Man of God in space

CHRISTIAN ASTRONAUT
endeavors to keep the faith during six-month mission.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Online worship during the COVID-19 pandemic helped prepare Victor Glover for a long-awaited work trip. At Glover’s destination — 250 miles above Earth at the International Space Station — there is no physical church building.

“I actually sent up communion cups and a Bible, and we have really good internet connectivity,” said the NASA astronaut, one of four crew members for the SpaceX Crew Dragon’s first operational flight.

“So honestly, I will probably continue in what we’ve been doing: virtual service, virtual giving, reading my Bible and praying,” added Glover, the pilot for a team that also includes NASA’s Michael Hopkins and Shannon Walker and Japanese astronaut Soichi Noguchi.

Glover, a Church of Christ member in the Houston area, discussed his faith with The Christian Chronicle while making preparations for a six-month mission to the space station.

At press time, liftoff was scheduled for 7:27 p.m. EST Nov. 15 at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida. However, the launch date and time were subject to change.

Glover’s first trip into space will give him a view of the heavens and the earth — which Genesis 1:1 says God created in the beginning — that few in history have experienced.

What might be going through his mind as the spacecraft soars high above the clouds?

“I have a job to do. Sometimes

Astronaut Victor Glover is the pilot for the SpaceX Crew Dragon’s first operational flight.
ONLINE
JANUARY 21-23, 2021

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SUNSET.BIBLE/WORKSHOP
In this crazy year, giving thanks for my mother

FORT WORTH, Texas

For decades, my mother, Judy Ross, has made the best Thanksgiving feast on the planet. I’m talking about a mammoth spread of turkey, chicken and dressing, ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, green beans, cranberry sauce and steaming hot rolls — plus carrot cake, chocolate pie and other homemade desserts that fill an entire table.

Amazingly, this big meal comes only a few hours after a “light” holiday breakfast that always includes fried and scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy, sausage, bacon and pancakes with chocolate syrup.

What am I thankful for? Well, for one thing, that I’ve never suffered a heart attack after all that I eat on this particular day.

But seriously, I’m grateful for Mom — a kind, loving Christian woman who has spent her entire life serving other people. Even before a recent mishap, Thanksgiving was shaping up to be a different experience for the extended Ross family in this crazy year.

With concerns about big indoor gatherings contributing to the spread of COVID-19, crowding all the brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandbabies and great-grandbabies into Mom and Dad’s home seemed unwise.

Ministers struggle under weight of pandemic stress

SOME CHURCH LEADERS are looking for a way out as the COVID-19 crisis takes a spiritual and emotional toll.

BY LAURA AKINS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Many ministers are stressed and exhausted.
The profession may be divine, but it takes a toll.
“It’s all consuming,” said Celeste Smith, a licensed marriage and family therapist in East Texas.
That’s not just her professional opinion. It’s personal. Her husband, Steven, serves as the youth minister for the Glenwood Church of Christ in Tyler, about 100 miles east of Dallas.
“COVID has revealed, to some degree, issues within the church,” she said. “We already have overworked ministers. This pandemic has magnified that.”
Tracy Moore agrees.
“It’s all weighed heavily on me,” said Moore, preaching minister for the Vero Beach Church of Christ in Florida.
“I’ve become severely depressed. I have felt every member’s pain deeper than in times past, like I was carrying it with me everywhere.”
He’s not a crier, but Moore said he has wept more for people during 2020 than ever before.
Recognizing the stress, his eldership is giving him a month-long sabbatical to finish the year.

Moore is not alone in his weariness. Josh Jones, youth minister for University Church of Christ in Denver, said the early days of the pandemic

Board replaces president at Harding

BRUCE McLARTY retires, and David Burks returns, as university launches search.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Amid declining enrollment and budgetary concerns that prompted recent cutbacks, Harding University in Searcy, Ark., is replacing Bruce McLarty as its president, effective Nov. 30.
As McLarty retires, David Burks, Harding’s chancellor and former longtime president, will return to the president’s role Dec. 1.
A search committee will be appointed to seek a long-term successor.
“I accepted the opportunity to become president of Harding during this interim period out of respect for our board of trustees and my extreme love for our work at Harding University,” Burks, 77, said in a written statement to The Christian Chronicle.
“I simply could not say no when asked to assume this role while the board searches for the next president,” he added. “Clearly, my appointment is temporary and will not last one day longer than needed.”

Trustees of the 4,500-student university, which is associated with Churches of Christ, announced the 63-year-old McLarty’s exit, saying the decision came “after careful and prayerful consideration.”
“We are grateful for Dr. McLarty’s service over the past seven-and-a-half years,” said a statement by board Chairman Robert Walker. “He

See THANKSGIVING, Page 4
See STRESS, Page 8
See HARDING, Page 23
But then my iPhone buzzed on a recent Monday morning, and my sister Christy Fichter’s face flashed on the screen. My baby sister, who is almost six years younger than I am, teaches special-needs students at a Fort Worth-area elementary school. If she calls just to chat, it’s typically not during the school day.

“How are you, big brother?” Christy asked, trying to sound calm. Then she got to the point: Mom had fallen, and her ankle appeared to be broken (in three places, as it turned out, and smaller bones had been crushed). An ambulance was rushing her to the hospital.

Mom, who turned 73 this past summer, has dealt with a number of health issues in recent years, as has my father, Bob Ross, who is 75. This was the last thing they needed.

By the time my wife, Tamie, and I arrived at their home, Mom had been treated and her foot repositioned. She was discharged to await surgery in a few days after swelling subsided. It was a long night for Mom. In spite of the prescription pain medicine, she lay in agony on her living room couch.

Even as she battled the pain and nausea, she had the audacity to ask us if we needed anything to eat or drink. Eventually, Mom’s pain became so severe that my sister took her back to the emergency room. Because of COVID-19 protocols, only one person at a time could be with Mom in the hospital. That person was required to wear a mask at all times.

The surgery went well, and when Dad pulled into the driveway and grabbed a wheelchair to help Mom into the house, a young neighbor rushed to assist. He didn’t even ask when she might next deliver homemade cookies.

On Sunday, Dad headed to preach at the Greenwood Church of Christ, a rural North Texas congregation that he has served for 18 years. He did so without the treats Mom usually bakes for the adult Bible class.

I stayed home with Mom and prepared tacos for our lunch. Neither of us said it aloud, but I couldn’t help thinking her turkey, ham and all the fixings would have tasted much better.

Alas, Mom will be off her feet for a few months. A big Thanksgiving dinner will have to wait until next year, when I pray the pandemic will be resolved and the world’s best mother will be feeling much better.

Wherever you find yourself this holiday season and whatever the circumstances, may God bless you and your family and give you peace.

BOBBY ROSS JR. is editor-in-chief of The Christian Chronicle. Contact bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org. Follow him on Twitter at @bobbyross.
In full PPE gear, Dr. Brent Dennis entered the home of Mitch and Shannon Wilburn.

Mitch Wilburn, minister for the Park Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla., had been diagnosed with COVID-19 just days earlier. A history of cancer, a compromised lung and a combination of autoimmune diseases made him a high-risk patient. It was that history — and brotherly love — that led Dennis, who is also a member of the Park church, to make the house call.

“He listened to Mitch’s chest and said, ‘I don’t like what I’m hearing,’” Shannon Wilburn said. With that, he said Mitch needed to be admitted to the hospital.

“Between when he said, ‘You’re going to the hospital,’ and two hours later when they had a bed, he went downhill,” Shannon said. “Driving him to the hospital was scary because I thought, ‘He’s having to think about talking and not able to get a full breath.’”

That was Oct. 15. Nearly a month later, Mitch remains hospitalized. It’s been a roller coaster of a journey for Shannon. Just days after Mitch was hospitalized, she noticed she could no longer taste her coffee. Then she tested positive for COVID-19, too. “I haven’t had a fever in 20 years. I forgot how awful having a fever is,” she said. “It just knocks you out.”

The virus left her with fever and a cough. She also struggled to breathe. On her third trip to the emergency room, she just knew she would be admitted. But doctors gave her a steroid treatment. Her breathing stabilized, and she was sent back home. “I’ve had nine surgeries, and this is way worse than any surgery I’ve had,” she said. “But I know that it’s not that way for everyone.”

Shannon was able to recover at home, eventually testing negative. However, Mitch’s condition worsened. He was given Remdesivir and plasma and then put on oxygen. He made improvements the first several days.

Shannon shared the details, pictures and requests for prayer on Facebook and on a CaringBridge page. Mitch would text and FaceTime her. He even sent her flowers while he was in the hospital. Then, he quickly began to get worse. “He sent me a text that said, ‘Urgent prayer request,’” Shannon said. “He was basically saying, ‘I can’t breathe. I’m on the maximum I can get, and I’m still heaving for any breath.’”

Within hours, Mitch was intubated — put on a ventilator. “When you can’t be up there, it’s really scary because you can’t advocate for them,” Shannon said. While she has full faith in the knowledge and expertise of the doctors and nurses caring for Mitch, she acknowledges that it’s hard to watch a loved one suffer from afar. “I’ve always been able to be there to advocate for him during all of his medical issues,” she said. “It’s just a loss of control, which for someone like me, it’s like, ‘Oh, Lord, I want to be in control but I know you are in control.’”

While doctors and nurses continued caring for Mitch, the church in Tulsa cared for Shannon. “We are surrounded by such a great community of just friends and Jesus followers, and a lot of people know how to love on us well,” Shannon said.

People brought groceries, ice cream, cookies and journals. They prayed in her front yard and sent texts of encouragement. And they shared her social media posts, leading people around the world to pray. “The prayers of perfect strangers” are so meaningful to Shannon. “Someone asking for prayers for us has influenced someone else, and that’s the reason we are getting the prayers,” Shannon said.

In fact, Shannon asked everyone to share where they were praying from. People from at least 55 countries responded. Shannon’s daughter and mom bought maps for a visual See PRAYERS, Page 6
PRAYERS: ‘We just don’t live in fear’

FROM PAGE 5

reminder of the prayers being said on Mitch’s behalf.

Then came the best news. In the middle of an interview with The Christian Chronicle, Shannon got a call. It was Mitch’s nurse.

Excitement filled her face as the nurse shared the news that he was off the ventilator and breathing well.

“I love you so much,” she said through the FaceTime call, tears filling her eyes.

A few days later, Mitch was moved off of the COVID floor to a regular hospital room where Shannon could visit him. She hadn’t seen him in person in 26 days.

She posted an update for friends and family saying, “I ugly cried all over his chest when I got here this morning as it was so good to touch him.”

On his own Facebook page, Mitch wrote: “I’m still here. Pray for me. Ask the stone in the garden if there is anything that Jesus can’t do.”

Unfortunately, the journey isn’t over for Mitch. Days after being extubated, his condition once again deteriorated. He was put back on a ventilator.

“I don’t know how people walk through something this hard without Jesus,” Shannon said.

She said Mitch has always been a driven person, mostly toward “getting people to Jesus.” But she knows it’s that driving spirit which has helped him fight this battle.

And while it’s challenging to not know what the future holds, Shannon and her family hold on to hope.

“We just don’t live in fear because we know we win either way,” Shannon said. “We get the reward, the everlasting reward, because we’re believers.”

FIND UPDATES on Mitch’s condition, including specific prayer requests, on Shannon Wilburn’s Facebook page or on the family’s CaringBridge site.
Have the events of the last several months challenged your faith? Join thousands of others the first week of February 2021 to study the Word of God during the 85th Freed-Hardeman University Bible Lectureship, “Encountering Ecclesiastes: Finding Meaning in a Meaningless World.”

Realizing current challenges, we invite you to join us in searching the Scriptures from wherever you are. Purchase a copy of the 2021 Lectureship Bible study book and look for 13 videos from the lessons’ authors to premier the week of Feb. 7-11.

Although on-campus Lectureship activities will be limited to students that week, our prayer is that the book and videos will help us draw closer to our Creator. Find more details at fhu.edu/lectureship.
STRESS: ‘It’s difficult to figure out what will get people back’

FROM PAGE 3

were stressful because the congregation had to pivot so quickly.

“Everyone was on board the first few weeks,” said Jones, who has served the University church for 16 years. “It was different and weird, but everyone wanted to make it work. Now, six months later, I’m happy if I can get seven kids on a Zoom call.”

Jones said teens are tired of being online but aren’t engaging in person either.

“It’s difficult to figure out what will get people back,” he said, admitting he’s drained.

OVERWORKED AND UNDERAPPRECIATED

On top of preparing a Sunday youth class for online and in-person attendees, Jones goes to the church building early to get it COVID-ready, wiping things down and putting up cautionary signage.

He shoulders most of the technical work to get worship online. And he feels unappreciated.

“Youth ministers are getting forgotten in a lot of this,” Jones said. “Preachers and elders are getting a lot of thanks and appreciation, and youth ministers aren’t getting that.”

Adding to the stress, Jones attends church alone without his family. Pre-pandemic, the University church’s attendance ranged from 250 to 300. Now, gatherings are limited to 50. Because of restrictions, the Jones family hasn’t returned to church since it reopened in June.

Their experience is not uncommon. Many ministerial families aren’t worshiping together; some aren’t even living together.

Summer Lashley, a licensed professional counselor and mom of two teenagers, is also a minister’s wife. Her husband, Andy, serves as involvement and communications minister for the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

For five weeks, Lashley and her kids quarantined away from Andy because, as the minister on call, he wasn’t able to socially distance himself from members of his church and community.

“We sacrificed seeing him for that long so he could meet the needs of church members,” she said, adding that she will never take her kids away from their father in the name of ministry again. “It was just the best we could do at that time.”

Back in Texas, Celeste Smith also attends church alone.

From the outset, the pandemic increased Steven’s workload. He was always on his computer or shooting videos in his backyard. The couple’s oldest daughter, Lily, 19, shouldered the burden of watching three younger siblings.

“I’ve got a lot of mom guilt,” Smith said. “She shouldn’t have to watch our kids. That became a huge burden, and we eventually got to a place where one of us just had to quit our job.”

WALKING AWAY FROM MINISTRY

Mike Cope, director of ministry outreach for Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., has heard from a lot of church leaders who intend to leave ministry. He said ministers are experiencing a dramatic drop in their sense of well-being.

The Smiths get it.

“For us, ministry became such a place of mental and emotional stress,” Celeste said. “My job isn’t like that. I can close my computer and come home. Very rarely do I stress about my clients like we stress about ministry.”

If one of them had to quit, it was going to be Steven, who’s worked in youth ministry for 19 years. Steven recently announced to the congregation that he will be stepping down as of Dec. 31.

“We felt if we didn’t walk away, we’d lose our love for the church,” said Celeste, who is also a certified eating disorder specialist.

“Twenty percent of people with a disorder will lose their life to it,” she added. “The fact that my work is less stressful than ministry is pretty telling.”

The majority of ministers who spoke with The Christian Chronicle aren’t quitting, but all of them agreed they can’t win right now.

“The biggest struggle is trying to work with families that are across the board on the big issues,” said Jones, whose youth group attendance dropped from 48 students to seven during the pandemic.

“We have some families that think the restrictions are silly, and we shouldn’t do them. Others think there is no way the restrictions are enough. So they don’t come.”

For youth ministers, planning events where everyone is comfortable is hard.

Celeste Smith agrees: “Understand that your ministers are trying their very best to take care of you and love you. Nothing we pick is going to be perfect, but if you can account for people’s motivations, how can you be mad at someone who is trying to love you?”

OUT AND ABOUT — BUT MISSING CHURCH

Danny Dodd, preaching minister for the Levy Church of Christ in North Little Rock, Ark., is less frustrated with restrictions but mourns the loss of personal connections and in-person fellowship.

Since moving back inside the church building, “we require masks, social distancing and individual communion,” Dodd said. “But only about half of the church has returned. Many remain afraid, and some are high risk, but those who I see out and about — posting about their activities on social media yet not back at church — hurt my heart.”

When trying to encourage ministers — like Jones and Dodd — Cope says people respond with, “Everyone has it hard right now.”

“And that’s true,” said Cope, who ministered for decades for the Highland Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. “If I were in charge of teachers, I’d apply this to them. Ministers don’t have it more difficult. But it is hard to lead in people’s spiritual lives, because it hits so close to the bone.”

So close to the bone, in fact, that the Smiths concluded that once Steven finishes his last day at Glenwood, they will need intense space from the church.

“A lot of wise people think we shouldn’t do that, but I don’t know how we can heal if we stay,” Celeste Smith said. Her husband
was struggling in his ministry role before 2020, but the pandemic finally pushed him over the edge.

**GET OUTSIDE, SPEND TIME WITH GOD**

Cope shared five reasons he believes ministers like Steven are quitting: They are weary, cut off from nurturing relationships, referring to a political war, grieving over lost members and worrying about church finances.

But, Cope said, ministers can push back against these issues.

First, they need to focus on contemplative spirituality, re-anchor in nurturing relationships and work on emotional security and self-care.

Stress and exhaustion are not unique among Church of Christ leaders — it’s across the board, said Cope, who is part of the Duke Clergy Health Initiative, a group of 30 caregivers who assess and improve the health and well-being of ministers.

More than ever, ministers need to take charge and live a life centered on God, Cope said. He and Randy Harris, senior consultant and university fellow with the Siburt Institute at Abilene Christian University, have hosted countless Zoom meetings to support other ministers.

“Randy says, ‘I know you are so busy, but you’ve got to trust me that for at least 10 minutes a day, you need to sit and dwell in the presence of God,’” Cope said. “He’s telling that to people who already know that, but they forget. Ministers nod and tear up at this reminder.”

After spending time with God, ministers need to carve out time for self-care: rest, take days off, spend time with family, eat in a way that fuels the body, pause and breathe deeply and get outside for a walk. And when it’s impossible to get outside, Cope said research proves even looking out a window or at a picture of a nature scene reduces anxiety and blood pressure.

**‘CUT THEM SOME SLACK’**

Self-care alone won’t erase stress. More than ever, church leaders need support from church members.

“I would love to see the church take some ownership, be compassionate, pray for ministers. I beg people to cut them some slack,” Cope said. “Ministers didn’t get into this work to undermine people. They did it for the sake of the Gospel.”

The Barna Group, an evangelical Christian research and consulting firm, published data from summer 2020 showing that 15 percent of leaders are lonely and do not have anyone to unload on.

And that’s dangerous.

That’s why Cope’s work — the Harbor Bible Lectures at Pepperdine University — will shift its focus in 2021.

“We are changing the purpose of Harbor to focus solely on minister recovery, refreshment and restoration. I’d love to have therapists available as well. And worship will be fun for ministers because they won’t have to be in charge of it,” he said. Harbor is tentatively set for May 26-28, 2021. Registration opens Feb. 1, with only 400 spots available.

Cope hopes Harbor can combat predictions of a large minister exodus in the coming five years.

“If I told you the full details, you’d be shocked,” Cope said. “I’ve got name after name of people looking for a way to step out. What messages are we saying to future men and women who are thinking about going into ministry?”

What can elders and ministers do?

“Alerting people to this anxiety and stress is good,” Cope said.

“Let’s courageously call on the church to be more supportive.”

Elders and members can make a difference, he said.

First, they can pray for their ministers daily. They should encourage them to take time off to be with family, offer a short or long-term sabbatical and consider sending ministers to an event such as Harbor weekend.

He encourages members to drop a note in the mail or find small ways to lighten their minister’s load.

“When a minister gets a well-thought-out note, that goes a long way,” Cope said. “It still won’t be easy, but at least they know they aren’t in this alone.”

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13-term incumbent loses

**AFTER OUSTER** by Democratic Party, anti-abortion minister and lawmaker fails to win re-election as an independent.

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

Tennessee state Rep. John DeBerry, a longtime minister and lawmaker kicked out of the Democratic Party because of his conservative positions on issues such as abortion, gay rights and school choice, lost his re-election bid Nov. 3.

The 13-term incumbent ran as an independent in the general election but was defeated overwhelmingly by Torrey C. Harris, a Democrat whom DeBerry had beaten by 21 points in the 2018 party primary.

The final tally was 15,930 votes for Harris (77 percent) and 4,675 votes (23 percent) for DeBerry.

“I think this election was decided back in April when the Democrats finagled and misused and misapplied the law to remove me from a ballot I had already qualified for,” DeBerry, who has preached for the Coleman Avenue Church of Christ in Memphis for 20 years, told The Christian Chronicle.

“I know that my faith was tested,” the 69-year-old minister added. “My faith was the issue — my faith in God, my faith in the Scriptures, my faith God created me, my faith that a child in a mother’s womb is a human being, my faith in parents to raise their children as they see fit in the nurture and admonition of God, my faith that marriage is between a man and a woman.”

Planned Parenthood and the LGBTQ Victory Fund were among liberal advocacy groups that campaigned against DeBerry in Memphis’ heavily Democratic House District 90.

Opponents relied on “lies and fraudulent information,” including putting signs with DeBerry’s picture alongside President Donald Trump and the motto “Make America Great Again” in Black neighborhoods, the African American lawmaker claimed.

“I made no statements at all in support of either candidate,” DeBerry said of the presidential race between Trump and Joe Biden.

Harris, 29, will be one of the first openly LGBTQ members of the Tennessee General Assembly. He characterizes himself as bisexual. He denied that anyone from his campaign was involved in placing the signs.

After winning, Harris told The Commercial Appeal in Memphis that he was “just shocked at the amount of people who were ready to see something different.”

“I think that for a long time we had a representative who really truly believed in his moral self,” Harris in an interview with the Memphis newspaper. “(Voters) truly felt that I will make some type of difference, and I’m just so thankful that our voters really truly feel that way. I’m going to do all that I possibly can just to make sure that they get what they went and voted for — they get somebody who is going to advocate for public education, for healthcare, women’s rights, for LGBT rights and for criminal justice reform.”

After 26 years in public office, DeBerry said he plans to keep preaching the Gospel, teaching and lecturing.

“I’m going to write. I’m going to continue to do my business. I have a marketing and advertising business that I neglected because I was in the House of Representatives,” he said. “I’m working on podcasts and various broadcasts.”

He has no intention, he stressed, of letting anyone silence him.

“I plan on being vocal,” he said.

In other races involving members of Churches of Christ, three Christian congressmen — U.S. Reps. Lance Gooden of Texas, Brett Guthrie of Kentucky and John Rose of Tennessee, all Republicans — were re-elected.

In Texas, U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, a Republican who was a member of the University Avenue Church of Christ in Austin for many years, overcame a challenge from Democrat MJ Hegar to win his fourth term.

In Alabama, former football coach Tommy Tuberville, a Republican who has roots in Churches of Christ, unseated Democratic incumbent U.S. Sen. Doug Jones.

**MARYLAND**

**BALTIMORE** — The University Parkway Church of Christ organized a virtual “24 Hours of Prayer” event featuring congregations across 18 time zones.

Organizers endeavored to bring hope and healing to a world where many are hurting because of the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice, gun violence, political unrest and other factors, church member Monica Andrews said.

“Our heavenly Father called congregations from all across the world,” Andrews said, “to host a 30- or 60-minute segment consisting of prayers, songs, messages, ministering and discussion forums — whatever God put on hearts to provide healing for the world.”

Recordings of the recent event can be viewed on the church’s YouTube page and Facebook group.

**NORTH CAROLINA**

**GREENSBORO** — After “Zoombombing” racists hijacked an online assembly of the Sharpe Road Church of Christ, a group of White church leaders who support racial unity made a video of support for their North Carolina brothers and sisters.

The video, played in the church’s Sunday assembly after the recent online attack, featured leaders from congregations in Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee and Texas, said Doug Foster, elder of the Minter Lane Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas.

In addition, Don McLaughlin, preacher for the North Atlanta Church of Christ in Georgia, hosted a Zoom podcast with Sharpe Road minister Nick Glenn that discussed the incident and the response in support of the predominantly Black church.

**TENNESSEE**

**BRENTWOOD** — “Does Character Matter?”

That was the topic of a special class taught at the Otter Creek Church by two retired Lipscomb University professors, Perry Cotham and Fletcher Srygley.

In the Wednesday night series this fall, Cotham and Srygley discussed the topic of lying, how lying is defined and whether all politicians lie. They worked to make the class nonpartisan and open to all points of view, Cotham said.
ASTRONAUT: He will rely on his Bible and prayer

FROM PAGE 1

that gets lost in the emotion of it,” Glover replied. “I’m looking forward to looking out the window and taking pictures and taking in the moment.”

But most importantly, he said, he must focus on his job and Crew-1’s safety.

Once at the space station — a world-class lab orbiting Earth — the astronauts’ activities will include scientific experiments, robotic operations and space walks.

“I want to use the abilities that God has given me to do my job well and support my crewmates and mission and NASA,” he said. “That’s really the thing I think the most about.”

‘DO NOT BE ANXIOUS’

In the moments before launch, Glover said, his wife, Dionna, and their four daughters — Genesis, 17; Maya, 15; Joia, 14; and Corinne, 12 — would be foremost in his mind.

Before joining NASA in 2013, the 44-year-old Navy commander flew combat missions in Iraq and served as a legislative fellow to the late U.S. Sen. John McCain, himself an acclaimed naval aviator.

“Just in general, before I go and even get in an airplane to go on a flight, I say a prayer, and I always think about my family,” Glover said. “If I don’t see them directly for some reason, I’ll send them a note, a text message, because I do a very high-risk thing.

“I’m not in combat anymore being shot at, but there’s still a risk,” he explained. “So I always want to make sure that, ‘Hey, if today is my day, I’ve told my family, I’ve told my girls that I love them, and I had a chance to commune with God directly.’ And then I go and do what I need to do and feel good about it.”

That said, he allowed for a bit of awe: “It’s going to be interesting to walk up to a rocket that’s really active and ready to go and has all those noises and sounds and know that I’m going to ride that to 400 kilometers up and then live there for half a year.”

For Dionna Glover, the approaching launch date brought a mix of emotions.

“Of course I’m excited, but it’s also a little scary,” she said, seated beside her husband in a Zoom interview. “I’m nervous. I’m excited for him. I have Scriptures that I’m reading regularly to try to remind myself not to worry and not to stress.”

One of those Scriptures is Philippians 4:6: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and

Before joining NASA in 2013, Navy Cmdr. Victor Glover flew combat missions. Glover is pictured with his wife, Dionna, and their four daughters.
“So I would say that as we’ve grown our family, that’s really when I’ve started to develop a real, true appreciation of my own faith and not just the academic.”

During the pandemic, the Glovers have worshiped online with two Houston-area congregations — the League City Church of Christ and the Southeast Church of Christ in Friendswood — as well as the Renaissance Church of Christ, an Atlanta congregation whose preacher, Orpheus Heyward, is a favorite of Victor’s.

“We’re just trying to make sure that with these interesting times, our family is doing what would make God happy and not necessarily what we want,” Victor said. “Attending in person (during COVID-19) is not the right thing for us, but we still want to make sure we’re doing what we need to do.

“It is very important to our family and bringing up our kids,” he added, “so we still attend as a family even though we’re doing it virtually. And like I said, we’re kind of supporting three different congregations in doing so.”

Tim Shoulders, the Southeast church’s associate minister, praised Victor and Dionna’s dedication to their faith.

“They have an incredible drive to produce faith in their children,” Shoulders said. “They are very invested in family and making sure church and God are at the center of that.”

A BITTERSweet MILESTONE

Since the start of the space program in the 1960s, fewer than 600 people have gone into space — about two-thirds of them Americans. Glover is the first Black astronaut assigned to a long-duration mission.

“It is bittersweet because I’ve had some amazing colleagues before me that really could have done it, and there are some amazing folks that will go behind me,” he said. “I wish it would have already been done, but I try not to draw too much attention to it.”

Social isolation is part of what Glover will experience in space.

“The risk won’t go away just because he leaves the planet,” she said. “Fortunately, NASA has provided lots of opportunities for us to keep in touch, and I’m hoping we can still study together, worship together, and figure out ways to still do that as a family while he’s gone.

Once it’s safe, we’ll return to in-person activities and in-person worship and Bible studies,” she added. “But I’m in no hurry to make any huge changes.”

Dionna will get a special iPad that she can use to communicate with Victor and videoconference with him.

“One of the things I was hoping, before this pandemic, was that we would take it with her to church and just log in, and I could just sit there and watch and kind of just sit next to her in worship services,” Victor said. “We’ll see if they’re back in regular, physical services soon or not.”

Either way, cyberspace will make family worship possible for an astronaut in outer space.
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— Stafford North
Oklahoma Christian University (2018)

“The White Rock Fund is a rock-solid effort in proclaiming the Gospel throughout the world. Their emphasis on supporting works that are “speaking the truth in love” is enabling us to reach many people throughout the Pacific Island nations so that they obey the Gospel and establish congregations that faithfully carry out the mission of the church. The White Rock Fund’s efforts are tremendously impacting the world and are worthy of individual Christian’s support.”

— Randy English, Pacific Islands nations

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ARGENTINA
BUENOS AIRES — Oscar and Francia Alvarez are making the most of this South American capital’s lockdown by using their teaching and videography skills to reach souls.

Unable to return to the Baxter Institute in Honduras, where they are fourth-year ministry students, the couple has launched a video series and women’s ministry called Hijas de Luz (Daughters of Light). Francia delivers inspirational messages that her husband films and edits.

“Summer, autumn, winter or spring, on the path of life God accompanies us in all seasons,” Francia said in a recent video. “Live and enjoy each one of them.” Find the series at facebook.com/Hijas.deLuz.

AUSTRALIA
SYDNEY — In a three-chapter book of 73 verses, the prophet Joel describes his vision of a plague of locusts ravaging the land.

The Old Testament book was an appropriate topic, perhaps, for the annual Bible Bowl hosted by Southwest Church of Christ in Sydney. Another plague, COVID-19, forced this year’s event online.

“Seven churches participated. “All in all, the event was fun and engaging, and everyone had a chance to compete,” said Bible Bowl committee member Emma-Jean Bargholz, a member of the Eastside Church of Christ in Sydney.

The winners: a team from a Church of Christ in Australia’s capital, Canberra.

LITHUANIA
VILNIUS — A Church of Christ in this northern European capital endured two weeks of lockdown after a member tested positive for COVID-19, said minister Juozas Puodziukaitis. The member recovered and no other church members became ill. The church has resumed socially distanced worship.

“Some people don’t come to meetings for fear of getting sick; some teens are forbidden by their parents to go,” Puodziukaitis said. “The worship is broadcast live online. Young people gather for Youth Nights. The pandemic has constrained our work but has in no way diminished our faith.”

NICARAGUA
MANAGUA — COVID-19 has claimed the lives of at least four members of the Nueva Libia Church of Christ, said Pedro Batres, one of three elders of the 250-member church.

Congregations across the Central American capital report cases of the virus. Some host worship services entirely online while others practice social distancing.

The Nueva Libia church has moved to three Sunday services to accommodate as many members as possible, Batres said. The Church of Christ in Falls Church, Va., supports the work.

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Souls in African kingdom added to the Kingdom

The Kingdom of Lesotho, a mountainous nation enclaved inside South Africa, has endured three years of drought and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, a Church of Christ in the capital, Maseru, reports several recent baptisms, including the two women praying in this photo, said minister Andreas Adontsi. Social media posts with photos of the baptisms yielded comments of “Jehova a bokoe,” “Blessed be Jehovah” in the Sotho language.

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SPOTLIGHT

After Hurricane Eta, churches plan relief

SAN PEDRO SULA, Honduras — Thousands of people took to their roofs in this Central American city as Hurricane Eta, the strongest storm of this year’s season, caused widespread devastation across the region.

The storm, which made landfall Nov. 3 in Nicaragua, flooded the terminal of San Pedro Sula’s international airport at levels higher than than Hurricane Mitch in 1998, said workers with Mission UpReach, a ministry associated with Churches of Christ. The Honduran government cleared a portion of the airstrip for relief flights.

“These facts emphasize the size and complexity of the relief that is going to be needed,” said Phil Waldron, who founded Mission UpReach with his wife, Donna.

“Thousands of families in the Sula Valley have lost everything.”

A team from the Baxter Institute, a ministry training school in Honduras’ capital, Tegucigalpa, planned to travel to northern Honduras to assist with relief efforts. Mission UpReach and other ministries, including Healing Hands International, are collecting funds for relief efforts.

SEE UPDATES and find links to contribute at christianchronicle.org/HurricaneEta.
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The Cortez area is home to scenic mountains, deserts, mesas, rivers, lakes, farmland and Mesa Verde National Park. Locals enjoy skiing, hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, boating, mountain biking and golfing.

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**Hope for Haiti’s Children**

**Director of Advancement**

**DESCRIPTION**

Hope for Haiti’s Children (HFHC) nurtures, educates, and trains more than 3,000 poverty-bound Haitian children to become Christian leaders in their homes, churches, and communities. HFHC has a 25-year track record of success and has been recognized by Charity Navigator as a “Perfect 100” charity for its commitment to accountability and transparency for the past 3 years.

HFHC is seeking a Director of Advancement based in Nashville, Tennessee to serve as the primary architect and leader of HFHC’s comprehensive, results-oriented development and marketing programs that will advance the organization’s mission and goals. Candidate should have 4+ years of increasing responsibility in non-profit development/marketing with excellent managerial skills, including at least 2 years of previous experience successfully managing non-profit development/marketing staff. Candidate must have a strong commitment to missions and share the beliefs expressed in HFHC’s Statement of Faith.

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‘Act like Christians in every realm’

CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE READERS share thoughts on politics, faith and healing the badly divided nation.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Fasting and praying for a divided nation — that’s how a host of church members spent the days leading up to the U.S. presidential election. As the vote counting — and the tension — dragged on, organizers of the effort, sponsored by the Carl Spain Center on Race Studies and Spiritual Action at Abilene Christian University in Texas, decided to extend the observance through Dec. 21.

“We will be specifically praying and fasting for an end to COVID-19 and for a transfer of presidential power absent of armed conflict,” said Jerry Taylor, founder of the center and associate professor of Bible, missions and ministry at Abilene Christian. As the world anxiously awaited the vote tallies, The Christian Chronicle asked readers for their thoughts on the record-breaking 2020 election — and for ideas on how people of faith can foster healing and hope in a badly divided United States.

A sampling of responses follows:

“Pray! We need to be more like Jesus was with the woman at the well (John 4). Find people where they are and give them hope by sharing the gospel. Show grace, mercy and joy. You cannot help people up if you avoid them or look down on them.

By speaking to those with different views rather than Bible-beating them and telling them they’re wrong, we help people find the joy, peace and contentment that only Christ can bring. We all need to put our faith in God rather than man, government or country.”

— Kandi Holbrook, member of the East Point Church of Christ in Kentucky

Two days after the U.S. presidential election, children ride bikes past a field of American flags at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City.

“While I do respect each American’s right to protest, to speak freely and to vote or not vote, we must get back to the mission of souls for Christ, even in ever-changing circumstances.

“Our traditions and cultural norms have changed but not our mission. Baptism is still required. Teaching, hearing, unwavering faith are still required. Teachers, elders, ministers, deacons and ministry work dedicated to a local congregation are still the pattern of church leadership.”

— Andrea Lorick, member of the Inner City Church of Christ in Baltimore

“We need to be able to speak the truth without being unnecessarily offensive. Our social media posts do not need to completely avoid the controversies of the day, but we must not be characterized by misinformation and insults.

“We need to challenge the stereotypes of our society. A Christian in the Democratic Party should be able to participate in a local March for Life. A Christian in the Republican Party should be able to participate in a local march for racial justice. A pro-life Christian should be known for caring for people in poverty. A Christian committed to fighting against injustice should be known for living and promoting sexual morality.

“When we break the stereotypes, we have a chance of bringing healing to our society.”

— Terry Laudett, member of the Contact Church of Christ in Tulsa, Okla.

“We are not going to solve the political divide, and that is not really our job. We can hold firmly to our biblical convictions and yet treat those who disagree with respect, not with compromise. There are moral issues — including abortion, homosexuality, worshiping God, etc. — about which there is no compromise of principle. We must treat people with kindness, the way we want to be treated.

“Issues like the economy, for instance, are important in the political realm but really make no difference from the Christian perspective. Paul makes it clear that our speech should be seasoned with salt so that we can know how to answer others.

“I believe that Christians have the right to have opinions in the political realm, but they are still to act like Christians in every realm.”

— Dean Kelly, minister for the Highland Home Church of Christ in Alabama

“In Acts 16, Paul had Timothy circumcised so that their message would reach the Jews they were preaching to.

“As Christians, we should be able to lay any earthly point of pride down for the sake of the Gospel.

“If a BLM shirt or a Biden-Harris sign inhibits my witness, I shall cast it down. If a Confederate flag or a MAGA hat inhibits my witness, I shall lay it down.

“Notice that the Jews discriminating on the basis of circumcision were wrong in the New Testament. But to win their souls, Paul had Timothy undergo a very painful process.

“I think The Christian Chronicle should ask, ‘How much do you love your brother?’”

— Keith Mattix, member of the Jack’s Creek Church of Christ in Henderson, Tenn.

“We need to remember that we should be the example of love, not the example of hate and division that we’ve shown recently. Our King isn’t of this world, so why are we letting this world divide us?”

— Diane Clay, member of the West Side Church of Christ in Kalamazoo, Mich.
Three months after they were baptized, Evan and Crystal Todachine endured terrible suffering. Their 18-month-old son, Chase, contracted bacterial meningitis and died within a week. “This just doesn’t make any sense,” Evan Todachine thought at the time. But rather than give up on their newfound faith and return to the traditional practices of their people, the Navajo, “we had to make a stand,” he said. “We continued to hold on to the promises found in God’s word, continued to read the promises. God provided a lot of resources for us.”

Now the Todachines — who worship with the Salt River Church of Christ in Mesa, Ariz., where Evan serves as assistant minister — want to share their resources with American Indian communities that are suffering their own terrible losses from COVID-19. They also want to share their faith. “We have the peace, we have comfort, having gone through a tragedy like this,” Todachine said. “I want people to know this peace and this hope.”

“I can’t bring my son back; that’s out of my control,” he said. “But what can I control?”

“Even pre-COVID, these things had already created this dim blanket over the reservation,” Todachine said. “Now, they’re just overwhelmed with this darkness. Folks are restricted to this darkness. Folks are restricted to their homes. Fear ... has really overtaken the people, and, unfortunately, it has lied over into their spiritual welfare.” For many, “there is no light at the end of this tunnel.”

**RELIEF TO RESERVATIONS**

The Salt River Church of Christ has about 75 members, most of them Native Americans — Navajo, Hopi, Apache, Paiute, San and Salt River Pima. The church was planted in 2013 to serve American Indians who leave the reservations to find jobs in the Phoenix metro. Many of those who are baptized on the reservations have a hard time fitting in with the city’s congregations and some fall away, said minister Josh Austin. He and his wife, Divine, founded the church to serve those believers “and anybody and everybody that God puts in our path,” he said.

The church’s members have been impacted by the virus — especially those with family on the reservations. The congregation has marshaled its resources to help securing the shelves of Sam’s Club and other retailers to find canned goods, bags of flour, Ramen noodles, hand soap, bleach and scarce items like paper towels and Clorox wipes.

In the early days of the pandemic, as some Navajos began to hoard these items, “sometimes we had to rub elbows with the folks who were hoarding just more than you do,” Todachine said. Church members load the items onto flatbeds and make trips to the American Indian reservations. In addition to the supplies, the Christians distribute invitations to join the congregation online for worship. Even in communities without ample electricity, many people have access to cellular data.

During the summer months, members of the Gran smoother Church of Christ in Columbia, Tenn., assisted in the relief efforts. Kelley Loveless, a science teacher at Columbia Academy, a Christian school, made the trip with her husband, Jeff, and their two daughters. They helped distribute aid at the meeting places of Churches of Christ in the communities of Many Farms and Kayenta in the Navajo Nation and at the White Mountain Apache reservation.

Jeff Loveless helped teach Bible classes via the Zoom teleconferencing program and baptized a woman. “We were basically two strangers, with our daughters, from the other side of the country,” he said. The Salt River church welcomed them to the reservation.

“I was just very eye-opening to see what was happening on the reservations,” she added. “Basic supplies that we don’t have access to out of my control, he said. “But what can I control?”

**RELIEF TO RESERVATIONS**

“A sign on the Apache reservation for visits, Church members have secured permission to deliver relief.” Todachine said.

“Even pre-COVID, these things had already created this dim blanket over the reservation,” Todachine said. “Now, they’re just overwhelmed with this darkness. Folks are restricted to their homes. Fear ... has really overtaken the people, and, unfortunately, it has lied over into their spiritual welfare.” For many, “there is no light at the end of this tunnel.”

“A sign on the Apache reservation for visits, Church members have secured permission to deliver relief.” Todachine said.

“At the Fort Apache Reservation in Arizona, church members prepare to distribute relief supplies for the reservations.” Todachine said.

“A sign on the Apache reservation for visits, Church members have secured permission to deliver relief.” Todachine said.

“A sign on the Apache reservation for visits, Church members have secured permission to deliver relief.” Todachine said.
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MINISTRY JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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SECH has an immediate opening for a Staff Counselor/Therapist. The therapist’s general function is to oversee the daily operation of Southeastern Counseling Center as well as to grow our existing client base. This may include: budgeting, maintaining of files and licenses, training, obtaining contracts and counseling, and helping with on-call of our residential program. This position further involves providing direct mental health services, including but not limited to: conducting assessments, individual/group/family therapy and crisis interventions to clients. Minimum and additional requirements: SC licensure as a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW), or Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) preferred.

Contact Robert Kimberly, Executive Director
(864) 439-0259 or rkimberly@sech.org, PO Box 339, Duncan, SC 29334

Full-time Minister Search

We are seeking a full-time minister to work with the congregation and elders. General Requirements: Bachelor’s degree in theology, graduate of a Bible school, training work, or equivalent preaching experience. Responsibilities: Preaching and other ministerial work in support of the church’s mission. To apply, mail resume to:

South Fulton Street Church of Christ
Attention: Elders
1035 S Fulton Street
Denver, CO 80247-1945
or email: sfcc88@comcast.net

Full-Time Associate Minister

The West Broward Church of Christ in Plantation, Florida (Fort Lauderdale), is seeking an associate minister. The ideal candidate is a family man with 10 years of ministry experience and an education in Bible, effective at public speaking (fill-in for pulpit minister, capable of assuming that position when necessary), along with all family being personable and outgoing. Please send a resume, link to recent video (or a DVD), references and philosophy of ministry and doctrine to:

West Broward Church of Christ,
Attn: Elders, 12550 West Broward Blvd.
Plantation, Florida 33325

Evangelist Needed - Kingman, Ariz.

The Desert Church of Christ is looking for an evangelistic minister who preaches, teaches, and follows truth from God’s Word. We are a congregation of 60 - 70 members, without an eldership, with a desire to grow. The successful candidate will be a “jack of all trades.” Please send resume and salary requirements to:

Desert Church of Christ
Attn: Search Committee
PO Box 3673, Kingman, AZ 86402
bj67cv@frontiernet.net
(928) 279-2226 (please leave message)

Full-Time Youth Minister

The Holly Hill Church of Christ is looking for a full-time Youth Minister. The church, located in Holly Hill, Fla. (east coast of central Florida, near Daytona Beach), has 200+ members with an established youth group of about 20 teens. Starting date is flexible. See our website for more info about our congregation. Applicants should send resume to Bill Nettleton at:

Holly Hill Church of Christ
1725 Ridgewood Ave., Holly Hill, FL 32117
bill@hollyhillchurch.com
hollyhillchurchofchrist.com

For additional information visit our website:
napleschurchofchrist.com
Apply as soon as possible to:
naplescoc@gmail.com
Naples Church of Christ
12760 Livingston Road, Naples, Florida 34105
A stressful, challenging ‘new normal’

STUDENTS AND STAFF say they’re glad to be at Freed-Hardeman University – even with masks and no hugs.

HENDERSON, Tenn.

When students returned to the Freed-Hardeman University campus in August, the Christian school’s administrators knew balancing safety with “normal” student life would be a challenge.

“We’re not an online university, and we do not want to be one,” said Dave Clouse, FHU’s vice president of community engagement. “There are a lot of places where you can do online education, but the value of Freed-Hardeman University is being together on campus, being part of a community and having that experience.”

The faculty and staff at FHU — like leaders at other universities associated with Churches of Christ — were committed to delivering an outstanding in-person education during the COVID-19 pandemic, no matter the challenge.

The West Tennessee school’s goal was to find the right balance in allowing students back on campus while doing what the university could to avoid an outbreak.

“We knew we were going to have to be very effective with quarantine and isolation. We didn’t come into the school year thinking there wouldn’t be a case on campus,” FHU President David Shannon said. “We came into it saying we have to be ready to properly and carefully manage the virus.”

“Students who tested positive were instructed to isolate in specific dormitories for 10 days. Those who had only been exposed were instructed to quarantine for 14 days, in hopes of reducing any further spread.

“It’s not easy having all your freedom whisked away from you for even just a few days,” said Madeline Carter, a sophomore whose home congregation is the Green Hills Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn.

To-go lunch in hand, Brooke Mefford walks alone on the campus of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn.

Shannon said he listened carefully to the governor of Tennessee as well as the state Health Department and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. FHU also asked students, parents, faculty and staff for their input.

In September, there was a dramatic spike in COVID-19 cases on campus. There were 100 positive student cases, and an additional 259 students were quarantined.

“It caused a lot of stress and loneliness for most people,” said Abigail McCain, a sophomore whose home congregation is the Bella Vista Church of Christ in Bentonville, Ark.

The outbreak was mostly contained to students. Only a handful of faculty and staff members tested positive for the virus.

For students, quarantine proved challenging, both physically and mentally.

“The fear of missing out became a real concern for students,” said Jud Davis, an associate professor of art.

“As I Zoomed with my students, it seemed that the virus was just a nuisance and the least of their worries,” Davis added. “Their biggest worry was missing out on activities with their friends. They wanted to be on campus enjoying the experience that FHU provides.”

Navigating classes during this confusing time also has been stressful.

“It is a lot to adjust to,” said Hannah Young, a junior from Queens, N.Y., where she attends the Long Island Church of Christ. “But when you are under an administration like the one at Freed-Hardeman that has done the absolute most to provide a healthy atmosphere, your fears dissipate, and you end up thoroughly enjoying your semester with people you love and cherish.”

“Cases on campus dropped quickly after the spike, said LeAnn Davis, associate vice president of academics. As cases dropped, she became a proponent of letting students resume many of their club interactions.

“Students come to this institution not only for the in-person classes but also for their friendships and social lives,” LeAnn Davis said. “Just cutting off the socialization activities is so unhealthy. I was glad (that) when our cases subsided we were able to relax some of the policies initiated during COVID-19.”

See NEW NORMAL, Page 22
### Full-time or Part-time Minister Search - Forsyth, Missouri

The Forsyth Church of Christ is seeking a minister who feels his ministry is preaching, teaching and equipping others to serve with heartfelt enthusiasm. We are a congregation of 40+ members who seek to be like Jesus by loving and serving each other and our community. Our spiritual family has many of the most loving and giving saints in the Lord’s church, and we are seeking a man of God to preach, teach, and work beside us.

The applicant must be solidly grounded and schooled in the scriptures, show passion and enthusiasm for the Lord’s work, have at least five years of pulpit experience within the Churches of Christ, and have evidence of a successful ministry. If you would like to be considered for this ministry, please submit your resume, current video media of two sermons (a link is acceptable) and a concise one-page statement that characterizes your current ministry efforts, style, and goals. Please include a current photo and three contactable references. Pay is negotiable.

To be considered for this position, email info to Brent: bzlake@mediacombb.net or mail to:
Church of Christ, 137 Spring St, Forsyth, MO 65653

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### Associate Minister for Family Spiritual Life - N.C.

The Hendersonville Church of Christ is seeking a full-time Associate Minister for Family Spiritual Life to help us in our goal of encouraging faith development and spiritual growth in our young families and families with children/teens. We have several young families and would like to attract more. We are a church with an average attendance of 125 members just south of the city of Asheville. A successful candidate will possess a bachelor’s degree, although commensurate experience would also be considered. Please visit our website for job description: hvlcoc.org. Please email resume and references to: belcher0804@att.net

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### Full-time Minister Position

The Northern Frontier Mission Field of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is in search of a full-time minister. The Escanaba congregation of 50 is looking for someone to work with all ages. Preaching, teaching, community involvement, and television/internet ministry. We have produced LET THE BIBLE SPEAK TV program for 44 years. Interested parties should send resume and video lessons to:

- David Grant
- DGR296@gmail.com
- PO Box 751, Escanaba, MI 49829

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### FULL-TIME MINISTER – HOWELL, MICH.

The Church of Christ is searching for a minister passionate in his work, in his studies of God’s word for his life, in his love for bringing souls to Christ, and in his preaching and teaching of God’s saving word for a dying world. We are a congregation with 50+ members where over half are 60 and above. We are looking for a person to help us bring in a more youthful population. We have two elders and two deacons to assist with the needs of our body. Housing is provided. Please submit a resume, a sermon, and salary/benefits needed to:

belcher0804@att.net

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### Full-time Youth and Family Minister - Malibu, California

The University Church of Christ seeks a full-time Youth and Family Life Minister to begin in Spring 2021. This individual is an active member of the Church of Christ, who will coordinate Biblical curriculum and facilitate relationships that shepherd youth and families toward a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ. Responsibilities will include planning and leading Sunday morning Bible study and midweek youth group meetings, semi-annual retreats, service projects and other activities. She or he will work closely with the children’s minister and parent advisory committee. The right candidate possesses strong communication and planning skills, knowledge of adolescent development, and biblically-sound teaching.

Those interested in applying should review the job description at: www.uccmalibu.com and send the following documents to the email below: (1) a resume, (2) references, (3) a statement of faith, and (4) a vision for youth and family life ministry.

Contact: church@pepperdine.edu
Attn: Youth and Family Life Minister Search

Applications and supportive materials must be received by December 31, 2020.

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### Silbano Garcia II Available To Help Church Grow

Evangelist with over 1,500 baptisms desires to work with and help grow a sound congregation.

www.church-of-Christ.org/introduction

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### Gospel Preacher-Haltom City, Texas

The elders of the Church of Christ at Birdville are seeking a full or part-time sound gospel preacher. We have three elders, two deacons and 70 attending members. The right candidate should possess biblically-sound teaching.

All interested persons need to submit a resume (with references) and video of a recent sermon(s):

Birdville Church of Christ
3208 Carson St, Haltom City, TX 76117
(817)838-9031
secretary@birdville.org

Scheduling interviews now.

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### Full-Time Pulpit Minister - Paragould, Arkansas

7th & Mueller is a Christ-centered, Bible-teaching church looking for a Pulpit Minister who will partner with the elders in guiding the church. The Pulpit Minister will work with the elders, deacons, and other ministry teams while serving as a spiritual leader, biblical educator, and mentor of members. Active ministries are Youth and Children’s, Compassion Outreach, Celebrate Recovery, City Youth Camp, and Foreign Missions.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**
- A man who is called and set apart by God to gospel ministry, biblically grounded and evangelical in theology, and is committed to living and serving in a manner consistent with the standards set forth in scripture. A leader of people who has a genuine interest in people and relationships both in and out of the church.
- A strong teacher who engages people to think about and grow in their faith as disciples of Jesus.
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- A strong teacher who engages people to think about and grow in their faith as disciples of Jesus.
- Self-motivated while being a team player. Able to handle conflict in a biblical manner and maintain confidentiality. Able to preach during services and teach various classes. Can do hospital visitations, funerals, weddings, and baptisms. Actively involved in the local community to connect and share Christ.

- 7th & Mueller Church of Christ, 1000 S 7th Street Paragould, AR 72450

Submit resume to: 7thministersearch@gmail.com

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### NEW NORMAL: Lives are measured ‘by how we respond’

FROM PAGE 21

the spike to allow for more of that.”

While campus officials are trying to maintain some levels of normalcy, the changes are hard to ignore.

“Life on campus is much quieter. The flow of students has been one-directional due to the regulations of people having to enter on certain doors,” said Nathalie Brumback, director of retention. “Large groups of students are smaller ... but most of all there are no hugs, and I miss that.”

While professors are grateful to have students on campus this semester, they are looking forward to the day when they can interact with students without masks.

“I think the faculty are going to be glad when this COVID-19 issue is behind us and more manageable,” LeAnn Davis said. “The students can use facial expressions, and I think they are going to be more comfortable when talking in class without masks.”

FHU administrators say the response to the virus and plans for the future are in line with the school’s mission to provide a godly environment for students.

“Our life is always going to be measured by how we respond to things, not by what is happening to us,” Shannon said. “This virus is no exception to that. The question I ask myself (is), ‘When all of this has subsided ... where am I going to be spiritually?’”

NATALIE CORBELLI is a sophomore majoring in photography and digital media writing at Freed-Hardeman. She is from Jamestown, N.Y., where she attends the Jamestown Church of Christ.
HARDING: Christian universities face challenges recruiting students

FROM PAGE 3

has made a powerful impact with his leadership, with an emphasis on community and commitment to living the Harding mission.

“Recent economic and higher education trends have created an extremely challenging business environment that has impacted the institution, leading the board to make a change,” Walker added, suggesting that Burks “will bring his experience and proven business acumen back to the university as a guiding hand through these unprecedented times.”

POSITIONS CUT, BRANCH CLOSED

Burks previously served as president for 26 years, beginning in 1987. Before that, he worked as dean of Harding’s College of Business for 10 years.

In Burks’ quarter-century as president, Harding reported year after year of record enrollments, eclipsing 7,000 students in 2011. In recent years, enrollment has declined, including a 5.2 percent dip this fall blamed largely on the COVID-19 pandemic.

This past spring, longer-term enrollment trends as well as the pandemic were cited as Harding cut 10 faculty/administrator positions and closed its North Little Rock campus.

In a statement concerning his retirement, McLarty said, “I am deeply grateful to the Harding University board of trustees for giving me the opportunity to serve as Harding’s president for the past seven-and-one-half years. The university has had a profound impact for good on everyone in my family, and I owe it a debt of gratitude I will never be able to repay.

“I am a preacher at heart, and I look forward to using my new freedom to teach, preach, encourage and write,” he added. “I have been so blessed to have this time at Harding, and I am excited to find out what God may yet have in store for my wife, Ann, and me.”

Before becoming president, McLarty served as Harding’s vice president for spiritual life from 2005 to 2013. Prior to that, he devoted nearly a quarter-century to full-time ministry. He spent 14 years as the preacher for the College Church of Christ in Searcy.

His tenure at Harding’s helm has featured an active social media presence, a personal touch that has made him popular with many students.

He guided the university community through the grief process after a beloved alumnus, Botham Shem Jean, was shot to death in his Dallas apartment by an off-duty police officer on Sept. 6, 2018.

“Bruce McLarty is a long-time servant of the Lord, the church and Christian higher education, and I honor him for his service,” said Trace Hebert, a higher education researcher at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn.

“Having said that, the environmental challenges that Harding University and most other universities face cannot be overstated.

“Even the most seasoned educational leaders,” Hebert added, “are challenged by the evolving circumstances which for C of C-affiliated institutions include a global pandemic, declining numbers of college-going students in the overall market, the significantly declining pool of students in the Church of Christ college-going population, challenged relationships and declining ‘brand-loyalty’ among members of the church and alumni, changes in the economy and shifting perspectives among constituencies about the value of Christian higher education.”

ANOTHER NEW LOW

Across the U.S., the number of high school graduates who identify with Churches of Christ and choose to attend one of 14 universities associated with the fellowship — including Harding — has fallen considerably.

The total estimated number of U.S. adherents has dropped to 1,425,836, down 14 percent from 1,656,717 in 2003, according to a national directory published by 21st Century Christian in Nashville, Tenn.

Burks likely can help with Harding’s enrollment and budgetary concerns, Hebert suggested, but “expectations should be tempered.”

The higher education environment has changed dramatically from past decades, the Lipscomb professor said, “and the models of Christian higher education that worked over the past century will not be the same adaptive and innovative models that will be necessary to succeed in the decades to come.”

Students from Churches of Christ have remained Harding’s primary target demographic — with 70 percent or more of its freshman class coming from within the fellowship — even as some other Christian universities have begun casting a wider net for students.

Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., another Christian university that has focused primarily on the Church of Christ demographic, reported a record enrollment this fall. Freed-Hardeman’s record headcount of 2,188 marked a 3 percent increase over last fall’s 2,117. The on-campus number rose to 1,727, up 5 percent from 1,648.

Walker, Harding’s board chairman, said: “Even though Harding primarily serves students who identify with the Church of Christ, students who hold different convictions are always welcome. Harding is committed to maintain her role as a leader in Christian higher education.”

Said Burks, in response to a question about Harding’s niche: “Let me again express my commitment to Harding’s mission of integrating faith, learning and living. I strongly believe our world, as divided as it is, very much needs what we are offering — a transformative, distinctly Christian higher education experience. We invite students from all walks of life to join us in pursuit of this dream.”
‘Wonderful Story of Love’

TEXAS HUSBAND AND WIFE, both 96, prepare to celebrate 75th wedding anniversary.

BY CHERYL MANN BACON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

He served as a deacon, led singing and oversaw the benevolence ministry for the Faith Village Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas.

She taught Bible classes, oversaw funeral meals and baked a mean chocolate pie. Lots and lots of chocolate pies.

Together, they knocked doors and were faithful partners in the church visitation ministry.

Gordon and Irene Wallace will celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary on the day after Christmas. Because of the pandemic, they don’t expect a party this year, but Irene says that’s OK. Their anniversary has always been a quiet day after having the whole family together on Christmas.

“It all goes together,” she said.

The Wallaces were charter members of the Faith Village congregation when it was founded in 1950.

“If you ever went there, you know them,” said Lynn Keller, church secretary, who has known the couple for more than 40 years. “If there’s something going on at church, Irene is there and Gordon right beside her. They just really worked well together.”

The Wallaces’ story began in a high school study hall in Sweetwater, Okla.

A friend of Irene’s was sitting next to a cute boy and asked him how old he was. When she learned the boy was younger than she, she insisted on trading seats so he could sit next to her younger friend, Irene. The friend later became Irene’s sister-in-law when she married one of Irene’s brothers, and the cute boy became Irene’s husband.

Irene and her eight siblings were raised on a farm near Erick, Okla., and later moved into town. “I was third from the bottom,” Irene said.

Irene and Gordon were both baptized at age 15 in a stock tank near Sweetwater.

After graduating high school, he joined the Navy and left for the war in the Pacific, where he served aboard a ship laying and retrieving mines out of Pearl Harbor. She moved to Weatherford, Okla., to attend college. But before he left, they became engaged.

When World War II ended, he came home and was granted a 30-day leave. He headed to Oklahoma, where the two married Dec. 26, 1945, then returned to San Diego for about five months before he was eligible for discharge.

Then it was back to Oklahoma, where Gordon began a 39-year career with Halliburton Oil Well Cementing Co., and Irene took a job with Douglas Aircraft Co. When Gordon was transferred to Casper, Wyo., they headed north with their first child, Larry. Daughter Karen Spiller prefers to think of her mother as elegant rather than feisty, describing her as a beautiful woman.

“I was teasing.”

Irene: “I say I hold my own.”

To the new Faith Village church.

Father Karen Spiller, nicknamed KaKa by her mom, said, “Church was just part of our week. We went to Bible class, went out to eat with different people — always went to somebody’s house on Sunday night. On Saturday night, they had many 42 (a domino game) parties. The church was not only for worship — they were their friends.”

Together, they conducted many home Bible studies and converted many to the Gospel, Spiller said. The couple was still knocking doors with the visitation ministry until the pandemic hit.

“They never sat down. They’re active,” their daughter explained. “When it came time to do a meal, mother would do a roast and two or three chocolate pies.”

Oh, those pies.

How would you describe Irene?

Gordon: “Feisty. And I may be in trouble, but she’s a little on the hyper side.”

Laughter.

Irene: “No, I am not.”

Gordon: “But then she’s got a good, giving side, too. She’s always doing for the family and everybody else.”

Quiet.

Gordon: “I’m teasing.”

Irene: “I say I hold my own.”

Laughter.

For several years, they served and worshiped with the 23rd and Grace Church of Christ, a Wichita Falls congregation where Gordon was a deacon. Then they bought a house closer to the new Faith Village church.

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Oh, those pies.
JOIN THE FAMILY IN CELEBRATING: Send cards for Gordon and Irene Wallace to the Faith Village Church of Christ, 4100 McNiel Ave., Wichita Falls, TX 76308.

“She’s got a heart as big as gold, but she’s feisty as she can be. She’s a little bitty thing. She’s 96 years old, and reminds me of the Energizer bunny — nothing seems to stop her or slow her down. She’s got a big heart. She does things for people. She makes pies for people at church — she’s famous for her pies.” Really.

How would you describe Gordon?
Irene: “Oh, I’d never get through with that. He’s gentle, sweet, wonderful, a good husband, the best.”
Gordon: “She’ll take that all back in an hour.”
Laughter.
Irene: “I will not. He’s just wonderful.”

Everyone agrees Gordon is the quiet one.

Keller, their longtime friend and church secretary, described Gordon as very quiet. “But if he has something to say, he says it. He’s never disrespectful — a gentleman all the way.”

Spiller also talked about his wonderful sense of humor, saying, “He’s a real positive man.” And, she said, a real neatnik, in his physical appearance and in the meticulous way he kept his yard, continuing to mow and trim the bushes himself until neuropathy made that too difficult a year or so ago.

“He’s a gentle, humble man,” she said.

And he sang.

“He always led singing,” his daughter said. “I do not remember when he did not lead. He has a beautiful voice and sang at funerals and weddings. When they’d go to Uncle Charlie’s, they’d sit out on the porch with hymn books and everybody sing. We sang in the car. He sang while shaving.”

His son calls him the Rock of Gibraltar. “He’s been the most constant influence in my life,” Larry said. “He never waivers, just steady as a rock. He’s always been even tempered. He’s a good man, a good man.”

Both of his children describe him as handsome and boast that at almost 97 he doesn’t have a wrinkle. Karen even provided a close-up to prove it.

“They’re wonderful parents,” Larry added. “I couldn’t ask for better parents. I’m so blessed.”

When Irene and Gordon reflect for a moment on Gordon’s years as a song leader, he tries to recall the name of his favorite song to lead. Irene remembers, “Wonderful Story of Love.” Yes, he agrees, that’s it. He loved so many songs, but that one was easy to lead.

Irene: “He was a very good song leader.”
Gordon: “That’s not quite true. That’s an overstatement.”
Irene: “Everybody bragged on you.”
Gordon: “Don’t flower this up. We’re just plain, simple people. Sometimes I think we had a dull life, but we’ve been blessed.”
Irene: “Huh! We had a wonderful life!”
Laughter.

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Milestones

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Anniversary


Memorials

Nancy Chapman
1923-2020

Nancy Ruth Mullaney Chapman of Dallas, Texas, went Home on July 12, 2020 at the age of 97. She was predeceased by her firstborn son, Adair Pinckney Chapman III (Buz) on July 12, 1952, and by Adair Pinckney Chapman, Jr., her devoted husband of 72 years, who passed from this life on July 12, 2013. Nancy is survived by one daughter, Nancy Jan Chapman-Green and one son, Larry Lynn Chapman; two granddaughters, Lauren Noland and Kristen Stewart and their mother Sharon Schwartz Chapman; and four great-grandchildren.

Nancy met Adair in the Patti Cobb Cafeteria at Harding College. They married in 1941, and when he felt led to become a minister, she grew to fully embrace her role and responsibilities as a minister’s wife. They shared an urgent call and strong love for those who did not know the Lord. Many years of local Church of Christ ministry were spent in Kansas City, Kan., Athens, Ga., and Port Arthur and Dallas, Texas. Through the First Century Way of the Cross Ministry, a charitable organization created by Adair and Nancy, they were instrumental in planting and strengthening churches across the South and Midwest. Each congregation continues in the Lord’s work today.

When the ministry established a nursing home in Fort Worth, Texas, to assist elderly ministers and others in need, Nancy became a Certified Dietary Manager to lead that department. Their final work was as strong advocates to address the inner-city Dallas needs of both aging members and the homeless population who attend Main Street Church of Christ (former Peak and Eastside), where Adair served as an elder.

Nancy attended Bible Study Fellowship both as a student and a leader for 23 years. She loved to learn and conscientiously studied her Bible daily. She enjoyed many happy days meeting friends for lunch and playing Duplicate Bridge. Awarded a Lifetime Membership by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc., Nancy lived by her personal motto, “Keep making new friends.” God blessed her family with her continued good mind and radiant smile to the very end.

Nancy left an enormous legacy of love, wisdom, faith, and prayer “without ceasing.” Her greatest love was for the Lord and her very blessed family. Her very last joyful words to them were, “I love you. I am leaving. I want to go Home. Goodbye! Goodbye! Goodbye! Goodbye!”

Frank Graves
1930-2020

Frank Winn Graves, 90, arrived in Wichita, Kan., on Jan. 21, 1930, and departed from Pueblo, Colo., Oct. 21, 2020. He graduated from Central High School in 1948 and went to Abilene Christian College from 1948-1950 where he met his future bride, Anna Louise (Pat). He continued his education and went to A&M (now CSU) in 1953 where he received a bachelor’s degree in Animal Husbandry. Frank also joined the Army in 1953 at the tail end of the Korean War and served three years as a clerk typist in Military Specialty Operations. During this time, he married his sweet Pat in 1954.

Additionally he received his teaching degree and taught mathematics for two years at Keating Jr. High and moved to Pitts Jr. High for one year where he started teaching history. He then moved to East High for six years and continued to teach history. He took a one-year sabbatical to get his master’s degree from New Mexico Highlands University. He laughed about being a slow learner and returned to Central High School where he first started and taught there until he retired in January 1990.

Frank was unselfishly worked hard throughout the years to take care of all of his family’s needs. He spent many summers roofing to earn additional money and also served as treasurer for the Pueblo Education Association until 2000.

Even more important to Frank was to lead his family spiritually. He had an unending love for the Lord and enjoyed singing and leading the congregation in joyful praise to the Lord. He also taught many classes concerning the history of Christianity and how it relates to current modern day living. His family will always be grateful for his loving example of being a strong Christian husband, father, and friend.

Frank was preceded in death by his wife, Anna Louise (Pat) Graves and his parents, Birdie Juanita and Frank Funk Graves. Frank was also preceded in death by his three older sisters, Virginia, Betty, and Connie. Frank is survived by his children Patti (Jim) Altixm, Stephen (Carolyn) Graves, and Gayle (Jon) Junker. He
was blessed with 11 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, seven nephews and one niece.

A memorial service was held at the Southwest Church of Christ on Saturday, October 24, 2020.

Max Lynn Dobson
1939-2020

Max Lynn Dobson claimed victory over this life on Oct. 28, 2020. He walked with God on this earth and is now comforted by his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Max was born on July 27, 1939, in Oklahoma City to Vernon and Geraldine. He was reared by his Uncle Don and Aunt Louise Edwards. Max largely grew up in the rural community of Waukomis, Okla. Farm life aided in his development of a strong work ethic. He attended Pioneer School, where he was an All-State basketball player. Max was awarded a scholarship to play basketball for Henry Iba at Oklahoma State University. He later transferred to Phillips University to play both basketball and baseball. Max earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Phillips University, a Master of Education from Northwestern Oklahoma State University and a Doctorate of Education from Oklahoma State University. Max married Ramona Vanderwork on June 1, 1958. They were blessed with three children and had a close and loving relationship until her death over 42 years later. Following Ramona’s death, Max married Marilyn Kelly Forrester. Max and Marilyn enjoyed a beautiful marriage for the past 18 years.

In 1966, Max and Ramona moved to Edmond, Okla., where Max had accepted an offer to teach and coach at Oklahoma Christian University. He gave tirelessly to Oklahoma Christian, his students, teams and community. Max was rewarded for his more than 47 years of service to OC. He received the University’s Gaylord Chair of Distinguished Teaching. His professional organization, the Oklahoma Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, granted him their annual Honor Award for his contributions to Physical Education. Max also received the Oklahoma Christian Faculty Leadership Award. During his coaching tenure, his baseball teams were consistently successful, including a third-place finish in the nation. Max founded the women’s basketball program at Oklahoma Christian, and his basketball teams were also highly successful, including many titles and championships. He had the pleasure of coaching numerous All-Americans in both baseball and basketball. Max was inducted into the Oklahoma Christian University Athletic Hall of Fame in 1995 and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Baseball Hall of Fame in 1996. He received the OKC Thunder Community Hero Award in 2012 for his work with Edmond’s special needs students. Max was inducted into Oklahoma Christian’s Master Teacher Hall of Fame in 2014. Max’s most treasured reward is the immense and positive impact he had on those he touched. For 54 years, Max served Memorial Road Church of Christ. He worked diligently in the church as a teacher, deacon and elder. Max was an exemplary husband, father, grandfather, brother, teacher, coach, mentor, friend and man of God. Max’s family cherishes their time spent with him. He was a bright light in each of their lives, showering them with love, care and much humor. Max’s ultimate goal and greatest mission was to make it to heaven, which he has now achieved.

Max was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Ramona; his sister, Lana Pray; his father, Vernon; his mother, Geraldine; his Uncle Don and Aunt Louise. Max is survived by his dedicated and loving wife, Marilyn; his three children, Tami Robbins, Todd Dobson and Teri Mueller and their spouses Bill Robbins, Dee Dobson and Scott Mueller; step-daughter Anna Jane Perrey and her husband Chris; seven granddaughters; three grandsons; one great-granddaughter and one great-grandson. He is also survived by his brother, Gary Dobson, and sister, Judy Lamb.

With Appreciation

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received during these COVID times in honor of the Christian Chronicle staff, Emma & Herminio Delgado, Joe Ogg, Bennett Ross, Lynn & Holly Shinsky, Fanchion Walker, and Roy Williams; and in memory of David Arnold, James Campbell, Gene Catterton, Deloris Cox, Doris Darling, Carmelita Ferguson, Lillie B. Fletcher, Adath Hudson, Harold & Madge Neiswander, Lloyd & Margaret Ross, and Joyce Williams.

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Contact: tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org
Amid COVID-19, missionaries face incredible stress, but we can help

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”
— 1 Peter 5:7, New International Version

Missionaries are generally hearty and resilient. They are flexible, adaptable and driven by a sacred mission. But as this pandemic grinds on, so do their levels of pressure and tension.

Many missionaries live in areas where medical care is inadequate. Hospitals are overcrowded, lack supplies and may not have access to ventilators. Borders and airports are closed or have limited access.

Their small apartments are not only their homes but also their schools, their church offices and, often, their quarantine quarters. Many countries have had such deep restrictions that children have not been allowed outdoors. Adults can only leave their homes two to three times a week for basic necessities.

Missionaries who have been creative and tenacious in finding ways to care for their church members have inspired me. They quickly moved their worship services, children’s classes and Bible studies online. They designed ways to safely baptize people and provide food when unemployment rates spiraled. For members without internet access, they printed Bible lessons and delivered them weekly.

I know a missionary couple who get up at 3 every morning so they can get on their knees and ask God to guide them.

But they are getting tired. These missionaries are driven by a divine calling, but the pace has been exhausting. They carry tremendous burdens of care for their church family. Some have lost their financial support; some fear they will.

Many feel distant and disconnected from their sending churches.

There are two things we can do:

• **First**, send a missionary a message of encouragement. They really don’t need to hear about problems, church challenges or national unrest. But they do need to know they are loved and not forgotten.

• **Second**, as they live and work on the front lines, they need people who will battle in prayer for them. I wonder what would happen if we all fell to our knees and asked God to help them.

**BECKY HOLTON** is director of missionary care for Great Cities Missions. She and her husband, Kerry, live in Loveland, Colo.

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**EDITORIAL**

Seeking hope amid the stress

**S**tress. So much stress. Can you feel it? No doubt many of us can.

Turning the pages of The Christian Chronicle, the stressed-out ministers, stressed-out voters and stressed-out students pursuing a pandemic-era education — with required masks and no hugs — are impossible to miss.

Stressed-out missionaries? See the column to the left.

As we approach Christmas and move through the final days of 2020, we long to turn the metaphorical page on this despairing year.

A new year can infuse us with hope and remind us that while the things of this world do, indeed, pass away (1 Corinthians 7:31), God’s promises are eternal.

Yet the coming year is poised to be stressful because of the baggage it carries. If we acknowledge this and prayerfully address it now, we can do much to reframe our own thinking and help transform the outcome.

How might we best prepare now to cope later?

• **Resist the urge** to self-medicate or find crutches — whatever we might use, do or consume in excess to escape reality. Whether dangerous by nature or only harmful if used incorrectly, the outcome will be the same.

• **Our health is vital.** We must make sure to include our spiritual, emotional and mental well-being along with the physical as we care for ourselves. We also must be alert for symptoms that may indicate professional help is required and seek that out.

• **Stay connected.** Regardless of our individual situations, most of us are finding ourselves at home more often. While this is a necessary precaution during this unprecedented health crisis, it can lead to loneliness and a feeling of separation from our church family and God, in particular, if not addressed.

• **Look for opportunities** to reach out even as you stay in, and get creative about spending time with God in your home worship setting as well as in private prayer and Bible reading time.

We wish you a holiday season and a new year ahead filled with God’s love, mercy and care.
Ben Wiles with Alex Trebek on the set of “Jeopardy!” when Wiles was a contestant.

For aspiring ‘Knowers of All Things,’ Trebek was an exemplar

BY BEN WILES | FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Here is a verse in one of Peter’s letters that says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you ...” (1 Peter 3:15).

I was the kid who took that verse way out of context, way too literally. I wanted to be a Knower of Things, no matter how random the Thing.

Indiana and Illinois are the only states that border each other in real life and on the Monopoly board.

In pi, you have to go 26 digits past the decimal point before you hit a zero. As long as there was the chance that someone might ask me, I wanted to be able to tell them.

In sixth grade, my middle school announced that the vice principal was going to be on a game show, “Jeopardy!” We should all watch. I was intoxicated by the format — 60 rapid-fire questions about literally anything. Now I knew not only that I could be asked anything, but also who would do the asking: Alex Trebek.

My turn came on Nov. 1, 2004. It went ... OK, or about as well as could be expected when the defending champion has already won 63 games in a row. Of the 61 responses I was asked for, I knew 40 and was able to get in on the buzzer for 10 of them, only twice getting Alex’s gentle correction of my pronunciations.

(Apparently neither “Nabokov” nor “kibbutz” are accented on the first syllable. If people are going to learn English by watching Jeopardy, Alex was going to make sure they learned it properly.)

Alex Trebek was a Knower of Things. For Alex, and for the players he welcomed into his studio five nights a week for 36-plus years, the curiosity that leads to knowledge was a character trait to be celebrated.

At a time when American culture was (or maybe still is) not always welcoming to Knowers of Things, Alex Trebek was our biggest cheerleader.

There are always more Things to Know. And at the risk of taking another verse from Peter wildly out of context, when people of good character seek to Know, that curiosity eventually leads to Love.

BEN WILES is chaplain for Ascension Saint Thomas regional hospitals in rural Tennessee. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., and a Master of Divinity from Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn.

He and his family worship with the Pleasant Cove Church of Christ in McMinnville, Tenn.
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Word Find: The joy of shoe boxes
By Betty Hollister | For The Christian Chronicle

Find the following words about shoe box gifts. They can be forward, backward, up, down and diagonal. The unused 46 letters form a sentence. See page 34.

- ADORATION
- ADORNS
- ANGELIC
- ANSWERS
- ANTICIPATION
- BEILOVERS
- CELEBRATION
- COMPASSIONATE
- CRAYONS
- DEDICATION
- DIVIDEND
- DONATING
- DUTIES
- EDUCATION
- ENDOURANCE
- ENTHUSIASM
- EVENT
- EVERLASTING
- EXCEPTIONAL
- GRACIOUS
- HELPING
- HOPEFUL
- LIGHTS
- LISTEN
- LOVINGLY
- MOTIVATE
- NATIVITY
- NECKLACE
- NEIGHBOR
- NEUTRAL
- NOVELTIES
- NURTURE
- PACKAGES
- PARENTS
- PARTICIPATION
- PRAYERS
- PSALMS
- REASON
- RECREATION
- RIGHTEOUS
- SACRED
- SALVATION
- SAMARITAN'S PURSE
- SENSITIVE
- SHIPPING
- TRAINING
- TRUSTING
- TRUTHFUL
- UNUSUAL
- VERSES

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—Willie Gley, Director, Bear Valley Bible Institute, Togo West Africa

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Where Learning Is a Team Sport.

The Christian Chronicle Crossword

By Henry Huffard | missions minister, Hillsboro Church of Christ, Nashville, Tenn.

ACROSS

1. Happy tails.
4. Brother jailed while others leave Egypt to get Benjamin.
9. Song “Far and ___.”
12. Treated swollen ankle.
13. “___, you have nothing to draw with” (John 4:11).
16. Note that follows fa.
17. Young David needed S or M armor, but Saul’s was ___.
18. Relieved God provided a sacrifice.
20. Greek prefix for “out” for words such as “church” (called out).
21. Direction the wise men came from.
23. Large deer cousin.
25. “Weeping and gnashing of ___” (Matthew 8:12).
27. “___ once they left their nets and followed him” (Matthew 4:20).
28. What the rich man cared more about than his soul (two words).
32. Lion in the stars.
33. This cola with a Moon Pie was a working man’s meal in the 1950s.
34. Be quiet!
35. Word with the same meaning.
37. Grecian container.
38. “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is ___ for service in the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).
39. Age to age the same.
41. Note that follows mi.
42. Usually suitable for teens and older.
43. Where Joseph’s silver cup was found — Benjamin’s ___.
44. Don’t eat this bird (Deuteronomy 14).
47. A wall-building prophet.
50. “Vey ___ mir!” Yiddish for “Woe is me!”
51. Danger in Daniel’s den.
53. Hannah’s condition before Samuel.
54. Renowned for her smile.
56. Relation to Christ where blessings are (Ephesians 1).
57. The word of God “judges the thoughts and attitudes of the ___” (Hebrews 4:12).
59. The note that follows sol.
61. Partner to 48 down.

52. Neighbor state to VT.
55. “To ___ is better than sacrifice” (1 Samuel 15:22).
58. Dispensation, such as Patriarchal.
60. “Son of” in Aramaic.
62. Farm dept.
63. “... in all these things we ___ more than conquerors ...” (Romans 8:37).
64. Restaurant’s need.
65. “He who has ears, let him ___”
66. Appointed in churches at the end of Paul’s first missionary journey.
67. Let your “yes” be this.

DOWN

1. Virgins of Matthew 25 (three words).
2. ___ of many colors (two words).
3. Some toothpastes, hair products.
5. Surrounded by water.
6. The note that follows re.
7. A face on Page 34 (two words).
8. ATLA abstracts for Matthew through Revelation.
10. First stop at hospital after a serious accident.
11. Main characters in parable about the afterlife (two words).
15. Rooftop bather.
19. Many use instead of AD.
20. Between Zeta and Theta (also when you think you’ll land).
22. “When the day of Pentecost came, ___ were all in one place” (Acts 2:1).
26. A Hebrew name for God.
29. Between Greece and Sicily (two words).
30. Where Wile E. Coyote gets supplies.
32. Sharing the gospel while helping non-native speakers improve their English.
37. U.S. president No. 18 (initials).
40. Acronym for mothers who do not work outside the home.
45. Final outcome of Revelation’s battle for those who believe.
46. “___ I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20 KJV).
48. Female parent.
49. He shall not eat.
50. Silly, foolish, idiotic.
52. Neighbor state to VT.

BIBLE BOWLING

Questions from Revelation, the theme of Leadership Training for Christ 2021.

1. Revelation includes John’s letters to how many churches?
2. Name them.
3. Where were these churches located?

CROSSWORD SOLUTION and Bible Bowling answers on Page 34.
Some of the best from a very bad 2020

On New Year’s Day 2020, I looked ahead with anticipation. Trips were set, plans were made and adventure awaited.

On March 2, I posted on Facebook, “I just experienced the best week of my year so far (trust me, it’ll only get better)!”

Seventeen days later, I posted pictures of empty shelves in my local grocery store.

The world had shut down — and none of us saw it coming. While I lived in sweatpants, neglected basic self care and struggled to work from home with four kids and a husband hovering around, others flourished during quarantine: writing books, recording podcasts and creating content to help people like me keep going.

And for that, I am thankful.

I’ve gathered here a few favorites of 2020, according to me and my friends. I hope you find something to encourage, redirect your path or strengthen your faith as you head into a new year.

Because who knows what’s coming next.

BOOKS


The start of the pandemic triggered a post-traumatic stress disorder flare-up for my friend, McKenzie Ross. So she picked up this book.

“My mind was running away with negative thoughts,” Ross said. “These words breathed life into my situation and reminded me that God is bigger than my thoughts and the pandemic.”

This timely book explores:

surrendering anxiety and trusting God, negative thought patterns that keep you stuck, the science behind why thoughts can change your life and your power to confront and overcome fears.

Allen also hosts a popular podcast, “Made for This,” where she discusses topics like, “The Emotional Impact of 2020,” “How to Hope for What You Can’t See” and “Practical Help for Life in a Pandemic.”


“If ever there were a story of sickness, hope and God’s deep love in the midst of heartache, these two know how to tell it,” my cousin Jennifer Schmidt wrote on Facebook as she challenged friends and family to read this book with her.

In “Hope Heals,” Jay and Katherine Wolf share the story of Katherine surviving a near-fatal brain stem stroke at age 26. In “Suffer Strong,” the couple shares what they’ve since learned — that suffering is not the end but rather the beginning of a new story.

The Wolfs share universal lessons that help us recognize we aren’t cursed by our story. The couple disrupts the myth that joy can only be found in a pain-free life. We can thrive — even in lives we never imagined living.

“I know that I need to read what they have to say,” Schmidt wrote. “Maybe you need to hear their message as well?”

The couple also has a five-star show called “Suffer Strong Podcast” where they take a deeper dive “with unexpected humor and powerful vulnerability,” according to the Apple Podcasts description.


Before the “Midnight Mom Devotional” book, there was just a Facebook group by the same name.

“I have been following the ‘Midnight Mom Devotional’ Facebook page for a couple of years now,” said Lindsey Hix, who found the page while up many times a night nursing her youngest daughter. “The posts were always relatable, always timely and always that nudge from God that I needed to hear, right when I needed to hear it.”

As the Facebook page grew to more than 940,000 followers, the site creators decided to turn their devotionals into a book. This small, fat book has a page for each day of the year — find today’s date and read a meditation or a prayer for mommas in all circumstances.

A friend gifted this book to Hix when her husband, an ICU nurse, moved out of their house in the early days of the pandemic to protect their family.

“This book gave me the opportunity to pray for others at a time when I selfishly cried out to God for myself and my own situation,” said Hix, who has since gifted this book to many of her mom friends.


Goff, the New York Times bestselling author of “Love Does” and “Everybody, Always” is on a mission to help people recapture the version of their lives they dreamed about before fear started calling the shots. Can’t you just hear his hearty laugh as he challenges you to dream big?

Unlike his other books, which were compilations of encouraging stories, this book is a version of the Dream Big workshop he’s offered the last few years, Sherry Bingham said. Goff’s latest book encourages the reader to identify their dreams, define them and come up with a specific plan to achieve them.

“I really like Bob’s style — his encouragement that it’s never too late to begin and also that it’s never too late to stop doing something so that we can choose something better,” said Bingham, who kicked off my church’s first book club with this title. “As a Christian, I love that he encourages us not to just get through life, but live it with purpose.”

“Dream Big” offers the actionable steps you need to get a jump-start on your goals.


Western churches face a difficult future, marked by numerical decline and evident signs of shrinking cultural influence. “Discipleship in Community” asks the church to go back to basics, according to the book’s Amazon page. What does it mean to follow Jesus? What does a life of discipleship look like?

Trusted scholars — Powell, Hicks and McKinzie — invite you to consider how good theology...
can lead to better, more intentional discipleship.

“This book takes a brief look at our history to elevate the conversation of where our movement is going. Or more importantly, where we should be going,” said my husband, minister Travis Akins. “The historical journey taken in these chapters are not to simply reflect on better times but rather serve as a launching pad for the future and a foundation to which Churches of Christ can restore for the sake of Christ’s church.”

In the words of the authors, “The hard intellectual work remains.” This book attempts to tackle that work.

STREAMING TELEVISION


“The Chosen” is the first multi-season television series based on the life of Jesus, as seen through the eyes of those who met him. I was a little apprehensive, assuming it would be another stale Jesus movie. Boy, was I wrong. My husband and I downloaded "everyone did what was right in their own eyes." In contrast, Ruth portrays a community where people demonstrate unselfishness, kindness and civility. Ruth is the story of an immigrant who quietly, through sacrificial giving and faithfulness, transforms a family and a nation. It is a story of suffering transformed by love.

Ruth demonstrates how the Israelites were supposed to live and how that quality of living can infiltrate and change a culture. Judges and Ruth were meant to be read together. Judges is a mirror and a warning; Ruth is a beautiful picture and an inspiration.

CHRISTIAN LIFE/SOCIAL ISSUES


From the author: “The Judge and the Left-Footed Leaders: Judges and Ruth for Postmodern Times” explores the world and the messages of the Old Testament books of Judges and Ruth.

The book of Judges describes a nation strikingly similar to the United States at the beginning of the 21st century. The nation of Israel at the time was racked by violence, greed, sexual abuse, civil war, political turmoil and racial tension. The underlying causes of such unrest were that “people had forgotten God,” and “everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” In contrast, Ruth portrays a community where people demonstrate unselfishness, kindness and civility. Ruth is the story of an immigrant who quietly, through sacrificial giving and faithfulness, transforms a family and a nation. It is a story of suffering transformed by love.

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CHRISTIAN NONFICTION


From the author: Give “God’s Desires for You” to someone who is looking for God. It will show him what God wants him to do so he can live in heaven for eternity. Give it to a new Christian to teach him and to increase his faith. Give it to someone who needs encouragement and hope straight from God’s word.

This is the perfect class book for Christians, no matter how long they have been children of God. It will guide you in finding peace and assurance in God’s richest blessings.

LOGIC IN CHRISTIANITY


From the author: This book adheres to Paul’s admonition in Colossians 4:6 to: “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt…” Scriptural references and applicable history are given for each topic covered, which include: how to discuss Christianity with a skeptic; what, when, and why baptism; acquiring grace; sinner’s prayer; Islam; the rapture; and many others.

Four rules are followed throughout the book: 1) Jesus has all authority, 2) key words must be defined as originally intended, 3) Conclusions must allow inspired writers to be in harmony, and 4) Conclusions must follow biblical evidence.

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Fair-well to Deon: Chronicle’s board chair never forgot his native Africa

‘M y boss is from Africa, y’know.’
I’m going to miss saying that, especially to our African brothers and sisters. They’ve often reacted with disbelief — and big smiles.

Deon Fair is stepping down from The Christian Chronicle’s board of trustees after 17 years of service — the past 11 of them as chairman.

Working with my predecessor, Lynn McMillon, Deon helped guide this newspaper into financial equilibrium and a mutually beneficial relationship with our owner, Oklahoma Christian University.

But he’s done a lot of cool stuff, too. Deon grew up in what has to be the coolest-sounding place on the planet — KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. His dad, Ian, was building a house there in 1958 when a neighbor offered him ice cream and iced tea.

The neighbor also asked Ian what church he attended. Ian was indignant. He stewed for a day or so and then asked the neighbor where he went to church.

That, of course, was all the opening that the neighbor, a missionary by the name of Tex Williams, needed.

Bible studies and baptisms followed. Ian became Tex’s partner and evangelized among the Zulu people, even in the tumultuous days of apartheid.

Once, Deon ended up in police custody because he was in a Black neighborhood.

The cops thought he and his friends were political conspirators.

They were, in fact, studying about something much more powerful than politics.

In 1974, the Fairs immigrated to Texas, and Ian taught at Abilene Christian University. Deon worked for Accenture, a consulting, technology services and outsourcing company. He’s retired now, but Deon is one of those guys who has stayed busier in retirement than many of us are in our full-time jobs. He’s an avid cyclist and a devoted grandfather. He and his wife, Susan, are a vital part of CARE (Christians At Richardson East), a Church of Christ in the Dallas suburbs.

He’s never forgotten Africa, and his passion nowadays is Heritage Christian College, a higher learning institution in Ghana that seeks to transform the continent by teaching people of faith to be entrepreneurs and contributors. We visited the campus in 2009, while it was under construction, and again last year, when I got to watch Deon shake hands with the college’s first graduates as they got their diplomas. More big smiles.

We also visited a mission team in neighboring Burkina Faso on that 2009 trip. (We landed in the cool-sounding capital, Ouagadougou, and ate slimy okra stew there — not as cool.)

While we were in the town of Dano, a young boy, maybe 9, died suddenly while playing outside. It was some kind of medical condition. They had the funeral the same day he died.

I was shaken up, but Deon kind of talked me through it. He knows the realities of life in Africa — and the urgent need there for the Good News. He hears the call to empower people.

Thank you, Deon, for your dedication to real news that honors God.

DECEMBER 2020

Erik Tryggestad is president and CEO of The Christian Chronicle. Contact erik@christianchronicle.org, and follow him on Twitter @eriktryggestad.
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