The nightmare never goes away.

Almost nine months have passed since Amber Guyger, an off-duty Dallas police officer still in uniform, entered Botham Shem Jean’s fourth-floor apartment and opened fire, killing the beloved song leader and Bible class teacher as he prepared to watch a football game on TV.

Still, the grief and the heartache never stray far from Bertrum and Allison Jean, parents of the 26-year-old accountant who left his native St. Lucia — a small island in the Caribbean — to attend Harding University in Searcy, Ark., and later worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Dallas.

The desire to see their son, to touch his smiling face, to hear his beautiful voice sing praises to Jesus once again grips the Jeans all the more during trips to this Texas city, where Botham Jean’s life ended suddenly on a Thursday night in September.

“For me, every day it’s going to be on my mind, especially as we are here in Dallas,” said Bertrum Jean, who traveled with his wife to attend the recent Dallas Racial Unity Leadership Summit, hosted by the Dallas West Church of Christ — Botham Jean’s home congregation — and sponsored by the Carl Spain Center on Race Studies and Spiritual Action at Abilene Christian University in Texas.

“It’s as if it just happened,” the father said of his son’s death.

“That’s how I feel.”

For Allison Jean, occasions such as the racial unity summit — dedicated in Botham Jean’s memory — and a simultaneous mission trip by Harding students to St. Lucia make her proud of the difference her son made in his short life.

“I see his work in all of this,” said the mother, wearing a #BeLikeBo T-shirt during an interview at the Dallas West church.

“It’s like a roller coaster,” she said.
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A church for the multiethnic sons of Joseph

What do you suppose young Ephraim and Manasseh were thinking, standing before their grandfather, Jacob, and hearing him ask, “Who are these?” They probably didn’t look much like their cousins. The sons of Joseph and Asenath were half Hebrew and half Egyptian. Their father was Pharaoh’s right-hand man and had made his boss incredibly wealthy. The boys were probably treated like Egyptian royalty. Their other grandfather was a priest who likely led people in worship of the sun god. Yet Jacob says, “Bring them to me so I may bless them.” These kids lived “in the hyphen,” a phrase we use when we talk about Latinos (“Hispanic-Americans”) born here in the U.S. There’s a dire need for churches to reach this rapidly growing demographic, says Dan Rodriguez, professor of religion and Hispanic studies at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.

In the inner-city ministry, they figured they’d be working with immigrants. They weren’t expecting immigrants from the Congo.

The McClues, who labored for 12 years as church planters in Cuernavaca and Mexico City, designed Central Phoenix Urban Ministry to make use of their Spanish-language skills as they reached out to their city’s growing Hispanic population. The Northwest Church of Christ in the Phoenix suburb of Glendale sponsors the work.

Since 2011, the McClues have taught language lessons for their Congolese neighbors and have sponsored “backpack drives,” encouraging fellow Christians to buy school supplies for more than 400 of the refugees’ kids. The McClues have taught language lessons for their Congolese neighbors and have sponsored “backpack drives,” encouraging fellow Christians to buy school supplies for more than 400 of the refugees’ kids.

Director of Gospel Broadcasting seriously injured

An ‘Army of Believers’ mobilizes to help Mississippi minister Don Blackwell after ATV accident.

Despite a life-threatening injury that could leave him partially paralyzed, Don Blackwell is determined to do the Lord’s work. “He’s already trying to figure out how can he reach out to those around him and minister, even in the hospital,” said friend and coworker John Stubblefield in an interview with The Christian Chronicle. “He’s a hard worker. He puts himself out there for the cause of the Kingdom.” Blackwell, director of Gospel Broadcasting Network and minister and elder of the Southaven Church of Christ in Mississippi, was injured in a recent all-terrain vehicle accident that shattered his T8 thoracic vertebra. His wife, Sheri, suffered a less severe injury in the accident and was released from the hospital.

The accident happened in Salem, Va., where Don Blackwell was hosting a gospel meeting.

A FundRazr.com page for the couple has received more than $116,000 in donations to help the couple with medical expenses. “I think it says a lot about ... how much people love them,” Stubblefield said. “I feel like we’ve got an army of people that are ready to help out.”

See SONS OF JOSEPH, Page 4

For more information, see the Christian Chronicle website at christianchronicle.org.
FULLEDITORIAL MINISTER

The Church of Christ in South Holland, Ill., is looking for a minister. We are a congregation of 85-100 in attendance with three elders and three deacons. We are located in a southern suburb of Chicago. Visit our website at:

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**SONS OF JOSEPH: Churches need Latino ‘flavor’**

Reach out to your local school system and police department if you want to see what the needs are in your Hispanic community, Rodriguez advised. Sadly, many Latino youths live in low-income neighborhoods and are susceptible to gang-related violence. Many grow up in single-parent families.

Churches have tremendous opportunities to provide healthy male role models and safe, welcoming environments for Hispanic youths. They also can sponsor programs for healthy marriages and families.

Whatever programs your church chooses, focus on developing intentional and transformational relationships with those you serve, Rodriguez said.

Adopt a nearby, predominantly Hispanic school. Go there and tutor kids. (I should mention here that the South Walker church has some experience in this. For decades the church has worked with an amazing program called Whiz Kids that provides role models for under-resourced children across the OKC metro.)

Rodriguez, himself a U.S.-born Latino, gives a lot more advice in his book “A Future for the Latino Church.” (See our review at christianchronicle.org.) He also recommends “Walk with the People” by Juan Francisco Martinez. A few days after this meeting, I heard Arkansas minister Mark DeYmaz speak at a convention. His book “Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church” also is a resource.

In Genesis 48, we learn that not only did Jacob bless his grandsons Manasseh and Ephraim, he also adopted them as his own sons. The descendants of these mixed-race children became tribes of Israel.

Are we willing to adopt our Hispanic communities in the same way — to accommodate them instead of trying to get them to assimilate to our culture? I pray that we are.

CONTACT: erik@christianchronicle.org
Midland, Texas, congregations join together in newly named Downtown Church of Christ

Members of the newly named Downtown Church of Christ in Midland, Texas, pose for a group photo after a recent merger of the North A and Main Street congregations. The North A church began meeting in 1930 at the location where the merged congregation joined together. The Main Street church formed in 1955. The new name reflects the combined body’s “ongoing commitment to serving the Lord in the central part of Midland,” said Greg Fleming, who will remain as one of the preachers along with Adam Elliott.

GEORGIA

ROME — It’s a revival — of areawide youth devotionals.

A recent one drew more than 200 attendees from a dozen congregations in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.

Matt Wallin, a deacon for the host Oak Hill Church of Christ, preached.

“Our area has not had areawide youth devotionals for years,” Wallin said in an email. “We wanted to revive those in an effort to ‘keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace’ (Ephesians 4:3).

“This year we are doing quarterly events, and if they go well (which they have so far!), we hope to expand to monthly next year,” he added.

MINNESOTA

PARK RAPIDS — For the first time in its history of more than 60 years, the Park Rapids Church of Christ has appointed elders.

Donald Hemenway, Norman Parks and Lowell Warne will serve as the congregation’s shepherds. Scott Warne is the preacher, and Ernie Mack and Gary Simmons are associate preachers.

“The current average attendance is around 45,” Warne said. “But our hope and prayer is that that number will be increasing as we purposely love and serve our neighbors and share the good news of Jesus with our community.”

SPARK (Sisters Pursuing an Active Relationship with the King) Women’s Conference in Branson.

The recent conference, sponsored by the Sunset Church of Christ in Springfield, Mo., drew 135 women from 29 congregations in five states, committee Chairwoman Kate Kail said. Amie Frantz from the Seymour Church of Christ in Missouri was the keynote speaker.

TEXAS

LAGRANGE — Scott Elliott, minister for the LaGrange Church of Christ, helped organize a recent weeklong community technology fast.

The purpose, Elliott said, was “to make people aware of the loneliness epidemic in our country and to promote table fellowship and spending time with others.”

“We got the entire town to join in,” he said. “I don’t think this could be done in a large city, but since we’re a small town, it was easy to get all the churches and local leadership on board.”

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S P O T L I G H T

Special carnival

RALEIGH, N.C. — The Brooks Avenue Church of Christ hosted its 19th annual spring carnival for children with special needs and their families.

About 200 volunteers served more than 800 guests, special-needs ministry leader Melinda Oldham said.

“Kids with special needs tend to have trouble at events like carnivals,” Oldham said. “This is suited specifically for them, so they can have fun.”
Police in New York are investigating what they’re calling a hate crime against a Church of Christ.

On a recent Sunday morning, minister William Jones arrived to find graffiti sprayed across the front and back doors of the North Greece Road Church of Christ building. Jones told The Christian Chronicle the graffiti included satanic symbols. Because of the nature of the graffiti and the fact that it targeted a church, police are investigating the incident as a hate crime. Greece, with a population of nearly 100,000, is a suburb of Rochester in western New York.

While the graffiti was hateful, “the response from the community has been overwhelming, really encouraging,” Jones said. “We’ve gotten calls from individuals and community agencies, even religious groups, offering prayers and encouragement.”

Church member Jonathan Wilson agreed. “There are only a few people out there with the mentality of attacking churches, and we’ll get it twisted if we think that everybody has that mindset,” Jones said. “We’ve gotten calls from individuals and community agencies, even religious groups, offering prayers and encouragement.”

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“Community wants us here,” he added, “and they showed their appreciation. … This is a perfect opportunity for us to show folks that we really are children of God.”

Jones said church leaders are making plans to increase security on the congregation’s property.

While they don’t need any extra help or donations, the congregation would love prayers from other Churches of Christ, he said. “Because we don’t know what precipitated this and who, so we certainly want to pray,” Jones said.

Police have not named any suspects and said they have few leads.
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FROM PAGE 1
added. “There are days when I feel that God has taken him for a reason, and I get comfort that he’s with the Lord. Then there are days when I miss his physical presence, and I miss his telephone conversations.”

‘BOOTHAM WAS NOT A JOHN DOE’
Months after Botham Jean’s death, trauma strikes his parents in unexpected ways.

While in Dallas, they needed to obtain medical records for an insurer. At Baylor Medical Center, where their son was taken after the shooting, they learned he initially was identified as a John Doe.

“That hurts because Botham was not a John Doe,” Allison Jean said. “He did so much, and he was so affable and always so upbeat in everything. He didn’t deserve to die.

“I know there’s a time to live and a time to die,” she added, referring to Ecclesiastes 3, “but certainly not in the way he did. I feel a wicked act was inflicted upon him right in his own home. That, for me, is the most hurtful part of it.”

WFAA-TV in Dallas recently obtained and broadcast a recording of Guyger’s 911 call from Botham Jean’s apartment.

Guyger claimed she mistakenly parked on the fourth floor instead of the third floor, where she lived directly below Botham Jean’s residence. She said she confused his place with her own and thought he was a burglar.

On the 911 tape, Guyger repeatedly insists that “I thought it was my apartment” and voices concern that “I’m going to lose my job.”

Three days after the shooting, police charged Guyger with manslaughter. Later, she was fired and indicted by a grand jury on an upgraded murder charge. Her trial is set for September, a year after Botham Jean’s death.

“That was very, very, very hard,” Allison Jean said of the 911 recording.

“Listening to it, it sparked some anger within me because I’m not hearing the dispatcher pay much attention to him,” the mother added. “I didn’t hear the dispatcher ask about his condition, whether he was breathing, whether he was responsive. … And I’m wondering whether it was because it was a police-involved shooting that the victim didn’t matter.”

Allison Jean, a former top government official in St. Lucia, said she believes the tape was leaked in an effort to gain sympathy for Guyger.

“I think it’s wrong,” she said.

SEEKING JUSTICE, GROWING WEARY
For many, “Justice for Bo!” has become a rallying cry seen on T-shirts and social media hashtags.

“In addition to grieving his loss, I’m consumed with ensuring he gets justice,” Allison Jean said. “I read all the news articles that bear his name. I’m in touch with the attorneys from the DA’s office to find out about progress from the case.”

The family filed a civil lawsuit in federal court, arguing that the city and Dallas police “failed to implement and enforce such policies, practices and procedure for the DPD that respected (Botham) Jean’s constitutional rights.”

But lately, especially after a right-wing radio host characterized her as a scheming mom looking to get rich off her son’s death, the fight has made her weary, Allison Jean said.

In a Twitter post, family attorney Lee Merritt condemned the shock jock’s statement as “dangerous, defamatory and uniquely evil.”

“Right now, since I came to Dallas, I’ve just been thinking about whether I should really fight for justice,” Allison Jean said. “I know the one just God is the one whom I serve. So I keep thinking, ‘Should I just leave everything up to him?’”

Asked what justice would look like, she replied, “I thought justice would mean some punishment to the person who inflicted harm (on Botham Jean). But right now, since I realize we’re dealing with principalities and powers — we’re dealing with a secular world and not only the spiritual that we believe in — I’ll just leave it up to the Father.”

For his part, Bertrum Jean said he knows “nothing could bring Botham back to me.” No outcome in a criminal or civil court will change the fact that his son died.

“All my mind is on is, I want to see him again,” the father said, his voice choked with emotion. “I know he’s in a place where he should be, with the Lord. I want to be in heaven with him. “Honestly, she’s the last person on my mind,” the father said of Guyger. “I don’t mind seeing her, and I have no hatred for her. Everybody who knows me, I’m about love.”

Whatever happens in the justice system, Bertrum Jean said, he’ll leave it in the Lord’s hands.

“Honestly, they could give her 100 years in prison, and I would take no pleasure,” he said. “Until I could see my Botham again, I will not be happy.”

FOCUS ON POSITIVE CHANGE

The four-day racial unity summit brought the family — Bertrum Jean, Allison Jean, older sister Allisa Charles-Findley and younger brother Brandt Jean — to Dallas.

They sat close to the front as
JUNE 2019

ACROSS THE NATION

THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Jerry Taylor, founding director of ACU’s Carl Spain Center, welcomed conference attendees. About 350 Christians from across the nation registered for the summit.

“Our presence here... speaks to our commitment to keeping the beautiful life and the horrific death of our beloved Botham Shem Jean alive,” Taylor said. “We will not suffer memory loss when it comes to recognizing the great tragedy of what the Jean family lost, what Dallas West lost, what the city of Dallas lost and what the world lost when Botham innocently lost his life.”

Dallas West minister and elder Sammie Berry, described by Botham Jean’s parents as his “Texas father,” told the crowd the slain Christian “was an outstanding young man with a bright future.”

“Allison Jean said of the summit: “Anything that will promote what Botham stood for, I fully support it. Racial unity is one of the things that Botham really tried to do. In fact, I don’t think he even recognized race because he was always with everyone. He blended very well at Harding, which is predominantly white.”

MISSION TO ST. LUCIA

At the same time as the Dallas event, a dozen-person mission team from Harding landed in St. Lucia. That island nation of 180,000 people is where Botham Jean dreamed of winning souls to Jesus and running for prime minister one day.

Harding teams led by Todd and Debbie Gentry, college and outreach ministers for the College Church of Christ in Searcy, began annual trips to St. Lucia in 2013.

At the time, Botham Jean worked as a student intern for the campus ministry. The Gros-Islet Church of Christ, where Bertrum Jean serves as a part-time preacher, was a new church plant on the island’s north end.

“We spent hours discussing the possibilities of how a team of Harding students could help grow and encourage those followers,” said Debbie Gentry, who with her husband became Botham Jean’s “Arkansas parents.”

On the latest trip, students spent four days in a Gros-Islet elementary school, teaching health and wellness, social studies and religion. That school is the same one where the original mission team coordinated a day camp that Botham Jean helped arrange.

“Our relationship not only with this school but with the ministry of education in St. Lucia has been cultivated,” Debbie Gentry said. “We have been invited to teach in all the schools in the island.

“It is amazing how free we were to talk about God and our faith,” she added. “We sang religious songs freely and prayed in all the classrooms. In all subjects, we were encouraged to speak about our faith in Jesus Christ.”

Nonetheless, the trip was difficult for all who knew Botham Jean, she said: “This year, we are walking with the entire church through grief and healing. Our hearts are broken over the tragic death of our dear friend and brother. Without a doubt, we have felt Botham’s absence in a big way.”

But just as Botham Jean “served because he loved God with all his heart, soul and mind,” she said, the Harding team did the same — knowing that he would be pleased.

The family has established the Botham Jean Foundation, with his sister serving as president, to keep his memory alive and serve vulnerable communities in the U.S. and St. Lucia.

On Sept. 6 — the anniversary of his death — the foundation plans a “Be Like Bo” Day that will feature the launch of a mentorship program.

“It’s a hard day, but we want to change it and bring good out of it,” said Charles-Findley, a member of the Kings Church of Christ in Brooklyn, N.Y.

TEAR-FILLED JOURNEY HOME

After the racial unity summit, Bertrum and Allison Jean flew home to St. Lucia to join the Harding group.

Even before returning to the island, though, they braced themselves for the torment that they’d experience there.

St. Lucia, like Dallas, stirs so many memories, so much anguish.

“I miss him being there, just going to the various homes that he visited,” Bertrum Jean said of past St. Lucia mission efforts. “It breaks my heart that he won’t be there for that work.”

The nightmare never goes away.

WEBSITE: bothamjeanfoundation.org
past four years here have led many to ask, “Can any good thing come out of Sandtown?” the couple hopes to answer that question with a resounding “yes.”

“Our mission is to capture every soul in Baltimore — and we ain’t going nowhere,” Davis Worley said. “We are making a difference. Souls are making a difference.”

‘START WITH THE CHILDREN’

As the kids finish their Bible lesson, the Worley’s 15-year-old daughter, Cnomi, gets ready for the next group of students — adults.

“We like planting lots of seeds,” she says, as she scoops meatballs from a crock pot.

Her mother explains as she passes out plates of food.

“This is a holistic effort,” Tracy Worley says. “You have to meet the community where their need is. We are working with these children, and hopefully we can work with their parents — through the kids — and prayerfully bring them along.”

It isn’t a new idea, says Kevin Bethea, senior minister and an elder of the East Baltimore church, which helped plant the Sandtown congregation. In decades past, churches sponsored JOY bus ministries (an acronym for serving Jesus, then others, then yourself) that would bring children to Bible classes and worship. The Sandtown church follows that model.

“If you start with the children, the parents will come,” Bethea said. “What that has done is show that we are reaching out to the community, and the community is responding.”

Davis Worley trained for ministry at Northeast Baltimore Bible Institute and College, an effort supported by Churches of Christ.

Ed Maxwell, dean of the college and minister for the Suitland Road Church of Christ in Suitland, Md., described Davis Worley as “the change agent that this community needs. If things change for the better, there has to be a change agent.”

The church reaches out through health and career fairs, backpack giveaways and community cleanups.

When city leaders call for aid, the Sandtown church responds. One member, Melvin Robinson, works as a drug counselor and has joined an effort by Baltimore’s police department and its health department to address the epidemic in its midst.

“The strategy is really to follow the example of Christ,” Davis Worley said. “Christ always took care of the needs of the people. He didn’t come to distance himself from people; he came for those who needed him the most. That is simply what we are doing. We come to people who need us the most.”

Such efforts serve not only the community but also the greater fellowship of Churches of Christ, which has declined steadily in numbers for the past two decades, Bethea said.

“Church planting will be the savior of the Churches of Christ,” Bethea said. “As older churches dissolve, we need newer churches to evolve.”

In recent years the East Baltimore congregation has planted new churches, such as the Inner City Church of Christ, east of downtown, and the Sandtown congregation.

“Across the country churches are dying,” Bethea said, “so it is important to plant churches where the people are.”
About 20 adults attend the Bible class, which meets weekly. In 2017, the church began meeting for Sunday worship and Bible study twice per month. Since that time, 15-plus souls have been baptized, Davis Worley said.

One of them is Samantha Boyd-Lide, 49. She was baptized April 14, 2018 — 10 days after her sister and niece were fatally shot after men broke into her home and opened fire. It's a case police still have not solved.

But Boyd-Lide remains hopeful. Her church family has helped, she said, and the congregation is transforming its community one soul at a time.

"If we can reach one person and they can reach someone, then we have made a difference," she said.

She was introduced to the church through her sister-in-law, who had invited her to visit another congregation in Baltimore County. There she heard Davis Worley speak about the church in Sandtown.

By that time “my life has already changed,” she said. “I had been clean from drugs for 16 years.” But she was still reluctant to get baptized.

“I was fighting against baptism,” she said. “I thought I had done it all (in terms of following Christ), but I learned that I didn’t get the right teaching.”

The expense of renting the meeting space prohibits the church from meeting more often. Although the church receives support from other Churches of Christ and individual Christians, it has no sponsor.

“A work such as this should be shared as an inspiration to Christian soldiers all over the country and the world,” Bethea said. “While others only move when there is potential for personal gain, these soldiers for Christ moved when there was no foreseeable gain, when there was no financial support.”

“CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS’ INSPIRE”

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Davis Worley said he hopes that the Sandtown church soon will be able to host weekly services.

“So many people out here don’t have a church home and don’t know Christ, and we try to teach Christ to them,” he said. “We believe in door knocking. We believe in getting out here and doing things the same way that Jesus did.”
The McClues (Sean, Philip, Sarah, Esther and Jeni) visit Cochabamba, Bolivia, in 2018. Son Philip is a student at Arizona State University's Polytechnic Campus in Mesa, Ariz. Daughter Sarah just returned to the U.S. after nearly two years of mission work in Cochabamba through Adventures in Missions. She begins studies at the University of Arizona this fall. Esther is 3 years old.

For Sean McClue, urban ministry is close to home.

“I was actually born in that hospital right there,” he says, pointing to a building blocks away, as he sits in the backyard of the Greenhouse. The one-story bungalow, painted forest green, serves as a ministry center and meeting place for a small church. The home was built in 1912, the same year Arizona became the 48th state.

For decades, Garfield was the hub of the community and was home to the state’s largest Church of Christ, Sean McClue says. That congregation held out against a rash of gang violence here in the 1980s but moved north in the mid-1990s.

Van Buren Street, just a few blocks from the Greenhouse, once served as a divider between the city’s white and black communities. Sean McClue remembers being told to stay out of this part of town — where he and his family now live.

One hundred and seven years after statehood, Arizona’s capital is the sixth-largest city in the U.S., boasting a metro population of 4.7 million. That still seems small compared to the McClues’ former residence — Mexico City, which has a metro population in excess of 21 million.

Baptized during his college years at the University of Arizona, Sean McClue met his future bride while working in campus ministry. He graduated with a degree in business marketing before enrolling in Adventures in Missions, or AIM, a program of Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas. As he studied in the program, Jeni completed degrees in chemistry and biochemistry. They married after graduation and moved to Lubbock to study in Sunset’s missions program and serve on the AIM staff.

They joined a mission team in Cuernavaca, where they perfected their Spanish. They later moved to Mexico City as part of a five-family team of former AIM students. There, they helped plant churches that met across the massive city in small, intimate cell groups. They raised two of their three children in Mexico.

After a dozen years south of the border, returning to Arizona required adjustment. “Here, we’re not really the different ones,” Jeni McClue says. About 44 percent of the metro population is of Hispanic origin, according to census data.

Also, “I don’t think people are as trusting here as they were in Mexico,” she says.

Phoenix is the birthplace of SB 1070, a state senate bill that, when passed in 2010, was one of the broadest and strictest anti-illegal immigration measures in the nation. Proponents saw it as a means of curbing illegal immigration and drug-related violence and kidnappings. Critics argue that the law encourages racial profiling.

The McClues do their best to stay out of politics, sharing the gospel with their neighbors regardless of their immigration status. They use FriendSpeak, a program developed by Texas-based Let’s Start Talking that helps non-native speakers improve their English using the Bible.

Interns with AIM assist the ministry, and a few have returned after their time in the program to continue helping.

One is Dominyc Turner, a native of Long Beach, Calif., who worked in Houston for 10 years before Hurricane Harvey in 2017 forced him to relocate (something he had planned to do anyway, he says).

Turner, who taught himself Spanish, works for a restaurant in the Phoenix airport and serves with...
Members of a spring break DiscipleTrips group pray with Barney, a friend of Central Phoenix Urban Ministry. “He’s been through a lot in life and gave the group advice about how to handle difficulties,” Sean McClue said.

Central Phoenix Urban Ministry.

When it comes to reaching Latinos, “just be calm and let them come as they are,” he advises. Trust takes time. “They expect to owe you something. Giving them something freely is an unknown thing outside of the church.”

A BIZARRE OUTREACH

Inside the Greenhouse, university students line up to make street tacos al pastor. Twenty-two students, plus some family and campus ministry staff, are here participating in a ministry retreat, a combination of devotionals and service projects.

The students, from the University of Arizona in Tucson and Arizona State in Tempe, spent the morning serving families in the Garfield neighborhood. Several of the students did yard work for “Miss Lupita,” a widow who lives a few blocks from the Greenhouse.

“Seeing everyone working together, no one trying to be the boss” — that’s what Joe Cooper likes best about the experience. The plumber and member of the Mission Valley Church of Christ accompanied one of the college groups to the event.

As for Miss Lupita, “to see happy people are loving her, helping her out, that’s cool,” Cooper says.

After tacos, the retreaters move to a nearby park to host the ministry’s weekly JAM (Jesus And Me) Club for about 30 Latino youths from the community. The college students lead “Father Abraham” and other Vacation Bible School songs and present a skit they wrote about the life of King David.

The students are from diverse locales — from Arizona to New Mexico to Delaware. There are even students from the African nations of Ghana and Zimbabwe.

Allen Matsika, an MBA student at Arizona State, came with a group from the Oasis Campus Ministry in Tempe. Matsika, who grew up in the Rusape Road Church of Christ in his home country, says that most of the youth activities there are centered on the church building itself. He says he appreciates Central Phoenix Urban Ministry’s focus on meeting people where they live.

Some of the retreat participants aren’t from Churches of Christ — and likely wouldn’t be interested in a weekend of singing and sermons, says Jessica Knapp, a campus minister for Ambassadors 4 Christ, a ministry supported by Churches of Christ in Tucson. But students have an abiding love of service, she says.

“It’s a bizarre outreach, but it works,” she says of the retreat, adding that a participant once told her, “I guess you’re not too bad — for a church group.”

OPENING GLOBAL DOORS FOR MINISTRY

For the McClues, modeling inner-city ministry meant moving their family into the inner city. They live a few blocks away from the Greenhouse, and Jeni McClue is an administrator in the public school system. It’s quiet here at night, they say, after the commuters return home from their jobs in downtown Phoenix.

The neighborhood is changing rapidly. Arizona State has a growing downtown campus nearby, accompanied by private parking lots and Starbucks coffee. The Garfield community is becoming a hub for local artists, with modern murals of Hispanic life lining the streets.

House-flipping developers have taken interest in the gentrified, low-income homes, envisioning a new, trendy downtown community that caters to hipster millennials.

But for now the immigrant families are here — including the recent arrivals from Congo, some of whom are children born in refugee camps in Africa.

“Now, because of continued unrest in their home country … they are trying rebuild their lives here,” Sean McClue says. One is studying in community college to become an obstetrician.

But the refugees face challenges, he adds, noting that one child had to repeat two years of high school due to a lack of English proficiency.

So the McClues — missionaries who returned home — help those who cannot go home, giving them lessons in English and sharing their love of Christ.

Central Phoenix Urban Ministry also has hosted two backpack drives for the refugee children and other youths in the neighborhood. Area churches provided supplies for 500 backpacks.

Barnabas Mto, the Congolese community leader, envisions a bigger role for Churches of Christ. He’s seen what one ministry can do locally, but thousands of his countrymen remain in refugee camps in Africa.

“If the Churches of Christ could do a big ministry, we could reach 135,000 students in Africa in the refugee camps,” he says. “My community appreciates the help,” he says, “and we ask you to continue.”

That task seems huge, Sean McClue says, but it starts on a small scale.

“If we can make disciples of Jesus in the international neighborhoods in our own city, then maybe one day they can help us reach neighborhoods all over the world,” he says.

“While planting churches in Mexico City, we learned quickly that the only way to impact such a large city was to focus on individual neighborhoods.

“And coming back to Phoenix, we feel the same way.”

SEE VIDEOS of Bible songs and silliness from the JAM (Jesus And Me) Club at christiantoehome.org.
CROATIA

VARAZDIN — Church members in the Balkans — nations that fought bitter, brutal conflicts with each other during the 1990s — are working together to make disciples of Christ in Central Europe.

Missionaries from Bosnia recently taught a seminar on disciple-making movements (DMM) that focused on reaching young people with the gospel through electronic media, said Mladen Dominic, minister for a Church of Christ in Varazdin.

Recently, Dominic and his wife visited churches and ministry partners in the Serbian cities of Valjevo and Belgrade.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

NEYBA — The Dominican Republic, a nation of 10.7 million souls on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, is home to an estimated 2 million immigrants from the impoverished nation to its west — Haiti.

Latin American Leadership Development, a ministry associated with Churches of Christ, has worked with church leaders to establish and help support eight Haitian congregations in the Dominican Republic, with two more church plants in the works, said director Bob Young.

Young and Clark Lineback recently traveled to Neyba to teach and train preachers working with the Haitian congregations. The church members also conducted a two-night evangelistic campaign.

GHANA

WINNEBA — Thirty-five Churches of Christ meet in the KAGE area of this West African nation. (The acronym represents the Kasoa, Awtu, Gomoa and Efutu peoples.)

About half of the churches have mature members and leaders. Others are made up of recent converts, according to Herald of Hope, a newsletter of the Village of Hope ministry.

So leaders of churches in the KAGE area meet bimonthly for prayer, encouragement and Bible study. At a recent meeting, hosted by the Winneba Church of Christ, attendees discussed the need to support evangelists and preachers. Desmond Donkoh, minister for the McCarthy Hill Church of Christ in Ghana’s capital, Accra, spoke.

“Even though many of the congregations in the area are economically poor ... brother Donkoh encouraged them to do their best to take good care of and support the preachers among them,” the Herald of Hope reported.

MYANMAR

YANGON — The harvest is plentiful in this Southeast Asian nation of 53 million souls, said Philip Lian.

But the workers are few.

“There are many, many cities in Myanmar where there is no church, which means we have a big and great responsibility,” said Lian, a member of a small Church of Christ who coordinates a class of 13 ministry students. “And so few people are willing and capable of doing it.”

In addition to studying the curriculum of Bear Valley Bible Institute International, the students travel to villages and conduct Bible studies.

Baptisms have resulted, Lian said.

UNITED KINGDOM

BANGOR — The Church of Christ in this Northern Ireland city is “small in number, but big in heart,” said Maurice Brown.

Brown, preacher for the Broadway Church of Christ in Rockford, Ill., was baptized in 1978 in Northern Ireland’s capital, Belfast. During a recent visit he and his wife, Tami, gave out about 600 postcards offering free Bible correspondence courses.

Michael Keaney, who preaches for the Southwell Road Church of Christ in Bangor, sends Bible courses to anyone who responds to the cards.

Last of U.S. team returns from Chile

SANTIAGO, Chile — More than 300 people gathered for a recent area-wide worship in this South American capital.

Churches of Christ host such a meeting quarterly, but this one was special because it gave Chilean Christians the chance to say goodbye to longtime missionaries Zane and Tamara Perkins. The couple and their children recently returned to the U.S. after serving as missionaries for 17 years. They are the remnant of a church-planting team from the U.S.

“I never thought it would be as hard as it’s been,” Zane Perkins wrote in a recent newsletter. “Tae and I have lived most of our lives outside the USA, and the boys have never lived there.”

Before their departure, Zane Perkins spoke to the assembly.

Church member Pablo Sanchez wrote of the experience: “This has been a historic week in Chile. Thanks to God for all he does and will do through his people.

“There is great encouragement for all the brothers to keep growing and expanding the gospel through all of Chile. We ask for your prayers (for) a unity that never has existed in the Churches of Christ in our country.”

The service concluded with a sendoff prayer for the family.

“Mission work has been such a part of our lives,” Zane Perkins said.

“To think about not being on the mission field is strange.” However, he added, “We know everywhere we live is the mission field.”
Christians in Sri Lanka ‘stand firm’ after church attacks

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

‘M uslim radicals all over the world are targeting people of Christian faith,” said Lilani Thomas after terrorist attacks on Easter Sunday took the lives of 258 people in her home country, Sri Lanka.

Now, “we pray … that our Heavenly Father gives courage to all of us to carry his Son’s message without fear,” she told The Christian Chronicle, “and to stand firm for the faith.”

Thomas and her husband, Harold, were on their way to Sunday worship with the Wannappuwa Church of Christ in Sri Lanka when suicide bombers entered three church buildings and four hotels in the capital, Colombo. Six blasts happened within a short period, and two more followed as police searched for suspects.

The Thomases were near one of the blast sites just 30 minutes prior as they gave a church member a ride to Wannappuwa, north of Colombo’s international airport.

The church’s members began to conduct worship and shared the Lord’s Supper before news of the attacks caused them to stop and pray. A member later learned that her nephew and two of her nephew’s relatives through her husband were near one of the blast sites just 30 minutes prior as they gave a church member a ride to Wannappuwa, north of Colombo’s international airport.

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“Altogether there are 60 funerals in the vicinity,” Lilani Thomas said. “Since the cemetery cannot handle so many burials, it’s mass burials taking place in threes and fives.”

No members of Churches of Christ were injured in the attacks, Lilani Thomas said.

Sri Lankan authorities said that a militant Islamist group, the national Thowheed Jamath, likely was to blame for the attacks, though the group likely had aid from abroad. The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attacks.
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*Offer lasts through June, 2019.

Erik, congratulations! God bless.
Carlus D. Page, minister for the New Heights Church of Christ in Biloxi, Miss., attends the National Lectureship in St. Louis.

Working to bridge generational divide

MISSISSIPPI MINISTER Carlus D. Page is eager to engage the faith of young adult Christians.

Why do you see a need for such a conference?
Our young adults are often neglected. Some older Christians are frustrated with the young adults, saying that they don’t listen. And then, some young adults are frustrated with some of the older Christians because they say they won’t give us a chance.

Describe the focus of the conference.
It’s a three- to four-day conference. On the first day, we have a welcome event. Then on that Friday, we always do a community service event. We want to reach up to God. We want to reach in within ourselves. We want to reach out into our community.

What sparked the Millennial’s Reach Conference?
I’m kind of on the outskirts of millennials. So, seeing the way that a lot of people talk about leaving the church, I thought it would be a great idea to try to develop something, a platform, for our peers by our peers.

Is the conference geared toward African Americans or more diverse?
We want people of all backgrounds, any ethnicity and every generation. This is not necessarily a young adult conference within itself. It’s created by young adults to strengthen the young adult population. But all are welcome to attend.

Why do you see a need for such a conference? Our young adults are often neglected. Some older Christians are frustrated with the young adults, saying that they don’t listen. And then, some young adults are frustrated with some of the older Christians because they say they won’t give us a chance.

Describe the focus of the conference.
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What is the importance of an event like this for African American congregations?
I think it’s more heritage than anything. I would like to see the Church of Christ come together over racial lines to have an event where it’s not a Polishing the Pulpit that’s predominantly Caucasian and not just the National Lectureship that’s predominantly African American.

You’re one of the younger speakers at the National Lectureship. What will it take for this event to keep thriving?
I think, as we can see, the average attendee is over age 45. In the next 30 years, if we don’t see a young adult group coming along that’s attending the lectureship, then I believe this vision will fade away. We have to be intentional about bringing in the next generation and passing the torch to them.
Launches during segregation, National Lectureship celebrates 75 years

BY ROBERT ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ST. LOUIS

F or 75 years, the National Lectureship of Churches of Christ has brought together Christians from across the U.S. for preaching, singing and fellowship.

Hundreds of members of predominantly African American congregations gathered at a hotel near St. Louis’ Gateway Arch for the recent National Lectureship event.

“We want your spirits to be fed, our bodies to be comfortable, your fellowship to be delightful and your time here to have been worth the visit,” Conley Gibbs said.

Gibbs said Smith “continues to encourage us to ‘endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace’ by imploring us to love each other as Christ did, to forgive each other as is often necessary and to serve each other for the glory of God.”

For his part, Smith said, “I am humbled, counseled and grateful to the National Lectureship Board of Directors and leadership who have bestowed recognition of my contribution to the kingdom down through the years.”

“If it’s predominantly white or just go, and it doesn’t matter where we are, and at Greenville, it’s the same way. We have as far as it comes in and feel welcomed,” said the mayor.

“The Lectureship is never to become a vehicle for settling Church of Christ Church problems and conflict in our brotherhood.”

Among the original objectives, leaders wanted to “offer sound and truth with delegated authority to legislate laws and rules to be bound on local congregations of the churches of Christ.”

“At the beginning was...” • “The Lectureship is never to become a delegated convention, with chosen men of local congregations who would have voice in policy-making decisions that would be binding upon all local churches. All local churches of Christ are autonomous in government and they are subject to Christ.”

“La’Tee Ideberg, whose husband, Otis, serves as an elder of the Greenville Avenue Church of Christ in Richardson, Texas, said she appreciates the long legacy of the National Lectureship. It traces its history to a time when black and white congregations were segregated.”
Oklahoma Christian University is a diverse community of scholars and learners, of seekers and sowers, all committed in service to a common mission to “transform lives for Christian faith, scholarship and service.” OC is committed to hiring employees who are actively engaged in a life of Christian discipleship as we strive to create an employment culture that encourages faculty and staff to lean into the university’s Christian mission with an emphasis on authenticity and unity, not uniformity.

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Application instructions and descriptions of each position are available at oc.edu/hr.

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PREACHING THAT ENGAGES multiple generations must be instructive and narrative, says minister Chris Seidman.

Share the gospel, and share your life

BY LYNN MCMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Chris Seidman loves to study God’s word — and to preach it. He is an avid student of Scripture, and his sermons reflect the same.

After graduating from Abilene Christian University in Texas in 1992, he served with the Southern Hills Church of Christ in Abilene, the Hills Church of Christ in North Richland Hills, Texas, and the Gateway Church of Christ in Pensacola, Fla.

In 2001 he began ministering with the Farmers Branch Church of Christ in the suburbs of Dallas. Today “The Branch” is a multi-site congregation of 2,500 members with campuses in Carrollton and Farmers Branch.

Seidman is a sought-after speaker. His most recent book, co-authored with Josh Graves, is “Heaven on Earth: Realizing the Good Life Now.” He also authored “Before Stones Become Bread: Becoming More like Jesus by Resisting Temptation.”

He is married to Tara, also a graduate of ACU. They have three grown sons, Skyler, Garrison and Cooper.

What is your philosophy of preaching?

The aim of my preaching is that people would see Jesus. The philosophical approach to my preaching might be summed up by what Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 2 — he loved them so much that he was delighted to share the Gospel and his life as well.

I’ve found that people lean in when I open up and reflect upon how the word or insight that I’m sharing has intersected with my life personally — for better or for worse.

Strategically in my preaching, I want the message to have three features:
• What could God be saying through this text in its context?
• What does this have to do with Jesus?
• What am I going to do about it?

Do you have an annual preaching plan?

I try to have five themes over the course of a year, but it doesn’t always work out that way.

I want one series that revolves around the cross of Christ. It could be a series on Jesus’ seven statements from the cross, or the passion narrative of the gospel, or what Paul had to say about the cross in his letters.

A second theme is a series having something to do with the kingdom of God for the simple reason that this is what Jesus preached. The kingdom was his favorite subject.

A third theme is some kind of expository series through a particular book of the Bible.

A fourth theme is more theological, such as something on the nature of God, his sovereignty or the fear of the Lord, or the Spirit of God.

A fifth theme is a series that addresses something that is going on in our contemporary culture. For example, last year I did a series on technology and its relationship to spirituality and to the building of community. Technology is advancing faster than we know what to do with it. I called the series “Present: Learning to be Where You Are.” Our relationship with technology and various devices and screens has a lot of leverage in what’s happening in our culture today.

What kind of challenges do preachers face today?

There have always been challenges to the preaching moment, though they may change from generation to generation. One of them today is attention span. At the same time, I also realize that five minutes of boredom is five minutes too long, and 30 minutes of engaging or fascinating is not enough. Attention spans are variable, but then so are the preparation, passion and capacity of the preacher.

‘Five minutes of boredom is five minutes too long, and 30 minutes of engaging or fascinating is not enough. Attention spans are variable, but then so are the preparation, passion and capacity of the preacher.’

Chris Seidman, on the impact of declining attention spans on effective preaching.

How do you try to make sermons relevant to four or five generations sitting in your audience?

In most every sermon I write, I am always thinking about somebody who is at church for the first time and is potentially not a believer or has very little frame of reference in regard to Scripture. I try to have something in my sermon that might speak to someone in that situation.

The other day I had a woman who just started attending ask me, “So how did Jesus die a second time?” She had assumed he had died again after his resurrection. I wish you could have seen her eyes when I shared with her the rest of the story and why it matters.

In terms of multiple generations, I try to be relevant to the younger generations by being more autobiographical in my illustrations. Most everyone has a great appreciation for preachers being transparent and drawing upon illustrations from their own lives.

I have found that older generations appear to have an appreciation for more of a teaching or didactic approach, whereas the younger generation seems to regard a story or narrative approach. So in every sermon, there are chunks that are more narrative or story-oriented and chunks that are more didactic or teaching-oriented.

See SEIDMAN, Page 22
What advice can you give to us as listeners on how to get the most out of a sermon?

Seek answers to these two questions when listening to a sermon: “What is God saying through this text? Where is Jesus in this?”

And, “What am I going to do about it with the help of the Holy Spirit?”

I think any listener also has to come with a spirit of graciousness and understanding that the one doing the speaking is a cracked vessel and doesn't have a monopoly on the truth. The preacher speaks in part and sees in part, as Paul recognized in 1 Corinthians 13.

How do you and your wife share in this ministry?

There is so much ministry that my wife does apart from me. Her spiritual antennas are so much more attuned than mine.

I think perhaps the most effective ministry we do together is in our living room and also following our services when we receive people for prayer. To be with my wife when she is praying for people and both hearing their heart while also tapping into the heart of God and melding that together in prayer is a beautiful thing.

We have a way of “ping-ponging” back and forth in prayer and in counsel with people that has brought forth some fruit. The truth is most of the evangelistic fruit in our neighborhood and in our community is tied more to what’s happened in our living room with people than what’s happened in the pulpit.
Airman surprises sister as she graduates from Harding

After being stationed for two years in Japan, Airman 1st Class Daylon Twigg surprises his sister Makayla Twigg at her recent graduation from Harding University in Searcy, Ark. For the broadcast journalism major from Buffalo, N.Y., graduation day “was an extreme reminder of how blessed and loved I am,” she wrote on Facebook. Harding’s more than 800 graduates came from 43 states and U.S. territories and 23 nations.

Spotlight

‘Note-burning’ at Heritage Christian

FLORENCE, Ala. — Heritage Christian University, which is associated with Churches of Christ, has made its final payment on long-term debt.

“In 2010, after the completion of our new dorms, we found ourselves with $2.1 million in long-term debt and began searching for ways to eliminate it as soon as possible,” said Pat Moon, vice president for administration.

The university cites support from donors as the reason for its ability to pay off debt. President Kirk Brothers and Philip Goad, vice president of advancement, took the “debt-free” message to donors and received overwhelming support, officials said. At the start of 2019, a large donation was received, allowing a kickstart on the final $949,000 owed.

“Our ability to pay off the debt is symbolic of our goal to help students live without debt,” Brothers said. “It encourages our donors to know that their support will now go toward present and future attempts to fulfill our mission of the Gospel, not past projects.”
For Christian retirees, it’s gospel before golf

SOJOURNERS CRISSCROSS THE COUNTRY as they dedicate their golden years to serving Churches of Christ and their ministries

MOUNT DORA, Fla.

The stereotypical view of retirement is a time to kick back and relax, maybe play some golf or spend days walking on the beach. If that’s the case, then the Sojourners definitely are not typical retirees. They are seniors who travel the country in recreational vehicles helping churches and Christian nonprofits. Much of what they do is tiring, physical labor like painting, carpentry, pressure washing and making repairs. And they do it for free. Based in Marshall, Texas, Sojourners has more than 1,000 members, more than half of whom are active in any given year, spending anywhere from two weeks to most of the year on assignments they choose, known as “sojourns.” The ministry is associated with Churches of Christ.

LABOR AND LAUGHTER

Recently, a group of about 30 Sojourners participated in a two-week mission at Mount Dora Christian Academy and Mount Dora Children’s Home, near Orlando in Central Florida. Their tasks involved long days of physical labor. The institutions provided breakfast, lunch, a daily devotional and lots of encouragement. They were a hardy group who could labor and toil for hours a day and keep a positive attitude. They also had fun along the way, laughing a lot and rarely complaining about their messy tasks or the hot Florida sun.

“We participate because we like to travel, and we want to travel with a purpose,” said Richard Clark, who along with his wife, Marsha, have been active Sojourners for 10 years. “We want to serve the Lord first and foremost, and this gives us an opportunity to do so.”

“It gives you a good feeling to accomplish things,” Marsha Clark said. “Just because you are retired doesn’t mean you have to sit around the house.”

The Clarks have completed sojourns in Florida, Alabama and Georgia. They travel in a 35-foot Class A motorhome.

A retired school teacher, Richard Clark is one of six co-directors of Sojourners. He estimates that he and his wife spend nearly half their year involved with the ministry.

‘RETREADS’ FIND LOVE AS THEY SERVE

Another couple, Lloyd and Dottie Hasty, are affectionately known as “Retreads.” That’s a term for people who were involved in Sojourners with their first spouses, but after their spouses passed away, they remarried other widowed Sojourners and remained active in the organization.

That’s what happened with the Hastys. They got married in July 2012. Lloyd Hasty still has a house in Kentucky, and his wife owns a place in New Jersey. They sojourn for about five months per year — usually in South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Florida and Georgia — and split the rest of the time between their two homes.

They have worked on Sojourners assignments as far away as Utah and Montana. They even completed a sojourn in Scotland, but of course
they had to leave their 38-foot Class A motorhome at home for that one. “We travel with a purpose, working for Jesus, serving the Lord,” Lloyd Hasty said. “I don’t play golf. Some people do, but I’d rather be working for the Lord.”

‘GREENDOTS’ LOOK FOR FULFILLMENT

Another group of Sojourners is the “Greendots,” people on their first sojourn. (Their name tags have a green dot.)

At Mount Dora, Walt and Nancy Harper were greendots. They are from Abilene, Texas, and said they were looking for a way to use their retirement time to accomplish something worthwhile.

“We looked at retirement communities where the focus was on pleasure and having a good time all the time,” Nancy Harper said. “But we wanted to be where we could serve other people and help other people.”

Her husband added, “Sojourners is a way for us to travel with other Christian couples, to travel around the country. It’s another way for us to serve the Lord.”

The Harper’s RV stood out from the rest due to its small size, but it’s a beauty — a 21-foot Escape. When they purchased it, they were only anticipating using it for short trips — not the extended road trips that many Sojourners experience. Some Sojourners even sell their homes and live year-round in their RVs.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM SOJOURNERS

After spending time with these Sojourners, it’s hard not to be impressed. Maybe their example will help us all dream larger dreams regarding our retirements.

If we’re blessed with reasonably good health, there’s so much more that can be accomplished later in life, once we’re freed from the shackles of working an 8-to-5 job.

There’s a saying about some people in old age preferring to burn out, not rust out.

Sojourners have made their choice, and they are happy with it.

DAVE HOGAN is director of donor relations for Mount Dora Children’s Home and a member of the Orange Avenue Church of Christ in Eustis, Fla. This piece originally appeared on the website “This Retirement Life” (thisretirementlife.com). Learn more about Sojourners at sojourning.org.

Milestones

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

Birthdays

90th: Lavaga Logan, April 29, Russellville, Ala. Happy birthday, Lovaga!

Anniversaries

75th: Carl and Jean Waldrum, April 13, 1944. Golden, Colo. Congratulations, Carl and Jean!

Memorials

Leonard Driskell
1934-2019

Leonard Monroe Driskell, 84, in later years of Freeport, Texas, died in North Charleston, S.C., after battling Alzheimer’s and congenital heart disease, surrounded by family. Leonard attended both Freed-Hardeman College and Abilene Christian College and preached full-time in Churches of Christ for more than sixty-five years. Ministering mostly in Texas, but also in Oklahoma, Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Nebraska, he headed youth bible camps in multiple locations and led mission trips to Zimbabwe, England, and domestically to the Peñasco Valley of New Mexico.

Leonard is survived by his loving wife of 62 years, Patricia; daughters Jeanie Benskin and Karin Chamberlain and sons Dennis, David, and Len Driskell; as well as fourteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He will be remembered as a deeply compassionate minister and diligent gospel preacher. He will be laid to rest alongside his parents at Holly Cemetery in east Texas. No services are planned at this time.

“There is hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” — Isaiah 40:31

Ealgie Gilbert Sr.
1927-2019

Ealgie Aubrey Gilbert Sr., age 91, passed away March 14 due to complications from Alzheimer’s. He was born June 22, 1927, to Rebecca McDonald and Bossie Gilbert Sr. He is survived by Jerome Sally, his wife of nearly 69 years. They were married April 1, 1950, and have seven children, 45 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren. His wife introduced him to the Church under the direction of brother David Shows at the then Gun Street Church of Christ in North Little Rock, Ark. He was so excited about obeying the gospel, and his ministry began in 1951. After several months he preached his first sermon, “What Lack I Yet.” The couple held Bible classes in their home on Sundays and Wednesdays since they lived close to the church. He served the congregations in Cotton Plant, England, Russellville, and Sweet Home, all in Arkansas. He established the congregations at Dixie Church of Christ in North Little Rock, Ark., and College Heights Church of Christ and East Side Church of Christ in Little Rock, Ark. After his retirement in 1993, he traveled to Malvern, Ark., to reestablish the work there. He labored there for seven years. After only a few months, he returned to continue another seven years until (continued on page 26)
Milestones

**Gilbert Sr. (cont.)**

his health started to fail. Brother Gilbert will be remembered for his enthusiasm in sharing the gospel however he could. Although he had no formal education, his ministry resulted in many conversions. The Jule Miller films were his first tool in teaching cottage classes in different homes several times a week. Perhaps his most favorite way to reach people was having tent meetings at least twice a year. He also taught in prisons, leading to many conversions. Also, much time was spent in the nursing home consoling residents and extending good will to the care givers. He was unselfish in the community by providing comfort and support to those families needing solace in the court system and making recommendations to parole boards. Lastly, many men, now preachers, were given the opportunity and encouraged to speak because he gladly shared the pulpit. We thank and praise God for his commitment to serve. Following each sermon, he quoted the following scripture, “And now brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” — Acts 20:32

Glen loved playing and coaching softball as well as drinking coffee with the guys at McDonald’s. For many years, he also owned and managed Glen’s Auto Sales. Glen enjoyed telling jokes, figuring out the daily crossword puzzle, and watching “Gunsmoke” and “Jeopardy.” But most of all, Glen loved getting to spend time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, cherishing every moment he had with them. He will be missed and remembered always.

Glen was preceded in death by his father, Elias Franklin Moore; mother, Lottie Pearl (Hargrove) Moore; son, Darrel Moore; brother, Bill Moore; brother, Pep Moore; and sister, Joyce Shelley.

Glen is survived by his wife, Peggy Moore of Carlsbad, N.M.; daughter, Diane (John Paul) Athanasiou of Amarillo, Texas; daughter, Darlene (Lynn) Shelton of Carlsbad, N.M.; daughter, Denice (Don) Peterson of Carlsbad, N.M.; son, Dennis Moore of Carlsbad, N.M.; eight grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Aubrey Glen Moore**

1933-2019

Aubrey Glen Moore, 85, of Carlsbad, N.M., passed away Sunday, May 19, 2019, at his home surrounded by his family. Glen was born on Nov. 20, 1933, in Rochester, Texas, to Elias and Lottie Moore. Later, he met the love of his life, Peggy Joyce Patton, and was married on July 19, 1952, in Lueders, Texas.

Glen was an active member and custodian of the Sunset Church of Christ, retiring this year. His servant heart and tireless dedication were not only evident in his work but also in his love for the children at the Shining Stars Preschool. Over the years, Glen loved playing and coaching softball as well as drinking coffee with the guys at McDonald’s. For many years, he also owned and managed Glen’s Auto Sales. Glen enjoyed telling jokes, figuring out the daily crossword puzzle, and watching “Gunsmoke” and “Jeopardy.” But most of all, Glen loved getting to spend time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, cherishing every moment he had with them. He will be missed and remembered always.

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**Marilyn Wilkinson**

1936-2019

Marilyn Holroyd Wilkinson, 82, of Renton, Wash., and Cedar Vale, Kan., passed away in Renton on May 13, 2019, after a period of declining health. Marilyn was born in Winfield, Kan., to Madison and Lucille Webb Holroyd on Dec. 12, 1936. She grew up on the family farm north of Cedar Vale, Kan. After graduation, Marilyn attended Central Christian College in Bartlesville, Okla., where she met Maurice Charles Wilkinson of Wichita, Kan. They married on June 30, 1956. After both graduating from Wichita State University, they moved to the Seattle area in 1962, where they have lived since, with the exception of residing in Parker, Colo., from 1993-2003. In 1997 they acquired a home in Cedar Vale to help care for Maurice’s parents. When Maurice retired from Boeing in 2003, they began alternately living in Renton, Wash., in the summer and Cedar Vale in the winter.

In her younger years, Marilyn greatly enjoyed hiking and camping with her family and playing tennis. Later, she spent time volunteering and blessing their network of friends and church family in Washington, Colorado, and Kansas. All of them, everywhere she went, remember her for her infectious smile, kindness, faith, servant heart, optimism, and love for all.

Marilyn is preceded in death by her parents and her sister, Margaret Thompson. She is survived by her husband, Maurice; son, David (Natalia) Wilkinson of Cedar Vale; daughter, Lynne Roberts of Okanogan, Wash.; brother, Madison Holroyd of Cedar Vale; grandchildren Steven Roberts, McKenna Roberts, and Karolina Wilkinson; and numerous nieces and nephews.

**Ivan Stewart**, 96, April 24, Oklahoma City, Okla.

With Appreciation

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges many very generous gifts received in honor of Lynn and Joy McMillon and in memory of Bertha Babers and Rick Schimizze.

Submit your wedding announcements, birth announcements, memorials or tributes to milestones@christianchronicle.org.
Bill Banowsky, former president of Pepperdine, OU, dies at 83

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

William S. “Bill” Banowsky, the fourth president and chief executive officer of Pepperdine University, died April 28 at age 83.

Banowsky served as president of the 7,700-student university associated with Churches of Christ from 1971 to 1978. He then moved to Norman, Okla., to serve as president of the University of Oklahoma. In 1982 he resigned to serve as president of the Greater Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, but returned to OU as president in 1983 and served until 1985.

In a news release, Pepperdine’s current president, Andrew K. Benton, said Banowsky had a lasting impact on the university.

“He was a visionary determined to assure a bright future for the University, often willing the institution forward with his considerable talents and very often against the odds. He must always be regarded as one of the central heroes of our story,” Benton said.

Banowsky served as a preacher for Churches of Christ in the Nashville, Tenn., area, while working on his bachelor’s degree from David Lipscomb College (now Lipscomb University).

In 1959, he joined Pepperdine College as associate dean of students. He divided his energies between duties at Pepperdine, a doctoral program at the University of Southern California and a Sunday preaching commitment at South Gate Church of Christ. By 1963, Banowsky had been promoted to dean of students at Pepperdine and completed his doctorate in speech communication.

He left Pepperdine for a few years, serving in a ministry role at the Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, and as a professor at Lubbock Christian College (now Lubbock Christian University).

While in Lubbock, Banowsky engaged in a much-publicized debate with the religion editor of Playboy magazine, Anson Mount, on the topic of sex and morality.

About 3,000 college students watched the Oct. 8, 1967, debate.

“I am affirming the moral principles of Christ,” Banowsky said during the debate, “which honor the power, and majesty, and beauty of sex as the sacred, limited, exclusive gift of married love.”

In 1968, Banowsky returned to Pepperdine as executive vice president. In 1969, he became chancellor.

In 1972, Pepperdine was elevated to university status and Banowsky, who was just 34 at the time, was named the fourth president.

“William Slater Banowsky belongs to a small group of leaders without whom, in each case, there would be no Pepperdine University today,” said James R. Wilburn, dean emeritus of the School of Public Policy and Graziadio Business School. “His special relationship to his predecessor was historic, almost biblical, in its capacity to cooperate and compensate with the stupendous talents of each.

Banowsky’s leadership in Los Angeles, in California, at the national level, in corporate life and political influence, as well as in higher education, lifted Pepperdine to an entirely new plateau of visibility and respect.”

Banowsky is survived by his wife, Gay; sons David, William Jr., Baxter, and Britton; and several grandchildren.

Tom Holland, ‘singing evangelist’ and ‘preacher’s preacher,’ dies at 87

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Tom Holland, renowned preacher, author and song leader for Churches of Christ, died April 25.

He was 87.

Holland was a longtime minister for the Crieve Hall Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn.

Holland was “a beloved soul, a preacher’s preacher,” said Jeffrey R. Arcey, minister for the East Side Church of Christ in Cleveland, Tenn., in a social media post.

In addition to preaching and song leading, Holland was a song writer, Arcey said. During a gospel meeting with the East Side church, he taught the congregation “Oh, Do You Love the Lord?” his own composition. When he returned years later, he led the song again.

“How often does the writer get to lead the song?” Arcey asked.

Fifty years ago this autumn, Holland and fellow song leaders launched a twice-yearly, all-night singing program in Diana, a small community about 60 miles south of Nashville. The event quickly outgrew Diana Church of Christ’s small building. Organizers bought property and built an outdoor pavilion for the event, eventually expanded to accommodate 2,500 people.

“We never dreamed that people would be coming here from literally all over the United States,” Holland told The Christian Chronicle in 2008. “When God ordained in the New Covenant the use of the human voice to accompany our hearts in singing … there are many, many people that respect that. The Diana Singing still emphasizes that. And I think that is the basic appeal.”

Holland taught speech and ministry classes for Freed-Hardeman and Lipscomb universities in Tennessee. For 31 years, he served as director of the Nashville School of Preaching and Biblical Studies.

The school was founded in 1965 by ministers B.C. Goodpasture, J. Roy Vaughn, E. Ray Jerkins, H. Clyde Hale and Roy J. Hearn to train Bible teachers and gospel preachers to work with Churches of Christ.

David Lipscomb College, now Lipscomb University, took oversight of the school in 1978 and named Holland as director. In 1990 the school was moved to the building of the Crieve Hall church. Holland continued as director until 1994.

“He was an extraordinary pulpiteer and student of the Lord’s Word,” said Brian Giselbach, minister for the Wood Avenue Church of Christ in Florence, Ala. “He was truly a singing evangelist. Thanks be to God for this gracious and wise servant of the kingdom. He will be greatly missed.”
Should women lead prayer in mixed-gender settings? One teen shares why she doesn’t

Every day, I pray over our girl’s athletics class at the end of seventh period. It’s something I really look forward to after the completion of a hard workout.

However, when it’s our swim team and it’s a group with both girls and guys, I always decline when asked to lead a prayer.

Why? It’s something that confuses a lot of people. It has to do with what the Bible says about a woman’s role in a mixed-gender setting, and it is the same reason I don’t go to chapel at school when a female is leading it.

Obviously, I don’t avoid these things like the plague without reason. In 1 Timothy 2, Paul writes about proper order in worship. He says, “Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing... A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.”

So women aren’t given the biblical authority to lead in the church. What does that have to do with me praying over my swim team? Well, when going back to those same verses, we see that men are to pray everywhere. This is where the controversy comes in — even within the church.

The first part of this verse is talking about Paul wanting “men everywhere to pray.” Notice, first of all, that it says men, not women. This verse is specific to the guys, not just to Christians as a whole.

The second part of the passage backs this up, too. In verse 11, Paul instructs the women of the church to learn in “quietness and full submission.” He doesn’t permit a woman to have spiritual authority over a man — a position that wouldn’t be very popular amidst today’s feminist movement.

A lot of people argue that these verses should be disregarded as a cultural tradition of the time. However, the mention of Adam and Eve’s time in the garden points to something greater than cultural tradition. It has to do with Eve’s mistakes, and it cost us, as women, the right to be spiritual leaders, just as it caused us to be stained by sin. Today, we still have to deal with the consequences, even though society has changed quite a bit since that time.

So women aren’t given the biblical authority to lead in the church. What does that have to do with me praying over my swim team? Well, when going back to those same verses, we see that men are to pray everywhere. This is where the controversy comes in — even within the church.

I interpret this “everywhere” as, when/where there’s a guy present, he should be the one in spiritual authority. Whether that’s by him being the one to pray or to speak in chapel, I believe it is God’s will for him to be the one in charge of it.

Is this view ultra-conservative? Absolutely. But as for me, I’d rather err on the side of caution than to be turned away at the gates of heaven for taking the scriptures into my own hands. We figure, often, that if we do what we think is right, God will accept it and be pleased with our efforts. The truth of the matter is, this isn’t the case, and not everyone who calls on the Lord will be saved (Matthew 7:21-23).

God tells us, through his word, what he wants from us and expects us to obey. If we don’t ... well, I’m in no place to say what happens next. He’s the judge, and I’m simply trying to obey his will like everyone else. I just know that I don’t want to be on the other end of God’s wrath — and I’d rather be safe than walk the line.

SAVANNAH NELSON, 16, worships with the Prattville Church of Christ in Alabama. She writes for Uncommon Girl magazine and blogs at wordandsunshine/home/blog.
We don’t support preachers; we hire them

Nearly 40 years of preaching have convinced minister that ‘it’s about the mission, not the messenger.’

In 38 years of preaching I have received many wonderful comments such as: “You are an answer to our prayers. You are the best thing that has ever happened to this church. I hope you never leave.”

Once, at a men’s retreat, one of our members made a public announcement that he wanted to buy me a cemetery plot in the town where our church met. The laughter slowly rolled in like an ocean wave. No, he didn’t want to kill his preacher, he quickly clarified. He just wanted me to stay there for the rest of my life.

I’ve also heard a lot of not-so-positive comments, often said with the best of intentions: “Your preaching isn’t quite up to par; I am very disappointed with you.” And even, “Your personality needs an oar and let’s row together.”

Once, my father-in-law made a statement with which I highly disagreed. He said that when a church builds a new building, at times they may want a new minister as well. A few years later I realized how wise he was.

Have you noticed that in our great country we really don’t support preachers any more? We hire them. Even our government considers preachers to be employees of the church. That makes it easier for us to put them up on pedestals for their accomplishments.

It also makes us feel more at ease when we criticize them. After all, we do pay them. But you know what? It’s about the mission, not the messenger. When I’m busy doing what I’m supposed to be doing, nothing else really matters if God is being honored.

John the Baptist, on the eve of his death, understood this when he sent messengers to Jesus asking, “Are you the One or do we look for another?” (Matthew 11:3)

Life is short, but the Kingdom of God will last forever. Not even the gates of Hades will prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

Why? Because life is about the mission, not the messenger.

I’ve never had a Type A personality. (I’m more of a “Type C-minus,” I tell folks.) I relate more to Andrew than Peter. I’m in the background saying, “Hey, here’s a kid with a basket of food. Can this help?”

Had I been a Type A person, I’m not sure if I would have become a Christian, let alone a preacher. I am often reminded of the words of Amos: “I’m not a prophet nor the son of a prophet” (Amos 7:14). It doesn’t matter what others think — or even what I think. God can use whomever he chooses. It sure takes the pressure off me, since this was God’s idea.

Forty years ago I sat at the feet of Abe Lincoln — former instructor at Sunset School of Preaching in Lubbock, Texas. He spoke about the apostle Paul’s use of the Greek word huperetes in 1 Corinthians 4:1. It’s the only time Paul uses the word, and it means “under-oarsman,” translated “servant.”

Picture the slaves in the bottom of ancient sailing ships, sitting on benches. They had just one job — row. They were all working for the same purpose. They didn’t steer the ship; they just provided the manpower.

They rowed. Paul writes: “Let man regard us in this manner, as servants (under-oarsmen) of Christ.”

We have only one pilot — Jesus, not our preacher. We do well to follow Paul’s advice. It’s about the mission, not the messenger. So, grab an oar and let’s row together.

ED BIALON ministers for the Overland Church of Christ in Missouri, a western suburb of St. Louis. See overlandchurchofchrist.com.

There must be power in the pulpit to save souls, edify the church

Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.”

— 1 Timothy 4:13-15, New King James Version

We are as evangelists continually growing in our understanding of the message of each Bible book?

The apostle Paul suggests that all Christians strive to “be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:18-19).

In order to reach that goal, one must follow his diligent example of reading, reflecting and responding to God’s word.

In the Word

Hernando Motta

In addition, carelessness, indifference and laziness imperil not only the evangelist’s ministry but also his soul. The apostle Paul stresses the responsibility of fulfilling one’s ministry (2 Timothy 2:5) while the Holy Spirit says more pointedly in James 3:1, “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”

Jesus issued a similar warning in Matthew 23:1-12. So the evangelist is never satisfied. His work is not done after he leaves the church building. He constantly seeks for souls to save.

Finally, the evangelist must live the life. The apostle Paul instructs the young evangelist, “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”

The preacher who exhibits energy in and out of the pulpit but does not provide a godly example is as beneficial to the church as a dull razor to a man’s beard. In time, the preacher’s character will be widely known and impact his work for the Lord accordingly.

HERNANDO MOTTA is a minister in Lima, Peru. This piece originally appeared in the newsletter of “Let the Bible Speak,” a ministry associated with one-cup Churches of Christ. Learn more at letthebiblespeak.com.
The decline of Christianity is a contentious topic these days. It seems a major concern, not only for members in the pews, but more and more for the media and America’s cultural commentators as well.

And our growing awareness of populations becoming more globalized — not just in the United States but also in other historically “Christian nations” — could easily lead us to the conclusion that the strength of our faith is waning in the world.

But is it? This is the central question that Dyron Daughrity takes up in “Rising: The Amazing Story of Christianity’s Resurrection in the Global South.”

Daughrity, who teaches as associate professor of religion for Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., and preaches for Churches of Christ, begins with a survey of the secularization of Western Europe. The opening chapter sets a template for his method of inquiry: combining a deluge of hard data on religious activity, a careful study of the religious history of various regions, and insightful anecdotes from Daugherty’s own extensive travels.

The formula proves to be a winning one, as there is enough “hard” evidence to establish the trends in question, but Daughrity’s personal travelogue keeps the reader from being overwhelmed by sociological statistics or what may be unfamiliar features of world history.

His discussion of Europe, alone, is one of the best, accessible analyses I’ve come across. The primary focus of the work, though, is not the “West” but the Global South: those regions of the world we do not typically associate with the centers of Christianity — or at least not in the last several centuries.

Surveying Asia, Africa, Latin America and Russia, Daughrity brings his mix of globe-trotting anecdotes and careful demography to demonstrate that across the world Christianity is not only not in decline but is emerging as a vibrant and influential force.

It is here, however, that “Rising” runs into the problem of metrics so common to works with such an enormous scope. In trying to measure the resurrection of Christianity in the Global South, the book gives us a sense of the scale to which the church is growing, but less so the quality or character of this expansion.

For example, in his analysis of Russia Daughrity gives great emphasis to the hundreds of religious journals, thousands of new websites and the numerous construction projects of the Orthodox church, which in the post-Soviet era receives backing from the Russian government. His conclusion from this data: that “an entire nation is returning to Christ.”

Similarly, we can look to the examples given in “Rising” of the net worth and influence of Nigerian pastors or the building of a cross in China’s Hunan province twice the height of a nearby statue of Mao. While these examples are not representative of the only types of evidence given to illustrate the rise of Christianity, their prominence and the frequency of similar points in the text do beg the question: What does it mean for Christianity to be on the rise?

At the conclusion of Daughrity’s book, one has no doubt that major shifts in religious practice and demographics are afoot. The implications of these shifts for the Kingdom of God reconciliation the world to itself remain somewhat more ambiguous.

SETH BOUCHELLE lives in the Bronx, N.Y., and works with Global City Mission Initiative, a nonprofit that focuses on cross-cultural evangelism, disciple-making and church planting among the diverse immigrant populations in big cities around the world. He is a graduate of Abilene Christian University in Texas. See globalcitymission.org.

Online outrage isn’t ‘standing up for the truth.’ It’s divisive, sinful

When using social media, Christians need to be aware of the impact their words can have on fellow Christians and non-Christians alike.

In “Christians in the Age of Outrage: How to Bring Our Best When the World Is at Its Worst,” Ed Stetzer presents in compelling language about how un-Christlike attitudes presented through Facebook and other social media can result in non-Christians developing a negative view of Christians and Christianity.

Stetzer, a preacher, author and instructor of missiology, uses sometimes-discouraging statistics to lay out his case that, all too often, those who exhibit a Christian personality on Sunday morning can communicate a very different side once they have technology between them and their audience. Clearly, it is hypocritical to engage online in a way that would be intolerable face to face.

When making use of social media, Stetzer writes, Christians can exhibit the same bad habits as everyone else. These habits can be personally harmful and damage relationships. It is incumbent upon churches to consider how to address problems inherent in social media with their members.

Many Christians try to rationalize their online outrage as “standing up for the truth” or “righteous anger.” But all too often the individual cares only about scoring points — not about giving fair and honest treatment to a topic. Stetzer’s perception of outrage is clear; it is sin. It is selfish, divisive, wrathful and chaotic, a product of the flesh.

Even Christians who don’t make use of social media, like me, should find the last few chapters practical and beneficial. Stetzer calls us to be Kingdom ambassadors who practice “winsome love.” It is possible to practice digital discipleship by exercising grace and, when online, to know when to engage and when to be silent.

In the end, we need to remember at all times whose we are and from where we derive our identity. “When we become primarily identified with any tribe outside the body of Christ,” Stetzer writes, “especially when we are identified to the point where others are repelled by us, we’ve traded our Kingdom-based identity for a world-based identity.”

DAN ARNOLD worships with the Spring Road Church of Christ in Westerville, Ohio. What are you reading? Email erik@christianchronicle.org.
JOURNEY INTO A JOY-FILLED LIFE


This book takes you on an encouraging journey through the Letter of Paul to the Philippians. It is refreshing to learn how you can live a joy-filled life, no matter what happens. The material highlights that a positive attitude is possible, even during trials, by reflecting on heaven and what really matters. The book is full of ideas, stories, and illustrations to help a person make application from what the apostle records from his own journey with Jesus. It is both an uplifting and challenging book for wherever a person may be in their journey with Jesus.

Tatum says, "If you will continue your journey with Jesus, or begin the journey, or take the journey fresh, the journey will ultimately take you to the place of a joy-filled heart." The thirteen-chapter book has a discussion page at the end of each chapter that would be helpful in teaching any class or small group. The questions are designed to promote thought and discussion in an effort to help teach, train, and transform lives to the glory of God. The thoughts and concepts have evolved from Tatum’s years of studying and preaching through Philippians.

Tuit Adair, President of Sunset International Bible Institute writes, “Most people would love to have more joy in their lives but many don’t know how to find it. Clark Tatum’s book can help any thoughtful reader to begin or enhance their journey to a more joyful life through an exploration of the Biblical principles in Philippians. I recommend the book and the author.”

THE REVELATION RAINBOW


In addition to a refreshing new commentary on the book of Revelation, this “encyclopedia” has eleven information-packed addeda.

A. Steps of Departure
B. Twenty-one Similarities Between Daniel and Ezekiel
C. Fulfilled Prophecies of 70 A.D.
D. Chronological Order of the Destruction of Jerusalem
E. Holford’s “Destruction of Jerusalem”
F. Extra Evidential Resources
G. The Biggest Fear of a Pre-Millennialist
H. THE END!
I. Satan’s Powerful Persuasive
J. The Eccentrics...
K. “WHAT IS ZION”

This combination makes an excellent reference book or textbook for evangelists, college students, and/or everyday Christians who are interested in detailed studies.

This book, “The Revelation Rainbow,” is the end of a forty-year quest by the author to find answers to the questions generated by Biblically un-informed scholarship that shrouds rather than unveils the great truths of this Holy Spirit-directed work of our Lord. Hundreds of students of Revelation have been left in a bewildered state because certain scholars approach the book with a human mindset instead of a Spirit-led mindset. Instead of looking at Revelation as The Divine apocalypse, they try to humanize and literalize the book as a study of human secular history, leaving the student with a complicated scheme of things that do not make sense.

Having met these students, Mr. Doughty was greatly distressed to see them turn from God’s Word (especially Revelation) altogether. Subjects like the Antichrist, Millennium, Mark of the Beast, Rapture, Tribulation and “Left Behind” are just some of the end-time twists causing confusion.

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Deadline for next two issues: June 14 and July 12.
New roles for familiar faces

CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE names Erik Tryggestad president and CEO, Bobby Ross Jr. editor in chief.

BY CHELLE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

OKLAHOMA CITY

A fter a nationwide search, the Board of Trustees has named Erik Tryggestad as the new president and CEO of The Christian Chronicle.

Tryggestad is a familiar name to most as he has served as the Chronicle’s editor since late 2013 and has worked on staff since 2001.

“We, the board, are excited to have Erik in the role of CEO,” said board Chairman Deon Fair. “Erik’s knowledge, experience and relationships within our fellowship are an advantage in his new role.”

Tryggestad is a graduate of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. He earned his master’s in journalism from the University of Georgia. He will now fill the role previously held by Lynn McMillon.

McMillon announced last summer that he would step down at the end of the fiscal year, May 31. From there, the Chronicle board began searching for the right person to fill the position.

“I really appreciate what Lynn has done for the Chronicle,” Tryggestad said. “He’s kept us going through challenging financial times and has worked diligently with our board to provide a secure foundation for this publication.”

While Tryggestad doesn’t foresee any major changes happening immediately, he said there could be exciting things in the Chronicle’s future.

“I’m going to be looking at the format of the Chronicle itself. Is newsprint the best option for us?” Tryggestad said.

However, he emphasizes, the Chronicle will not be going to an entirely online format.

“There’s value in giving readers something they can hold in their hands,” he said. “Putting a newsprint product in the U.S. mail is difficult, so we’re going to be looking at some other options in terms of paper quality and printing. We may transition to something that looks more like a magazine, if the price is right.”

One immediate change is the appointment of Bobby Ross Jr. to the position of editor in chief.

“That decision was easy,” Tryggestad said. “Bobby’s been vital to the editorial decision-making process since he started here. We’ve always had an iron-sharpens-iron working relationship, and what he brings from his years in the daily newspaper business is invaluable.”

Ross has been with the Chronicle since 2005, serving as managing editor and chief correspondent.

“I’m excited to lead the Chronicle’s overall news and editorial operations,” Ross said. “The Chronicle has established itself as one of the nation’s best Christian newspapers, but I believe we can be even better.”

For the 12,000 Churches of Christ in the U.S. and thousands more worldwide, the Chronicle provides a sense of community, Ross said.

“Our job,” he added, “is to tell the heartwarming stories as well as the challenging stories that help bring us all together, either to celebrate our victories in Christ or to look for ways to serve our Lord better.”

“We serve a big God who can handle any negative publicity. The Bible doesn’t shy away from uncomfortable facts. We believe in Christian journalism that shines a light.”

Tryggestad is hopeful that congregations around the world will see the Chronicle as more than just a niche publication.

“I want our readers to stop thinking of what we do — so-called ‘Christian journalism’ — as a subset of ‘real journalism.’ This is real journalism.”

Tryggestad and Ross begin their new roles June 1.
Two national press associations recognized The Christian Chronicle for journalistic and social media excellence, honoring the international newspaper for Churches of Christ with 21 awards for content produced in 2018.

Competing in the Evangelical Press Association contest for the first time, the Chronicle earned the first-place Award of Excellence in the newspaper category.

“This is a publication that understands news and tells it with some attention to innovation,” the EPA judges said.

The Chronicle’s digital news editor, Chellie Ison, received the Best in Class first-place award for social media presence from the Associated Church Press. The judges complimented her work, saying, “Active engagement is the hallmark of this social media effort. Well-formed titles invite readers to respond, share and dive deeper.”

In the Best in Class category for national or international newspaper, the Chronicle, edited by Erik Tryggestad, won the second-place Award of Merit. The first-place award, which the Chronicle had received for the previous four years, went to the Mennonite World Review.

In all, the Chronicle staff won six EPA awards and 15 ACP awards.

Bobby Ross Jr.’s “18 wheels and a heart to serve” story on a disaster relief truck driver captured first-place awards from both organizations.

The Chronicle’s “Big Questions” series on issues facing Churches of Christ — a project spearheaded by Tryggestad with contributions from Ross and Ison — also was recognized by the EPA and the ACP.

Other winning entries included:
- “Tears and fears: Church teen killed by Arkansas police” by Ross.
- “Everyday Saints” by Chris Reynolds and Jennifer Gerhardt.
- “At the border, a prayer for forgotten people” by Tryggestad.
- “Seeking justice for Botham Jean” by Ross.
- “1,000 wells around the world” by Ross and Ashley Reeves.
- “Our poverty challenges us to cling to God” by Elise Miller.
- “Fear and hope in Europe” by Tryggestad.
- “50 Years: Racial Reconciliation and the Church” by Ross, Hamil Harris and Lynn McMillon.
- Inside Story columns by Tryggestad.

Since 2007, the Chronicle has claimed 116 ACP awards and been recognized in the Best in Class contest for 13 consecutive years.

FIND A COMPLETE LIST of the awards and read the winning stories by going to christianchronicle.org and searching for “2019 awards.”
A force for goodwill, encouragement, unity

LYNN MCMILLON looks back – and forward – with gratefulness after two decades with The Christian Chronicle.

How can I be anything but grateful for the 23 years I’ve had with The Christian Chronicle?

From the beginning, I have prayerfully sought to shape the paper as a force for goodwill, encouragement and unity. In the earlier years of my life, I saw too much wrangling between brotherhood papers. So when I came to the Chronicle in 1996, I envisioned positive, encouraging stories of Christians and churches that would inspire greater service to the Lord. I have always wanted to help draw together our diverse and non-centralized fellowship in ways that will honor God and strengthen his church. You have been a key part of that goal. Clearly, you understand that The Christian Chronicle is a newspaper and not a teaching paper. There is a place for both.

You have answered many times when I have requested financial support in the face of rising production costs and postal rates. You have given generously, and your many letters of encouragement reflect that you understand and wholeheartedly support our mission. The Chronicle came to me at the request of Kevin Jacobs, president of Oklahoma Christian University in the mid-1990s. He charged me with putting the Chronicle on sound financial footing and making it into a force for good. I am grateful to President Jacobs for his vision and his commitment to making this an uplifting, viable newspaper.

My wife Joy has advised and supported me through these years from her depth of knowledge and experience. She first joined the Chronicle in 1983, soon after Oklahoma Christian received ownership of the paper at the bequest of John and Dottie Beckloff, the previous publishers.

Joy served as managing editor for several years and wrote many stories. In those days, hundreds of church bulletins and the phone were her main sources of news gathering. She and Scott LaMascus made the Chronicle into a true newspaper.

Each time I hired a staffer, I asked that they help move the Chronicle to the next level. They have, earning top honors repeatedly from Christian press organizations.

- Bobby Ross Jr., who came to us from The Associated Press, has served as an outstanding writer, winning many individual awards.
- Erik Tryggestad came to us from daily newspapers in Georgia and served as a reporter and editor. Now he moves into the position of president and CEO of this publication.
- Chellie Ison, a former NBC affiliate anchor and Emmy Award winner, leads our online and digital services and expertly coordinates our social media presence, bringing a host of new readers to our website.
- Tonya Patton, our dedicated ad manager, repeatedly has risen to the challenges of sales and design — even in an economy that’s seen steep declines in print advertising revenue among daily newspapers.
- Louise Beyer is our faithful accountant who makes sure our numbers always add up.
- Lynda Sheehan is our highly capable lead administrative assistant who heads the many behind-the-scenes endeavors necessary to make the organization work.
- Melinda Wilson processes our donation checks and works with Tonya to make sure our ad clients have the best possible products. She contributes greatly to our Milestones section.
- Emily Henderson just finished her fourth and final year as our student worker. She was vital to the expansion of our mailing list and did countless tasks around the office.

- Elise Miller has served as our talented, award-winning student intern.

Every one of these wonderful people is a faithful, dedicated Christian who sees their work as a ministry to the Lord and to you.

How could I not be grateful to have such a wonderful team of Christian colleagues?

The Chronicle has grown over these years from about 175,000 readers to more than 260,000 (We have a circulation of more than 135,000, and many papers are seen by multiple sets of eyes.)

Today the paper receives support from more than 600 churches and many thousands of you.

For the past 20 years, our professional marketing survey shows a consistent, 95-plus percent reader satisfaction rating. That has helped me and all of us to gauge the work we do, making sure we accomplish our stated mission.

And then there is the Chronicle’s Board of Trustees. You can have confidence that these women and men provide the best supervision to the Chronicle. Chairman Deon Fair has been a dream to work with, as was his predecessor, Dale Brown. Both men are deeply spiritual as well as gifted and superb leaders. Space does not allow me the pleasure of extolling the Christian qualities of each trustee. Their names are listed in the information box on Page 28.

How could I not be grateful to have worked with such exemplary people?

My plans? If the Lord wills, I will continue teaching Bible full time at Oklahoma Christian University. I am a classroom teacher at heart. I love the Lord, his word and the many students who I am blessed to study with.

Thank you, Chronicle readers and supporters. With all of this, how can I be anything but grateful?
HOUSEPARENTS NEEDED

The Tipton Children’s Home is accepting applications for Christian couples to serve as houseparents.

Competitive pay, three weeks on, one week off, 401k, health insurance paid, dental and vision available. Our cottages have the capacity of up to eight children at a time. We are a Level B facility.

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The Christian Chronicle
SPECIAL ENDOWMENT
Honoring Lynn and Joy McMillon

The Christian Chronicle Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the creation of a special endowment to secure operation of the Chronicle until the Lord returns. Named the Lynn and Joy McMillon Endowment, the Board seeks to honor Dr. McMillon for 23 years of distinguished, visionary leadership and service.

To contribute to this special endowment online, look for the “Lynn and Joy McMillon Endowment” form at christianchronicle.org/donate. Or, mail a check to The Christian Chronicle, P.O. Box 11000, Oklahoma City, OK 73136-1100 earmarked for the McMillon Endowment. You may also call Lynda Sheehan in our office at (405) 425-5070.

Best Wishes, Christian Chronicle, on your new chapter!!