In border wall fight, compassion mixes with concern

By Bobby Ross Jr. | The Christian Chronicle

As a Christian, U.S. Rep. Brett Guthrie worships with a bilingual congregation that shares the Gospel with Spanish speakers and feeds the hungry without concern for immigration status.

As a congressman, the Kentucky Republican points to a definite “crisis at the border” and supports President Donald Trump’s push to build a $5.7 billion wall separating the United States from Mexico. The 54-year-old politician sees no conflict in his dual roles.

“I heard somebody say the other day, ‘We all have to have a heart for what’s going on at the border, but we also have to have a plan,’” Guthrie told The Christian Chronicle.

The sixth-term House member is one of three U.S. representatives who are members of Churches of Christ. The other two are freshman lawmakers: Rep. Lance Gooden, R-Texas, and Rep. John Rose, R-Tenn.

Both newcomers were elected in Trump-friendly districts after promising to fight illegal immigration.

“I believe that we have to protect the country, and we can still do that and be compassionate to folks,” said Gooden, 36, a member of the Rockwall and Brin Church of Christ in Terrell, Texas, east of Dallas.

“Even though we didn’t participate (in the memorial), we weren’t...” See IMMIGRATION, Page 7

‘Child of God’ goes home at 112

America’s oldest World War II vet is remembered as ‘a Texas legend’ who loved cigars and whiskey. But the Church of Christ that baptized ‘brother Overton’ at 107 knew him as a humble man of faith.

By Erik Tryggestad | The Christian Chronicle

Austin, Texas

Richard Overton was buried in a field of honor at Texas State Cemetery — a Tampa Sweet cigar in his jacket pocket and a bottle of Maker’s Mark whiskey at his side.

But that isn’t who he was, said members of the congregation where he was baptized at age 107, less than five years before his Dec. 27 death at age 112.

The nation’s oldest World War II veteran — and the oldest man in America — was a humble man of God who dressed up for Sunday worship and never smelled of whiskey, said members of the Church of Christ in Hyde Park.

“He was not a drunkard. He was not a wild guy,” said Martha Trybyszewski, who worships with the church in Austin’s historic district, just north of the University of Texas.

Instead of the cigars and whiskey in his casket, “they should’ve put a Bible in there,” said Martha Eberhard, another Hyde Park member who encouraged Overton to get baptized.

“Even at age 112, “he was a true child of God.”

The 70-member Church of Christ didn’t have a speaker at Overton’s funeral, held on the north campus of Austin’s large Shoreline Church to accommodate more than 1,000 mourners. Two of Shoreline’s pastors bookended the service, which included speeches by Austin’s mayor, a U.S. Army general and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott.

The governor, who is paralyzed below the waist, recalled how Overton once challenged him to a wheelchair race.

“Richard Overton is a Texas legend,” Abbott said. “He is an American icon. He loved this nation, and he put his faith in God Almighty above all else.”

Scattered among the audience, away from rows of seats reserved for Shoreline staff and Austin’s City Council, members of Overton’s home congregation watched. A couple of them had appeared on TV the night before at the wake — though you could only see the backs of their heads, said James Tackett, a deacon and song leader for the Hyde Park church.

“Even though we didn’t participate (in the memorial), we weren’t...” See CHILD OF GOD, Page 12
Young Men Deserve to be Inspired.

Camp Apollos seeks to train young men to be like Apollos, “an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures.” (Acts 18:24)

The Church of Christ needs young men with a dream to carry the good news to their generation. Camp Apollos equips young men to be mighty in the Word and in the ability to effectively communicate it to future generations.

Camp Apollos will be May 28-31, 2019 for young men 12-18.

Learn more at sunset.bible/apollos.
**Furlough and prayers for the unspoken**

**GLENARDEN, Md.**

Every week, a good brother in Christ reminds me to pray for those who have “unspoken prayer requests.” I know we’ve all been there. We have trouble burning in our souls, but we just can’t bring up the courage to give voice to our needs — even in the midst of our church family. I try to remember that when I preach for the Glenarden Church of Christ, which meets about 11 miles east of the U.S. Capitol.

I watch my brother, Boris Ortiz, place his hand over his heart in honor of the prayer requests we haven’t heard. I respond by doing the same.

Those unspoken requests multiplied, I imagine, as our government shutdown became historic — for all the wrong reasons.

Federal workers who live almost paycheck to paycheck worship among the Churches of Christ here. I know a lawyer who works for the D.C. Superior Court system and a broadcast engineer for Voice of America. They kept showing up for work — without pay and without complaints.

We have brethren who work government jobs they can’t talk about. (They’ve almost stopped taking my

See [UNspoken], Page 4

**Inside Story**

Hamil R. Harris

Prisoner receives Lipscomb degree, then clemency

**THE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY** ‘changed my life,’ says Tennessee inmate who killed man when she was 16.

**BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE**

Each semester, the LIFE program at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., which is associated with Churches of Christ, pairs traditional students with inmates serving time in the Tennessee Prison for Women.

Recently, the most high-profile graduate of that academic program — offered behind the prison’s locked steel doors and razor-wire perimeter — made national headlines when Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam granted her full clemency.

Cyntoia Brown will be released Aug. 7 after serving 15 years in the 2004 murder of Johnny Allen, 43, whom Brown shot to death in his bed when she was 16.

“This decision comes after careful consideration of what is a tragic and complex case,” Haslam said in a press release. “Cyntoia Brown committed, by her own admission, a horrific crime at the age of 16. Yet, imposing a life sentence on a juvenile that would require her to serve at least 51 years before being eligible for parole consideration is too harsh, especially in light of the extraordinary steps Ms. Brown has taken to rebuild her life,” added the governor, a Republican in his final days in office. “Transformation should be accompanied by hope.”

In pushing for commutation of Brown’s sentence, supporters

See [WELLS], Page 24

**Fare thee Wells**

**MEMORIAL FOR RENOWNED** evangelist and crusader R.C. Wells becomes a four-hour gospel meeting — just like he would’ve wanted, friends say.

**BY HAMIL R. HARRIS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE**

**NEW YORK**

New Yorkers streamed out of the subway at 125th and Malcolm X Boulevard on a Friday night.

Some headed toward a line of neon-lit stores and restaurants like Sylvia’s Queen of Soul Food.

But most of them, it seemed, headed toward the meeting place of the Harlem Church of Christ. The main sanctuary and overflow room were packed with ministers and people who came from across the country to celebrate the life of Roosevelt C. Wells, a tall defender of the faith who preached the Gospel for three-quarters of a century.

This was the second of two memorial services to honor Wells, who died Jan. 3 at age 84. The minister emeritus and elder of the Harlem church was a crusader for racial equality within Churches of Christ. The first service was the night before.

Even with two services, organizers knew it would be a tight squeeze.

“It was our beloved Dr. Wells’ wish that all of his final services be held in the place where he labored, where he worked, where he loved, where he baptized, where he counseled,” said the Harlem church’s minister, O.J. Shabazz, “and we are going to honor that request.”

Preachers, former students of Wells, community leaders and singers filled the humble church building for the Friday night memorial, which quickly turned into a gospel campaign.

Wells would have wanted it no other way, friends of the minister said.

See [WELLS], Page 24

Hamil R. Harris

A crowd of church members from across the U.S. gathers in Harlem to remember R.C. Wells.

Hamil R. Harris

Brown

Haslam

**Prisoner receives Lipscomb degree, then clemency**

**THE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY** ‘changed my life,’ says Tennessee inmate who killed man when she was 16.

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See [CLEMENCY], Page 22

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In pushing for commutation of Brown’s sentence, supporters
UNSPoken: In midst of shutdown, church must show that no one is ‘nonessential’

FROM PAGE 3

phone calls, afraid that I’ll quote them in The Christian Chronicle. I also have interviewed people who worship with various denominations for pieces I’ve done for other publications.

They’re all hard workers who put in the effort to get where they are. They’re proud of the work they do. It’s hard for them to ask for prayers, I think.

But I see the concern in their eyes. Little by little, their savings accounts are dwindling. They’re eating beans cooked in Crock-Pots instead of dining out. They’re asking their mortgage companies for more time.

All the while, they’re being told that they’re “nonessential.”

Nancy Clark is one of them. I talked to her for a piece I wrote for Washington City Paper.

Normally, she would have had to scramble from her job at the Department of Homeland Security to get a good seat for a Monday night revival meeting at her Baptist church in Landover, Md. Thanks to the furlough, however, she was there with time to spare.

She’s 58, and after 36 years in the government she’s been through some long shutdowns, but not this long. But she stays faithful.

“It is because of God’s grace and knowing that he is in control that I’m able to keep my peace,” she told me. Meanwhile, “I keep watching TV for the news.”

A preacher at Clark’s church told me that the congregation created a fund to assist its members and wouldn’t charge tuition for furloughed federal workers whose children attend a Christian academy connected to the church. You may have seen the story of a synagogue in Chattanooga, Tenn., donating gift cards to furloughed workers with the Transportation Security Administration.

I would love to see Churches of Christ doing the same thing, and I’m sure there are some stories out there of our congregations helping out. But I hope we can do more than handouts. I hope there’s some way we can really let these people know that they’re not “nonessential” to us — and they’re definitely not nonessential to God.

They matter. We all matter. Meanwhile, I’ll keep putting my hand over my heart, just like brother Ortiz, and asking God to answer all of our pleas — spoken and unspoken.

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who sees what is done in secret. And your Father, who knows what is done in secret, will reward you.” — Matthew 6:6

HAMIL R. HARRIS is a freelance writer who preaches for the Glenarden Church of Christ.

FROM OUR READERS

Thoughts on legalism and unity

I like the theme and focus for 2019 (“In 2019, what unites us?” Page 31, January). For those on both ends of the spectrum, I would encourage you to read “Letters to the Church” by Francis Chan.

In many ways he confirms what many churches once taught (which may be challenging to progressives).

In the same way, he challenges rigid religiosity. I think it would do both ends of the spectrum well in terms of unity.

JAMES COLLINS | Brunswick, Ga.

The only valid unity is unity with Christ. To the extent that individuals and congregations are united with Christ, they are united with each other. Anything else is superficial pseudo-unity.

The deep doctrinal divisions that now exist cannot be solved by emphasizing “the things that unite us.” Those who do not submit to the authority of Christ must be called to repentance.

There is, always has been and always will be unity among those who truly follow Christ and His teachings.

MISTY DAVISON | via Facebook

Where others see looming disaster, I see opportunity. The declining “brand loyalty” of teens enroll-

CORRECTION: A story on page 23 of the January issue contained an error due to numbers provided to The Christian Chronicle. In 2019, Oklahoma Christian University’s freshman enrollment fell 12 percent to 454.
**ALABAMA**

MERIDIANVILLE — Kiptyn Patterson is a second-grader who attends the Meridianville Church of Christ. He recently joined with a friend to collect several hundred canned goods to feed the hungry.

“We were trying to get 50,” the boy told WAFF-TV. “Well, it got over 50. We were like, ‘100 maybe.’ Then we were like, ‘200,’ and then we came to 300 and were like, ‘Oh my, this is crazy.’”

**FLORIDA**

ST. JOHNS — A new Church of Christ is being planted in fast-growing St. Johns County, which includes St. Augustine.

“Within a five-mile radius of our location, there are 80,000 people and no Churches of Christ within 15 miles,” lead minister Glenn Newton said.

The launch service for the Agape Church of Christ is scheduled for Feb. 3. The plant team includes seven families.

“This church will be missional to the core,” Newton said. “We will be a go-and-tell group of believers rather than a come-and-see group of churchgoers.”

**TENNESSEE**

WINCHESTER — With the “Great Bible Reading Challenge,” the 400-member Winchester Church of Christ is urging all its members to read through God’s word in 2019.

More than 300 members have accepted the challenge, minister Joseph Horton said.

“It’s a simple goal, but we believe it will be transformational for our people,” Horton said.

**TEXAS**

TENNESSEE CItY — After 25 years of serving this city on the Galveston Bay shoreline, the Mainland Church of Christ is closing.

Declining membership and the opportunity to sell the property to the Salvation Army prompted the decision, said Robert Goolsby, who was the church’s volunteer acting minister for 15 months.

“Church leaders decided this was best for the congregation,” Goolsby said, noting that $1.4 million for the sale will be distributed “to recipients doing God’s work throughout his kingdom.” Through “Scripture, prayer, humbleness and teamwork,” the church’s men came up with a list of roughly 35 recipients for the funds.

Other Churches of Christ remain active in Texas City, the minister said.

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“It’s a simple goal, but we believe it will be transformational for our people,” Horton said.
About 200 members of St. Louis-area congregations praised God at a recent unity service hosted by the Centreville Church of Christ, across the state line in Illinois.

Ralph P. Smith, the Centreville church’s minister for 45 years, delivered a heartfelt message on unity from Ephesians 4, said Conley Gibbs Jr., who preaches for the Gateway Community Church of Christ in St. Louis.

“In addition, there was singing, praying and great fellowship,” Gibbs said. “All the ministers joined hands in one accord. Many members stated ... that this was one of the most moving collective endeavors in years.”

Thomas Owens, a Centreville elder, said his congregation enjoyed the opportunity “to promote reconciliation and unity in our area.”

The joint assembly was a wonderful way to start a new year, said Nathaniel Cobb, minister for the Buckmaster Lane Church of Christ in Alton, Ill., and the Logan Street Church of Christ in Madison, Ill.

“Emphasizing unity and endeavoring to keep the unity — that’s what we’ve been doing and practicing,” Cobb said. “We’re hoping that it would reach other congregations and encourage efforts in their area.”

Loving one another, he added, promotes the cause of Christ.

Gibbs agreed: “Sometimes we have differences. We have different perspectives, and we can’t always see eye to eye. But we just need to love each other and let God work on our hearts.”

In April, St. Louis-area congregations will host the 75th annual Church of Christ National Lectureship.

“Area leaders “want to make sure we are coming together as we are trying to bring people together,” Gibbs said. “We want to be an example across the country of what love and unity are all about.”

While the recent service involved predominantly black churches, the Centreville congregation has a regular fellowship with the Fairview Heights Church of Christ, a predominantly white Illinois congregation. That fellowship is just one example of unity efforts across racial lines, area church leaders said.

 Ministers showing their unity are, from left, Christopher Mitchell, Conley Gibbs Jr., Leon Cobb, Roy Morgan, Rodney Weekly, Christopher Williams and Marvin Johnson.
IMMIGRATION: ‘There needs to be a system in place’

FROM PAGE 1

protecting our borders and taking care of our citizens first,” he added, as the weeks-long federal government shutdown that began Dec. 22 dragged on. “It’s the biggest issue in my district back home.”

America is “a country of immigrants,” said Rose, 53, a member of the Buffalo Valley Church of Christ in Middle Tennessee.

“We have accepted people from all around the world, allowing them to escape from oppression,” he said. “I think of Christians in the Middle East that have been oppressed in recent years.”

However, the nation has clear-cut immigration laws that must be respected and enforced, said Rose, who — like Guthrie and Gooden — pledged to forgo his congressional salary during the impasse over the border wall’s funding.

To change those laws, the Tennessee representative added, “We have a well-defined process.”

But former Rep. Brenda Jones, D-Mich., a member of the Wyoming Avenue Church of Christ in Detroit, criticized the shutdown that started during her brief tenure in Washington.

“While I support safe, secure borders, in my district there are many people who desire a pathway to citizenship,” said Jones, 59, who served the final five weeks of long-time Rep. John Conyers Jr.’s term after his resignation over sexual harassment allegations. “We must also protect the human rights of children who are forced into immigration courts as young as 2 years old without legal representation.”

FEEDING THE HUNGRY, NO QUESTIONS

The Latino ministry of the University Heights Church of Christ in Bowling Green, Ky., drew Guthrie to the downtown congregation, just a few blocks from Western Kentucky University.

The youngest of Guthrie’s three adult children, Elizabeth, speaks Spanish, he noted.

“We wanted to give her some opportunity to reach out,” the congressman said of his daughter, a student at Northwestern University in Chicago. “When she’s home, she actually attends the Spanish worship, which is really nice. She’s that fluent in it.”

At the church, Brett Guthrie is known as a kindhearted servant of God, leaders said.

“He is a very dedicated, committed young man,” minister Bob Raby said. “He attends church every time he’s in town. He participates in the worship service when he’s here, leading prayers and doing other things as well.”

The Spanish and English speakers meet separately most Sunday mornings. But the fifth Sunday morning of each month and every Sunday night, they join together to sing, pray and study the Bible in both languages.

A typical Sunday brings a combined crowd of about 65 souls, many of them immigrants and refugees, including a sizable contingent of Cubans, Raby said.

Luis Betanco, a native of León, Nicaragua, and a graduate of the Baxter Institute, a ministry training school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, preaches for the Latino group.

Betanco said the church has a food pantry that serves the poor regardless of whether they have proper government paperwork.

“We feed them no matter what because that’s what Jesus told us to do,” he said. “I’m trying to do my best. We need to love them, care for them. And I believe, when we expose people to the Gospel, they will figure it out: ‘I’ve been doing something wrong. I better fix my status or go back home.’”

Betanco, his wife, Claudia, and their two children, Daniel, 12, and Sanyt, 6, received legal authorization to move to the U.S. in 2012.

“He’s a humble man, really welcoming,” Betanco said of Guthrie, “and he and his family help the community not only as a congressman but as a Christian. His family, they have a company that employs a lot of Latinos, as well.”

Trace Die Cast, an aluminum manufacturing company founded by Guthrie’s father, Lowell, in 1988, has hired a significant number of refugees, according to a public radio report in 2017.

“The General Motors and the Fords and the GE’s, you know they brought in immigrants, and they had great internal programs to train and to also do apprenticeship programs,” Chris Guthrie, the company’s president and the congressman’s brother, told NPR’s local affiliate. “So we started doing the same thing and really worked with the local refugee center to incorporate new immigrants.”

A ‘GREAT HELP’ IN NICARAGUANS’ ASYLUM

After more than six years in the U.S., Betanco said he understands concerns over the nation’s estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants.

The Latino minister said Guthrie has no problem with legal immigration and even sent a supportive letter to help two of the Betanco family’s relatives escape the civil unrest in Nicaragua last year.

“They’re in the process of getting permanent asylum — a long process,” Betanco said of his wife’s nephews. “I would say he (Guthrie) was a great help to us.”

For his part, Guthrie said he believes in following U.S. law the way he does the Bible — as written.

“We just can’t have emergencies at the border and all kinds of chaos,” he said. “We have to have a system where people who are truly in refugee status, who are fearing for their lives, have the opportunity to come here.

“But they can’t just come here as a group and move through, like a caravan. There needs to be a system in place.”
In faith and politics, they share beliefs

THREE MEMBERS of Churches of Christ elected to U.S. House — the most in recent memory and perhaps ever.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

n 2005, a freshman congressman named Ted Poe drove his gaudy Jeep with 35-inch tires, six front floodlights and a bumper sticker proclaiming “Texas is bigger than France” to a White House meeting.

The colorful former state district judge, who earned his political science degree at Abilene Christian University in West Texas, joked that he “leaked a little oil on the president’s driveway.”

At the time, the Texas Republican was the only one of 435 U.S. House representatives who gave his religious affiliation as Church of Christ.

Poe, 70, a longtime member of the Bammel Church of Christ in Houston, didn’t seek an eighth two-year term in the 2018 midterms. He cited a desire to spend more time with his 12 grandchildren.

Nonetheless, the new, 116th Congress includes three members of Churches of Christ — the most in recent memory and perhaps ever, The Christian Chronicle determined.


“This happens to represent a greater percentage serving in the House than the percentage relative to the U.S. population,” said Neal Coates, a political scientist at Abilene Christian. “But it is also a reminder that from the local to the state to the national level, we need Christians and people of faith representing people and solving problems for this country.”

‘FAITH ON THE HILL’

The U.S. has a population of about 325.7 million. The nation’s Churches of Christ have an estimated 1,442,285 adherents — representing roughly one in every 226 Americans. That ratio would translate to two House members instead of three.

On the Senate side, John Cornyn, R-Texas, was a member of the University Avenue Church of Christ in Austin for many years. His press secretary did not respond to a request for information on his current church.

A Pew Research Center report gives his religious affiliation as nondenominational Protestant.

Overall, 88 percent of House and Senate members describe themselves as Christians, according to the Pew report. However, the report’s specific designations of members’ religious affiliations, such as Baptist, Catholic and Presbyterian, make no mention of Church of Christ.

The report, titled “Faith on the Hill,” characterizes Guthrie as a “Restorationist” because Pew categorizes Churches of Christ, along with the instrumental Christian Churches and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), as part of the broader Stone-Campbell Movement. The data comes from a survey by CQ Roll Call.

Gooden is erroneously described as a “Congregationalist” in the report because that’s how Pew labels members of the United Church of Christ, a liberal Protestant denomination.

“Unfortunately, I’m afraid I can’t say how he came to be listed as UCC in the CQ data,” said Gregory A. Smith, Pew’s associate director of research.

Meanwhile, Rose is classified as an “unspecified Protestant.”

“Rose is listed in the CQ data simply as ‘Christian,’” Smith explained. “Many members of Congress described their religion this way, and we categorize them all as Protestants whose denominational affiliation is unspecified.”

‘WHERE EVERYBODY KNEW EVERYBODY’

Guthrie, 54, attends the University Heights Church of Christ in Bowling Green, Ky. He and his wife, Beth, have three adult children: Caroline, Robby and Elizabeth. Caroline is married to Ryan Randolph.

A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., Brett Guthrie grew up in the Chisholm Hills Church of Christ in Florence, Ala. — a community with a heavy concentration of Churches of Christ.

“I went to a congregation where everybody knew everybody,” he told the Chronicle in 2017. “It’s hard to distinguish between my church life and family life. It was all together.”

In Florence, it seemed like half the people attended one Church of Christ or another, Guthrie said.

“The Churches of Christ were just so embedded in everything,” he said of his early years. “The Little League coach might be your Sunday school teacher. Like anything with faith, it affects you in a positive way.”

Guthrie developed a close bond with Poe during their time in Congress together. The two worshiped at the Brussels Church of Christ during annual visits to the Belgian capital for the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

“I hate to see him go,” Guthrie said. “We always did good things together. He’s a special guy. But he wants to get home and spend time with his grandchildren, which makes sense.”

‘MY FAITH … HAS GUIDED ME’

However, Guthrie serves with two new House members with religious and political beliefs similar to his own.

Both Gooden and Rose prevailed in conservative Republican districts that
U.S. Rep. Lance Gooden, R-Texas

Age: 36
Home congregation: Rockwall and Brin Church of Christ in Terrell, Texas
Represents: Texas' 5th Congressional District, a rural and suburban district south and east of Dallas
2018 House election: 62 percent for Gooden
2016 presidential vote in this district: 63 percent for Donald Trump


Age: 53
Home congregation: Buffalo Valley Church of Christ in Tennessee
Represents: Tennessee's 6th Congressional District, a rural district in the middle part of the state
2018 House election: 69 percent for Rose
2016 presidential vote in this district: 72 percent for Donald Trump


Age: 54
Home congregation: University Heights Church of Christ in Bowling Green, Ky.
Represents: Kentucky's 2nd Congressional District, a rural district in the west central part of the state
2018 House election: 67 percent for Guthrie
2016 presidential vote in this district: 68 percent for Donald Trump

— like the one Guthrie represents — voted overwhelmingly for President Donald Trump in the 2016 election.

Gooden, 36, grew up in the Rockwall and Brin Church of Christ in Terrell, Texas, east of Dallas, and remains a member there.

His father, Tom Ed Gooden, a former football star at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., coach football at Terrell High School.

“My faith is something that has guided me throughout my political career,” said Gooden, a former Texas state representative. He is married to Alexis and has a 1-year-old son, Liam.

Gene Glaeser, involvement minister for the Rockwall and Brin church, has known Gooden for 25 years.

As a high school senior, Gooden traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend George W. Bush’s January 2001 inauguration as president.

“He was about my size, and his mother said, ‘Do you have an overcoat that he could wear?’” Glaeser recalled. “And so he used my overcoat. … He was interested in politics at that time, so I said, ‘I’m looking forward to the day that you wear my overcoat to Washington as a congressman.’”

Gooden didn’t ask to borrow Glaeser’s overcoat for his recent swearing-in, but the congressman remains a favorite “adopted grandson” of the minister.

“He’s a very faithful Christian and has always stood up for Christian principles,” Glaeser said. “He’s our hometown boy, so to speak, for our church and for our town.”

GOD’S PLAN, IN LIFE AND POLITICS

Rose, 53, a former commissioner of agriculture for the state of Tennessee, was raised Southern Baptist.

But while dating his future wife, Chelsea, a lifelong member of Churches of Christ, he began going to worship with her.

“So some of the times when I would take him to Churches of Christ were difficult … because every now and then, a preacher might actually single out other denominations,” Chelsea Rose said. “Even when you recognize that the Church of Christ may be God’s true word … when somebody starts disparaging the church you grew up in, that’s hard to hear.”

John Rose was in his mid-40s when he married Chelsea, who is younger. Neither had been married before.

They normally attend the Buffalo Valley Church of Christ, near the family farm where Rose grew up. It’s a 20-minute drive from their home. When caring for their 1-year-old son, Guy, puts them behind schedule, they worship with the Jefferson Avenue Church of Christ, which is closer.

“Chelsea and I were both raised with the belief that we’re called to take the blessings that God gives us and use them to make things better,” Rose said, discussing how his faith informs his public service.

“We don’t want to see the country, for the first time in history, pass along a nation that’s worse off than the previous one left to us,” he added.

Chelsea Rose said she’s biased where her husband is concerned.

“But I also know when he’s stupid as well, so I could tell you about that,” she joked.

Turning more serious, she characterized John Rose as a thoughtful person who is extremely modest about his Christianity. He doesn’t want to “make a big grand noise” like the rich men who put their money in the treasury in the biblical story of the widow’s mite, she said.

“He never wants to come across as though he’s trying to be a show-off in his faith, sometimes to a fault,” Chelsea Rose said.

“He and I believe strongly that all our blessings come from God. And while we do things here and there to try and chart the course in our life — inevitably, it’s God plan that guides us to where we are and where we will go.”
Five weeks in Congress: one Christian’s journey

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

When Brenda Jones took the oath of office for her brief tenure in the U.S. House, her first words related to her faith.

“Mr. Speaker, let me start out by saying, ‘To God be the glory.’ I want to thank God for giving me this great opportunity,” the 59-year-old Michigan Democrat recalled telling former House Speaker Paul Ryan.

A member of the Wyoming Avenue Church of Christ in Detroit since 1967, Jones served the final five weeks of longtime Rep. John Conyers Jr.’s unexpired term. Conyers, a civil rights icon first elected in 1965, resigned amid an onslaught of sexual harassment allegations.

“I know that in my political life God has carried me,” said Jones, who has returned to her former role as president of the Detroit City Council.

“My faith is a strong faith in believing that the things that I have gotten, it’s not about Brenda — it’s about God giving me the opportunity,” she added. “I don’t call myself a political person. I call this my ministry to be able to help and assist the people.”

Jones won a special election to fill the remainder of Conyers’ term. However, she narrowly lost a separate Democratic primary for a full two-year term to Rashida Tlaib, a Michigan state representative who ultimately became one of the first two Muslim women ever elected to Congress.

But given that Jones came within a percentage point of defeating Tlaib, some wonder if she’ll challenge the incumbent in 2020.

“People have asked me to run for Congress again,” Jones told The Christian Chronicle. “Right now, I’m concentrating on the job that I’m doing as Detroit City Council president.”
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CHILDF OF GOD: At 107, ‘he said it was about time’ to be baptized

FROM PAGE 1

there for us; we were there for him,” Tackett said of his supercentenarian friend — a term for someone who reaches 110.

The service included snippets from a documentary filmed two years after Overton’s baptism. Although the film included footage of Overton at church, talking about his faith, the clips shown at the funeral focused on his love of cigars and butter pecan ice cream.

“I drink about four cups of coffee in the morning,” Overton said in the film. “This morning I drank about that much whiskey.” The crowd erupted in laughter.

That’s an exaggeration — and an example of Overton’s signature humor, Tackett said, adding, “His father told him that whiskey keeps your muscles tender.” So Overton put a dab in his coffee.

Overton lived a quiet, unassuming life, Tackett added, and few people seemed to pay him much attention until he passed the century mark. He never quite knew what to make of the fame his long life brought him.

“When people told him, ‘You’re a hero,’ he’d say, ‘Oh no. I saw men who were heroes. I was doing my duty,’” Tackett said.

‘WHY ME? WHY AM I STILL HERE?’

Born in Bastrop County, Texas, on May 11, 1906, Overton volunteered for the Army in 1942 and served with the 188th Aviation Engineer Battalion. The all-black unit constructed runways — sometimes behind enemy lines — to give ground troops air support as they fought on the islands of the Pacific. The unit fought in the Battle of Angaur and served in Guam and Okinawa.

Overton was driving an officer the first time he was shot at, he told Tackett. Overton pulled his jeep to one side of a dirt road, and he and the officer leaped into the brush on the other side.

The officer handed him his gun. “Here, Richard. You might need this,” the officer said.

Overton soon gained a reputation as a skilled rifleman. Seventy years later, he still remembered the sound of Japanese sniper fire — how you could hear the bullet ripping through the jungle foliage before you heard the gunshot.

He later visited Arlington National Cemetery. Seeing the countless rows of white headstones, he asked, “Why me? Why am I still here?” said his relative, Volma Overton Jr., during the funeral.

After the war Overton returned to Austin where he worked for a furniture company and built a house — and some of the furnishings in it. He was a courier in the Texas State Capitol for four governors.


As he neared 100, family members — and a few doctors — asked Overton to consider assisted living. He refused.

In 2013, Overton was honored at Arlington cemetery during a Veterans Day observance. President Barack Obama praised him for his service and marveled at his longevity.

“Today Richard still lives in the house that he built all those years ago,” Obama said. “(He) rakes his own lawn, and every Sunday he hops in his 1971 Ford truck and drives one of the nice ladies in his neighborhood to church.”

That nice lady played a vital role in his baptism.

BORN AGAIN AT 107

Earlene Love rarely missed Sunday worship with the Church of Christ at Hyde Park. Her husband, Isaac, had served as the church’s custodian. The Loves were among the congregation’s only black members.

When Isaac Love died in the early 1970s, his wife stayed with the church. She said, “These are my brothers and sisters,” church members recalled.

Earlene Love, a former nurse, lived just a few blocks away from Overton. She cooked and cleaned for him on occasion.

Then, as she neared her 90s, Overton, a man 17 years her senior, began driving her to church.

When Overton and Love came to worship, “he always carried her purse,” said Hyde Park member Bobbie Neely. “Men used to do that. They don’t do it anymore.”

When church members asked if Overton was her boyfriend, Love replied, “What, that old man?” The relationship never was romantic, Tackett said.
His wit matched his chivalry, said Martha Trybyszewski, who once told Overton, “I like your purse.”

His reply: “You should see my high heels.”

His smile was infectious, said church member Cile Hare.

“When you asked him how he was, he’d say, ‘I am 6 feet above ground, and I’m doing great,’” Hare said. “I never saw him down.”

Martha Eberhard started attending Hyde Park about seven years ago. The 74-year-old widow routinely conducts Bible studies with people she meets across Austin.

Eberhard became fast friends with Love, who told her, “I want you to help me get Richard baptized.” From then on, “when I would greet him. I told him, ‘I want you to be baptized so I can call you brother Overton,’” Eberhard said.

On a summer Sunday in 2014, after worship, Overton approached minister Ron Bell and said he was ready. About 20-30 church members, lingering in the fellowship hall, came back to the auditorium and watched as the 107-year-old man was born again.

“He said it was about time,” Bell recalled, “and that he knew he wasn’t going to get much older.”

He outlived Earlene Love. She died in 2017 at age 93. He kept coming to worship. He enjoyed the a cappella singing and the potlucks, said church member Jan Moore.

When a film crew profiled Overton for a documentary (the one from which clips were shown at his funeral) they accompanied Overton — minute by minute — through Sunday worship.

As the service concluded, Overton grabbed Moore’s husband and said, “Don’t ever get old. They follow you everywhere.”

**GOD COMES BEFORE CIGARS**

At the Texas State Cemetery, National Guard helicopters flew in missing man formation over the crowd, hundreds strong, gathered at the state cemetery where Overton was laid to rest — near the graves of “The Father of Texas” Stephen F. Austin, former governors and military heroes like “American Sniper” Chris Kyle.

Motorcycle-riding veterans held American flags as some of the attendees lit cigars in Overton’s honor. Others crowded around his grave to get a photo with their hands on his casket.

Relatives wore T-shirts that read “112 forever.” On the backs they identified their relationship to Overton — “2nd Cousin,” “3rd Cousin,” “4th Cousin.”

Two of them, Jana Dixon and Geila Phillips, talked about “Uncle Duel,” as they called him. (Neither was sure how that name came about.) They remembered stories about their grandfather and Overton, who were brothers, breaking horses and moving the family from Bastrop to Dallas during a terrible drought.

At the funeral, “they emphasized the cigars and the whiskey,” Phillips said, “but his faith was No. 1 to him.”

Dixon added, “He always talked about God first — then cigars, then the whiskey.”

**‘YOU DID THE WORK, YOU EMBRACED RICHARD’**

The day after the funeral, the Hyde Park church gathered for its regular Sunday worship.

Tackett led the hymns “Just over in the Glory Land” and “Mansion Over the Hilltop,” and church members reminisced about “brother Overton.”

Stan Reid, president of Austin Graduate School of Theology, was the guest speaker. He preached on Luke 1 and the importance of “passing the baton” of faith to the next generation of Christians.

“I know there’s some disappointment,” he said of the church’s exclusion from the memorial. “You did the work, you embraced Richard, you welcomed him here. That’s recorded in the register in heaven.

“It doesn’t matter who gets the credit, so long as God gets the glory.”

From her church pew, Cile Hare nodded in agreement with the statement — a statement that described the life of her friend Richard Overton.

“He always gave glory to God,” she said. “That was Richard.”

**SEE THE DOCUMENTARY “Mr. Overton” and additional videos at christianchronicle.org.**
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In a makeshift baptistery in the village of Palabek, Uganda, a woman gives her life to Christ at the conclusion of an annual youth meeting. Fifteen baptisms resulted from the meeting, attended by about 150 people, said minister Yope Simon. Palabek, in northern Uganda, is the temporary home of refugees from neighboring South Sudan. Simon was a technician at a medical clinic overseen by a Church of Christ in South Sudan before violence forced him to flee with his countrymen.

From refugee to redeemed in Africa

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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 February 15, 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. Allen Frazier, dean, Paul R. Carter College of Business Administration, at afrazier@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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It’s not about competition. It’s about our kids becoming future leaders of the next generation of the Church of Christ.”

Ricky Gootam gave that message to kids — and more than a few parents — during the first-ever convention of the Lads to Leaders ministry in the nation of India.

Founded a half-century ago by Jack Zorn, Lads to Leaders trains children to sing, preach, teach and memorize God’s Word. On Easter weekend participants gather at sites across the U.S. for annual conventions. The Nashville, Tenn., convention — in the heart of the Bible Belt — brings together more than 20,000 participants.

India’s demographics are quite different.

Less than three percent of the nation’s 1.3 billion souls claim Christianity as their faith. In recent years, Christians in some parts of the country have reported increased persecution for their faith by militant Hindu groups.

Nonetheless, about 530 believers from 20 Churches of Christ gathered in the southern Indian city of Kakinada for the convention, said Gootam, an Indian evangelist.

“We plan to continue and start slow and grow,” said Gootam, who worked with representatives of the Alabama-based ministry to launch the effort.

(The first Lads to Leaders convention, held on the campus of Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., drew 74 participants.)

Pictures from the India convention, posted by Gootam to social media, drew praise from members of Churches of Christ in the U.S., including David Shannon, president of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn.

“This is exciting,” Shannon said. “To see the next generation being reached for the Lord is a blessing. What great attendance!”

WEBSITE: lads2leaders.com
“Girls really need sports. I think it helps them learn a sense of teamwork. It helps them gain self-esteem and know that they are needed. In (Kenya) there’s basketball and soccer for the guys. It was nice to give the girls something that was only for them.”

Catherine Hackett, 14, on the experience of hosting a volleyball clinic for girls in Nairobi.

How have you grown in your faith since leading the clinic? “I honestly have grown so much just by being over there. In America, it is just so easy to just go to church on a Sunday or Wednesday. But there they walk miles and miles to be there, and they are so happy to be there.

“I definitely don’t take going to church for granted anymore because I saw the sacrifice those girls and guys make to get there and how happy they are to be there.”

Future plans: “I would love to continue doing mission trips. I would love to bring more and more people with us to go around the cities and spread God’s Word through things that you wouldn’t normally spread God’s word with — like sports. Those are the ways that you can really reach people.

“By doing things that they’re interested in, we can show how pretty much everything relates back to God.”

Catherine Hackett teaches the volleyball skills she’s learned at home to girls in Nairobi, Kenya.

Surrounded by volleyball skills, Catherine Hackett sits at the desk once used by her great uncle, Berkeley Hackett, at KCITI in Nairobi, Kenya.

Kenyan girls talk about volleyball and faith during Catherine Hackett’s three-day “Serving You” clinic.

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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.

The Department of Language and Literature invites applications for a full-time, French professor to join our lively department beginning in Fall 2019. Our large and collegial department includes majors in English as well as minors in English, French, German, Spanish and film. The ideal candidate will have a Ph.D. in French and be prepared to teach French language, literature and culture courses. The candidate also will be credentialed to teach first-year Spanish language courses. While a terminal degree in French is strongly preferred, applicants who are ABD or who have a master’s degree also will be considered. This is a non-tenure-track, College Faculty position and provides opportunity for promotion and multi-year contracts. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/english.

The Department of Psychology invites applications and nominations for a tenure-track professor or instructor position, beginning in Fall 2019. Depending upon degree and credentials, the candidate will be expected to teach undergraduate and graduate classes; 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. Candidates must also meet research expectations to support the university’s status as a premier comprehensive university. An earned doctorate in any field of psychology preferred; a master’s degree combined with significant teaching experience is acceptable. Information about the department is available at acu.edu/psychology.

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 and a 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.
GEORGIA AGAPE  
ATLANTA — Georgia Agape has set a goal of adding 50 new foster families by 2020, when the Christian nonprofit will mark its 50th anniversary.

“We are so excited to meet this goal and be able to serve that many more children,” executive director Racquelle Grant wrote in a recent newsletter. For more information, see www.georgiaagape.org.

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY  
MALIBU, Calif. — Pepperdine University has announced five finalists to succeed longtime President Andrew K. Benton, who announced plans last year to step down at the end of this academic year.

The finalists are:
• Jim Gash, the Pepperdine School of Law’s associate dean for strategic planning and external relations.
• Nancy Jordan, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at Louisiana State University Shreveport.
• Rick Marrs, Pepperdine’s provost and chief academic officer.
• Tim Perrin, president of Lubbock Christian University in Texas.
• Greg Sterling, dean of Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Conn.

Pepperdine’s president must be a member of a Church of Christ.

K-12 CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS  
PARK ROW CHRISTIAN ACADEMY  
FLORENCE, Ala. — Park Row Christian Academy is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The school has evolved from a Thursday school for preschoolers into a five-day-a-week preschool and elementary school.

“Our school is very special,” teacher Susan Mullins said.

For more information, see www.parkrowchristian.net.

MARS HILL BIBLE SCHOOL  
FLORENCE, Ala. — Nathan Guy has been selected as the ninth president of Mars Hills Bible School.

Guy is an associate professor in the College of Bible and Ministry at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., where he has served since 2006.

He will assume his new duties in June.

“The new position will represent a homecoming for Guy, a 1997 graduate of Mars Hill. “I know firsthand the Christian character, intellectual rigor, loving culture and rich tradition that make Mars Hill the best-kept secret in the South,” he said.

MINISTRY TRAINING  
INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY  
ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — The Russian government has recognized the Institute of Theology and Christian Ministry as a school.

“This is the first Church of Christ school in Russia from the time Churches of Christ first emerged in Russia in the early 1990s,” President Igor Egirev said.

For more than a decade, the institute had made attempts to receive official school recognition. “All these years we have been a nonprofit partnership,” Egirev said. “But finally, the door has been opened to us.”

The school still needs to receive a license for educational activity, which is a difficult process, he added.

“However, we know that everything is possible with God.”

MUTARE SCHOOL OF PREACHING  
BOR, South Sudan — Four Christians in this East African town received certificates from the Mutare School of Preaching in Zimbabwe, where they studied.

Theophilus Tanhera, a lecturer at the school, which is associated with Churches of Christ, traveled to South Sudan to present the certificates.

The graduates “are doing a splendid job for Christ and are committed to preaching and teaching around the country,” said the school’s director, Nhamo Marunga.

Freed-Hardeman students lead devo at assisted-living center  
Each Friday, students from Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., organize a half-hour period of singing and devotional thoughts for residents at the Southern Oaks assisted-living facility, said Samantha McMillan, president of the Student Government Association. The assembly is put together by Ryan Overby, the association’s spiritual life chair. McMillan said she doesn’t know when the program started, but she has been involved for three years. Freed-Hardeman is associated with Churches of Christ.
— including celebrities such as Rihanna, Kim Kardashian West and Ashley Judd — depicted her as a victim of sex trafficking. A 2011 film, "Me Facing Life: Cyntoia’s Story," details her life as a teenage runaway forced into prostitution by an abusive boyfriend.

Brown’s statement said the LIFE program — the Lipscomb Initiative for Education — “changed my life.”

“Thank you to Dr. Richard Goode and to Dr. Kate Watkins and all of you at Lipscomb University for opening up a whole new world to me,” said Brown, who has earned not only her GED certificate but also an associate’s degree from Lipscomb. “I have one course left to finish my bachelor’s degree, which I will complete in May 2019.”

In a testimonial on Lipscomb’s website, a student identified as “Cyntoia” says: “You don’t truly realize how amazing of an opportunity education is until you’ve experienced LIFE. The power of education to come in and completely overhaul your sense of self and view of the world is incredible. Watching the LIFE program transform my life and the lives of those around me has been a highlight of my life. The Lipscomb Initiative for Education is truly a life altering experience and you haven’t experienced education until you’ve experienced L.I.F.E.”

Goode — a Lipscomb professor and the LIFE program’s founder — said the classes Lipscomb offers behind prison walls breathe freedom and opportunity into students’ lives.

“If we’re going to take the story of the Gospel seriously, grace means second chances,” he told The Christian Chronicle in 2014.

In his statement, Tennessee’s governor also cited Brown’s academic work through Lipscomb and added, “Numerous Department of Corrections employees and volunteers attest to her extraordinary personal transformation while incarcerated, which will allow her to be a positive influence on the community upon release.”

Haslam’s decision thrilled Audra Barton Hensley, 26, a Lipscomb graduate who got to know Brown in 2010 while taking an Introduction to Psychology class with her and other inmates.

“I’m overwhelmed with joy,” said Hensley, who recalled how much work Brown and other inmates put into their studies compared to the regular Lipscomb students, who sometimes finished assignments while carpooling to the prison.

“I think it was really nice for us all to just come from different places but to have something we could talk about together,” added Hensley, now a programmer analyst for Genesco Inc., a Nashville-based specialty retailer. “We could all share. We could all talk about God together.”

Under the commutation granted by the governor, Brown will be on supervised parole for 10 years. She will be subject to a release plan that includes conditions such as employment, education, counseling and community engagement.

Charles Robinson, a detective who investigated Allen’s murder in August 2004, wrote Haslam in 2017, arguing against clemency. A Facebook group defending Allen also objected to Brown receiving clemency. They say Allen took Brown home out of compassion because she had no place to stay and that he was killed in a robbery.

Brown “lit up with a joy like I’ve never seen before” when informed of Haslam’s clemency decision, said Kathy Sinback, a juvenile court administrator who acted as Brown’s first public defender.

“I've known Cyntoia since the day after she was arrested, and I've never seen the peace and joy that I saw today,” Sinback said. “There was overwhelming gratitude toward her attorneys and mostly a lot of talk about her faith and how people who have believed in her and supported her and encouraged her in her faith were instrumental in getting her to this day.”
Milestones

Memorials

Harold G. Taylor
1930-2018

Harold was born Dec. 5, 1930, and passed from this life on Dec. 13, 2018. He spent his entire adult life preaching publicly, teaching person to person and shepherding his family and the congregations of Churches of Christ that he served.

Harold was born in Salem, Indiana, graduated from David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tenn., and was married to his beloved Betty for 63 years until her passing on March 11, 2016.

For over six decades, Harold devoted himself to the cause of Christ. He served churches in Indiana and Ohio before coming to Texas in 1966. He preached for the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock, Garden Oaks Church of Christ in Houston, Sunset Church of Christ in Dallas and Walnut Hill Church of Christ in Dallas. He was the founding minister and an elder of the Lewisville Church of Christ in Lewisville, Texas. He spent 15 years conducting seminars for churches in areas of church growth, leadership and evangelism under the oversight of the West Erwin Church of Christ inTyler. He preached in 36 states and 15 foreign countries. He authored several books on leadership and evangelism. Harold served as the editor of Christian Family Magazine and served as a trustee of the Bell Trust Foundation for 25 years. Harold loved the work of Heritage Christian University in Florence, Ala., and served as a trustee for decades.

Harold is survived by a grateful family of three grown children: Teresa (John) Scott, Greg (Paula) Taylor, and Brad (Cathy) Taylor. His grandchildren feel blessed and abundantly loved by the patriarch of their family: Shane Scott, Lindsay Scott Simmons, Kenny Taylor, Trevor Taylor, Cole Taylor, Trace Taylor and Chandler Taylor Cooksey. The nine precious great-grandchildren are Drew, Briana, Mia, J.T., Zane, Landry, Zeke, Baron and Carter.

A man of big personality, big voice, big love and big faith is both mourned yet celebrated by his family and thousands whom he taught and pointed to the One. Harold served loyally.

Elijah Nevan Clark
2004-2018

Elijah Nevan Clark, 14, of Walker, W.Va., went to his heavenly home on Sept. 24, 2018, at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, from a very rare form of brain cancer.

He was born on March 7, 2004, in Parkersburg, W.Va., to Roy and Karen Carpenter Clark. He was a student at Hamilton Middle School, where he played trumpet in the band. He was a member of Sunrise Church of Christ where he liked to lead singing. He also loved theater and performed in many musical productions at the Actors’ Guild of Parkersburg. Eli loved singing, acting, playing keyboard and pop music, and he was an avid swimmer. Eli loved making people laugh. Even at his most trying times, he still had his tremendous sense of humor.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by: his two brothers, Caleb and Josiah, both of the home; maternal grandparents, Danny and Tennie Carpenter; and paternal grandparents Roy (Grand Ole Opry member and host of television’s ‘Hee Haw’) and Barbara Clark; and many aunts, uncles and cousins who loved him dearly.

Eli inspired people all over the world with his bravery and wit. He had two favorite sayings which were “I love you more,” and “A stranger is only a friend you haven’t met yet.”

You can follow Eli’s story on Facebook at #elisstrong.

With Appreciation

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges very generous gifts received in honor of Lynn and Joy McMullen, Bill and Marilyn Simpson, and in memory of Don and Ann Engle, Dr. William J. Teague of ACU, and Bill Willis.

Submit your wedding announcements, birth announcements, memorials or tributes to milestones@christianchronicle.org or call (405) 425-5071.
WELLS: ‘He was a soldier, and he was God’s man’

FROM PAGE 3

“Let me sound my trumpet!” boomed Eugene Lawton, who ministers across the Hudson River for the Newark Church of Christ in New Jersey. “When God needed someone to evangelize people in New York City and turn things upside down, he found Roosevelt and wife, Dorothy Wells.”

Lawton, 80, and Wells participated in efforts to promote racial unity, including a meeting in Atlanta among black and white ministers in the turbulent summer of 1968.

“He was a soldier, and he was God’s man,” Lawton said of his friend. “His mission was to evangelize, to emancipate. His mission was to educate. His mission was to empower families to reach their full potential. ... If you were baptized by Roosevelt Wells, say ‘Amen!’”

The packed room reverberated with amens.

A PREACHER FROM AGE 10

“Can anything good come out of Waco?” joked Ruth Wyrick, Wells’ sister, as she read a letter of tribute to her brother, who was born March 8, 1933, and grew up in the Eighth Street Church of Christ in Waco, Texas. Their mother was widowed when they were young, Wyrick said, and “for so long it was my mother, my brother Roosevelt and me.”

Wells was baptized at age 9. Only a year later, he started preaching.

“Other than throwing a newspaper as a boy, he’s been a preacher,” Wyrick said, “And he was a mighty one at that.”

In Waco, the young Wells caught the attention of R.N. Hogan, a minister and church planter in Texas and California, who asked him to read Scripture at gospel meetings.

Another minister, J.S. Winston, served as a mentor for Wells and encouraged him to enroll at the Nashville Christian Institute in Tennessee, a preparatory school for African-American youths associated with Churches of Christ. There, Wells studied under Marshall Keeble, the African-American evangelist who brought an estimated 30,000 souls to Jesus in his 71-year ministry career.

But Wells’ time at the institute was short-lived. An illness in his family sent him back to Texas, where he graduated from high school before earning a degree from Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, the only historically black college associated with Churches of Christ. There he met his wife. Later, when his sister married Deacon Wyrick, Wells walked her down the aisle.

Wells also earned degrees from Midwestern Theological Seminary and Temple Theological Seminary.

Wells’ first ministry assignment was in Okmulgee, Okla. He later preached in Pontiac, Mich., and his travels took him to pulpits in Jamaica, Los Angeles, Arkansas, Florida and Virginia. Wherever he preached, he also trained ministers.

In 1965 he began preaching for the Harlem church, where he served as minister until 2000.

Throughout his ministry, his sister said, “He only spoke the truth and God’s love.”

PREACHER WITH ‘A TENDER HEART’

All of Harlem, it seemed, was grieving for Wells, one family member said.

The crowd that gathered for the four-hour Friday night service was a mix of faces black and white, some wearing fur coats and others clad in tennis shoes. Some came in black suits and others in leather pants.

It was a testament, friends said, to Wells’ ability to minister to people from all walks of life.

The night before, a slate of ministers from predominantly black Churches of Christ across the nation offered tributes to Wells. Daniel Harrison of the Chatham-Avalon Church of Christ in Chicago led the event, which included remarks from:

- Walter Maxwell of the Roosevelt-Freeport Church of Christ in New York, who spoke on behalf of ministers from the northeastern U.S.
- John Dansby, chair of Southwestern Christian College’s board, who spoke about Wells as an educator.
- Andrew Hairston, longtime minister for the Simpson Street Church of Christ in Atlanta, who spoke about Wells in terms of missionary work.

In addition to his fame among Churches of Christ, Wells was known by public figures in Harlem, including Malcolm X and former New York congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr.

Wells “had an air about him” that projected importance, said Billy Washington, minister for the New Golden Heights Church of Christ in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., “but Roosevelt had a tender heart. ... He was a stalwart child of God. He was a soldier, and he was God’s man.”

MENTORS FOR MINISTERS AND SINGERS

Jason Walker and Chris Turner took turns leading songs. Turner remembered traveling with Wells to gospel meetings far beyond the borough of Manhattan.

“I was blessed to be with him in Bermuda and in Jamaica,” Turner said. “I was studying with a young man, and I remember how he placed his hand on my shoulder when we baptized that young man.”

Wells also served as a mentor for Richard Price, who worked with the Harlem church for a decade before he became minister for the North Green Street Church of Christ in Tupelo, Miss.
**Minister I.V. White dies at 88**

**ABBEVILLE, S.C. —** In 1959, I.V. White left his job at the Packard Motor Car Co. in Detroit and moved to this small Southern town to preach. The Church of Christ promised him $5 a week, but it took the congregation some time to deliver on that promise, he recalled.

Nonetheless, he stayed with the Haigler Street Church of Christ for 60 years, serving as minister and elder. White, 88, died Jan. 15.

He was “an astute Bible student and dynamic preacher who captivated audiences with his profound simplicity and stunning wit,” said Bryan C. Jones, minister for the Graceview Church of Christ in Anderson, S.C.

White baptized “scores of believers into Christ, converted generations of families to Christ,” Jones said. “In one sermon he baptized over 30 believers with 60 responses to his message. He also trained and influenced many young preachers, including myself, and planted several churches throughout the Southeast that are still standing today.”

**Carl Mitchell, missionary to Italy and Harding Bible dean, dies at 92**

**MESQUITE, Texas —** Churches of Christ across the U.S. and Europe mourned the Dec. 19 death of Carl Mitchell. The World War II veteran, who served as a missionary for 18 years in Italy, was 92.

Mitchell worked in higher education for more than 40 years. At Harding University in Searcy, Ark., he was dean of the College of Bible and Religion. Before his tenure at Harding, he was a professor and administrator at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.

“He was an astute Bible student and dynamic preacher who captivated audiences with his profound simplicity and stunning wit,” said Bryan C. Jones, minister for the Graceview Church of Christ in Anderson, S.C.

White baptized “scores of believers into Christ, converted generations of families to Christ,” Jones said. “In one sermon he baptized over 30 believers with 60 responses to his message. He also trained and influenced many young preachers, including myself, and planted several churches throughout the Southeast that are still standing today.”
Job Listings

Classifieds start at $325; discounts where applicable.
Contact Tonya Patton at: tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org.
Deadline for next two issues: Feb. 8 and March 8.
Visit our online listings at christianchronicle.org/classifieds.

Minister Wanted - Ypsilanti, Mich.
The Ypsilanti Church of Christ is seeking to fill our vacant minister position; this includes pulpit, class and evangelistic duties. We are a diverse congregation with a current average attendance of 120.
If you desire to be considered for this position, please submit your resume with three sermons (audio and/or video) to:
ypsicofc@gmail.com
For more information, contact:
Bob Bowen at (734) 482-6213.

Minister - Atlanta, Georgia
The Camp Creek Church of Christ is seeking a full-time minister due to the retirement of the current minister. The position requires 5-7 years of experience as a minister or associate minister for a congregation of 200 or more members. Candidate must have a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in a related field from an accredited college, university (preferably Christian) or school of preaching and formal training.
Camp Creek is a well-established 400-member congregation located in Atlanta, Georgia. We invite you to visit our website at www.campcreekcoc.org to learn more about us and get further details on this exceptional opportunity.
To apply, send a resume, three professional references and an audio/video link to a recent sermon/message to:
Campcreekinfo@gmail.com

Church of Christ on West Olive
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 10 years of experience. He should be of strong personal faith and be doctrinally sound and well grounded in the Scriptures. He should have an evangelistic heart to share the Gospel with those who are lost.
Principal Responsibilities: Responsibilities of this position include preaching, teaching and participation in the life of our church family.
How to Apply:
Those interested in applying should mail a copy of their resume with picture and at least three references to the attention of:
West Olive Church of Christ
Attn: Elders
10935 W Olive Ave
Peoria, AZ 85345
Send emails to:
WO Elders at westolive.com

Full-Time Family Life Minister - Malibu, Calif.
The University Church of Christ seeks a full-time family life minister to begin in summer 2019. This individual should be an active member of the Churches of Christ. She or he would develop and lead a program that shepherds the children of the church from birth through high school while intersecting with Pepperdine University’s campus ministry. This individual would also minister to the needs of families within our congregation and seek opportunities to welcome and serve new families within Malibu and the surrounding communities. Those interested in applying should send the following documents to the email below: (1) a resume, (2) references, (3) a statement of faith, and (4) a vision for family life ministry.
Contact: church@pepperdine.edu
Attn: Family Life Minister Search
Applications and supportive materials must be received by March 1, 2019.

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

Bible Chair Director
Opportunity to impact college students for the cause of Christ. The Church of Christ Bible Chair has a position open for Bible Chair Director at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton, Okla. We have a core group of young Christians needing leadership as well as a campus full of students needing Christ. Are you up to the challenge?
(918) 448-8933
michael.williams@bpx.com

Full-Time Pulpit Minister Search - Suitland, Maryland
The Suitland Road Church of Christ is currently seeking to fill the position of a full-time pulpit minister. Our location is in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. The ideal candidate should be energetic with a commitment to the cause of Christ. The Church of Christ Bible Chair has a position open for Bible Chair Director at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton, Okla. We have a core group of young Christians needing leadership as well as a campus full of students needing Christ. Are you up to the challenge?
Send emails to:
Resumes@suitlandroadcoc.org
The church must break its ‘Eerie Silence’

BY HAMIL R. HARRIS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

What bothers Ammar Saheli most is what Churches of Christ aren’t saying.

That’s why the 48-year-old minister penned “Eerie Silence” (WestBow Press, 2018), a raw assessment of race relations in churches and other institutions 50 years after the turbulent events of the late 1960s. He described the book as an urgent plea for people of faith to speak out against injustice and to “truly embrace the radical love of Jesus that protects and cherishes all of humanity.”

Saheli grew up in the Uptown Church of Christ in San Francisco. He earned a bachelor’s in psychology and a master’s in marriage and family therapy from San Francisco State before completing a doctorate in international and multicultural education at the University of San Francisco. For the past 18 years, he has served as minister for the West Oakland Church of Christ.

He is director of student support services for the San Lorenzo Unified School District and teaches at San Francisco State. He is the founder and CEO of Saheli Educational Consulting.

Saheli wrote “Eerie Silence” because, “like the prophet Jeremiah, the traumatic reaction to silence ballooned within me,” he said, “like a fire shut up in my bones.”

Some of us see Christian ministry and social justice as separate concepts — sometimes even opposed to each other. You link them. How did that come about?

My parents were members of the church when I was born, so my whole orientation to theology and to Scripture is through the Church of Christ. Going through my formal education, I was immediately connected to social justice. Having a biblical world view, I was compelled to take social justice concepts and find out if they were based in Scripture.

I looked at the ministry of Jesus, at how God dealt with Israel in terms of their enslavement, their bondage in Egypt. I studied how God dealt with his people, how God delivered them and told them to never forget their bondage, never forget their deliverance.

Thinking about that from an African-American perspective, people in this nation have also been people enslaved, people in bondage. What does the Gospel have to say?

You can’t tell me to forget all of the things my people and my ancestors went through. That has to be remembered, and through that process I can focus on God’s deliverance as well.

How do you see the ministry of Jesus — and churches today — addressing social wrongs?

As I continued to grow, I started to question more and more — really trying to see how the ministry of Jesus deals with oppression. How did Jesus react to social justice, to marginalization, to racism?

Jesus was concerned about the marginalized. Jesus was concerned about the oppressed and the least of these. Yet today in the church we can be silent on these issues. We can respond to natural disasters, but when it comes to tragedies with a racial component, we can’t handle that.

What I see in Scripture is that there is room for me to be an absolute Christian and a social justice advocate at the same time. I am moved by the Gospel of Jesus Christ because he was concerned about the children, concerned about the oppressed.

God does not just want us spiritually saved, He wants us psychologically, ethnically, racially and spiritually saved.

Chances of Christ in the U.S. today seem more aware than in years past of the need for racial reconciliation. Why is that?

The Church of Christ is in decline. When we go back to 1906, we start looking at our data moving forward, and around 2006 you see it starting to decline, and it’s declining every year thereafter. We are losing congregations every year.

Because the church is declining, you can see things more clearly. In the past because the house was full and we still had all of these problems, nothing was done because we were satisfied with our level of attendance. What we see now has always been in play.

And you hope that your book will help people see these problems. How do you think your words will be received by fellow Christians?

“Eerie Silence” was birthed out of pain — a pain related to racial avoidance, denial and silence in churches, schools, universities, communities, families and the judicial system.

I think that many people — from a church perspective — will struggle with this book on many levels. I discuss how American Christians have learned to get along by operating in a type of cognitive dissonance — simultaneously holding contradictory beliefs. You see racial injustice and act like you don’t.

With social justice, someone always has to step up and speak despite the pain, despite the ridicule.

You said this was a painful book to write. Please explain.

If you speak on racial injustice, you set yourself up for critics who claim you are not appreciative of the freedom you have in America. In the course of writing this book, I’ve had at least one friend on social media claim that I “hate America.”

As an African-American, it can be infuriating and humiliating — the pressure to conform to standards that do not affirm my humanity. I am being told implicitly I need to fit into a box. This happens even in church settings.

Ammar Saheli
West Oakland Church of Christ in California

I studied how God dealt with his people, how God delivered them and told them to never forget their bondage, never forget their deliverance. ... You can’t tell me to forget all of the things my people and my ancestors went through.'
Faculty Position – Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Lipscomb University seeks an outstanding teacher and scientist to join the departmental faculty, fall semester, 2019. Exceptionally well-qualified individuals in all areas of chemistry will be considered. The department has the primary responsibility for the instruction of students majoring in biochemistry and chemistry as well as the preparation of students for careers in health care fields and engineering. The successful applicant will be expected to contribute to the teaching of general chemistry and upper division courses, and also to pursue research with undergraduate students. The department has been approved by the Committee on Professional Training of the American Chemical Society since 1971. An earned doctorate in chemistry or biochemistry from a recognized, accredited university is required. Academic rank will be commensurate with the candidate's experience.

Applicants should submit a current Curriculum Vitae, letter of interest, and the name and contact information for three professional references to Professor Kent Clinger, Department Chair, via electronic mail at kent.clinger@lipscomb.edu.

Lipscomb University is a private, Christian university associated with the fellowship of the Church of Christ and governed by religious tenets held by the Church of Christ. Applicants should be members of the Church of Christ. Lipscomb University complies with all applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws and does not engage in prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, color, national or ethnic origin, or disability in the administration of its employment practices.

For more information about Lipscomb University and the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, visit our website at http://chemistry.lipscomb.edu.

Mount Dora Christian Academy and Children’s Home is hiring!

We have an immediate opening for a Development Officer / Director of Church Relations.

Qualifications: Prior experience in fundraising and/or sales and marketing. Good organizational and public speaking skills and proficiency using Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Position requires some weekend travel making presentations in churches. Must be a faithful member of the Church of Christ and pass criminal background and agency checks.

Benefits Include: Salary, Retirement Plan, Health Insurance, Life Insurance, and School Tuition. Company vehicle and all expenses are provided for travel.

About the Organization: Mount Dora Children’s Home has been serving children and families since 1945 and is affiliated with the churches of Christ. Our beautiful 70-acre campus is in the heart of Central Florida. We invite qualified candidates to come join our successful ministry and help change young lives and give them hope for the future.

Send a resume and letter of interest to:

Tim Deem
Vice President for Development
tim.deem@MDCAcademy.org
(352) 729-9015
301 West 13th Avenue
Mount Dora, Florida 32757

People from the San Francisco Bay area gather in the meeting place of the West Oakland Church of Christ during the church's monthly outreach and food giveaway.

SILENCE: We must understand faith, repentance

FROM PAGE 11
If I clap my hands or say “Amen!” too loud, then there is something wrong with me. But as a human being, that’s how I respond — and you are telling me that my humanity does not matter.

We talk about being like the first-century Christians, but we espouse an American version of that vision that says “be silent” on divisive issues, on issues of race.

We don’t have an example of this kind of silence in the New or Old Testaments. When Jesus walked through the temple and turned over tables because the money changers and merchants were overcharging people, the reason he was upset was because he saw injustice.

This book also was painful to write because I had to go through all the horror stories of how black people have been treated over the years, over generations. I wish I didn’t have to write about it, but it hasn’t stopped. We still have to have this conversation.

I understand that a lot of white people don’t want to have this conversation because it’s painful. It’s also painful for black folks and all marginalized folks. It hurts across every sector.

Has racism ever made you want to leave the church?

I stay in the church because I believe that Christianity is about the salvation that Jesus Christ gives to an individual. There is no way I would leave the Church of Christ because of human actions or attitudes.

Is the Church of Christ still relevant to people today?

I believe that some people view the church as not relevant because they have never really been introduced to the church. There are people who have been in congregations 30 to 40 years, but they have never been introduced to the church. They have been introduced to an American version of the church.

We specialize in baptizing people. We try to rush people to the water, but we don’t spend any time teaching them to understand what it means to come to Jesus by faith and repentance. They come out of the water, but there was never a conversion. They haven’t met Jesus.

What can Churches of Christ do today to make things better tomorrow in terms of race?

The church is obligated to create space for repentance to occur. Repentance requires reflection and retrospection before forward progress commences.

No one alive today created the concept and context of race and racism, but we are currently responsible for interrupting, disrupting and dismantling its soul-crushing effects.

The place we go from here is bold and courageous dialogue on race — especially within settings that are predominantly white. Without regular dialogue, we will never get to healing and sustainable solutions.

WEBSITES: westoaklandoc.org, eeriesilence1.com
FIVE YOUNG PEOPLE in Australia give answers to a question pondered by congregations around the globe.

Is the church relevant in the 21st century?

SYDNEY

When it comes to Christianity, Australia is a land of curious contrasts. There are multiple megachurches across the continent, including the well-known Hillsong congregations and their popular music ministry, Hillsong United.

Yet religious surveys show that the number of Australians who identify themselves as Christians is on the decline while irreligion — atheism, agnosticism, secular humanism — is on the rise.

Young Australians “are growing up in a world that is increasingly insistent in telling them what they should believe without letting them learn and decide for themselves,” said Nathan Clark, a member of The Point Church of Christ in Brisbane. “Today, many young people, as well as adults, are seeking answers that are a bit bigger than the world around them. Many are coming up short of answers.”

Clark wrote an opinion piece, “The Faith of Our Youth,” for a recent edition of InterSections, an online publication for Churches of Christ in Australia. In the same issue, associate editor Christian Bargholz asked five young Christians the question, “Is the church relevant in the 21st century?” The youths’ responses offer insight that spans far beyond their part of the world. They are reprinted here with permission.

AMANDA MINDER
Canberra Church of Christ

“Absolutely. But there’s something essential missing from church. We regularly offer milk, not solid food.”

“Worship, family and encouragement are important, but they need to be accompanied by deep understanding of the Bible.

“If my experience counts for anything, youth want more. We don’t want fancy Power Points or teen-life focused sermons. We want evidences for God, where the Bible’s from, why we believe it, and the uncomfortable parts. Why does Yahweh seem so harsh? How should that affect my theology?”

“I want Old Testament. It feels like there should be something important in there.

“I know that being a young woman isn’t an excuse. So, now that I’m teaching the girls’ Bible class, I’m designing and teaching a Bible survey. It’s a lot of work but we’re all learning so much. I want the girls to have what I lacked — to have something to say. In our Judeo-Christian culture, people feel Christianity is nothing different. We’re full to bursting with people telling us to be good, but with so few who can explain why. The church is always relevant, but it’s our job to live up to what church is supposed to be.”

DAMIAN GRASSO
The Point Church of Christ, Brisbane

“The message Jesus gave us in first century Palestine is just as relevant today. Looking at the Old Testament law and even the practices of Islam, Christianity by comparison is designed for people to express their love for God in a personal way. Instead of defining laws, it focuses on a relationship with God, which transforms individuals and their relationships with others.

“When we observe law in religious and secular contexts we should ask ourselves, ‘Have they ever been effective at changing the hearts of individuals?’ Or, ‘Are they better at upholding structure and maintaining standards of behavior?’

A relationship with the Creator transcends race, sex, nationality or...”
Perseverance after the storm

SURVIVORS OF HURRICANE MICHAEL share stories of hope and faith as the repairs continue.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

— James 1:2-4, New International Version

PANAMA CITY, Fla.

You might think that people living in an area that has seen dozens of hurricanes, knowing the perceived danger of those storms, would be better prepared.

But on Oct. 10, 2018, when Hurricane Michael roared across the Florida panhandle with Category 5 sustained winds, we were not prepared.

Residents here know that storms often lose their punch as they make landfall. There was little reason to believe this one would be any different. But it was.

The storm was 350 miles wide with the strongest winds on record. Still, months later, the visual impact is an awe-inspiring picture of the power of nature.

In the months since the storm I’ve spoken with many and swapped stories of how we survived. One man shared with me that he was in his living room watching out the window when the entire roof came off. He said the force of the rain blowing horizontally felt immediately like a dozen fire hoses were directly aimed at his face.

He ran to the kitchen, slipping on the slick, drenched floors, but when he got there more of the roof peeled back.

He ran to his room, promising God as he scrambled for safety, “God, I will give my life to you if you save mine.” He said at that moment it felt as though the storm weakened. He has not missed a Sunday since. Hurricane Michael was truly life-changing for him.

People are still cleaning up property and wrangling with insurance companies. Everything is done one step at a time and with patience — with perseverance.

The church is now working to connect with those families, figuring out what they still need, inviting them to classes and setting up Bible studies with those interested in learning more about the faith we’ve shared.

Groups from Churches of Christ throughout the eastern United States rolled in with supplies and manpower.

Countless congregations have provided funding for recovery. Others are still contacting us, seeking dates to come and help.

We continue to need experts in hanging dry wall, bobcats to move major trees and stump grinders for removing what is left of once majestic trees.

The storm hit on a Wednesday. The following Sunday, Jenks Avenue church held service in space they cleared on the church parking lot. No electricity, no water, no stores open, scarce cell and no land line service nor internet were available. The entire community was under a curfew. But we still gathered to worship.

With much of our campus still awaiting repair, members and dozens of visitors, both local and from around the country, continue to fill the seats to worship each week.

Hurricane Michael, while devastating, has provided an opportunity for us as Christians to reach out and plant seeds in the hearts and minds of our neighbors.

The government showed up in Florida because they had to, but Christians showed up because they wanted to serve.

It’s in a Christian’s DNA.

We’re grateful for those who came and those who continue to come. To God be the glory.

TIM KITTS is Director of Education for the Jenks Avenue Church of Christ in Panama City, Fla. See jenkschurchofchrist.com.

OPINION

Passing the baton

W e’ve lost a great number of servants of late — R.C. Wells, I.V. White, Carl Mitchell and many more. And, of course, there was Richard Overton, who went home age 112.

That’s why Stan Reid’s topic, “Passing the Baton,” seemed so timely when he spoke to Overton’s congregation, the Church of Christ at Hyde Park in Austin, Texas, the day after the World War II vet’s memorial. Reid, a former minister for the church who now serves as president of Austin Graduate School of Theology, talked about the first chapter of Luke, in which the gospel’s author tells his audience that he’s writing “so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.”

Instead of wringing our hands about our declining numbers in the U.S., let’s focus on loving and discipling our youths so that they may attain this certainty. A good start is programs such as Lads to Leaders (see Page 17) and Leadership Training for Christ, both of which host conventions across the nation on Easter weekend. See christianchronicle.org for more details.

The handoff, Reid said, is probably the most important part of the relay. Let’s do everything we can to ensure a good transition as we near the end of our leg of the journey.

RELEVANT: Young believers respond

FROM PAGE 29

any aspect of our human identity. It is timeless. Law falls short, but love never ends (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.” (Hebrews 8:7).

YICHEN ZHANG

Eastside Church of Christ, Sydney

“People nowadays are best at finding the fastest way to do everything. We always try and find a short cut, and we lose patience for activities that won’t provide instant gratification.

However, when it comes to the church, patience, consistency and hard work are necessities. ‘Sing to the Lord, all the earth, proclaim his salvation, day by day.’ (1 Chronicles 16:23)

“There are absolutely no short cuts. On the contrary, it takes a long time to even understand what it takes to build this relationship with your church and God. It is for this reason among others that, to 21st century society, the church is not seen to be relevant.”

FIND ADDITIONAL VIEWS on matters of faith, youth and mentorship in InterSections, a quarterly journal produced by Churches of Christ in Australia. See intersections.com.au.
If You’ve Been Celebrating Your
Recovery
Is It Time to Take
the Next Step?

Compare Our
Prices, Quality,
and Overall Value.
NextStepChristianRecovery.com

See our Recovery Bible and Workbook, Co-Dependency Material and Much More.
All our books and workbooks originate from our brotherhood.

Cedar Ridge Chronicles by AJ Hawke
NEW RELEASE

Want clean and wholesome stories? Check out The Cedar Ridge Chronicles by AJ Hawke. This is a series of novels that follows the struggles and triumphs of faith of families as they live in Colorado in the 1870s. Enjoy a good read and a satisfying ending.

Colorado Cowboy’s Forever Promise is the story of newly-widowed Emeline Mills who has few options—and she must find a way to provide food and shelter for her children. Destitute and desperate, she accepts the gallant cowboy’s proposal even though he’s not a Christian. But when her new spouse comes under fire for employing Indians at their ranch, Emeline wonders if she’s made a tragic decision.

Available on Amazon.com, Kindle, paperback and Kindle Unlimited.

https://amzn.to/2RF8VKh, AJHawke.com

Benevolence in Venezuela

The Church of Christ has approximately 175 congregations in Venezuela, a nation ravaged by poverty. Our brethren go hungry and lack critical medications, like Yeglis pictured here, who suffers from epilepsy, and her son Santiago who has chickenpox and is malnourished. The West Broward Church of Christ is leading a benevolence effort which has sent more than 10,000 lbs. of food, evangelistic tracts, Bibles, water filters, clothing, and medical supplies so far. So much more is needed. Please, consider supporting this benevolent cause to help our brethren there.

Learn more at www.wbcoc.com

GET MARRIED!

To avoid fornication, each man should have his wife and each woman her husband.
– 1 Corinthians 7:2

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Purity movement critique suffers from over-generalizations and flawed style

I grew up hearing, nearly verbatim, some of the ridiculous sayings mentioned in “PURE: Inside the Evangelical Movement That Shamed a Generation of Young Women and How I Broke Free.”

As a virgin, I was like a new stick of gum, I was told. Once I had sex, I would be chewed up. Nobody wants someone else’s chewed gum. Will my future husband want a shiny new car or a rusty clunker?

I rolled my eyes at these phrases. But for others, these words were hurtful. I’ve talked to friends of mine who had similar experiences in their church youth group. One said she was made to feel “completely unworthy of God’s love.”

In “PURE,” Linda Kay Klein describes the feelings of deep shame and worthlessness she experienced as a teenager in a church that followed the purity movement, which rose to prominence in the 1990s and 2000s and was inspired by books including “I Kissed Dating Goodbye.” (That book’s author, Josh Harris, recently announced he was discontinuing its publication and apologized to those who said they were damaged by his teachings.)

Klein says she was taught that boys are sexually weak and that girls must keep male desire in check by wearing modest clothing and taking a purity pledge. “In the evangelical community, an ‘impure’ girl or woman isn’t just seen as damaged; she’s considered dangerous,” Klein writes.

Unfortunately, Klein makes her argument in the form of a partial memoir, partial research study that I found difficult to follow. She intertwines her own story, full of emotional and psychological scars, with interviews she conducted with other women who had similar experiences. Occasionally, she throws in some additional research on the matter.

As a result, the book bounces from memoir to interview transcript, then back to memoir, then to a research paper and finally back to an interview. I found this very difficult to read — not solely because the writing was repetitive, but also because I found it difficult to relate to so many of those interviewed — and to Klein herself. For me, the riveting portions of “PURE” are not the stories of the individuals who are unable to have sex with their boyfriends because they have panic attacks or unexplained allergic reactions. There are a few really horrific stories here — stories of those who experienced gang rape, molestation and incest. In these stories, Klein does a great job of showing how women can be victimized by their churches and families just as much — if not more — than by the men who physically hurt them. The reactions of victims’ churches and families described in this book are disgusting.

Klein attempts to make the case that these particular victims were treated so poorly as a direct result of the teachings of the purity movement — teachings that she claims place blame upon the victims of rape and excuse the perpetrators.

At times, Klein references curricula and study materials she remembers from her youth group days and generalizes to all teachings about sexual purity and gender roles. As I read, I cringed to think that believers would teach their young people these things — and that parents wouldn’t speak up against such teachings.

Klein also generalizes that all problems faced by her interviewees are a direct result of the purity movement’s teachings.

I believe that we should be having the difficult discussions Klein attempts in this book. I appreciate her gentle tone with those she interviews and that she is not afraid to tackle such sensitive topics.

But I feel she misses the mark due to gross over-generalizations and a writing style that is hard to follow.

LAURA ELLIOTT worships with the La Grange Church of Christ in Texas, where her husband serves as minister. She is the mother of two boys, a pre-kindergarten teacher and a Cub Scout leader.
NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

TOOL FOR MINISTRY
Lindsey Garmon. The Seeker Series Bible Study. Self-published, 2018. $10. Available at ToolsForMinistry.net.

As we begin a new year, are you feeling the need to be more involved in the work of evangelism? Every day, we are interacting with friends and loved ones who do not know Jesus. We must pray. We must prepare. It's time to do something! Let's take action!

Are there people in your life with whom you would like to share the “Good News of Jesus,” but you are not sure how to go about it?

Would it help if you had a user-friendly tool that would guide you through a presentation of what God has done through Jesus to show His love for sinners?

Dr. Lindsey Garmon has created an evangelistic tool called, “The Seeker Bible Study Guide.” The exercises in these lessons help to generate constructive conversation in six key areas—Bible, Jesus, Sin, Cross, Faith, and Church. The exercises are designed for interactive use within small groups where each participant has a worksheet, a Bible, a pen, and a desire to learn. The lessons fit perfectly as you sit at a kitchen table or in a small group Bible study. This simple tool blended with your caring voice could provide the avenue for God to call one or more of your loved ones to salvation through the Gospel.

Now is the time!

Sample kits of “The Seeker Bible Study Guide” are available at no cost. Each sample kit includes a single copy of the six lessons, an answer sheet for each lesson, and a detailed user-guide that will provide ideas for presenting the lessons effectively. You are invited to request your sample kit and examine the materials for yourself.

Here’s an idea. Share these lessons with someone who is already saved as a way of preparing yourself to present the lessons to someone who is not saved. Church leaders, encourage the use of this evangelistic tool! Let’s equip our people for works of ministry. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

To order a sample kit of “The Seeker Bible Study Guide” or to ask questions, please send an email to: lindseygarmontx@gmail.com, or call 361-643-3085.

MISSIONS
Hadayat Hakim Din. The Amazing Mission Story. Cordova, Tenn.: Dr. Din, 2018. 164 pages. $20, shipping included. Email: din.hadayat@yahoo.com. Mail check to: Dr. Din, 7769 Shelby Grove Court, Apt. 101, Cordova, TN 38018, or pay via PayPal.

Hadayat Din was a prominent Christian missionary in Pakistan. He has influenced many Christians. His story begins with a humble village childhood and minimal opportunities. He grew up secular but was saved while he was studying at the University of Indiana.

He is an educator, trained homeopathic physician and an evangelist. He established various churches and baptized hundreds of people during his ministry.

THE BATTLE FOR REDEMPTION

See the Bible like never before! “The Battle for Redemption, A Walk Through The Bible,” is a plain-language, relevant view of God’s Word in 16 concise chapters. Skipping confusing jargon and church-speak, it gets straight to the fruit of the scripture that so many are desperate to hear and understand. It’s a redemptive journey through the Old and New Testaments designed to help someone fall in love with God’s Word for the first time, or for the first time in a long time!

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY submissions are paid advertisements. For prices, contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org or call 405.425.5070.
Does it bring you joy?

‘TIDYING UP’ our closets and to-do lists – even when they’re full of ministry tasks – can help us draw closer to God.

I’m the type of person who enjoys being busy. What I’ve learned, however, is that when I overload my schedule with places to be and things to do, I miss out on the opportunity to enjoy those things. Rushing around leaves me feeling tired and, on the worst days, resentful of my ever-expanding to-do list.

Often, my lists are full of good things – even things that are ministry related, acts of service to God. However, when I spread myself too thin, service becomes a burden.

“Does it bring you joy?” That’s the question everyone around me seems to be asking themselves.

They’ve jumped on the KonMari bandwagon, thanks to the popular Netflix show “Tidying Up with Marie Kondo,” and the related book “The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up.” The mission, according to the KonMari website, is “to help more people tidy their spaces by choosing joy.”

That shirt from high school that you’re holding onto? That dress you swear you’ll wear someday? The contents of that closet you avoid opening out of fear of what’s in there? If these don’t bring you joy, throw them out, donate them, just get rid of them. That’s the basic idea.

In Romans 15:13, Paul writes: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

It’s a sad reality that many of us find our joy in the belongings filling our homes.

My husband and I help lead a Celebrate Recovery program at our church. One thing I’ve learned about joy is that it doesn’t come from my belongings or from filling my time. Rather, it comes from God.

In my early days of recovery, I read some of the literature on codependency. What really stuck with me is the idea that codependent service can keep me from truly finding the joy that God wants to fill me with.

When we serve to please others because we need to feel needed or when we serve without boundaries, we can find ourselves lacking joy and feeling burdened.

We need room to stop, to breathe and to see God’s hand in our daily lives.

It’s good to learn to say no to some things, even good things, so we can serve in a way that allows God to fill us with his joy and draw us closer to him.

This is not an excuse to do nothing. It’s a push to be purposeful with our time. Service can be difficult. In Hebrews 12:2 we see how Christ persevered and “endured the cross,” because he knew there was joy to come.

And let’s not even get started on the amount of time we spend with our phones and social media. No doubt putting our devices down could help us experience the joy in our days that we are oblivious to, because of those devices.

I like Marie Kondo’s theory. I believe there is value in cleaning out our homes. There is also value in clearing our schedules and making room for God to show us how we can best serve him, how he can fill us with joy.

So, as you clean out your closets and declutter your homes alongside millions of other KonMari fans, take a moment to think of other areas in your life that are feeling a little cluttered and figure out how you can clear those areas to make room for the joy God wants to share.

CONTACT: chellie@christianchronicle.org
CALENDAR

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


April 6-7  50th Anniversary Celebration. Fairfax Church of Christ. Fairfax, Va. (703) 631-2100. fxcc50@fxcc.org. See fxcc.org.

April 20-25  Church of Christ National Lectureship. St. Louis, Mo. (314) 272-0282. contact@nationallectureship.net. See nationallectureship.net.

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.patton@christianchronicle.org.

Full-Time Pulpit Minister
The Van Church of Christ in Van, Texas, is accepting applications for a full-time pulpit minister. The Van church has 150 members, four elders and four deacons. Ideal candidate will be a family man with at least two years of post-secondary education in Biblical Studies (degree preferred), five years of preaching experience, a proven record of church growth, motivated by a love for God and people of all ages and backgrounds and with a wife involved in his ministry and church activities.

Compensation is negotiable and based on experience, education and qualifications and includes a comfortable on-site minister’s house.

Please submit cover letter, resume, three recent sermon samples (at least one video), personal and professional references and salary requirements to:

Minister Search Committee
Van Church of Christ
199 Cherry Lane
Van, TX 75790
or e-mail to: office@vancoc.org

Applications to be accepted until the position is filled.

Full-Time Pulpit Minister
Lincoln Park Church of Christ in Lincoln Park, Mich., (suburb of Detroit), a congregation of approximately 150 members, is seeking a pulpit minister. Interested candidates should send their resume, and an audio/visual link to a recent sermon to:

Ed Stewart
estewar8@comcast.net

Salary commensurate with education and experience.

Full-Time Minister
The Church of Christ in Cortez, Colo., is accepting resumes for a full-time minister. If interested, send your resume to:

cortezcofc@live.com

Church of Christ
Attn: Minister Search
PO Box 145
Cortez, CO 81321

Christian Leadership Opportunity
Administrative Director of Compassion Outreach

Compassion Outreach is a free medical clinic open two nights a month for the uninsured of the Ada, Okla., area. Compassion Outreach is staffed mostly with volunteers from area medical facilities and area churches. The ideal candidate will have experience and/or training in the following areas:

- Working with non-profit funding
- Working with medical and nonmedical volunteers
- Strong organizational skills and work habits
- Proficient at public speaking
- Constructively working with civic and church organizations
- Grant writing and working with foundations
- Working successfully with a Board of Directors and Church Leaders

Compensation of $35,000 plus family medical/dental and retirement.

Submit a letter of interest and resume to:

Search Committee, Compassion Outreach Center
1124 Cradduck Rd, Ada, OK 74820

Respond by March 1, 2019.

Part-Time Minister
The Fifth and Beechwood Church of Christ in Pittsburgh, Pa., is looking for a part-time minister with an evangelistic spirit. We are a diverse, small congregation in an area with multiple universities with a lot of potential for growth. Please contact us at:

Ken Branson, (412) 583-6910
Larry Ciampa, (412) 482-7285
larryciampa@live.com

FULL-TIME MINISTER
The Church of Christ in South Holland, Ill., is looking for a minister. We are a congregation of 85-100 in attendance with three elders and three deacons. We are located in a southern suburb of Chicago.

For detailed information and to submit a resume, please email:

therock43@juno.com

Children and Family Minister
Woodland West Church of Christ in Arlington, Texas, is looking for someone to help us take a thriving Children and Family Ministry to the next level and help children and their families to know God and grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus and go serve Christ in our community. For the job description and qualifications contact us at:

jobs@wwcoc.org

AGAPE & its new program Morning Star Sanctuary, a Christian nonprofit that provides child placement services, counseling & domestic violence care in Nashville, is now hiring for

Director of Development.

Ideal candidate has:

- a working knowledge of development and marketing
- a proven track record of successful fundraising and relationship-building
- the ability to speak publicly and inspire support

Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to

info@agapenashville.org.

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