



Fighting for souls, and lives, in Native America



TEEN SUICIDE is an epidemic, especially among American Indians. A Church of Christ responds: 'No matter how dark it might seem right now, there is hope.'

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MESA, Ariz.

Arlinda Lee remembered the old medicine man's words: A baby, yet unborn, would suffer from "a problem with her mind."

He made the prediction during a Navajo healing ceremony for her husband, Nate, after a car wreck. She was pregnant with their third child, Celeste, at the time.

Fifteen years later, those words haunted her as she sat by Celeste's hospital bed. The teen, in the throes of bipolar disorder, had tried to kill herself.

But faith in Jesus sustained them through the ordeal, said both mother and daughter.

So did notes of support from fellow believers.

On a recent Saturday night, Celeste Lee, now 18 and sporting partially dyed hair and a Misfits T-shirt, spread handfuls of greeting cards across a coffee table in the family's living room. On the walls of the suburban home,



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

At home, Celeste Lee flips through a sketchbook of her artwork. Above: The sun sets on the suburban neighborhood in Mesa where she and her family live.

east of Phoenix, hung Navajo tapestries, Hopi figurines and the teen's pencil sketches, proudly displayed by her parents.

Some of the letters were from members of the family's congregation, the Salt River Church of Christ.

Others were from Christians she's never met. Each was a lifeline of hope when she felt hopeless.

She's not alone. Every year 157,000 youths ages 10 to 24 are treated in emergency rooms for self-inflicted injuries, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. American Indians and native Alaskans have the highest rates of suicide of any ethnic group in the U.S. — more than 3.5 times that of groups with the lowest rates.

For all teens, regardless of race, the problem is getting worse.

The percentage of hospital visits for children attempting or planning suicide nearly doubled between 2008 and 2015, according to a recent study in the journal *Pediatrics*.

For Celeste, prayer, counseling and medication have helped.

On her phone, she pulled up an app that tracks her progress — 149 days sober. Looking back "I don't even know how I did the stuff that I did," she said, "how I could go through what I did and still come out alive."

See **NATIVE AMERICA**, Page 10

A perpetrator in the pews

SEX OFFENDER'S PRESENCE at worship stirs discord in Pennsylvania church.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

UNIONTOWN, Pa. — After a longtime youth minister's recent conviction on corruption of minors and indecent exposure charges, a judge in this western Pennsylvania community did what the Uniontown Church of Christ's elders refused to do.

The judge told Clyde E. Brothers Jr. to stay away from church services.

Brothers, 68, served for many years as the volunteer youth minister for the 100-member Uniontown congregation.

Since at least the 1980s, he also interacted with hundreds of children as a founding board member for Camp Concern — a Bible camp directed and sponsored by members of Churches of Christ.

Generations of parents entrusted Brothers with instilling Christian faith and values in their children in this city of 10,000 that originally grew with the development of coal mines and the steel industry.

Victims' relatives say his case points to a problem that plagues not just the Roman Catholic Church and the Southern Baptist Convention — both embroiled in major sex abuse scandals — but also the nation's 12,000 autonomous Churches of Christ.

"It truly is an epidemic, such sickness," said one victim's mother, a former Uniontown church member whose name is being withheld to protect her son's identity. The allegations that Brothers used his volunteer church and camp positions



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Clyde Brothers Jr. was sentenced at the Fayette County courthouse in Uniontown, Pa.

See **PERPETRATOR**, Page 6



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When the roll is called up yonder, Alexa answers

OKLAHOMA CITY

In 17 years with *The Christian Chronicle* I've been blessed to report amazing stories of faith from 70 countries and territories around the globe.

(I have to say "territories" to count Puerto Rico and American Samoa. And visiting

Hong Kong doesn't really count as going to China, I'm told by travel snobs.)

Despite all this traveling to places that are not really China (I

did change planes in Beijing once, but that doesn't count either), the story I've written that's likely gotten the most attention happened less than two miles from my house.

And it's about toilet paper.

A few Sundays ago, I was listening (dutifully, of course) to Phil Brookman's sermon during second service at my home congregation, the Memorial Road Church of Christ. Phil was preaching on the apostle Paul's admonition from 1 Corinthians that the church should function as one body with many parts.

In the 21st century, it's easy for Christians to live separate lives — and to fail to find the need for unity, Phil said. Even shopping has become depersonalized. Instead of going to Wal-Mart and interacting with other humans, one need only say, "Alexa, order toilet paper."

What he said next really caught my attention.

Evidently, he had made that

See **ALEXA**, Page 4

Inside Story



Erik Tryggestad



VIDEO STILL VIA NETFLIX

Leon Logothetis speaks with Pat and Ken Beckloff on Netflix's "The Kindness Diaries."

Surprised by 'Kindness'

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER with retired missionaries in Central America results in 'The Gift of Shelter' for a church leader's family on Netflix series.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Retired missionaries Ken and Pat Beckloff were walking to market in El Valle, Panama, one morning when a man with a British accent approached them.

"Do you speak English?" he asked.

"We thought he must be a tourist wanting directions," Ken Beckloff told *The Christian Chronicle*. "He then told us he was traveling from Alaska to Argentina without money, just depending on the kindness of people."

"He asked if he could spend the night on our couch, and we told him we

could do better than that as we had a guest room."



Pérez

Suddenly, a camera crew appeared from behind the shrubbery, Beckloff said, and after signing a release form, he and his wife were part of a Netflix series, "The Kindness Diaries." And because of the encounter, a leader of the El Valle Church of Christ, Cleo Pérez, received a huge blessing.

The show follows Leon Logothetis, a former London stockbroker who, in spite

See **KINDNESS**, Page 16

Church members wow judges on 'The Voice,' 'American Idol'

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

When Matthew Johnson sings, the audience can't help but smile.

So it's only fitting that the song he chose to sing before a national audience was Kirk Franklin's "I Smile."

"When you think of Jesus and what's he's done, sometimes you can't do anything but smile," Johnson said in a recent interview with KLOVE radio.



Johnson

Johnson, a member of the Northside Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Fla., took the national spotlight when he appeared on NBC's "The Voice."

Days later, another church member wowed the judges on ABC's "American Idol." Kason Lester, who worships with the College Hills Church of Christ in Lebanon, Tenn., performed the country song "Holdin' Her" by Chris Janson for judges Lionel Richie, Katy Perry and Luke Bryan — and received a coveted golden ticket to compete on the show in Hollywood.



Lester

See **VOICE/IDOL**, Page 27

Racial concerns prompt renaming of Christian university auditorium

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

OKLAHOMA CITY — After a half-century as Hardeman Auditorium, the main auditorium where Oklahoma Christian University students assemble for daily chapel and perform the annual Spring Sing musical variety show has a new name — a change spurred

by concerns over a racist statement attributed to the former namesake.

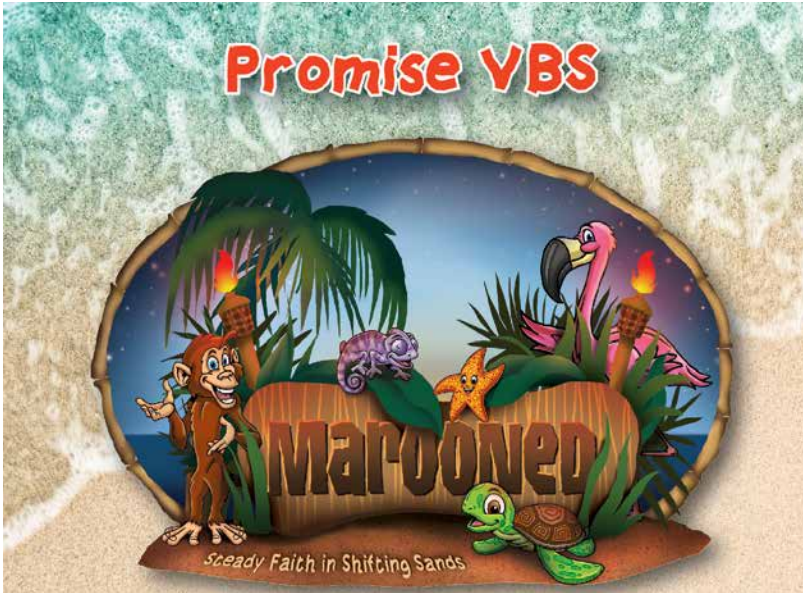
As hundreds of students in colorful costumes recently gathered for Spring Sing club night, university President John deSteiguer revealed that the assembly hall's new name will honor donors Benton and Paula Baugh.

The Baughs are members of the

Memorial Church of Christ in Houston and active proponents of racial unity efforts. They recently gave Oklahoma Christian \$1 million — just their latest

See **RENAMING**, Page 22

AFTER 50 YEARS, AN APOLOGY: Oklahoma Christian seeks to right a wrong done to former students, arrested and expelled on racially tinged allegations. Page 17



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ALEXA: Nationwide TP-buying frenzy averted

FROM PAGE 3

same illustration two hours earlier as he preached during first service. One of our members was listening at home, through the internet, and their Alexa smart speaker had answered the call, filling their Amazon shopping cart with toilet paper.

Wow! That could be a fun little page brightener for the *Chronicle*, I thought. I made a mental note to ask Phil who that someone was. And, like all of my mental notes, I promptly forgot it.

That night we went to our Q group Bible study at the home of our friends Wes and Bethany Becknell.

(The Q, in case you're wondering, is from the Hebrew word *qashar*. It means "our church's small-group coordinator is a Bible nerd.")

"Did you guys go to second service?" Bethany asked. We did. "So you know about our toilet paper?"

"That was *you*? You've gotta give me a quote!" I said. (Clearly, the Lord wanted me to write this story.)

It turns out Bethany was at home Sunday with a sick child, Eli, while Wes took their other son, Cam, to early service. Bethany watched the simulcast of the service online, and just as Phil said, "Alexa, order toilet paper," a pleasant female voice replied from the bathroom, "OK, I've added it to your cart."

Bethany grabbed her phone. Sure enough, there in her Amazon cart was a package of 60 double rolls.

Cost: \$27.45.

"My first thought was, 'Cancel! Cancel! Cancel!'" she said. (They simply didn't need that much TP.)

She figured out how to remove the item from her virtual shopping cart — but not before texting a screenshot to her husband.

After the sermon, Wes told Phil, "You owe me 28 bucks."

The minister later learned that two other church members, April Williams and Carrie Jane Arledge, had almost identical experiences.

"I've never ordered anything with Alexa before," Arledge said. "I wish you could've heard me hollering, 'Alexa, cancel toilet paper order!'"

'I wish you could've heard me hollering, "Alexa, cancel toilet paper order!"'

Carrie Jane Arledge, who was listening to Phil Brookman's sermon online. When the minister said "Alexa, order toilet paper" as a sermon illustration, her smart speaker did exactly that.

For second service, Phil added a new sermon illustration: "Alexa, donate \$500 to the Memorial Road Church of Christ." No, it didn't work.

I wrote a story about all this on Tuesday morning and posted it to our website. My coworker Bobby Ross pitched it to Religion News Service, which picked it up. By that afternoon, the story was on the website of the *Salt Lake Tribune*. The *Baptist Standard* ran it. Humor columnist Dave Barry mentioned it on his blog.

Several people told me they read the story aloud to their spouses, only to have their Alexa speakers ... yep, you guessed it.

On Thursday morning, the story received 26 seconds of airtime on National Public Radio's Morning Edition.

(Host David Greene wisely chose to use the phrase, "Smart speaker, order toilet paper," lest he unleash a nationwide

TP-buying frenzy.)

It was the story's online comments that were truly gratifying. Several said they thought they were reading *The Babylon Bee*, a satirical religious news site that posts headlines like "Sad: Joel Osteen keeps getting picked last for Bible trivia."

One reader said the TP story immediately brought a Bible verse to mind: "*He will wipe away every tear*" (Revelation 21:4). Another couldn't help but think of the hymn "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder."

Yet another pointed out the appropriateness of the toilet paper brand Alexa nearly purchased — Angel Soft.

I suppose there's a story here about the dangers of technology that's designed to make our lives easier, or perhaps an allegory about how every word we say is under surveillance from up above.

But what occurs to me is that I often think I have to fly off to mainland China or another faraway locale to find engaging stories for our readers. In fact, some of the most interesting tales come from our own bathrooms.

Humph ... Angel Soft.

Wish I'd thought of that.

CONTACT: erik@christianchronicle.org

APRIL 2019

GEORGIA

LAGRANGE — The Broad Street Church of Christ has Loads of Love for its community. Through a ministry by that name, the church uses laundromats as places to strike up conversations about Jesus.

“Our congregation makes a bulk amount of homemade laundry detergent, divides it into 8-ounce containers and then delivers the detergent to the local laundromats,” preaching minister Evan Kirby said. “This offers us a chance to meet people in the community, serve them, pray with them and continue contact with them in the future.”

An advantage of laundromats is that they offer a “captive audience,” he said. “You’re not keeping them from doing anything on their busy day. They are just waiting on their laundry to get done.”

LOUISIANA

CALHOUN — The Calhoun Church of Christ’s food bank spreads the love of Jesus by feeding the hungry.

About 10 to 15 church volunteers pack food bags on the third Friday of each month then distribute them that Saturday. The ministry serves 70 to 80 families each month, elder and preaching minister Thomas Keith Roberts said.

“Like so many small churches, we have sometimes been puzzled about how to do benevolent work in our community,” Roberts said. “We’ve often had requests from people passing through town needing gas money or someone calling on the phone wanting the church to pay their bills, which we couldn’t do.”

“When our food bank began about



© Bob GlickSmith

BOB GLICKSMITH

Growing Atlanta congregation celebrates opening of new building

Minister Orpheus Heyward cuts the ribbon at the new building of the Renaissance Church of Christ in the South Fulton County area of Atlanta, just minutes from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Originally known as the West End Church of Christ, the church has baptized more than 500 people since 2007 and grown to Sunday attendance of more than 1,200.

15 years ago, we found a powerful way to truly be part of our community in a positive way.”

MONROE — The Forsythe Church of Christ is using the Alpha Course as an outreach to unbelievers, people with little faith and those who struggle with faith.

“It is a re-examination of the basics of the Christian faith using a series of films addressing Jesus, prayer, the Bible and other basic issues,” minister John Dobbs said, noting that the course is offered in a non-threatening environment focused on developing relationships and giving people time to come to faith as they learn together.

A team of about 10 church volunteers helps with a meal offered as

part of the gathering, Dobbs said. “So we have excellent cooks, helpers, greeters, discussion leaders and those who are present to offer friendship and conversation to anyone who attends,” he said.

MASSACHUSETTS

WEST SPRINGFIELD — The West Springfield Church of Christ has added a worship assembly for Spanish speakers.

Minister Gareth Flanary said a small group of Guatemalan immigrants outgrew a home where they had been meeting.

“The West Springfield church is excited to partner with them,” Flanary said. “We look forward to expanding the outreach to the Hispanic community.”

TEXAS

FARMERS BRANCH — The English- and Spanish-speaking congregations of the Webb Chapel Church of Christ have merged to become one body.

Six elders and a transition team of 12 members — split evenly between the two groups — helped orchestrate the change, elder Robert A. Nienstadt said.

About 250 Anglo and 60 Latino members make up the Webb Chapel church, Nienstadt said.

“We started discussing this merger two years ago and decided it was the right time,” he said, noting that a typical model in Churches of Christ is to separate the groups. “All has been progressing smoothly, which is an indication of God’s blessing.”



THOMAS KEITH ROBERTS

Volunteers help fill grocery bags at the Calhoun Church of Christ in Louisiana.

PERPETRATOR: 'Is it my place to judge him on his sins?' church elder asks

FROM PAGE 1

to prey on young boys were traumatic enough, several current and former Uniontown church members told *The Christian Chronicle*.

But church leaders' decision to allow Brothers to keep worshiping with the congregation made it worse, they said.

"I was told I had hatred in my heart, and I needed to forgive," said member Debbie Williams, a former youth group sponsor who had traveled with Brothers and church teens to numerous Bible bowls and youth rallies.

Another longtime member said her son, now in his 30s, was one of four victims whom Brothers identified by name to the Pennsylvania State Police.

"It's almost like Clyde is more important than the victims are," the mother said about the perpetrator remaining in the pews.

However, Bob Coldren, one of the church's three elders, stressed in an interview that Brothers twice came forward at church and repented of sins.

"Just like anybody else who comes forward at church, is it my place to judge him on his sins ... or is it God's to judge him of those?" said Coldren, who is also Brothers' brother-in-law. "If I judge him if he's sincere or not sincere, I'm judging wrong because I can't see what's in his heart.

"I'm in the middle of a bad situation. No matter what I do, I'm wrong," Coldren added. "So if I say, 'Absolutely not, he didn't repent,' then God's going to be on me. I'm not going by the world. I'm going by what's in Scripture."

Coldren said the elders had taken steps to protect children and ensure the former youth minister was "never out of anybody's sight." Brothers was removed from his church leadership roles after the allegations surfaced in late 2016.

Asked if the elders supported the victims, Coldren replied, "Yes, we were very supportive of the victims, if they asked for help. But none of them ever came to us for anything. What do you do when nobody asks? You can't help somebody who doesn't ask for help."

Elder Dan Barnhart declined to comment to the *Chronicle*.



BOBBY ROSS JR.

Victims advocate Jimmy Hinton, left, prays with relatives and supporters of Clyde E. Brothers Jr.'s victims.

Elder Eugene Smith did not respond to messages. However, he complained about the newspaper's calls at a Wednesday night Bible study, Williams said, telling the congregation that "Clyde has to heal, and we have to heal ... and we don't need any more publicity."

"After we were dismissed, I went up to Gene and asked him, 'What does Clyde have to heal from?'" Williams said. "He said that Clyde has a sickness."

'MANY, MANY, SO MANY BOYS'

More than two years ago, three of Brothers' fellow board members at Camp Concern — conducted each summer at Raccoon Creek State Park, about 25 miles west of Pittsburgh — confronted Brothers at his home.

Brothers broke down and confessed to inappropriate behavior with "many, many, so many boys," said Terry Lafferty, one of the board

members and minister for the North Hills Church of Christ in Pittsburgh.

"He said, 'I'm evil, just evil,'" Lafferty said of the December 2016 meeting. "And I thought that he was really going to open up and confess to all this stuff because there were a lot of names that started coming out."

Brothers agreed to go with Lafferty, Richard Walton and Keith Wolfgang to make a statement at the Pennsylvania State Police station in this city about 50 miles south of Pittsburgh. By the time Brothers got to the station, though, he had become much less forthcoming, Lafferty said.

Some allegations against Brothers could not be prosecuted because the statute of limitations had expired, victims advocates said. Other claims involved alleged victims who were unwilling to testify. In at least one case, church members complained that law enforcement officials did not follow up on leads. Fayette County Assistant District Attorney Wendy O'Brien, who prosecuted the corruption of minors and indecent exposure charges filed against Brothers in March 2017, declined an interview request.

At Brothers' trial in Fayette County District Court last October, a 38-year-old man testified that he was 13 or 14 when the Uniontown youth minister took him to a church event in Arkansas and inappropriately touched him.

At first, Brothers took him and other youths to fun activities, such as seeing movies and driving go-karts. But then the youth minister began showing pornographic movies to the boys, the man testified, according to the Uniontown Herald-Standard. Eventually, Brothers performed lewd acts in front of him and encouraged him to do likewise, the man said, reporting that this happened "at least 50" times.

"This man stole my son's childhood as well as his innocence and basically ruined his life," the man's mother said in a victim impact statement. She alleged that the youth minister drugged and molested her son "on several occasions" and threatened to harm his family if he told anyone.

"I believe that Clyde Brothers deserves nothing less than the most severe punishment allowed by law,



Lafferty

of course,” the mother told Judge Steve P. Leskinen before Brothers’ sentencing in January. “But I know in my heart that the more severe punishment will be the one that I pray God delivers to Clyde Brothers because he chose to prey on innocent children in God’s name.”

Another mother directed her victim impact statement to Brothers, who did not speak when offered the opportunity by the judge. (That mother and other alleged victims’ relatives interviewed for this story said that while Brothers went forward at the Uniontown church, he never apologized to them directly.)

Not one of your victims remains in church,” the mother told Brothers during the court hearing. “You have affected them in more ways than you could imagine. Were all these activities just so you could gain access to the boys? One is in jail. Some have turned to drugs and have trouble holding down a job. Counseling doesn’t help. And two have committed suicide.

“And all the while,” she added, “you have been walking around a free man while these boys are trying to deal with what you have done to them.”

SHEEP AND WOLVES

Jimmy Hinton, a certification specialist with the advocacy organization GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment), blames “bad theology” for congregations allowing abusers to remain in the pews alongside victims and their families.

“Shepherds are to guard the sheep from the wolves with their lives. Most churches I encounter have never been trained to distinguish the wolves from sheep, so they invite wolves in under the guise of ‘forgiveness and repentance,’” said Hinton, who preaches for the Somerset Church of Christ, about 60 miles east of Uniontown.

Hinton became a victims advo-

cate after his sister Alex Howlett confided to him in 2011 that their father, John Hinton — who spent 27 years as the Somerset church’s minister — had sexually abused her when she was young.

Jimmy Hinton’s report to authorities prompted an investigation that resulted in the pedophile preacher pleading guilty to sexually assaulting and taking nude photographs of four young girls, ages 4 to 7. John Hinton is serving a 30- to 60-year sentence in a Pennsylvania state prison.

Discussing the Brothers case, Jimmy Hinton pointed to questions about whether the former youth minister has named all his victims, as well as Brothers’ decision to file a post-conviction appeal, as indicative of his heart.

“Forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance,” Hinton said. “A repentant sexual predator would name every victim, submit to the court authorities and would never do anything to retraumatize his victims or their families.

“Because they are wolves, they don’t care.”

LOSING FAITH

Anger. Heartbreak. Regret.

A father, three mothers and a grandmother who shared tears and prayers around one family’s dining-room table in February said they’ve experienced all these emotions since the truth came out about Brothers.

“Mom, he was a pervert,” one of the women’s sons, now an adult, revealed to her for the first time in October 2016, opening the floodgates of allegations by multiple former church youth group members and Christian campers.

That alleged victim’s parents said they struggle not just with anger at Brothers but also anger at themselves for failing to notice warning signs — such as the former youth minister inviting boys on overnight trips with him.

“The anger that I feel, it just never goes away,” the mother said, lamenting that her son’s experience with Brothers caused him to give up



PHOTO BY MARK HOFMANN, HERALD-STANDARD
Clyde E. Brothers Jr. leaves a courtroom after being convicted in October 2018.



Hinton



KEEPING CAMPERS SAFE & VOLUNTEERS

3Ts

All RFKC volunteers need to adhere to appropriate conduct in these three areas:

- TALK
- TOUCH
- TERRITORY

3Rs

All campers need to know they are empowered to ensure their safety:

- RECOGNIZE
- RESIST
- REPORT

3Ws

It is **everyone's** responsibility to ensure appropriate supervision **at all times**.

- WHO ... are they?
- WHERE ... are they?
- WHAT ... are they doing?



SCREENSHOT VIA WWW.CAMPCONCERN.ORG

Camp Concern implemented a new child protection plan after Clyde E. Brothers Jr.'s arrest. See www.campconcern.org for more details.

on God and renounce his faith.

Others gathered around the table nodded their heads and reported similar experiences, saying their grown sons won't have anything to do with church.

LETTING A SINNER IN

Leskinen sentenced Brothers to up to five years in prison. However, the former youth minister was released on electronic monitoring pending an appeal of his convictions.

As part of his ruling, the judge told Brothers to give up his firearms.

And to the relief of victims’ parents and supporters, Leskinen also ordered Brothers not to attend the Uniontown church “until and unless there is a signed waiver of

this provision ... by the governing authority of the said Church.”

“When he said that, it was just like a ton of bricks was off me,” said Williams, a former elder’s wife. “When I got in the car, when we were ready to leave, I started crying. I was like, ‘Two years, we had been fighting for (justice), and it seemed like nothing was going our way.’”

But this reprieve proved short-lived, as the elders quickly announced a congregational meeting to discuss whether to provide the waiver and allow Brothers to return to the Uniontown church.

The three Camp Concern board members who confronted Brothers in 2016 — and immediately

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BOBBY ROSS JR.

The sign outside the Uniontown Church of Christ on a rainy day.

PEWS: Brothers appeals conviction

FROM PAGE 7

removed him from the board and sent letters to parents of hundreds of campers informing them of the allegations — urged the Uniontown elders not to let the former youth minister back in church.

“On the basis of compassion, we appeal to you to seriously consider the hurt and pain you are causing to faithful members of your church by allowing the one who victimized their children to worship there in the regular public assembly,” Lafferty, Walton and Wolfgang wrote. “Please have compassion on them. Their lives and families have been turned upside down.”

They argued that Brothers “has not admitted to or confessed his sins/criminal actions, let alone repented of them.”

“The fact that Clyde is trying to overturn his conviction tells you that he doesn’t think he is guilty or doesn’t deserve to be punished,” they said. Walton is the minister for the New Brighton Church of Christ, north of Pittsburgh. Wolfgang is a New Brighton member.

In a post-sentence motion in late January, attorney Jack R. Heneks Jr. said Brothers’ convictions for offenses alleged to have occurred in 1992 and 1993 should fall outside Pennsylvania’s statute of limitations. Heneks also asserted that the judge’s prohibition against Brothers attending the Uniontown church “violates the defendant’s First Amendment rights to freedom of religion and association.”

Like the camp board members,

the elders of the Crossroads Church of Christ in McMurray, Pa., south of Pittsburgh, asked the Uniontown elders to abide by the judge’s order and keep Brothers away from the church. They cited the need to “obey the laws of the land.”

“Furthermore, we strongly urge you to guard and protect the flock for which you are overseers,” said a letter by Crossroads elders Jim Robison, Bud Wilson and Van Wolfe, whose congregation includes a victim’s family. “Again, Mr. Brothers was convicted of criminal acts that took place within your congregation and against those whom you are responsible for.”

They concluded: “Fellow elders, we beg you to prayerfully consider your motives in this matter and seek the Lord’s direction. Your decision will certainly impact the Lord’s Church and not just the church at Uniontown.”

About 30 members attended the congregational meeting, Williams said, and “all but three or four said that we didn’t want him to worship with us and to go by what the judge said.” Some said the elders could take the Lord’s Supper to his home.

For now, the elders have not requested the waiver, and Brothers has not returned to church.

But eventually, the leaders will have another meeting with the congregation, Coldren said. They wanted to let a little time pass first.

“I’m not saying we are or are not going to let him back in,” Coldren said. “What’s the difference if he walks in our doors, or if he walks in another church’s?”

THE DAUGHTER OF A CONVICTED pedophile preacher urges people of faith to speak out when they suspect abuse.

‘Tell somebody. Don’t keep quiet.’

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

SOMERSET, Pa.
Until recently, no one knew Alex Howlett’s name. In 2011, she confided in her brother Jimmy Hinton that the man he followed into ministry — their father — molested her when she was young. But when the case made headlines, the identity of the victim who came forward remained confidential.

Jimmy Hinton, who preaches for the Somerset Church of Christ in this southwestern Pennsylvania coal-mining community, immediately reported their father to police.

That prompted an investigation that resulted in John Hinton, who had filled the Somerset church’s pulpit for 27 years, pleading guilty to sexually assaulting and taking nude photographs of four young girls, ages 4 to 7. The pedophile preacher, now 69, is serving a 30- to 60-year sentence in a Pennsylvania state prison.

Empowered by the #ChurchToo movement to tell her story, Howlett, 27, talked with *The Christian Chronicle* about her role in bringing her father to justice.

You’re the youngest of 11 children. I understand that you felt like you had a pretty happy childhood, but in 2011, you started having flashbacks reminding you of abuse that had occurred. What can you tell me about that?

At first I tried to shrug it off like, “Oh, that didn’t really happen.” You know what I mean? It was just bits and pieces. I didn’t have a full memory, so I couldn’t quite put it together.

Then in 2011 — I was 20 years old — my dad had asked me to help him babysit kids a couple times, take them swimming. It was the things that the kids had said that I got horrible, bad vibes from. Then I knew that something wasn’t right. And that’s when I finally put it together that, “Yes, that did happen to me.”



Alex Howlett, right, with her brother Jimmy Hinton and her mother, Clara Hinton, outside the Somerset Church of Christ in Pennsylvania.

The little bits and pieces that I remembered were real, and there was more. So I knew I had to do something about it right away to make sure it wasn’t continuing to happen to those kids or any other kids.

Did you ever confront your father or talk to him about it?

No. I only saw him once after I knew that the investigation had started. There was a wedding of a family friend that a bunch of us in the family were invited to, and it was really awkward because I was seated at the same table with my dad at that wedding.

But I knew with the investigation, if I said anything to my dad that was angry or that confronted him about it, it would possibly risk the chances of the police finding evidence. Like, he would realize, “Oh, something’s going on,” and try to hide it.

That was the last time I saw him before he was put into jail. He’s tried to write me letters a few times since then, but I didn’t respond to his letters.

Have you been able to recover, if that’s the right word, from some of this?

Yeah, I’m much better now.

When I had first put it together, I had severe PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). I started having panic attacks pretty regularly. I was suicidal. I

was severely depressed. I was in counseling. I was having nightmares.

But eventually, it was actually through yoga that I came to find my healing because of the mind-and-body connection. That was able to help me breathe and be more in the present and shut off the flashbacks when they came.

So it took a few years of where I was like severely depressed, but I feel OK now. I’m at peace with where I’m at, but I don’t see any need to

talk to my dad again. I don’t think that will help anything.

What about church? What has this experience meant for your faith?

I was going to church at the time (in 2011). I had been kind of on the fence with my beliefs for years, and then that was what really made me start to question things and change my beliefs. I haven’t been to church now for about four years. I mean, there are other reasons. That’s not the only reason. But that was a big part in questioning my beliefs, for sure.

Do you have any faith at this point? Do you believe in God?

I’m not super worried about it. I don’t particularly believe in the God of the Bible, but I’m not ruling out the existence of God totally. I just feel it’s more important to be a good person, to help other people who are struggling, than it is to have a faith that’s not really backed by action, which was a lot of what I saw with organized religion.

Is there a message that you would want people to take from reading an interview with you?

My biggest message is, if you suspect that abuse is going on, tell somebody. Don’t keep quiet. I don’t

ever regret the decision of talking about what my dad did because ultimately putting him in prison protected a lot of people moving forward.

I think that if he had never been turned in, he would have continued abusing kids until he died or until he could no longer leave

home or whatever. The reason I started talking about this is just the hope that we can protect more kids.

‘The little bits and pieces that I remembered were real, and there was more. So I knew I had to do something about it right away to make sure it wasn’t continuing to happen to those kids or any other kids.’

Alex Howlett on the flashbacks and repressed memories that led her to report the abuse she suffered as a child.



On the Salt River Pima-Maricopa reservation, served by the Salt River church, handpainted messages of encouragement are painted on a roadside barrier.



Worshippers from at least five different Native American groups, including Navajo, worship with the Salt River Church of Christ in Mesa, Ariz.

NATIVE AMERICA: Church tells troubled teens there is help — and hope

FROM PAGE 1

'WHAT DID WE DO WRONG?'

Celeste Lee grew up going to church. Her mother first encountered Christ in the courtyard of a trailer park in Tuba City, Ariz., on the vast Navajo reservation. There, a Church of Christ hosted a Vacation Bible School. Arlinda Lee rode the JOY bus to worship (an acronym for serving Jesus, others and then yourself) and was baptized at age 12. A few months later, her mother and father followed her example.

At one point in her life, "I had gone away from church a little," she said.

Suffering from depression, she underwent a nighttime Navajo ceremony in which her friends blackened her body with ash to hide her from evil spirits. A medicine man chanted prayers of protection before she was washed and covered with yellow cornmeal.

"It was kind of like a baptism" she said, but the effects didn't last.

Later, she attended the healing ceremony for her husband, Nate, where the medicine man made his fateful prediction.

Many of Arlinda Lee's cousins were as young as 17 when they had children, but she was 33 when Celeste

was born. "A lot of my friends were already grandmothers," she said.

Celeste was bright, talkative. She loved to read. In kindergarten, she won the Navajo Nation spelling bee. A year later, her teachers skipped her ahead from first to second grade.

That's when the bullying started. "They put me in a supply closet," Celeste Lee said.

She persevered — and excelled. She played trumpet in the school band. Then her family moved to Mesa, where her mother got a job as a clinical laboratory consultant. They worshiped with the Sun Valley Church of Christ in Gilbert, Ariz.

As Celeste started high school, "I noticed that her moods were swinging ... and she was showing anger, anxiety, depression," her mother said. "She'd be awake, awake, awake and full of activities." And then she'd crash.

"One second I could be fine," Celeste Lee recalled, "and then the next second I would be having a panic attack for no reason. My brain was, like, constantly looking for things to make it feel better."

She tried marijuana. She tried cutting herself. The pain forced her forgot the turmoil "for a couple of hours, or for like a second," she said, but then it all came back.

It always came back.

So, at age 15, she swallowed

handfuls of antidepressants, sleeping pills and her mom's prescription stomach medication, attempting to end her life. She spent a week in the hospital on suicide watch.

"I tried to be strong in front of her," her mother said, "but I would go home and cry and pray."

Her father struggled to understand what was happening to his little girl.

Growing up, he had been taught that Navajo men "are part of the sky, the universe," he said, and "the women are in the house; they're part of the earth. There was no interaction, even in the household."

As she watched her daughter suffer, Arlinda Lee did her best to "let God take over," she said. She read through the book of Job and prayed for answers.

"I was trying to figure out, what did we do wrong?" she said. "Why is this happening?"

'WE KNOW IT'S A LACK OF HOPE'

About five years ago, the Lees started worshipping with the Salt River Church of Christ — a congregation planted in Mesa to minister to Native Americans living in the Phoenix metro and the small reservations nearby.

Josh Austin, the church's minister, is a second-generation missionary to the Navajo. He grew up on the reservation and knows about the temptations young Native Americans endure.

High rates of poverty and unemployment, combined with a lack of access to mental health services, are factors in the suicide epidemic, he said, "but ultimately, we know it's a lack of hope. If I don't know Christ, what do I live for?"

The specter of youth suicide "is everywhere," said Austin's wife, Divine. "Kids that we don't even suspect would have depression issues or suicidal tendencies do."

One of the church's first converts, Evan Todachine, now serves as assistant minister. A Navajo who grew



Todachine

up on the reservation near the Four Corners, he understands the despair.

"You're living in a world that's saying you have got to seek material wealth, you've got to seek physical blessing,

and that what makes you happy," he said. "Well, if you grow up in a state where you don't have running water and electricity to begin with, chances are you're not going to reach those mountain peaks that you see on billboards and in magazines."

In communities plagued by domestic abuse, alcoholism and homicide, "If there is no God in the picture, it makes sense to end my life," Todachine said, "to forgo all of that pain."



Arlinda Lee



In her family's home, Celeste Lee shows a few of the many cards — encouraging her and congratulating her for graduating — she has received from Christians.

'IT HURTS, BUT WE KNOW WE'LL BE OK'

In recent years, Native American communities have developed surveillance and prevention programs, one of which resulted in a nearly 40 percent reduction in suicides among the White Mountain Apache tribe, east of Phoenix, researchers found.

Yet the epidemic remains.

Todachine believes that the love of Jesus and the sense of purpose he's found in the church can help save his people. But even for Todachine, the grandson of a Navajo medicine man, sharing his faith with young Native Americans is difficult. Many are quick to note the atrocities done to their people in the name of religion.

So Christians here seek to build personal relationships with the people they serve, through door-knocking campaigns and volunteer work in Native American communities. They distribute *House to House/Heart to Heart*, an evangelistic magazine, and "Letters 4 Life."

"No matter how dark it might seem right now, there is hope," reads the letter, printed on cardstock. "Life is precious, and our Creator gave His Son to die so that we might have life." The cards include contact information for the congregation and the national Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Church members add personal messages.

Todachine and his wife, Crystal, draw from their own grief as they



Sayles

minister to the hurting. Three months after their own baptisms in 2013, their 18-month-old son, Chase, contracted bacterial meningitis and died within a week.

Rather than abandon their newfound faith, "we just held on to the promises in the Word," the minister said. Despite the pain, "underneath everything is peace, joy, all the stuff the Bible talks about, and we're OK."

"It hurts, but we know we'll be OK."

'GOD WAS THERE FOR US'

In addition to the letters from her congregation, Celeste Lee got messages of support from across the nation. Aaron Sayles, a member of the Salt River church who teaches the teen class, contacted about 150 of his fellow alumni from Southwestern Christian College — a historically black college in Texas associated with Churches of Christ — and Oklahoma Christian University. He shared the teen's story and asked for prayers and encouragement.

"I thought African-Americans had it rough," said Sayles, who is black. "Native Americans have had it rough, too. There is a close relationship. We feel together, and that's really nice."

Notes Celeste Lee received from a Southwestern alum named Gwen were particularly touching, she said. As she read and reread the letters, her mother read book after book on understanding bipolar disorder.

"I decided to stop feeling sorry for myself and start learning about the sickness," Arlinda Lee said. "I



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGSTAD

Celeste Lee and her friends hold hands during a closing prayer at Salt River.

learned what her triggers are, what her moods are. I kept a diary. I graphed it on my computer."

And even in the darkest hours, she kept worshiping with her church.

"Arlinda has been a rock," minister Josh Austin said. "You can tell that she had nothing else besides God."

Things are better now. Mother and daughter and know each other better, though they realize they will face challenges in the years ahead.

"I actually lost a friend to suicide a year ago," Celeste Lee said. "I just wish people would not be afraid to speak up about what they're feeling."

She understands that "you're afraid you're going to set the wrong impression, afraid you're going to get hospitalized again."

Her mother can never forget the medicine man's prophecy all those years ago. But neither can she forget the almighty, benevolent Savior who has stood with her family through their trials.

In December, Celeste Lee graduated from high school — resulting in more cards of encouragement.

"It was really nice at graduation to know that God was there," Arlinda Lee said. "This is how he had planned it. And he has plans for us."

Recently, a friend at a group therapy session told her: "What happened to your daughter is a way of her saving your whole family."

Nate Lee remembers his bright little girl as a toddler — sitting in her car seat and singing the McDonald's jingle every time they passed the golden arches.

Now she's singing again.

"Sometimes I'm sitting at my desk and I can hear her," he said. "She's got a voice like her mother's."



Nate Lee



Bulldog Canyon forms part of the striking southwestern landscape of Tonto National Forest in Arizona, northeast of Mesa, home of the Salt River Church of Christ.

‘Not a white man’s religion’

ARIZONA CHURCH reaches out to Native Americans – and ‘anybody and everybody that God puts in our path’

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

MESA, Ariz.
Fry bread! Fry bread!
Mutton stew! We’ve got spirit! How about you?”
Most of the Salt River Church of Christ knows what Josh Austin is talking about when he uses the chant — a popular cheer at basketball games during his high school years — as a sermon illustration. Smiles and laughter follow.
About 75 souls have crowded into the church’s meeting space in a suburban strip mall for Sunday worship. Among them are Navajo, Hopi, Apache, Paiute, Sioux and Salt River Pima Christians.
Many of them, like their preacher, grew up on Native American reservations and moved to the Phoenix area for jobs or education. One family lives in Prescott and drives more than 100 miles to worship with the church. Other members are white, Latino and African-American.
Austin preaches on the apostle Paul’s words to the early church in Ephesians 4, a passage that stresses “one body and one Spirit ... one hope ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”
“Everywhere in society, you’re getting divided,” he tells the church. “Paul is praying that you will stay united. Now that you’re Christians, you’d better not divide over politics, over skin color.”

GROWING UP NAVAJO
Although he’s white, Austin remembers the culture shock of moving from his home on the Navajo reservation to the big city — in his case, Denver.
“How come you always look at the ground?” his classmates at the University of Denver asked him. Navajos tend to avoid eye contact as a sign of respect, he explains.
He grew up in Kayenta, Ariz., where his parents, Fred and Susan Austin, planted a Church of Christ and served for 24 years. Josh Austin went to a Navajo school and played on its state championship basketball team in 1993 — a first for a predominantly Native American team.
Josh Austin met his wife, Divine, at the university. He graduated and became branch manager for a company that sells knives. He had fallen away from church, but his office was just down the street from the Bear Valley Church of Christ. He started attending, and “I just kind of got hungry,” he recalls. He enrolled at Bear Valley Bible Institute International, which trains ministers and missionaries.
“Nah, I’m not a preacher,” he insisted to his classmates at Bear Valley. But as he continued to study, “I decided, ‘Man, this is something I could do with my life,’ and then the first thing I thought of was back home.”
The church his parents launched



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Salt River church members sing “Jesus ‘Ayóó ‘Áshó’ ni,” the Navajo translation of “Jesus Loves Me.” See a video of the song at christianchronicle.org.
had dwindled since they left in 1997, so Josh Austin and his wife moved to Kayenta to revitalize it. Later they served with a ministry training school in the African nation of Cameroon before returning again to the Navajo Nation.
As Navajo church members moved to the Phoenix metro, the Austins connected them to Churches of Christ there. But too often “they fell away,” he says — partly because of the same culture shock he felt in Denver.
“This is where everybody ends up,” he says of Phoenix and its neighboring towns, including Mesa, Gilbert and Tempe, home to at least 130,000

Native Americans. He called nearly 30 Churches of Christ in the area and identified only about 10 Native Americans worshipping in their pews.
He asked his wife, “What if we did a church plant (in Mesa) to focus on Native Americans — and anybody and everybody that God puts in our path?”
‘THEY FIND THE TRUTH AND THEY LOVE IT’
Divine Austin also knows what it’s like to be an outsider. Born in the Philippines, she moved to the U.S. when she was 8.
Despite the commonalities, sharing the Gospel with Native Americans can be difficult, she says.
“In some respects, they view it as a white man’s religion without even reading the Bible and knowing what it’s about,” she says. “Some of them will not give it a chance.”
“Those that do give it a chance, they find the truth and they love it. They change their lives, (though) sometimes it’s a slow process.”
Evan Todachine gave the church a chance.
A Navajo who grew up on the reservation, he often questioned his family’s traditional beliefs and ceremonies. In response, his elders told him “jini,” a Navajo word that means “it is said.” Much of the Navajo religion is passed down through oral tradition. To Todachine, that meant his people’s truths could be subjective.
He visited the Church of Christ in Kayenta during his teen years and came to the Salt River church after he moved to Tempe to study at



Josh Austin



Divine Austin



“It took 35 years, but I’m here!” says Will Guajardo, in rear with glasses. A Latino American, his wife, Stephanie, is a Native American Christian who waited patiently for him to accept the Gospel and be baptized. Now they bring their children and grandson to worship with the Salt River Church of Christ in Mesa, Ariz.

Arizona State University.

As he studied the Scriptures, he saw that “there is a standard,” he says. He and his wife, Crystal, were baptized and later studied at Bear Valley. Evan Todachine now serves as the church’s assistant minister.

When sharing the Gospel with Native Americans, “automatically, you are chips down before you come to them,” Evan Todachine says. They ask, “If this is the book you want to convert me to, why then were my people murdered? Why was my tribe murdered in the claim that this is what God wants? I’m not going to worship that God.

“My grandparents, our grandparents, they were the kids that were stripped from the family, put into boarding schools and told, ‘You need to stop being natives.’ ‘Kill the Indian, save the man,’ (it was) said at the time. That was the thinking.”

When Christians share their faith with their Native American friends, “not only are we trying to convert them to Christ, we’re having to separate what they experienced in the name of Christianity before we even open up the Bible. Yeah, that evil was done, and I’m sorry, but just give me a chance, and let me show you what true Christianity is — not a white man’s religion. It started in the Middle East.”

‘BE A PART OF YOUR CULTURE, BUT GIVE GLORY TO GOD’

Native Americans — and people from a variety of other ethnicities — are responding to the church’s message.

On Sunday, as Navajo Christian Stenson Osif leads hymns, a young Native American couple, baptized two weeks ago, sings along. Two rows ahead is a small group of white Christians — residents of a housing community across the street from the shopping center, also recent converts.

“Everybody is accepted. Everybody is taught,” says Joanne Pigg, who worshiped with a church in Tempe before moving to Salt River two years ago. “I love it. I love the spirit, the heart.”

Aaron Sayles, a longtime member of the Tonto Church of Christ in Phoenix, began worshiping with Salt River after it launched. He has helped with outreach efforts and door-knocking campaigns in the nearby Salt River Pima–Maricopa Indian Community.

“It’s just amazing that God led me here because I fit right in,” Sayles says. “God has brought us all together to work in his church.”

Mixing the church’s diverse cultures can be a challenge, Josh Austin says. He wants the church’s members to be proud of their heritage and to participate in their family traditions when they can — whether it be a Navajo celebration of a baby’s first laugh or other rites of passage.

His message: “Be a part of your culture, but give the glory to God.”

Evan Todachine puts it this way: “You can claim to be whatever you want in life, but it’s your actions. They’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our fruit.”

WEBSITE: saltriverchurch.com

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BAHAMAS

FREEPORT — Churches of Christ in the Bahamas were blessed by a lack of severe storms during the past hurricane season, allowing them to make repairs from previous storms, said missionary David Caskey.



Miller

Caskey and his wife, Dinah, work with 15 congregations in the Bahamas.

Each “continues to move at a good pace,” he said. “We are delighted with the growth and the continued studies and baptisms.”

But churches also suffered losses, including the recent death of James Miller, an elder and minister for the Freeport congregation. He was 58.

“He was a wonderful man and a great influence on the church all over the islands,” Caskey said.

CAMBODIA

KAMPONG CHAM — Bill Singleton and his wife, Tang, traveled to this Southeast Asian nation to meet with evangelists during a ministry training session. The couple’s work spans 18 years in Cambodia and has produced more than 4,000 baptisms and 60 Churches of Christ.

“We had left the Cambodian outreach in the good hands of natives I had trained,” Bill Singleton said, “and we feel good about their accomplishments in the work, but the rate of growth has slowed over the last few years.”

During the trip, the couple encouraged Cambodian ministers and took part in 14 baptisms. The Melrose Church of Christ in New Mexico sponsors the work.

COSTA RICA

HEREDIA — It was a sad-yet-exciting day in the life of the Heredia Church of Christ, which meets about 20 minutes from this Central American nation’s capital, San Jose.

Members of the metropolitan congregation prayerfully decided to sell their meeting place and move to a rented space. The reason: Their facility is too small. Attendance has reached a cap of 125 to 150 on Sundays, said minister Carlos Ulate.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY GREG ELANGWE

In a troubled land, youths turn to God’s word

Young members of the Wotutu Church of Christ in Cameroon hurriedly page through their Bibles to find a verse called out by their teacher. The exercise keeps them fluent in God’s word, said Greg Elangwe, director of the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Cameroon, Wotutu. English-speaking portions of this West African nation are embroiled in a conflict between government and separatist forces. “Insecurity is still high,” Elangwe said, “but our God is watching over his own and we are ever grateful to him.” The church recently produced and aired radio broadcasts on the topic of forgiveness.

Ulate recently invited Bob Young, a



Ulate

longtime missionary to Spanish-speaking countries, to conduct a weeklong evangelism seminar.

“We identified a new team of 10 to 12 members committed to evangelism,” Young said. “The church has

birthed seven cell groups, currently meeting in homes, that are moving toward becoming churches in various suburbs around San Jose.”

SENEGAL

MARSASSOUM — A new Church of Christ was born recently in this West African village in Senegal, a predominantly Muslim nation of 15.9 million souls.

Minister Arnold Dzah sends gospel radio broadcasts throughout the country with support from One Kingdom (formerly World Radio), a church-supported nonprofit. Dzah includes a phone number in the broadcasts for Bible studies.

Villagers from Marsassoum



Dzah

responded, and an evangelist baptized seven people.

About 10 other Churches of Christ meet across the country with a combined attendance of about 575, Dzah said, adding that only three have adequate meeting places.

TANZANIA

MBEYA — In this East African country, members of the Iyunga Church of Christ recently



Mwakasungula

conducted Bible training sessions for 63 students in the town of Mbeya and 57 students in the village of Mlowo. “We had a good time representing the truth of God’s Word for all the students and their friends,” said minister Samuel A. Mwakasungula.

SPOTLIGHT

‘Tell Christianity to find you a job!’

NOTRE DAME, Mauritius — Nearly half of the inhabitants of this tiny island nation in the Indian Ocean, 700 miles east of Madagascar, are Hindu.

Becoming a Christ-follower here can mean estrangement from family.

Such was the case for a young man named Kannen, who was baptized recently. As a result, he got “rejected a lot” by his relatives, said Camden Subarayadu, who ministers for a Church of Christ.

Jobs can be difficult to find for young people in Mauritius. For four years, Kannen had tried to join the local police force or enlist in his country’s military. He was continually rejected, Subarayadu said.

His grandmother — jokingly and somewhat bitterly — said, “Tell Christianity to find you a job!”

Soon, “our Almighty God had done exactly that,” Subarayadu said. “Kannen has entered the army, and he will be training for six months.”

And not all of Kannen’s relatives rejected him. His older brother, Kesaven, recently was baptized.

“We all are rejoicing for our two brothers and how they are living their lives, bringing glory to Jesus Christ,” Subarayadu said. “Praise be to God.”



PHOTO PROVIDED

Camden Subarayadu, right, prays for Kesaven after his baptism in the island nation of Mauritius.



JAMES RUCKER

Medical missionaries evacuated in Haiti

Nine members of a Haitian Christian Development Project medical mission team board a helicopter in Gonaïves, Haiti, for a flight to the capital, Port-au-Prince. The 38-member team was comprised of members of Churches of Christ from Arkansas and other locales. One day after they arrived, “unbeknownst to our team, massive anti-government protests broke out,” said team member Kevin Linderman, who works with Searcy, Ark.-based International Health Care Foundation. In recent weeks, people in the impoverished nation of Haiti have protested against their government amidst charges of corruption. See updates at christianchronicle.org.

Churches of Christ and Christchurch: Prayers, unity sought after N.Z. attacks

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described it as “one of New Zealand’s darkest days” — a sentiment echoed by members of Churches of Christ in the South Pacific nation of 4.8 million souls.

At least 49 people were killed and 20 seriously injured, in a terror attack targeting two mosques in Christchurch, a city on New Zealand’s South Island.

Aaron Knotts, senior minister for the the Dunedin Church of Christ, asked for prayers for all those affected by the violence. The church meets about 200 miles south of Christchurch.

Knotts quoted words from the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel that tell of the Lord’s supremacy and justice.

At press time, a man in his late 20s was charged with murder for the attacks, which happened as Muslims



Knotts

gathered for Friday prayers. The attacks appeared to be carefully planned, police said. The suspect left a lengthy racist manifesto where he outlined a white supremacist motivation for the attack and described the victims as “invaders,” BuzzFeed News reports.

Justin Cherry, an American minister serving in New Zealand’s largest city, Auckland, posted the following to social media:

“Concerning the recent attacks in Christchurch, I have lots of words, but that is not what is needed right now. Now is a time to listen to the hurting and to show them love.

“Let’s be a pathway to unity and peace today. Sending love to our Muslim friends throughout the world. May we all be better. May we all do better.”

UPDATES: christianchronicle.org



Cherry



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KINDNESS: In the wrong hands, a gift can 'cause more harm than good'

FROM PAGE 3

of the wealth he acquired, found himself uninspired and chronically depressed. Inspired by the film "The Motorcycle Diaries," he quit his job and became a globe trekker, motivational speaker and philanthropist.

In "The Kindness Diaries," Logothetis travels on a shoestring budget, relying on strangers who offer him places to stay. He rewards their acts of charity with his own acts of benevolence.

The Beckloffs appear in Season 2, Episode 6, "The Gift of Shelter." In a phone interview with the *Chronicle*, Logothetis said he was impressed by the couple's selflessness and faith.

A HUGE GIFT, AND A HUGE RESPONSIBILITY

Logothetis met the Beckloffs after spending the previous night in his yellow Volkswagen near the Costa Rica/Panama border. The encounter happened in April 2018, but the Beckloffs promised not to speak of it until the second season was released on Netflix in late February.



Logothetis

In the episode, Logothetis told the Beckloffs, "I sense there is a deep love and a deep kindness in both of your hearts." Ken Beckloff responded, "Well, that's kind of what we spent our lives doing."

The couple, married for 52 years, spent more than a decade evangelizing and church planting in Mombasa, Kenya, before moving to Oklahoma City to serve in international ministry with the Memorial Road Church of Christ. In 2015 they retired to Panama and began working with the El Valle Church of Christ.

From an early age, Pat Beckloff told Logothetis, she realized that the blessings she's received — blessings of comfort and relative affluence compared to the rest of the world — require her to give back and "not to live as affluently as I could live."

Logothetis gave the couple the option to receive a life-changing gift — or to help him find someone to receive it instead.



VIDEO STILL VIA NETFLIX

They immediately chose the latter. "This is so exciting. I just can't get

my mind around it," Pat Beckloff said. "But it's also a really big responsibility because we all know that if you give it to the wrong person, it can cause more harm than good."

'I LACK WORDS TO EXPRESS THE LOVE'

After discussing and praying about the decision, the couple led Logothetis to the home of Cleo Pérez, a leader of the El Valle church and manager of Butterfly Haven, a tourist attraction in the town. Pérez welcomed the couple when they moved to Panama, Ken Beckloff said, and his rented home constantly was "full of people who needed a place to stay."

When the episode was filmed, Pérez was living on a rocky mountainside in a tiny, ramshackle home with his wife, Chanet, their son, Kaliler, and their daughter, Anaydili. The family had to share one bed.

Despite the poverty, "they were very happy, very kind, very welcoming," Logothetis told the *Chronicle*.

That's how other missionaries in Panama know them, said Lisa Carter, who has served with her husband, David, in the Central

American nation for 12 years.

"Cleo is known for his joyful spirit and smile," Carter said, adding that she was thrilled to see his family highlighted on the Netflix show.

Augustus Kimanzi watched clips from the show in Mombasa, Kenya, where he preaches for the Likoni Church of Christ. Seeing his longtime friends, the Beckloffs, and learning of their act of kindness brought him to tears, he said.



Kimanzi

Beckloffs: "God knows why he sent you to Panama."

'I HAVE BECOME A MAN OF FAITH'

"They really spent a lot of time with us," Ken Beckloff said of Logothetis and the show's crew. "It was interesting to see what they included and had to leave out. They

did an excellent job getting the heart of the conversations."

In the months that followed the filming, Logothetis wired money to the Pérez family, who sent him photos and construction updates. The episode ends with pictures of the Pérezes preparing for their first meal in their newly refurbished home — along with the Beckloffs and other guests.

Cleo Pérez told the *Chronicle* that the new house will serve as a place "to have a night of prayers." His family also plans to host devotionals and dinners for their community.

"We want our home to continue to be for the Lord's work," he said. "This gift shows us his love and his mercy toward my family. We may have many difficulties, (but we're) never abandoned. God's plan is perfect."

As he travels, Logothetis often is asked, "Are you religious?" he told the *Chronicle*.

"Religious? No. But I have become a man of faith because of these journeys," he said. "You can't do these journeys unless you feel connected in some way to a higher power."

WEBSITE: leonlogothetis.com



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Seated among his classmates, Ron Wright, reacts to a certificate of recognition presented by Oklahoma Christian University President John deSteiguer.

After 50 years, an apology

OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY *asks forgiveness of former students, arrested and expelled on racially tinged charges.*

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

OKLAHOMA CITY

They left campus in handcuffs. Fifty years later, they returned to a standing ovation.

Seven former students, expelled and removed by police from the campus of what is now Oklahoma Christian University, were the guests of honor as the 2,000-student school, associated with Churches of Christ, acknowledged a bleak chapter in its past.

On March 6, 1969, in the midst of civil rights demonstrations and protests against the Vietnam War, 18 Oklahoma Christian students — the vast majority of them black — were arrested for trespassing in Benson Hall, their college's administration building. Demonstrations were not allowed on campus, the school's

leaders said, though administrators have since acknowledged that the accusations were racially based.

Exactly five decades after the arrests, the university celebrated the "Oklahoma Christian 18" in a Wednesday night "Commemoration of the Benson Hall Sit-In." Seven of the original 18 students attended.

Some had not set foot on the school's campus since the incident.

John deSteiguer, the university's seventh and current president, spoke about the institution's history in race relations.

Some stories were inspiring. During the civil rights era the school's chorale, led by professor Harold Fletcher, was denied the chance to sing in a church building because one chorale member, George Shirley, was black. So the students gathered in front of the building and sang, "*We are one in*

the spirit, we are one in the Lord."

The song leader: George Shirley. Other stories were shameful. For those, deSteiguer made apologies.

"I apologize that this institution did not allow black students to enroll until 1961," deSteiguer said.

"That is wrong," he added, pausing after each word. Scattered voices in the audience joined him.

Then, stepping away from the podium and turning toward the seven former students on stage, he said, "And to you, as president of Oklahoma Christian University, I apologize for the way that you all were treated 50 years ago this morning."

From his seat next to the podium, assistant dean of students Gary Jones



Jones

Jr. watched as deSteiguer spoke. Jones, who facilitates the university's Black Student Union, worked for months to help make the event a reality.

"I looked across the stage and saw seven people who had been waiting for 50 years," Jones said. At the moment of the apology, "it was almost like a collective exhale. Everybody's body language changed."

Don Wilson, one of the seven, has rarely spoken about his arrest and expulsion in the past half-century, he told *The Christian Chronicle*. After the incident he returned home to Hartford, Conn., and began working for a bank where he had worked the summer before.



Wilson

CONTINUED

After 50 years, an apology

CONTINUED

That turned into a 22-year career. Only in social settings — when party games and ice-breakers included questions like “Have you ever been arrested?” — would he grudgingly acknowledge what happened, speaking only in snippets: “It was the 60s. It was a demonstration.” The apology “helped me to sort of clear that blockage that I had in my mind,” Wilson said. He hadn’t seen his classmates in 50 years, and learning how much the incident hurt them let him know that he wasn’t alone. “It was basically like a cleansing,” Wilson said. Now “I’m able to speak about it. I’m able to not be ashamed of what happened.”

THE ‘GATHERING’ AND THE ‘SIT-IN’

What happened wasn’t a demonstration, said Ron Wright, one of the 18 students arrested and expelled from what was then Oklahoma Christian College. It was, rather, an attempt by the students to discuss an event that had happened days earlier — an event equally mischaracterized by the administration, he said. Wright, a longtime college president, minister and elder of the Gray Road Church of Christ in Cincinnati, and his fellow former students told their stories during a panel discussion with Oklahoma Christian’s current students a few hours before the apology. In early March, 1969, they explained, a group of students gathered at a home off campus to celebrate a friend’s new baby. They had signed out of their dormitories



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

Terri Mays, a member of the 1st and Georgia Church of Christ in Chickasha, Okla., sings during the remembrance.

for the weekend, as the rules required. Word reached the administration that the students had been at a party, against school rules and that some of the attendees were white females. The college didn’t forbid interracial dating, the former students said, but the parents of both boyfriend and girlfriend had to approve. The students learned that the “party” was to result in expulsions — something they viewed as a gross overreaction. It had happened off campus while they were signed out, some argued. The college should have no jurisdiction. And it wasn’t a party. Wright — who had been out of town and didn’t attend the “gathering,” as the students called it — was asked by his classmates to talk to the administration. Their hope was that his strong roots in Churches of Christ would help ease the tension, he said. Early Thursday morning, March 6, Wright and the concerned students walked to Benson Hall. A few others joined them on the way, including Wilson. He had a check to cash, so he

followed the group into the building, which also housed the business office. Inside, the college’s then-president, James O. Baird, met the students with an ultimatum: Sit-ins are against the college’s rules. Leave in 10 minutes or be arrested. Some of the students dispersed. Others, including Wright, stayed. As staffers prepared to call police, Wright pleaded with Baird, “This is your opportunity to show the world how Christians act by talking to us and by forgiving the students who were dismissed yesterday.” Soon, Oklahoma City police cars arrived. Some of the students were handcuffed, including Billy Brooks, a standout on the college’s basketball team. Others rode, uncuffed, in the front seats with police. Some of the officers expressed bewilderment as to why they’d been called, the former students said. At the jail, men and women were separated, said Patricia McCauley Kimbro, the only female of the 18 to return for the commemoration. She remembered sharing a cell with two Native American women, but she could hear some of her male classmates not far away, crying.



Kimbro

Fifteen of the students pleaded guilty to trespassing, *The Oklahoman* newspaper reported. One was dismissed on a technicality — a typo on the police intake form. Two posted and forfeited the \$20 bail charge. For years, rumors circulated that Fletcher, the music professor, had quietly arranged for the bail money.



PHOTO ABOVE AND YEARBOOK PHOTOS (BOTTOM) PROVIDED BY OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Seven former students returned to Oklahoma Christian for the Benson Hall remembrance. They are, from left, Earl Lewis, Michael Baldwin, Billy Brooks, Donald Wilson, Patricia McCauley Kimbro, Robert Edison and Ron Wright.

The hardest part, the students said, was calling their parents. “I was three to four weeks from graduation, and all of a sudden my school was taken away from me,” Brooks said. “It was like my freedom was taken away from me.”

THE AFTERMATH AND THE HATE

Once released, the students were given less than an hour to collect their things and leave campus, the students said. The Oklahoma City chapter of the NAACP, led by civil rights activist Clara Luper, helped some of the out-of-state students find temporary housing. Two of the expelled students were white females, one of them from California. Kimbro, who lived in an off-campus apartment, housed both of them for about four nights as they prepared for the journey home.

“I got a lot of hate calls for that,” she told the *Chronicle*. Her parents persuaded her to spend the summer with family in Chicago before returning to study at Oklahoma State University. The students found it extremely difficult to get access to their Oklahoma Christian transcripts, they said. Some, including Wilson, never returned to higher ed. One student, Michael Baldwin, was drafted into the military 30 days after he was expelled. Some of the former students had friends obtain copies of their grades and send them to other institutions. Wright transferred to another school associated with Churches of Christ, Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., and later earned a doctorate from Cornell University. After his arrest — and before returning to his family in Connecticut

— Wilson went back to Oklahoma Christian’s campus and stayed there through the end of the semester, living in a friend’s dorm room and eating in the college’s cafeteria. No one seemed to mind, he said.

THE FUNERAL AND THE REMEMBRANCE

In the past five decades, Oklahoma Christian students have heard only vague details about the incident, several alumni told the *Chronicle*. That includes Jones, the son of a longtime minister for the predominantly black Eastside Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. A graduate of Oklahoma Christian, he began working for the school about seven years ago. His goal: To make the campus more inclusive and sensitive to the needs of its minority students. He heard through a friend that

Wright — who had stayed in touch with the university and had even spoken during its Black Heritage Week in 2002 — had expressed disbelief about Jones taking the job. “At the time I thought, ‘How dare he,’” Jones said. “Now I look back and see that, in his own way, he was attempting to prepare me for my work.” In June 2017, the campus mourned the loss of Harold Fletcher, who died at 93. At his funeral, stories about the Benson Hall incident resurfaced. The stories inspired the university’s current president, deSteiguer, and Jones to look for ways to right an old wrong as its 50th anniversary approached. Risa Forrester, the university’s chief communications officer, and staff members attempted to contact each of the 18 former students. Four had died. Six did not respond. One, James Burris, didn’t come for the remembrance but visited campus and spoke about the incident on video. The remaining seven agreed to attend, including Wright. “If nobody came but me and Billy, I was coming,” he said. “I’m ecstatic — delighted unbelievably — to be here.” On the night of the apology, “it was hard for me to come to any other conclusion but that God was in that place,” Jones said.

THE APOLOGY AND THE VOICE

Despite the negative encounter on a Christian college campus, Wilson said his faith never wavered. He still worships with the Northside Church of Christ, a 90-member congregation in

Hartford. He regrets that the arrests may have given his classmates who weren’t from Churches of Christ a negative impression of the fellowship. “My grandmother and my parents were members of the church,” he told the *Chronicle*. They taught him to “never allow the things of this world to separate you from the word of God.” Kimbro, who now lives in Atlanta, said she was thankful for the long-overdue apology, though she had long ago moved on from the ugly incident. “I let the past be the past,” she said. “Life is too short to hold a grudge. I refuse to walk through life carrying a bag of rocks on my back.” As the service concluded, the seven former students gave a standing ovation of their own to Elise Miller, a sophomore at Oklahoma Christian. Miller, from Dallas, is a journalism major and a *Chronicle* intern. “But more than that,” she told the audience, “I am the manifestation of a dream, a prayer, and a movement. I am a product of a group of students, deciding 50 years ago today that they would do something far greater than themselves. “Fifty years ago today, I wonder where I would have stood. In a jail cell? In solidarity with my brothers and sisters? Or maybe in my dorm room too afraid to come outside. “Regardless, 50 years later I have a voice, and I intend to use it for good.”



Read the series: christianchronicle.org



Miller



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BALDWIN, MCGUIRE, GRIFFITH, REYNOLDS

Honoring the Oklahoma Christian 18

ON THE MORNING of March 6, 1969, dozens of Oklahoma Christian College students flooded Benson Hall with hopes of speaking to then-president James O. Baird. Among their grievances was the recent dismissal of 14 students, most of them black, accused of

violating curfew rules by attending an all-night party. They felt the punishment was racially motivated, as white students caught staying out too late were not immediately removed from the college. Instead of meeting with the students, Baird told them they had five minutes to leave, or else they would be arrested. While a handful of students close to graduation or with difficult family situations

decided to leave, the 18 who remained were arrested and booked into the Oklahoma County Jail on trespassing complaints. Sixteen of the 18 arrested were black. AS THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY of the incident approached, Oklahoma Christian University officials reached out to the 18 former students and apologized for disrupting and altering their lives forever.

- Four of the students had died:
- Chandler Jackson
 - Shannon Jones
 - Carl Love
 - Laquetta Lusk



Jones

Five of the students could not be found or did not respond to the university’s invitation:

- Johnnie Marie Allen

- Loren Fisk
- Thomas Griffith
- Maureen McGuire
- Sarah Reynolds



Smith

Administrators also were unable to find former student Paula Smith, but a relative saw coverage of the remembrance and has reached out to the university.

Seven of the students returned to campus and participated in the remembrance ceremony:

- Michael Baldwin
- Billy Brooks
- Robert Edison
- Earl Lewis
- Patricia Kimbro
- Donald Wilson
- Ron Wright



Lewis



Wright

See related videos at christianchronicle.org.

CAMPUS MINISTRY

AUBURN CHRISTIAN STUDENT CENTER

AUBURN, Ala. — Members of the Auburn Christian Student Center planned to travel to historic Williamsburg, Va., during spring break but changed plans to help in recovery efforts after tornadoes devastated nearby communities in Lee County including Beauregard. Other members of the campus ministry and its sponsoring congregation, the Auburn Church of Christ, joined in the debris removal and cleanup.

"We are thankful (to) have been able to serve our neighbors this week," the ministry posted to social media. "Keep the folks in the Beauregard community in your prayers."

HIGHER EDUCATION

HARDING UNIVERSITY

SEARCY, Ark. — Harding, in cooperation with PwC, formerly known as PricewaterhouseCoopers, and the family of Botham Jean, has established the Botham Jean Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Jean, a 2016 Harding alumnus originally from the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia, was shot to death by an off-duty police officer in his Dallas apartment on Sept. 6, 2018. The officer, Amber Guyger, was fired and awaits trial on a murder charge.

Jean, a 26-year-old risk assurance associate with PwC, was a teacher, song leader and occasional preacher for the Dallas West Church of Christ, his home congregation.



Jean

RADIO MINISTRY

WORLD CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING

FRANKLIN, Tenn. — When Maurice Hall served in the U.S. Army, he was involved in setting up and shipping shortwave radio equipment for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's use at Yalta in 1945.

Hall came up with the idea of transmitting the Gospel all over the world via shortwave radio.

That vision became World Christian Broadcasting, a ministry associated with Churches of Christ that broadcasts from two stations, blanketing the globe with faith-based programming in multiple languages.

Hall died March 8 at his home in California, three days after his 99th birthday. In addition to his radio work, he served as a minister and as a missionary in the Philippines and Vietnam.



Hall



A packed auditorium listens as Jeremie Beller, congregational minister for the Wilshire Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, delivers a Saturday morning keynote, "That They May All Be One," during the Affirming the Faith seminar.

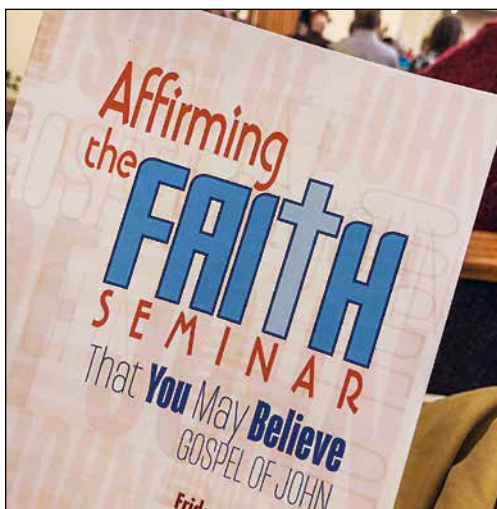
Affirming the Faith

OKLAHOMA CITY — Hundreds of Christians shared a weekend of fellowship, gospel messages and Bible classes at the recent Affirming the Faith seminar, hosted by the North MacArthur Church of Christ.

The seminar is an effort by Oklahoma congregations "to provide a day of teaching on important matters of faith," according to the seminar's website.

"That You May Believe: Gospel of John" was the theme. Melvin Otey, associate professor of law at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., spoke on "The Trial of Jesus." Other speakers included Bruce McLarty, Howard Norton, Denny Petrillo, Steve Higginbotham and Steve Cloer.

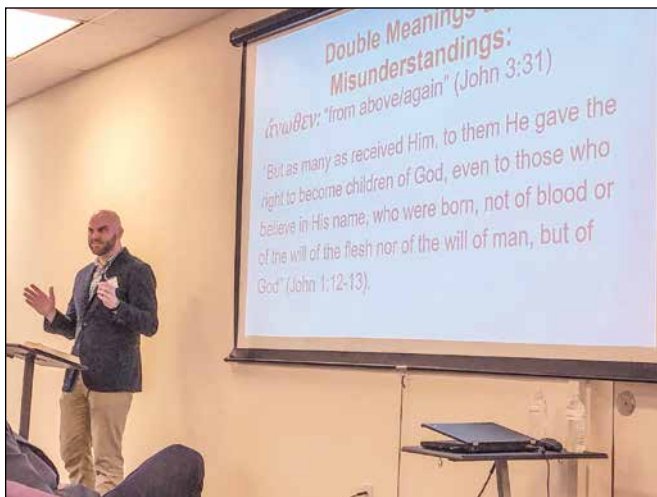
Listen to audio from the keynotes and classes online at www.affirmingthefaitbok.com.



PHOTOS BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD



Melvin Otey of Faulkner University discusses the illegalities of the trial of Jesus.



Travis Bookout, preaching minister for the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Monroe, La., teaches a class on Nicodemus.



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.

COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH • ATHLETIC TRAINING. Seeking a full-time, twelve-month faculty member to serve as the clinical education coordinator within a CAATE accredited athletic training program. Candidates holding a doctoral degree (or willingness to immediately pursue a doctoral degree) are preferred. Minimum qualifications include a master's degree, athletic training certification and two years clinical experience. At least two years teaching experience within a CAATE accredited athletic training program is also preferred. This is a non-clinical position. Responsibilities will include didactic instruction, as well as coordination and assessment of clinical education.

Submit application materials to Brian Cox, athletic training director, at bhcox@harding.edu or HU Box 12281, Searcy, AR 72149.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES • ART & DESIGN. Seeking a full-time faculty member qualified to teach foundation studio classes, art history, and art education. Coursework and/or experience in animation is desirable. The candidate should have at least three years of experience teaching art in a K-12 environment but not necessarily in both elementary and high school settings. It is desirable that the candidate be TESS trained (teacher evaluation and support system). The candidate must have at least a master's degree, but the M.F.A., Ph.D., Ed.D. or other relevant terminal degree is preferred.

Submit application materials to Dr. John Keller, department chair, at jkeller@harding.edu or HU Box 12253, Searcy, AR 72149.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES • MUSIC. Seeking a full-time, nine-month faculty member to begin Aug. 1, 2019, in the area of instrumental conducting. The successful candidate will have minimum of a master's degree in instrumental conducting, music education, or a closely related field. A doctorate is preferred but not required. Experience teaching in higher education or secondary education is desirable. Primary responsibilities include conducting, administering and recruiting for the wind ensemble, orchestra and other ensembles based on the candidate's qualifications and strengths. Other teaching duties as assigned. Experience teaching low brass or strings preferred but not required. Wind band conducting experience is desired.

Submit application materials to Dr. Wesley Parker, instrumental conducting search committee chair, at wparker@harding.edu or HU Box 10767, Searcy, AR 72149.

PAUL R. CARTER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION • ACCOUNTING. Seeking a full-time faculty member to begin Fall 2019. Preference will be given to a Ph.D. in accounting, a master's degree with at least 18 hours of accounting, and/or significant accounting experience. The Paul R. Carter College of Business Administration is committed to the promotion of free markets and economic freedom.

Submit application materials to Dr. Phil Brown, department chair, at pbrown@harding.edu or HU Box 10774, Searcy, AR 72149.

CARR COLLEGE OF NURSING. Seeking a full-time faculty member in the Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner track to begin August 2019. Applicants should maintain an active nursing license, be eligible for RN and APRN licensing in the state of Arkansas, have an M.S.N., be nationally certified as a family nurse practitioner, and have work experience in a primary care practice. A candidate with a Ph.D., D.N.P. or related doctoral degree is preferred, and experienced, qualified applicants currently pursuing a doctoral degree will be considered. The successful candidate is expected to work collaboratively in shared governance with the administration and faculty of the College of Nursing, teach hybrid online courses and demonstrate a willingness to participate in a culture of continuous quality improvement in accreditation implementation. The College of Nursing encourages applicants who are willing to facilitate exceptional distance and face-to-face student learning environments, value mentoring and advising students, and are willing to engage in service for the university, profession and community. Applicants will be expected to pursue scholarly interests and engage students in these activities.

Submit application materials to Dr. Susan Kehl, dean, at skehl@harding.edu or HU Box 12265, Searcy, AR 72149.

COLLEGE OF SCIENCES • ENGINEERING AND PHYSICS. Seeking a full-time faculty member in physics. Candidates with a Ph.D. in physics or a closely related field are preferred. The primary responsibilities for this position include curriculum development and teaching of undergraduate lecture and laboratory courses.

Submit application materials to Dr. Zane Gastineau, department chair, at zgastineau@harding.edu or HU Box 12290, Searcy, AR 72149.

Additional openings are available in the following areas:

COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH • COMMUNICATION SCIENCES & DISORDERS

PAUL R. CARTER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION • FINANCE • MARKETING/MANAGEMENT

PAUL R. CARTER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS • ONLINE ADJUNCT

CANNON-CLARY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION • GENERAL EDUCATION

RENAMING: Family questions decades-old allegation

FROM PAGE 3

donation after previous seven-figure support of the university's Bible and engineering programs.

Students greeted deSteiguer's announcement of the newly renamed Baugh Auditorium — already dubbed the "Baughditorium" — with a standing ovation.



Jeffries

Ansel Jeffries, a sophomore from Grand Rapids, Mich., said the name change was "a smart move." The auditorium's previous namesake, N.B. Hardeman, made great contributions to Christian education, Jeffries said, but after learning about the statement attributed to Hardeman, "I'm glad we were able to make a change."

QUESTIONS RAISED

In 1966, Oklahoma Christian dedicated the 1,175-seat auditorium in memory of Hardeman, whom the university's website had characterized as "a great preacher among churches of Christ in the early part of the 20th century and a longtime president of Freed-Hardeman College."

But in more recent times, some students, faculty members and alumni raised questions about whether Hardeman was a racist.

"As I learned more and more about the levels of concern that people had, I thought: Hospitality and welcoming people are such important core values of this institution that we probably needed to make a change," deSteiguer told *The Christian Chronicle*. "We had a really wonderful gift from a very special couple ... and it was a really good situation to put a name on the auditorium of some special, devoted Christians."

Minority and international students comprise roughly one-third of Oklahoma Christian's total enrollment of nearly 2,300.

In an article titled "Negro Meetings for White People" in the March 1941



Hardeman



OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

The former Hardeman Auditorium, now the "Baughditorium," is the setting for Oklahoma Christian's annual Spring Sing. Pictured are the women of Iota Kappa Phi social club as they perform a "Scooby Doo" routine during the 2019 show.

edition of the *Bible Banner*, prominent preacher Foy Wallace wrote: "When N.B. Hardeman held the valley-wide meeting at Harlingen, Texas, some misguided brethren brought a group of negroes up to the front to be introduced to and shake hands with him. Brother Hardeman told them publicly that he could see all of the colored brethren he cared to see on the outside after services, and that he could say everything to them that he wanted to say without the formality of shaking hands. I think he was right. He told of a prominent brother in the church who went wild over the negroes and showed them such social courtesies that one day one of the negroes asked him if he might marry his daughter. That gave the brother a jolt and he changed his attitude!"



Foster

Douglas A. Foster, director of the Center for Restoration Studies at Abilene Christian University in Texas, said the statement attributed to Hardeman was "typical of the overtly racist attitudes of the day, including the reference to black men as sexual predators and the specter of miscegenation."

"Hardeman, like virtually all the

white leaders of our churches and schools, bought wholly into white supremacist ideology, and it was manifested throughout all his dealings with people," Foster said. Oklahoma Christian officials quietly removed the Hardeman name from the auditorium over the Christmas break, a fact first reported by the student newspaper *The Talon* in late January.

GREAT-GRANDSON OBJECTS

Brad Bradshaw, a great-grandson of Hardeman, was attending the 83rd annual Bible lectureship at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., when he heard the news. The university is named after former presidents A.G. Freed and Hardeman.

Bradshaw, 62, a member of the Buford Church of Christ in Georgia, told the *Chronicle* that nothing in his great-grandfather's life, actions or works "supports any kind of disunity in the church. On the contrary, he was in favor of unity." The great-grandson

said older relatives who knew Hardeman well and are still living witnessed no hint of racial prejudice. "The allegations that my great-grandfather was a racist are a complete lie," said Bradshaw, who was 9 years old when Hardeman died at age 91 in 1965. "It upset me, and it upset the family."

The great-grandson said he has questions about the quote attributed to his great-grandfather. Even if it could be proven that Hardeman said what Wallace reported he did, Bradshaw said, the circumstances matter.

"It sounds to me like it was right before the lesson started and that my great-grandfather was concentrating on the lesson and that he did not have time to greet people before the lesson," Bradshaw said. "So it could very well have been ... that it had nothing to do with the fact that these brethren were black."

Although his family gave money toward Oklahoma Christian's auditorium, Bradshaw said, they have no problem with the name change.

"But don't make up a lie," he said, describing the Wallace report as "one contrived incident" and suggesting that bringing up the allegation decades later promotes Christian disunity, "which is sinful."

FHU PRESIDENT VOICES REGRET

Officials at Freed-Hardeman University declined to comment on Oklahoma Christian's decision.

However, FHU President David Shannon addressed racial issues at the recent Bible lectureship, responding to an evening keynote sermon by prominent African-American minister Eugene Lawton. Lawton's message, taken from Exodus 22:21-27, addressed how "liberation from injustice was needed in Egypt then, and liberation from injustice is needed now in America," according

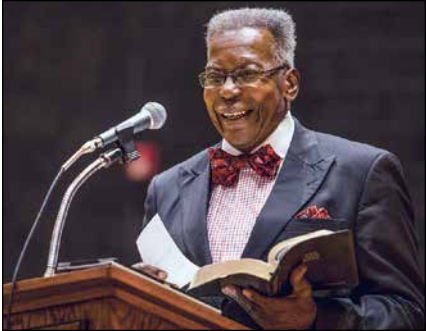


PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE BRAMBLETT GROUP

Eugene Lawton, minister for the Newark Church of Christ in New Jersey, delivers a keynote at Freed-Hardeman.



HAYLEY BENTLEY

Benton and Paula Baugh unveil the new name of Oklahoma Christian’s auditorium.

to the online program.

Shannon voiced regret for “so many injustices that we simply cannot explain.”

“We regret the violent times of the Civil War and civil rights (era) — times of prejudice and cruel hatred,” Shannon told the lectureship crowd. “I regret times that we settled to be nice yet to be separate.”

“We regret that many of our Christian schools only opened the doors to all races when our government tied their funding — federal funding — to this discussion,” he added. “There’s no way to explain that away, to make it right. It’s just not. For this I’m sorry.”

“For remarks or actions or even lack of actions in our past, for the real lack of honoring God and God’s creation, I’m sorry. We won’t seek to rewrite history or defend wrongdoing.”



Shannon

CIVIL RIGHTS HEROES

In recent years, universities associated with Churches of Christ have taken steps aimed at racial reconciliation — from Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., awarding an honorary doctorate to Fred Gray, a civil rights attorney who once sued Lipscomb, to Abilene Christian launching a center on race studies

and spiritual action. At Oklahoma Christian, an annual “History Speaks” series brings civil rights icons such as Gray, former Atlanta mayor Andrew Young and Terrence Roberts and Carlotta Walls LaNier of the Little Rock Nine to campus.

“It’s been a priority for us to bring in heroes who we could learn from and be with as we try to make this a more welcoming community for folks,” deSteiguer said.

Benton and Paula Baugh — the Oklahoma Christian auditorium’s new namesakes — have been active in Houston-area efforts to bring Christians of all races together, including an annual citywide Campaign for Christ and Day of Good Works.



Smith

The Baughs are not alumni of Oklahoma Christian but were introduced to it by David Duncan, the Memorial church’s preacher and vice chairman of the university’s board of trustees.

“I tell you what, you’ve got two names over (the auditorium) now that will bring honor to Oklahoma Christian University and honor to the students and honor to their legacy and honor to God,” said Gary Smith, minister for the Fifth Ward Church of Christ, a predominantly black congregation in Houston. “So you’ve got the right people.”

Sound Preacher Search

Rock Hill Church of Christ is searching for a sound preacher with a family that can help us attract young families. We are a conservative congregation, and our current minister is reaching retirement age. We have four elders and four deacons. Our congregation averages 80 on Sunday morning. We are located in one of the fastest-growing cities in America that is poised for continued growth.

Please send your resume to:

Zerrial Bass, zerrialb@abw.com, or
3213 Monette Ln, Plano, TX 75025
Learn more about us: www.rhcoc.org

Full-Time Minister

Ventura Church of Christ, a multigenerational, multicultural church composed of 100 plus members, located on the coast of Southern California, is looking for a full-time minister with a youthful perspective, yet one who possesses Godly wisdom that speaks to all generations. Compensation includes housing and health insurance. To learn more about this opportunity and submit your application, go to:

surveymonkey.com/r/WCXT3C5

Part-Time Minister

We are a small Bible-believing church in the Pocono Mountains, Pa., prayerfully seeking a part-time (15-20 hours a week) seasoned minister. For more information, please contact us at:

preachersearchpcoc@yahoo.com

Pocono Church of Christ
1114 Heritage Dr
Stroudsburg, PA 18360
Poconochurchofchrist.com
[Facebook](#)

Full-Time Evangelist Wanted

Freehold Church of Christ, located in central New Jersey, is seeking an enthusiastic evangelist to serve a diverse congregation of 55-plus members. If interested, please contact:

Freehold Church of Christ
46 Strickland Rd
Freehold NJ 07728
Lianp@exitrealtyec.com
For more information visit our website:
Freeholdchurchofchrist.com



Minister

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

General Requirements: *The ideal candidate should be a married, middle-aged man with at least 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:
WOElders@westolive.com

ABILENE CHRISTIAN PROFESSOR *Orneita Burton recalls her journey from petrochemicals to faith-based education.*

An engineer gets 'an answer from God'

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Orneita Burton grew up playing in the dirt and, as she put it, "creating something out of nothing." Perhaps she was destined for a life in engineering.

The northeast Arkansas native also had a knack for teaching. In elementary school she helped tutor other students. She continued as a math tutor in college. After she began a career in the oil and gas industry, her peers asked her why didn't she become a teacher.

"One day, I told someone that if I was given the opportunity to teach at a Christian university, I would change career paths," she said in an interview. A few months later, Jack Griggs, then dean of the College of Business Administration at Abilene Christian University in Texas, called and made her an offer.

"I could not turn down an answer from God."

After working full time for Phillips Petroleum and Mobil Oil, she joined the faculty of ACU, teaching courses in operations management, enterprise systems, e-commerce, data analytics and economics. She shares her faith with students and works to instill within them a love for learning and a commitment to "never give up."

These are values she inherited from her parents, who raised 12 children. Among them are 17 degrees — six undergraduate degrees in science, four in engineering, five master's degrees and two doctorates.

What were your growing-up years like?

I grew up in a farming community. That meant we spent most of our time playing in dirt and creating something out of nothing. Our food was simple, and sweets were rare.

At times, usually during Christmas, someone shared apples and oranges. This was special, because peaches were the only fruit grown in our garden. Children played together in the streets and



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Orneita Burton earned a doctorate in information systems from Arizona State University.

under the stars. Life was good. I am sure we were poor, but either we didn't know it or didn't care.

What are some of your memorable early church experiences?

I must say that my early experiences of church were not those of a typical Christian family. My mother was a devout Christian; my father only knew God through the actions of people. As a result, I felt the deep need for God as influenced by my mother to become the person I wanted to be.

By the age of 16, I was confused and acknowledged that I knew a lot about people but did not know God. One day, I expressed my frustration to God and the need for him at a crucial moment in my life. That very day, he showed up. From that time to this present moment, I have called out to the God I know, and he has been faithful in every response.

Describe your faith background.

I did not become a Christian until after graduating from college.

When in college, the churches near campus were segregated, and the only church for blacks was on a hill across town.

I didn't have a car, so when an attempt to worship at a nearby church led to being directed to the "black church," I decided not to attend church services while in college.

After graduating, I read every religious handout that came my way. One day, a dear friend invited me to attend a local Church of Christ in Texas. That invitation led to my present faith walk, the subsequent faith of my husband and children, my mother, and several sisters.

Today, I am blessed and thankful that we can worship with any church we choose.

What obstacles have you had to overcome?

As a young African-American woman, I began to view obstacles as God's way of transforming my life and moving me closer to him.

For example, I believe my most enduring obstacle is that of misrepresentation. Many women and people of color are easy targets for those who wish to hide their actions and misrepresent us for their personal benefit.

Although difficult to accept at the time, this obstacle has been a very humbling experience, leading me to frequently conduct reality checks that remind me who I am as a creation of God.

As a result, I have a strong self-identity that, despite what others think, confirms that God is pleased with what he alone has created in my life.

What influences led you into engineering?

Prompted by a relative who was a school administrator, my older brother entered an engineering

'I believe my most enduring obstacle is that of misrepresentation. Many women and people of color are easy targets for those who wish to hide their actions and misrepresent us for their personal benefit.'

Orneita Burton, Abilene Christian University.

program at Tennessee State University in Nashville when I was about 11 years old. During the summers, he would return home and tell me about his life at TSU. As the real teacher in the family, William made engineering fascinating to me.

I also had a love for natural art and the sciences and realized I could integrate both in an engineering degree. As a result, I

attended the University of Arkansas and enrolled in the Chemical Engineering program. This choice worked well as I later began an engineering career in the oil and gas industry.



PHOTO VIA BLOGS.ACU.EDU

Orneita Burton stands with a group of her Abilene Christian University College of Business Administration students during a study abroad program in Oxford,

What have been some of your favorite engineering projects?

As a process and research/development engineer, I was involved in projects using new computing technologies to automate field operations. Seeing science applied in real life has always revealed something to me about the richness of God’s design in creation.

For example, while providing engineering support at Phillips, I maintained the turbo-expanders in a polyethylene unit. This equipment changed the state of fluids through changes in temperature and pressure. Once, when a turbine needed maintenance, the company called an elderly gentleman to “rebalance” the unit. It was remarkable to see him use his ear and a tuning fork to “retune” the turbine.

I also provided support for high-pressure steam generation. As in our spiritual life, I learned that a few “impurities” can make all the difference in our ability to produce the best outcome.

What people have been the greatest influences in your life?

• My mother, who had the personal strength, holy discipline and moral courage to do what’s

right, even when it did not make sense to anyone else.

- My husband, who has provided love, leadership and support for our family and who brings out the best in others.
- My sons, who have amazing resilience and goodness that cannot be hidden, because goodness originates in Christ.
- My best friend, who established a special relationship between us when she chose to invite a stranger to her place of worship, which set me on my current faith walk.

• A few outstanding people I have met over time who have spoken words of life into me, as prompted by Christ in them, at just the right time.

‘My mother taught us to never abandon the dreams that are in our hearts — and to take opportunities to make a positive difference in the life of someone else.’

Orneita Burton.

In addition to academics, what do you try to teach your students?

To be good stewards of the resources God has given us.

To never, never, never give up. To me, failure is to give up or give in after facing life’s challenges. Through her actions, my mother taught us to never abandon the dreams that are in our hearts — and to take opportunities to make a positive difference in the life of someone else. My mother was a master teacher without a degree. I hope to instill in students’ lives the life she instilled in me.

Youth Minister - Smyrna, Tennessee

Highland Heights church of Christ is currently seeking a youth minister who will serve as part of the church staff in ministering to our congregational needs, focusing on overall education and ministry activities for church youth in grades six through twelve.

The youth minister is to promote biblical discipleship by planning, promoting, and coordinating the youth activities of the church. The youth minister will set an excellent example to our youth and stress the importance of Christianity in their personal life and in their association with others. This position will develop rich, Godly relationships with the church youth and their families. The youth minister will possess and effectively communicate a thorough knowledge of the Bible while exemplifying a mature and deep abiding love for Christ.

For further information and to apply online, please view the complete job description on our website www.highlandchurch.cc under Job Opportunities!!

Pulpit/Family Minister Needed

At **Westside**, our vision is to “love others to Jesus.” We have 50 years of history in **Bakersfield, Calif.** of trying to do just that. It’s a great history, and we would like to find a leader who can help us hear God’s voice through biblical preaching and teaching and can build relationships with our families that will help equip our people to grow in their ability to “love others to Jesus.” If this is the kind of journey that excites you, please reach out to us so we can start a conversation! Please contact:

Merv Rash, mrash@westsidelife.org
Westside Church of Christ

Oregon Youth Minister

The **Southwest Church of Christ** in Tigard, Ore., is seeking a man with a ministry degree or life experience to lead our youth program. We’re a congregation of 500 in a Portland suburb with an active youth group of around 50 teens. The ideal person will have faith in the Lord and a proven desire to help teens navigate life and faith. Southwest has a focus on missions, involving teens in international and domestic mission efforts. Please email a resume to the attention of Youth Minister Search:

office@swest.org

Full-Time Pulpit Minister - Pleasanton, Texas

The **Pleasanton Church of Christ** is seeking a full-time pulpit minister. Our current minister will be retiring in September 2019; this position will need to be filled on 1 Sept 2019. We seek a man with at least five years of experience preaching with Church of Christ congregations. He should be deeply dedicated to the inerrancy of the scriptures and able to show the relevance of its message in today’s diverse and ever-changing culture. We prefer a family man who can lovingly connect with our membership, spanning from the youngest to our most seasoned saints. We offer a competitive salary based on experience and education.

There is the expectation that the prospective minister will at a minimum teach a Bible class on either Sunday or Wednesday, will preach both Sunday morning and evening services and be recognized as the office staff manager.

We believe in elder-centered leadership, believe in a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, hold that baptism is essential to salvation, utilize males exclusively in leading the public worship assemblies, and conduct traditional congregational-style a cappella worship services.

Pleasanton is a town 30 minutes south of San Antonio, Texas, with a growing population of more than 10,000 people. We have an average Sunday morning attendance of 200, seven shepherds, nine deacons and an associate minister whose focus is youth and family. For more information on our congregation, visit:

pleasantonchurchofchrist.com

Our Mission Statement: We are a body of believers who have met in this community since 1910 with the goal of not only establishing the Lord’s Church in this place but also of maintaining its viability throughout the ages until Christ’s return.

Our Vision Statement: We were created in Christ Jesus for good works and see the Lord’s family in this place reaching a dying and lost world with the good news of Jesus Christ.

If you feel you satisfy the above requirements and would like the opportunity to serve with us, please provide a copy of your resume, including personal and professional references (three each), and at least one DVD/ file/link of a sermon you have preached within the last year by May 31, 2019. All packages with the requested information need to be sent to:

PO Box 104, Pleasanton, TX 78064

The search committee chairman is **Wayne Johnson** and can be contacted at: (830) 391-2571, or email him at wjohnson4945@sbcglobal.net.

Milestones

Showcasing the moments of your life and the lives of loved ones.

Special Recognition

Let's give a round of applause to outstanding teens Shaun Boothe, Zaquan Kemp, MacKenzie Scarborough, and Enoch Sparks! They have all earned the prestigious Red Coat Award, the highest award achieved through Lads to Leaders, Inc. The executive director explains this award is to L2L what the Eagle Scout Award is for the Boy Scouts of America. To earn the award all four have completed an extensive list of challenging L2L accomplishments including a Leadership Service Project. These high achievers have a multitude of other accomplishments as well.

Lads to Leaders, Inc. was founded in 1968 to develop youth into godly leaders. The Red Coat Award was developed by Glenn Colley, a L2L board member, in honor of the founder, Dr. Jack Zorn, and his late wife Frances.

These four teens have been involved with Lads to Leaders for many years.

Shaun Boothe, son of Neal and Leigh Boothe, was awarded several scholarships and has a long list of extra-curricular endeavors. He won first



place in speaking at regional and state levels with the Business Professionals of America. He credits his Lads to Leaders training for helping him to overcome a fear of public speaking. He is a senior at Lake Brantley High and will attend the University of Central Florida in the fall.

Shaun's Leadership Service Project involved mailing care packages to servicemen and women in the armed forces. The care packages included items such as a personal letter, a Bible, food, and the World Bible School course. Shaun worships with the Concord Street Church of Christ in Orlando.

Zaquan Kemp, son of Cheryl Snipes, is a senior at Wekiva High School. He credits Lads to Leaders for



helping him overcome his shyness and develop leadership skills. Zaquan serves as president of the Safety Ambassadors and is a member of the Chick-fil-a Leadership Academy. He is also the founder of Edify Day which falls on April 29th annually.

Zaquan's Leadership Service Project involved reaching out to first responders by taking care packages to the Orlando Fire and Police Departments. The care packages included treats, "Fishers of Men" Bible study, "Gospel Advocate Overview of the Bible CD," "Apologetics Press" book by Kyle Butts, and an offer to have a "Muscle and a Shovel" book mailed. Zaquan is a member of the Concord Street Church of Christ in Orlando.

Mackenzie Scarborough is in tenth grade and is the daughter of Chuck and Heather Scarborough. She is an accomplished home-schooler who plays violin, is in color guard with a marching band, and is an avid photographer. She is also a seasoned traveler, having visited 46 of the 50 states. With a heart dedicated to service, Mackenzie has earned the Platinum Good Samaritan award and was nominated for the 2019 Inspiring Teens Scholarship. She plans to attend Freed-Hardeman University.



MacKenzie's Leadership Project, "Nourishing our Neighbors," provided underprivileged local citizens a thanksgiving meal and a care package. Care packages included Bibles and Bible study information. She attends the Central Church of Christ in Smyrna, Ga.

Enoch Sparks is the son of Scotty and Celine Sparks. A senior at North Alabama Christian, he is the captain of his basketball team. He is a volunteer for Polishing the Pulpit children's program and is involved in an array of extracurricular activities in Youth for Christ. Enoch is the founder of "Moonlight Madness," the annual



all-night lectureship for teens at his church, the Mastin Lake Church of Christ in Huntsville, Ala.

Enoch's Leadership Service Project included coordinating the compilation of almost 1,000 goody bags for every inmate in the Madison County jail. Each bag had evangelistic material, an encouraging note, and many other items.

Roy Johnson, executive director with the L2L board of directors, is pleased to recognize these four high achievers. They will be awarded their Red Coat at the L2L 50th Convention on Easter weekend.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY EDMERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Shepherds of the Edgemere Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas, pray over new youth minister Darion Dalton.

Memorials

George T. Elkins Jr. 1929-2018

George was born on March 4, 1929, and passed from this life on Dec. 24, 2018. He graduated from Abilene Christian College in 1952 and preached for congregations of Churches of Christ in Ark., Mo., Texas, and N.M. throughout his life.



With a lifelong interest in education, he earned degrees in New Testament Greek, Psychology, and Pastoral Counseling and became an instructor at Eastern New Mexico University in his later years. He was proud to have worked for *The Christian Chronicle* in his college days and later for the *Herald of Truth*. He served his home congregation, Country Club Rd. Church of Christ in Roswell, N.M., through preaching, teaching, song leading, and 48 years of commitment. George was an oil painting enthusiast, teaching local art classes, and he pursued an interest in genealogy in his retirement years.

George married Billie Jo Fears on Feb. 14, 1953. They were married for 65 years. They had five children: Michael Elkins, Patricia Grassie, John Elkins, Paul Elkins, and Laura Suazo; 11 grandchildren; and 19 great-grandchildren.

NEW MINISTERS: Darion Dalton, youth minister for the Edgemere Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas. Logan

Hackworth, youth minister for the Crosstown Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla. Phillip Bates, preaching minister for the Sunset Church of Christ in Springfield, Mo.



Bates

Bates succeeds Joe Bright, who retired after 24 years with Sunset.

NEW ELDERS: Roy Kunkle, Kent McMahan, Mike Tolon and Kevin Woods, first elders of the Renovatus Church of Christ, a church plant launched in Vancouver, Wash., in 2005. Ronnie Honeycutt, Trey Curington and Bill Shumate, newest elders of the Waterview Church of Christ in Richardson, Texas.

APPOINTED: Daniel Adams, as director of the Harding University in Greece international studies program. Adams previously served as a professor and chair of art and design at Harding's main campus in Searcy, Ark. Steve Shaner, to the board of the Agape Asia Foundation. Shaner is an elder of the Downtown Church of Christ in Searcy.

HONORED: Andrae Smith, as Volunteer of the Year by the Zephyrhills Correctional Institution in Florida. Smith is associate minister for the Lake Tarpon Church of Christ in Tarpon Springs, Fla.

VOICE/IDOL: 'Be the light' on reality TV

FROM PAGE 3

A CHAIR-TURNING 'VOICE'

At the first sound of Johnson's voice, country music singer and "Voice" judge Blake Shelton slammed the red button to rotate his chair toward the church member.

"I gave myself a pep talk before the audition. I said, 'Matthew, if you see someone turn, do not see it,'" Johnson said when asked by KLOVE how he kept his composure during the show. "I needed to make sure that I focused on my performance."

Seconds after Shelton, Maroon 5 frontman Adam Levine turned his chair, followed by singers John Legend and Kelly Clarkson.

It was a clean sweep. "Is that a gospel song?" Legend asked. "I grew up in the church." Legend then praised the church member for his energy and the range in his voice. After hearing pitches from each of the judges, Johnson selected Legend as his coach.

Back in Jacksonville, those who know Johnson said it was exciting to see their brother, who often leads worship, on stage.

"It was very, very exciting," Charlie McClendon, minister for the Northside church, told *The Christian Chronicle*. "I have looked at it over and over again, and it amazes me how professionally he walked out on the stage and just took the audience."

Johnson attended Southwestern Christian College, a historically black college in Texas associated with Churches of Christ, Martin said. He performs with two a cappella groups and leads singing for the Northside church when he's in town.

"I feel like I am the light of the world, and my mission is to be the light, and so all those that come in contact with me. They should be able to see a really positive person," Johnson told KLOVE. "They should see Jesus in me."

"The Matthew that America saw on TV for the first time is the same Matthew they would experience if they met him face to face,"



John Legend meets Matthew Johnson's family on "The Voice."

Zack Martin, minister for the Cedar Springs Church of Christ in Louisville, Ky., told the *Chronicle*. "Music is his ministry and his gift and how he connects to people. He's a really special guy."

McClendon added, "He's a very humble young man and very respectful. Finally, someone discovered his talent and his ability."

BRIBING 'IDOL' JUDGES WITH HONEY

Meanwhile, on "American Idol," Lester showed that he had no problem resorting to bribery to get the judges' attention.

Just before the 28-year-old strawberry farmer performed, his brother, Mitchell, and his grandmother, Fran Martin, gave each judge a gift basket of goodies from their family farm, including plastic

bears filled with honey.

Kason Lester's brief performance got three "yes" votes from the judges. (Perry's vote was delayed as she pounded down the honey straight from the bear.)



Jana Owen

The singer and his brother grew up in the pews of College Hills church in Middle Tennessee, said preaching minister Kevin Owen.

"His mom and dad, Kevin and Teresa, are salt-of-the-earth people," Owen told the *Chronicle*. "I'm just really proud for this family."

Owen's wife, Jana, added, "Two of our three sons have worked for them at Lester Farms in the past. Kason came and played at a church family event last year. We are so excited for him and are definitely part of #teamkason."



McClendon

Milestones

Stanley R. Hurd
1951-2019

Stanley R. Hurd, 67, of Wendell, Idaho, passed away on Feb. 3, 2019, at his home surrounded by family. Stanley was born Aug. 4, 1951, in Wendell, Idaho, the son of Ralph and Juanita (McGhee) Hurd. He was reared and educated in Riverside, Cali. After his graduation, he enlisted in the Army National Guard, where he served for six years. Stanley was a lifelong member and preacher of the Church of Christ. He was a mail carrier with the United States Post Office for 29 years. He loved his job because he could love on all of his recipients. Upon his retirement, he became a member of the American Legion Post 41 in Wendell, Idaho, where he served in the position of Sergeant-at-Arms. He married Janis Fisher on Sept. 21, 1982, in Lovelock, Nev. He



blessed his wife with generous acts of love, including sharing the Gospel with her early on in their marriage. Stan enjoyed many activities, including fishing, gardening, traveling, playing cards, writing poems and sermons, helping others, and giving "horse-back rides" to little ones, especially his grandbabies.

Stanley assisted in the foundation of International Bible Studies (IBS), doing missionary work in Nepal, Ghana, and India. He loved singing, preaching, visiting others, and praising God! He is survived by his wife Janis Hurd; and his beloved children: Joe (Karen) Nicholson of Mukilteo, Wash.; Jeff (December) Nicholson of Battle Ground, Wash.; Donavon (Monica) Hurd of Picabo, Idaho; Jarod (Francesca) Hurd of North Plains, Ore.; Jessica (Jermaine) Galloway of Prosper, Texas; and Lety (Simon) Martinez of Wendell, Idaho. He was loved by his 17 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren; his mother, Juanita Hurd; sister, Cynthia Lundstrom; and brother Mike (Pam) Hurd.

Stanley was preceded in death

by his father Ralph Marlin Hurd, grandparents Ralph and Esther Hurd and Earl and Lorena McGhee, and a brother-in-law, Jim Lundstrom.

Maybel J. McCay
1917-2019

At the age of 101, Mrs. Mable J. McCay was the oldest member of the Donelson Church of Christ in Donelson, Tenn. Not only was she the oldest member, she was the most loved. She was born on June 24, 1917, in Henderson County, Tenn., and she went to her heavenly home on Feb. 3, 2019.

She was preceded in death by her husband Warren McCay and her daughter Ann. She is survived by her son Ray and her daughter Alice. Her church attendance was impeccable, even to the end of her life. She had a pleasant, peaceful and elegant countenance for all who met her.



The following is a poem written for Mrs. McCay on the occasion of her 100th birthday.

A hundred years, a long, long time
No matter how you live it,
But when it's lived like Mrs. McCay
The Lord is pleased to give it.

My heart is filled with gracious love
And Godly admiration,
And then I view your strength in faith
As high as all creation.

Your sense of humor, unsurpassed
Your wit goes way beyond,
To see your face light up with smiles
All these I've grown quite fond.

O, Mrs. McCay, the words aren't there
To adequately say
How much your friendship means to me
In your special kind of way.

by Don McAlister, 2018

With Appreciation

The *Christian Chronicle* appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in memory of Calvin L. Drake and Bill Weger.

EDITORIAL

Expose the boils of injustice

Recently, leaders of two universities associated with Churches of Christ apologized for actions — and, in some cases, inaction — during the civil rights era.

At Oklahoma Christian University, during a chapel presentation, president John deSteiguer discussed the troubled past of the school he serves — which in 1969 arrested 18 of its own students participating in a peaceful demonstration.

DeSteiguer quoted this graphic analogy from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail":

"Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured."

That's certainly true of the racist attitudes and actions that have marred our colleges and universities — before, during and after the tumultuous events of the 1960s.

We salute Oklahoma Christian, Freed-Hardeman and other institutions that have taken steps to honestly address the sins of the past in hopes of a more united future.

King's words ring equally true as we consider our Page 1 story on the discord created in a Pennsylvania church by the presence of a confessed sex offender. Months of research, interviews and prayer preceded the publication of the story.

We anticipate that some will accuse us of dragging Churches of Christ through the mud, arguing that we would better serve our fellowship by allowing congregations to handle these matters internally — outside the glare of the media spotlight.

We disagree. The Catholics and the Baptists have tried this approach. It hasn't worked. The victims deserve better. God demands better.

Abuse of any kind — whether it is committed by elders, preachers, church volunteers or members — is a pox on our house, a vile stain on our fellowship. For too long this sin has plagued Churches of Christ, and the online responses we've received to the story reemphasize this truth.

In the months to come, we want to share resources to help churches be better as we address issues of abuse. (See Christine Parker's "Views" piece on the opposite page.)

We invite you to participate in this endeavor. Give us feedback. Disagree with us, but don't give up on us. Pray for us.

And never be afraid to expose the boils of injustice. Sunlight, as we journalists are fond of saying, is the best disinfectant.

The Lord's church will survive.

And we will get better.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Amy and David Cady say goodbye to their baby girl, stillborn and delivered in January 1999.

'I know we'll see her again'

(W)e who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

— Hebrews 6:18-20, New Living Translation

How does a fully formed, healthy baby just slip away, back into the arms of Jesus, and her vigilant mother not know it?

I had failed. God had failed. I was being punished. David deserved better. He should have a wife who could give him children.

Grief is an unwelcome, foreign agent. We weren't created to die, so it's like our bodies, our minds, our hearts don't know what to do with it.

Even now, 20 years later, I still don't understand.

But I know I didn't fail. God didn't fail. I wasn't being punished. That's not who God is. I don't know why — as if any "why" would make it all OK, make it all make sense.

I know we now have a unique perspective of sorts and have been able to sincerely empathize with countless mamas and daddies ever since. I know it could've been much worse in so many ways.

I know the odds are against marriages that experience the death of a child —

and that David and I grew closer because of our shared loss. I know we probably wouldn't have our beautiful, special, unique lights of Mackenna and Jonathan if she'd stayed.

In the Word



Amy Cady

I know God is love, and this wasn't "his will." I know she's the lucky one to not have to ever experience heartbreak, sadness, all the heaviness of existing, and to have only ever known warmth and love.

I know we are incredibly fortunate for all we have — and for what *hasn't* happened to us.

I know that this life isn't it. I know all will be made new again someday, that all will be as it originally was.

I know we'll see her again.

Her name is Hope.

And we are beyond thankful for her.

AMY CADY and her husband, David, serve the Wellspring Fellowship Church of Christ in Waipahu, Hawaii. Their first child, Hope, died in utero after a complicated pregnancy and was delivered by cesarean section on Jan. 10, 1999.

The Cadys have two more children, Mackenna and Jonathan, both teenagers and active in ministry.

Abuse of any kind — whether it is committed by elders, preachers, church volunteers or members — is a pox on our house, a vile stain on our fellowship.

Rewrite the script: Churches must serve abuse survivors better

I am convinced that church leaders want to shepherd the broken and bleeding souls around them.

However, in my experience, many are unknowingly doing the exact opposite. It's as if they're responding with some sort of poorly written script:

Victim: I have been abused by Preacher Fred.

Church Leader: No! That cannot be! He would never do something like that!

Victim: But he did it to me.

Church Leader: Are you sure? Maybe you misunderstood. Maybe you did something to provoke it?

Victim: (silent)

Church Leader: I don't understand. Are you telling me that Preacher Fred hurt your feelings?

Victim: (trying hard not to cry) No. I am saying Preacher Fred has been abusing me for years.

Church Leader: I just cannot imagine Preacher Fred ever doing anything like that to anyone! I am going to need to think about this awhile. Do me a favor, and please do not talk to anyone about this. OK? Can you do that for me?

Victim: (tears streaming, nods)

This script plays out for victims of all forms of abuse at the hands of church leaders — child sexual abuse, spiritual abuse, domestic violence, narcissistic abuse. Church leaders, in their shock and dismay, fumble in a darkness they do not understand, doing their best to

move forward for the best of all parties. In doing so, however, much more damage is done to the victims.

Victims don't expect to live out this script — feeling, disbelieved and discarded.

My world shattered four years ago when my marriage fell apart

The questioning quickly turned on me. What did I do wrong? What was I willing to do to save my marriage?

In church, leaders' rush to redeem the sinner/abuser, the sinned-against are inadvertently re-victimized or simply forgotten, pushed aside. The victims are asked, "What part did you play?" They are told, "You need to submit more," and, "If you don't forgive, you cannot heal."

The forced silence and blame leave victims abandoned in the very place where they should be most embraced and protected — the church.

Too often, church leaders care for and protect the abusers — the abusive spouse, the predatory minister, the emotionally or physically abusive parent — while their victims sit alone. Too many leaders attempt to handle abuse in-house.

In my own experience, through a painful divorce, I am convinced that the things said and done to me were done out of ignorance — not malice.

I believe the church leaders *did* care about me; they simply did not know *how* to care for me.

I founded PorchSwing Ministries Inc. to help church leaders change



Christine Fox Parker

the script and stop re-victimizing victims. PorchSwing ministers directly to survivors of church abuse and trains churches and Christian institutions on issues of survivor care, creating safe spaces and caring for victims in the immediate aftermath of abuse disclosure.

Here are a few things PorchSwing recommends church leaders do to care for survivors:

- **Report suspicions and/or allegations of abuse** — Always report immediately. It's the law. In most states, church leaders are mandated reporters, and failure to report is a crime.
- **Hire outside experts** — This is especially important if the abuser is a church leader. There are ministries and consultants available to walk through this crisis with you.
- **Be the image of Christ** — Victims become survivors when they are believed and cared for mercifully. Don't make assumptions; rather, cover the cost of counseling, visit, and call. Never make a victim suffer alone.
- **Hear from both sides** — This is standard practice in courts of law, mediation, etc. It should be standard in our churches as well. Do not assume guilt or innocence.
- **Do not demand forgiveness** — Forgiveness is a gift freely given and does not require reconciliation.
- **Invite survivors into the conversation** — Victims are not powerless or dangerous. Invite them to teach you how to care for survivors. Include them in developing policies and safeguards in your churches.

I know my church's leaders cared. They listened when I stood back up after being re-victimized. When I told them how they were hurting me, they course-corrected, often. They are a unique group with very good hearing.

I am grateful for the many things my people got right. Far more often, leaders do not hear well, and victims cannot speak their needs.

I eventually left the church where I experienced so much pain — not out of anger or callousness, but out of a need to seek care for the deep wounds in my soul.

I never left God. Today I am closer to him than I've ever been. God is my strength. God is the lover of my soul who brings me to tears.

There are thousands of survivors who share my story. They love God, but they find God's church too painful to be a part of.

It doesn't have to be that way. It is never too late to reach out to survivors of abuse.

Don't silence them. Love them. Rewrite the script.

CHRISTINE FOX PARKER is a therapist, speaker and co-editor and contributor to *"Surrendering to Hope: Guidance for the Broken."* She is the founder of PorchSwing Ministries Inc., online at www.porchswingministries.org. See more of her writings at christinefoxparker.com.

CORRECTION: On Page 5 of the March issue, *The Christian Chronicle* incorrectly reported the site of the Shepherd Network: Northwest Connection gathering in Montana. The Belgrade Church of Christ hosted the event.



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Societal trends that allow mind to define body dehumanize us all

Transgenderism, euthanasia, homosexuality, abortion.

Many contemporary societal trends that alarm people of faith are based on a new cultural insistence that a person's mind can — and should — define the body that carries it around.

In the future, this year may be regarded as a watershed: a time when confusion flowed to one side of a rise, and clarity to the other, in thoughtful Christians' assessments about the nature and use of the human body.

It's no overstatement to say that Nancy Pearcey's **"Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality"** has provided that watershed.

Though it is full of anecdotes and research, it is not an easy read, because it starts by tackling the conundrum: What is the proper view of the body's relationship to the spirit or soul?

Pearcey, a former agnostic turned religion scholar and university professor, takes to task the cultural insistences that mind defines gender and other issues related to the human body.

This is not the biblical "buffeting the body" to bring it under subjection to a God-centered mind, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9.

Instead, Pearcey shows how anyone's personal determination to confront and deny realities such as physiological genitalia ends up not glorifying the body but instead showing it what Pearcey calls a "profound disrespect."

Philosophers term this denial of bodily features the instrumentalizing of the body, "treating it as a tool to be used and controlled instead of valuing it for its own sake," Pearcey writes.

The miraculous uniting of elements of the earth (dust) into which God breathed life in Creation is thus deliberately fractured.

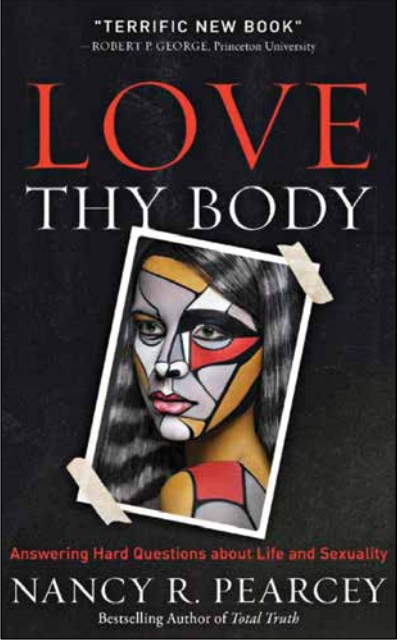
That concept shows up in what is called "personhood theory," which says that all human worth is in the mind or consciousness. This low view of the body, Pearcey asserts,

"ultimately dehumanizes us all."

With meticulous research and documentation that has earned her characterization as "America's pre-eminent evangelical Protestant female intellectual" (The Economist), Pearcey carefully documents secular viewpoints on the body/spirit issue. This analysis is an invaluable gift to anyone who wants to understand current sexual trends.

As the co-author of books on sexual topics, I have found this to be kind of authoritative, foundational discussion that I and other authors and thinkers can put our weight into.

The book is not all theory and theology. It has practical, accessible examples and applications.



Nancy R. Pearcey. **Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality.** Ada, Mich.: Baker Books, 2018. 336 pages. \$22.99.

LATAYNE C. SCOTT is an award-winning author of more than two dozen books, including **"Protecting Your Child from Predators: How to Recognize and Respond to Sexual Danger"** with Dr. Beth Robinson (to be released by Bethany House Publishers in August) and an upcoming book on how to talk to teens about sex. She worships with the Mountainside Church of Christ in Albuquerque, N.M. Learn more at latayne.com.

Minister for Churches of Christ details the 'spiritual bondage' of legalism

There are many who have walked the path of legalism, but few know its depths, deception and destruction more than Kevin Pendergrass.

Pendergrass, a graduate of a preacher training school in East Tennessee, served in Oklahoma as a minister for Churches of Christ. He was a formal debater and a co-host of a gospel television and radio program.

At the same time, "I was a Christian living in spiritual bondage without realizing it," he writes in **"A Different Kind of Poison: How Legalism Destroys Grace."** "I made so many mistakes and robbed myself of spiritual peace, joy and freedom. I unintentionally hurt myself and others in the name of Jesus."

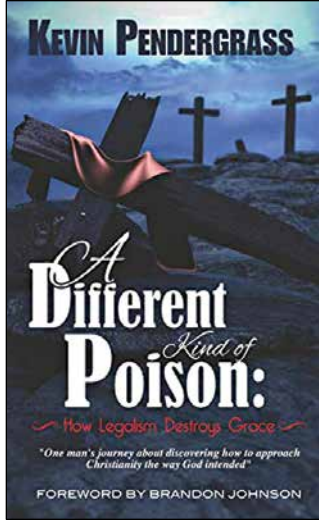
Pendergrass shares his story of transition from legalism to trusting in the grace of God. He has remained active in Churches of Christ, which I think makes his story even more appealing and helpful for our brotherhood. His book is written in such a way that it does not condemn our heritage, but rather he identifies his own shortcomings because of his former legalistic views.



Pendergrass slowly strips away the covers of legalism and shares his own struggle with reconciling the teachings of Jesus with his long-entrenched convictions.

As a man who was raised on legalism and preached it for years, I can attest to the reality of the destruction it causes. I have seen close families torn apart, churches full of people claiming to follow Jesus fracture and never recover, the closest of friends alienated from each other, and people who quit Jesus altogether because of legalism. I have personally experienced many of these in my own life.

The damage is real, and the people are real. Those who are hurt by their own legalism or that of others are left scarred for years — and in some cases forever.



Kevin Pendergrass. **A Different Kind of Poison: How Legalism Destroys Grace.** Amazon Digital Services (independent), 2018. 269 pages. \$14.99.

BRANDON JOHNSON is pulpit minister for the Northridge Church of Christ in Shawnee, Okla. He authored the foreword for Pendergrass' book.

What are you reading? Email erik@christianchronicle.org.

CALENDAR

April 5-7 "Living Jesus" Bible Conference. Third and Kilgore Church of Christ, Portales, N.M. (575) 356-6150. http://3kchurch.org/bible_conference.aspx.

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

April 9 Eastern European Mission College Station Event. Brazos Center, Bryan, Texas. (800) 486-1818. See eem.org/events.

April 13 Children's Teacher Workshop. Memorial Road Church of Christ, Edmond, Okla. See mrcc.org/workshop.

April 21-25 Church of Christ National Lectureship. St. Louis, Mo. (314) 272-0282. Contact@nationallectureship.net. See nationallectureship.net.

June 26-28 Summer Celebration 2019. Lipscomb University. Nashville, Tenn. (800) 333-4358. See lipscomb.edu.

July 29-Aug. 2 Global Reunion 2019. Oklahoma Christian University, Edmond, Okla. Nancy.Hartman@oc.edu. See intermissionministry.org.

Sept. 15-18 Abilene Christian University Summit. Abilene, Texas. See acu.edu/summit.

Sept. 29-Oct. 2 Harding University Bible Lectureship. Searcy, Ark. Contact@lectureship@harding.edu. See www.harding.edu/events/lectureship.

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

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NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

BROWN PAPER PACKAGES

Elaine Coleman, Ph.D. **Brown Paper Packages.** CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2018. 84 pages. \$11.95, Amazon.com.

The road of life is wrought with speed bumps, potholes, and, for some, a bridge collapse. It is in these challenging times we make choices that shape and define who we are. Some people unravel and are overtaken by their sadness, while others manage to heal and recover, becoming stronger than they ever were before. How can we choose a path of healing and not be swept away by despair? Satan is ready to capitalize on our dark moments, but God tells us to take our thoughts captive. How do we discipline our thinking?

God instructs us to think about things that are right, true, lovely, noble, pure, and praiseworthy. When we focus our minds on God's love and His numerous blessings, the brightness of God's greatness chases away the dark clouds like a beautiful sunrise. He is the great Healer, Jehovah Rophe.

This Bible study is written as a workbook and includes 13 lessons, all of which center around the priceless value of our relationship with God. God provides something constant and reliable when the unexpected potholes happen in life. Our relationship with God is the anchor by which we can hope for a better tomorrow.



row. This scripture-packed Bible study is full of all the joys that we have in Him. It is through embracing these joys we find our strength for life's heart-aches.

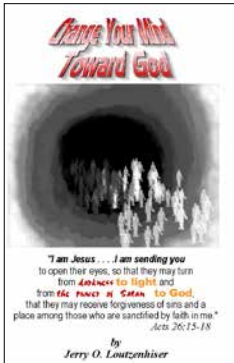
Elaine is a Christian, a wife, a mother, and a Biology professor. She enjoys teaching about God's amazing creation, but she is also passionate about encouraging others of all ages to continue to add to their knowledge of our Lord and Savior. She teaches ladies' and children's Bible classes and works with the children's ministry at church.

CHANGE YOUR MIND TOWARD GOD

Jerry O. Loutzenhiser. **Change Your Mind Toward God.** Self-Published, 2019. 146 pages. \$10.75 + SH + (Tax, Kan.). Order at: jerryoloutz@gmail.com, or 214 Iowa Ave., Salina, KS 67401. Author will send an invoice.

"Change Your Mind Toward God" is the product of years of research and questioning of those who teach as their doctrine "repent of sin." Since there is no such phrase translated in the New Testament Scriptures, why is this taught as part of the gospel of Christ?

A nationwide survey was made striving to get answers to this doctrine of "repent of sin." That survey is summarized in the book.



Also, a history of the use of words to indicate a translation of the original Greek is carefully laid out. Why are there dogmas formulated to include a misuse of the Greek word God used?

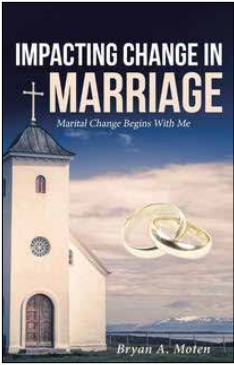
An analysis is made of all the gospel sermons in the book of Acts looking for the proper use by the translators of God's Greek word. And much more!

The author gives a little background of himself and why this project seemed so eternally important. Also, the concluding chapters indicate what he has learned from conducting, for more than 40 years, citywide evangelistic efforts in this country, as well as throughout the world.

MARRIAGE

Bryan A. Moten. **Impacting Change in Marriage: Marital Change Begins With Me.** Christian Faith Publishing, Inc., 2018. 126 pages. \$18.95.

Marriage is designed to be a blessing and not a burden. "Impacting Change in Marriage" emphasizes God's design for marriage. Too many goodwill couples have become bewildered in the marital wilderness simply because they lack the compass of God's Word to navigate their course to love, joy, peace, romance, and the desire to live "happily ever after." Minister Bryan Moten challenges us all to discover the transformative power of Divine perspective.





HONOR ROLL OF CHURCHES, 2018-2019

*With deepest appreciation to those churches who have provided financial support
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HONOR ROLL OF CHURCHES, 2018-2019

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To learn more about being part of the Honor Roll, please contact Lynda Sheehan at: lynda.sheehan@christianchronicle.org.

AN OSCAR-WINNING FILM *and its controversy show that efforts to improve race relations require God's heart*

The Green Book and the Good Book

HYATTSVILLE, Md.

As soon as Sunday night service ended at the University Park Church of Christ, I rushed to find a kind soul with a TV set. I had to watch the Oscars. (I *do* have a TV, just so you know, but mine is a venue for my son's video games, old movies and something called a "Fire Stick." I don't even know if I can watch regular TV on it!)

And I don't usually care much about the Academy Awards, but I had a story riding on it. If "Green Book" won for best picture, *USA Today* wanted me to expand on what I had written about the film for an online feature. And hey, it won. To be honest, I didn't really know what a "Green Book" was until a childhood friend of mine called and said there was a movie with that name up for multiple awards — and it was about a man from my hometown of Pensacola, Fla., Donald Shirley.

As I learned more about Shirley, I discovered the threads that tie his experiences to my own.

STAINS OF THE PAST THAT WON'T ERASE

A gifted musician, Shirley was a classical and jazz pianist who moved to New York after studying here in the Washington area.

The film "Green Book" is based on Shirley's friendship with Anthony "Lip" Vallelonga, an Italian-American bouncer from the Bronx who in 1962 chauffeured Shirley on a tour through the Deep South and served as his bodyguard.

Along the way they use "The

Negro Motorist Green Book" to find motels, restaurants and gas stations that will serve them.

You see, Shirley, like my own parents, was part of a generation of African-Americans who were forced to leave the South for the North for education and a better life — away from segregation and Jim Crow laws.

My mother, after earning a degree at Florida A&M, earned her master's in music from Boston University. My dad left Texas to get his degree at the University of Southern California (without any high-dollar help from his parents, I might add).

Another friend of mine left home in the 1960s to become an engineer at Bell Labs in New Jersey. For all his life, he's pushed for excellence and Christian love that crosses racial lines.

Regardless of where we end up, there always is a desire to visit home. That's why Victor Green published his "Green Book," between 1936 and 1967. It listed gas stations, restaurants and hotels that would serve people of color.

It was as cherished as the family Bible for African-American families who made long trips across the country on dark highways lined with segregated corridors and hate.

Sometimes blacks had to stay in people's homes as they traveled the South. Growing

up in Pensacola, I remember when the chauffeurs came to my grandmother's house.

(Of course, the chauffeur in "Green Book" is white, which makes for an interesting twist.)

Unlike the portrayal of Shirley in the film, a lot of African-Americans who went North didn't stay there. Many, like my parents, came back to the South to build their lives after they earned their degrees.

My mom told about teaching in



Donald Shirley (Mahershala Ali) and Tony Lip (Viggo Mortensen) star in the film "Green Book."

Century, Fla. — in the panhandle just south of Alabama — at its recently integrated high school. On her first day, someone wrote the N-word on the chalkboard.

"I didn't erase it," she told me, "because I was there to teach."

I'm thankful that things have gotten better since the days portrayed in the film, the days my parents talked about, the days of my youth.

Whenever I travel back home, I pull off Interstate 65 and cut through Flomaton, Ala., just north of Century. I always buy a burger there when I pass through.

Why? In 1965, I tried to buy one at a segregated bus station and was not served.

ONLY ONE WAY TO MAKE THINGS BETTER

Unfortunately, the story I wrote for *USA Today* doesn't have a happy ending — at least not yet.

I spoke to Shirley's real-life family, who said that the depiction of the famous pianist in the film is inaccurate. Vallelonga, they said, was hired to drive Shirley on a tour of historically black colleges and

universities, not segregated venues across the South.

The story also was told through the lens of the driver, played by Viggo Mortensen. There was no recognition of "Uncle Donald" or his family in the acceptance speeches for best original screenplay or best picture, his niece said.

(However, when Mahershala Ali, who played Shirley, won the supporting actor Oscar and said "I want to thank Dr. Shirley," the family was grateful, she said.)

You know, after all the ways we've tried to address the issue of race relations — in discussions, in remembrances, in films — I wonder if we're ever going to bridge the divide. These are all good things, but those of us who proclaim Jesus as king know that we'll never be successful without God.

Today we don't need a Green Book to find our way, but we do need the Good Book like never before — to direct our lives in the name of God. Whether we live in the North or the South, in red, blue or purple states, we are more than the labels we try to assign one another.

We are one race, humans all.


These stories make me think of Philemon, a man once labeled "slave." He ran away from his master, Onesimus, and the apostle Paul took him in.

Then Paul wrote to Onesimus on Philemon's behalf:

"I am sending him — who is my very heart—back to you. ... Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever — no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother."

Let these inspired words change our story. It's not too late.

HAMIL R. HARRIS is a *Christian Chronicle* correspondent. He preaches for the Glenarden Church of Christ in Maryland.



Insight

Hamil R. Harris



The "Green Book" was published from 1936 to 1967 and fell out of use as hotels and restaurants were desegregated.



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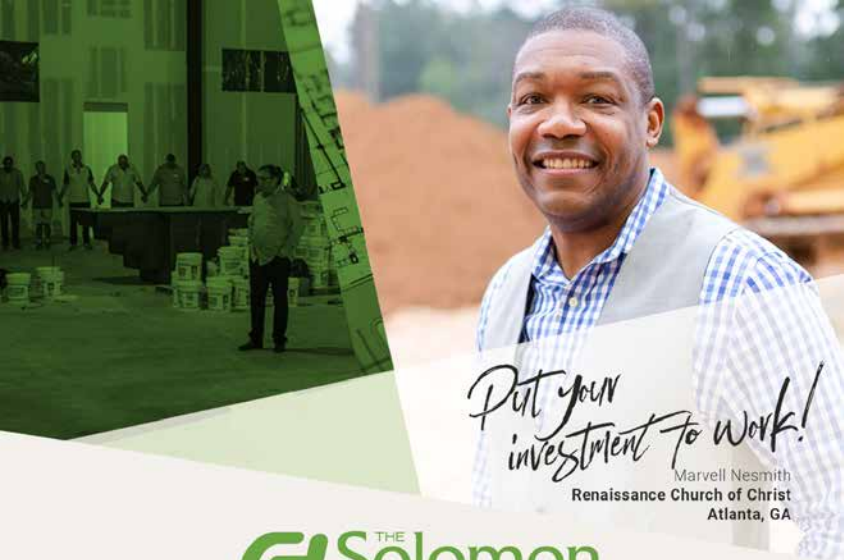
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