



## Tornado victims mourned

**IN AN ALABAMA town, the dead include three family members who attended a Church of Christ.**

BY CHERYL MANN BACON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A tiny town in Alabama. A high school football star. A gospel singer gone blind.

Three open caskets at a borrowed Baptist church.

If the death and destruction weren't so raw and real, the story of the Ohatchee tornado would read like a movie script.

Ohatchee, Ala., where the Tallaseehatchee and Ohatchee creeks reach the Coosa River, sits about 60 miles northeast of Birmingham and 16 miles northwest of Anniston, near Lake Henry Neely. About 95 percent of the town's 1,100 residents are White.

As a young man, Willie Gene Harris, 73, was a gospel singer who performed in a sextet for Black Churches of Christ in Los Angeles back in the late 1970s and early 80s. For the past 15 years, he was a member of the 16th and Noble Street Church of Christ in Anniston, where he was known as Bill. His wife, Barbara, 67, also considered 16th and Noble her home church, and their daughter Ebonique, 38, a social worker, visited often.

Bill, Barbara and Ebonique died March 25 when an EF2 twister's  
See **TORNADO**, Page 6



Bill Harris



E. Harris



PHOTO PROVIDED BY NIA JOHNSON

## Holy leadership training, Batman!

Three-year-old Joshua Johnson of the Deerfoot Church of Christ in Birmingham, Ala., leads a song at the Lads to Leaders convention in Little Rock, Ark. His red blazer was a gift from Lads to Leaders founder Jack Zorn, his late wife, Frances, and their daughter, Rhonda Zorn Fernandez, lifelong friends of Joshua's parents. COVID-19 canceled the 2020 Lads to Leaders and Leadership Training for Christ conventions, which draw thousands of participants from Churches of Christ. This year some churches hosted mini-conventions at their buildings. A few of the larger conventions resumed with reduced attendance, social distancing and the occasional superhero mask.

## 'It's been quite a trip'

**AFTER 75 YEARS** of marriage, Florida husband and wife still devoted to each other – and their faith.

BY DEANA NALL | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Sixteen-year-old Fern Kerbo didn't know she was being watched. But as she walked across the Centralvue High School gym in Oklahoma one afternoon in 1945, she caught the eye of fellow student Dale Doyle, who was perched in the bleachers with a friend.

"Who is that?" Dale asked.

"That's Fern, and she's my cousin," the friend replied.

Now that he had her name, Doyle had the confidence to approach Fern at her locker and ask her to go with him to a show. They don't remember the show now.

"It was probably Bing Crosby or Bob Hope," Dale said.

From then on, Fern said, "We dated."

They still are. The couple, members of the Sunset Church of Christ in Miami, will celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary on April 27.

Both 93 now, they still go everywhere together, including making the rounds at the church as the building and grounds caretakers. They have worked in this role since long before lead minister Jim Holway arrived at the church 15 years ago. The congregation rents its building to a school during the week, and the Doyles take their job very seriously.

"They live on the property and have always been very conscientious about their



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DOYLE FAMILY

**Dale and Fern Doyle, both 93, shown as a young couple and in a more recent photo.**

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## 'Life-saving miracle' gave Josh Oakley five extra years

The news hit me like a fastball to the gut. "With overwhelming sadness, we need to share that the Lord called

Josh home today," Krista Prindle, one of Josh Oakley's five older sisters, wrote on Facebook. "Thank you for your continued prayers

### Inside Story



Bobby Ross Jr.

for our family during this unimaginably difficult time."

Josh was just 23 — the same age as my son Keaton.

In 2016, I was blessed to tell the inspiring story of how Josh, then an 18-year-old Kansas high school baseball player, came to receive a life-saving heart transplant.

"It's an absolute gift from God to still be able to play this game," Josh, a member of the Northside Church of Christ in Wichita, said after a successful pitching outing on a blue-sky April afternoon.

Before the transplant, Josh's parents, Darrell and DeVona Oakley, had feared they might lose him, I reported in a front-page *Christian Chronicle* feature.

"I'd already accepted that God was going to take him," his father told me, "and I was preparing myself to have to feel what he felt by giving up his son."

Steve Tandy, a longtime minister for the Northside church, recalled: "It looked like Josh wasn't going to make it. ... Things were crashing pretty fast."

But as Josh lay unconscious

See **OAKLEY**, Page 4

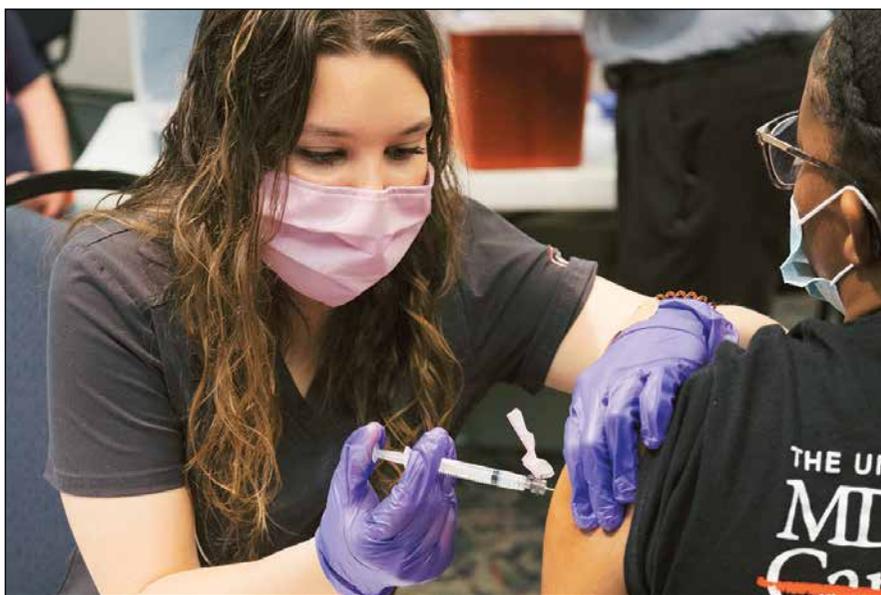


PHOTO PROVIDED BY OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Brittany Bedford, a senior nursing student at Oklahoma Christian University, administers a COVID-19 vaccine to a member of the campus community.

## When being the hands and feet of Jesus means giving shots in arms

**CHURCHES AND CHRISTIAN** universities partner with community agencies to offer COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

BY **CHELLIE ISON** | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Day after day, a long line of cars stretches through the parking lot of the College Hills Church of Christ in Lebanon, Tenn., west of Nashville.

The crowds aren't coming for a special gospel meeting or Vacation Bible School.

Rather, they're showing up to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

"As a church, our DNA is to serve and bless our community. We are a 'hospital' for the sick, so it seemed only natural to open our doors to the medical profession as they seek to bless our community," said Kevin Owen, lead minister for the College

Hills church. He alluded to Jesus' statement in Mark 2:17 that *"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."*



Owen

The Middle Tennessee congregation was approached by Wilson County officials back in December. Since January, more than 22,000 people have made their way through the drive-thru vaccine site, which is housed under one of the church awnings.

Numerous other congregations across the U.S. also have opened their buildings — allowing state and

See **SHOTS**, Page 11

## Hunger and hopelessness in Myanmar

**CHURCH MEMBERS** 'put their lives on the line for the gospel,' minister says, in a country beset by protests and death.

BY **ERIK TRYGGESTAD** | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

"Our country is now just a battlefield." That's the message from a church leader in Myanmar after months of violent protests that have resulted in an estimated 600 deaths in the Southeast Asian nation.

"The situation is so bad that we have no hope," the church leader, whose name is being withheld for security reasons, said in a recent message to fellow Christians in the U.S. "It is unknown at this time what will happen in the future. Myanmar — and we — need your prayer constantly."

Such messages are rare, said Mark Hooper, since the country's armed forces seized control of Myanmar, also known as Burma, on Feb. 1 following an election that military leaders claimed was beset by widespread fraud. As protests have intensified, internet access has dwindled.

"Besides the physical fear of harm, they are facing hunger and helplessness," said Hooper, a longtime missionary to Asia who works for Texas-based Missions Resource Network.

See **HOPELESS**, Page 16



PHOTO PROVIDED BY PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

A young woman is baptized in Myanmar in 2015 — one of thousands in recent years, ministers say.



KRISTA PRINDLE

Months after his heart transplant, Josh Oakley, then 18, pitches in a spring 2016 game for the Eisenhower High School Tigers in Goddard, Kan., west of Wichita.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAMILY

Josh Oakley, an avid fan of Oklahoma Sooners football, celebrates a win by his favorite team. At the family's suggestion, many wore sports attire to his funeral.

# OAKLEY: Josh made the most of his second chance at life

## FROM PAGE 3

at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., in October 2015, the perfect heart became available.

"Ernesto Alonso Aguilar's family made a selfless decision under unimaginable circumstances and provided a life-saving miracle," Josh's obituary noted.

The faithful young man spent the next five years making a difference.

"He wanted to be better because he understood his second chance," said Matt Carden, youth and family minister for the Eastwood Church of Christ in Hutchinson, Kan. "Not many people get a second chance in that manner, and he didn't want to blow it."

After high school, Josh attended Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., on a baseball scholarship.

During college, he remained active in church activities. He served as a counselor at Kansas' Silver Maple Camp, which is associated with Churches of Christ. He worked as a summer intern for Carden at the Eastwood church.

"For me, it's really easy to see why God gave him those extra years," said Carden, who was 18 when he first met Josh, then a 9-year-old camper at Silver Maple.

"He definitely had a heart for the outcast," the youth minister said. "He was really good at making sure the



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAMILY

**A temporary headstone, baseball and flowers at Josh Oakley's gravesite.**

loners, the outsiders, the awkward people knew that Jesus loved them."

Josh "was always trying to be better for Jesus because of Jesus' grace.

It was never an 'earn my way into heaven' thing but always, 'I'm inspired to be better because of Jesus.'"

After Josh finished his undergraduate studies last spring, he entered Tabor's master's in business administration program while working as a second-grade teacher's aide and a baseball coach at Life Prep Academy, a Christian school in Wichita.

He loved children. Absolutely loved them.

"He's got 15 nieces and nephews, and at family get-togethers, he'd be out in the yard playing football with them or playing baseball with

them," his mother told me.

At Life Prep, he played "rock, paper, scissors" with a special-needs boy in his class and made him feel important, DeVona recalled.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a heart rejection episode this past November forced Josh into an Oklahoma City intensive care unit. He spent Thanksgiving in the hospital, eating a home-cooked meal provided by the Britton Road Church of Christ.

But as 2021 rolled around, he was doing better.

"Josh was cautious, but he refused to live scared or in isolation," DeVona said. "He went back to work in January, continued spending time with our family and his friends and kept on coaching. He lived life every day and loved big!"

In late February, Josh woke up one Monday feeling sick. He tested positive for COVID-19 that Thursday.

On Friday — Feb. 26 — his condition worsened. DeVona called 911 at 12:45 p.m. Firefighters quickly moved him to the floor and performed CPR for 45 minutes. He was pronounced dead at 2:03 p.m.

His sudden passing at home, surrounded by family, came as a definite shock.

"You kind of prepared yourself more for it five years ago," DeVona said, fighting back tears.

"He was living life," she added.

"He was doing so many things, feeling so good. There'd be bumps in the road as far as (heart) rejection and things like that. But for him to code and go into cardiac arrest, you know — no, I don't know if you're ever ready and expect that."

More than 400 people showed up for Josh's socially distanced memorial service at the Northside church.

Many mourners wore Sooners jerseys or T-shirts or attire for their favorite teams, as suggested by the family. Besides God, his family and friends, Silver Maple Camp, baseball and fun, Josh also loved University of Oklahoma football.

"It was just really cool," DeVona said of the size of the crowd that filled the church auditorium and an overflow area. "We had no idea how far-reaching his influence was on people."

Josh never threw a perfect game, but oh, what a difference he made on his way to the ultimate Hall of Fame.

"One of the things that he said was that he didn't have to worry about it anymore," DeVona said of her son's reaction to his positive COVID-19 test. "And then he said, 'If it's my time to go, I'm ready. Either way, I'm good.'"

**BOBBY ROSS JR.** is editor-in-chief of *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact [bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org](mailto:bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org). Follow him on Twitter at [@bobbyross](https://twitter.com/@bobbyross).

# 'Bo's Law' proposed in response to church member's slaying

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

**M**inisters for Churches of Christ joined Texas lawmakers and the family of Botham Jean at the Texas State Capitol in Austin recently to promote the Botham Jean Act.

House Bill 929, also known as "Bo's Law," was authored by state Rep. Carl Sherman Sr., senior minister for the Hutchins Church of Christ, south of Dallas.

"Bo's Law is about establishing systemic accountability," Sherman said during a news conference that opened with an a cappella singing of "Amazing Grace."

"Bo's Law is about making sure Texans are safe at home," the lawmaker added.

Joining Sherman was Collin Packer, minister for the Greenville Oaks Church of Christ in Allen, Texas, who said that the proposed legislation is a bold step toward ensuring what happened to Jean doesn't happen again.

"Though Bo is no longer with us, we believe this bill will save many lives," Packer said.

Jean, 26, a member of the Dallas West Church of Christ and graduate of Harding University in Searcy, Ark., was shot inside his Dallas apartment on Sept. 6, 2018, by off-duty Dallas police officer Amber Guyger, who lived in the same apartment building. Guyger said she mistakenly

entered Jean's apartment, thinking it was hers, and mistook Jean for a burglar.

On Oct. 1, 2019, Guyger was convicted of murder. She is serving a 10-year sentence.

"Bo's Law" would strengthen and clarify the "Castle Doctrine," also known as a stand-

your-ground law that allows someone to use deadly force against an intruder on their own property. The doctrine became murky in Guyger's case, legal analysts have said, because the police officer thought she was entering her own apartment.

The change would make sure the protection only applies to those who are in their own residence when confronting an intruder. The proposed law also eliminates "mistake of fact" as a legal defense and requires body cameras to remain activated for the entirety of any investigation in which an officer is participating.

Jean's mother, Allison, spoke about the sense of surprise she felt during Guyger's trial as she learned about the complex nature of the case.

"I thought it was an easy case because he had every right to be in the sanctuary of his home watching football and eating ice cream," Allison Jean said, adding that her family fully supports the proposed legislation.

Dallas County District Attorney John Creuzot said that Botham Jean's death "highlighted an unexpected gap in our 'Castle Doctrine.' He deserved to be safe, to feel safe, in his own apartment. This law clarifies what everyone assumed already existed."



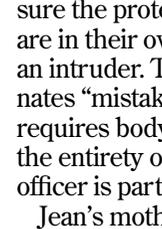
Botham Jean



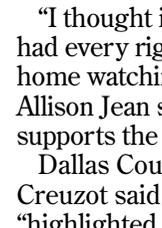
Sherman



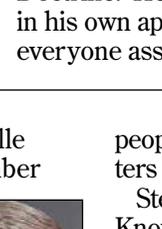
Packer



Creuzot



Steele



Willson

a deacon of the South Knoxville Church of Christ, fellow member J.L. Steele said.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation is investigating the shooting in which 17-year-old Anthony J. Thompson Jr. was killed.

Willson "was shot in the femur and is now resting comfortably after surgery," Steele said. "He and his wife, Heather, are great

people. He is the father of two daughters and two sons."

Steele, who is active with a South Knoxville church ministry that helps the homeless and less fortunate, praised the 20-year Knoxville police veteran as a man of strong character and faith.

"Among other things, he has been involved in missions work, having made two trips to Honduras through Latin American Missions," said Steele, who indicated that Willson's wife gave him permission to share that information.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JONATHAN W. MORRISON

Allison Jean and Jonathan W. Morrison, minister for the Cedar Crest Church of Christ in Dallas, celebrate the renaming of a street in honor of Jean's son, Botham. The city of Dallas renamed the four-mile stretch of road, which runs in front of the South Side Flats, the apartment complex where Jean lived, and Dallas Police Department headquarters.

## GEORGIA

**ROME** — "Part of pure religion is taking care of those that can't always take care of themselves," notes Matt Wallin, referring to James 1:27.

To help with that, the Oak Hill Church of Christ has created a checklist that it mails to widows and widowers once a month.

The form asks if the church can help with needs such as yard work, cleaning and plumbing or if the person could use assistance with groceries or utility bills, Wallin said. Another part of the

form lets the widow or widower request phone calls or visits.

"These are just some of the ways we want to help," the form says. "What else can we do for you? (Write on back)."

## TENNESSEE

**KNOXVILLE** — An East Tennessee policeman wounded April 12 when four officers confronted an armed student at a Knoxville high school is a Church of Christ member.

The injured school resource officer, Adam Willson, serves as

# TORNADO: Faith response stirs gratitude and questions

FROM PAGE 1

140-mph winds hit their mobile home, leaving cinder blocks and debris but little else. Ebonique's 13-year-old daughter, Ontarriah, was injured and hospitalized.

Bill Harris was born in Big Sandy, Texas, on Feb. 23, 1948. According to his obituary, he met Barbara when they were neighbors in Compton, Calif. The couple married and had four children.

"He was a great singer," nephew L.J. Williams said of his uncle. "That was his passion."

Williams, who serves as minister for the East Dallas Church of Christ in Texas, gave the eulogy at the funeral of his uncle, aunt and cousin.

Marvin Jones, minister for the 16th and Noble St. congregation, a body of about 120 members, said Barbara and Ebonique frequently brought Bill to church because he had been blind for the past several years as a result of a hereditary condition. Jones described Harris as "one of those guys who, if given an opportunity, he'd tell the truth. He'd tell you the gospel and advocate for the gospel."

## RELIEF EFFORTS BREAK BARRIERS

Domonique Thomas, the Harris' grandson and Ebonique's son, was a football star at Ohatchee High School. He was named first-team all-state and a finalist for Class 2A back of the year by the Alabama Sports Writers Association. After graduating in 2020, he headed to Union College in Kentucky on a football scholarship.

Union delayed its 2020 football season until spring because of the coronavirus pandemic. Then a March 26 game was canceled because of tornadoes. Thomas missed the

April 3 game to attend the Harris family funeral. But he told WBRC-TV he would return to play in honor of his mother and grandparents.

"I remember my last high school



PHOTO BY JOE SONGER, AL.COM

Loved ones walk up the drive of the home where three Harris family members died.

game, my grandfather was walking up the ramp, and he said, 'Let's go, Boogie' — that's what he always called me," Thomas said, describing how his family members filled a whole section of the Ohatchee stadium, bottom to top.

In Union's final game of the season, against Kentucky Christian, Thomas made good on his promise to honor his mother and grandparents. He caught six passes for 106 yards, ran 56 yards and had two rushing touchdowns.

"He was a community champion," Williams said, describing the esteem in which the town held Domonique as one reason for the outpouring of support the family experienced. Many in the community were already encouraging Domonique to stay in school and finish college.

A GoFundMe page created to raise funds for Domonique and

Ontarriah had raised \$35,895 by mid-April, exceeding the \$25,000 goal.

"The community was overwhelming, very responsive, very helpful," Williams said. "It broke a lot of

barriers."

About a dozen Church of Christ congregations can be found in Calhoun County, but there's only one in Ohatchee. Wayne Dunaway, minister and elder of the Ohatchee Church of Christ, a predominantly White congregation of about 200, said none of its members were hurt or had any losses, "but the community was obviously devastated."

Tornados are like that, wreaking devastation in one block and leaving the next untouched.

Fellow elder Aubrey Jones knows what it's like.

"I had a tornado in 1994 hit my place, so I've felt that end of it," he said in the slow and thoughtful Alabama drawl that seemed to emerge from the empathy he felt for the storm's victims.

"I've been involved in three tornadoes and a hurricane over the years. I got some help in '94 — people reached out and touched my heart," he said quietly. "Now I've had the opportunity to help people recover."

The retired mechanic and heavy equipment operator knows a lot of people. He grew up here. His son and daughter-in-law work in the schools. He knows a lot of the bus drivers, who in turn know where families live in scattered, rural neighborhoods. As he watched the

path of the tornado, he knew.

"I noticed from where it sat down across the river. I knew people down there. I could see the path and the communities that it hit. I knew a lot of those people, went to school with some of them," he said.

When the dust settled, he went to find them, taking checks supplied through a fund supported by other Churches of Christ throughout the area and some in Tennessee, including some of the little 30- to 40-member congregations around the county. "They couldn't do much, but they did 100 percent," he said softly. "You can't get more than 100 percent."

By press time, he'd delivered checks to 46 families to cover whatever immediate needs they faced. He anticipated there'd be at least 25 or 30 more.

The first neighborhood he went to was the one where the Harris' home once stood.

"Do you know the name Domonique Harris?" he asked as he told the story. "He's a really good young man. I tell you, he's like one of my grandkids. He and my grandkids were real close in school."

A few days after the storm, he found the local hero at the home of his daughter and her five kids. "Domonique came there like on Tuesday or Wednesday. The high school coach wanted him to throw the first pitch in a rival game, so I knew where he was."

Ever the small-town star, even in grief.

## A BORROWED CHURCH, DONATED GRAVES

Alabama was still under a 25 percent capacity rule because of COVID-19, and no facility in a Church of Christ was open and large enough for the funeral.

Then the Leatherwood Baptist Church, a large, White church in Anniston, opened its facility for the service. Other local churches reached out as well. The Ebenezer Baptist Church, a Black congregation in Ohatchee, opened for the community viewing and a meal for the family.

Williams — preacher, nephew and cousin of the deceased — said he had questions from the experience.

"I don't know any other fellowship



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAMILY

Willie Gene Harris and his wife, Barbara, died in the tornado.



PHOTO BY JOE SONGER, AL.COM

A drone photo shows the area where the tornado hit the Harris family's home.

than the Churches of Christ. I'm what most would consider old school, traditional, but one thing that always struck me is that Christ said it's not the doctrine. It's the way we love one another."

Oak Bowery Baptist Church, another large, White church in Ohatchee, donated three plots in its cemetery, and in so doing, leveled a barrier from generations past.

"It was the only place we could find three graves in that area side by side," Williams said. "They were quite generous, very accommodating."

Grave markers in the cemetery bear dates from the 1850s, and some from the decades after the Civil War up to the present day. Caretaker Tony Nunnelley said the Harrises were the first African-Americans buried there.

"I can't say what happened years and years ago," he said, explaining that he thinks a few unmarked graves in the section he calls "the old cemetery" may be American Indian graves. "We don't know who's in those," he added. "But as far as I know, they're the first."

#### LEAN ON EACH OTHER

Williams has served the flock his entire life, but nothing prepared him to preach a funeral for three. Three family members. Three silver caskets adorned with flowers and marked by banners bearing the photos of his loved ones.

"I've been preaching 35 years. I have done hundreds of funerals. But I've never experienced anything like

this. It was just overwhelming."

"God is love," he told the masked mourners. "He is not an ogre, a meanie waiting to catch us and have bad things happen to us. God is love, and he has spoken. He loves Barbara, Ebonique and Bill more than we did." Still, he went on, "We're promised our time is short and full of trouble."

If ever an audience understood those words, it was this one.

When people have lost everything, they begin to take the anger and hurt out on each other, he said. "That's one thing I wanted to address: Lean on each other."

Williams experienced some of that leaning himself. Many displaced residents were staying at the Hampton Inn where he and his family were. The hotel guests visited over the free breakfast each morning.

"These folks were 70, 80 years old, mostly Caucasian people," Williams said. "They were talking with us before they even knew why I was there."

"Even though my relatives were African American people — the community was there to help clean up, handing them money and gifts of time and expressing love."

He paused, pained.

"The outpouring was tremendous — but I did not see my brethren."

He didn't meet Aubrey Jones or know about the check he gave the Harrises.

And despite 40 years in Ohatchee, minister Dunaway had never met them.

Tearing down barriers can be a bit like tornadoes, healing one block, leaving the next untouched.

"We've got to fix it," Williams said. "That's what I'll be working on."



Williams



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Shown are grandson Joshua Rees, holding great-grandson Elijah Rees; grandson Keith Doyle; great-grandson Caleb Doyle; great-granddaughter Taryn Doyle; son Larry Doyle; Dale and Fern; son Jimmy Doyle; daughter Cheryl Doyle, with great-granddaughter Luna Rees, granddaughter Carra Doyle; and grandson David Doyle.

## COUPLE: 'They are so sweet and have so much love for each other'

### FROM PAGE 1

responsibilities, which include locking up the building every night," Holway said. "They are rarely apart and truly united into one flesh."



Holway

Bob Perkins, a former longtime Sunset elder, quipped: "Fern was always the ultimate church secretary. I've forgotten how many ministers she trained." Of Dale,

Perkins said, "Having grown up on a farm, he was perfectly suited for the job of groundskeeper."

Perkins added: "We've all been so enriched by their love, friendship and counsel over all these years."

Sunset elder Jeff Hinson spoke in similarly glowing terms about the couple.

"Fern and Dale are such a beautiful example of how putting God first in your life blesses every aspect of your life," Hinson said. "They are so sweet and have so much love for each other as well as everyone in our church family. They are a wonderful example of a loving couple who are totally committed to God and to each other. As a team, they are dedicated in service to the Lord and his work. When I grow up, I want to be just like them."

### 'HONEYMOON' WAS A HIGH SCHOOL TRIP

The Doyles have lived in Florida's largest metro area for 62 years, but their story began in rural Oklahoma. Having grown up just 10 miles from each other, Fern and Dale didn't meet



Dale and Fern Doyle are pictured in their younger years and in a more recent snapshot.

until high school, when Dale began attending Fern's school because his small farming community had no school beyond eighth grade.

The autumn after their first date, Fern and Dale — both basketball players — were sitting on a bus together on the way to a game when Dale asked, "If I buy you a ring, will you wear it?" Fern said yes, so that Christmas, they got engaged. Not wanting to bother with waiting until after graduation, the couple set an April date.

"There were several couples in our class that got married before we graduated," Dale said. "We were in the country, and country customs were different from town customs."

The big day came on April 27, 1946. At the time, Oklahoma required a blood test and a waiting period of several days. But in Texas, you could get married right away. So the couple drove to Wellington,

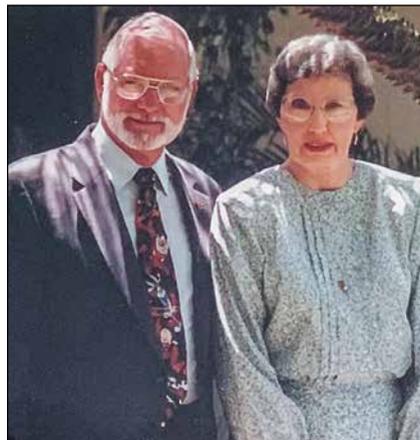


PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAMILY

Texas, to the home of a Church of Christ preacher they knew about. But no one was home. They also knew about a Baptist preacher in town, so they drove to his house. Again, no one was home.

"We ended up going to a JP," Fern said, referring to a justice of the peace.

The couple's "honeymoon" was a senior trip to Hot Springs, Ark., with the rest of their graduating class. Then they returned home to finish high school and begin their lives together. They needed jobs, and Fern's aunt and uncle asked them to help with their custom combine business.

"People didn't have their combines to harvest with, and my aunt and uncle had customers from years past," Fern said. "So they asked us to do the wheat harvest with them."

Dale drove one of the trucks while Fern helped her aunt cook for the crew.

"We spent that whole first summer harvesting wheat from Texas up to South Dakota," she said.

### TYPING A FAMOUS AUTHOR'S FIRST BOOK

The couple eventually moved to Mangum, Okla., where they started their family when daughter Cheryl was born. Dale did everything from driving a school bus to working at a brick plant to working at the county creamery.

By 1959, sons Larry and Jimmy had rounded the Doyles out to a family of five, and at the encouragement of a friend who thought Dale had worked for the creamery too long, Dale decided to attend airline school. He graduated and accepted a job in Miami as a ticket agent and passenger service representative. Fern and Doyle packed up their three children and left Oklahoma, the only home they had known.

Once in Miami, it was Fern's turn to go to school to brush up on her typing and shorthand. She and Dale were attending Central Church of Christ, and an elder approached Fern about working in the office as the church secretary. She accepted and served as the secretary at Central, and then Sunset after Central and South Miami Church of Christ merged in 1991, for almost 29 years.

One summer, the church hosted a young intern named Max Lucado, who wrote bulletin articles every week. After his internship ended, he called Fern and asked if she would type those articles into one document and send it to him. She did, and that document later became



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FAMILY

Dale and Fern Doyle's T-shirts recall their wedding 75 years ago — in 1946.

"On the Anvil," Lucado's first book. Lucado still remembers the Doyles, their work with the church and their commitment to each other.

"I'm offering resounding applause for Fern and Dale Doyle," Lucado said in a written statement. "What an accomplishment! 75 years of marriage. Fern and I served on the staff at the Central Church of Christ. I was there from 1979 to 1982. She typed some of my writings which later became my first published book. ... What a special memory, and what a special couple!"



Lucado

#### 'GOD PUT US TOGETHER'

A year after Central and South Miami merged as Sunset, Hurricane Andrew devastated south Florida in August 1992. The newly formed congregation became a center for relief efforts in the area, and Fern and Dale threw themselves into the exhausting work of helping to organize necessities for the community.

"Churches across the country sent groceries and money and volunteers," Dale said.

For a year, the fellowship hall was filled with donations and building

materials.

"We had stacks of every dimension of lumber you could ever need," he said. "The crews would load up with whatever they would need for that day."

Eventually, the community rebuilt, and Sunset ceased operations as a relief center. A few years after Andrew, Fern decided to retire from the church and considered writing a book about all 29 ministers she had worked with.

"One of the elders said, 'I will pay you \$1,000 NOT to write that book,'" Fern said.

Dale had already retired in 1988, and together they began taking care of the church building, which they still do together. The couple makes the rounds through the building to lock up with Fern on her walker as they move up and down the hallways. When asked the secret for staying married so long, Fern and Dale — who now have six grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren — think the answer is pretty simple.

"We just went into it thinking, 'This is it,'" Fern said. "There was no reason to be apart anymore. The fact that I think God put us together made a big difference.

"It's been quite a trip these 75 years," she said, "and 76 if you count the year we dated."



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tim.deem@MDCAcademy.org (352) 729-9015  
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PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAVID SHANNON

Students at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., gather as vaccines for COVID-19 are given on the Christian campus.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JON REYNOLDS

Healthcare workers, including elder's wife Lisa Camp, center, organize COVID-19 vaccine supplies at the College Hills Church of Christ in Lebanon, Tenn.

# SHOTS: For churches, vaccines bring blessings and concerns

## FROM PAGE 3

county health officials to take over their facilities for varying amounts of time to help inoculate residents.

"We had discussed it in late November, December," said David Perryman, an elder at the Southern Oaks Church of Christ in Chickasha, Okla., southwest of Oklahoma City. "We decided then if we could get access to somebody to do a clinic, we wanted to do that."

The vaccine clinic at the Southern Oaks building was conducted by the Indian Health Services, a clinic from another town about 45 minutes down the road.

Perryman said clinic officials were excited to find a location that would allow them to offer the vaccines in the central Oklahoma community.

When the day came, about 250 people had signed up. Perryman said the clinic ran smoothly, and people seemed grateful for the opportunity.

"Members are enthusiastically getting behind this," said Roger Woods, elder and minister for the Walled Lake Church of Christ in Michigan. "People are volunteering and excited to help."

The Detroit-area congregation is gearing up for a clinic at its building. Woods said the clinic scheduling happened unexpectedly. He was at a funeral and ran into an old friend, whose daughter is a pharmacist. It just so happened her company was looking for places to host vaccine clinics. After

a brief conversation and a few text messages, the Walled Lake church clinic was scheduled for late April.

## 'OUR CAMPUS WILL BE A HEALTHIER PLACE'

It's not just congregations that are serving as host sites. Colleges and universities associated with Churches of Christ are also stepping up.

Abilene Christian University in Texas, Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn., and Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City also have also worked to set up vaccine clinics.

The Oklahoma Christian clinic — a partnership with a hospital — was opened to students and employees as well as the community. In all, more than 700 people were vaccinated on campus back in mid-March.

"We have had many opportunities to both serve and receive blessings throughout the pandemic," said Jeff McCormack, OC's chief academic officer. "The partnerships we have been able to form with healthcare providers and suppliers as well as city and state officials will last for years to come. Our campus will be a healthier place and an important resource for the city."

At Freed-Hardeman, more than 300 students, faculty and staff signed up to get vaccinated on campus in coordination with the local health department.

"We would love to see a semester where we have very few students

that have to isolate or quarantine," FHU President David Shannon told WBBJ-TV. "We look forward to the social distancing and the masks being a part of our history."

ACU was wrapping up its second of two vaccination clinics at press time. The university was happy to partner with the city health department to be able to help those in their community who were wanting to be vaccinated, administrators said.

"While ACU does not have plans to require the vaccine, we are encouraging vaccination," Tamara Long, ACU's vice president for enrollment and student life, said. "In addition, faculty from our biology department are providing educational information sessions to anyone wanting to better understand the vaccine."

## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

While the congregations and university officials saw the vaccine opportunity as a way to "love our neighbors," the clinics did not come without protest.

Some Christians are opposed to the vaccine and made sure church leaders were aware of their concerns.

"There are some individuals in our congregation who aren't going to be vaccinated, and we are cognizant of that and respectful of that," Perryman said. "What we wanted to do was give everybody who wanted to have a shot an opportunity to get vaccinated. That was our goal, and

we have accomplished that."

As an elder, he said, the last year has come with a multitude of challenges. Another elder, who is a doctor, has helped guide the steps the Oklahoma congregation took. The church has been meeting in-person — with masks — for a while and has had no known cases of the virus spreading among church members.

In Michigan, Wood said, "We have members who have let us know they are not getting vaccinated. Our approach has been, 'OK. That's your decision. It's between you and your family.'"

Back in Tennessee, Jon Reynolds, worship minister for the College Hills church, said, "We, from the very beginning, have set the tone that during

this pandemic we are going to be gracious to other people."

The College Hills church looked at the opportunity to open its building, Reynolds said, as a way to be the "hands and feet of Jesus" in the community.

Owen added, "Years from now, I may not remember what series I watched on Netflix or how well my sports team did in 2020.

"I will, however, remember vividly the thousands of cars that lined up daily to get their first or second dose of the vaccine."



Reynolds



## Pulpit Minister Search

The elders of the Park Forest Church of Christ are looking for a pulpit minister with a family to come work with us. Minister responsibilities include preaching and teaching and participating in the life of our church family. We are an established and diverse congregation. The ideal candidate would be bilingual or willing to learn Spanish and able to minister to our diverse family and large concentration of Spanish speakers in the area. The ideal minister would be able to minister to our seasoned saints as well as the younger generation. You can also visit our website for a more detailed description: [www.achurchofchrist.org](http://www.achurchofchrist.org)

**Park Forest Church of Christ, Attn: the elders**

**PO Box 130, Matteson, Illinois 60443, (708) 748-3370 Fax (708) 748-0298**

## Full-time Pulpit Minister - Brenham, Texas

The Brenham Church of Christ is about a 200-member church with a modern building located in the small but growing central Texas town of Brenham, Texas. We have a great passion for community, outreach, children, youth, families, seniors, missions, and all of God's people! For more information, you are welcome to visit our website at:

[www.brenhamchurchofchrist.com](http://www.brenhamchurchofchrist.com)

and our YouTube channel, which has many of our recent videos, programs, and recorded worship services!

We are seeking a full-time pulpit minister due to the retirement of our current pulpit minister who has been with us over 12 years. We believe God will guide us through this process and lead us toward the candidate who will be the best fit to help us achieve the purposes He has in store for our future! Any interested ministers or future ministers are welcome to email us or send their resume to [brenhamchurchtx@gmail.com](mailto:brenhamchurchtx@gmail.com).

*We look forward to hearing from you!*

## Seeking Full-Time Minister - Cortez, Colorado

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## Volcano destroys church buildings in Caribbean

**MEMBERS ARE AMONG** 20,000 souls displaced by eruption on the island of St. Vincent. Christian relief ministries prepare to send aid.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

**E**xplosive eruptions rocked St. Vincent and the Grenadines recently, forcing nearly 20,000 people to flee their homes.

“Ash clouds up to heights above 30,000 feet (were) reported by pilots,” said Joel Jack, a preacher for the Kingstown Church of Christ in the Caribbean nation’s capital city. “Large deposits of ash are all over the country and as far away as Barbados.”

It was the biggest eruption of La Soufrière, an active volcano on the north side of St. Vincent island, since 1978, Jack said. The explosion destroyed the volcano’s dome and created a new crater as pyroclastic flows — fast-moving currents of hot gas and volcanic matter — razed everything in their way.

“Anything that was there, man, animal, anything ... they are gone,” Richard Robertson of the University of the West Indies’ Seismic Research Center told local station NBC Radio. “And it’s a terrible thing to say it.”

Falling ash and stone crushed the meeting place of the Sandy Bay Church of Christ. Days  
See **VOLCANO**, Page 15



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY METRO MANILA MINISTRIES

## ‘Angels are singing’ after a barrel baptism

Despite the global pandemic, “our God in heaven is smiling again. Angels are singing too,” said minister Danni de Vera. “One soul who is happy to become God’s child decided to obey our Lord Jesus in baptism to wash away her sin.” De Vera is minister for the Twinville Church of Christ in Manila, Philippines.

The Southeast Asian capital and surrounding communities are home to more than 20 million people. Space for baptisteries is scarce, said Remy Kingsley, who works with de Vera through Metro Manila Ministries, so the church uses a space- and water-saving barrel for baptisms. Compared to a baptistery, a barrel “still does the same job!” Kingsley said. “Praise God, and to him be the glory!”



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JOEL JACK

Ash covers the collapsed meeting place of the Sandy Bay Church of Christ in St. Vincent.

### 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 in 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

### 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)

### Minister Need - Ottawa, Kansas

Must be married and wife must support her husband in his ministry. Must teach from the Bible and only the Bible. We are a small and loving congregation of 45-50 that love to study God's word.

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**Church of Christ**  
c/o Richard Ecord  
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Ottawa, KS 66067

### Full-time Minister - Los Angeles

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elders@redondochurchofchrist.com

### Full-time Minister Search - Enterprise, Alabama

**Adams Street Church of Christ** is seeking a full-time minister who has an in-depth knowledge of God's Word. The candidate must minister to the needs of the congregation and join our leadership team in glorifying God. We are a congregation of 40-60 members (pre-COVID-19) with an established team of three members on our leadership team. Enterprise is a truly diverse military community, right outside of Fort Rucker, the US Army Aviation Center of Excellence. We will consider applicants who have a college degree in Biblical studies and/or prior ministry experience. He must be scripturally sound, socially engaged, and committed to expanding the borders of the kingdom. Applicants should be experienced, focused, self-directed, and have a passion for evangelism. Duties include community outreach, preaching, teaching, and other traditional ministerial roles as required. Please submit a current resume, references, and three recent multi-media sermon files or streaming links to:

jcoon1949@yahoo.com or ewdvtech58@gmail.com

**Adams Street Church of Christ, 701 W Adams St, Enterprise, AL 36330-2303**

### Minister Search - Medford, Oregon

The **West Main Church of Christ** is actively seeking a leader who does as Jesus did by talking to the people in their homes and communities. Our church family is seeking a visionary to lead the saved and the lost to the kingdom of God by guiding us and being involved with us.

Our lead minister will appreciate the rich heritage within the Churches of Christ. He will also envision a future not bound by tradition, but open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. With a firm commitment to the Bible and a desire to apply its truth to the 21st Century, our new minister will provide leadership, instruction, and be a role model for a church that is looking to glorify Christ. He will be first and foremost a man of integrity in all aspects of his life. He will be respected in his home, church, and community.

The ideal candidate will be at the forefront of designing and preparing the Sunday worship while being open to sharing the preaching duties in order to focus on being: • A Biblical Teacher • A People Person • A Relationship Builder • A Caring Disciple • An Active Collaborator

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### Lead Evangelist - Tallahassee, Florida

The **Meridian Woods Church of Christ** is seeking a full-time Lead Evangelist. Meridian Woods has two elders who serve a diverse body of around 160 members. We strive to encompass all ages and cultures in our commitment to create an atmosphere where people from all walks can serve God in genuine unity. We are striving to be an outreach-focused church working to spread the Good News in our community. The ideal candidate should be strong in the Word, fervent in prayer, and have a genuine love for the church and the lost. He should have at least 5 years preaching experience and a commitment to fostering unity within the church. Before applying, please visit our website at [www.meridianwoods.org](http://www.meridianwoods.org) to learn more about us. Interested candidates should send a resume to [ministersearch@meridianwoods.org](mailto:ministersearch@meridianwoods.org).

*"We are one people, serving one King, following one purpose."*

### Full-time Minister Position

The **Montrose Church of Christ** is seeking a full-time preacher who is passionate in sharing the gospel with the community and in maturing the church through preaching, teaching, and personal interaction. We are a family of 70 with two elders. Call for further information. Please contact:

montrosecofc@gmail.com

Wendell Turner 970-249-7154 or  
Sam McCormick 970-209-6077

Send resume to:

Montrose Church of Christ  
PO Box 612, Montrose, CO 81402

### Full-time Minister - Gallatin, TN

The **Gallatin Church of Christ** is in search of a full-time minister. The candidate must minister to the needs of the congregation and join our leadership team in glorifying God. He must possess a vision and a service to our community. We desire a minister with a heart for discipleship, local outreach and administration of church ministries. Interested candidates should send a resume to:

**Gallatin Church of Christ, Attn: Elders**  
150 East Main Street, Gallatin, TN 37066

### 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 one deacon to assist with the needs of our body. Housing is provided. Please submit a resume, a sermon, and salary/benefits needed to:

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### Minister - Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

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### Pulpit Minister Needed

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**Gregg Smith at (352) 427-6131**  
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### Part-time Evangelist

We're seeking a seasoned part-time evangelist. We are a diverse but solid congregation of 60 in Homestead, Fla. This is an excellent opportunity for someone who has another source of income and wants to work with us. Please send resume to:

**Gateway Church of Christ**  
Attn: Orlando Thompson  
1800 E Mowry Dr  
Homestead, FL 33033  
[orlandothompson@bellsouth.net](mailto:orlandothompson@bellsouth.net)

# 'The most fruitful mission field in the world'

**A GLOBAL AUDIENCE** remembers Ron Clayton, who mobilized a network of 50,000 preachers in India.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A recent funeral hosted by the Hamilton Church of Christ in northwest Alabama was viewed on Facebook more than 3,000 times and generated more than 300 comments — mostly from Christians in India.

"We all miss you, uncle Clayton," wrote Aruna Kumari of Hyderabad.

"One day for sure we will all meet." Prabhakar Chilaka of Khammam wrote, "The church has lost a great warrior of the Lord. I personally lost my spiritual father."

Ron Clayton, founder of India Missions, died March 3 in Alabama at age 76. For the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic had prevented him and his wife, Karen, from returning to India, the country where



PHOTOS PROVIDED

**India workers Ron and Karen Clayton were married for 56 years.**

they served for 42 years.

Following in the footsteps of his mentor, missionary J.C. Bailey, Clayton believed that India, a predominantly Hindu nation of 1.3 billion souls, is "the most fruitful mission field in the world," said one of his three sons, Jeff, during the service.

"This has to be an Indian work," Ron Clayton told the Church of Christ in Spring Valley in Tuscumbia, Ala., during a June 2020 presentation. In four decades of ministry, some 40,000 denominational preachers were converted through India Missions, he said. He worked with more than

50,000 Indian preachers and reported that in 2019 some 703,000 gospel meetings were conducted, and 1.2 million people were "born again."

In the past year, India Missions has collected aid for suffering believers.



**A Church of Christ in Dornala, India, hosts a "Heartfelt Condolence Meeting."**

Thus far, the pandemic has left 600-plus widows of Indian preachers in its wake, Jeff Clayton said.

Despite the hardships, Indian Christians continue to share the Gospel, said another of Ron

Clayton's sons, Kyle.

And despite the loss of his father, Kyle Clayton said, "The work in India is going to continue."

**RELATED TRIBUTE**, Page 29

## VOLCANO: Prayers and fresh water needed

FROM PAGE 13

later, the roof and an exterior wall of the Owia Church of Christ's meeting place collapsed under the weight of ash and debris.

"Brethren from four congregations are among the evacuees," Jack said at press time, as La Soufriere continued to erupt. Leaders of the Biabou Church of Christ opened their facility to 25 church members from Sandy Bay. Others went to public evacuation shelters or to the homes of family and friends.

Ash has coated much of north St. Vincent, killing crops and animals, Jack said. There is an island-wide water shortage. Schools that were set to reopen after a prolonged



Jack

lockdown for COVID-19 have become shelters, likely delaying a return to in-person learning.

Church leaders on the island gathered recently to discuss relief operations and named Maxwell Ince as coordinator, assisted by others including Elton Lewis, evangelist for the Kingstown Church of Christ.

Church members plan to use the Biabou congregation's building as a center for distributing aid.

"It is still possible to purchase a lot of what is needed on the island," Jack said, "but some things may be much less expensive in some other places."

The Caribbean Christians asked Arkansas-based Partners in Progress, which is associated with Churches of Christ, to receive relief funds from Christians in the U.S. for relief efforts. Tennessee-based Healing Hands International

also is responding to the disaster and working with the Kingstown church, said Joseph Smith, vice president of operations.

About 500 church members live in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which has a combined population of about 110,500. In addition to 12 congregations that meet on St. Vincent island, there is one Church of Christ each on the Grenadine islands of Bequia and Union.

"Thank you for your concern," Jack said, "and do continue to pray for St. Vincent and the Grenadines at this time."

**FUNDS FOR RELIEF** in St. Vincent and the Grenadines may be sent to Partners in Progress, P.O. Box 13989 Maumelle, AR 72113 or Healing Hands International, 455 McNally Drive, Nashville, TN 37211. For more information, see [www.partnersinprogress.org](http://www.partnersinprogress.org) or [hhi.org](http://hhi.org).



JOEL JACK

**The stratovolcano La Soufriere (French for "sulfurous") shoots ash thousands of feet above St. Vincent.**



SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTO BY TEERA NOISAKRAN

Myanmar protesters in the neighboring country of Thailand hold photos of Aung San Suu Kyi at a rally in front of the United Nations facility in Bangkok.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Schoolchildren in Myanmar's Irawaddy Delta show off the ponchos they received from Partners in Progress after Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

# HOPELESS: 'Nowhere in Myanmar is safe right now'

## FROM PAGE 3

Burmese Christians know that "their only hope is Christ," Hooper said, but their ever-worsening situation is nonetheless "heartbreaking."

Christians outside Myanmar feel equally helpless, said Wayne Barrier, director of missions evangelism for the Double Springs Church of Christ in northern Alabama. Commerce has slowed to a crawl, businesses have shut down, and food prices have skyrocketed. Banks and money wiring services in Burma aren't functioning either, making it impossible to send aid.

## 'THEY JUST PUT US TO SHAME'

Burmese Christians are no strangers to hardship, said Barrier, who first traveled to Myanmar in 1996 and helped establish a ministry training program there with the government's permission.

"They just put us to shame," he said of the Burmese believers, who claim Jesus as their savior in a country of 57 million souls, nearly 90 percent of whom claim Buddhism as their faith. "They praise us for going over there, but those people literally put their lives on the line for the gospel."

About a dozen students comprised the first class of the ministry training school — on the outskirts of Myanmar's largest city, Yangon. They preached, planted and established additional schools, one at

the foothills of the Himalayas and one near the country's border with India. Close to 2,000 students have participated in the ministry training program. Four years ago, Denver-based Bear Valley Bible Institute International launched an advanced training program to prepare Burmese teachers for the growing ministry schools across Myanmar.

Ministries associated with Churches of Christ have sent relief aid to Myanmar after disasters. In 2008, Arkansas-based Partners in Progress spent \$200,000 on relief efforts for people in the country's Irawaddy Delta after Cyclone Nargis claimed more than 30,000 lives.

The nonprofit helped feed 9,000 people for a year after the storm, said Bill McDonough, who oversees the ministry. Baptisms followed, "and we have watched in wonder as they changed their hearts and lives and brought their friends to Jesus," McDonough said.

Small congregations meet across Myanmar, Barrier said, but "we don't know what number. There are hundreds of little house churches. It could even be thousands."

## 'HUNGER GAMES' PROTESTS

Burma gained independence from Britain in 1948 and was ruled by its military from 1962 to 2011. In 2015 the National League for Democracy, headed by Aung San Suu Kyi, won 86 percent of the seats in the country's



## Republic of the Union of Myanmar

**POPULATION:** 57,069,099 (2021 estimate);

**LANGUAGES:** Burmese (official), minority ethnic groups use their own languages.

**RELIGION:** 87.9 percent Buddhist, 6.2 percent Christian, 4.3 percent Muslim, 0.8 percent animist, 0.5 percent Hindu, 0.2 percent other, 0.1 percent claim no faith (2014 estimate).

**SOURCES:** CIA World Factbook, globe via Wikimedia Commons.

streets nightly, banging on drums or water jugs and "making as much noise as possible," Barrier said. Many used a three-finger salute that originated in "The Hunger Games" books and movies. Violent clashes soon erupted, prompting Christians to stay home.

"Nowhere in Myanmar is safe right now," said K.P. Yohannan, founder of Gospel For Asia (GFA) World, a humanitarian ministry that serves the region. "Every single night is spent with fear, and dawn seems so hard to reach. The people are restless, and they're exhausted physically and mentally. Many businesses have been burned down."

## PRAYERS AND JESUS' LOVE

Christians around the globe should pray for a quick resolution to the crisis, Barrier said, and for food and medicine to reach the people of Myanmar.

As he was responding to *The Christian Chronicle's* request for updates, Barrier received a message from a Burmese Christian who said people there had been told they were about to lose internet access for at least a week.

Before the online blackout, another Burmese Christian, a minister, sent a message to fellow believers.

"I have encouraged the church members with God's words," he said, "and I share with them about Jesus' love."

Assembly of the Union.

Suu Kyi served as head of state until February, when she and members of her party were removed from office by the military, who allege that she violated the country's official secrets act, possessed illegal walkie-talkies and published information that may "cause fear or alarm," the BBC reports.

Protesters began flooding the

## CALENDAR

**May 2 Hope & Hilarity, a virtual play.** Stonecrest Church of Christ, McDonough, Ga. See [stonecrestcoc.org](http://stonecrestcoc.org).

**May 22 NationsUniversity Spring Dinner.** Visit [nationsu.edu](http://nationsu.edu).

**May 12 Pushpay's Church Disrupt.** Free online conference with Andy Stanley. Visit [churchdisrupt.com](http://churchdisrupt.com).

**May 14-15 Lysa TerKeurst.** North Boulevard Church of Christ, Murfreesboro, Tenn. See [northboulevard.com](http://northboulevard.com).

**May 24-26 Sermon Seminar.** Lipscomb University Austin Center in Texas. See [lipscomb.edu/austin-center/sermon-seminar](http://lipscomb.edu/austin-center/sermon-seminar).

**May 25 FREE Estate Planning Workshop.** Hosted by: HHI, Thrivent, and *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact [ssaunders@hhi.org](mailto:ssaunders@hhi.org).

**May 26 Harbor: The Pepperdine Bible Lectures.** Malibu, Calif. See [pepperdine.edu/harbor](http://pepperdine.edu/harbor) or call (310) 506-4270.

**June 9-11 Thomas H. Olbricht Christian Scholars' Conference.** Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tenn. See [lipscomb.edu/events](http://lipscomb.edu/events).

**June 18 Legacy of Love Benefit Dinner and Auction.** Lilyfield. Tulsa, Okla. See [lilyfield.org/auction](http://lilyfield.org/auction) or call (405) 216-5240.

**June 26-29 Red River Family Encampment.** Visit [rrfe.org](http://rrfe.org). Call (806) 676-8686.

**July 3-10 The Kerusso Experience.** Harding University. Searcy, Ark. See [www.harding.edu/kerusso](http://www.harding.edu/kerusso).

**July 11-16 Honors Summer Academy.** Oklahoma Christian University. See [oc.edu/hsa](http://oc.edu/hsa).

**July 11-18 TITUS Camp.** Heritage Christian University. Email [thekinglives@yahoo.com](mailto:thekinglives@yahoo.com) or call (251) 923-8951.

**July 18 Legacy of Love Benefit Dinner.** Lilyfield. See [lilyfield.org/auction](http://lilyfield.org/auction)

FULL CALENDAR: [christianchronicle.org](http://christianchronicle.org)

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<http://www.blacksburgchurchofchrist.org/new-page-65>

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PHOTO BY ERIK WILLIAMS, SOUTHLAND COMMUNICATIONS

Abilene Christian University's Reggie Miller celebrates the Wildcats' 79-45 win over Nicholls State in the Southland Conference championship game in Katy, Texas.

# Painting Texas purple

**NATIONAL EXPOSURE** *from Abilene Christian's basketball magic valued at more than \$200 million.*

## INDIANAPOLIS

David defeated Goliath. Again.

It was a March Miracle. The semi-biblical allusions found on social media and in headlines nationwide still don't do the game justice. One of my Facebook friends reported that her small-town Texas Church of Christ ended its service later that morning with "Go Wildcats!"

Football is often called a religion in Texas. Basketball not so much. But when 14-seed Abilene Christian University beat the 3-seed

Texas Longhorns, 53-52, early Sunday morning during round one of the men's NCAA basketball championship tournament, I was in the stands at Lucas Oil Stadium, screaming, chanting and at one point retrieving my purple-framed glasses from the floor when they were knocked off by the frenzied fan next to me.



Cheryl Mann Bacon

## Sports

I know those athletes in burnt orange were just kids, too. I know their mommas cried. But I watched a lot of bad ACU basketball in my 40-plus years there, and a few really good seasons as well. And

I confess to selfishly relishing every single second of my Wildcats' first-ever March Madness win.

For my friends in ACU's marketing and strategic communications division, the headlines were about more than adrenaline. Linda Bonnin, ACU vice president, and her team have pages of impressive calculations detailing the advertising value equivalence of the Wildcats' national exposure at more than \$200 million.

"We would never have been able to afford this attention and publicity with our budget," Bonnin told me. "It gave us such nationwide exposure to our brand — we had over 190,000 new unique users to our website."

Applications created or submitted through the website that week totaled 590, in addition to those that arrive during a typical week in March.

ACU President Phil Schubert told CBS, "There are other places a university can make significant steps, but I'd say nothing compares to the level of visibility and market value that comes with men's basketball, at least for us."

I'm happy about the applications, and the market exposure, and the lives that will be changed by a Christian education at an institution where I spent my career. But for me, March Madness — especially

**CONTINUED**



EMERALD CASSIDY, ACU

ACU students and community members gather in the Abilene Convention Center at a watch party for the ACU-UCLA game.

CONTINUED

this March Madness — was a personal victory. In part because we won. In part because I was there with my son, Michael, and his wife, Sarah. But mostly because after a year full of isolation, March Madness was a shot in the arm for all of us.

Michael is a high school basketball coach. When he was 8, 9 and 10 years old, he was the ACU ball boy who wiped sweat from the Moody Coliseum floor with a dingy white towel. During half-time he dribbled and shot threes by himself, oblivious to the usually sparse crowds in the stands.

We've been fans for a long, long time. So when faced with the most common conversation starter of 2021 — "What will you do when you get your second shot?" — the answer was an easy one for me. "Go to a basketball game in person!"

Being fully vaccinated was an answered prayer. That's no semi-biblical allusion. It's a fact.

Basketball is an up-close-and-personal experience for fans. You're close enough to see players' faces. Near enough to hear the sneakers squeak, the bones hit the floor or the clank of a brick shot on the rim. Basketball on an iPhone just isn't the same.

COVID protocols placed fans a bit farther from the floor during tournament games so we couldn't always hear ACU coach Joe Golding's animated admoni-



EMERALD CASSIDY, ACU

ACU basketball players Immanuel Allen, left, and Coryon Mason sign autographs.

tions. But we could see them, in person and on the big screen above us. We could see junior Joe Pleasant take a deep breath before sinking each of the two free throws that would seal ACU's 1-point victory.

I don't think God made us win. I don't think he cares too much about who wins. During the same week ACU won the Southland Conference tournament, a shooting rampage left eight people dead in Atlanta. Closer to home, the whole campus was devastated when a young faculty member's husband died in a wreck that could have killed them both and all three of their children. I believe God cares a lot more about those losses than the kind that show up on scoreboards.

But I also know life should be lived abun-



CHERYL MANN BACON

Cheryl Mann Bacon with son Michael and three friends who came to cheer for ACU.

dantly. In my family that includes basketball. The late John Wooden, legendary UCLA basketball coach, was as well known for his motivational quotes as his 10 national championships. "Make each day your masterpiece," he once said.

We did. Joe Golding did. Joe Pleasant and the rest of the Wildcats did. Two days later they faced UCLA in round two, losing as the Bruins marched on to the Final Four. Goliath won that time. And now Golding has been hired away by UTEP. But it doesn't dim the miracle or the masterpiece.

**CHERYL MANN BACON** is a *Christian Chronicle* correspondent who served for 20 years as chair of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Abilene Christian University. Contact her at [baconc@acu.edu](mailto:baconc@acu.edu).



PHOTOS BY CALEB DANSBY, LCU

Lubbock Christian University players celebrate a 69-59 victory over Drury (Mo.) that gave the Chaparrals their third NCAA Division II women's basketball title. LCU finished the season 23-0.

# 'Chap'-ions: Lubbock Christian wins third NCAA crown

BY MURRAY EVANS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Lubbock Christian University is enjoying a remarkable run of dominance in NCAA Division II women's basketball.

The Texas university, which is associated with Churches of Christ, beat Drury (Mo.) 69-59 in the recent national championship game in Columbus, Ohio.

LCU finished the pandemic-abbreviated season with a 23-0 record, and the Chaparrals will take a 35-game winning streak into next season. Under coach Steve Gomez, Lubbock Christian also won Division II titles in 2016 and 2019 and was one of the favorites to win the 2020 title before the NCAA canceled the postseason due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Chaparrals are the first program in Division II history to have two undefeated national-championship seasons, as they went 35-0 during the 2015-16 season. LCU is the fifth program to claim the title in consecutive tournaments (the



Lubbock Christian's Channing Cunyus shoots during the Chaparrals' national title game against Drury. LCU claimed its third championship since 2016.

first since Cal Poly Pomona in 2001 and 2002) and the fifth to win at least three national championships.

Remarkably, they've put up those numbers during only six years of membership in Division II.

"Just keep striving for excellence," Gomez told the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*. "It doesn't mean you always succeed and win, but if you're heading towards

excellence, good things will happen. In the classroom, they're tremendous. Out in the community, they're tremendous.

On the court, they've been pretty tremendous, too."

Senior Allie Schulte of Nazareth, Texas, scored 18 points in the win over Drury (24-2) and was named as the Most Outstanding Player of the NCAA tournament. Senior



LCU coach Steve Gomez helps cut down the net after the title game.

Emma Middleton of Lubbock, Texas, had 12 points and 10 rebounds and joined Schulte on the all-tournament team. Both players earlier had received All-America honors from various organizations.

LCU built a 10-point lead in the first quarter against Drury and never trailed after that. The Chaparrals held a 21-point lead in the fourth quarter before a late rally

by Drury closed the gap to 63-59, but Ashton Duncan hit two clutch free throws, and the Panthers came no closer. Drury is 91-3 over the last three seasons, with two of those losses to Lubbock Christian.

"What a mature group," Gomez said. "Everybody filled in where we had some gaps. ... It really comes out of more instinct on our players' part than any big coaching strategy. It was just a team working together, not only on offense — a lot of times you think teamwork on offense — but our team really works together on defense."

To reach the title game, Lubbock Christian defeated Cameron (Okla.) 96-66 and Southwestern Oklahoma State 78-65 to win the South Central Region championship, then downed Daemen (N.Y.) 66-49 and Central Missouri 63-61 in the Elite Eight before facing Drury.



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**FORMER HARDING ADMINISTRATOR** works to preserve ‘pivotal human right’ that faces threats in many countries.

# A voice for global religious freedom

BY LYNN McMILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

**J**ames W. Carr, a longtime top administrator at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., was appointed last year to the nine-member U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Carr retired in 2017 from Harding after serving 30 years as executive vice president, senior vice president and professor of business. He and his wife, Susan, attend the College Church of Christ in Searcy, where he serves as an elder.

He is CEO of Highland Home Holdings and consults with universities nationwide on enrollment management and fundraising.

Carr also held administrative positions at Florida State University, where he earned his Ph.D., and at the American College Testing Program. He previously served as chair of the Arkansas Board of Higher Education, appointed by Gov. Asa Hutchinson. He received a six-year presidential appointment to the National Security Education Board during the George W. Bush administration. He was nominated to the USCIRF by U.S. Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California.

The USCIRF appointment brings with it a different weight for Carr.

Each commissioner adopts two or three individuals who have been imprisoned because of their faith. One of Carr’s adoptees is Raymond Koh, a Chinese Malaysian minister who, in addition to raising a family and leading his Protestant congregation, was an activist advocating for the disadvantaged.

Koh was last seen Feb. 13, 2017, when three black SUVs forced him to pull over on the highway. Carr said video footage shows at least 15 men emerging from the SUVs to abduct the minister. He hasn’t been seen since.

The State Department set up a Zoom call so Carr could visit with Susanna Liew, Koh’s wife, who has spoken out on religious freedom all over Malaysia.

“It is anathema to me,” Carr said, “that a country of 33 million people could feel so threatened by a 67-year-old minister that they kidnap him, and he is never heard from again.”



JEFF MONTGOMERY

James W. Carr serves on the U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom.

## Why is a commission like this needed?

USCIRF is led by nine commissioners appointed by both political parties (three each by the House, Senate and president), which ensures that international religious freedom remains a bipartisan issue. USCIRF is separate from the U.S. State Department.

Because USCIRF is not part of the executive branch, and separate from the State Department, and because it focuses solely on religious freedom, we can report unflinchingly on violations and make our recommendations without having to take into account other bilateral issues. This independence is why Congress created USCIRF.

By statute, USCIRF monitors the universal right to freedom of religion or belief abroad — outside the United States — using international standards to do so and makes policy recommendations to the president, Secretary of State and Congress. USCIRF evaluates the implementation of U.S. policies on international religious freedom and develops

policy recommendations for the U.S. government.

Across the globe, this pivotal human right remains under attack. To an alarming extent, freedom of religion or belief is being curtailed, often threatening the safety or survival of innocent persons, especially members of religious minority communities.

Religious freedom abuses must not go unchallenged.

## How has service on USCIRF had an impact on your faith?

It has had a profound impact on me. In recent months, I was sent a report by Open Doors, an organization in The Netherlands, indicating that 340 million Christians were persecuted because of their faith in 2020, up from 245 million the previous year.

On average 13 Christians were

killed every day last year because of their faith. For example, in North Korea, being discovered as a believer in Christ is a death sentence. If you are not killed instantly, you are sent to a labor camp as a political criminal. According to Open Doors, Kim Jong-un is reported to have expanded the system of prison camps in which an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 Christians are currently imprisoned.

## What metrics or other measures are used by the commission to assess threats to religious freedom?

USCIRF monitors religious freedom through the lens of international human rights standards, such as those found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his/her religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with

others and in public or private, to manifest this religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

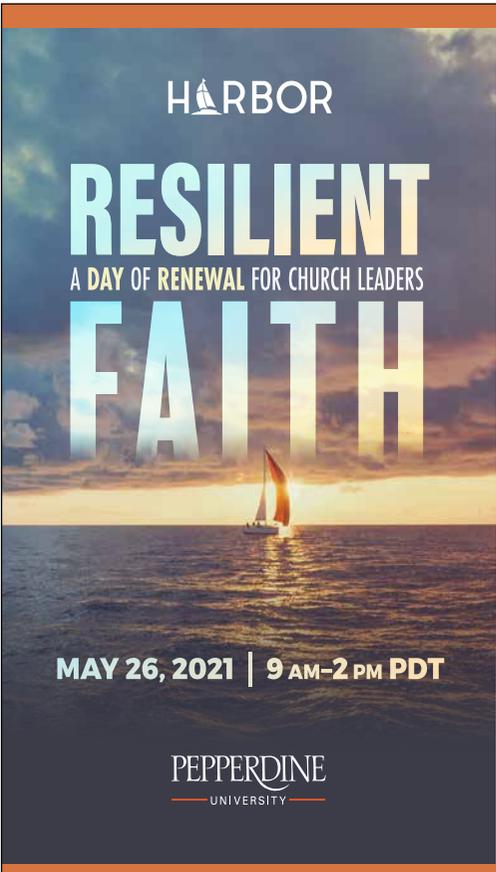
By relying on international human rights standards as specified in IRFA, USCIRF is not attempting to impose American

values on other nation. But rather it examines the actions of foreign governments against these universal standards that most countries have committed to uphold.

USCIRF obtains information about

**‘On average, 13 Christians were killed every day last year because of their faith. For example, in North Korea, being discovered as a believer ... is a death sentence. If you are not killed instantly, you are sent to a labor camp.’**

James W. Carr on the threats to religious freedom around the world



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## CARR: Promoting global freedom is a foreign policy, security 'imperative'

### FROM PAGE 23

violations abroad in multiple ways, including visiting selected countries to observe facts on the ground and meeting regularly with foreign officials, religious leaders and groups, victims of religious intolerance, and representatives of civil society, national and international organizations. It also keeps abreast of credible news reports.

### How many countries have significant problems with religious freedom? And how does that affect us?

In its 2020 annual report, USCIRF recommended that 14 countries be designated as "countries of particular concern"

for committing systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom: Burma, China, Eritrea, India, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam.

USCIRF also recommends countries to be added to the State Department's Special Watch List, countries whose governments engage or tolerate severe religious freedom violations. USCIRF recommends 15 countries to be added to the State Department's SWL: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Central African Republic, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Sudan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

USCIRF has also urged the U.S. government to increase the use of targeted sanctions to deter religious persecution by using human rights-related financial and visa authorities to impose asset freezes and/or visa bans on individual officials, agencies and military units for severe religious freedom violations, citing specific abuses.

### Why should Americans care about religious freedom in other countries?

The passage of the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), which created USCIRF, reinforced the historic commitment of the United States to religious freedom. The commission is the



JEFF MONTGOMERY

James W. Carr at his office in Searcy, Ark.

first and only government entity in the world with the sole mandate of reviewing and making policy recommendations on the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom globally.

In passing IRFA, Congress was not trying to enforce an American standard of religious freedom but rather to promote the

universal standard of freedom of religion or belief set forth in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments.

Freedom of religion or belief is an expansive right that includes the freedoms of thought and conscience and is intertwined with the freedoms of expression, association and assembly. The active promotion of this freedom is a critical component of U.S. foreign policy and a national security imperative.

### How do other countries view the work of the commission?

Most of the countries that USCIRF reports on pay close attention to our annual report, policy recommendations, statements and other country updates that we publish regularly.

USCIRF commissioners and staff are in contact with many foreign governments that engage USCIRF during country visits and through their embassies based in Washington.

## DEVOTIONAL

## HEARTLIGHT.ORG

**ABILENE, Texas** — Heartlight.org and VerseoftheDay.com celebrated their 25th anniversary in April.

The popular online ministries offer free, Bible-focused devotionals to help people strengthen their faith.

“We believe it is significant, and so many in our brotherhood don’t know about us, even though we were birthed by and continue our strong connection to Churches of Christ and core elements of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-7) and baptism and communion and the Great Commission,” content writer and editor Phil Ware said.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

## FREED-HARDEMAN UNIVERSITY

**HENDERSON, Tenn.** — Freed-Hardeman University plans to create an endowed chair as it begins a Doctor of Ministry program. It will be named the Dr. Earl Edwards Chair for the Graduate School of Theology.

Edwards began his career at FHU in 1982 after directing the Florence Bible School in Italy. He oversaw graduate studies in Bible at FHU from 1989 until 2008 when he retired from full-time work.

“Dr. Edwards’ leadership set in motion FHU’s graduate programs in Bible and sustained their growth for nearly 20 years,” said Mark Blackwelder, dean of FHU’s College of Biblical Studies.

Edwards has committed \$500,000 for the chair. The Edwards family has set a goal of raising a total of \$1 million with help from friends and other family members.

## HARDING UNIVERSITY

**SEARCY, Ark.** — The family of Clifton L. Ganus Jr. has released “I’d Do It All Again,” a memoir by the former president and chancellor of Harding University.

While known for his work at Harding, Ganus traveled to 117 countries, made four 700-mile



PHOTOS BY DEBRA SISSON

## Christian school’s teachers, staff wash feet of senior class



In a special chapel assembly at Harding Academy of Memphis, teachers and staff members follow the example of Jesus and wash the feet of the senior class. School employees prayed over the students and asked God to bless them in their futures.

“This is such a meaningful time for us to encourage our graduates and serve them like Jesus,” the Tennessee school said on its Facebook page.

In the top photo, teacher Michelle Malone washes the feet of student Chloe Johnson. In the inset photo, teacher Lindsey Pence prays with student Emily Howard.

Founded in 1952, Harding Academy is a coed, college-preparatory Christian school.

Mississippi River trips in a small boat, enjoyed conversations with world leaders and made annual fishing trips to Alaska, among numerous other adventures.

**Ganus Jr.**

Ganus III said of his father, who died on Sept. 9, 2019, at age 97. “This book is his account of the life he loved.”

## LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** — Despite the pandemic, the largest fundraising

campaign in Lipscomb University’s history has reached its \$250 million goal nearly a year early.

Contributions came from 47,000 donors — 35,000 of whom made financial gifts to the Christian university for the first time during this initiative.

The goal was met “during one of the most challenging times in our world with the devastating impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic,” President Randy Lowry said.

## OKLAHOMA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

**OKLAHOMA CITY** — Oklahoma Christian University alumna Sherri Coale has announced her retirement after 25 years as the head women’s basketball coach at the University of Oklahoma.

Coale, a four-time Big 12 Conference coach of the year,

directed the Sooners to 10 Big 12 championships (six regular season, four postseason) and 20 post-season appearances, including 19 consecutive NCAA tournaments.

**Coale**

Oklahoma Christian Athletic Hall of Fame.

“Through much prayer and the gifts of a year that provided pockets of stillness most years never produce, I have amazing clarity,” Coale, a member of the Westside Church of Christ in Norman, said of her recent decision to retire.



Members of RiverHawks for Christ in Oklahoma traveled nearly 800 miles east to Jackson, Ky., on a Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team mission.

# Muddy mission is blessedly normal

**CAMPUS MINISTRY** endures a year of COVID-19, then forgoes the beach to serve flood victims.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

After a year of lockdowns, nasal swabs and Zoom lectures, it's understandable that college students would be sorely tempted to head for the beach.

But 13 members of the RiverHawks for Christ campus ministry in Tahlequah, Okla., picked a different destination for their spring break — eastern Kentucky, the heart of the Cumberland Plateau. There, in the small towns of Jackson and Beattyville, they spent the better part of a week ripping rotted drywall and floorboards from homes devastated by floods back in March.

"They worked hard — came back muddy and tired," said John Albright of Churches of Christ Disaster Response Team, who coordinated the work.

After a year of COVID-19, "they were loving every second of it, absolutely," added campus minister Tyrel Hatfield. "It was great to feel a little bit normal again."

## CAMPUS MINISTRY: 'SOLACE' IN PANDEMIC

RiverHawks for Christ, a ministry of the South College Church of Christ in Tahlequah, serves nearby Northeastern State University.

The church's previous campus minister, Wade Bullard, planned to lead a group from the ministry on a spring break mission trip last year. They were going to help the Disaster Response Team organize its warehouse in Ohio.

The pandemic canceled those



PHOTO PROVIDED BY TYREL HATFIELD

**Students remove waterlogged floorboards from a home in Kentucky.**

plans and turned the 2020 spring break into the longest — and arguably the worst — spring break ever. Classes, church services and ministry activities all moved online.

So did the final weeks of Andrea Stone's high school career. Stone, who goes by Andy, grew up in the pews of the Stonewall Church of Christ in southern Oklahoma. She earned her diploma virtually before moving 150 miles northeast to Tahlequah last fall for her freshman year at Northeastern State.

"Classes have been real iffy," she said. "Some days you go to class as normal, but at the drop of a hat

anything can change." If a classmate is diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been exposed to someone with the virus, classes may have to move online. For Stone, checking email before class — to see "whether you're going to class or not" — is the new normal.

She didn't know a soul when she arrived on campus but quickly found a home with RiverHawks for Christ, which hosts devotionals and Bible classes in addition to other activities with the South College Church of Christ. Despite the uncertainty of the pandemic, the campus ministry has "been very regular," Stone said. "We have stayed together and have been able to meet.

"It's an escape from the panic of the virus. I find my solace here."

## HATFIELDS IN A LAND OF MCCOYS

Stone was eager to join the mission trip to Kentucky — even though it meant a week of pulling up old, damp floorboards from homes. She quickly learned what it sounds like when a board pulls free with all of its nails intact — meaning she wouldn't have to pry them out of the joists one by one.

"That's the greatest sound in the world," she joked, "when the nails come up with the board."

Albright coordinated the Oklahomans in addition to church groups from California and Alabama who came to help in Kentucky. They helped distribute boxes of food and cleaning supplies provided by Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort in Nashville, Tenn.

The area where they served was at the western edge of the McCoy family's land during the infamous Hatfield-McCoy feud of the late 1800s. Albright made sure to point that out to Tyrel Hatfield, who

brought three of his children on the trip — one of them a Northeastern State student. Hatfield, a graduate of Oklahoma Christian University, has served with the South College church

for 20 years and recently took on the role of campus minister.

Thankfully, no feuds broke out during the trip, joked Albright, who worships with the Clear Creek Church of Christ in Hixson, Tenn.

However, he does remember the Oklahomans singing with at least one of the homeowners they helped.

## A MISSION OF PEOPLE, NOT HOMES

The students also worshiped — and sang beautifully — with one of the Churches of Christ in the area, Albright said. When they weren't working, the team slept on the floor of the church's classrooms.

In addition to singing, "we prayed with people," Hatfield said. "They were the mission, not the homes."

Stone said that focusing on others helped take her mind off the pandemic. It also "brought us closer, as a family, to God," she said.

Hatfield added, "I couldn't think of a better way to spend spring break."



**Hatfield**

# Milestones

Showcase the lives of your loved ones — birth and wedding announcements, anniversaries, memorials, honors for longtime ministers and workers and more. Contact [tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org](mailto:tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org) for rates and more information.

## Anniversary



**Larry and Tricky Arnold**, 69 years. The Arnolds have seven children, five of whom are over 60. Larry preaches for the New Lexington Church of Christ in Ohio.

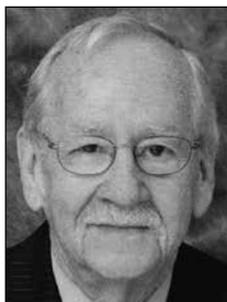
## Memorials

### Charles Baggett 1939-2021

Dr. Charles Edmond Baggett, 81, passed away on March 12, 2021, at his home in Hartselle, Ala., with his family by his side.

Charles was born Sept. 11, 1939, to David Allen and Eva Lee (Shaw) Baggett in Hartselle. He knew he was called to preach when he did his first sermon at the age of 11. At 16, he had his own congregation. He graduated from Morgan County High School in 1957.

Charles preached the gospel for 69 years. He began working in jail/prison ministry in 1984. He was chaplain at Limestone Correctional in Alabama for 22 years. In 2002, Charles was recognized as Chaplain of the Year. After his retirement, he volunteered as chaplain at the Decatur Work Release in Alabama. He also started the Freedom Through Truth program and helped establish Project Rescue in Priceville, Ala. In 2015, Charles and his wife, Martha, were awarded honorary doctorates from Heritage Christian University in Florence, Ala. Charles is survived by his wife,



Martha (Earwood) Baggett, and his sister, Ann Feller. His six children are Terri (Keith) Rigoni, Donna (Johnny) Hope, William Alan (Lisa) Baggett, Alan (Lori) Parker, Sherie (David) Miljanich, and Maria (Steve) Hicks. He is also survived by 12 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Charles' memorial service was held on Saturday, March 20, at Bellline Church of Christ in Decatur, Ala., where he was a longtime member. The family requests donations be made to Project Rescue, Heritage Christian University or Hospice of the Valley.

### Richard Johnson Jr. 1925-2021

Richard Allison "Coach" Johnson Jr., 95, of Searcy, Ark., passed away from natural causes, old age and a worn-out body on Feb. 17, 2021.

Coach was born Feb. 17, 1925, in Nashville, Tenn., to Richard and Gladys Johnson. He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the U.S. Army while stationed in New Guinea and the South Pacific.

Coach was outstanding in football, basketball, baseball and track and was a Golden Glove Mid-South boxing champion while attending Whitehaven High School in Memphis, Tenn.

He attended Harding College (now University) in Searcy and served as an assistant coach for Harding's first football team in 1959. After graduation, he and his family moved to Georgia, where he coached high school football, girls' basketball and baseball. In 1966 Coach Johnson's Dykes High School Colts won the AAA Georgia High School State Championship. He was voted Georgia High School Coach of the Year.

In 1969 he returned to his alma mater, where he was a teacher, offensive line coach and head baseball



coach for 20 years. After a career 289 wins at Harding, a flagpole was erected in his honor at Jerry Moore Field. A bronze plaque in the grandstands, presented by chancellor emeritus Clifton L. Ganus Jr. on April 6, 2019, reads: "His records are many; his influence on the lives of young men is immeasurable."

During his time at Harding — as a student and as a coach — he preached for several small Churches of Christ in rural Arkansas. He served for 15 years as an elder of the Downtown Church of Christ in Searcy. His wife, Joyce, was secretary for several Harding administrators. Coach and "Mrs. J," as she was known, were members of the West Side Church of Christ in Searcy for more than 15 years until his death.

In addition to his wife of 73 years and four months, Coach is survived by his son, Bill Johnson (Betty) of Searcy; son-in-law Gregg Ratliff (Janet) of St. Louis, Mo.; four grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by daughter Nancy Johnson Ratliff and grandson Brian Luke Johnson.

### William E. Jones Sr. 1930-2021

Dr. William E. Jones Sr., 90, evangelist, music minister and father transitioned to Glory on Jan. 9, 2021.

Born in Birdsong, Ark., to Lewis and Osilene Jones, he became a native of Chicago. Encouraged by a singing father and praying mother, at 15 William was baptized at Michigan Avenue Church of Christ in Chicago.

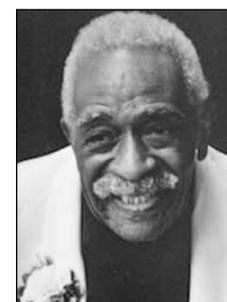
Because of his talent for singing, Jones discontinued formal education to travel the brotherhood. His ministry began at the Michigan Avenue congregation under the late evangelist Levi Kennedy, who recommended Jones to the late evangelist G.P. Holt as a prospective song leader. During those years, Jones led music for Jimmy Steward, Russell Moore, W.D. Booker and notable gospel preachers. Those experiences brought foundational

teaching, music and preaching preparation and cherished friendships.

When young William returned to Chicago, he and his father organized the Christian Stars Chorus at Old Maypole Church of Christ. Jones also sang with the Rising Sons Quartet, a trailblazing a cappella group known for motivating congregations.

Jones married Viola French, the grand soprano. They were blessed with four children. Jones continued preaching the gospel and singing. Kennedy encouraged him to assist another preacher, Norris Foulkes, so the Jones family traveled each week to the Robbins, Ill., congregation.

Known as a "singing preacher," Jones followed his passion: to be a servant minister of the 87th St. Church of Christ (formerly Miller/Maxwell Street). During his 38-year ministry, he organized and directed the Campaign for Christ, a citywide gospel meeting with members of Churches of Christ across the Chicago area and surrounding states



in 2015. Jones received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Metropolitan Christian University in Louisville, Ky.

Viola Jones, his wife of 63

years, labored beside him until her death. Jones retired from preaching in 2014 due to health problems, but his ministry continued: calling on members, studying his Bible, watching cowboy shows and singing with his children.

He is remembered by children Juanita Lee (Willie) of South Orange, N.J.; Deborah Walker (Gerald) of Robbins, Ill.; William Eddie Jones Jr. (Deborah) of Olympia Fields, Ill.; and John Jones (Sharon) of Troy, Ohio; eight grandchildren; and five great grandchildren.

He is mourned by his 87th Street church family, friends and church members throughout the country.

*More Milestones, Page 28*

# Milestones

## Jane Johnson Waites 1934-2021

Born in Franklin, Tennessee, Jane grew up on Maple Lawn Farm, graduated from Franklin High School and attended Agnes Scott College, where she met and later married Georgia Tech student, Bill Waites who. He, along with her parents her and brother Dob, preceded her in death.

Her five children "rise up and call her blessed": LeaAnne (Kevin) Hammond, Mat (Dani) Waites, Dob (Korky) Waites, Ben (Wendy) Waites, and Emily (Mike) Gifford. Other survivors include one sister Anne (Daniel) Ridinger, twelve grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, two nieces, and two nephews.

In August 1946 Jane was baptized in a cow trough because the creek was dry. She spent the rest of her life serving the Lord.

Jane worked beside her late husband Bill, a deacon and later an elder of the Druid Hills Church of Christ. She taught Bible classes and



used her talents to serve the Lord. She was anxious to share whatever she had – flowers from her garden, food from her kitchen, her car to drive others to Bible class or doctor appointments, cards to cheer and encourage, her phone to check on the sick, and even her beach house or a spare room in her home. She performed countless loving deeds for others, especially widows, the lonely, the less fortunate, and those recovering from substance abuse.

She organized poinsettia sales to support Rainbow Omega, an Alabama faith-based nonprofit that provides vocational and residential programs to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Always focused on helping others, Jane taught at Little Dears in Alpharetta and first grade at the Smyrna campus of Greater Atlanta

Christian School. She was a loyal supporter of Christian education all over the world and participated in overseas mission trips.

Truly Jane devoted her time, talents, and material goods in service to God, family and an untold number of others. She did not grow weary in well-doing.

## C. Bruce White 1939-2021

Dr. C. Bruce White, former minister for the Madison Church of Christ, passed away March 10, 2021. He served as pulpit minister for the Tennessee congregation from 2001 to 2004 and was an associate minister from 1979-1984 when Ira North served as pulpit minister.

Dr. White was born in Pulaski, Tenn., and was reared in Birmingham, Ala. He was preceded in death by his wife, Judy White, and daughter Terri Parrish.

He is survived by his son, Michael White, brother Dwayne White, grandchildren Hunter White, Bailey White, and Landon Parrish and great-grandchildren Magnolia and Mabel Parrish.

Dr. White taught Bible and psychology at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., from 1979 to 1985. He taught counseling for ministers at Southern Christian University in Montgomery, Ala., from 1991 to 1993. He was a minister for Churches of Christ for 54 years and taught Bible classes at the Madison church into his 80s.

He began his preaching career after spending two years at Auburn University in Alabama, where he played baseball. He transferred to Lipscomb as a junior to study ministry and played one year of baseball there. It was Coach Ken Dugan's first year as coach there.



Dr. White preached for churches in Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Arkansas on a full-time basis. He preached at gospel meetings in 22 states and three foreign countries. He spoke on the campuses of almost every college and university associated with Churches of Christ as well as at 18 state university campuses.

He received his education at Auburn, Lipscomb, Harding School of Theology, the University of Oklahoma and the World-Wide Bible Institute. All totaled, he had a bachelor's, three master's degrees, and Doctor of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry. He authored two books, numerous tracts and articles for journals, papers and periodicals. He had a part in three different TV programs and five radio programs through the years.

He was a preacher, educator, counselor, civic leader and a family man. He wore many hats during his career. He was chairman of the board for Childhaven Children's Home in Cullman, Ala., for many years. He was executive director for the Tennessee Children's Home in Spring Hill, Tenn., for several years. He had a private counseling practice in several of the locations where he preached and was the first full-time counselor on a church staff for the Churches of Christ, serving in that capacity for the Madison church from 1979 to 1984.

While he had many interests and varied activities, he had the heart of a preacher and always wanted to be known as a preacher. He used to say, "I am not a counselor who preaches some; I am a preacher who counsels some. I always want to be known as a preacher."

Memorial gifts may be made to Tennessee Children's Home: [www.tennesseechildrenshome.org](http://www.tennesseechildrenshome.org).

## Bill Yasko 1935-2021

William Alex (Bill) Yasko was born Dec. 26, 1935, in Chattanooga, Tenn., and died March 29, 2021, in

Lawrenceville, Ga. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Dorothy C. Yasko, two children, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

In 1972, Bill and Dot enrolled in the Sunset School of Preaching (now Sunset International Bible Institute) in Lubbock, Texas. Upon graduation, Bill was asked to be one of the ministers of the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock and was also offered an instructor's position at the school.

In his life Bill served as an evangelist at The Maricamp Road Church of Christ in Ocala, Fla., and the Westbury Church of Christ in Houston. In 2005 he retired.

While retired he preached for the Church of Christ in Trinity, Texas; the Oak Grove Church of Christ in Soda, Texas; the Shepherd Church of Christ in Texas; and the Needville Church of Christ in Texas.

Even after leaving the Sunset institute, Bill and Dot worked tirelessly in recruiting men to come and train to be preachers.

After retiring from full-time pulpit ministry, Bill worked as a field representative for Sunset and hosted an annual dinner in the Houston area that raised thousands of dollars for the ministry.

In January 2020, Sunset gave the Grey Eagle Award for an outstanding alumnus to Bill.

"Only God knows how many people were introduced to their Lord because of what God did through Bill for so many years," administrators at Sunset said in a social media post. "We want to echo the words spoken to Bill, *Well done, good and faithful servant.*"

There will be a memorial later in the summer at the Westbury Church of Christ in Houston.

In lieu of flowers, Bill requested that contributions be made to Sunset International Bible Institute, 3723 34th Street, Lubbock TX 79410 or online at [www.sibi.cc](http://www.sibi.cc).



## NEWSMAKERS



PHOTO PROVIDED BY SARAH CLEMENTS

**Nine-year-old twins Barrett and Graham Clements of the Creekside Church of Christ in Greenville, Texas, celebrate their success at the Lads to Leaders convention in Dallas.**

**RECOGNIZED:** Cory Collins, with an honorary Doctor of Ministry degree from Heritage Christian University in Florence, Ala. Collins is a former dean of students and Bible instructor at Heritage. He has 47 years of ministry experience, the last 10 with the Keller Church of Christ in Texas. The degree will be presented during Heritage's May 22 commencement ceremony, where Collins will serve as the speaker.



Collins

**APPOINTED:** John Law, as vice chancellor of Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn. The 1989 FHU graduate recently retired after



Law

a 32-year career as a Farm Bureau Insurance executive. He has served on FHU's board of trustees since 1999. **David Simmons**, as director of development and marketing, a newly created role at New Pathways for Children,

a Melber, Ky.-based ministry associated with Churches of Christ. **RETIRING:** Dan Williams, as vice president of church relations and lectureship director at Harding University in Searcy, Ark. Williams had served in those roles since 2013.

**NEW MINISTERS:** Jack McNeil, Sugar Creek Church of Christ in Charlotte, N.C. **Blan Chrane**, Northcrest Church of Christ in Mexia, Texas.

### Tributes

## Naomi Ruth Malick

### 1938-2021

#### 'Wife of Noble Character'

Ruth Malick was born on Dec. 8, 1938, in Glendale, W.Va., and grew up in nearby Moundsville, W.Va. She was a registered nurse and graduated with her degree from the Ohio Valley General Hospital School of Nursing in 1959. It was at this hospital where she worked for two years before marrying and moving to the Trenton, N.J., area with her husband Gordon. After working at Mercer Hospital and Saint Francis Hospital, she retired to raise her two children. In 1980, she became a library assistant at the College of New Jersey and retired from there in 2000.



Ruth was a loving wife, mother and grandmother. Throughout her life she was known for her compassion to family and all who she became acquainted with. Throughout her life, she provided care and support to elderly neighbors and friends, many times using her nursing background to assist. During graveside services on Feb. 25, 2021, minister Bruce Wadzeck of the Princeton Church of Christ proclaimed Ruth as the Proverbs 31 "Wife of Noble Character."

*A wife of noble character who can find?*

*She is worth far more than rubies.*

*Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.*

*She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.*

*She selects wood and flax and works with eager hands.*

*She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.*

*She gets up while it is still night: she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants.*

*She considers a field and buys*

# Milestones

*it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.*

*She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.*

*She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.*

*In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.*

*She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.*

*When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.*

*She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.*

*Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.*

*She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.*

*She is clothed with strength and dignity, she can laugh at the days to come.*

*She speaks wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.*

*She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

*Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.*

*Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.*

*Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but the woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

*Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.*

Ruth is survived by her loving husband of 59 years, Gordon Malick; son Thomas Malick of Manassas, Va.; daughter Linda Brooks and husband Glenn of Jackson, N.J.; grandchildren Ashley Gurganus of Las Vegas, Robert Malick of Centerville, Va., and Olivia Malick of Centerville.

Naomi Ruth was predeceased in life by her parents Donley and Mildred Glover and older siblings Doris and Norman Glover.

Ruth Malick was a longtime member of the Princeton Church of Christ in New Jersey.

## Ron Clayton, 1944-2021

### Pioneering missionary to India

Ronald Alan Clayton, age 76, of Hamilton, Ala., passed away March 3, 2021, at his residence. He was born in Vernon, Texas, on Aug. 12, 1944 to William Franklin Clayton Jr. and Sara Ellen Cabe Clayton.

The oldest of four children in a military family, he moved frequently and lived on military bases across the U.S. and the

Panama Canal Zone. He dedicated his life to the Great Commission and served as a pulp minister for Churches of Christ for 20 years before

moving to India, where he and his wife, Karen, directed India Missions for 42 years. The ministry resulted in millions of baptisms and thousands of church plants.

A memorial service was held March 8 at the Hamilton Church of Christ with Robert Hall and Ben Renegar officiating. The Hamilton church supports India Missions, and Ron Clayton was an active part of the congregation for 45 years, making regular visits and reports on the work in India.

He was preceded in death by his son, Gregory Allen Clayton, and parents William and Sara Clayton.

He leaves to cherish his memories his wife, Karen Clayton; sons Jeff (Karen) Clayton and Kyle (Madhuri) Clayton; grandchildren Page, Sammy, Brendon, Prema, Grant, Jordan, Preethi and Maddie; great-grandchildren Bo and Silas; sisters Cathy Burgess, Laura Mosier and Pat Jensen; and a host of nieces, nephews and friends.

Memorial gifts may be sent to India Missions, P.O. Box 1448, Hamilton, AL 35570.

**WITH APPRECIATION:** *The Christian Chronicle* appreciates gifts received in honor of Bill Watkins and in memory of Juli Jackson Beck, David and Virginia Cole, Kenneth Keeler, Mary M. Smith and Dr. Van Tate.



## EDITORIAL

# A reminder to 'weep with those who weep'

For months now, our hearts have felt troubled. We've watched as Christians on social media have erupted in angry, hateful, hurtful words time and time again.

As we watch, a voice has echoed in our minds, asking, "Where's the kindness? Where's the empathy? Where's the love of Jesus?"

Black friends have shared their hurt. Asian American friends have shared their hurt. Friends who have suffered from COVID-19 or lost a loved one to COVID-19 have shared their hurt. All while more voices yell over them, disregarding their stories and their experiences.

"Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep," the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 12:15 (New Living Translation), adding in the next verse, "Live in harmony with each other."

Friends, some of our brothers and sisters are weeping, loudly, and too many Christians are ignoring those cries.

Harmony seems far from our reality. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Let us, as Christians, take time to listen. Let us sit with those who are hurting.

Let us not be like Job's friends,



**VIEW A LIVE DISCUSSION** by the Editorial Board at 4 p.m. Eastern/3 p.m. Central on April 26. Board members, pictured above, are Jeremie Beller, John Edmerson, Chellie Ison, Trindi G. Mitchell, Bobby Ross Jr., Tamie Ross and Erik Tryggestad.

who with their words caused more harm. Let us learn how to be present with those who are weeping and how to truly hear the cries of their heart. Let us hold our tongues (or maybe the fingers with which we type).

Let us pray for God to give us the strength and wisdom to know when to speak and when to simply be present.

Let us truly examine ourselves, our opinions and our biases. Let us choose not to hold those things more highly than the brothers and sisters who are asking that their pain be acknowledged.

It's true: Your life has likely held struggles. You, too, have pain. We've all walked through valleys, some that feel deeper than others. However, acknowledging someone else's hurt doesn't mean you cannot continue to

work through your own.

This is not asking you to do something you feel is illegal or something you feel violates your conscience. It's simply an appeal for you to take a step back from your computer and your television, to look a real person in the face and to try to understand how that person has experienced this world, your community even, differently from you.

We must stop listening to the voices that scream at us on social media or on our favorite cable channel. We must stop listening to those who make millions by sowing discord among us.

We must stop pointing fingers and start choosing to weep with those who are weeping.

It starts in our communities, our churches. By learning to sit with each other through pain, we can also learn how to truly live in harmony with one another. — **Chellie Ison, for the Editorial Board**

**'Harmony seems far from our reality. But it doesn't have to be this way. It shouldn't be this way. Let us, as Christians, take time to listen.'**

## Learning to listen — really listen — is key

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

It can be hard to listen. Trust me, as someone who grew up interrupting others, learning to listen is challenging.

For the past few years, I've worked with a recovery ministry at my home congregation.

I've learned how to sit with a hurting person as they pour out their heart, process their pain and explore the choices and experiences that brought them to where they are.

It's hard and uncomfortable to watch someone weep. Often, I fight off the urge to want to fix their struggle with my words.

I pray I won't be like the friends Job had. I try hard to hold my tongue. I ask God for the strength and wisdom to know what to say and when to say it.

These experiences have changed me and how I see the world. I've gained empathy and understanding. God has used each person I've met to grow my heart. While my own story may not reflect theirs, I still can listen intently to their words and go forward loving more wholly.

I hope and pray more of us can learn to listen to those who weep, because in doing so I believe God grows our heart to love more deeply and sincerely.

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# What it means to 'value others above yourselves'

**A GRANDSON'S QUESTIONS** inspire reflection on how to engage in positive, productive dialogue.

**H**aving a 2½-year-old grandson means hearing the word “why” quite often.

In fact, nearly every sentence is phrased “Jeopardy!” style — in the form of a question.

Some are silly or reflect a particular interest he has at the moment. Recently, I recited the items in my purse and explained why birds sing (after a peek online to ensure my answer was correct).

And yet others are deep, philosophical and perhaps spiritual: “Nana, why do you wear a mask?” And more recently, “Nana, why don’t you have your mask on right now?”

I’m so glad Bennett trusts me enough to ask questions, especially about masks. More importantly, I’m glad he asks with such a pure heart

and a real desire to know the answer.

That’s not often the case on social media. Many self-proclaimed pundits and experts pose questions only to show how clever they are and to further their own point of view:

“Help me understand why ...”

“What am I missing ...”

“Why is it that ...”

The rest of their word allotment is devoted to explaining how those with other viewpoints are foolish, ill-informed or simply lacking in the insight they

have. (Incidentally, true experts on any given subject don’t impart their wisdom in this manner. It simply isn’t necessary for them to use sarcasm in order to educate.)

These days, more often than not, such posts center around COVID-19, vaccinations, mask-wearing and

## Views



Tamie Ross



BOBBY ROSS JR.

**Tamie Ross with her 2½-year-old grandson, Bennett, who is at an age when he asks a lot of questions.**

related subjects, like mandates or restrictions.

And while I cannot respond for

everyone, I can answer my toddler grandson and share with whomever would truly like to understand my perspective.

Quite simply, the reason is Philippians 2:3-5: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”

I try each day, with God’s help, to live this way. I fall short, as we all do. But I keep trying and learning from those stumbles. It’s that important.

Because of Paul’s words and after a lot of prayer and reading, I asked my doctor to allow me to receive a vaccination earlier this year in spite of him telling me repeatedly that I could not risk getting the shot (because of my autoimmune

See **QUESTIONS**, Page 32

## FROM OUR READERS

### Not putting her hope in COVID-19 vaccine

I would hope that we as Christians don’t really consider a vaccine to be our “hope for a brighter tomorrow.” (See “After difficult year, COVID-19 vaccines bring joy and hope,” Inside Story, April.)

Perhaps comments like this were meant to be taken lightly, but to me, they send the wrong message. We know that our heavenly father is our hope for a brighter tomorrow, and he is the one who will see us through any difficult time.

While the past year has been challenging for many, I think our takeaway message should always be that we must look to God for our solutions. With that in mind, I personally find the idea that vaccines are our savior from the coronavirus to be a misplaced trust. Especially so when I have done some reading and found that the vaccines we have do not seem to be in line with God’s will.

**KRISTINA WALSH** | Adair Village, Ore.

You mentioned God and the scientists who developed the vaccine. Of course, we all applauded them. I did not see any mention of those who led the effort: Mr. Trump and Mr. Pence.

Many lives will be saved in the U.S. and around the world because of the leadership involved. Perhaps it was an oversight to not recognize these men, but their efforts proved to be a key component if not the key component.

**STEVE COUNTS** | Nixa, Mo.

I will pray for you to have a greater understanding of God’s love and control over what goes on in this world. You are so lacking in the knowledge of Bible teachings and have fallen into the world’s belief of masks, distancing, vaccines and isolation as the way to be safe in life.

God gave us life and left us with the Spirit to guide us. You’ve been tricked into believing man has the answers.

**STANLEY HOFFMAN** | Englewood, Fla.

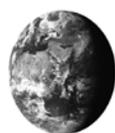
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The Christian Chronicle

## Honor Roll of Churches 2020-2021, Part II

**MISSOURI:** Blackwater Church of Christ, Blackwater; Bolivar Church of Christ, Bolivar; Church of Christ in California, California; Cape Church of Christ, Cape Girardeau; Church of Christ, Clinton; Florissant Church of Christ, Florissant; Huntsville Church of Christ, Huntsville; Kimberling City Church of Christ, Kimberling City; Church of Christ, Morley; Rocketdyne Road Church of Christ, Neosho; O'Fallon Church of Christ, O'Fallon; Owensville Church of Christ, Owensville; Flat River Church of Christ, Park Hills; Pomona Church of Christ, Pomona; Plainview Church of Christ, Rogersville; Gospel Chapel Church of Christ, Salem; Sparta Church of Christ, Sparta; West Central Church of Christ, St. Louis. **MONTANA:** Great Falls Church of Christ, Great Falls; Church of Christ – Livingston, Livingston. **NEBRASKA:** Beatrice Church of Christ, Beatrice; Hastings Church of Christ, Hastings; Imperial Church of Christ, Imperial. **NEW MEXICO:** Cimarron Church of Christ, Cimarron; Dora Church of Christ, Dora; 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## QUESTIONS: Valuing others

FROM PAGE 31

diseases). I'm thankful that he relented, and even more so that my system responded favorably. I prayerfully hope that I can contribute in this way to our collective return to whatever normality awaits us all, and that you will choose the same.

This passage is why I began wearing a mask last March when I was in contact with anyone who didn't live in my home full-time — including my adult children. It is why I continue to do so now unless I know that everyone within 6 feet has been vaccinated and has the shot's full protection, because now the risk is much more so for them and not me.

Therein lies the complexity and the beauty of this verse both at the time it was written as well as today: Paul knew how difficult it would be for most of us to adopt the mindset of Christ, to humble ourselves enough so that we truly believe everyone else is more valuable than we are and then to consistently respond and react this way to them and the world at large.

If we are striving to live this way, then we've accepted another truth: It simply is not possible to compartmentalize or justify anything less.

Abraham Lincoln's observation about our actions speaking louder than our words has expanded over the last 165 years to come full circle. Now our words often are our actions as we post on social media or like and share others' contributions. It is how we are remembered and the impression that lasts longer because of the footprint we leave behind.

If I'm not trying my best to live like Christ, I'm not fooling anyone, and least of all not the One who matters most. He knows my heart.

My grandson, who misses nothing and asks about everything, won't be deceived, either. And I sincerely hope that's one question he never has to ask.

**TAMIE ROSS** is a member of *The Christian Chronicle's* Editorial Board. A former online editor for the *Chronicle*, she is a member of the Edmond Church of Christ in Oklahoma. Contact [tamieross@icloud.com](mailto:tamieross@icloud.com).

## Honor Roll of Churches 2020-2021, Part II (continued)

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What is your congregation doing to protect your members?

- Follow mandated restrictions
- Wear masks
- Social distance
- Use prefilled communion sets
- Encourage use of hand sanitizers
- Leadership set examples
- Clean touched surfaces
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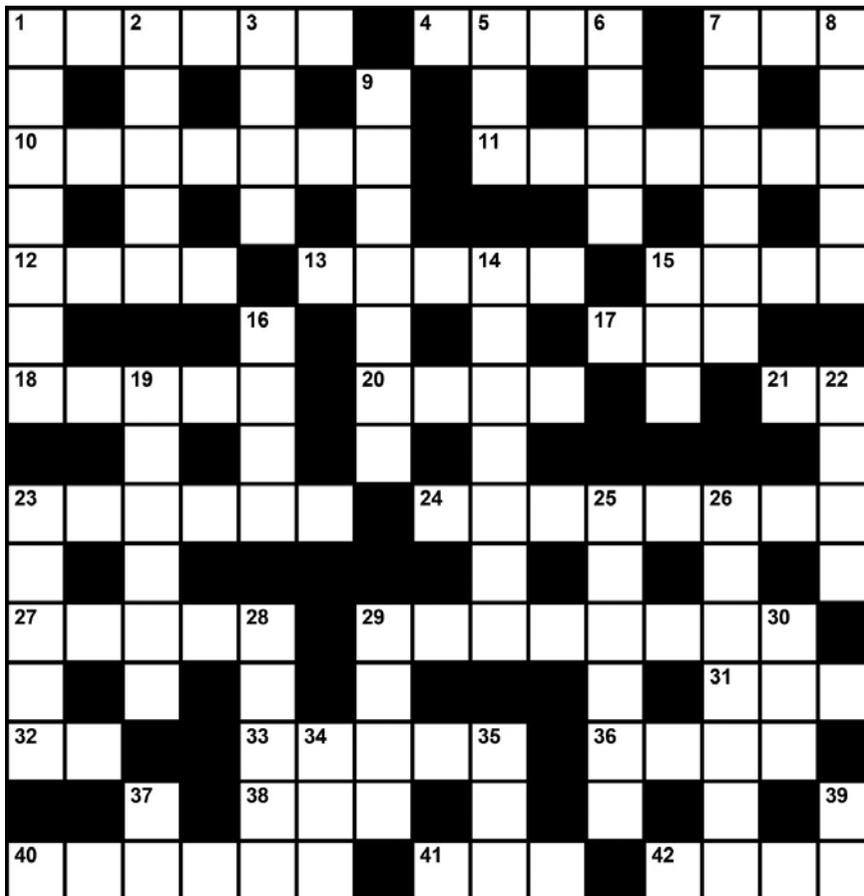


# The Christian Chronicle Crossword

By Myles Mellor | www.ilovecrosswords.com

## ACROSS

1. Mountains where Noah's boat came to rest (Genesis 8:4).
4. One of the birds Noah sent from the ark (Genesis 8:8).
7. Existed.
10. Areas.
11. Isaac's wife (Genesis 25:20).
12. "For thou will not leave my soul in \_\_\_\_, neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10, King James Version).
13. "And I will stretch out my hand and \_\_\_\_ Egypt with all my wonders ... and after that he will let you go" (Exodus 3:20, KJV).
15. "Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the \_\_\_\_ ..." (Deuteronomy 16:2, KJV).
17. "Yet through the scent of water it will \_\_\_\_ and bring forth boughs like a plant" (Job 14:9, KJV).
18. "I will have \_\_\_\_, and not sacrifice" (Matthew 9:13, KJV).
20. His name means "help" or "helper" in Hebrew.
21. Alongside.
23. "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a \_\_\_\_ place or under a basket ..." (Luke 11:33, International Standard Version).
24. Related to the Good Book.
27. Plants like bulrushes.
29. "Now we know that God's \_\_\_\_ against those who act like this is based on truth" (Romans 2:2, ISV).
31. "but you are not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because you will certainly \_\_\_\_ ..." (Genesis 2:17, ISV).
32. Take action.
33. Prophet who foretells the final destruction of Nineveh.



36. River through Egypt.
  38. New England's Cape \_\_\_\_
  40. Church platform.
  41. Strange.
  42. Voyaging on water.
- ## DOWN
1. Name meaning "father of many."
  2. Heavenly being.
  3. State openly.
  5. Rowing equipment.
  6. Falls back.
  7. Word in the Bible meaning evil.
  8. "Rise up early in the morning

- and \_\_\_\_ before Pharaoh ..." (Exodus 8:20, KJV).
9. Son of Abraham, Genesis 16:15.
14. Biblical word for stayed.
15. Color shade
16. Religious song.
19. Its waters parted, Exodus 14, two words.
22. Egg center.
23. "Then \_\_\_\_, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth ..." (Matthew 2:16, KJV).
25. Mourn.
26. Flickering light sources.

## BIBLE BOWLING

### Turns of phrase

**MANY SAYINGS WE USE** today have biblical origins or can be found in English translations of scripture, especially the King James Version. Bruce Hopkins, a Christian Chronicle reader in Palestine, Texas, sent us a list. Here are a few examples. Would you like to see more? Let us know at [letters@christianchronicle.org](mailto:letters@christianchronicle.org).

**Find the commonly used phrase in these verses (KJV unless otherwise noted):**

1. Genesis 32:30, 2 John 12.
2. Numbers 22:31
3. Deuteronomy 31:27, Acts 7:51.
4. Nehemiah 8:1.
5. Job 9:18 (New International Version).
6. Job 27:5 (English Standard Version).
7. Psalms 44:12 (New King James Version).
8. Psalms 44:20, Jeremiah 51:40.
9. Where in the Bible can you find the phrase "holier than thou?"
10. In Ruth 4:1, the Hebrew phrase translated as "friend" (NIV) and "such a one" (KJV) also can be translated as what common phrase?

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION** and Bible Bowling answers on Page 38.

28. Mountain where God gave Moses "two tables of testimony, tables of stone" (Exodus 31:18, KJV).
29. Disciple who was James' brother.
30. Shackle.
34. "Go to the \_\_\_\_, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6, KJV).
35. "Rescue me from the miry \_\_\_\_ . Don't let me sink ..." (Psalms 69:14, Christian Standard Bible).
37. Miami's state, abbr.
39. Arts degree.

# Word Find: The book of Hebrews

By Betty Hollister | For The Christian Chronicle

FTNOITPMEDERIGHTEOUSPH  
 AELCANREBATEACHINGLAUE  
 INECESARYESNDHTHEALRN  
 TCANSWERLTPUEDIRMENVIO  
 HORIISTLNRMRERUAIHRAFI  
 FUNAESAEUEURCUVRNSETIT  
 URITPULVSERENEEAECTICA  
 LANRSLESCETCACECNREOAC  
 TGGUENANBENTRNCCITCNTI  
 NEOCTGEEISOEIEAIODENDIF  
 AMXIEDLTTTMOVTFMETEEOI  
 NEOSILIHCHENEPIPRATTNT  
 ENRFIFI IAENTSERAELSASC  
 VTNOINYOXROFRCCNFOILCN  
 OONEGRACESTHECAYFIXERA  
 CIDSELTSOPASPASSOVERTS

Find the following words from the book of Hebrews. The unused 32 letters form a statement about the purpose of the book. (See the answer on Page 38.)

- ACCEPTANCE
- ACCOMPANY
- ANSWER
- APOSTLES
- ATONEMENT
- CHRIST
- CONFIDENCE
- COVENANT
- CURTAIN
- ENCOURAGEMENT
- ENDURE
- ETERNAL
- EXACTS
- EXCELLENT
- EXISTENCE
- FAITHFUL
- GRACE
- LEARNING
- MESSAGES
- NECESSARY
- NOTHING
- OFFERED
- OTHERS
- PASSOVER
- PERSEVERANCE
- PREVENTION
- PURIFICATIONS
- RADIANCE
- REBELLION
- REDEMPTION
- RELATED
- RESURRECTION
- RIGHTEOUS
- SACRIFICE
- SALVATION
- SANCTIFICATION
- SERVANT
- TABERNACLE
- TEACHING
- TESTIFIED
- TRUMPET
- USUALLY
- VIOLATE



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# Shank calls church to its 'central mission' – children

Down the street from where you live are houses filled with broken people. People bent, bruised and broken by life walk the streets of every city."

Harold Shank writes those words in the intro to **"Listen and Make Room: Joining God in Welcoming Children."** Some of the most broken, mistreated, overlooked and voiceless people, he writes, are children. And he would know.

For more than 50 years, Shank has worked in ministry and with leadership programs across the country including Network 1:27, a children and family outreach program associated with Churches of Christ. He has seen children in almost every situation, which has spurred his mission to promote Christian childcare.

His book is divided into five sections, each with eight to 10 short chapters that end with a paragraph called "Continuities" that explains how that chapter fits into the section and asks a few questions.

This book brought tears to my eyes and awareness to my heart. Readers

will absolutely be compelled to take action. And it's not hard to take action, Shank says, if we start planting seeds of faith in children and teens.

"I don't understand why we don't have long lines of people waiting to teach children in Bible class," said Shank, an elder of the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. "They are souls waiting for seed, hearts waiting for water.

"If we do not plant and do not water, the results are serious. If we don't build, the movie industry will. If we don't harvest, the secular songwriters will. If we don't plant, their friends will." And society plants weeds.

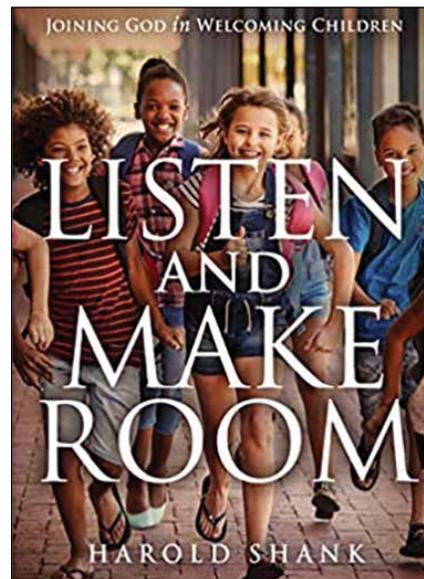
"Too many children grow into adults that engage in violence and crime, vice and promiscuity, drugs and alcohol, and in far too many cases, live lives of quiet desperation," Shank writes. Taking care of at-risk children is not a "backdoor ministry," he adds, "it's central to the mission of the church."

Listening and making room for the vulnerable of this world doesn't have to be harder than it is. Yes, it includes

## In Print



Laura Akins



Harold Shank. **Listen and Make Room: Joining God in Welcoming Children.** Leafwood Publishers, 2020. 256 pgs. \$21.99.

listening to abused and abandoned children, but it also includes listening to those in our own church.

Shank lists women who were champions for children: Mary Crozier taught Sunday school at Norvel Park Church of Christ in Zanesville,

Ohio, for 48 years. Joyce McBride taught hundreds of 4-year olds at Memorial Road before her death in 2015. Mildred Stutzman taught sixth-graders at the East Pike Church of Christ in Indiana, Pa., and invited Shank to church when he was a kid.

"All of these are regular people: farmers, wives, homemakers and factory workers. But they involved children, and they made a difference," Shank writes.

There is not a single person or a single sin or a single problem beyond the power of God in Jesus Christ. Who was a champion for you when you were young? Are you willing to listen to the voices of the world's most vulnerable? Are you willing to work with God and others to make room?

Shank has a way of retelling Bible stories and shining fresh light on them, making this book a great resource for preachers and teachers. It's full of rich sermon illustrations and topics. It would also make a great class or small group topic.

**LAURA AKINS** is Features Editor for *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact [laura.akins@christianchronicle.org](mailto:laura.akins@christianchronicle.org).

# Religion scholar's life was a study in respectful disagreement

If we fear our neighbors, perhaps we should get to know them better.

That's one of the many lessons taught to me by Ed Harrell Jr., my mentor and friend for more than a half-century, since we met in 1969.

Harrell, a widely respected historian and minister among Churches of Christ, died March 15 at age 91.

He was known for his biographical writings on evangelical personalities Oral Roberts and Pat Roberson. He was considered one of the world's top scholars on Pentecostalism and American religion.

We enjoyed animated conversations, even arguments, over meals at various meetings of professional societies

— but also as fellow preachers.

Among the most important lessons he taught me is that it is possible to seriously disagree with someone over issues and ideas both consider important without treating each other with contempt. He stressed the importance of understanding those with whom one may differ, while forthrightly stating uncomfortable and unpopular truths.

Those important truths were not always appreciated by everyone. Many academics (and even some fellow Christians) simply could not believe that someone of Harrell's intellect and insight could be an "anti" — a member of a non-institu-

## Perspective



Steve Wolfgang

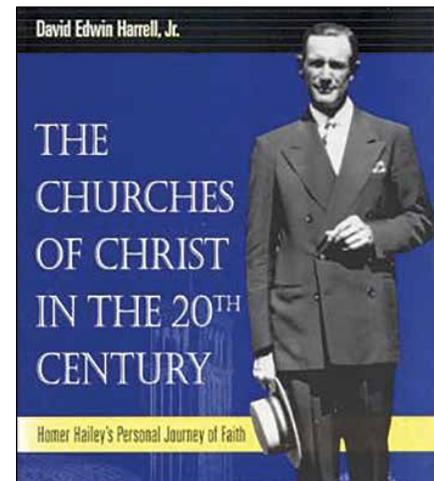
tional Church of Christ — or that he could write objectively about Pentecostals and others whose views he did not share.

Harrell attended Abilene Christian College (now University), the U.S. Naval Academy and David Lipscomb College (now Lipscomb University) before earning his master's and doctorate degrees in history from Vanderbilt University.

His long career included teaching appointments at the University of Oklahoma, the University of Georgia and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. In 2005, he retired after 15 years as a Breeden Distinguished Scholar at Auburn University.

Harrell lectured widely under the auspices of the U.S. State

See **HARRELL**, Page 37



**"The Churches of Christ in the 20th Century: Homer Hailey's Personal Journey of Faith" (2002) is one of many titles by religion scholar Ed Harrell Jr.**

# HARRELL: An eye for the overlooked

FROM PAGE 36

Department as a Fulbright fellow, engaging Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and other religious scholars in exploring the dimensions of religious life in America.

He also was extensively involved in the life of Christians in Churches of Christ, preaching at hundreds of meetings across the U.S. and speaking at lectures and conferences at many of the colleges and universities associated with the fellowship. He was a founding co-editor of *Christianity Magazine* and served the publication from 1984 to 2000.



Harrell

Harrell used his knowledge to educate churches and wider audiences about many previously unexplored aspects of their histories. He published path-breaking works about the Restoration Movement. His three volumes on Churches of Christ revealed that social, economic, sectional and class differences were underlying causes of many of the events in our shared history.

Some of his better-known books — exploring race relations among Southern churches and 20th century healing and charismatic revivals — were published at a time when most historians studiously ignored them.

He was most widely known as a historian of religion — especially of groups, individuals and events that most other historians overlooked, ignored or deliberately marginalized. He had the capacity to describe and explain religious movements — and their peoples and ideas — fairly and accurately. His fairness brought him the respect and admiration of many in those groups as well as other historians. It also brought the disdain or contempt of others whose self-constructed narratives did not fit the facts that Harrell described.

In 2012, he was honored with the publication of a Festschrift, presented at the Christian Scholars' Conference, recognizing his persuasive explanations of restorationism and charismatic movements, integrating marginalized religious groups into the historical narratives of America and the world.

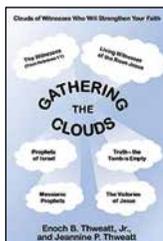
Those who mourn his passing knew him not merely as an accomplished academician but as a steadfast friend and brother whose likeness is rarely seen and is sorely missed.

**STEVE WOLFGANG** preaches for the Downers Grove Church of Christ in suburban Chicago. He taught at the University of Kentucky for two decades and reported for National Public Radio and CBS stations, including reporting from Moscow and Tel Aviv. He and his wife, Bette, a board-certified psychologist, have two children and three grandchildren.

## NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

### STRONG FAITH

Enoch and Jeannine P. Thweatt. **Gathering the Clouds: A Study to Strengthen our Faith.** LifeRich Publishing, 2020. 274 pages, \$25.95 hardcover, \$14.50 paperback. See [thweattbooks.com](http://thweattbooks.com).



"If you want to strengthen your faith in God in these troubled times ... then 'Gathering the Clouds' is a must read!" — Dr. C. Philip Slate  
"In 'Gathering the Clouds,' Enoch and Jeannine Thweatt assemble many clouds of witnesses...in solid proof that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the prophecies and was in

fact the Son of God and resurrected Savior of the world ... [It] takes the Scriptures with which we are familiar and retells them in a cogent fashion that piques interest, challenges some presuppositions and answers questions that we have not even thought to ask." — L. Edward Short  
Read more at [thweattbooks.com](http://thweattbooks.com).

Deborah Thoennes Schlapper and Roxanne Schmitt Copeland. **You Are a Gift from God.** Westbow Press, 2021, \$18.95. Available from Westbow Press.com and BarnesandNoble.com.

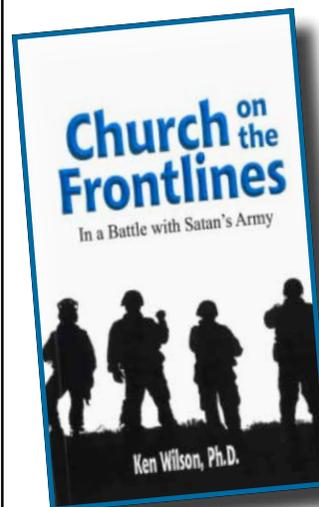
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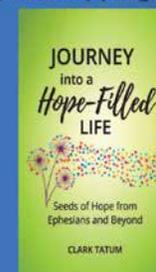
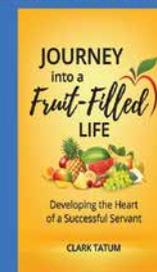
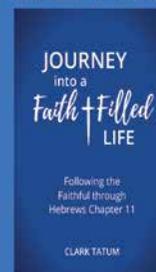
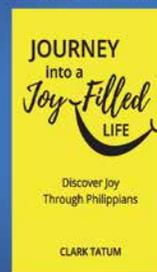
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and **Chris Donlan** ([cdonlan@gmail.com](mailto:cdonlan@gmail.com))

**Crossword** | From Page 34**Bible Bowling** | From Page 34

- 1) "I have seen God face to face." 2) "...and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face."
- 3) "For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck ..."
- 4) "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man ..."
- 5) "He would not let me catch my breath ..."
- 6) "Far be it from me to say that you are right ..."
- 7) "You sell Your people for next to nothing ..."
- 8) Noah, Genesis 6:9.
- 9) Ham, Genesis 5:32.
- 10) Mule, 2 Samuel 18:9.
- 11) "The song of God's servant Moses and of the

**Word Search** | From Page 35

The unused 32 letters read: **"THE THEME IS THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST"**



ERIK TRYGGESTAD

In Port-au-Prince, Haiti, an Air Force C-17 takes off after delivering aid.

## A journey from a food truck to an Air Force cargo plane and back again

ALTUS, Okla.

Whenever we come to this southwestern Oklahoma town to see my wife's folks, we hit all the high points — Roberts Drive Inn, Luigi's Pizzeria and the Friendship breakfast buffet. I recently added MeatHead Ed's food truck to the mix. (Get the corn as your side. Trust me.)

I also make sure to visit the coffee shops — Just Brew It and White Buffalo. This time I went to the White Buffalo next to Altus Air Force Base to swap stories with Adam Matthews, the new minister for the Tamarack Road Church of Christ. He recently finished graduate work at Abilene Christian University.

We talked about mutual friends — my former roommate, ACU art professor Dan McGregor, and Gary Ford, who runs a coffeehouse ministry in Bangkok.

Then Adam told me how he almost got arrested in Cape Town, South Africa, while doing mission work. (He tells it better. Ask him.)

All the while, massive C-17 Globemaster III cargo planes circled above us, practicing touch-and-go landings. Altus is the training hub for the planes. They've also got KC-135 Stratotankers and KC-46

Pegasuses. Big stuff.

I was inside a C-17 once — in Haiti, of all places. It was 2015, and I was in Port-au-Prince with Hope for Haiti's

**Insight**

Erik Tryggestad

Children. We drove out onto the tarmac to meet the cargo plane, flown by the 315th Airlift Wing out of Joint Base Charleston in South Carolina.

With a lot of help from our Haitian brethren, we unloaded pallets of high-protein rice meals for the children's homes and schools supported by Hope for Haiti's Children.

The food came from International Disaster Emergency Service (IDES), a faith-based nonprofit. When the Air Force does training missions, they're allowed to bring humanitarian aid

under the Denton Cargo Program.

Unfortunately, Haiti is a bit too unpredictable right now for such efforts, my friend Steve Cooner, Hope for Haiti's Children's development director, told me recently.

I pray that the flights will resume soon. When they

do, I plan to ask MeatHead Ed for a sizable food donation for Haiti.

I mean, I *did* just give him a plug.



TONYA HUNT

**Johnny Laine of Hope for Haiti's Children and Erik Tryggestad get a look inside the cargo plane.**

**ERIK TRYGGESTAD** is president and CEO of *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact [erik@christianchronicle.org](mailto:erik@christianchronicle.org), and follow him on Twitter @[eriktryggestad](https://twitter.com/eriktryggestad).



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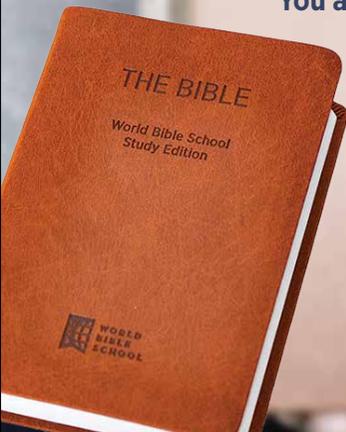
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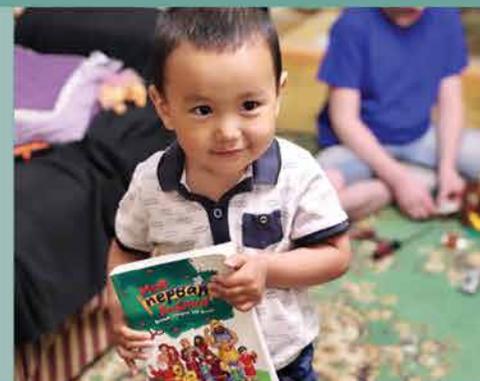
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