DONO-MANGA, Chad — In this rural African village, a young Muslim mother unfurls her prayer mat, sending wisps of dust into the air. Facing east, she bows, her head eventually touching the ground.

François March sits on a bench nearby, just outside the meeting place of a Church of Christ. He’s clad head to toe in white, traditional West Africa garments, hand-stitched to resemble tiny flower blossoms. He’s a security guard for the compound, which includes the church building, a clinic and a school for nearly 1,000 students. Hope Springs International, a Tennessee-based nonprofit, sponsors the work.

“Does that bother you?” a reporter asks, motioning toward the young mother, who prays as she waits for treatment at the Jordan Health Center, named after the river where Jesus was baptized.

“After what you’ve been through, do you bear any animosity toward Muslims?”

March lost his wife to Islam. She converted — out of fear, he says — after the terrorists came for us. His wife became Muslim to appease militant Islamists. He fled with their children – and found Christ.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

U.S. ARMY VETERAN’S work with Red Cross emergency shelter is ‘an inspiration to many’ as he and fellow Christians serve flood victims.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

When the terrorists came for us

The disaster deacon

Kenneth Hearrell, 87, serves as the “disaster deacon” for the Crosstown Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla.

Faith after the storms

CHRISTIANS HELP IN OKLAHOMA, ARKANSAS ........ 8
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“So the code saved my life,” the retired air traffic controller said. About how he rode a horse five miles to his two-room schoolhouse from first through fourth grades. About how he used a homemade rowboat to drive cattle to dry land after a big rain swamped the Texas side of the Red River. About how his Morse code skills got him sent to Germany, while the rest of his U.S. Army artillery platoon was dispatched to Korea during the war.

“Does that bother you?” a reporter asks, motioning toward the young mother, who prays as she waits for treatment at the Jordan Health Center, named after the river where Jesus was baptized.

“After what you’ve been through, do you bear any animosity toward Muslims?”

March lost his wife to Islam. She converted — out of fear, he says — after
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Dear readers, please share your story ideas

Hey there! I’m not exactly the new guy. After all, my musings, ramblings and occasional insights filled the Inside Story space for seven years (2005 to 2012) during my time as managing editor of The Christian Chronicle. When I transitioned to the chief correspondent’s role in 2013, I kept writing periodic first-person pieces. That means many readers — even those who connected with the Chronicle just in recent years — have seen my pretty face. (Yes, that was meant to be funny.)

As you might have read, I am the new editor-in-chief of the Chronicle. Erik Tryggestad, who previously served in that role, is our new president and CEO. He succeeds Lynn McMillon, who retired after 23 years of service but will continue teaching Bible at Oklahoma Christian University.

For those who have appreciated Tryggestad’s international writing, the good news is this: He’s not going anywhere — except to the Currents section.
Also, Tryggestad (at my request) will write the monthly Insight column at the back of the paper. That’s the hallowed space that, for so many years, was occupied by Bailey McBride. Fittingly, it was McBride who recruited Tryggestad to the Chronicle in 2001. McBride retired as our editor in 2006 but kept writing that column for several years afterward.

As for me: Even as I oversee our news and editorial operations, I’ll remain our lead writer on news involving the nation’s nearly 12,000 Churches of Christ in the U.S. In my time with the Chronicle, I’ve been blessed to report from all 50 states and 14 nations. Lord willing, I look forward to many more opportunities to travel in search of stories that inform, inspire and unite our fellowship.

When I last wrote this column on a regular basis, I often mentioned my wife and kids (I sort of want to apologize for that, but not really). Tamie and I are empty-nesters now and enjoying it. She’s still battling the autoimmune disease that forced her to give up her role as the Chronicle’s advertising manager in 2012. When she feels like it, she enjoys planting flowers, sewing (mostly making cute outfits for our grandson, Bennett) and writing (when she finishes her novel, it’s going to become a best-seller and make us rich).

I’m still an obsessed Texas Rangers fan and holding out hope that before I die my team will get that elusive final strike and win a World Series. Our oldest son, Brady, and daughter-in-law, Mary, live in Waco, Texas, where he is the youth minister for the Crestview Church of Christ. They are the parents of Bennett, who is absolutely perfect and will celebrate his first birthday later this summer.

Our middle son, Keaton, is an intern for The Oklahoman, the daily newspaper in Oklahoma City. He’ll be a senior at Oklahoma Christian this fall and serve as editor-in-chief of the student newspaper, The Talon, a position his father held 30 years ago.

Kendall, the youngest of our three children, is a junior history major at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif. She’s a champion debater who spent her sophomore year studying in China. We miss her when she’s so far away, but she’s thriving.

Back to my new role at the Chronicle: I’m curious, dear reader, about the types of stories and articles you enjoy most. Some questions for you:

• Are there topic areas or subjects we should cover more? Less?
• How could we improve what we do? What suggestions do you have for making the Chronicle better?
• What story ideas do you have?

Finally, we’re so thankful for those who read the Chronicle in print. You’re a huge blessing to us. But I’d urge you, too, to check out our online offerings.

At christianchronicle.org, which is managed by our superb digital news editor, Chellie Ison, we cover breaking news in real time. You can sign up there to receive our twice-a-month email newsletters.

Also, I’ve launched a weekly roundup (each Friday) of religion headlines in Churches of Christ and beyond. I’d be honored if you’d give it a click on our website and let me know what you think.


Bobby Ross Jr. is editor-in-chief of The Christian Chronicle. Reach him at bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org. Follow him on Twitter at @bobbyross.
ALABAMA
ATMORE — A man convicted of using a sword and a knife to kill a rural Church of Christ preacher in 1991 was executed recently.
Christopher Lee Price, 46, was killed by lethal injection, The Associated Press reported. Price was convicted of killing Bill Lynn in Fayette County on Dec. 22, 1991.

DECATUR — Two Churches of Christ with about 150 members each have decided to consolidate. The Austinville and Grant Street congregations will meet together as one body starting Aug. 4. They will be known as the Decatur Church of Christ, evangelist Tony Edwards said.
“Grant Street was about to spend a large sum of money on building a new building, and they were questioning within themselves what would be the best use of the Lord’s money,” Edwards said. “The options were to build a building or consolidate with a sister church and use that money to reach the lost.
He said the merger will bring together two strong congregations: “We both had a large contribution and steady membership. This was all based on how much more good we could do if came together.”

MASSACHUSETTS
MARLBOROUGH — More than 300 Christians from nearly a dozen states gathered for the recent New England Lectureship, which featured the theme “Understanding New Testament Leadership.”
At the annual event, ministers who have served the New England area for 20 or more years were recognized.
The honorees were:
• David Tarbet of the New Milford Church of Christ in Connecticut;
• John Kurpriel of the Lawrence Church of Christ in Massachusetts;
• Mark Craigwell of the Roxbury Church of Christ in Massachusetts;
• Park Linscomb of the Manchester Church of Christ in New Hampshire;
• Mike Mullen of the Fall River Church of Christ in Massachusetts;
• Herschel Walker of the Blue Hill Church of Christ in Dorchester, Mass.
The 2020 New England Lectureship will be May 1-3 in Mansfield, Mass. For more information, call Maurice Davis at (617) 274-2409 or see newenglandlectureship.org.

NEW MEXICO
PORTALES — Domingo Reyes, minister for the Greenbank Church of Christ in Wilmington, Del., served as the keynote speaker for the first Living Jesus Bible Conference.
The conference, hosted by the Third and Kilgore Church of Christ, aimed “to engage as many people in our community as possible in Bible classes, hearing committed Christian speakers and keynote addresses centered around the theme of living as Jesus lived,” member Lora Chandler said.
About 150 to 200 people participated.
Chandler characterized the conference as a first-of-its-kind effort in eastern New Mexico and said church members did “whatever they could to make it a success.”
“We are located in a rural community, and that may have contributed to smaller numbers in attendance,” she added.
“However, for a first-time effort, we all feel that Jesus was lifted up, and people were encouraged. Next year, we’re confident that more will come. People are hungry for the truth Christ offers!”

TENNESSEE
MT. JULIET — How can Christians show the love of Christ to single mothers?
The Mt. Juliet Church of Christ does so with an annual Single Mother Car Care Clinic, said deacons Joe Cowan, Daniel Johnson and Clay Bailey.
The clinic offers each mother a vehicle inspection, oil change, wash and detail, Cowan said. The recent event involved roughly 100 volunteers, ranging in age from 8 to 80, who served about 25 to 30 mothers.
“While the cars are serviced, mothers are treated to snacks, manicures, massages, a bag of home goods and a bag of groceries,” he said. “Ladies from the congregation use this time with the mothers to review available church programs, talk about Bible classes and the youth program, provide an opportunity to sign children up for VBS and work to establish a time to conduct a Bible study or additional follow-up time.”

VBS marketplace a hit in Louisiana
Children pick out colorful yarn as part of a Vacation Bible School marketplace experience offered by the Forsythe Church of Christ in Monroe, La. “About 40 members of our church pulled together to bless 65 children,” minister John Dobbs said of the four-night event. Associate minister Daniel Kirkendall organized the VBS, which featured Bible stories as well as shops and crafts tied to Old Testament stories.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MAURICE DAVIS
David Tarbet, John Kurpriel, Mark Craigwell, Park Linscomb, Mike Mullen and Herschel Walker

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MAURICE DAVIS
Edwards

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MAURICE DAVIS
John Dobbs
A masked gunman who opened fire nearly two years ago at the Burnette Chapel Church of Christ in Antioch, Tenn., will spend the rest of his life in prison for the murder of church member Melanie Crow.

A Nashville-area judge imposed the jury-recommended sentence after 27-year-old Emanuel Kidega Samson’s recent conviction in Crow’s death.

Crow was walking to her car after worship on Sept. 24, 2017, when Samson shot her multiple times in the church parking lot. Samson then entered the church building and began shooting, injuring several others before a church member apprehended him, according to authorities and witnesses.

In May, Samson went on trial. A jury found him guilty of first-degree murder and guilty on 42 other criminal counts, including attempted murder, aggravated assault and civil rights intimidation.

Joey Spann is minister of the 90-member congregation. He and his wife were both injured in the shooting. Spann and several church members testified at the trial.

“People gave testimony, and some of the stories I hadn’t heard before,” Spann told The Christian Chronicle. “It was very touching.”

Many in the congregation still struggle with PTSD from the event. Some have found closure, but for others, there’s more healing to come.

“You don’t get over it,” Spann said. “We didn’t close the book on it. We closed that chapter.”

A judge sentenced Samson to life in prison for the one first-degree murder count. Sentencing for the remaining 42 counts will occur later this year.
Study Bible Meets Need for Churches of Christ

WBS’ evangelistic Bible includes study helps that teach a faith-response to the Gospel, including “baptism.”

Two years after its release, the numbers are in: The World Bible School Study Bible is meeting a felt need among Churches of Christ.

“A felt need, yes, but more accurately,” corrected John Reese, WBS president, “it fills both spiritual and practical needs.” He explained that the WBS Study Bible includes study helps that thoroughly outline a faithful response to the Gospel—including repentance and baptism (as compared to ‘the sinner’s prayer’). “I don’t think you’ll find a Bible like this on Amazon or at your local religious bookstore!” Reese exclaimed. He also pointed out that while this Bible summarizes WBS lessons and invites readers to study with WBS, it also includes extensive built-in tools for personally studying the Bible with someone.

Indeed, the WBS Study Bible was created with Churches of Christ in mind. Reviews are underscoring how important it is for many believers to have a Bible that faithfully represents the principles and practices of New Testament Christianity—including biblical faith, baptism and unity.

The Bible is the English Standard Version (ESV) published by Crossway, a modern, accurate, readable translation. Other translations including the same WBS study helps are being considered for publication. The WBS Study Bible is attractive, durable and inexpensive—only $5 each.

PUTTING THE BIBLE TO USE

Christians are putting this Bible to use in a number of ways:

• The Pickwick Church of Christ in Tennessee distributed hundreds of free Bibles to teens on national “Bring Your Bible to School Day.” (Note: This year it’s October 3, 2019. See www.bringyourbible.org.)

• In Alabama, the Mayfair Church of Christ uses Bibles as study incentives for their many WBS students to continue studying. Newly baptized converts also get their own new Bible.

• The Hillcrest congregation in Abilene, Texas, has fully stocked their pews with the WBS Study Bible and invited members to freely take them to give to others or for personal use.

• Campaigners are taking the WBS Study Bible everywhere they go—like the group that blessed hundreds of seekers in Muslim north Ghana with their own new Bible.

• Steve Hadley, who hand-delivers volumes of Bibles in his prison ministry, said: “It’s everything a Bible student needs—in a compact package [with] Bible lessons in the back.”

The WBS Study Bible is one component of WBS’ far-reaching campaign called Bibles for Millions. John Reese explained: “Bibles for Millions is our effort with Christians around the world to put one million Bibles at work in the hands of seekers. It’s just the beginning to what we see God doing through WBS and His people.”

You and your congregation can help fulfill the campaign’s lofty goals. Bibles can be purchased from the WBS website, while gifts to WBS can be designated for “Bibles for Millions.”

Content sponsored by World Bible School. Contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org for advertising opportunities.
BY BOBBY Ross Jr. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

SAND SPRINGS, Okla.

The rains came down, and Christians stepped up.

After some residents of this Tulsa suburb lost everything in historic flooding, members of Churches of Christ helped clean up the mess and distributed boxes of emergency food and supplies.

In the disaster’s aftermath, teams from The Park Church of Christ in Tulsa worked to clear debris from swamped homes. At the Sand Springs Church of Christ, volunteers served neighbors at a disaster relief distribution center opened inside the congregation’s activity center.

These were just a few of the churches in Oklahoma and Arkansas that aided neighbors.

Amid flooding that threatened two towns across the Arkansas River from each other, the River Park Church of Christ in Russellville, Ark., readied its building for use as a Red Cross evacuation shelter. Meanwhile, the Dardanelle Church of Christ in Arkansas became a depot for emergency food delivered by Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort.

Back in Oklahoma, Elliott Dunn, pulpit minister for the 250-member Sand Springs church, talked about his congregation’s experience.

How hard did the floods hit this area?

We are located just east of Keystone Dam. The floodwaters coming out of Keystone Lake — they had to release an amount that wound up flooding quite a bit of area here in Sand Springs.

Were members of your congregation affected by the flooding?

We’ve had three of our church members here who had water in their homes 2 feet or higher. One of our elders had 5 feet in his house. We’ve had two who had water get in their garage. And then we had a number who had to evacuate, but they were fortunate.

Did they have insurance?

The elder has insurance. One of the members does not have insurance. I’m not sure on the other.

I’ve never done this before. I’ve never been through a flood. So I’m learning pretty quickly that if you have insurance, of course that’s going to help a lot. But it’s bad no matter what.

But flooding like this is not something that happens here often?

The last one that happened here like this was in 1986, I believe. A lot of people were told in those neighborhoods that there were circumstances then that wouldn’t happen again, shouldn’t happen again. There are people that were told they don’t live in a floodplain and didn’t need insurance.

A lot of them were told that. So it’s been a mess.

Tell me about this disaster relief center that you’ve opened here at the church.

The organization out of Nashville, Tenn. — the Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort — we’ve known about them, and we’ve contributed to them like when Hurricane Katrina and things like that happen. So we knew about them.

I’ll just tell you how it happened: The Park Church of Christ in Tulsa got going with them pretty quickly. Then a few days later, we were debating whether to share the items with Park because the disaster is mostly here. But then the guy from that organization there in Nashville contacted us, and we quickly determined that it merited him bringing a semi-truck here as well.

So your members have sprung into action to get this up and running?

Yes. I’ll back up a step and say: The whole thing is overwhelming.

Of course, for those flooded and affected, it’s mind-boggling. And to the rest of us, it’s overwhelming. Because everyone wants to help. We all want to do something. So people are extremely grateful.

They come in, and they don’t even know what they need. They’re glad to get anything we can help them with. They’re very, very appreciative.

So from your perspective: One day you’re doing church as normal, and the next day you’re into seven-day-a-week emergency distribution?

Absolutely.

This is over $70,000 worth of supplies that was brought here on a truck, and a week after the evacuations, we’re handing it out in a very organized manner.

We could not even dream of doing something like this without the Nashville group. I mean, they have it down to a science, to an art.

The guy told me on the phone, “If you need it, I can have it there in 12 hours.” I mean, it’s overwhelming for me, but it’s gone incredibly smoothly.

SEE EXPANDED COVERAGE online of the relief work by the Russellville and Dardanelle congregations.

‘The whole thing is overwhelming’
Disaster strikes ‘in our own backyard’

Relief workers reflect God, church members say, as they clean and rebuild in their hometown.

Late on Memorial Day, Walter Tolley and his wife, Marie, members of the Northridge Church of Christ in Dayton, Ohio, took cover in their home. Moments later, a tornado ripped off their roof.

“Our house starts a-popping and a-cracking and the doors blowing,” Walter Tolley said.

The nighttime darkness made it nearly impossible to see the full scope of the damage until the next morning.

By then, the Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team was in the area, ready to help.

“There’s a lot of devastation and a lot of people without much at all,” said Laura Cremeans, who directs the Disaster Response Team with her husband, Mark.

This disaster has been an unusual experience for the ministry’s volunteers, who serve all over the U.S. That’s because the organization’s headquarters are in Vandalia, Ohio, a suburb of Dayton.

“It’s a real challenge but interesting to us because we’ve never worked in our own backyard,” Cremeans said.

The Disaster Response Team set up at the Northridge Church of Christ in Dayton. The 70-member church let the group use its building as a base for helping the community.

Volunteers provided food, water, clothing and meals to those in need. The ministry also made laundry and shower trailers available for those in the community to use.

The Tolley's home was one of those hit hard. The roofing was torn off, the rafters exposed.

As the storm came through, Tolley and his wife took shelter in an interior room.

“We don’t have a basement to go to. We had our safe spot. My wife and I sat there, and I said, ‘Honey, it’s coming,’” Tolley said.

Within moments, he heard that sound so many others have reported — that of a train running overhead.

It lasted about three minutes, he said, and then stopped. Thanks to the disaster response volunteers, the Tolley’s roof was quickly covered with a tarp, and a generator was brought in to help run appliances.

“They are beautiful, beautiful people,” Tolley said of the volunteers. “They reflected the Lord’s church and what it’s all about.”

A Door to Presenting the Gospel

Cremeans said many of the immediate needs have been taken care of. The focus is shifting from recovery to rebuilding, helping those who are uninsured or under-insured.

Tolley said he’s lived in the area for 42 years and never seen anything like this. However, he knows God can use this disaster and those helping in the recovery to spread the Good News.

“This really gives you a door of presenting the Gospel to someone,” he said.

FIND LINKS to contribute: christianchronicle.org
118 injured and hundreds of homes destroyed in the Sooner state, according to state emergency management officials.

The Red Cross shelter at the Crosstown church was the first to open in Tulsa. At the height of the disaster, it housed close to 100 people a night. As many evacuees received federal disaster assistance, that head count shrunk into the 30s. The shelter stayed open for three weeks.

Victims such as Susan Robinson, 76, who fled the Sandy Park Apartments with her 15-year-old Pomeranian, “Little Bit,” praised the Red Cross and the church. “The people here have been so kind, so it feels like home,” said Robinson, who spent two weeks at the church. “The Red Cross has been good, and the minister has been by every day.”

Sam Duvall, 43, and his wife, Alicia, had an hour to gather important papers and a few belongings when flooding forced them out of their residence. They stayed in a motel for about a week. But they eventually ran out of money.

“Y’all got a big building out there, I understand,” a Red Cross official who called Hearrell said, as he recalls the 2005 conversation. “We’ve got a bunch of people coming in from New Orleans. Can we use the church as a shelter?”

Hearrell replied that he’d ask the church’s elders. “The Red Cross needed the space, so we moved all of our stuff out and turned it over. I think, for 52 days, and they basically took over,” said former elder Tom Conklin, still a Crosstown member.

Since then, the church has opened the shelter after disasters ranging from apartment fires to tornadoes. “We’re the first place that opens up if they need a place for overnight stays,” Conklin said. “I think it’s the heart of this church.”
Larry and Rosemarie Larimore

Church member known for notes of encouragement dies in floods

77-YEAR-OLD NAVY VET sent hundreds of cards to his fellow Christians and the people of his community.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

An Oklahoman known for sending hundreds of cards to encourage his church family and community died during record-breaking floods in the Sooner state.

Larry Larimore, 77, was a U.S. Navy veteran and a member of the Blackwell Church of Christ in northern Oklahoma. He went missing May 21 after he called his family about rising storm water. Rescue crews searched near a bridge submerged in water at U.S. 177 near Dry Road in Blackwell, about 100 miles north of Oklahoma City.

Larimore’s truck was recovered, and his body was found in a field May 23. Authorities believe he was swept away in the current of rising floodwaters as he exited his truck.

Larimore and his wife, Rosemarie, were known for their card ministry, said Lanny Jobe, minister for the 140-member Blackwell church. The couple met while both were serving in the Meals on Wheels program.

After Rosemarie Larimore’s death in 2017, her husband continued the card ministry.

“Everyone that was ever added to our church’s prayer list got a card,” Jobe told The Christian Chronicle in a message from Gallup, N.M., where he and fellow church members were serving on a mission trip. “Every church member got a birthday card and weekly encouragement cards. His tagline at the end was either ‘Love you, take care!’ or ‘Praying for you, take care!’

“He also mowed lawns for the elderly and veterans. He would taxi people that needed rides. He took care of our communion supplies and made sure communion was taken to shut-ins on Sundays. He helped track attendance of our church members and alerted us of anyone he knew that had been missing from services for a few weeks in a row. He could be seen at the back of the auditorium with his clipboard, checking people off that were here.”

‘WHAT’S HIS WORTH IN THE KINGDOM?’

A big part of that heart, Conklin stressed, is Hearrell.

“He’s a very simple man, and you might look at him and think, ‘What’s his worth in the kingdom?’” Conklin said.

“But he’s had a huge impact on a lot of different people, just by being a hard worker and by being a big, positive impact.”

Hearrell stood at the door of the activity center that Sunday morning, greeting shelter residents as well as church members arriving for worship. Since the facility opened, he had worked most days from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

“This is his church, so to have him here has been so helpful,” said Matthew Griffiths, a 25-year-old Tulsa waiter volunteering as the Red Cross shelter’s manager.

“He’s been so great, taking all the towels (to the laundromat every afternoon) and making sure they’re clean for people that need to take showers.”

Hearrell lost Martha, his wife of 57 years, about seven years ago. The couple raised two daughters. He has eight grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. They call him “Papa.”

“He’s a funny guy but has a great story and is truly an inspiration to many,” Prater said of the disaster deacon.

Besides overseeing the church’s response to storms, Hearrell jokes that he works with a different kind of disaster — the democratic process.

Two precincts vote at the Crosstown activity center, and he coordinates that process with election officials.

“So I’m a disaster man,” Hearrell said with a laugh.

‘WHO’S GONNA FILL THEIR SHOES?’

Minister Lanny Jobe challenges Christians to take up the simple, meaningful ministries that their departed brethren began. See ‘In the Word,’ Page 30.
Eric Johnson, the newly elected mayor of Dallas, enjoys a moment with his wife, Nikki, during his victory speech. Johnson is a member of the Mountain View Church of Christ.

Members of the Dallas West Church of Christ, where new Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson grew up, surround him and his family and pray for them on the Sunday after his election.

DALLAS: Church prays with newly elected mayor

from page 3

and family who joined him at Sunday’s church service.

“He’s first Sunday after being elected, he wanted to come back home and just let people know how much he appreciated them and say thank you to everybody,” Dallas West elder and minister Sammie L. Berry said. “It was most definitely intentional, him being there.”

Berry, who has known Johnson for 40 years, talked in his sermon about Joseph’s Old Testament rise “from the pit to the palace.” The minister drew parallels with the mayor-elect of the nation’s ninth-largest city.

“In a lot of people’s minds, West Dallas was the pit of the city of Dallas,” Berry told The Christian Chronicle. “And for him to grow up in an area that’s basically below the poverty level — a lot of poverty, a lot of crime — and then to ascend to the office of mayor of Dallas is a great, great story.”

Despite his achievements, Johnson never has forgotten his humble beginnings or those who helped shape him, said state Rep. Carl O. Sherman Sr., a fellow Democrat who is senior minister for the Hutchins Church of Christ, south of Dallas.

At the same time, Johnson has kept his priorities straight, always putting God first and his family second, Sherman said. The new mayor, who was inaugurated June 17, and his wife, Nikki, have two sons: William, 4, and George, 1.

“Our Christianity shapes our decision-making process,” said Sherman, a former mayor of the Dallas suburb of DeSoto. “I think Eric is very thoughtful, and that can only be good for the city of Dallas. … He understands the importance of being that role model for the city of Dallas.”

Berry said Johnson’s commitment to his faith has included supporting several congregations financially.

“Even though he hasn’t been attending Dallas West since he graduated from high school, he has often sent contributions back,” Berry said. “And these are substantial amounts. These are not $40 and $50 checks — they’re into the thousands of dollars.”

Dallas County has the most adherents of Churches of Christ (32,254) of any county in the nation, according to a national directory published by 21st Century Christian, based in Nashville, Tenn. Its 91 congregations tie for third with Davidson County (Nashville) and rank behind only the 113 Churches of Christ in Harris County (Houston) and 92 in Los Angeles County.

Jonathan W. Morrison, ministering evangelist for the Cedar Crest Church of Christ in Dallas, has worked on community organizing related to immigration, neighborhood policing and economic development.

Since last year’s fatal shooting of Botham Shem Jean, a Dallas West church member, by an off-duty police officer, Morrison has been active in calling for justice.

Johnson’s election pleased Morrison.

“First, we give glory to God for his successful campaign,” Morrison said, voicing hope that Johnson will bring “fresh, progressive and aggressive approaches” to dealing with the city’s myriad challenges. “As a minister in the city of Dallas and a member of Churches of Christ, I am proud to say that Eric is our city’s top politician. His election inspires a sense of hopeful optimism that some of our best days are still to come.

“It is my prayer that, in all things, Mayor Johnson will lead the city in a way that is fair and equitable for all and glorifies God,” the minister added.

“I can say, on behalf of the Dallas-area Church of Christ leaders, that we proudly and eagerly look forward to supporting and working with Mayor Johnson as he leads our city forward.”
to handle life, to get their education and to let their light shine for the Lord across the country.

“It’s more than a song; it’s about relationships,” Wells said. “We travel together, we fly together, we have had losses. And the losses span many years.”

Her husband is among the recent losses. R.C. Wells, the Harlem church’s minister emeritus and crusader for racial equality within Churches of Christ, died Jan. 3 at age 84.

Just a few months later, sister Wells was back in front of the chorus, doing what she loves. During their performances, “we do a segment called ‘Love the Lost’ (for the deceased),” she explained, “but when we get to that segment there are no tears. There is clapping because we knew them and we love them.”

SISTER WELLS’ OTHER CHILDREN

About 1,500 Christians have sung with the Easternnaires in the past five decades, and many have gone on to become physicians, educators and professionals in business and other vocations. They came from Baltimore, Washington and cities across the country for the 50-year reunion concert.

“I had to be here,” said Sylvia Rawlings, who sang with the group in the 1970s and now worships with the Coleman Avenue Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn. “Sister Wells has been a big influence in my life.”

The singers were Dorothy Wells’ “other children,” said one of her daughters, Stacey Wells Young.

“When we were growing up, we didn’t fully appreciate that,” said Young, who sings in the group with her sister, Peggy Wells Autry, “but now that she is older it is a blessing. “My mother was doing music ministry before they called it that. I’m just glad that she can see some of the fruit of her labors and that she ran her race well.”

Young directed several of the songs during the concert as her mother sat in a chair in the front of the auditorium and listened intently. Others were directed by Alice Carroll, a 41-year veteran of the ministry.

“In 1978, I was a newbie in the group,” recalled Carroll. “My mother was a counselor, and I was only 13.”

Counselors are an important part of the ministry, Carroll said. They accompany the youths as they tour the country, serving as chaperones and mentors.

“We pick the children up. We stay up all night to make sure they are in their rooms,” said Danielle Dusett, one of the counselors. “We sew their clothes. We are there for them because we really care.”

That care extends to spiritual formation and education. The group has raised $12,000 for a scholarship honoring Dorothy Wells, who enrolled at Queens College in New York while in her 60s to complete her degree.

“We want to raise more money for scholarships,” said group member Bryan Dickerson, “and 100 percent of the proceeds goes to the students.”

Dorothy Wells’ commitment to education began with her mother, Mary Carpenter, who served as dean of women at Southwestern Christian College in Texas, the only historically black college associated with Churches of Christ.

CHURCHES STRIVE FOR UNITY, PURPOSE

As the Easternnaires prepared to sing one final song, Dorothy Wells invited singers from the Central church to join them. One of the first to rise was Perin Tinsley, director of a vocal group in Baltimore.

He remembered fondly his days singing with the group — and his excitement at seeing the bus when it stopped in Baltimore to pick him up.

“The bus stopped at the Pitcher Street Church of Christ,” said Tinsley, who attended four youth conferences with the group. Dorothy Wells taught them the songs on the bus as they traveled.

Willie L. Rupert Jr., minister for the Central church, called the concert “an East Coast unity weekend.”

“We cling together in fellowship in the Churches of Christ,” Rupert said, and churches must do more to reach lost souls in the Mid-Atlantic.

“What else can we do?” he asked. The Electrifying Easternnaires, he added, demonstrate the value in “fellowshipping, acquaintances and spreading the good news.”

RELATED VIDEO: christianchronicle.org
New life for a growing church on Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula

On the beach of the Gulf of Mexico, six youths prepare to give their lives to Christ in baptism. The baptisms happened during a gospel campaign conducted by the Sambulá Church of Christ in Mérida. Minister Francisco Javier Patlán Camacho, second from left, has preached for the church for four years, during which the congregation has grown from 15 to more than 100 in attendance, said Marco Díaz, a minister for the East Brainerd Church of Christ in Chattanooga, Tenn. Patlán is a graduate of a school of preaching overseen by the church, which uses curriculum produced by the Baxter Institute in Honduras. “He and his wife, Gore Cano de Patlán, have been working so hard in this community,” Díaz said of Patlán’s ministry in Mérida.

BRAZIL
Rio de Janeiro — A Church of Christ in this South American metropolis celebrated its mothers recently with a special program presented by their children. Meanwhile, some men from the congregation prepared breakfast for the congregation — to be served to the women first.

“As they waited, “the rest of the men took advantage of the time for speed chats,” said missionary Larry Zinck. “They rotated at four-minute intervals and had an opportunity to meet a few brothers they didn’t know and to get to know others a little bit better.”

COLOMBIA
Medellín — Churches of Christ in this mountainous South American city recently celebrated their 50th anniversary. More than 500 church members gathered in the auditorium of the University of Medellin to hear speakers including Juan Villa.

KENYA
Nairobi — More than 280 women from 72 congregations gathered on the campus of the Eastleigh Church of Christ for the 19th annual Jipe Moyo Women’s Seminar, said missionary Charlotte Hackett.

“Many of those who attended had saved all year to pay the $20 to $30 public transportation costs,” Hackett said. “Jipe Moyo” is a Swahili phrase that means “take heart.”

INDIA
Hyderabad — One stitch at a time, minister’s wives are improving their family’s lives in southern India.

Minister B. Chakravarthi recently visited a coworker whose wife uses a sewing machine to stitch clothes and earn income. As a result, “they have a better life for their daily food and needs,” Chakravarthi wrote in a letter to missionary Karen Clayton, who helped provide the sewing machine. The minister’s wife hopes to stitch punjabis (Indian pantsuits) to sell.

“We believe we should, as much as possible, teach them how to fish instead of giving them a fish,” said Clayton’s husband, Ron, in a recent report. “We have provided sewing machines for preachers, their wives and Christian widows so they can earn a living and support themselves.”


That’s a brief description of the final days in Thailand for David and Michelle Allen, who returned to the United States after a quarter-century of mission work in Southeast Asia.

During that time the couple reared two daughters, Brianna and Brielle. The Preston Road Church of Christ in Dallas supports their work.

The Allens shared the Gospel with countless souls through their ministry with the Chiang Mai Church Planting Team. In a recent newsletter, David Allen offered some reflections on their years of service.

“I remember reading about church-planting movements in African nations sent out about the same time as ours in 1994,” he wrote. “By 2005, several had planted 20 to 40 churches. We had three.”

Success, of course, shouldn’t be measured by numbers, he wrote. Instead, “I see faithfulness to God as the defining factor of a successful missionary. When I look back on my ministry, I see as many failures as I do victories. But I take comfort that whether my attempts failed or succeeded, I gave it my all.”

Members of the Chaiyo Church of Christ perform a foot-washing ceremony for Christians including Michelle and David Allen, right.
‘I’d gladly sacrifice more buildings if that would save but one more soul’

MARSEILLE, France — In recent months, French believers and non-believers alike have focused their attention on a church building.

The devastating fire at Paris’ Notre Dame Cathedral has generated tears, sympathy, and millions of dollars dedicated to restoring the gothic edifice, completed in 1345.

The national tragedy also is a reminder “for us to set our priorities straight and true,” said Philippe Dauner, minister for the Church of Christ in the coastal city of Marseille.

The Catholic bishop of Marseille, Dauner noted, “reacted to the visible increase in attendance in churches the week of the fire by stating he’d gladly sacrifice more buildings if that would save but one more soul.”

The Marseille Church of Christ “is growing sufficiently to start looking for a bigger building more suited to our ministries,” Dauner said. The Notre Dame fire “reminded us that this project only makes sense in the light of the infinitely greater value of the eternal souls that surround us.”

Despite the fire, the walls of the ancient cathedral held, proving that “the trustworthy masons of the Middle Ages built it to last,” Dauner said. Accordingly, we truly hope the remnant Christian presence in France will one day be deemed sturdy enough to build upon once again.

“The next cathedral I visit, I’ll be sure to note with a newfound respect the discreet-yet-essential stonework that upholds the magnificent ceilings.”

Diverse church reports growth in Australia

MELBOURNE, Australia — In three years, a Church of Christ in this city of 5 million souls has grown from six members to about 30, including people from the city’s Sri Lankan and Sudanese communities.

“We wanted to bring back those who had stopped coming to worship and to spread the Word of God to all in this area,” said Analene Forbes, a member of the Greater Dandenong Church of Christ, in an interview with Intersections magazine. The church meets in what she described as “a fast growing suburb with many different communities.”

Members of other congregations have helped teach Bible classes.

“We thank our visiting teachers wholeheartedly,” she said. “An experienced song leader is what we would ideally like to have, but in the meantime we manage somehow, knowing that God listens to our hearts.”

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Lubbock Christian University invites applications for a full-time, tenure-track, faculty position as Director of the University Library. The candidate will be expected to perform professional and administrative duties in leading, planning, implementing, and evaluating all library operations and services.

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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.

Thank you,
Trustees of the Christian Chronicle Board
‘God is bringing water today’

A TRIP TO CENTRAL AFRICA shows the all-encompassing need for clean water – and the floodgates it opens.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

`W`ater, please.”

That’s the most common phrase heard around the table as a team of American Christians gathers under an open-air pavilion at the home of their African hosts.

The missionaries, from Hope Springs International, are weary after a day pulling teeth, playing soccer and even removing a spider from a child’s ear in heat exceeding 100 degrees. Now they’re thirsty. Very thirsty.

A young woman named Prudence Rimorbe appears, almost angelic in a flowing blue West African dress, bearing bottles of water and cola on a silver platter. The Americans lavish praise on her. They ignore the colas and take liter bottles of pure water, slick with condensation.

A few miles away, across twisting, dusty pathways, women struggle to draw a few drops of water from a shallow well in the village of Maloun. Dug 50 years ago, the well is nearly dry in the final weeks before the rainy season. And the water it produces is light brown, undrinkable.

As the well has dried, the village has dwindled, community leaders say. Only a few souls remain, and they spend hours walking to other water sources, including a river a few miles away, to get enough to make it through the day.

***

Nothing teaches the importance of water like a mission trip to Central Africa.

The life-sustaining liquid comprises nearly 60 percent of the human body and covers more than 70 percent of the planet — though only about 0.4 percent of the world’s water is usable by its 7 billion inhabitants.

And here in southern Chad, it’s all too rare — especially clean, drinkable water free of the parasites and bacteria that rob this continent of its life and vitality.

This village, Dono-Manga, is the home of Prudence Rimorbe’s father, Pierre, who first encountered Churches of Christ when he lived in northern Nigeria. He was baptized and studied at the School of Biblical Studies in Jos, Nigeria, before returning home in 2006 to plant a church.

The church grew, but not as fast as the needs in his community. Children were dying of malnutrition, cholera and other preventable, water-borne diseases. Many had been orphaned by the continent’s HIV/AIDS crisis. Others lost parents who served in Chad’s military and died fighting against the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram or in the Darfur conflict in neighboring Sudan.

Pierre Rimorbe sent out an SOS to his Nigerian brethren: “Come help us save lives so that we’ll have more chances to save souls.”

CONTINUED
**Republic of Chad**

**POPULATION:** 13.8 million

**LANGUAGES:** French and Arabic

**Suffice it, pleasan, in the number of their inhabitants in the Carabian colonized area, the capital, N'Djamena, and the town of Dono-Manga, a 250-mile area, took the Hope Springs team nearly 18 hours. Obstacles included potholes, rutted dirt roads and a flat tire. The return journey was significantly shorter, though the four-vehicle convoy did have to stop for a passing herd of camels.

**Churches of Chad:**

In northern Nigeria, workers with a Christian relief group were facing an uncertain future when they received the plea from Dodo Manga. Arewa Aid, launched by missionaries from Indonesia and Japan, was eager to help.

In 1989, when Rambi was an evangelist in far-off Nigeria, he had been trained in the Bible and in medicine. When the team arrived, he knew that he could help the people.

Rambi, who grew up in the north of Nigeria, had been trained in medicine and theology. He was eager to help.

**Clean water isn’t just for humans.**

As members of the Hope Springs mission team visit the villages of a community called Kimri, the local preacher, Rambi Moundou, talks about a well-dressed by the nonprofit. Before, villagers had to walk to a polluted river more than a mile away.

"But it doesn’t stop there," she adds. "The education of both the children and the women and the men, we need, which is water."

A women’s group of 30-plus, at a medical clinic, a school that serves more than 1,000 students and a church that helps nearly 100 children who lost parents to disease or war. As stability has slowly returned to northern Nigeria, Hope Springs continues its work there.

Diana Rodriguez comforts one of her dental patients at the Jordan Health Center.

"And finally, with the clinic, those who have stopped going to the traditional healers, to the witchdoctors and the shamans to expect a new chapter of life," Hodges tells the village.

People here know the transforming power of clean water — better health, more economic prosperity, more time for education — says Prudence Rimorbe. They have come to the School of Clean Water as a divine gift.

"The people of Dodo Manga believe that God must really be working among these people, because they come, and they take care of our primary need, which is water."

In response, the villagers cheer, clap and sing a song in their native language, Gabri. Translation: "God is bringing water today."

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The community of nearly 18,000 souls has four good wells, Moundou says, and could use about 50 more.

"The mission team passed traders riding horse-drawn wagons during its journey."

A boy draws dirty water from an old village well, baldly in need of replacement.

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"The people of Dodo Manga believe that God must really be working among these people, because they come, and they take care of our primary need, which is water."

"But it doesn’t stop there," she adds. "The education of both the children and the women and the men, we need, which is water."

Hodges tells the village leaders to expect a new water well soon — one to replace the 50-year-old dry, dirty well they now use, according to a woman who is among the villagers and the countless farmers who come to the nearby fields during the rainy season to plant rice.

In response, the villagers cheer, clap and sing a song in their native language, Gabri. Translation: "God is bringing water today."

Prudence Rimorbe

"They are so overjoyed," Prudence Rimorbe says. "That God saw fit to choose them as a vessel to pour out his blessing on this community."

**The journey from Chad’s capital, N'Djamena, to the village of Dono-Manga, about 250 miles away, took the Hope Springs team nearly 18 hours. Obstacles included potholes, rutted dirt roads and a flat tire. The return journey was significantly shorter, though the four-vehicle convoy did have to stop for a passing herd of camels.**
MUSLIMS: Despite trials, ‘we can’t cast them out’

FROM PAGE 1
the terrorist group Boko Haram invaded their city in northern Nigeria.
She wanted him to convert, too, along with their daughter and two young sons. Instead, he fled, bringing the children here, to his home village.
And here he found Christ.
Or, more accurately, Christ found him, he says.
He and his daughter, Gloria Maryamu, 14, tell their story in Hausa, a language they picked up in Nigeria. His brother, Pascal Ngarndei, who works for Hope Springs, adds a few details in a mixture of English and Hausa. Translating is Brad Blake, a member of the Meadowlark Church of Christ in Oxford, Miss., and a former missionary to Nigeria.
As to the reporter’s question, March answers, “No. I can’t be angry toward Muslims.” He points to the ground, almost drawing a small circle in the dust.
“There’s a Hausa phrase that goes ‘se hakuri,’” he says.
Translation: “It requires patience.”

IN NIGERIA ‘IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE’
“I normally am not afraid,” Maryamu says.
“But there are some things I am afraid of — like Boko Haram.”
She was 10 and living near the cattle markets just outside Maiduguri, Nigeria, when the terrorist group arrived. Their name is a Hausa phrase meaning, roughly, “Western education is sin,” and they launched a campaign of violence meant to “purify Islam in northern Nigeria,” their leaders said. Already, they had bombed church buildings and abducted children including 276 schoolgirls in the town of Chibok in 2014.
Her father had moved to Nigeria from Chad in the mid-1990s, seeking a better life. So had her uncle, Ngarndei, who was introduced in Nigeria to the World Bible School correspondence ministry and was baptized.
“At the time I decided to be baptized, he was against it,” Ngarndei says of his brother. “He didn’t think it was the true church. I told him he should not think like this because I’m not a child. I’m not just going in somewhere without understanding, without studying.”
He earned a degree from the School of Biblical Studies in Jos, Nigeria, which is associated with Churches of Christ, and returned to Chad in 2008 to work with Hope Springs.
Seven years later, Maryamu says, Boko Haram “came to our village, burned our school and scattered all of the children. They went into the bush. My father and brothers were unable to farm.”
Her mother, March’s wife, “became very afraid,” March says. “They began recruiting her to join their ranks. She became a Muslim through fear.”
She asked him to join her — and if he wouldn’t, to give her the children.
“It was time to leave,” he says. “We would not live in fear.”

IN CHAD, ‘HOSPITALITY, DIGNITY, RESPECT’
IN CHAD, ‘HOSPITALITY, DIGNITY, RESPECT’

François March talks to his 11-year-old son, Pascal, outside the meeting place of the Dono-Manga Church of Christ in the Central African nation of Chad.

IN CHAD, ‘HOSPITALITY, DIGNITY, RESPECT’

March, objected. In January March and his daughter were baptized.

IN CHRIST, ‘YOU CAN’T BEAR GRUDGES’
March hasn’t spoken to his wife since he left Nigeria, but his nephew, Ngarndei’s son, visited her a few years ago.

When Pascal Ngarndei, right, was baptized, his brother, François March, objected. In January March and his daughter were baptized.
She has changed her name to A’isha and has a new husband. She sent gifts for the children. March, who works as a security guard for Hope Springs and farms, says he doesn’t bear her any ill will — nor any for the Muslim mother praying nearby.

“You can’t bear grudges,” he says. “Jesus tells us that if someone falls into a ditch, you pull them out of the ditch.”

“Muslims live here, but we can’t cast them out,” he says. “We have to coexist to show them that there is a better way of life.”

As the interview concludes, the reporter tells March that he admires his courage. The reporter also is a father and says he doesn’t know if his faith could withstand the trials March has endured.

“God will give you the strength,” March replies. “Remember Jesus’ words: ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.’”

A rainbow forms in storm clouds near Dono-Manga, Chad, as a woman and her child wait for treatment outside the Jordan Health Center. Chadian Christians named the clinic after the river where Jesus was baptized. They were inspired, minister Pierre Rimorbe said, by the story of Naaman, healed of leprosy after dipping in the river seven times, as told in 2 Kings 5.

The woman is Fulani, a traditionally nomadic, Muslim people who usually avoid Westerners, said Brad Blake, a former missionary to northern Nigeria. Nonetheless, the woman brought her children for dental work provided by members of a mission team from Hope Springs International. The woman also received a fluoride treatment.

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Miranda Higgins at: (931) 424-8615
Peggy Hutchens at: (931) 379-4262

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The elders of the Church of Christ in Purcellville, Va., (purcellvillecoc.org) are seeking a sound, mature, full- or part-time evangelist to work with the congregation. Located in beautiful, historic, and rapidly growing Loudoun County, about an hour’s drive northwest of Washington, D.C., the Purcellville congregation is ideally located to take the gospel to hundreds of thousands of lost souls nearby. The congregation is 20 years old, has 50+ members in attendance with a mixture of young and old, and owns a beautiful meeting facility on a busy street. We are dedicated to the New Testament pattern in all areas of doctrine and practice of the corporate body, as well as in the lives of the members. The congregation is energetic and puts a strong emphasis on evangelism. If interested, please send a complete resume, cover letter, and audio/video recordings of sermons to elders@purcellvillecoc.org.

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To include your event for $25, contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org.
Why did you choose the Air Force Academy?
I didn’t even know the Academy existed until January of my senior year of high school.
I filled out an online questionnaire for their track program before even looking on the admissions website.
Come to find out, the Academy requires a Congressional nomination, which was months past due, so I put it out of my mind and focused on other options. However, a week or so later, Coach Cole (the cross country coach) gave me a call and said that the athletic department could help me secure a nomination.

God presented the Academy at just the right time and blessed me to complete the application process. When it came down to it, I knew the Academy was the best avenue for me to challenge myself as a student, as an athlete and as a person.

How challenging is the Academy?
My first months at the Academy were some of the most difficult of my life. Freshman year is extremely challenging militarily, and getting adjusted to the academic rigor of the Academy was no small task.

Running was really my only outlet, but this was taken away from me when I developed mononucleosis and pneumonia.

For as long as I can remember, my goal had been to compete on the college level, and suddenly I found myself sitting out of my first cross country season.

I struggled to find patience and hope during this time, and it was difficult to believe that God had a purpose in what was happening.

Looking back, I see that this early test of resiliency gave me strength that I needed to overcome many challenges that I have faced since. Trying times have given me perspective and served to amplify the gratitude I feel for each blessing and success that God hands me.

As a female cadet, did you face any additional challenges?
There are certainly unique challenges to being a female cadet at the Air Force Academy. There seems to be a little more pressure on the women to prove that we belong here, but most of this is pressure that we place on ourselves.

Women who come to the Academy generally aren’t the type to shy away from a challenge. We don’t want to be held to lower standards.

Most of the male cadets at the Academy recognize this and have a lot of respect for the women.

Describe a typical day for you at the Academy.
I usually get up around 6 a.m. to lift weights with the team, get a run in or attend morning formation. I have class from 8:30 to 11:30, then the

I put it out of my mind and focused on other options. However, a week or so later, Coach Cole (the cross country coach) gave me a call and said that the athletic department could help me secure a nomination.

The sudden emergence of USAFA as a potential school was a daunting—but-exciting prospect. It was so different than any other place I had considered.

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**Milestones**

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

**Anniversary**

**Durward and Mary Webb**

**70 years**

Durward and Mary Webb will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary on July 8, 2019. Durward served as an elder of the church for over forty-five years. The Webbs currently reside in Gorman, Texas. They have three children, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Congratulations, Durward and Mary!

Jaci Smith (No. 25, Air Force Academy) competes in the 5k race during the NCAA championship preliminaries in Sacramento, Calif., on May 25.

**STARS: Airman ponders Space Force**

**FROM PAGE 23**

**What type of career do you hope to have in the Air Force?**

Space is becoming ever more critical to our military, and I'm really excited to see where the skills I've developed in my academic major can be applied within our Air Force or even a future Space Force.

Another major goal of mine is to run competitively for the Air Force's World Class Athlete Program.

**How do you nurture your spiritual life in such a demanding environment?**

I love traditional hymns. I have a playlist of nearly 100 a cappella worship songs that I sang growing up, and I find so much peace in listening to these throughout the week.

Most importantly, I have steady friends on and off the cross country team that share in my faith, providing me with constant fellowship and spiritual accountability.

Do you have a favorite scripture?

It's hard to choose just one. Many scriptures have encouraged me at different points in my life, but these have been especially meaningful during my time at the Academy:

- **Matthew 6:25-34** (“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.”)

- **Hebrews 11:1-3** (“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was invisible.”)

- **Isaiah 43:2** (“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”)

(continued on page 26)
50th anniversary Diana Singing in Tennessee again draws thousands of Christians

About 5,000 members of Churches of Christ lift their voices to God during the recent 50th anniversary Diana Singing, which is held in a small community off Interstate 65, south of Nashville near the Alabama state line. The twice-yearly singing event began in 1969 and occurs on the second Friday and Saturday nights of June and September each year. Tom Holland, a longtime minister and song leader who helped launch the Diana Singing, died earlier this year at age 87. For more information, see dianasinging.com.

THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

OKLAHOMA CITY — Minister Scott Laird, who has served the Great Falls Church of Christ in Montana since 1994, has been named to The Christian Chronicle’s board of trustees. Outgoing Chronicle President and CEO Lynn McMillon announced Laird’s appointment to the 18-person board.

“Scott is a highly respected leader of Churches of Christ in the Great Plains and neighboring Canada,” Editor-in-Chief Bobby Ross Jr. said. “He is a longtime friend of the Chronicle.”

HIGHER EDUCATION

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
MALIBU, Calif. — Dee Anna Smith, CEO of Sarah Cannon, the Cancer Institute of HCA Healthcare, has been appointed chair of Pepperdine’s board of regents. Smith is the first Pepperdine graduate to chair the board as well as the first woman to occupy the position.

“I am thrilled that Dee Anna Smith will be lending her unique perspective and extraordinary skills to help shape and direct the policies of the university,” said Jim Gash, president-elect of Pepperdine.

Smith’s responsibilities will include guiding the board to advance Pepperdine’s progress, welcoming a wide array of perspectives and ideas, helping generate financial resources and fostering academic excellence and spiritual growth in all students, according to a news release.

She is a member of the Churches of Christ and attends Ethos Church in Nashville, Tenn.

SOUTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
TERRELL, Texas — A regional accrediting agency has extended Southwestern Christian College’s accreditation “with only the lightest sanction a school can receive,” President E.D. Seamster Jr. announced.

Seamster said the decision by the Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges offers “amazing new hope” for the only historically black college associated with Churches of Christ.

“This is very positive news,” he said. “In an academic climate where so many HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) are not meeting accreditation standards and being closed, being sanctioned or placed under conditional oversight, this is such a tremendous blessing.”

The light sanction, Seamster said, relates to a warning regarding a tardy audit. SACS will grant Southwestern Christian up to 12 months to provide a timely audit with an update on fiscal responsibility.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MELISSA MCCULLOUGH ZIERDEN

The happy family after the wedding of Neil and Melissa Zierden.

SPOTLIGHT

Single dad no more


There’s a happy new chapter in the story: Zierden recently married Melissa McCullough with Mount Dora social worker Johnnie Coley standing beside him as “best woman.”

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MELISSA MCCULLOUGH ZIERDEN

The happy family after the wedding of Neil and Melissa Zierden.
of that denomination only a few have received. He served as a seminary professor and, at the top of his career, when the liberal movement took hold of the American Presbyterian Church, he fought with courage and faith to uphold the inerrancy of the Word of God. He made many sacrifices to remain a voice of Biblical truth and was isolated by the liberal church. He finally cut his ties with the Presbyterian Church and in 1984 sought affiliation with likeminded brethren who believed the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. He was appointed preacher at the Central Church of Christ in Sahiwal Punjab, where he preached until his death.

Brother Sabir’s accomplishments included establishing 80 new Churches of Christ, baptizing thousands of believers and training new preachers. He translated several doctrinal books from English to Urdu. Brother Sabir was a hardworking servant of Christ who endured being pelted with stones, walking through floods and mud, being constantly on the move for the Gospel, in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from hostile faiths, in danger from false believers. He toiled for Christ’s church with sweat, tears and prayers from Khyber Pass to the Arabian Sea.

Brother Charles Scott of Tennessee visited him over 18 times and stayed with him in Pakistan over extended periods of time. By the account of many from the United States who visited brother Sabir in Pakistan, he was a selfless, combative, disciplined and dedicated servant of Christ. He traveled through every part of Pakistan, and his ministerial influence went out across some 80 congregations in the region of Punjab. He preached in one of the most daring, challenging and frontier Christian mission regions of the world.

He is being described by brothers in Pakistan as a servant of Christ who walked through this world with exceptional grace, strength and wisdom. Christ was Brother B. M. Sabir’s preoccupation, and His church was his full-time work.

His eldest son, Dr. Theodore Sabir, is Professor of Chemistry at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama. He remembers him as a loving father and a humble servant of Jesus Christ. Dr. Sabir has been helping with his father’s mission work in Pakistan since 2006 and, at a ceremony in Pakistan, he received a mandate to continue his father’s mission work in that country. In a conversation, Dr. Sabir said that there are many challenges to overcome to increase Christ’s kingdom in that part of the world. He quoted the words of Christ in Matthew 9:37-38 to illuminate this need: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

I pray our brothers and sisters will extend their right hand of fellowship to Dr. Theodore Sabir as he furthers the work of the gospel in Pakistan and other Third World countries.

— by Dr. Cecil May Jr.

Dr. May is Dean Emeritus of the College of Biblical Studies at Faulkner University. He can be reached at (334) 325-5988 or emay@faulkner.edu. Dr. Theodore Sabir can be reached at (334) 580-9784 or teddsabir@gmail.com.

In addition to receiving his bachelor’s in Bible, it was there that he met the love of his life, Larneatha Evans. The two were married on August 20, 1954, and for the next 64 years, the couple reared four children and served congregations in San Angelo, Texas; Ada, Okla.; Terre Haute, Indiana; Maryville, Tenn.; McAlester, Okla.; and Prairie View and Navasota, Texas.

George W. (Bill) Knight 1933-2019

Bill Knight, 85, went to meet his Lord on April 15, 2019. He was born in Stuart, Okla. on Dec. 1, 1933, and married in 1956 and reared three children in Lake Jackson, Texas.

They moved to Edmond, Okla. in 1997 and were blessed with 43 years of marriage before her passing in 1999. Bill was then blessed with a second love, Donna Sharp (Knight), and they married in 2004.

Bill had a 35-year legendary career as a polymer chemist at Dow Chemical Company. He retired in 1996 and has over 56 patents awarded for his work with more still being awarded.

Prior to college, Bill had never been more than 50 miles from his hometown, but his travels took him to six of the seven continents. He loved woodworking, gardening and had the best sense of humor. Part of his legacy will be the humor and joy that he left with all who knew him.

His greatest joy was service to God and others. Bill served the Lake Jackson Church of Christ through hospitality and as a mentor, teacher, song leader, deacon and elder.

Bill is preceded in death by his first wife, Anna, his parents, and his three siblings. He is survived by his wife, Donna; three children: Natasha (Hiram) Brown, Renai (Rich) McClanahan, and Tony (Elise) Knight; seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, and a fourth on the way.

Virginia Rae Niles, 92, June 9, Edmond, Okla.

With Appreciation

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges very generous gifts received in honor of Erik Tryggestad and Bobby Ross Jr. and in memory of Gerald and Elwanda Lowrie.
**NEWMAKERS**

**HONORED:** Murray Evans, assistant athletic director for media relations at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City, with three first-place writing awards from the College Sports Information Directors of America. Melanie Jenkins, member of the Spring Meadows Church of Christ in Spring Hill, Tenn., with the Paraoptometric of the Year Award from the American Optometric Association. Josahan Jaime-Sambrano, member of the Yankton Church of Christ in South Dakota, as Coach of the Year at the U.S. National Outdoor Collegiate Championships Awards. Jaime-Sambrano coaches archery at Mount Marty College in Yankton. Hamil R. Harris, journalist and minister for the Glenarden Church of Christ in Maryland, with the Fatherhood Minister Award at the Harlem Festival at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

**NAMED:** Chelsia Harris, executive director of the Lipscomb School of Nursing in Nashville, Tenn. Andrea Long, Kevin Poliquin, Charisse Stokes, Dr. Yu-Tuong Tsai, David A. Umphress, Ph.D. and Kevin D. Vezertzis, to the advisory board of Faulkner University’s Department of Computer Science in Montgomery, Ala. Bob Turner, as director of Sunset International Bible Institute’s SALT (Sunset Academy of Leadership Training) in Lubbock, Texas.

**ACCREDITED:** York College in Nebraska, by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

**RECOGNIZED:** Rep. Mark White, a Tennessee legislator, as outstanding alumnus by the Institute for Conflict Management at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn.

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**Church of Christ on West Olive**

**Minister**

We are seeking a minister to work with our pulpit minister with the intention of transitioning to our full-time pulpit minister position. He will work with our ministerial staff and elders to serve the West Olive Church of Christ by providing a balanced ministry of preaching, teaching and assisting the elders in implementing our vision to help the congregation grow to its full potential in membership and spiritual growth in Christ. We are a congregation of 450 members in a growing community west of Phoenix, Ariz. ([www.WestOlive.com](http://www.WestOlive.com))

**General Requirements:** The ideal candidate should be a married, middle-aged man with at least 10 years of experience. He should be of strong personal faith and be doctrinally sound and well grounded in the Scriptures. He should have an evangelistic heart to share the Gospel with those who are lost.

**Principal Responsibilities:** Responsibilities of this position include preaching, teaching, participation in the life of our church family and other duties requested by the elders.

**How to Apply:** Those interested in applying should mail/ email a copy of their resume with picture, links to recent sermons, and at least three references to:

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

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**Mission/Spiritual Formation Minister Position - Montgomery, Alabama**

**THE LANDMARK CHURCH OF CHRIST** is seeking well-qualified applicants for the Mission/Spiritual Formation Minister position. We are particularly interested in candidates with significant experience in the field of mission ministry and spiritual formation. The Mission/Spiritual Formation Minister is responsible for leading missions and guiding the church family into a deeper relationship with Jesus by creating environments that enhance spiritual formation. The position is designed to help the church work toward a vital, healthy, mutually beneficial relationship between the church family, missionaries in the field and the people groups we serve. This position involves discovering mission opportunities and developing a long-range plan with goals, strategies, and action plans to ensure the effectiveness of all local and global mission points. The Mission/Spiritual Formation Minister oversees all ministries relating to Missions including enlisting, training, and supervising for local and global missions. The position also supervises budget, fund raising and expenditures of budgeted funds.

Must have strong written and verbal skills along with solid interpersonal skills for working with other church staff and volunteers. Must be comfortable with traveling and experiencing different cultures. Must be self-directed, possess strong leadership skills and be well organized. This position also requires strong public speaking skills. Most importantly, the Mission/Spiritual Formation Minister must be passionate about spreading their faith to other people and must be intentional about integrating the mission of “leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus.”

Applicants for the Mission/Spiritual Formation Minister position are required to submit ALL of the following materials: A cover letter indicating interest in the position; a curriculum vitae; a list of at least three professional references with telephone and email contact information. Employment is conditional upon a satisfactory background check. Landmark Church of Christ gives preference in hiring qualified candidates who are members of the Churches of Christ.

Salary will be commensurate with experience.

Applicants are asked to respond to gail@landmarkchurch.net by July 28, 2019.
As believers go on to their reward, ‘Who’s gonna fill their shoes?’

“I love song lyrics that tell a story or make a meaningful point about something that impacts our lives. A great example of this is a country song written by Troy Seals and Max D. Barnes and performed by George Jones. “Who’s Gonna Fill Their Shoes?” focuses on many of the legendary departed singers like Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and Hank Williams.

Who’s gonna fill their shoes? Who’s gonna stand that tall? Who’s gonna play the Opry and the Wabash Cannonball? Who’s gonna give their heart and soul to get to me and you? Lord, I wonder, who’s gonna fill their shoes?

I thought of these lyrics as I reflected on the life of Larry Larimore, whom we lost in the recent flooding. No, Larry wasn’t known for singing, but he was certainly known for making an impact in other ways, especially through the untold number of encouraging notes he and his late wife, Rosemarie, sent. Larry was proud to serve his country and was very patriotic. Larry is only one example of so many in our church who are no longer with us — including Larry Cochenour and Irene Cole — who fit the apostle Peter’s description of a servant. Where some left off, others must now take on. There will never be another Larry Larimore, Larry Cochenour, or Irene Cole. But someone needs to pick up where they left off and fill their shoes.

Could that be you? Well, if the shoe fits...

LANNY JOBE ministers for the Blackwell Church of Christ in northern Oklahoma.

Cancer stinks, but heaven awaits

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”
— 1 Peter 4:10, New International Version

“Who’s Gonna Fill Their Shoes?”

After the death of Larry Larimore, the Chronicle’s advertising manager, in mourning her sister-in-law Sherly Scott, 51, of Pearland Texas.

Survivors include her husband, Cris, and nine children.

We want to curse. We want to demand that he intervene.

Wants to weep. We want to yell at God and demand that he intervene.

But dear Lord, please give us the faith and the strength to trust you during difficult times such as these.

Let the virtuous sinner sing, "Who’s gonna fill their shoes?"

LANNY JOBE

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:
letters@christianchronicle.org
What a brain tumor taught me about change and the church

TRANSITION IS INEVITABLE and scary, but God’s ‘rocks of truth’ remain.

Before surgery, my neurologist was rather grim. “There’s a chance you won’t make it off the table, Nancy. We’re going to do our best. If you do survive the surgery, there’s a good chance that you’ll be blind or partially blind.”

Life is full of transitions. With some, there’s time to prepare. But others are unexpected. My epic, surprise transition was the discovery of an enormous brain tumor.

I not only survived two surgeries and a six-week round of radiation to my brain, but I can still see better than most people my age. God is exceedingly and abundantly good!

Let me assure you that thinking you’re going to die, preparing to die and then not dying is tremendously liberating. This transition was a turning point in my life.

I was “raised in the church,” as we say, by godly, precious parents and enjoyed many advantages. By any standard of measure, God had given me an abundance of blessings.

Yet, I had been leading a life of marginal Christianity. I wasn’t out doing anything horrible or illegal, but I wasn’t making much of a difference for God or my fellow man, either.

The words from Luke 12:48 nagged at me: “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”

For anyone who has been blessed as I have been blessed, that scripture calls for solemn self-examination.

The author C.S. Lewis once wrote, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains.” God was shouting! He led me into a season of struggle, pain and transition that demanded a change on my part.

Why are transition and change so hard for us? The very nature of life is transition and change. I often wonder why God didn’t hardwire us to handle it more gracefully.

We often say that God is in control and looking out for us. So, why do we fear change? Why do we struggle with transitions?

As I speak to groups across the country, I’m starting to see certain commonalities. The biggest? My home congregation is not the only one struggling with change these days. Churches of all sizes, denominations and traditions are undergoing transformations on various issues. Public worship, church staffing and community outreach are just a few of the many areas in flux. This is true not only in the United States but around the world.

Our world is changing. Families, education, medicine and governments are changing. Man’s nature may be the same, but individuals are changing. This means that the church, made up of people, is also changing.

Many of us are working at navigating transitions while others are upset and angry, perhaps even a bit fearful. I get that… We’re looking for a rock to stand on, a firm foundation that will not be moved.

‘Many of us are working to navigate transitions while others are upset and angry, perhaps even a bit fearful. I get that… We’re looking for a rock to stand on, a firm foundation that will not be moved.’

Now, every day is God’s. My mission in life, with whatever time I have left, is to encourage anyone who will listen to the message that all of the changes and transitions we face in life are ultimately for our benefit. They are meant to be a blessing if we will only receive it.

NANCY OEHLERT and her husband, Mark, worship with the Northwest Church of Christ in San Antonio. See more of her writing at CreateYourDash.com.

FROM OUR READERS

Column on women’s roles questioned

I have been a reader of The Christian Chronicle for many years and have never felt the need to write to you. I found that this opinion piece (“Should women lead prayer in mixed-gender settings? One teen shares why she doesn’t,” Page 28, June) was ill-informed and not very well thought-out.

There are many conversations about women’s roles in the church, and to leave it to a teenager to speak to doctrine and theology does not seem wise to me at all. There is so much more to the gender role than very narrow interpretations of the verses she quoted.

Also, do you really believe that if someone interprets the Bible incorrectly that they are in danger of hell? Very disappointed that this was put in the Chronicle.

ANDY SPELL | Houston

Our church in central Pennsylvania (Conestoga Valley Church of Christ) is in need of a new baptistery. The problem, however, is that most manufacturers of fiberglass baptisteries do not recommend leaving water in them 24/7.

Questions that I’ve asked on other Christian forums do not get me the answers I need because of our beliefs on baptism. Have you heard of this issue before? Do you know of companies that other Churches of Christ have used?

ROBBIE WARRELL | Lancaster, Pa.

It is about the message and not the messenger (“We don’t support preachers; we hire them,” Page 29, June).

My father is a minister in central Florida, and there have been many occasions that people came to him and made comments and criticisms, yet he “preached the Word in season and out of season” and has continued to do so. The message is never going to change if people stick to the Scriptures.

SHELBY DENISE | via christianchronicle.org
Question of women’s roles, as with all questions, requires grace, humility

Off questions in the text of Scripture there is no end.

• What does the double narrative of Genesis mean, and was there full equality in man and woman before the fall?
• How do we wrestle with authentein, a Greek word that shows up only once in the New Testament, 1 Timothy 2:12, translated “to usurp authority” in the King James Bible? In other Greek texts, it’s far more violent.
• How do we reconcile 1 Corinthians 11 with chapters 14-15, discussing what women are to do in the assembly, namely praying and prophesying?

These questions must be asked, and I would like to request respectfully that we ask them again, because if we are wrong, this mistake has deadly spiritual consequence. We, as people who hold up the Scriptures, should lead by example.

More than these important questions, however, is our overriding question: Who is God, and what does God do? Have we made our ideas about God into an idol?

It is easy in our Christian walk to construct ideas about God that are false images, making God too small or constrained. It is one thing to seek to know God and wholly another to try to control God. Thankfully, God doesn’t always work in the ways that we think God will.

As we in the Churches of Christ approach these and other questions, I would like to make two small suggestions. I hope I am brave enough to employ them.

Our first concern should be knowing God as a God of grace.

God cares about our actions, but out of concern for what our works and sins are doing to us and how they are shaping us. God does not save and love on technicality, but with mercy, as we are being conformed to God’s image. Even our best efforts are filthy rags, which cannot and do not save. God accepts us by Christ’s virtue, not ours.

Grace is difficult but boundless and free. With grace, we watch not whether each individual step sets us to plunge off the tightrope but whether our submission to God’s molding keeps us on the narrow way.

The second task is humility. Correct readings of the Scripture with a misguided care for the meaning of the scripture makes for a wrong reading. When we are right without humility, we are wrong. Worse yet, without humility, we have neither the poise nor the wisdom to understand how wrong we could be. Humility encourages grace as we seek to offer each other our best understanding. We all see through a glass dimly, and it would be foolish to presume that we fully understood the revelation of God though our finite lenses.

One of the things I love most about this fellowship is our focus on unity. I honor what I trust to be other believers’ God-given convictions, and I seek to imitate their care for the Scriptures and the church.

Even in places where I consider them misguided, I want to first assume that they love God like I do. Too many factors play into how each of us reads the Scriptures: time, location, culture, family context, gender, age, education and even the language of the Bible we read.

I want to be conscious of these things as I try to understand without vainly attempting to set them aside.

For my sisters and brothers with whom I disagree, I still can see by the fruit of their spiritual labor that they truly desire God. In that unity, we can move forward to join with God in reconciliation, to help take down the dividing wall of hostility and to make our way into the path of peace.

CANA MOORE, 25, is a Master of Divinity student at Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn. She worships with the Holmes Road Church of Christ in Memphis.
‘Elite?’ examines how an unhealthy focus on youth sports can jeopardize our faith

Adam D. Metz had my immediate attention with two early items in his treatise “Elite?: A Christian Manifesto for Youth Sports in the United States.”

They are:
• His reference in the table of contents to “The Youth-Sports Industrial Complex.”
• His statement on Page 3: “This book is written for Christians who feel unprepared for and at a loss to deal with a youth sports scene that seems to be spiraling out of control.”

In light of recent scandals involving coaches, student athletes and parents, Metz seems right on.

Metz, who has ministered for the Alum Creek Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio, since 2003, explored the relationship between Christianity and sports for his doctoral research at Fuller Seminary.

With a bibliography of 185 pieces, citations on half of the 184 pages, 66 scripture references and just enough 50-cent words (“autotelic” and “autocharismatic”), his work will certainly make one involved in this subject give it complete attention.

This is not a casual read or a feel-warm-and-fuzzy-when-done kind of book. Points are varied, well-supported and highly documented.

Much credibility is gained from quotes by, and references Metz makes to, such notables as Dwight Eisenhower, Pierre de Coubertin, Vince Lombardi, Herm Edwards, Bo Jackson and countless theologians, psychologists and lay people.

Metz’s point is addressed from a wide variety of perspectives with the goal of resolving the sports-industrial complex and the mission of God’s people.

As a retired educator with 12 years as a teacher and coach — and 18 years as an athletic director — I am a strong advocate for the value of sports participation. My experience and passion have been in education-based athletics (school sports). All too often, efforts in that arena can be severely compromised by the “elite, select and travel teams” that Metz examines.

As I paraphrase from Chapter 2, in general, play (and sport) is intended to be voluntary and therefore fun, a critical element for children.

With the proliferation of parents and the sports-industrial complex, sports participation is no longer “voluntary” and therefore, increasingly, not fun. So agrees my friend and noted youth sports psychologist Dr. Greg Dale of Duke University: “Kids quit when it stops being fun.”

Metz writes that the world of “elite,” “select” and “travel” teams has helped foster a national youth-sports climate built on unrealistic parental hopes and dreams of college scholarships and a culture of favoritism and celebrity where gifted athletes are often excused from bad behavior and given special treatment and privileges. Noticeably absent during the rise of these trends in youth sports has been a clear and distinct voice of the church.

“Kids quit when it stops being fun.”

“Youth leagues increasingly resemble professional leagues,” he writes, “not because of the desires of the children playing, but because of the coaches, parents and other adults in charge.”

“Elite?” produces three summary statements relating the juxtaposition of youth sports and faith:
• For many families, sports have taken the place of the full life Jesus has promised.
• Parents are raising their children with an identity primarily formed by their experiences as athletes instead of as faithful Christians.
• We have not taken seriously enough the many challenges youth sports present to the identity formation of young people during their very formative adolescent years.

As I work to defend my position as a Christian school, I find little support for arguments with Metz. As he and others state, “The tail often wags the dog.”

In other words, to help someone else, we must know who we are, we must accept them as they are and we must actively listen without judgment.

Rogers goes on to extrapolate these findings to other fields that interest him, including education. Rogers, who died in 1987, was a revolutionary man with bold ideas about treating everyone equally because we all have value.

He doesn’t mention much about religion other than to talk about treating the “wholeness” of a person. But it is impossible to read his theories and not see how they parallel the teachings of Jesus. And the response to the Savior isn’t dissimilar either.

Some thought Rogers wasn’t intellectual enough. He didn’t play by the rules or maintain the status quo. He has many critics in academia. He didn’t seem to be bothered by them.

He cared about the clients. He cared about their progress. And none of them are complaining.

DOUG KILLGORE is the recently retired assistant principal and athletic director of Central Arkansas Christian School in North Little Rock, Ark. He and his wife, Sheila, worship with the Sylvan Hills Church of Christ in Sherwood, Ark. Known as “The Bow Tie AD,” he is a motivational speaker and high school athletics professional development specialist. Contact him at BowTieAD232@gmail.com or on Twitter @BowTieAD.

The tail often wags the dog.

Psychologist’s final advice echoes Christ’s teaching

I love reading authors’ first and last books.

First books are inspired. We see what makes writers so passionate that they have to write. Last books are about what authors wish to leave behind, the most important things they have gleaned over a lifetime.

“A Way of Being” by Carl R. Rogers falls into the latter category. Here Rogers, one of the most influential psychologists in American history, the father of client-centered therapy, shares his most important speeches, papers, articles, chapters and his current (as of 1980) perspective on them.

Rogers also shares that what has been most fulfilling to him — and, hopefully, most impressive to the reader — is that his life’s work has been upheld. He has proved time and again that the relationship between therapist and client is the most important factor in promoting change. That relationship is fostered most successfully by a therapist’s own personal congruence, acceptance of who they are, and by giving the client a time of empathetic listening.

In other words, to help someone else, we must know who we are, we must accept them as they are and we must actively listen without judgment.

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JILL NICHOLS is a licensed professional counselor with a private practice in Edmond, Okla. She and her husband, Brent, and their two children were missionaries in Niterói, Brazil for eight years.
**NEW AND NOTEWORTHY**

**MISSIONS MADE REAL**

This book is written to help Christians understand what it is like to live and serve in the mission field. It will be useful for Christians considering short-term or long-term mission work, elderships and mission committees who currently support or are considering supporting a missionary, and any Christian who wants to be an encouragement to missionaries.

The book has an easy-to-read style that feels like you are having a conversation with the author. Kevin uses humor, candid honesty, and real-life examples from his own life and the lives of other missionaries to illustrate and bring to life the challenges and blessings of mission work.

Chapters include: motivation for missions, considering your family, where to go and what to do, fundraising, preparing to leave home, arriving and settling in, working with short-term volunteers, reports and furloughs, when to return home.

Three missionaries with a combined total of 90+ years in missions have endorsed the book. “This book would have been invaluable to me had I read it before returning to Ireland in 1970.” Tony Coffey. “This is what I would say to any person—or family—contemplating mission work: You must read this book. May the Lord use this book to inspire others with a missionary heart to go into the field with joy!” Herman Alexander. “Devour Kevin’s material to determine your motives, pick your field, start your preparation checklist, figure out your budget and check your pulse for a long-term commitment. I wish I had read this book before I graduated from Bible school.” Ken Fox.

Additional resources at: missionsmadereal.net.

**COMING HOME TO HOLINESS: EMBRACING THE LIFE YOU WERE MEANT TO LIVE**

**Holiness.**

It’s our heart’s deepest longing and our true spiritual home. We were made for it. Twice. We entered the world at birth created in the image of a holy God. When we entered God’s kingdom at rebirth, our “new self” was “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24).

“Coming Home to Holiness” is about three things:

- A holy God. A God who is perfectly pure and sinless, who does only what is right and good.
- God’s plan to display His holiness in His creation. He calls us to identify with Him in His holiness and He blesses us as we do.
- The path God laid out to lead us to holiness, a path paved by spiritual disciplines. As we practice the disciplines, we do what God asks us to do, and then God does what only He can do to lead us to holiness.

Shawn McMullen ministers with the Church of Christ in Vevay, Ind., and edits The Lookout (Lookoutmag.com), a national magazine promoting discipleship and personal spiritual growth.

**Nichols’ boundless drive to share Jesus shines through in ‘The Sage of Jasper’**

Gus Nichols worthy of the 10-year effort exerted by Scott Harp, author of *The Sage of Jasper: Gus Nichols — A Biography.*

The answer is an unqualified yes.

Harp spent hour after hour, days without end, pursuing the Gospel Advocate and Firm Foundation as well as newspapers and other journals, collecting important data about this tireless, noteworthy Alabama servant of God. The book preserves the source of these countless details as endnotes to each chapter along with listing personal conversations with those who knew and admired Gus Nichols.

The book has more than 50 chapters with addenda, the first being a time line of Gus Nichols and his family. It also includes 150-plus photographs of Nichols and other settings.

As Harp unfolds the Nichols’ biography, the reader is compelled into an escalating admiration for this exceptional Jasper, Ala., preacher, who pursued every available avenue in order to declare the whole council of God to as many men and women as possible.

Nichols preached in houses, public buildings, outdoor groves, town squares and church buildings. He published tracts, pamphlets and religious journal articles as well as columns in newspapers. He turned out books and volumes of sermons.

He specialized in give-and-take, question-and-answer sessions. He used radio and sometimes television to great advantage. Perhaps even more admirable was the fact that he nurtured his own family in the faith.

Nichols was mostly self-educated but grew as a Bible student and preacher. He dedicated five hours a day to study, mostly the Bible and books about it. He employed the available channels to proclaim the Gospel, the foremost being the gospel meeting. In these years in Alabama, the main community gatherings were the evangelistic meetings.

Nichols also visited town markets on Saturday afternoons and visited with whoever would stop about Christ and the Scriptures.

Not only did Nichols write for the brotherhood papers, but in January of 1943 he contributed weekly articles to The Mountain Eagle, Jasper’s local newspaper.Five years later, 66 of these articles were bound and sold. Gus utilized the power of the written word though multiple venues, and his writings were dispersed globally.

Through most of his career, Gus Nichols engaged in religious debates, mostly in Alabama. The debates were community gatherings. Rather than inducing acrimony and driving wedges, these debates brought religious persons face-to-face and created community rather than disrupting it. By following these debates one gains an excellent understanding into the history of Churches of Christ from the 1920s through the 1970s.

Harp is to be commended for the incisive insights he provides in his Nichols biography regarding this period of Churches of Christ history. We are indebted to him for his impressive research and cogent prose setting forth the life and times of “The Sage of Jasper.”

**In Print**

**The Sage of Jasper**

Scott Harp graduated from Bible school. He specialized in give-and-take, question-and-answer sessions. He used radio and sometimes television to great advantage. Perhaps even more admirable was the fact that he nurtured his own family in the faith.

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**TOM OLBRICHT** has ministered for Churches of Christ for nearly 70 years. He has taught theology to students and administered at universities including Harding in Searcy, Ark., Abilene Christian in Texas and Pepperdine in Malibu, Calif.
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ARE WE A ‘CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPER?’  Our goal shouldn’t be to produce a specialized version of a ‘real newspaper.’ Rather, we strive for ...

‘A journalism of hope’

LUBBOCK, Texas

I don’t like “Christian journalism.” I don’t think it even should exist.

Putting the word “Christian” in front of things — “Christian music,” “Christian education” — reduces them to subsets of “real music,” “real education.”

In truth, any undertaking that grows nobly from the foundation of faith, honoring God as Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer, is real. And endeavors that deny or attempt to mimic this foundation with something other than God are deviations from the real.

Too often, my fellow Christians don’t see it that way. They speak with disdain about “the media” and tell us that The Christian Chronicle should strive to exist “separate and apart” from it. (We are, I believe, part of “the press” — a term that appears in the First Amendment and one I prefer over “the media.” More on that later.)

With all this in mind, I was thrilled to speak on a panel at this year’s Thomas H. Olbricht Christian Scholars’ Conference at Lubbock Christian University. The topic: “News Organizations and the Integrity of Information: How Do We Change the Perception of Trustworthiness?”

Doug Mendenhall, associate professor of journalism at Abilene Christian University, chaired the panel. He talked about his research into the language of incivility across the websites of various denominations. (There have been some increases in the past five years, but hardly on the scale of what we’re seeing on CNN, FOX News and other media outlets.)

Elizabeth Smith, assistant professor of communication at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., presented research she conducted on students’ perception of the press as they ran through The Situation Room Experience, a crisis simulation at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Smith and her colleagues are investigating whether or not seeing a video explaining the responsibilities of the press before the simulation affects participants’ views of the press.

Michael Anastasi spoke on the need for community engagement and about how newspapers must leave behind the practice of talking at people rather than talking with them.”

Anastasi is a Pulitzer-winning journalist who serves as editor of The Tennessean and region editor for the USA Today Network in Tennessee and Florida, overseeing the work of more than 400 journalists. He made that important distinction between “media” and “press.” He also stressed the importance of watchdog and accountability reporting.

But newspapers also must produce “a journalism of hope,” he said, “reflecting the achievements of our community, the great things that are happening, not just the problems. And when we do expose problems … we’re providing potential solutions and not just illustrating how things are messed up.”

Newspapers “have a magic power to bring people together,” he said. He noted The Tennessean’s Civility Tennessee project, which focuses on getting people to discuss contentious issues respectfully, “in a way that encourages civil discourse, arriving at solutions that benefit everyone.”

The goal: equipping people with tools to be able to have hard conversations about contentious topics, from politics to the anti-vaccination movement. (I can think of a few topics in our fellowship that could benefit from civil discourse.)

After serving on this panel, I’m even more convinced than before that the goals of good journalists and Christ followers are one and the same. Journalism of hope is what we continually seek to produce at The Christian Chronicle. I pray that we stay focused on this goal in the coming months as we transition into new roles and look for new opportunities to inform, inspire and unite Churches of Christ.

CONTACT: erik@christianchronicle.org
Residential Services Director
Full-time position

Job Details:
- Supervises House Parents and social services support staff
- Client intakes, case management and discharges
- Liaison with schools, referral sources, families
- Train staff
- On-call for emergencies
- Ensure program meets Texas Minimum Standards

Job Summary:
- Supervision of CTCH staff; Oversight of children’s service plans and development; Management of therapy plans; Coordinate communications with state of Texas

Job Requirements:
- Master’s degree in Social Work or relevant field preferred
- Bachelor’s degree in Social Work or relevant field required
- Experience with out-of-home placed children
- Supervisory experience preferred
- Faithful member of a Church of Christ

Salary/Benefits:
- Competitive salary, health, retirement, on-campus housing

Ray Crowder, Executive Director
13200 Crane Road, Buda, TX 78610
512.243.1386 ray@ctch.org

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

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

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

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

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

Send a resume and letter of interest to:

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

Southern Christian Children’s Home is seeking an Executive Director to continue its 93 year legacy of service to children and families. The Executive Director will be responsible for operational oversight, guiding and supporting the leadership team, helping to develop mission-related strategies, cultivating community and governmental partnerships, and serving as a kind and welcoming ambassador for the Home.

This role will be both challenging and rewarding as the Executive Director will steward the home as it builds on its history of family style residential care while evolving to meet opportunities in the provision of foster care. It will require strong moral character, focused vision, effective leadership, accountability, strategic planning, and an ability to value the work of all staff who are committed to building and maintaining standards of excellence in their work.

Established in 1926 as a home for homeless children and affiliated with the Church of Christ, SCCH is licensed by the State of Arkansas as a Residential Childcare Facility and as a Foster Care Provider. We serve families by providing a place for neglected, abused, and dependent children when they need supportive care away from the family home.

Southern Christian Children’s Home
100 West Harding St.
Morrilton, AR 72110
501-354-2428
www.schome.org

Email letter of interest and resume to:
application@schome.org

Job Openings

Special Education Teacher: Knoxville
TCH-East is seeking a full-time Special Education Teacher to work at their on-site school.

Teachers: Knoxville, Spring Hill
TCH-Middle is seeking two full-time Teachers for their on-site school.

Night Staff: Spring Hill and Knoxville
TCH-Middle, TCH-East are seeking at least one full-time and one part-time night staff to supervise youth during sleep hours of 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Residential Counselors: Pinson and Knoxville
TCH-East and TCH-West are seeking full-time Residential Counselor Couples (formerly houseparents) to be responsible for the day-to-day care, guidance, and training of the youth assigned to residence, all in keeping with the program policies and procedures.

Case Manager: Spring Hill
TCH-Middle is seeking a full-time Case Manager.

Come be a part of this ministry! We offer competitive pay and excellent full-time benefits including medical, dental, vision, life insurance, disability, retirement and paid-time off.
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Southern Christian Children’s Home
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The Christian Chronicle
JULY 2019
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Ray Crowder, Executive Director
13200 Crane Road, Buda, TX  78610
512.243.1386     ray@ctch.org

Mount Dora Christian Academy
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