on the contents of our house. In fact, both of our insurance companies have been very, very good. They’ve taken good care of us already.

I believe most of our members were insured, but I haven’t been able to talk to everyone because they are scattered all over.

Q: The death toll from the Camp Fire has hit 85. Did all your members survive?
A: Everybody that we know of escaped the fire. Some of our members drove through flames on both sides of the road because they came after we did. One of our ladies couldn’t get to her car, so she just took her son and started running. And some people picked them up and took them down to Chico.

Q: Will you and the church rebuild there in Paradise?
A: That is our plan right now, but I haven’t been able to meet with all of the guys yet. It’s assumed that that’s what we’re going to do.

Q: Were you able to collect any belongings before you fled?
A: We didn’t have time. I’ve got some manuscript stuff that I’ve been working on, and I dumped that into my briefcase and put it in the car.

Then we grabbed one fire box that had some money in it that we’d been putting back. Because of the fear of fires, we wanted to have extra money.

Q: How do you even begin to describe what you’ve lost?
A: You know, all the books you gather up over 60 years — everything’s gone.

Q: But I understand that you consider yourself blessed that you survived?
A: God is good. Paradise is lost. We are OK. It is going to take many months before Paradise is rebuilt. Keep us in your prayers!

HOW TO HELP: Checks may be sent to: Chico Church of Christ, 995 E. Lassen Ave., Chico, CA 95973, Attn.: Paradise Fire Fund.
Serving amid the ashes

**CALIFORNIA CHURCH** helps and hosts victims of Paradise fire.

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

The fire is contained, but it will be a long time before life in Paradise, Calif., returns to normal — if it ever does.

Even weeks after the devastating Camp Fire destroyed 14,500 homes and businesses, including the Northern California town in the Sierra foothills, very few people are allowed back into the affected areas, said Christie Presswood, office manager for the Chico Church of Christ, which meets about 15 miles west of Paradise.

“The infrastructure of Paradise is gone,” Presswood told The Christian Chronicle. “Nothing like this has ever happened before, and I’m not sure anyone knows what to do at this point.”

In the days after Paradise burned, the 100-member Chico congregation began working with Nashville, Tenn.-based Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort to distribute loads of supplies to those in need.

“So far, the church has received three truckloads of supplies for evacuees and has helped about 350 people. The Federal Emergency Management Agency also has stepped in, providing trailers as temporary homes for many evacuees. Many of the evacuees hope to rebuild, but there’s no timeline yet. Some have chosen to relocate. The editorial board of the Los Angeles Times questions whether or not residents should rebuild the town at all due to the high fire risk.

In the midst of the uncertainty, “it’s a different world here,” Presswood said of life in Chico. “When you drive around, the traffic is just stop-and-start, stop-and-start. You see the large number of people that evacuated to here and are still here.”

The Paradise Church of Christ lost its building in the blaze. While its members wait to rebuild, they worship with the Chico church. Presswood says the church’s attendance has increased by about 25 people a week since the fires.

“We are just trying to welcome the people from Paradise and fold them into our church family,” she said.

The Chico church has received multiple donations to help with the recovery efforts.

“I’ve never seen anything like it,” Presswood said. “The response from the Churches of Christ around the country has been overwhelming in monetary donations — and they’re still coming.”

FIND LINKS to congregations and ministries collecting funds for California fire relief at christianchronicle.org.
DEATH ROW: ‘We think Jesus’ blood just covers us “good” Christians’ sins’

The Nebraska State Penitentiary in the capital, Lincoln, was the site of Carey Dean Moore’s Aug. 14, 2018, execution. Death row inmates are housed at a different facility, the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution, about 60 miles southeast of Lincoln.

THE STRONGEST CHRISTIANS I’VE MET WERE MURDERERS’

Born again behind bars, Moore was a de facto ministry leader for the death row inmates in Tecumseh, Hance told The Christian Chronicle.

It’s a role Moore inherited from Robert E. Williams, another convert who spent two decades on death row for multiple rapes and murders he committed in 1977.

Williams died by electric chair in 1997. It was the last execution in Nebraska until Moore’s in 2018.

Hance, 80, has served in prison ministry in Nebraska for three decades. He knew both Williams and Moore.

“I did not baptize Cary Dean Moore,” Hance said, “but I did baptize four of the men on death row that were taught by Cary Dean.”

The Lincoln Church of Christ, a humble, 75-year-old congregation of about 120 souls, sponsors a far-reaching prison ministry. Church members have sent Bible lessons to inmates across Nebraska — and to Mississippi and the Carolinas. A few prisoners who are allowed to leave their facilities on four-hour passes worship with the church.

Some members make regular visits to correctional facilities to lead worship, study the Bible and baptize inmates. One of the volunteers, Joe Stallard, said he sometimes looks up the criminal records of his students after he studies the Bible with them.

“Some of the strongest Christians I’ve met were murderers,” he said. “That’s the sad thing I keep thinking about Cary Dean Moore. He was the leader of the church on death row. He converted a lot of people.”

SALVATION FROM ‘A DEEP, DARK PIT’

After Moore’s execution, a dozen inmates remain on death row — a sequestered, high-security wing of the Tecumseh prison with about a dozen inmates. They’re not allowed to mix with the general prison population or attend worship services.

They are allowed limited interaction with each other — and with prison chaplains — in a common area, Hance said.

Hance met Robert E. Williams, who he came to know as Bob, a few years before Williams’ 1997 execution. Williams had been baptized years earlier and had started studying Bible correspondence lessons with two women from the North Omaha Church of Christ. They had suggested that Williams be re-baptized, and he wanted Hance’s opinion.

Hance asked Williams why he had been baptized. Williams told him that his time in God’s Word had convinced him that he needed to follow Jesus’ example and be baptized by immersion for the remission of his sins. Hance said he was convinced that Williams’ baptism fit the pattern found in Scripture.

Hance later met Carey Dean Moore, who was baptized in 2005 after studying the Bible with Geoffrey Gonifas, minister for the Wheatland Worship Center in Wyoming. Moore “did lots of talking and encouraging of people that couldn’t study with me,” Hance recalled. Moore studied with his fellow inmates and recommended that they study with Hance, eventually resulting in the baptisms of four death row inmates.

One of them, Jose M. Sandoval, was the ringleader of a 2002 bank robbery attempt that left four people dead. Sandoval was baptized in 2006. “Everything happens for a reason, and there is a purpose for everything,” Sandoval told the Chronicle. He wasn’t allowed to attend Moore’s funeral, so he prepared remarks to be read at the service that reflect his belief.

“I’ve been on death row since 2005,” he wrote, “and, to be honest, I wouldn’t (have) been saved unless I was on the row ... If they would of given me life, I would of been still thinking that life is still good, and I wouldn’t of been in my dark hole.

“It sometimes takes us to be in a deep, dark pit in order to be saved by Jesus. ... I believe that Carey was in a dark hole, and he too was rescued.”

Another of the four inmates, Marco Torres, also wrote a statement for Moore’s eulogy.

“He was there through thick and thin,” Torres wrote, “always putting the other person first, even when he was tired. ... He showed me how not to judge, when at times judging was easy.”

That mentality makes a difference in the lives of prisoners, said Hance’s wife, Colene. She conducts Bible studies and meets with inmates when her health allows.

Occasionally, on Thursday nights — set aside by the prison system for baptisms — she has witnessed convicts give their lives to Christ.

“I always say ‘hallelujah’ because their faces are different. Don’t you think, Bill?” she asked her husband, who agreed.

“You know, as Christians sometimes we think Jesus’ blood just covers us ‘good’ Christians’ sins,” she said. “But that’s not what Jesus did.”

THE DEATH PENALTY AND THE GOSPEL

“Carey Dean Moore’s solemn walk to the execution chamber followed years of controversy.

In 2015, Nebraska’s state legislature voted to repeal the death penalty, overriding the veto of Gov. Pete Ricketts. Nebraskans in favor of capital punishment launched a petition drive, subsidized by $300,000 of Ricketts’ own money, and got enough signatures for a public vote.

In November 2016, voters rejected the repeal, keeping execution legal.

Moore’s death was the state’s first-ever lethal injection, and a German pharmaceutical company that manufactures one of the drugs used in the execution tried to halt it, to no avail.

“I personally am a strong proponent
of the death penalty,” Bill Hance said. “The primary charge of government from God is to punish evil doers. God’s punishment is capital punishment.” He cited Genesis 9:6: “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.”

But he also quoted Ecclesiastes 8:11: “When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people’s hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong.”

“I believe that, as it has been carried out in Nebraska, it’s cruel and unusual punishment,” Bill Hance said of the death penalty, noting that the last two men executed had waits of 20 and 38 years. The Nebraska Supreme Court set Moore’s execution date seven times before it finally was carried out.

While the ordeals were torturous, “I was very, very thankful that he had the years to serve before they executed him,” Bill Hance said of Moore. “Cary Dean’s death to me was not the loss of a brother, but the absence of the ability to communicate with a brother.”

‘HE WAS A BEAUTIFUL MONSTER’

In the days leading up to Moore’s execution, news reports focused on the controversies, the crimes and the long wait for justice endured by the victims’ families.

“I don’t know who the papers are talking about or that murderer they claimed him to be,” Torres wrote in his eulogy for Moore. “The man I knew was a savior to my life and my soul. ... I just hope I can honor him with the life I have left.”

Seven years before his death, Moore talked to the Lincoln Journal Star about the lives he took at age 22 — Reuel Van Ness Jr. and Maynard Helgelan, both cab drivers, both 47, both Korean War vets. Van Ness was the father of 10 children.

“When I killed the two men, that was my responsibility, my fault,” he said. “The devil didn’t make me do it. That was just me.”

In a testimony read at his funeral, Moore described the pain he felt daily for his actions. “I have hurt so many people, especially when I murdered two men,” Moore wrote. “How could I have done that to so many? And the pain continues ... and so does healing and the tender mercies of God!”

Sandoval, in his eulogy comments, described his fellow death row convict — and brother in Christ — as “a better man than me.” “He wasn’t the perfect Christian, but then again, who is?” Sandoval wrote of Moore. “Even with all his flaws he was a beautiful monster. I know for a fact that a path to three decades of service to inmates — a work of great opportunity and greater need.”

By Erik Tryggstad | The Christian Chronicle

Lincoln, Neb.

Bill Hance was a reluctant convert to prison ministry.

The soft-spoken 80-year-old sits at a table outside his small office in an annex of the Lincoln Church of Christ. He leafs through a folder of notes as he gives a rundown of his weekly schedule — Bible studies every other Tuesday at LCC (Lincoln Correctional Center) for protected inmates, and what the state calls a Protestant worship service on the alternate Tuesdays.

Bible studies happen at the first of the month for the general population. It’s called prison fellowship. Baptisms are on Thursdays if requested in advance. Fridays are mostly for mailing Bibles to inmates.

Hance, who has served in prison ministry for three decades, never saw himself as the type of guy who would spread the Gospel behind bars — much less on Nebraska’s death row to “the vilest offenders who truly obey” to borrow words from an old hymn.

It all started with a belt.

A native of Texas, Hance studied agriculture at Abilene Christian College before moving to Washington to work for the Soil Conservation Service in the nation’s capital.

He worshiped with the Springfield Church of Christ in Virginia and served as the church’s curriculum director.

See JUSTICE, Page 12
JUSTICE: ‘The big prayer is that when they get out ... they’ll stay faithful’

From Page 11
He wrote Bible lessons at a desk next to the church’s donation closet.

“As people would get out of jail, people in the jail ministry would bring them by to get clothes,” Hance says, “but one thing people don’t tend to give away is belts.”

One day, Hance took off his own belt and gave it to a former inmate. That act made a huge impression, the jail ministry workers told Hance, so “I began to buy multiple belts — too big for me — and would punch an extra hole in them,” he says, chuckling. “I was a little thinner then.”

“When people would come in and need a belt, why, I would take off my belt and give it to ‘em. I didn’t know if I was being hypocritical or not, but it seemed to make the right kind of impression.”

Hance and his family took a young parolee into their home — an experience that quickly turned negative.

The young man got high from model glue in their home and took advantage of their hospitality.

“We learned real quick that, as we make ourselves vulnerable, we become vulnerable,” he says.

In 1985, the family moved to Nebraska and began worshipping with the Lincoln Church of Christ. About 15 members served in prison ministry and in 1987 invited Hance to accompany them to worship at one of the men’s dormitories.

Despite his previous negative experience, he accepted the invitation.

Soon Hance was in charge of outreach efforts at a different facility. He developed a curriculum for teaching inmates and took early retirement to work full time in prison ministry. He has served at facilities across the state — including the Tecumseh State Correctional Institution, which houses death row.

He has served as part of a prison chaplain fellowship, working with ministries from other Nebraska churches. In the past three decades he’s helped establish halfway house ministries and coordinated benevolence work for prisoners.

Some of the efforts have floundered, he says. Others have succeeded. Through it all, he’s kept members of the Lincoln Church of Christ active in prison ministry. From 270 to 290 inmates per year are baptized through the church’s efforts, Hance says, though he’s quick to give the credit to God.

PRISONERS WITH ‘A STRONGER PURPOSE’

Members of the Lincoln Church of Christ say that the faith they’ve seen behind bars has strengthened their own faith.

And the barrage of Bible questions they receive from inmates keeps them grounded in God’s Word.

“The thing that keeps me going is the letters they write,” says Winona Maxon, who sends 40 to 50 cards to inmates per month and helps coordinate the church’s Bible correspondence ministry. “They just are so thankful, so appreciative. We know we’re making a difference in their lives. The big prayer is that when they get out that they’ll stay with the Lord, they’ll stay faithful.”

The needs of the inmates — for mentoring and discipleship, during and after their sentences — is immense, Hance says.

“I wasn’t able to do it justice part time,” he says, “and I realized after I became full time that I still wasn’t. All I can do is all I can do.”

Hance is training Joe Stallard, a crane operator who plans to retire and serve as Hance’s successor.

Stallard says he’s been surprised and inspired by what he’s seen in the prisons he’s visited — especially Nebraska State Penitentiary, where Nebraska carries out its executions.

Built in 1869, the prison has a chapel at its heart. Visitors must go through multiple security measures to reach it.

“When you leave the turnkey and are walking across the courtyard with a guard, these people just come walking out. They start singing praises to God and join us. They stop their singing every once in a while to greet each other. They sing hymns all the way to the chapel. You don’t see that out in the real world.’

Joe Stallard, member of the Lincoln Church of Christ, describing worship services at the Nebraska State Penitentiary

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Joe Stallard, member of the Lincoln Church of Christ, describing worship services at the Nebraska State Penitentiary

MORE ON OUTREACH TO INMATES

WEBSITE: www.lincolnchurchofchristnebraska.com

He knows the Bible frontwards and backwards’

In addition to serving as the Lincoln Church of Christ’s longtime prison minister, Bill Hance makes regular visits to nursing homes to conduct Bible studies.

After a recent study of Ephesians 6, Hance visits with Dorothy Sterrs, age 101, and Marie Green, 103. (At age 80, he is the youngest of the group.) Hance also has served on mission trips to Samara, Russia.

“He knows the Bible frontwards and backwards,” Sterrs says of Hance.

The minister credits his Bible knowledge to the dedication he saw in his parents. During World War II, as his father served in the military, his mother had to “train up a child in the way he should go,” as Proverbs 22 reads, on her own. She was up to the task, Hance said, adding that “some of the best Bible teaching I had was during the war.”
BRAZIL
RECIFE — Elders for every congregation: that’s the goal of missionaries working in this northeastern Brazilian city of 1.5 million souls. That’s also why 60 Christians from 13 Churches of Christ gathered for the recent Elder-Link seminar, hosted by the Boa Vista Church of Christ. Five guest speakers focused on “take heed to yourselves and to all the flock” from Paul’s final charge to the elders in Acts 20.

“Of the two dozen congregations in the metropolitan region, only the Boa Vista church, which is the oldest, has elders,” said missionary Mike Pruitt. However, I am encouraged by the progress two of the congregations are making in this regard. They hope to each have an eldership installed by next year.” See www.redeemingrecife.org.

GREECE
THESALONIKI — In this ancient Greek city, 25 women serving churches in Africa, Europe and Central America gathered for a Retreat for Single Women Missionaries. In addition to touring the sites once visited by the apostle Paul, participants heard presentations from speakers including Mary Nelson of Mission Bible Class. Nelson, who lives in New Zealand, spoke about methods for teaching Bible lessons to children using the free resources at www.missionbibleclass.org. She also spoke to members of the Glyfada Church of Christ in Athens.

INDIA
LAHLA — A Church of Christ in this northeastern Indian village recently celebrated the opening of a new meeting place.

The church members are part of the Karbi ethnic group in India’s Assam state. Garry Jones works with the Karbi through Spiritual Sword Missions, an outreach of the Clinton Church of Christ in Tennessee. The work includes the Mustard Seed Village children’s home, the Spiritual Sword Bible School Program, the Jean Fields Women’s Bible School and the Health Worker’s Training Institute.

“There has been division among the churches in the Karbi state,” Jones said, “and I, along with many Indian brothers, have made it our goal to bring peace and unity.”

LATVIA
RIGA — “Who is Jesus Christ?”

The Riga Center Church of Christ pondered that question during a recent lecture series featuring speakers Wayne Brewer, Michael Richardson and John Griffin.

The Mabelvale Church of Christ in Arkansas and individual Christians provided support to help the church advertise the event on Facebook in Latvian, Russian and English.

TANZANIA
MOROGORO — A swing set was stolen from a Church of Christ in this central Tanzanian town recently — despite the fact that it was anchored to the ground with concrete.

“In this fast-growing neighborhood, construction workers are constantly coming and going,” Thayer Salisbury explained. “Anything that is not nailed down disappears — and sometimes even items that are nailed down.

“Someone came in the night, cut the legs of the swing set just above ground level and carried off the whole thing.”

Salisbury, a minister and elder of the Flanders Road Church of Christ in Toledo, Ohio, recently visited Morogoro, a city in central Tanzania with about 300,000 people. The church supports the work of minister Wilfred Massawe and special projects.

The Flanders Road church already had raised most of the money needed for a security wall, Salisbury said, and seeks additional funds to finish the project — and to replace the swing set. See flandersrdchuchofchrist.com.

Bikers, Bibles and selfies in Burundi

In the East African town of Bweru, Burundi, evangelist Akembe Ahumbwe Amou, center, gives Bibles to a group of motorcyclists. “The young people ... are pleased to receive a Bible and thank the Church of Christ Burundi and our donors for the fulfilment of the Lord’s mission,” the preacher said. See facebook.com/groups/theyneedbibles.
SOZO RECOVERY CENTER
“Healing Addiction Through God’s Love”
Located just 10 minutes from Hot Springs Village, Ark., SOZO Recovery Center is achieving amazing results in curing drug and alcohol addiction in men by having their residential clients study the Bible and attend a local Church of Christ as part of their recovery program. “By practicing this God-centered, Bible-based curriculum, nearly 40 men have gotten sober and become baptized in the last four years,” says SOZO Director, Bob O’Dowd.
For information, call Bob O’Dowd at:
(501) 226-9575, bonhsv@suddenlink.net
www.sozorecoverycenters.com

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Cuban Christians join with their brethren from the U.S. for an evening devotional at the meeting place of the 10 de Octubre Iglesia de Cristo in Havana, Cuba. The congregation was one of the first Churches of Christ planted on the island by missionaries Ernesto Estévez and José Ricardo Jimenez, Floridians of Cuban descent, in 1938.

Final Pan Am Lectureship reaches Cuba

HAVANA, Cuba

Reuel Lemmons had a heart for evangelizing Latin America. But he was concerned that Churches of Christ in the U.S., by and large, paid little attention to the spiritual needs south of the border.

In the years after World War II, missionaries eagerly preached the Gospel in Europe, Africa and Asia, but few traveled to Central and South America. Many U.S. Christians were unaware of the spiritual needs and opportunities there.

So Lemmons, a renowned minister and editor of the Firm Foundation, proposed a lectureship that would bring church leaders together in a different Latin American city each year. Launched in 1963, the Pan American Lectureship did exactly that for a half-century.

Recently, 96 believers participated in the 53rd and final lectureship. The mission-minded men and women visited a city that would have been nearly impossible for them to visit in 1965 — Havana, Cuba.

Traveling by cruise ship, the participants disembarked in the communist nation’s capital and shared a devotional with one of the 200 Iglesias de Cristo (Churches of Christ) on the island. Many of the travelers considered the evening with their Cuban brethren as the highlight of the historic week.

Lemmons served as coordinator of the event for some 20 years. Dan Coker, a former missionary to Guatemala City, attended the first lectureship and most of the ones that followed. The lectureship’s underlying dream, Coker said, was that the travelers would return to their congregations and urge them to send missionaries to the harvest fields of Latin America.

That dream came true.
Churches of Christ in every Latin American nation except for Bolivia and Haiti have hosted the Pan American Lectureship. (Churches on the predominantly English-speaking islands of the Caribbean host their own lectureships.) Growing congregations now thrive in Guatemala, Honduras and across the region, and U.S. churches sponsor regular mission trips and support a variety of works in Latin America.

We don’t know how much of that growth comes from the influence of the Pan American Lectureship. But those of us who came to Guatemala and Brazil and other places in the 1950s and 1960s know that the picture in Latin America today is totally and completely different from what it was.

Lemmons gave oversight of the program to Jim Frazier, Coker and me in 1983. Frazier served as chairman of the events’ directors. Others have joined the committee — including Don DeLukie, Paul Shero, David Duncan, Kelley Grant, Bruce McLarty and Jeff Jenkins.

Throughout the lectureship’s history, organizers dreamed of visiting Cuba. The committee decided to make one more try and was blessed to receive permission to gather with Cuban Christians. Having finally achieved this goal, the directors concluded that Lemmons’ dream had been fulfilled. His mission was accomplished. It was time to let the curtain fall on one of the major mission activities of the past half-century.

Frazier put it this way: “Although there are still great needs, opportunities and challenges in Latin America, North American Christians in great numbers have traveled there and seen the situation for themselves. “May the Lord Jesus help us put that knowledge to work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.”

HOWARD NORTON is a longtime minister and educator who served as a missionary to Brazil and as editor of The Christian Chronicle. He is an elder of the College Church of Christ in Searcy, Ark.
104-year-old Elmo Snelling, right, prays for the Lord’s Supper during a Sunday homecoming service for the Kress Church of Christ in Texas. (September, Page 1)

“We truly believe that if you’re going to change the world, it’s going to start with water.”

SEAN JUDGE, director of Walk4Water, fundraisers by Healing Hands International, which drilled its 1,000th well — this one in Haiti — this past spring. (June, Page 1)

“Shaken. Broken. Wishing I had words to pray.”

PAUL HARRINGTON, member of the Lone Oak Church of Christ in Paducah, Ky., after a gunman opened fire at her daughter’s Kentucky school. (March, Page 3)

“A month of bliss doesn’t replace a month of grief. But every day I try to do something for Botham.”

ALLISON JEAN, mother of Botham Jean, after the Harding University graduate and Dallas West Church of Christ member was killed in his own apartment by a police officer. (October, Page 1)

“I am not, nor do I ever want to be, a member of the Church of Christ, if by that terminology we mean a denomination among denominations in competition for memberships from all denominations.”

DAN WINKLER, preaching at the annual Polishing the Pulpit conference in Sevierville, Tenn. (October, Page 3)

2018

The year in quotes

“I never heard God talk to me. But, sometimes, I wake up in the morning with something so heavy on my mind that I just have to do something.”

GENE MCKOWN, member of the Alameda Church of Christ in Norman, Okla., on deciding to build 32 transitional houses for the homeless in his community. (May, Page 7)

“Flipping burgers may seem mundane, but nothing is ordinary when done in the name of the Lord.”

TOM LEIBRAND, deacon of the University Park Church of Christ in Hyattsville, Md., on hosting Friday night cookouts for a high school football team. (November, Page 34)

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

ALLISON JEAN, mother of Botham Jean, after the Harding University graduate and Dallas West Church of Christ member was killed in his own apartment by a police officer. (October, Page 1)

“Flipping burgers may seem mundane, but nothing is ordinary when done in the name of the Lord.”

TOM LEIBRAND, deacon of the University Park Church of Christ in Hyattsville, Md., on hosting Friday night cookouts for a high school football team. (November, Page 34)

In Puerto Rico, Hurricane Maria victim Sandra Rosa Vargas, center, embraces mission team members Ashton Brophy and Carson McKee. (August, Page 1)

“Our last three years have been filled with joy, filled with hope, but very, very harsh at times. If we had not seen really raw miracles … I don’t think we would still be around.”

ELENI MELIRRITOS, member of the Omonia Church of Christ in Athens, Greece, on the church’s ongoing service to refugees from the Middle East. (December, Page 17)

“In Baguio, Philippines, minister Dodoy Sameon holds a Bible solar player — one of 10,000 given by Sunset International Bible Institute. (October, Page 17)

“Here we were — two different languages, two different worlds, with one heart and one spirit. I just cried throughout the whole service. It was so sweet, so emotional. The spirit of God was just alive.”

JONI GOODMAN, member of the Reidland Church of Christ in Paducah, Ky., on worshipping with Puerto Rican brothers and sisters on a trip to help after Hurricane Maria. (August, Page 1)

“Brother Keeble’s thing was preaching, and his thing was saving souls and baptizing people. Right now, many of us are still carrying on his legacy.”

DANIEL HARRISON, one of the late Marshall Keeble’s “boy preachers” and longtime minister for the Chatham-Avalon Church of Christ in Chicago. (April, Page 1)

“On the church of Jesus Christ, we can ask God to give us the courage to speak redeeming words into situations that carry the foul scent of racial injustice.”

JERRY TAYLOR, at the opening of the Carl Spain Center on Race Studies and Spiritual Action at Abilene Christian University in Texas. (November, Page 1)
John Schneider is known for the encouraging calls he makes.

Sometimes taking care of a family — managing chaos, maintaining routine, getting the kids to school and volleyball practice and baseball and youth group, shopping for school supplies and getting stains out of shirts — seems ordinary. But when done with patience and love, intention and wisdom, daily tasks are transformed into sacred rites.

Natalie Bogue first came to the Round Rock church when her older daughter attended the preschool program. She decided then that she wanted Jesus to be at the center of her family. Ever since, she's committed to motherhood as a holy vocation.

Jim Flemmons has been a Round Rock church fixture for a long time. His laughter ringing across the foyer most Sundays, his tenor voice leading in worship. In recent years, he has battled cancer, problems with his immune system and unexpected treatment complications. But his laughter still rings across the foyer. He still sings. His hope and joy lie in what comes next.

Balancing family and a high-stress career isn’t easy, but Danielle Arnold does her best — and asks God to make her best enough. As a doctor, Arnold is often on call, perpetually available to her patients, ever interrupted by their needs. She can feel stretched too thin sometimes. But she keeps showing up at the Round Rock church, doing good work, helping and healing.

When Natalie Norbut heard the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, she told her parents that she wanted to be baptized, too. Just like that. She said she wanted to be close to God and wanted to get rid of everything standing between her and him. Natalie is young, but that doesn’t mean she’s not a saint. Natalie loves to worship and writes her own songs of praise.

When Brenda Dodd moved to Round Rock, her condition was dire. Her health was declining, and her relationship with her children was strained. If she didn’t get clean, she likely didn’t live. So she moved in with her daughter and committed to sobriety — attending Celebration Recovery meetings, welcoming therapy and getting plugged into the Round Rock church.

ROUND ROCK, Texas

When we think of saints, we think of people like the apostles: St. Peter or St. John. We think of St. Francis of Assisi and his vow of poverty or St. Teresa of Calcutta and her devotion to the sick and poor in India. We think of people who are extra holy, more holy than we are or ever will be.

But that’s not the way the Bible talks about saints.

In Scripture, all followers of Christ are called saints, literally “the set apart” or “the holy ones.” To choose Christ is to choose to be a saint. Clothed in his righteousness, washed in his blood, we are made and are being made holy.

At the Round Rock Church of Christ, where my husband, Justin, preaches, we recently began a sermon series called “Everyday Saints.” As part of the series, Chris Reynolds shot portraits of members in the style of saint icons. The portraits have been up in our building, and we’ve pushed them out online with accompanying captions describing the way each person is being made holy by God. The response has been incredible.

First, we intentionally picked people who wouldn’t necessarily describe themselves as saints. Once we persuaded them to participate, the shoots themselves were so moving. People cried. We prayed over each person and thanked God for what he was doing in their lives. Then, seeing the images — it was such a powerful moment. I’ve received messages from several of the participants telling me how they see themselves differently now, thanks to this experience.

Our church has been receptive to the images in a way I couldn’t have anticipated. They’re sharing them on social media, spending 20 minutes after church reading the captions and meditating. It’s been beautiful.

JENNIFER GERHARDT is the storytelling minister for the Round Rock Church of Christ. Her most recent book is “Swallowed Up: A Story About How My Brother Died. And I Didn’t.”
EVANGELISM

HOUSE TO HOUSE/HEART TO HEART
JACKSONVILLE, Ala. — The House to House School of Evangelism has been launched to “train the saved to teach the lost.” The school is an effort by House to House/Heart to Heart to share the Gospel with contacts made through the national publication ministry, which is sponsored by the Jacksonville Church of Christ.

“House to House/Heart to Heart has produced thousands of prospects since its inception,” said Matt Wallin, who signs up churches for the program. “Too many times, this low-hanging fruit has gone unpicked due to a lack of training in how to effectively harvest it.”

For years, churches have requested help to teach those who make contact with them, Wallin said. Rob Whitacre has been hired to start the school and lead personal evangelism seminars.

HIGHER EDUCATION

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
MALIBU, Calif. — The Alaina Housley Memorial Endowed Scholarship Fund has been established to honor the 18-year-old Pepperdine student who died in the Nov. 8 mass shooting in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

So far, 113 donors have given more than $135,000 to the scholarship fund. A memorial service honoring Housley’s life was conducted Nov. 28 at Pepperdine’s Firestone Fieldhouse.

“We are touched deeply and indelibly by this loss to our community and Alaina’s loving family,” Pepperdine President Andrew K. Benton said. “Those who knew her loved her; she completed our campus family and made us better.”

SOUTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
TERRELL, Texas — Southwestern Christian College was the grand prize winner of Ford’s Ultimate Homecoming Takeover, Ebony magazine reported.

Southwestern, the only historically black college associated with Churches of Christ, received a $100,000 prize.

The check was presented by stars of the 1980s and 1990s television show “A Different World,” including Jasmine Guy (Whitley), Kadeem Hardison (Dwayne), Cree Summer (Freddie) and Darryl Bell (Ron).

Scott Hamilton shares life story at FHU benefit dinner

Gold medalist Scott Hamilton recounts his rise from unwanted son of an unwed mother to Olympic glory as a figure skater. Adopted when he was six weeks old, Hamilton spoke at a recent benefit dinner for Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., raising $1,245,000. Hamilton, who often talks about his Christian faith, was baptized in the swim facilities at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.

SPOTLIGHT

Former ACU president dies at 91

ABILENE, Texas — William J. Teague, chancellor emeritus of Abilene Christian University, died Nov. 28 at age 91. Teague served as ACU’s ninth president from 1981 to 1991 and later as chancellor from 1991 to 2007.

With an emphasis on fundraising, he oversaw the transformation of the campus, leading to the construction of the Mabee Business Building and the Onstead-Packer Biblical Studies Building as well as the relocation of Judge Ely Boulevard.

ACU’s Teague Boulevard opened in 1992 and was dedicated in August of that year, serving as a new front entrance to the university.

Across campus, the Margaret L. and William J. Teague Center was dedicated in his and his wife Peggy’s honor in 1999.

“Dr. Teague’s spirit of innovation is evident everywhere on campus, and that influence will far outlive him,” ACU President Phil Schubert said.
Universities: ‘Loudest whisper from God’

From page 1

“Long story short, I believe that my personal reason for going to OC was a combination of me wanting something completely new, Rick being a little pushy in the most loving way possible and the loudest whisper from God to pursue him above everything else,” Walker said.

Each year, Odell takes high school juniors and seniors on a four-state journey to visit Lipscomb; Harding University in Searcy, Ark.; Oklahoma Christian; Lubbock Christian University in Texas; and Abilene Christian University in Texas.

That’s not to mention the West-Ark church’s separate yearly expedition to the Soul Quest summer camp at York College in Nebraska.

Odell, a 1984 graduate of Oklahoma Christian, believes in Christian higher education.

Why?

It’s not, he said, that he discounts the outstanding campus ministries that nurture souls at some state universities.

Rather, it’s that he has witnessed the value of a faith-based learning environment in helping many young people grow as disciples.

First, though, he must persuade potential students to set foot on a Christian university campus.

“If you get them on campus,” Odell said, “then kids can see themselves there.”

Declining ‘brand loyalty’

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

In the 21st century, those universities have seen a 55 percent overall decline in the total number of first-time freshmen who give their religious affiliation as “Church of Christ.”

In fall 2000, 4,411 such students represented 66 percent of the 6,643 total first-time freshmen at those institutions.

Contrast those figures with fall 2018: The 2,004 such students comprised 38 percent of 5,234 total first-time freshmen.

The downward trend coincides with a general membership decline in Churches of Christ: The total number of men, women and children in U.S. pews has shrunk by more than 200,000 — down from 1,645,645 in 2000 to 1,442,285 in the latest online estimate — according to a national directory published by 21st Century Christian.

“The 2018 data presents an extremely difficult picture for any president or chief recruitment officer whose desire is to maintain an effective recruitment strategy from this religious affiliation,” Hebert wrote in a report to Christian university presidents.

Universities associated with Churches of Christ at one time benefitted from “brand loyalty” from congregations, church leaders and alumni who’d encourage young people to go to a university associated with the fellowship, Hebert pointed out.

But that has changed, he told the presidents: “The C-of-C enrollment data revealing declining numbers of C-of-C enrollees in affiliated institutions suggests that the era of brand loyalty has substantively diminished from what it once was.”

Declines at most universities

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

A separate Christian Chronicle survey found declines in freshman enrollment — some steep — this school year at most universities associated with Churches of Christ.

Freshman enrollment fell 38 percent at Ohio Valley University in Vienna, W.Va., 31 percent at Rochester College in Rochester Hills, Mich., 20 percent at Crowley’s Ridge College in Paragould, Ark., 18 percent at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., and 16 percent at York.

“Leadership changes at the university had an impact on enrollment,” said Lindsay Cole, director of student services at Ohio Valley, where the proportion of freshmen who identify with Churches of Christ fell to 17 percent in fall 2018, down from 27 percent in fall 2017.

“Additionally, higher education attendance was down regionally,” Cole added. “The university is seeking to strengthen our brand to increase enrollment for the upcoming fall 2019 semester.”

Multiple factors influence enrollment trends, from higher education competition to concerns about student debt to marginalization of the need for a college degree, said Keith Mock, Faulkner’s vice president for enrollment management.

“The undeniable focus for families and prospective students is on academics and jobs after graduating,” Mock said. “Our Christian colleges and universities have to promote their academic prowess in a way that sets them in a position of market strength among their competitors.”

Faulkner’s percentage of on-campus students from Churches of Christ has remained stable in recent years, Mock said, making up an average of 42 percent of that population.

“The overall percentage of freshman Church of Christ students enrolling this fall is about 5 percent lower than last year, so we are seeing that we are appealing to a more religiously diverse population,” he said, declining to give specific figures for those years.

Officials with Rochester, Crowley’s Ridge and York declined to comment
on enrollment trends.

Elsewhere, freshman enrollment declined 7 percent at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., 6 percent at Harding, 5 percent at Lubbock Christian, 5 percent at Abilene Christian and 2 percent at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn.

Two of those universities — Freed-Hardeman and Harding — said they actually increased their proportion of students who identify with Churches of Christ. That figure rose to 85 percent at Freed-Hardeman, up from 80 percent a year ago. At Harding, it climbed to 72 percent, up from 70 percent a year ago.

“Our environment on campus and commitment to our mission and Church of Christ heritage have certainly influenced our high percentage of Church of Christ students,” said Dave Clouse, Freed-Hardeman’s vice president for community engagement.

Jana Rucker, Harding’s vice president for university communications and enrollment, said: “Certainly, the overall trends in higher ed enrollment impacted Harding, as they did many other schools among and outside our sister schools.”

But Rucker added: “I strongly believe we can counter the trends by clearly communicating the benefits of a Christian education that come with our academic strength. My prayer is that our congregations and families will see our value and encourage their high school students to choose a Christian school.”

At Lubbock Christian, Warren McNeill, vice president for public relations and marketing, said he’s optimistic about the future despite “a weakening of the once widely held consensus about the value of a college degree.”

“We have witnessed over time a downward trend of students coming to us from Churches of Christ,” McNeill said. “And more specifically, we are increasingly challenged to recruit students who identify with the Churches of Christ in an era when rural churches are declining and aging. As a Christ-centered, academic community of learners, we remain committed to our fellowship and its young people.”

Tamara Long, vice president for enrollment management at Abilene Christian, noted that expanded graduate and professional programs have helped that university increase overall enrollment four years in a row.

As for the decline in the number of students who identify with Churches of Christ, she said, “Data is challenging to track, as a number of congregations in our fellowship have changed their name, which affects how students self-identify their religious affiliation. A growing number are choosing ‘Christian’ or ‘non-denominational’ rather than ‘Church of Christ.’”

Krissy Collins, dean of enrollment management at Pepperdine, said: “While the decline in the size and number of Churches of Christ nationwide makes the recruitment process more difficult, we are encouraged by the quality of Church of Christ students who enroll at Pepperdine. ... We remain confident that our Church of Christ students play a critical and valuable role in our diverse campus community.”

Risa Forrester, Oklahoma Christian’s chief communications officer, attributed a bump in freshman enrollment last year to a special circumstance: the launch of an intercollegiate swimming program.

“This year’s number was closer to our typical average freshman number,” Forrester said.

A declining number of international students, particularly at the graduate level, resulted in an overall enrollment decline this fall for Oklahoma Christian, she said. International student enrollment is down across the board at U.S. universities, according to Inside Higher Ed.

Lipscomb officials declined to comment on its 4 percent increase in freshman enrollment.

Florida College in Temple Terrace, Fla., draws a significant portion of its student body from non-institutional Churches of Christ.

Its 28 percent increase in first-time freshmen was attributed to special recruitment efforts at 22 Christian summer camps across the nation.

Florida College’s overall enrollment remained flat.

“We are finding that the cost of attendance and a resistance to taking out student loans are continu-
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Associate Minister Needed - Richmond, Virginia
The Glen Allen Church of Christ, located in the suburban Richmond, Va., area, is seeking a full-time associate minister (in his 20’s-40’s) to fill a vacancy due to the retirement of our current associate who has been with the church since its beginning in 1995. This is a "general associate" position, and will likely involve participation in the church’s education, youth, outreach, and other ministries, and will also involve some preaching. The degree of emphasis given to each of these will depend on the gifts and interests of the person selected.
The Glen Allen church is a growing, loving, multi-ethnic congregation of approx. 200, located in a rapidly-growing community and served by elders, deacons, a part-time church administrator, and a pulpits minister. More information about the church is available by visiting our website: www.glenallenchurch.org.
Interested individuals should contact Pat Langston or Tommy South at:
(804) 756-2030
pat.langston@glenallenchurch.org or tsouth@glenallenchurch.org

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 annapolischuch.org/preacher for full job description.

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

Oregon Youth Minister
The Southwest Church of Christ in Tigard, Ore., is seeking a man with ministry experience. We are a congregation of 500 in a suburb of Portland. We have an active youth group of around 50 teens (grades 7-12). Deep faith in the Lord and ability to communicate the Savior’s love for all is a must, as well as proven skills in organization of classes, camps, activities, and mission travel. Beautiful Pacific Northwest, 90 minutes from the ocean and 90 minutes from the mountains! Salary will be commensurate with experience. Please email a resume to:

office@swest.org
Attention: Youth Minister Search

Mountain Community Opportunity
Tiny congregation looking for sound Christian leadership. Retirement or other support needed.

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

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE brings an associate’s degree program — and Jesus — into a Nebraska prison for women.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

YORK, Neb.

“A lot of us come here thinking there is no God,” said LaToya Ross. The 35-year-old is serving a 50- to 70-year sentence for second-degree murder, a crime she committed under the influence of methamphetamines five years ago. She won’t be eligible for parole until she’s 55.

When she came to the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women, at the west edge of the small town of York, “I didn’t see any future,” she said. Then she learned about the Second Chance Education Program offered by York College, a school associated with Churches of Christ.

“I had been in college several different times,” Ross said. “With all the distractions, I didn’t stay.”

The distractions are fewer here. Inmates aren’t even allowed cell phones in the prison. But the program’s professors see past the mug shots and rap sheets, Ross said, and treat the inmates like their students on York’s campus.

As a result, she said, “We show up hungry for knowledge.”

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECIDIVISM

On the inside, the correctional facility, complete with beige-brick dormitories and neatly manicured walkways, resembles a college campus — albeit one surrounded by 20-foot fences topped with razor wire.

Opened in 1920, the 275-bed prison is Nebraska’s only secure correctional facility for adult women, housing maximum, medium and minimum custody inmates.

In a multipurpose room at the facility’s heart — an A-frame that resembles the meeting place of many Churches of Christ — inmate students sit two to a table and study business, preparing reports on entrepreneurs. One student has chosen Joseph Gayetty, who, in 1857, marketed a product called “Gayetty’s Medicated Paper for the Water-Closet.” He’s credited with the invention of toilet paper.

Terry Seufferlein, associate professor of Bible for York College, initiated the Second Chance program — inspired by a similar program offered by Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., which also is associated with Churches of Christ.

The York program offers up to 12 students per cohort the opportunity to earn an associate’s degree through four years of part-time study. The first 11 students will graduate Aug. 14.

Since the program launched, “we have so many more opportunities now,” said student Angela Manns. When she is released in a few years, she hopes to earn a criminal justice degree and work as a paralegal.

Providing inmates with some college education reduces recidivism by 30-50 percent, according to studies cited by Seufferlein, while an associate’s degree reduces recidivism by almost two-thirds. The cost of educating an inmate is much less than the money required to prosecute and incarcerate a repeat offender.

Donors provided initial funding for the program, which in July received a $110,000 grant from Nebraska’s Department of Corrections to continue the program through 2020.

In addition to the educational and financial benefits, “in the last two years, I’ve seen a shift in our ladies. It’s hope,” Manns said. “Each of us is now looking forward to life outside these gates.”

‘YOU ARE MY AMAZING GRACE’

After the inmates became classmates, they quickly became teammates, helping each other study and complete assignments, said Bridgette Mann as she took a break after history class. The group is learning about World War II through Stephen E. Ambrose’s book “Band of Brothers.”

“We all stick together,” said Mann, who wants to be a drug and alcohol counselor and to open a homeless shelter after she’s released. “Right now we’re like a band of sisters.”

Classroom topics go far beyond history — and toilet paper. The inmates take Bible courses as part of the curriculum.

Before she enrolled, “I didn’t even know the books of the Bible,” Mann said. Now, she sees value and finds comfort in God’s Word. Another student, Seeletter Livingston, said that Bible knowledge can be an asset in prison.

“Being in this type of environment, you need something strong to stand on,” Livingston said.

Last year the students hosted a Teacher Appreciation Day for their instructors, organized by student Jennifer Kerby.

“I once was lost, but God has given me a second chance,” Kerby told the audience of York College faculty and staff, prison staff and fellow students. “You teach us faith and give me hope for my future ... You are my amazing grace.”

The feeling was mutual, said Clark Roush, professor of music, after leading the assembly in the song “Amazing Grace.” As Roush’s booming baritone swelled, many in the room wiped away tears.

“You have been an amazing grace in my own life, in my own heart,” Roush told the students. “You have changed the way that I think about things. You’ve changed my life ... and I came out here expecting it to be the other way around.”

‘YOUR MORALS CHANGE’

Ross, who came into prison hopeless, said she now finds strength in the Bible — especially the letters written by the apostle Paul from prison. It seems like every time she has a Bible study, the words speak comfort to whatever adversity she’s facing, she added.

On York College’s campus, during chapel, students’ names are read on their birthdays, including Second Chance students. That means a lot, Ross said. A few York students have even visited them for class, studying alongside them and eating lunch in the prison commissary.

“They’ll never complain about their cafeteria again,” one of the inmates chimed in.

Beyond teaching, Ross said that the professors “introduce Christ to us. They want students to understand.”

As a result, “your morals change. Your integrity changes. It ripples into the administration and other inmates.

“Doors open, windows open. Blessings just flow in.”

WEBSITE: york.edu
Since his first visit to a Dallas County jail in 1971, Buck Griffith has spent his life taking the Gospel behind bars. A minister for the Kings Crossing Church of Christ in Corpus Christi, Texas, he believes that effective prison ministry starts in the church nursery — with dedicated, nurturing volunteers who instill Christlike values into children as they grow up in the pews. That, Griffith says, is crime prevention.

In 2000 Griffith became president of NewLife Behavior Ministries, or NLBM, founded by fellow Church of Christ member H.M. Motsinger. An educator and counselor, Motsinger developed the New Life curriculum to assist inmates as they seek to change their attitudes and actions. The ministry now has about 12,000 teachers in the U.S. and impacts about 750,000 prisoners and family members per year, Griffith estimates.

In 2008, a second ministry, NewLife Behavior International, or NLBI, took on the task of training Christians around the world to work in prisons, public and private schools, Bible colleges, private universities and churches. Motsinger retired as president of NLBI in 2017. Gary Bingham now serves as president.

In 1997, Motsinger and coworker Brad Davis received the Governor’s Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award from then-Texas Gov. George W. Bush. Last year, Griffith received the same award from Gov. Greg Abbott.

In a letter to NLBM, Texas Board of Criminal Justice chairman Dale Wainwright wrote that the award honors “outstanding volunteers whose contributions assist victims of crime, enhance public safety, promote positive change in inmate behavior and help offenders get back into society.”

What sparked your interest in prison ministry?

Griffith: I was a reluctant volunteer. The church where I served as minister got a letter from a man in jail that was in for a very serious crime that had been committed in our community in Grand Prairie (Texas). I remember reading about it in the newspaper and hoping the guy got the death penalty.

I found out later that he grew up in the congregation I was preaching for. He had been in a young men’s training class, and he stood at the pulpit that I preached from. He grew up practicing how to lead prayers and singing and so forth.

He wrote us and asked for a Bible study course. He said if he died right then he knew he’d go to hell, and so I felt compelled. I still wanted him to get the death penalty, but I wanted him to have a Bible.

So I contacted a deacon in another church and offered to give him the Bible and the study course. This deacon asked me to go with him (to the prison), and I didn’t want to. But I went and ended up just getting hooked on it, seeing this guy change, and eventually he asked me to be the one that baptized him.

I really didn’t trust myself to let him back up until he quit bubbling, but I did. And then he had a friend, and I taught him and baptized him; and pretty soon we were off and running and never stopped.

We’re all transfixed by news of mass shootings. After so many years of spreading the Gospel in prisons, what perspective do you bring to that?

Griffith: I think about all the families impacted by crimes. There has got to be a lot of pain and a lot of hurting, and I think that sometimes plays into our churches. At some point in our lives, most of us have been the victims of crime — from theft to fraud to assault. So there’s kind of a built-in resistance to doing prison ministry.

On the other hand, you have a lot of people in our churches who have loved ones who are in a county jail or maybe in a state or federal prison somewhere. Crime touches all of us. It’s not isolated.

Some Churches of Christ host worship services at prisons. Others do correspondence ministry. Some bring inmates to worship. What are some best practices for our congregations?

Griffith: Obviously, the best practice would be a church that does all of those things. But every congregation can’t do all of those things, so congregations have to do what they can do.

Churches can partner to take advantage of their resources. For instance, a congregation not doing Bible correspondence courses that is going in and teaching classes and doing Sunday services in a prison can send those Bible correspondence course students to a congregation that just does Bible study by mail.

Churches should also work in crime-prevention ministry. For our congregation, that starts in nursery and cradle roll. Hopefully, that’s what we’re doing in all of our Bible classes — we’re preventing crime.

But when they get to be teenagers, and if they end up in juvie, we want to be in the juvenile detention facilities to say, “Hey, you messed up, but we still love you, and you’re still valuable to God. And we want to minister to you.”

When they are no longer a minor and they get sent to the county jail, we want to be there. If they get sentenced and they go to a state or a federal prison, we need to be there. We need to minister to their families, and we need to minister to them when they get out.

The most effective work is where...
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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NEWLIFE: Effective prison ministry involves sharing Jesus with inmates and their families

FROM PAGE 25

you track them all along the way. You never ignore them. You build a relationship with them. And whenever they are released, you follow up with them in the community and work with their families.

In Oklahoma, there’s a law that forbids contact between inmates and volunteers for six months after the inmate’s release. Do laws like that complicate prison ministry elsewhere?

Griffith: Yes. In Texas, for instance, volunteers are not supposed to make contact with inmates’ families. So what you have to do is develop a whole new group of volunteers that just works with the families. The big thing they don’t want is for you to be taking messages from the inside to the outside and from the outside to the inside. You never know when they are manipulating you to carry out a crime. You have to be careful.

Speaking of inmates’ families, you want to expand NewLife Behavior Ministries to incorporate them, right? And this is a request coming from the families?

Griffith: Both from the inmates and from the families. For instance, if I'm doing a “Managing My Anger” class with an inmate, I’ll say it would be great if you enrolled your wife, parents or significant other in this same course. When the inmates have a chance to talk on the phone or have a family visit, it’s amazing how a lot of their visitation time is taken up discussing the NewLife Behavior courses that they are taking together.

Brother Motsinger, tell us about NewLife Behavior International. It involves more than just prison ministry, right?

Motsinger: We have added country after country. We have gone to the Bible colleges, mainly in Africa, and we have trained their students to take what they’ve learned from us and share it with the churches they preach for. We encourage Bible college graduates to add teaching school to their preaching ministry. Throughout Africa, Bible is taught in public schools. So we train teachers who are already in the public schools to use our curriculum. We train church people so they can go into the schools.

One quick story: One of the guys that we trained at African Christian College (in Swaziland) went back to his native Uganda and was invited to a public school, a high school, and it was out in the boonies. He did a 12-hour seminar. At the end he offered the invitation — this is a public school building. Nineteen high school students asked to be baptized. Two high school teachers were baptized.

And then the high school principal came to the preacher. He said, “I understand what you’ve been doing here. You’ve got something that nobody else is teaching. Therefore, every Sunday you are to use our school building as your church building.”

So what started out as 22 baptisms is now 60-something. And that’s just one of the stories that we hear. We are training Christians to not only teach others but also to train them to train others. We feel this is Paul’s message to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2.

What kind of international scope does the program have now?

Motsinger: We started in South Africa in 1998 and Russia in 2000. Success in Russia was not as easy as in Africa. Still, NLBI has spread into 30 countries.

From 2008 to 2019, our 35 Certified Trainers have trained and certified just over 30,000 adults outside the U.S. to become NLBI instructors.

Our Certified Trainers still teach in public and private schools and Bible colleges, but they also train churches and church leaders, abandoned women, refugees and orphans. They train in prisons and in government programs. Mayors from multiple cities take our courses. Government officials have been trained. A nursing school uses our Bible-based curriculum.

The outcomes are tremendous life changes. In fact, NewLife Behavior International’s slogan is “Restoring Hope. Transforming Lives.”

**CALENDAR**

Jan. 17  Training Involvement Ministers. Athens Church of Christ, Athens, Tenn. travisirwin@att.net. See churchinvolvement.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@fh.edu. See fh.edu.
April 30-May 3  Pepperdine Bible Lectures. Malibu, Calif. (310) 506-4270. See pepperdine.edu/biblelectures.

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

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**Evangelist/Outreach Minister**

Southern Oaks Church of Christ, located in Chickasha, Okla., is looking for an Evangelism/Outreach minister.

Please send resume to: soakselders@att.net

Applications to be accepted until the position is filled.

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**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

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**Full-Time Student Minister - St. Louis, Missouri**

The McKnight Crossings Church of Christ in St. Louis, Missouri, is actively seeking to hire a male or female full-time Student Minister for grades 6-12 to help us meet the vision of the Milestone Family Ministry program.

The vision of the Milestone Ministry is to navigate a common path for church and home, using an intentional team approach to encourage MX children and parents, to grow in delighting in God, encouraging one another, and serving eagerly, from ages 0-18.

The primary focus of this position is leading the Student Ministry while supporting the growth of the entire ministry.

Questions should be directed to: Eric McPherson, emcperson@cfserve.org

Apply online by going to McKnightCrossings.org/teens

Applications Due: January 31

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**Preacher / Evangelist**

The Cleveland, Oklahoma, Church of Christ is looking for a married man with children that is very strong in evangelism. If interested, please forward your resume to:

mmillerok@gmail.com

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**Full-time Children and Family Minister - St. Louis, Missouri**

The McKnight Crossings Church of Christ is actively seeking to hire a male or female full-time Children and Family Minister to work one-half time with grades 0-5 and one-half time with Students grades 6-12 to help us meet the vision of the Milestone Family Ministry program.

The vision of the Milestone Ministry is to navigate a common path for church and home, using an intentional team approach to encourage MX children and parents, to grow in delighting in God, encouraging one another, and serving eagerly, from ages 0-18.

The primary focus of this position is to lead the Kids Crossings Ministry (0-5th grade), while supporting the growth of the 6-12th ministry through building spiritually encouraging relationships with the teens and their families.

Questions should be directed to: Eric McPherson, emcperson@cfserve.org

Apply online by going to McKnightCrossings.org/teens

Applications Due: January 31

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**Full-time Minister Needed**

The Church of Christ in Port Angeles, Wash., is seeking a full-time minister to feed the flock and help us grow. Located in the beautiful Pacific Northwest, we are an older group of approximately 50 Christians seeking someone to help us add to our family, both in numbers and spirit. We will be supportive and open to new approaches and new blood. If you are ready to begin as if you are planting a new church, we want to talk to you. Please send your response to:

Gloria Mandery
gloriamandery@hotmail.com

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**Minister 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

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**Pepperdine University, Natural Science Division**

Pepperdine University’s Seaver College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, located in Malibu, California, invites applications for appointments with the rank of Assistant Visiting Professor in the Natural Sciences. The Natural Science Division offers these positions for the 2019-2020 academic year. If you are seeking a faculty appointment at a premier Christian university committed to the highest standards of undergraduate education, then we encourage you to apply. Review of applications will begin on January 30, 2019 and continue until the position is filled.

Any inquiries about these positions should be sent to: Dr. Jay Brewster, Divisional Dean of Natural Sciences, Jay.Brewster@pepperdine.edu.

Full details for each position are available at the following URLs:

Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology: https://apply.interfolio.com/58214;
Visiting Assistant Professor of Mathematics: https://apply.interfolio.com/58204;
Visiting Assistant Professor of Sports Medicine: https://apply.interfolio.com/55589

Pepperdine University is an Equal Opportunity Employer affiliated with the Churches of Christ.
College of Arts and Sciences  
Dr. Gregory Straughn, Dean, ACU Box 29210, Abilene, Texas 79699-9210

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

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

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

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

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.
Birthday
90th: Mazie Fowler, Dec. 29, Poplar Bluff, Mo.

Anniversary
Ralph and Joyce Perry
65 years
Ralph Perry married Joyce Dale on Saturday, Aug. 15, 1953, at Strathmore Church of Christ in Toronto, Canada. They built their relationship on the foundation of serving God together. Five children, 14 grandchildren and currently four great-grandchildren later, it is a love story worth celebrating and a couple four great-grandchildren later, it is a love story worth celebrating and a couple.

Memorials
Ruth Summitt Geer
(1924-2018)
Ruth (Summitt) Geer, the daughter of Chester A. Summitt and Kati O. (Darden) Summitt, was born on July 1, 1924, in Cardwell, Mo. She died on Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2018, at the age of 94 years, four months, and 19 days.

Ruth was preceded in death by her husband, Carter, on April 1, 2001; her brothers, Herbert, Sherrill, and Moody Summitt; and her sister, Glendola Harrison.

Ruth was a life-long member of the Church of Christ and attended Harding University where she met Carter. She taught elementary school for several years at Crowley’s Ridge Academy in Paragould, Ark., and later served for several years as administrative secretary at Crowley’s Ridge College in Paragould. She and Carter served as missionaries in Tanzania and Kenya for the 18 years prior to his death. She then moved to Searcy, Ark., for a few years and later moved in with Ruthie (her daughter) and Ray Deck in Mascoutah, Ill., until she entered a health care facility in 2014. In July of this year she moved to the health care facility in Ash Grove where she was until her death.

Ruth was a hard worker. Every evening after dinner, she would make her way to the sewing machine where she sewed for several hours each night, making most of her daughters’ clothes. She moved 15-16 times during her married life and was always successful in making any house a home. She will probably be most remembered for her sense of humor. She seemed to find something funny in any situation. Even in the last few months, she was renowned for her smile as people passed by in the health care facility. She loved the church and truly enjoyed her time as a missionary in Africa.

Ruth was preceded in death by her husband, Carter, on April 1, 2001; her brothers, Herbert, Sherrill, and Moody Summitt; and her sister, Glendola Harrison.

Edward Lee
(1931-2018) and
Earlene Stegall
(1934-2018)
Edward Lee Stegall and Earlene Stegall were reunited with their Lord in the year 2018. Earlene finished her work on earth on Feb. 21, 2018, eight months before Ed. She loved teaching young girls and women about God’s plan for them and made several mission trips to Jamaica. Earlene felt her calling in life was to spread the gospel, raise her children, and be a help meet to her husband. She spoke at Ladies’ Days, delighted in meeting people, and always had plenty of room at her table and beds for guests.

Ed was a farmer, teacher, deacon, elder, missionary, and minister. He performed countless weddings, funerals and baptisms. Throughout the years he worked with congregations in Borger, Fritch, and Lake Jackson, Texas. After moving to Oklahoma, his work was with the Hollis, Gould, and Vinson Churches of Christ.

Ed and Earlene were much loved and were surrounded by their children upon death. They were both buried on Oct. 27, 2018, in Gould, Okla.

They leave behind four children and spouses, 13 grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren, many of whom are Bible class teachers, missionaries, deacons — and just as Ed and Earlene would want, workers for The Lord.

Submit your wedding announcements, birth announcements, memorials or tributes to milestones@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5071. Submissions start at $25.
What it means to lead singing

YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT pitch perfect, but you can honor God with your gifts.

When one assumes the responsibility of leading congregational singing, several things are implied. Some of those are understood, and, apparently, some are not. Those things generally understood include the following: selecting how many songs will be sung, selecting which songs will be sung, selecting how the songs will be sung (which verses, volume), and selecting the order of worship (songs, prayers, scripture reading, the Lord’s Supper, the sermon).

However, there are other responsibilities that song leaders accept when agreeing to lead the congregation in song in the Lord’s church. These must not be so obvious, because there are a number of men in charge of the song service who do not practice this aspect of leading. Those responsibilities include the following:

1. Get the pitch correct: A pitching aid (pitch pipe, smartphone app, etc.) can do this. Estimates are that one in 10,000 people possesses perfect pitch, which would include starting a song on the right note without an aid. It is also a fact that most a cappella groups tend to “flat” (or drop in pitch) as the song progresses. So, a song starting lower than on pitch will be even lower by the end of the song. What is a comfortable pitch for you may not be comfortable for everyone else; there is a reason songs are pitched as they are on the printed page. The wrong pitch pulls everyone away from the words and gets them worrying about hitting the really high or low notes. It hurts the worship.

2. Get the pacing correct: Pacing — how quickly or how slowly the song is led — is determined within the first few words. Decide this ahead of time, and start the song at the pace you intended. If you are going to get it wrong, it is better to start it too quickly rather than too slowly.

3. Keep the pacing consistent throughout the song: All congregations tend to slow down as the song progresses; it is just a fact of life. If you start the song too slowly, it will only get slower; better to start too quickly than too slowly. Here are some other pointers to help with pacing:
   • Assert yourself. Keep the pace of the song as you originally intended. Be willing to “go solo” for a few words at the faster pace; the group will initially go a little silent on you, but they will immediately pick up on your attempt to renew the pace of the song. The beginning of a new verse is an easier time to accomplish this than in the middle of a verse. Most will appreciate your effort to keep up the pace.
   • Use your hand to beat the time for your pacing. Although many members seldom look away from the hymnal or the overhead regardless of how many times they have sung the song, this could help. Make the motions meaningful. Each measure has a specific number of beats; merely waving or even beating off-count is more confusing than no visual support at all.
   • Move closer to the microphone (if available) so the group can hear you. How can you lead if they cannot hear you? It makes no sense to announce the number so it can be heard and then step back from the microphone so you cannot be heard. If you cannot be heard, then you are definitely not leading.
   • Finally, singing songs too slowly hurts the worship. Singers cannot maintain their breath through a phrase and cannot, as a result, focus on the words of the song as they slog their way through a “draggy” rendition.

Leading singing is not simply getting them started and blending into the baptistry.

Ric Keaster

From prison to salvation: Surviving ‘the blast furnace’

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.

— 2 Corinthians 7:9, New King James Version

TUBUNGU, eSwatini

My life was not as easy as walking through golden roses.

It was a life full of challenges.

It was survival of the fittest.

I passed through mud, deep valleys and also through thick bushes. My motto was “Life is what you make it.”

I grew up in a family of four, and I am the last born. I was born in the year 1990 on 12 January, and I am proudly Zimbabwean.

I grew up in a village where we used to gather as young boys, playing soccer, hunting animals such as rabbits and also fishing. However, I was rude and disrespectful to all age groups. But today I thank God, for I am transformed.

I would begin my life journey when I completed my ordinary academics. It seems as if I was thrown into the blast furnace of life. I applied to many universities such as University of Zimbabwe, Bindura University, etc., but I failed to enroll due to financial challenges.

After I failed in all my ways to proceed with education, I lost all hope and I became a drug dealer. Worse still, I didn’t know anything much about being a drug dealer. So I threw myself in that deep dark pit of the drug world and ended up in prison cells.

It was in the prison that a preacher, Mr. Johnson, delivered a sermon titled “Repentance.” The message struck me at the depth of my heart, and I accepted Jesus as my personal savior within those prison walls.

After that, David, a friend of mine, introduced me to his congregation, the Church of Christ. Being part of the community of believers helped me grow in my new faith. I started spending much time praying and fasting.

Surprisingly, God’s mercy and favor penetrated my life like the drugs I was dealing. God was suddenly in control of my life with new likes, new passions and new dreams.

It was in the year 2017 when Timothy Rinopisa encouraged me to apply to study at African Christian College, and incredibly I was accepted. I am grateful to be here and looking forward with eagerness and great hope for a fruitful three years of study and growth.

Looking back on my time in the blast furnace, I see that God used those circumstances to shape me to become a vessel to evangelize and bring a message of hope to the world.

LAZARUS LIBONGO is a student at African Christian College in the southern African kingdom of eSwatini (formerly Swaziland). The 51-year-old college is associated with Churches of Christ. See our coverage of the school and videos at christianschronicle.org.
In 2019, what unites us?

Call this the Age of Division — in our politics, in our rhetoric, in our choices.

In our churches.

A year ago, in this editorial space, we asked the question, “In 2018, who are the Churches of Christ?”

We launched surveys and conducted interviews with Christian Chronicle readers across the nation. We looked at the differences among the age groups in our fellowship and the growing dichotomy between urban and rural congregations.

We talked to Christians at ever-growing mega-churches where thousands worship — and aging members at small congregations with 20 or fewer souls left in the pews.

Based on what we learned, we launched the series “Big Questions for Churches of Christ.” In 2019, we plan to continue that series.

As we look through our readers’ responses, it occurs to us that we — including those of us here at the Chronicle — focus too often on the issues that divide our fellowship, on our differences, on our grievances.

As part of our ongoing coverage, we would like to know what unites us. Is it respect for God’s Word? Do we still hear the call to restore the church of the first century? Do we share a belief in congregational autonomy? Do we still have Christ-inspired zeal to spread the Gospel at home and around the world?

And if any of us have lost these desires, what can we do to refocus on God and rekindle the flame?

Look for new surveys soon on our website, our Facebook page or in your email. Or write us a letter to share your thoughts on what you think can unite our fellowship as we begin a new year. You’ll find our contact information in the staff box on Page 4.

May all of us experience the peace that passes understanding in 2019. May we also experience spiritual growth — through rain and through sunshine, through trials and temptations, through every blessing and opportunity we find in our path. We know that in all things God is with us.

There is room for disagreement, but not regarding biblical truth

I appreciated the Views column entitled “Should we avoid controversies in the Lord’s church?” (Page 31, December) When we have disagreements, it should not be about something that is biblical fact, practice, principle, commandments or Jesus’ teaching. There is room for differences of opinion, but not regarding biblical truths.

Does not the Bible teach that there is one church? If so, why do people say “churches” when they speak of different congregations of the Lord’s church or of denominational groups? There is one church and many congregations of the Lord’s church — and many denominational groups.

When we use the word “churches” incorrectly, we only solidify the world’s concept of more than one church rather than teaching the saving truth of the one church. We teach error without realizing it.

LINDA SNEED | Borger, Texas

Milestones
(continued from page 29)

Wayne T. Hall
(1934-2018)

Wayne T. Hall, former minister in the Churches of Christ passed away Dec. 10, 2018, at Life Care Center of La Center, Ky. He held hundreds of gospel meetings during his 58-year career and touched many people’s lives in his years of ministry. He was innovative by using television and radio, and it’s estimated he preached in front of hundreds of thousands of people on TV in St. Louis, Mo., Paducah, Ky., Huntsville, Ala. and other cities.

Wayne is survived by his daughter: Teresa (Mike) Walker of Wickliffe, Ky.; son W. Tom (Tina) Hall of Bowling Green, Ky.; and son Tim (Lori) Hall of Huntsville, Ala. He is also survived by nine grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

A private family memorial will be held. Instead of flowers, contributions may be made to the Howell Hill Church of Christ. We also want to leave you with one of his favorite sayings: “Remember, your Bible is always right!”

With Appreciation

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges very generous gifts received in honor of Lynn and Joy McMillon, Don and Charlotte Wheeler, and in memory of Desinee Rose Hamilton, Ann Porter, H. A. Turney, Emmett E. Wade, and a now-closed Church of Christ in Kansas.

Minister

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

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

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

How to Apply:
Those interested in applying should mail a copy of their resume with picture and participation in the life of our church family.

Send emails to:
WOElders@westolive.com
New volume will ‘Intergenerate’ ideas for meaningful ministry among age groups

Intergenerational ministry is a popular topic among church leaders, thanks in part to books such as “Intergenerational Christian Formation” (2012) by Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross. The book spurred churches to refocus their efforts toward multiple generations together instead of keeping everyone in their age-segregated silos.

Now Allen, a professor in the College of Bible and Ministry at Lipscomb University, has released “Intergenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry,” an edited volume of material presented at a biennial conference she convenes at the Nashville, Tenn., university. This volume presents an even broader swatch of voices adding to the intergenerational conversation. Contributors include academics, practitioners and those somewhere in the middle and run the gamut between theory and practice.

Because of its nature as an edited volume of presentations, the book lacks the cohesive voice and trajectory of Allen’s foundational 2012 book. But it makes up for that with expanded looks into fresh territories.

One particularly helpful section includes four chapters with detailed looks into several ages (babies and toddlers, millennials, emerging adults and seniors) and how to bring them into intergenerational settings for ministry and service.

Wilson McCoy’s chapter also is a helpful guide, as he details some specific projects he led in his ministry setting to bring the generations together. McCoy’s observations and conclusions about what worked well, adapted from his Doctor of Ministry project, should serve as paths forward for others.

Cory Seibel’s chapter also is helpful. He points out that many congregations are multi-generational (composed of multiple generations) but are not necessarily intergenerational (bringing the generations together to worship, learn and serve). Multigenerational can happen by accident; intergenerational happens only with intentionality.

Gareth Crispin convicts us with his chapter on accommodation as it relates to intergenerational ministry. He writes, “According to 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, it is incumbent on the Christian with more knowledge to accommodate the Christian with less.” Noting that increased age generally correlates with increased knowledge, Crispin puts the onus on older Christians to be more accommodating toward younger.

Tammy Tolman details how to create “life-long, intentional, relational, holistic” environments where sustainable intergenerational ministry can happen. She recounts the overwhelmingly positive reactions of participants in some intergenerational activities she planned, and then she goes on to lay a solid theoretical foundation for others looking to mimic these kinds of settings.

Those wanting an entry point into the intergenerational conversation should start with Allen’s 2012 book. Those who are ready for some next steps should pick up “Intergenerate,” where they will find many ways to expand the conversation in their ministry settings. Allen continues to be a leading voice in the intergenerational conversation. This book and the conferences she coordinates are noteworthy contributions for which we can be thankful.

Josh Kingcade is education minister for the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City and has a Doctor of Educational Ministry degree in intergenerational education. His website is faithform.com.

Rather than divide, ‘The Hate U Give’ helps us pursue unity

‘My brother is 15. He’s about to start driving.’

I repeated these petrifying words over and over again while driving back to campus after watching “The Hate U Give.”

Tamir Rice was 12. Trayvon Martin was 17. My brother is 15.

The movie, based on the bestselling young adult novel by Angie Thomas, tells the story of Starr, a girl growing up in a black community while attending a predominantly white private school. When her close friend is shot by a police officer during a traffic stop, Starr must face the unfortunate reality of racial tensions in America.

It is a coming-of-age story I can relate to. While no one close to me has died because of police brutality, every man in my family has at least one unfortunate story concerning the police.

I do not exactly remember the first time I had the talk about police brutality. My parents gave a different version of the talk on at least a weekly basis. Any time the police stopped my father without a legitimate reason, we had the talk. Whenever my siblings and I acted up in a store, we had the talk about the potential of being accused of stealing because of our race.

When I went from the highest to the lowest reading group in the second grade, I had the talk about racial bias in education.

These talks are endless, and “The Hate U Give” provides substantial insight into the discussions many black Americans have on a daily basis. The movie does more than portray feelings associated with racial and social injustice. It provides a forum for discussion.

I cannot watch a movie like “The Hate U Give” and do nothing about it. And I do not believe I am alone in this. Since viewing the film, our university’s Black Student Union has hosted a series of discussions about the major themes.

During a time when our country denies racial tension, discussing brutality and other racial topics in a chapel setting is a great way to move toward unity. Staying educated is far better than remaining complacent — especially because “My brother is 15. He’s about to start driving.”

Elise Miller and her family worship with the McDermott Road Church of Christ in Plano, Texas. She is a sophomore at Oklahoma Christian University.
**NEW AND NOTEWORTHY**

**CHRISTMAS**


Twelve days before Christmas, the angel Gabriel is sent to a family, the Hopewells. And after he touches the lights of their Christmas tree, this family of six experiences a season that none of them could have ever imagined. In the following 11 days prior to Christmas, they and their friends are amazed and entertained as the ornaments on the tree become animated. What first begins as entertainment eventually educates them to the fact they have been called to a heavenly mission.

**CHURCH AND RACE**


Why do we still have black churches and white churches? Is that the way it should be? Is there anything that can be done about it that will be respectful of everyone’s culture? This book speaks of a church that ran away and, in the end, suggests what we can do today to improve black and white relationships.

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“A preacher told me I could not marry again. The contents of The Truth About Divorce and Remarriage, checked by the Bible, convinced me that he was mistaken.”

– Name Withheld

“This is the best book ever written on the issue...”

– Charles Hodge, author, *On the Banks of Onion Creek*

“You have really done a good job of placing before me the reader a wide, well-documented...mass of material.”

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Remembering Bush: A charge for 2019

A REPORTER LOOKS BACK on a president who, at times, was bigger than politics – and whose life challenges us to redefine success and be the people God intends for us to be.

WASHINGTON

The military brass snapped to attention as the honor guard carrying the flag-draped casket of President George Herbert Walker Bush passed by. As the procession moved down the steps of the Capitol, the military band played “My Faith Looks Up to Thee.”

For three days, the political labels, the rhetoric, the egos were silenced — replaced by dress blues, military order, dignity and humanity as America celebrated the life of our 41st president. I spent a few hours alongside my fellow Americans as they lined up for the chance to file past President Bush’s casket, placed atop the same base that once held the remains of Abraham Lincoln. I spotted Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), a member of the Congressional Black Caucus who represents the citizens of Houston — including Bush. She welcomed and hugged people from Texas as they entered the Capitol Rotunda.

Lee said that Bush helped her husband get into the same prep school that the former president had once attended.

“George Bush was a Republican who stood for Republican values,” Lee said, “but he also was a human being who believed in human dignity.”

COVERING THE BUSH WHITE HOUSE

As a young reporter, I wrote about Washington and the Bush White House for the Afro-American newspaper. I covered endless hours of congressional hearings — especially the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. I also wrote about the fall of apartheid in South Africa, the release of Nelson Mandela and the fall and rise again of D.C. Mayor Marion Barry.

There were issues of race, of course, but the Bush White House seemed bigger than race — and sometimes even bigger than politics.

During Operation Desert Storm we were a nation united, and the world was with us. I went to the Pentagon every day and asked then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, about the conflict. Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams called on me in the same way he called on reporters from The Washington Post and CNN’s Wolf Blitzer. I never felt that any of these government officials — or President Bush — saw us as enemies.

A SHARED EXPERIENCE OF LOSS

A few years later I worked for the Post as a reporter covering matters of faith. I attended countless prayer services during the administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

The words of their speeches always stuck with me, and George W. Bush’s speech about his father was no exception.

Of all the losses the elder Bush endured, whether the reelection loss to Bill Clinton (who later became his friend) or the terrible loss of his crew mates during World War II, his son said that the loss that grieved him most was the loss of his first child.

“He was sustained by the love of the Almighty and the real and enduring love of our mom. Dad always believed that one day he would hug his precious Robin again.”

Those words reminded me of the terrible sense of loss I felt, years ago, when my wife and I lost a child that never made it into this world. That shared pain cuts across lines of politics, of denomination, of theology.

I thought about the lyrics to “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” and the opportunity we all have as Christians to embrace the Gospel and point lost souls to Christ.

While life’s dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my guide.

I leave you with this excerpt from George H.W. Bush’s inaugural address in January 1989. I pray that now, 30 years after they were spoken, we will resolve in 2019 to take up our president’s charge as part of our mission to be the hands and feet of Jesus:

“We cannot hope only to leave our children a bigger car, a bigger bank account. We must hope to give them a sense of what it means to be a loyal friend, a loving parent, a citizen who leaves his home, his neighborhood and town better than he found it.

“What do we want the men and women who work with us to say when we are no longer there? That we were more driven to succeed than anyone around us? Or that we stopped to ask if a sick child had gotten better and stayed a moment there to trade a word of friendship?”

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.
Voices only: Book, chapter and verse a cappella

John P. Kee’s “Harvest” is a soulful gospel song that actually includes a book-chapter-verse reference in the lyrics. (“I read that Hebrews 11 and 1, the kind of faith to know my blessing will come.”) If you’ve never heard the song, we recommend the high-energy version from ViZion Ministries. You’ll find it in our weekly Voices only feature at christianchronicle.org. While you’re there, check our online extras, and sign up for our email newsletter to get the latest headlines delivered to your inbox.

As the year ends, we count our blessings and say thanks

What a blessing you have been to us this year. Recently, we asked you to join us as we set a goal to raise $5,000 online through our #GivingTuesday appeal.

This year, for the first time, we enlisted the help of a Facebook fundraiser — combining donations given through the social media platform with donations made through our website.

Thanks to your generosity we exceeded our goal. What was really exciting for us was the number of donors who contributed this year. More than 100 people gave online — far exceeding our total number of donors from 2017. We’re so appreciative for every one of you who took the time to be a part of this campaign.

There are a lot of good causes you can support (we report on many of them), and we know that — especially at this time of year — a lot of organizations ask for contributions. That’s why we’re so thankful for those of you who believe in and support The Christian Chronicle.

While we are overjoyed at the success of our Giving Tuesday campaign, this fundraiser actually makes up a very small portion of what it takes to keep the Chronicle going each year — covering stories, printing and delivering the news, and keeping you updated online.

If you were unable to contribute on Giving Tuesday, there’s still plenty of time to contribute to this good work. We hope you will consider making an end-of-year, tax-deductible gift — online, by phone or by mail — to help us as we move ahead, into 2019.

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

Please also pray for the work of the Chronicle and for our staff throughout the next year.

CONTACT: chellie@christianchronicle.org.

Why I support The Christian Chronicle

Living to age 93 has only strengthened Jacqueline “Jackie” Morue’s faith in Christ.

The Oklahoma native grew up in the Methodist church but started attending Churches of Christ after marrying her high school boy-friend, Don, who was a member of a Church of Christ in Maud, Okla.

Morue’s father-in-law gave her a pamphlet on baptism and encouraged her to study the Bible about salvation through baptism. After reading Acts 2:38, “I knew I was lost until I was baptized for the remission of my sins,” she said.

That night, a Wednesday, 19-year-old Morue was baptized.

Eventually, Morue and her husband moved to Abilene, Texas, where they lived for 45 years. In 2005, after her husband passed away, Morue moved to Arizona to be closer to her son, who is an elder at the Canyon Church of Christ in Phoenix, where they both currently worship. She has donated to The Christian Chronicle for 24 years.

Why do you support The Christian Chronicle?

Jesus told his apostles to go and preach the Gospel to the lost sheep of the world. That has been my goal in life, to spread the Gospel as best as I can. I’m not very good at trying to convert people personally, but since The Christian Chronicle causes people to think, I pass it on to others interested in reading it.

Do you enjoy one section the most?

I start out on the first page. There are usually three articles, and I read them first. I follow them back into the Chronicle because they’re continued in the center. I think they mean the most to me because it’s really news of interest. I read the Chronicle pretty well all the way through.

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