Minneapolis Central Church of Christ members sing on the Sunday after former officer Derek Chauvin's conviction.

Race discussion exposes differences

By Bobby Ross Jr. | The Christian Chronicle

Woodbury, Minn. — A year ago, George Floyd’s killing sparked outrage around the world. At the Woodbury Church of Christ, a predominantly White congregation about 20 miles east of Minneapolis, the Black man’s death under a police officer’s knee provoked difficult conversations.

Some church members in this fast-growing suburb, where new homes keep replacing cornfields and pastures, welcomed the ongoing dialogue on race and justice. Others were not pleased.

“We’ve had some people say, ‘Why are you even talking about it?’” said Patrick Doherty, preaching minister for the Woodbury church, which averaged Sunday attendance of about 240 before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

But he’s quick to add: “Most of the feedback about tackling the topic has been supportive. The bulk of members are aware that this discussion needs to happen.”

Even before fired Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin ignored Floyd’s cries of “I can’t breathe” on May 25, 2020, the Woodbury church had taken steps to bridge racial divides.

Those steps include annual unity services with the Minneapolis Central Church of Christ and helping with the predominantly Black congregation’s benevolence and food ministry.

But the aftermath of Floyd’s death exposed differences within the Woodbury church itself. Some members joined peaceful protests and promoted racial equity in other ways.

A tragic death, a tough dialogue

In the City Where George Floyd died, influential preacher fights for justice.

By Bobby Ross Jr. | The Christian Chronicle

Minneapolis

To Russell A. Pointer Sr., fighting for justice is a biblical pursuit.

Most residents of Minnesota’s largest city might not recognize the 56-year-old preacher.

But to prominent leaders from Gov. Tim Walz to U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, he’s a familiar — and respected — advocate.

The Minneapolis Central Church of Christ minister’s influence was evident on a recent Sunday after a state jury found fired police officer Derek Chauvin guilty of murdering George Floyd.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison visited Pointer’s congregation — the state’s only predominantly Black Church of Christ — the same day CBS News’ “60 Minutes” featured his high-profile role overseeing Chauvin’s prosecution.

Pointer made the closing announcements at the end of a nearly two-hour worship assembly, then invited Ellison to speak.

The former U.S. congressman hugged the preacher before turning his attention to the congregation.

A couple reflects at the intersection where George Floyd was killed.

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See George Floyd, Page 8
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The love of Jesus compelled Sonia Madiki to teach women to sew. Now the program she launched a decade ago has become a lifeline for families as her home nation of India endures a devastating wave of COVID-19. “It’s a really frightening and painful situation,” she said. Madiki and her husband, minister Vijay Madiki, serve the Church of Christ Samalkot and work with a network of some 300 congregations in southern India. Seeing the plight of women in the villages where they minister inspired Sonia Madiki to launch SWAN, a program that gives rural, homebound ladies sewing machines and the skills to use them. Then they could “earn money to be able to give their children more nutritious food, health care and especially the opportunity to go to school,” Sonia Madiki said. She couldn’t have known 10 years ago that she was training the seamstresses for their biggest client and their most important task — mask-making, with supplies and funding from the local authorities. When asked if the soaring death toll in her homeland made her wonder where the Lord she serves is right now, she replied, “No, no, brother. I see that God is always at work. Even in the midst of this pandemic situation we can experience God’s miracles.”

In southern India, people who have lost income due to COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns receive aid from Churches of Christ.

A pandemic of prayer for India

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

The love of Jesus compelled Sonia Madiki to teach women to sew. Now the program she launched a decade ago has become a lifeline for families as her home nation of India endures a devastating wave of COVID-19. “It’s a really frightening and painful situation,” she said. Madiki and her husband, minister Vijay Madiki, serve the Church of Christ Samalkot and work with a network of some 300 congregations in southern India. Seeing the plight of women in the villages where they minister inspired Sonia Madiki to launch SWAN, a program that gives rural, homebound ladies sewing machines and the skills to use them. Then they could “earn money to be able to give their children more nutritious food, health care and especially the opportunity to go to school,” Sonia Madiki said.

In South Carolina, a vision for church planting

BY CHLOE FRANKLIN | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ROCK HILL, S.C. — A quarter-century ago, the Charlotte Avenue Church of Christ was at a crossroads. The congregation in the Charlotte, N.C., suburb of Rock Hill, S.C., had a vision to serve its community and fulfill the Great Commission. The church had a choice: It could expand its own facilities, or it could plant a new congregation in an area with incoming families, elder Steve Cox said. Charlotte Avenue chose the latter, and that decision has resulted in three new congregations. Charlotte Avenue planted the Church of Christ at Gold Hill Road, and Gold Hill planted the Church of Christ at Clover and the Church of Christ at Indian Land. “Acts chapter one, Jesus talks about how the church would grow in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the whole world,” former Gold Hill elder Brett Pharr said. “And that’s the way the church grew, by church planting. ... So, reigniting a mindset of church planting is key.” Charlotte Avenue bought the land for the original church plant from a member, Cox said. Volunteers and some members who lived close to Fort Mill were asked to go and help the church plant get started and succeed. Then the members informed the surrounding neighborhoods about the new congregation.
DAUGHTER: Graduating in a pandemic year

Kendall Ross, right, with her father, Bobby Ross Jr., at Pepperdine University.

From Page 3

Her high school’s valedictorians. Her father, mother and two older brothers all attended Oklahoma Christian University.

But Kendall likes to zig when other people zag. So she chose Pepperdine — 1,400 miles from home.

“She plans to major in political science and history and then, at some point, become president of the United States,” I said in that 2017 column.

I also may have made a sappy comment about my baby bird growing up and flying away.

Certainly, she gained an incredible number of frequent-flier miles her first few years at Pepperdine.

As a member and later student director of the Waves debate team, she competed in Canada, England, the Netherlands, South Africa and all over the U.S.

She spent her sophomore year in Pepperdine’s since-closed Shanghai program.

She served as a resident assistant and enjoyed visiting Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Thailand, Tibet and South Korea. In Tibet, she donned a furry hat, rode a yak and accidentally kicked a monk. I wish I had the space to share full details.

But then came something none of us anticipated: a once-in-a-century pandemic.

My daughter returned home to Oklahoma City midway through the spring semester of her junior year. She — like thousands of classmates — completed most of her final three semesters remotely.

Until our recent trip, she had not set foot on the Pepperdine campus in over a year.

She returned to make her senior history thesis presentation in person.

She invited me to go with her but stressed, “You can’t be weird if I hang out with my friends.”

I found cheap airfare for the two of us from Dallas to Los Angeles and booked a rental car. We are both fully vaccinated so felt comfortable traveling.

Once in Southern California, I spent time on the beach while Kendall caught up with Pepperdine friends.

To my delight, she also carved out a window to eat lunch with me at Paradise Cove. That popular beachside restaurant is familiar to most who have attended Pepperdine’s annual Bible lectures. We shared a $32.95 entree of fish and chips.

That night, Kendall and four fellow history majors made their presentations to professor Loretta Hunnicutt and other faculty members and relatives watching on Zoom. When we made the trip, I thought that COVID-19 protocols might prevent me from being in the classroom.

So I felt extremely blessed when Hunnicutt, a Christian Chronicle reader, welcomed parents to watch the soon-to-be graduates’ reports in person. Many of us celebrated outside afterward at Malibu Yogurt & Ice Cream. I am sad to report no celebrity sightings.

Kendall titled her thesis “Knit it to Win it: Division and Empowerment in Black and White Women’s Great War Knitting Movements.”

The topic reflects my daughter’s keen interest in knitting.

During her Pepperdine years, she turned her favorite hobby into an entrepreneurial career, starting a business called I’d Knit That. In a short time, it has amassed more than 24,000 Instagram followers.

In fact, Kendall has decided to forgo graduate studies in history and focus on growing her company.

My wife, Tamie, and I could not be more proud of her.

My only request, dear daughter: Next time I tell a dad joke, please acknowledge it with at least a pity laugh.

Bobby Ross Jr. is editor-in-chief of The Christian Chronicle. Reach him at bobby.ross@christianchronicle.org. Follow him on Twitter at @bobbyross.
Sarah Baugh couldn’t sleep.

It was late spring 2020. The nation had erupted into protests and unrest after George Floyd’s killing on May 25.

Baugh, a certified public accountant and administrative assistant for the Brentwood Hills Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn., wanted to do something. But she felt helpless.

She knew that she had Black brothers and sisters in Christ who were hurting. She had participated in Build the Bridge, a program that promotes awareness and healthy response to racial brokenness and systemic injustice. But she felt God pushing her to do more.

“I kept feeling God saying, ‘It’s great that you’re talking about this with your White friends, but you need to reach out,’” Baugh said.

While lying awake that night, Baugh remembered Dorcas Curry, a motivational speaker and author whom she had met at a luncheon. As she wrestled to sleep, Baugh felt God was prompting her to reach out to Curry. So she picked up her phone.

“I’m tired of standing on the sidelines, just wringing my hands and not knowing what to do,” Baugh told Curry in a text message.

The two agreed to meet. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the women sat masked at a park in Nashville, 6 feet apart. Curry, a member of the Schrader Lane Church of Christ in Nashville, wasn’t afraid to voice her reservations about what she thought Baugh was wanting to do.

“I told her, ‘If you’re looking to me to be the person to teach White people how to treat Black folks, I’m not that person,’” Curry said.

The women agreed that something should be done, and they asked God to show them. They knew they alone couldn’t change the world, but maybe they could start a ripple effect that could bring about positive change in their own congregations and communities.

Curry and Baugh decided to call some women to talk about race issues and their own experiences. These conversations led to the formation of Shades of Grace Sisters.

The group of Black and White women is interested in making the church a better place racially and setting an example of what racial unity should look like in God’s kingdom. The sisters meet about once a month on Zoom. About 25 to 45 women participate in any given meeting.

Curry said she has witnessed understanding and healing during every meeting.

“It’s because people are being so honest,” she said. “There are tears in the group when women are revealing and feeling.”

During the first few calls, participants were asked to share their own experiences with racism.

“I think that was really eye-opening for a lot of the White women,” Baugh said. “There were women who had experienced racism just the month or the week before.”

See SISTERS, Page 6
SISTERS: As group grows, leaders plan more sharing, listening, healing

From Page 5

Jenise Stewart, a member of the Church of Christ at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, didn’t know what to expect when she accepted an invitation to a Shades of Grace Sisters meeting.

“It was during a time where the political climate was so polarized,” Stewart said. “Protests for social injustice were widespread, and the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol had occurred. The Shades of Grace Sisters forum allowed for us to express how we were feeling without judgment. For me, that was most important — to be able to express how I felt and to be able to listen to others express their anger, concern, dismay and confusion without anyone casting dispersions.”

Creating a safe environment within the group was a priority from the beginning, so Curry and Baugh established a boundary early on.

“Our purpose is to blend sisters of all skin colors for racial healing,” Baugh said. “So we don’t talk politics. We talk about what race issues mean to us as Christians and how to respond to the world around us.”

Baugh and Curry agree that the Shades of Grace Sisters’ identity in Christ has helped keep the group’s culture focused on its purpose.

“Knowing we are Christian sisters eliminates all of that other stuff,” Curry said.

‘No One Said Anything’

Nevertheless, the group has engaged in some raw conversations.

During one meeting, Curry asked the women to share their feelings about the case of Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old African American woman who was shot six times and killed by plainclothes police officers who had forced their way into her Louisville, Ky., apartment. After Curry asked the question, silence fell over the group.

“No one said anything, and that bothered me,” she said. “If we’re going to talk about these issues, we have to share our feelings about them.”

The White women had stayed quiet for fear of offending the Black women, and the Black women were offended that no one said anything.

“We realized it’s OK to say, ‘I don’t know what to say,’” Baugh said.

Learning how to navigate these moments has led to increased understanding among the Shades of Grace Sisters, which is crucial to the group’s purpose. For Curry, understanding is a big part of what she hopes will be achieved through the group.

“Not reconciliation but conciliation,” she said. “When I look back at my folks, there was never a good time between the races. So that’s what it is for me. We’re trying to make a conciliation.”

For Leah Bradshaw of the Brentwood Hills church, striving for racial healing and unity is a significant part of her faith.

“As a Christian, I am aware of many reasons why we should come together and discuss matters of race,” she said. “First, as those who claim to love God, we are expected to love each other. ... This would include celebrating with those who rejoice and weeping with those who mourn.

“We also know from Micah 6 that pleasing God requires acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with him. Listening to those who have felt hurt, taking responsibility for my part and having compassion for the injured certainly seem to be in line with this passage.”

Overcoming Denial

While these principles are central to Christianity, Curry and Baugh recognize that some Christians still have a difficult time talking about race issues, including racism that exists within churches. Curry and Baugh attribute this to denial.

“They don’t want to make it real,” Curry said. “When you don’t talk about something, you can pretend it’s not happening.”

Despite the inevitable tense moments, Shades of Grace Sisters maintain commitment to respectfully listening to each other’s hearts. Group member Norma Burgess, a member of the Schrader Lane church, believes this is the key to healing.

“Conversations about race are difficult, uncomfortable and tend to be generally avoided,” Burgess said. “No one likes to feel uncomfortable in this way. Unless someone starts the conversation, it will not be held.”

She said the Shades of Grace Sisters are getting more and more comfortable with each other and are making an effort to hear voices that may differ from what they had previously thought to be true.

Curry and Baugh firmly believe God called them to form this group for women and to start conversations that can lead to healing and racial unity.

“Women have very crucial work in the church,” Curry said. “We have a different drive about getting things done. Mary discovered the empty tomb. Churches are still segregated, so maybe the sisters need to step in.”

Women, Baugh said, specifically those who are mothers, have the ability to view race issues in a specific way. “We think, ‘What if that had been my son?’” she said.

The Shades of Grace Sisters met just after the recent murder conviction of Derek Chauvin, the fired Minneapolis officer who pressed his knee to Floyd’s neck and ignored the Black man’s complaints that he couldn’t breathe.

The topic of the meeting was not about whether the members agreed with the conviction, but about how it made them feel.

One Black sister said, “Derek Chauvin has a mother. What is she feeling right now? What has this done to his family?”

Baugh had not considered that before. “I believe it is easier for women to empathize and view things differently,” Baugh said.

As COVID-19 restrictions ease, Curry and Baugh look forward to more in-person meetings. The congregations the women attend fully support the group’s efforts. In fact, ministers and elders of both churches have started conversations with each other.

The Shades of Grace sisters prayerfully anticipate more sharing, listening and healing as the group and its efforts continue to grow.

“I believe that the ladies who participate in the group have a sincere desire to want to understand their sisters who are of another race/ethnicity,” Stewart said. “Most importantly, I believe the Shades of Grace Sisters want to have an open heart that will allow for God to do the healing.”

For More Information or to join a meeting, send an email to shadesofgracesisters@yahoo.com.
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GEORGE FLOYD: Minneapolis minister cares about 'right and wrong'

FROM PAGE 1

“It ought to be safe for your son and daughter to be able to go out, even if they’re pulled over by an officer for an infraction, to leave that exchange and come home safely,” Ellison told the roughly 65 church members gathered in person — with many still watching online because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It ought to be the case that if somebody stops your child that they don’t put them up under their knee and crush the life out of their body until dead,” he added. “It ought to be that our families don’t have to worry about their safety from the people whose job it is to keep them safe.”

“Amen! Amen!” the crowd responded. “That’s right!”

CHURCH LIVES OUT ITS FAITH

Ellison, 57, became the first Black person and the first Muslim elected to statewide office in Minnesota in 2018. He lives within walking distance of the Central church, which is known for feeding about 200 needy families a week through its benevolence and food ministry.

In an interview with The Christian Chronicle, Ellison explained why he showed up at Pointer’s church five days after jurors convicted Chauvin of second- and third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in Floyd’s May 25, 2020, death.

“Dr. Pointer’s a good friend of mine,” the attorney general said. “He has a wonderful body of believers. The folks at this church are known to live out their faith. They don’t just say it, and they don’t just keep their faith inside the church walls. They carry it outside the church walls. … They actually follow Jesus, right?”

“So I thought … it would be only natural to come back and just tell the folks how it went,” he added. “Because the folks at this church, they take feeding the hungry, taking care of the people who are in prison, social justice things — they take it seriously. They want a better world.”

State Sen. Bobby Joe Champion, a Christian who represents the neighborhood where the church is located, accompanied Ellison, a fellow Democrat, to the church.

“This church does have a reputation for being outside of the four walls and really being about change and faith and putting their faith in action,” Champion said.

But the lawmaker stressed, “Not one time has Dr. Russell Pointer asked me about (being a) Democrat or Republican. I don’t think he cares about that stuff. But right and wrong? He’s all over that. Justice? He’s all over that.”

Also at worship on this Sunday: Kimberly Hunt, a Central member who spends a lot of time in Washington, D.C., as a senior adviser to Klobuchar, also a Democrat. Minnesota’s senior senator joined Pointer and other leaders at the Central church this past summer for a news conference on voting rights.

“It’s personal for me,” Hunt said of the Chauvin verdict. “I’m the aunt of three African American males and also the godmother of an African American male, so when we talk about what policing should look like, and police reform, I’m happy to share my voice.

“I, too, agree that young men should not be killed in the hands of police for minor violations,” she added. “Because you have an infraction doesn’t mean your life should be ended.”

THE ROLE OF THE BLACK CHURCH

The Central church is about six miles from Cup Foods, the corner convenience store where Floyd, 46, was accused of trying to pass a fake $20 bill last Memorial Day.

Bystander videos captured Chauvin pressing his knee to Floyd’s neck — for 9½ minutes — as the handcuffed Black man pleaded, “I can’t breathe.”

Floyd’s death triggered a national reckoning on racial injustice and police brutality as months of protests — some of which turned violent — drew bipartisan calls to reform law enforcement.

Three other former officers who were at the scene — Tou Thao, Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane — face a state trial in August on charges of aiding and abetting Floyd’s death. They and Chauvin have also been indicted on federal charges of violating Floyd’s civil rights.

Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo, the first Black chief in the majority-White city’s history, fired all four officers the day after Floyd was killed. The chief soon afterward labeled the death a “murder.”

Arradondo gave “unequivocal and historic testimony” at Chauvin’s trial, condemning the officer’s actions and offering “what is seen by some veteran lawyers as a fresh crack in the longstanding ‘blue wall’ code of silence by police,” the Minneapolis Star-Tribune reported.

In a Zoom discussion after the verdict, Pointer praised Arradondo’s testimony and told the chief, “You’re such a good friend.”

Arradondo, in turn, extolled the commitment of Pointer and other Black ministers to improving “the health and wellness and vitality of our city.”

“Mr. Floyd was killed on Monday, May 25,” the chief noted in an interview with the Chronicle.

“The morning of May 26, I called members of our Black leadership, particularly the churches, to meet with me.

“That wasn’t by accident,” he added. “Again, it just speaks to the Black church. … That’s where we come for healing. That’s where we come for guidance.”

It’s easy to look for solutions to societal problems in the police
Minneapolis Central members stand as they sing. Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, beside the woman in the red dress, is among the visitors.

department and city government, Arradondo said.

But often, he said, ministers such as Pointer do the important work behind the scenes.

“When our city was literally burning, it wasn’t 60-plus-year-olds that were setting those fires,” Arradondo said. “A lot of the anger and a lot of the frustration and hopelessness was young people, and I will tell you that where many cities miss the boat is being able to reach young people. And Dr. Pointer and his outreach and his church, they’re able to reach young people.

“For any major city chief, if they do not have a strong relationship with their faith leaders in their city, they are grossly missing a vital piece in terms of what community safety is all about.”

'SOCIAL JUSTICE IS IMPORTANT'

Pointer grew up in the Harlem Church of Christ in New York and began preaching at age 11.

The late R.C. Wells, the Harlem congregation’s nationally renowned minister, served as Pointer’s spiritual mentor.

Pointer later attended Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas — the only historically Black college associated with Churches of Christ — and spent two decades preaching in the Nashville, Tenn., area.

Eleven years ago, he was recruited to Minneapolis to help revive the Central church.

The once-thriving congregation had dwindled to about 25 members. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance had grown back to more than 150 on a good Sunday.

When the new senior minister arrived, he put a focus on community involvement.

.GONE IN A DAY” in Minneapolis, citing Pointer’s service with the Harrison neighborhood, the Hennepin County sheriff’s African American/Social Religious Leadership Council, the Minnesota Council of Churches and other volunteer groups.

“I’m tired of the Church of Christ, for lack of wording, not doing anything,” Pointer told the Chronicle.

“The stuff that’s in the world is going to hit our church eventually, and social justice is important because … racism is a sin. We have to address it.”

Pointer has advocated for justice in deaths ranging from Philando Castile, a Black man fatally shot in 2016 by a Minneapolis police officer, to Daunte Wright, a Black man fatally shot April 11 by an officer in the Minneapolis suburb of Brooklyn Center, about 10 miles from the courthouse where Chauvin’s trial was ongoing.

Wright was 20. He had a 2-year-old son. His killing hit particularly close to home for Pointer.

As a boy, Wright and his family had attended the Central church.

“I don’t remember him, but I remember the family,” Pointer said.

A DECISION TO FEED, NOT PROTEST

The chaos that erupted in Minneapolis’ streets after Floyd’s death resulted in the destruction of stores that served residents who live near the Central church.

A Walgreens drugstore and a Cub Foods supermarket — not to be confused with Cup Foods, where Floyd was killed — were shut down for months.

Amid the protests, the church did not change its focus.

“I said, ‘Let’s just feed people,’” Pointer said. “So when people marched, we just kept feeding people. So when people got hungry, we kept feeding them. That’s what we’re known for.”

About 75 percent of the families served by the church are Hispanic, about 20 percent are Black, and the remaining 5 percent are Hmong and

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MINNEAPOLIS: Relief, praise greet verdict

FROM PAGE 9

a few Whites, Pointer said. The
Hmong are a major ethnic group in
the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Many
arrived as refugees from Asia.

Many of those helped are
Muslims, so the meat provided
includes non-pork options.

“We give out four days’ worth of
food, meat, eggs, cheese, water,
batteries, women’s products, toiletries,
the whole nine yards,” Pointer
said, giving a tour of the church’s
basement, filled with 11 freezers
and six refrigerators.

The minister said he believes
protesting is biblical, but he felt the
church could serve the community
better by feeding the hungry. At
the same time, he remains active in
ministerial groups that prayed for
peace and justice after Floyd’s death.

Before the Chauvin verdict,
Minneapolis braced for more
unrest and violence. Buildings were
boarded up. Thousands of National
Guard troops were deployed.

“At first, I was really nervous
because I thought they were going
to come back with a ‘not guilty’
verdict, then they were going to
tear up Minnesota, and I was going
to have to move,” Central member
Valerie Hannah said.

Hannah said she “doesn’t under-
stand anybody tearing up where
they live.”

But the 64-year-
 old Christian, who
watched the entire
trial on television,
said she believes
justice was served
with Chauvin’s
conviction.

“For one reason, I
felt like one of those people
standing on the sidewalk,” she said. “I saw
what the policeman was doing to
the man. (Floyd) kept saying he
couldn’t breathe. … I didn’t think it
was right. Not because of his color.
He could have been a White man,
and I still would have felt the same
way. It was wrong, just wrong.”

Another Central member, Gail
Brown, said she wept when Chauvin
was convicted on all counts.

“In all of my 69 years, I have
never seen a police officer be made
accountable for what he was doing,”

Brown said. “So this was really
an impactful decision. … It was
exciting, but it threw me so much
that all I could do was cry.”

FROM EXHAUSTION TO ELATION

Despite driving a sleek black SUV
with a personalized “MANAGOD”
license plate, Pointer said he repeat-
edly has experienced the indignity
of police stopping him because of
his skin color.

After Floyd’s death last year,
the minister voiced outrage and
frustration.

“We saw life taken out of a person,”
Pointer told the Chronicle that week.
“We’re all asking for a murder convic-
tion, … Being Black in America
should not be a death sentence.”

Eleven months later, as he awaited
Chauvin’s trial outcome, he felt a mix
of apprehension and exhaustion.

“This has been a long journey
from Castile to this incident,” he
said. “I knew that if the verdict
came back, and he didn’t get guilty,
I knew our city was torn up. … So
I knew we couldn’t handle another
big incident like that.”

The guilty verdict rejuvenated
him. Justice, as he saw it, won.

He thanked the Lord and “went
from exhausted to being elated,
excited, emancipated.”

Chauvin could face up to 40 years
in prison. Hennepin
County Court Judge
Peter Cahill, who
presided over the
trial, is expected to
decide the former
officer’s punish-
ment at a June 25
sentencing hearing.

The Sunday after
Chauvin left the courtroom
in handcuffs, Pointer lifted his voice
to heaven and led the Central
congregation in singing “Because
He Lives.”

After praising Jesus, church
members bowed their heads.

“We thank you for the verdict,”
Pointer prayed, “but Father, we
know … the fight has just started.
We have to continue to embrace
your struggle.”

READ EXPANDED COVERAGE of the George Floyd
case at christianchronicle.org/georgefloyd.
WOODSBURY: Church surveying members about race and faith

FROM PAGE 1

marches and protests. When rioting occurred, some helped clean up the damage. After markets were destroyed, some donated money and delivered groceries.

“Unfortunately, the largely peaceful protests during the day were often conflated with the looting and rioting at night,” Doherty said. “It also seemed to me that some Christians who had been quiet about the death of George Floyd were fairly vocal in their condemning the looting and rioting.

“I think condemning looting is a perfectly reasonable position,” the minister added, “but doing so without acknowledging a human death seems to me to have missed the bigger picture.”

As food needs increased after the rioting, elder Travis Edwards and other Woodbury members helped the Minneapolis Central church expand its basement pantry.

In addition, Edwards cleared large trees that were creating a problem on Central’s property.

His wife, Anna Edwards, and their seven children joined in the volunteer work.

“Our city was very troubled at the time, and I felt like that was just a good place to focus,” Anna said.

Travis, a train engineer and former bricklayer, said a desire to help people in need motivated him.

“As far as political views, we probably differ with them sometimes,” he said of Minneapolis Central members. “Otherwise, I don’t feel any racial tensions, I guess, when we’re over there. … We’re just friends and co-workers in God’s kingdom is how I feel.”

Travis welcomed the April 20 guilty verdict in Chauvin’s murder trial but said he did not like how political the case became.

Three days before the verdict, Rep. Maxine Waters, a Democrat from California, called for protesters to “stay on the street” and “get more confrontational” if Chauvin was acquitted.

“I think we probably could have gotten the same verdict without that,” Travis said of pressure on the jury.

“It’s kind of tarnished our justice system in my mind because it’s polluted it a little by involving politics.

“You know how you’re always seeing Lady Justice with the blindfold on?” he added. “That’s what I hope our justice system is, and it didn’t feel that way to me.”

WHAT JESUS SAYS

A quarter-century ago, Steve Countryman, a former missionary to Thailand, worked with the Woodbury congregation to launch the St. Paul Urban Ministry.

It aims to reach the thousands of Hmong refugees who settled in the Twin Cities after the Vietnam War.

Now the suburban church’s discipleship and outreach minister as well as one of its eight shepherds, Countryman sees a need for Christians to grapple with “what our world is talking about.”

“We want to say, ‘Hey, here’s what Jesus says. Here’s what the Bible says. Here’s what God says about how we should deal with this,'” Countryman said of the Floyd case.

“But also, if there is an injustice, I believe Christians need to speak to that, so we have talked about it.”

To gain a better understanding of the congregation’s mindset, Woodbury leaders are asking members to fill out a questionnaire on faith and race. The survey idea resulted from discussions with the church’s own minority members, Doherty said. (A Black member who is a part of the church’s faith and race committee said he’d be excited to read this article but declined to be interviewed.)

Members’ responses will help the ministry staff craft a sermon series on the issue.

“We felt like, as a church, that we needed to have a coordinated response,” Doherty said, “and one of the tricky parts about this is … everything becomes so political so quickly that it can be easy to overlook the biblical perspective.

“And we had people who were frustrated because they felt like, ‘Well, the Bible doesn’t speak to this kind of stuff,’” he added. “Then when you start reading the New Testament letters, you realize the majority of what Paul was addressing was culture and ethnic diversity that they were struggling with.”

But it’s not a simple study.

Terminology itself — from the definition of racism to the soundness of critical race theory — can bog down a discussion.

“I think it’s been good for a couple of our Black members to have a chance to talk,” Anna Edwards said. “It’s also felt like to some of our White members … that we were focusing on something that wasn’t really an issue.

“It’s surprised me how personal it can feel to both parties,” she said of trying to address some members’ concerns without alienating others.

A TRYING TIME

These conversations have occurred amid a pandemic that has stirred debates among Christians about masks, social distancing, vaccines and other controversies.

The Woodbury church met online and then outdoors and now has two Sunday morning services indoors — with masks required at both but only recorded singing at the early assembly.

Youth minister Caleb McCaughan and his wife, Taylor, arrived at their new congregation about a week before the COVID-19 lockdown began in mid-March 2020.

Two months later, Floyd’s death thrust the Minneapolis-St. Paul area into the international spotlight.

“To actually be in the Twin Cities when George Floyd died, to see the emotion of the community we’re living in, I think that had a pretty big impact on us and wanting to find a way forward,” Caleb said.

They also felt an obligation to help the church’s teens process their feelings, Taylor said.

The couple, who have a 6-month-old son, Axel, watched the verdict in Chauvin’s trial on live television.

“I think this was a big step for justice in this situation,” Caleb said, “but I think this is where the church can kind of step up in recognizing that they didn’t close the book on where there is sin and injustice in our communities here, specifically the Twin Cities. This was just one case.”

Said Taylor: “It is the beginning of a long road ahead of us. But I do think this was a first step toward justice in this one specific case. I do think we have a long road, not just in the city but in the church as well. I think we have a lot of things we need to be proactive about.”

As Doherty, the preaching minister, sees it, any progress must start with recognizing that “Jesus would care more about the loss of George Floyd’s life than the destruction of property.”

“But I worry,” he said, “that people are allowing their politics to inform their Gospel rather than the other way around.”
PLANTING: One decision resulted in four congregations

“Don’t lose sight of … how it’s going to be affected and how it’s going to look post-plant,” Bitting said.

They were more willing to step out and take part, and a lot more people were active and took part in the services and in outreach, in classes,” Glenda Hood said. They were “just generally more active than what they had felt in a larger group.”

The congregation’s ties with the community were being strengthened by the new church plant. Through church planting, they started developing new talent, Pharr said. New skills were brought out in the members, and those members learned to grow because the congregation had to pull together.

“We want to see that carried out locally in the community of Indian Land,” minister Chad Garrett said. The Indian Land church’s focus is to help the surrounding area. Garrett recently became involved in the Indian Land Chamber of Commerce as a way to strengthen the congregation’s ties with the community.

Garrett’s advice for church planters: Take care of the physical side. But don’t neglect the spiritual side.

Christians must invest time in talking to, spending time with and studying with people, including those who have been baptized, he said. Proper planning, prayer, vision, strong leadership and financial support are all essential to a successful church plant.

Also, having dedicated people to help with the new church plant is a huge asset, Jim Hood said. In addition, he believes that the heart and the mindset of the people are more important than the building.

Bitting believes that planting grows Christians in the church because of the mission work they are doing in their communities.

Gold Hill leaders noticed that through church planting, they started developing new talent, Pharr said. New skills were brought out in the members, and those members learned to grow because the congregation had to pull together.

But attention must be paid, too, to the needs of the planting congregation.

“We want to see that carried out locally in the community of Indian Land,” minister Chad Garrett said. The Indian Land church’s focus is
Trials and ‘pure joy’ in Romania

PITEȘTI, Romania — There’s plenty of bleak news in Central Europe nowadays — rising numbers of COVID-19 cases, lockdowns, curfews and protests against restrictions.

But spiritual seekers in Romania also have greater access to good news in their native tongue — thanks to 23-year-old Bianca Zanfir.

Zanfir, an English teacher for a private school in Pitești, was a key translator for a commentary on the New Testament book of James (“Iacov” in Romanian) written by staffers at Sunset International Bible Institute in Texas.

In timely fashion, the book urges believers to “consider it pure joy ... whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance” (James 1:2-3).

Zanfir began attending Bible classes as a child and was baptized at age 14, said missionary Harvey Starling. Romanian and English aren’t her only languages. A member of the Valcea Church of Christ, she translates for the deaf and teaches children’s Bible classes.

Romanian Christians plan to translate all 27 Sunset commentaries on the New Testament into their language, Starling said. James is No. 14. Zamfir currently is translating the commentary on Colossians.

Starling’s work in Romania is a ministry of the Midway Church of Christ in Jasper, Ala.

Spiritual therapy at rehab center results in baptisms

José David Alcerro prays for 27 new believers at a rehabilitation center in Matiguás, Nicaragua. Alcerro and fellow ministers Julio Alcerro and Eduardo Cisneros conduct a spiritual therapy ministry at the facility, 50 miles from the Church of Christ they serve in Matagalpa. The center houses about 180 people, ages 12 to 80, struggling with substance abuse. The ministers cite Jesus’ words in Mark 2:17 as their motivation: “The healthy do not need a doctor, but the sick.” An earlier campaign in 2020 resulted in 19 baptisms. The Edmond Church of Christ in Oklahoma supports the ministers.

ALBANIA
BERAT — An earthquake and a global pandemic have hampered efforts to plant a Church of Christ in this Central European city, said Cimi Kafexhiu, who ministers 60 miles away in Durres. Originally scheduled for January 2020, the church plant is now slated for September.

Despite the delays, Kafexhiu makes monthly visits to Berat and said that Christians there are eager to launch a congregation.

The city dates back 2,500 years and was part of the Roman empire. During World War II, some 60 Christian and Muslim families in Berat hid Jews in their basements from the Nazis, Agence France-Presse reports.

MALAWI
LILONGWE — Some 4,000 Churches of Christ meet in this slender, southern African nation of 18.6 million souls. Many use only one cup in communion — not for theological reasons, said minister Moses Khombe, “but because they have no means of getting individual cups.”

Such churches are at increased risk of spreading the virus, said Khombe, who requested boxes of individual communion cups for the Area 47 Church of Christ and rural congregations.

The Malawi Project, a faith-based humanitarian nonprofit, is collecting cups for a shipment to Malawi.

Cups may be sent to The Malawi Project, 2421 Golfside Dr., Lebanon, IN 46052-8176.

See malawiproject.org.

UNITED KINGDOM
AYLESBURY — Graham Fisher, a well-known theologian and author among Churches of Christ, died March 30.

Fisher and his wife, Barbara, worshiped with churches in Liverpool, Stoke-on-Trent and Aylesbury. He authored books on Genesis and apologetics. In 1987 he succeeded Albert Winstanley as editor of Christian Worker, a publication for Churches of Christ in the U.K. He served as editor until 2014.

“He was never a Sunday-only Christian,” said Steven Whitehead of the British Bible School, “being a reliable supporter of midweek meetings and an enthusiastic attendee of social activities. Graham very much understood church to mean family.

“An open celebration is planned for later in the year, when we can all meet together, sing so as to raise the roof and shake as many hands as we want.”

Christian Worker dedicated much of its May edition to Fisher. Find it at churchesofchrist.co.uk.

Bianca Zanfir holds one of 2,000 copies of the James commentary produced for believers in Romania.
INDIA: Virus has claimed lives of 600 preachers, workers say

FROM PAGE 3

In the predominantly Hindu nation of 1.3 billion souls, the latest wave of the pandemic is fueled by an aggressive strain dubbed “double mutant.” It’s hard to fathom: More than 343,000 new infections per day were reported at press time. Daily deaths had exceeded 4,000.

“There is no place for the sick at hospitals, no place for the dead at the crematoriums and graveyards,” said Dr. Mani Pagidipalli, a physician and evangelist who works with multiple Churches of Christ in southern India and oversees a medical mission and a preacher-training program.

Ministers across India made similar reports to The Christian Chronicle, noting shortages of vaccine and medicine for COVID-19 patients. Lockdowns have crippled many congregations whose members are day laborers and can no longer provide food for their families.

Some 600 preachers for Churches of Christ have died from COVID-19 in the past year, according to workers with India Missions, a ministry overseen by the Shiloh Church of Christ in Hazel Green, Ala. The ministry has distributed aid to suffering believers, including women newly widowed by the virus, said missionary Kyle Clayton.

Two evangelists who work with Pagidipalli recently died, and the families of at least seven teachers who work with the training program are suffering from the virus.

As the situation becomes increasingly “grim, grave and gloomy,” the minister said, church members are doing their best to serve and share Christ with the suffering.

“COVID is increasing exponentially here in India,” Pagidipalli said, “but the number of souls who are turning to Jesus as their Lord is also increasing every single day.”

MAKING HOUSE CALLS WITH OXYGEN

Vijay Madiki’s cousin, Dr. Stanley Madiki, knows of more than 900 preachers’ families affected by the virus in southern India.

The physician and preacher for the Agraharam Church of Christ is buying oxygen concentrators with help from churches and individual Christians in the U.S. He makes house calls to patients with the virus who are quarantined and in need of oxygen in Andhra Pradesh state and the neighboring state of Telangana.

“The risk is very high,” Stanley Madiki said of possible exposure to COVID-19 patients, “but that is what we have decided to do — to spread the love, to give hope and to pray for them and their loved ones.”

The virus “can shut down churches, choke the Gospel and persecute,” he added, “but our faith, hope and love shall continue.”

‘MORE CHRIST IN THEM THAN I THOUGHT’

In the southern Indian city of Chennai, Paul Renganathan hopes for a pandemic of prayer.

The director of World Bible College and longtime minister for Churches of Christ said he has commitments from about 1,000 Christians around the world to pray “for the eradication of the virus globally.” He’s hoping that number will grow to 1 million.

Renganathan knows of nearly 500 deaths among members of Churches of Christ in the Chennai region, including several evangelists with whom he worked closely.

When the initial lockdowns were lifted in 2020, members of the Anna Nagar Church of Christ in Chennai conducted gospel campaigns and did street preaching.

Even children as young as 7 proclaimed the Good News to their neighbors, Renganathan said.

“That was one of those times I came to know that Christians have more Christ in them than I thought they did,” he added. He also learned that “people have more hunger for the Word of God than I thought they did.”

SEEING GOD’S LOVE IN QUARANTINE

As the infections rise, Vijay and Sonia Madiki are working late nights. The minister serves alongside medical missionaries in rural villages. His wife volunteers at hospitals, counseling patients and health care workers.

The couple also is housing 14 children on the second floor of their home. The children’s parents or relatives tested positive for COVID-19 but are unable to quarantine due to small living space. In some situations, multiple families live in two-room homes, Sonia Madiki said.

The couple hopes to secure government permission to use a former missionary’s compound as a sort of “reverse quarantine” facility, allowing those who test negative for the virus to have a place to live as their relatives recover at home.

The Madikis work with Agape Asia, an organization with roots in Churches of Christ that sponsors children and assists in development projects across India, Nepal, China, Mongolia and Myanmar.

The nonprofit is collecting funds for relief efforts in India. So are other ministries, including India Missions and Healing Hands International.

As they minister to the hurting “we don’t need to tell them about Jesus; we need to show them Jesus,” said Ray Hooper, Agape Asia’s managing director for India operations, “and we’re able to do that now in this crisis.”

In a land where Christians have endured persecution — especially in recent years from militant Hindus — the believers’ acts of charity are getting noticed, said Jeff Robertson, Agape Asia’s executive director.

Last year, during a relief effort, the Madikis approached a vendor who was selling rice. They bought his entire stock. He was amazed.

“He followed them and wanted to know why they were doing this,” Robertson said. “They were able to share Christ with him.”

Many Indians consider Jesus to be one of their gods, Vijay Madiki said.

Now, he added, “people are more open to faith. They are more willing to listen, ... They are asking us to pray. And they are closing their eyes and growing closer to God.”
Pandemic claims ministry leader in Pakistan

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Pakistan, home to 216 million souls, hadn’t at press time experienced the wave of infections and deaths besetting its eastern neighbor, India. But cases of COVID-19 are on the rise in the Islamic republic, and the virus has claimed a prominent minister among Pakistan’s Churches of Christ.

Eric Masih, who served congregations in the city of Lahore, died April 21 after a brief battle with COVID-19 and pneumonia. He was chairman of Church of Christ Ministries of Pakistan. He is survived by his four children and their families.

Friends and supporters praised Masih and his family for their devotion to Jesus in a nation where many Christ-followers endure persecution.

In 2016, six Pakistanis who had been baptized by members of Churches of Christ were killed, and 17 church members were hospitalized after an Easter bombing in Lahore. A militant group associated with the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack and said the target was Christians.

Instead of calling for retribution, “Eric was a servant of God that lived out the verses, ‘Love the Lord your God with your heart and soul and mind. And love your neighbor as yourself,’” said Julie Tuley, children and family minister for the Woodmont Hills Church of Christ in Nashville, Tenn., which supported Masih’s work.

Masih and fellow believers arranged and funded funerals for the Christians killed in the blast. They also assisted survivors and their families.

“Eric was a servant of our Lord and Savior whose life was about building the Kingdom of God,” said Bruce Anstey, a member of Woodmont Hills’ missions committee. “The numbers of people he led to Christ and baptized, plus the many works of outreach to injured people, are his legacy and will be rewarded by our Father.”

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Corpus Christi, Texas

Arlington Heights Church of Christ, located in Corpus Christi, Texas, is searching for a full-time Youth and Family Minister.

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Our congregation consists of 150 members.

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Ernest Castro
theway0420@yahoo.com
The Blacksburg Church of Christ is seeking a campus minister (or husband-wife team) to lead ministry and evangelistic efforts at Virginia Tech, Radford University, and other local colleges. The applicant must be relatable to both believing and non-believing college-age individuals and be able to work effectively in a campus environment. For a complete job description and more information, see the campus ministry page on our website: https://www.blacksburgchurchofchrist.org/new-page-65

President
Lipscomb University invites nominations and applications for the position of President who will serve as the chief executive officer for the university.

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Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae or resume to LipscombPresident@carterbaldwin.com.

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Application and supporting materials must be received by June 18th, 2021.
As in-person Bible classes resume, some churches hit the ‘reset button,’ hoping not just to impart knowledge of Jesus, but also to help students take him to their communities.

Be rivers, not reservoirs

BY ERIK TRYGGSTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Bible class teachers have it tough. Every week they’re expected to lead thought-provoking, deep dives into Scripture. Most are volunteers who agree, sometimes grudgingly, to teaching stints of three months or more.

Now, bless their hearts, they have to compete with Aaron Sorkin. The award-winning screenwriter of films including “A Few Good Men” and “Moneyball” — not to mention the binge-watching TV series “The West Wing” — is part of an online “MasterClass” that allows students to log on and learn his writing techniques. Or they can learn photography from Annie Leibovitz or science from Neil deGrasse Tyson.

“What is the gift of the Holy Ghost?” Gage Coldwater teaches on that subject, from Acts 2:38, during Bible class with the Wewoka Church of Christ. The rural Oklahoma congregation resumed in-person after a prolonged lockdown due to COVID-19. Coldwater’s lesson is part of a series, “Questions people ask me.”

Gerhardt

TRUTH IS YOUR GREAT COMMANDER

The quality of what they’re being fed outside is what they bring to your Bible class.

Gerhardt spent five years in the role of storytelling minister for the Round Rock Church of Christ in Texas, where her husband, Justin, served as lead minister. Developing content to engage adult learners was a key focus of their ministry.

After a year of pandemic, “it really asks a lot of us, to show up for these classes,” Jennifer Gerhardt said. “We just need to bring something better.”

THAT’S HOW ‘WE DID IT LAST WEEK’

Even before COVID-19, people were doing a lot of learning online. But the virus propelled the trend to warp speed.

Now church members attend virtual seminars for their jobs. On YouTube, they peruse TED talks on psychology and economics. On TikTok, they watch an Australian man sing his favorite air fryer recipes.

As disruptive as the pandemic has been for churches, it also has served as a “reset button,” said Josh Diggs, teaching minister for the Clear Creek Church of Christ in the Chattanooga suburb of Hixon, Tenn.

“It’s been an interesting laboratory to figure out what we’re doing.”

Reevaluation is overdue, Justin Gerhart said. He’s been in meetings with church leaders and asked what they think the purpose and goal of adult Bible classes should be, only to hear vague and conflicting answers. For too many churches, the reason Bible class is done the way it’s done — or why it’s done at all — seems to be “we did it last week.”

MICRO-CHURCHES, NOT COUNTRY CLUBS

In Chattanooga, “we prefer to not restart adult Bible classes on Sunday the way they were before the pandemic,” Diggs said.

Like many churches, the 1,100-member Clear Creek congregation had adult classes with “a lot of content,” he said. But “some had accidentally turned into reservoirs, not rivers,” taking in a lot of Bible knowledge but not allowing it to flow into their communities.

Adult Bible classes should function less like “little country clubs” and more like “micro-churches, missional communities,” Diggs said.

To equip believers for the task, he added, Bible classes should focus on evangelism. He envisions a “growth track” in which church members complete classes focused on church membership, small-group ministry, discipleship and service.

Oddly enough, as Christians return to the building, the church needs to “invest more in getting people out of the building,” Diggs said. “We need to avoid the mindset that church is a

CONTINUED
Bible class: ‘We just need to bring something better’

In Murfreesboro, Tenn., a suburb of Nashville, the North Boulevard Church of Christ recently resumed in-person, maskoptional Bible classes. In this photo, David and Renae Sproles teach about how the Holy Spirit teaches, counsels and intercedes in the life of Christ followers, the couple said, citing Jesus’ advice to his disciples in John 16:7.

“Our recognition is that the world already is looking different,” Diggs said. People seem less willing to commit to a long-term experience, but their need for Bible knowledge that’s applicable to their lives is great.

“WALK TOGETHER”

“Many of our churches have all but shut down Sunday school for the better part of a year,” said Keith Stanglin. “Ten weeks of absence is enough to decimate a Sunday school program. What do you think 10 months will do?”

Stanglin, a professor at Lipscomb University in Nashville, shared that so many courses are taught, perhaps receiving some sort of certification or even some sort of merit badge the church members have been given by scouting programs.

Just before the pandemic, William and Aida Jackson taught members of the San Jose Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Fla., a subject that turned out to be most timely — how to use new technology to enhance their study of God’s word.

“We had people who didn’t even know how to use their phone, oh wow!” said Aida Jackson. Her husband has 33 years of teaching experience. He conducts workshops on STEM, an educational discipline focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and STEAM, which also incorporates the arts. He helped the church members understand technology and talked to them through the finer points of online interaction.

The class proved to be providential. Within months, the whole world was on Zoom — Bible classes included. In Chattanooga, as the Clear Creek Church relaunches its Wednesday night program, it plans to introduce short-term, focused courses that diggssuggested as “bite-size” and “actionable.”

In addition to Stanglin, Guy has interviewed the Gerhardts and other church members including Josh Kingcade, education minister for the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, and retired Bible professor Randy Harris, who taught for 35 years at Abilene Christian University in Texas and Lipscomb University in Tennessee.

“The best times are when they say, ‘Many of my guests are saying similar things,’ Guy said, ‘that adult education is in great need and short supply, that helpful resources are in high demand.’ Bible classes don’t have to compete with Aaron Sorokin to be effective, he said, but they need to be intentional.

‘Fire up your people with a shared vision of how adult education can be a part of life education minister."

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

The Post-Quarantine Church Forum is an online gathering for church members to discuss, envision and strategize. The Christian Chronicle and the Heritage 21 Foundation present the free forum on the last Sunday of every month. May 22 to July 25. To register, go to choro.org/churchforum.

The COVID mess has given the local churches a unique opportunity to reframe what we are doing, he said. “In a post-COVID world, fewer Americans regularly attend church — in person or online — than in years past. A recent Gallup poll showed church membership in the U.S. fell below 5 percent for the first time since the research group started measuring in 1957. Fewer and fewer people spend time reading their Bibles, other studies show. Biblical literacy is declining nationwide. ‘Anyone with just a little historical perspective,’” Stanglin said, “and a snapshot of knowledge of the current scene knows that if there were ever a time when we need a robust education program in the church, it’s now.”
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For area information, visit www.angelfirefun.com.
A Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted on all counts in George Floyd's killing, millions of Americans watched on live television.

Jerry Taylor, founding director of the Carl Spain Center on Race Studies and Spiritual Action at Abilene Christian University in Texas, was not one of them.

"I felt like the best way that I could protect the health of my own sanity and the well-being of my own soul was just to use that time to ask God to address our hunger and our thirst for righteousness," Taylor told The Christian Chronicle.

"And I prayed that God’s justice, his righteousness, would prevail in this case," the veteran minister and Bible professor added. "Because we needed to have some indication that the country still had the capability, or at least was striving to have the capacity, to appropriate justice in a fair and balanced way."

Jurors found Chauvin guilty April 20 of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter for pressing his knee to Floyd’s neck — for 9½ minutes — and ignoring the Black man's complaints that he couldn't breathe.

Taylor welcomed the verdict and called it a positive step toward justice. But he said he’ll reserve final judgment until Chauvin’s sentencing, scheduled for June 25.

The former officer could face up to 40 years in prison. However, the judge has discretion on the exact punishment.

“Finding him guilty but not giving him the amount of time that kind of crime would deserve would be a great injustice,” said Taylor, whose center organized the Minneapolis Racial Unity Leadership Virtual Summit this past October.

Ahead of the May 25 anniversary of Floyd’s death, Taylor discussed a variety of topics — including police reform, Christian activism and peacemaking — with the Chronicle.

Some highlights:

- **On police reform:** “We must examine and investigate the culture that exists inside of the law enforcement communities — a culture that could produce a person who wears a badge and carries a gun who could take another human life like that, seeming as if he had no empathy or compassion.

  “That he could put his knee on his neck and press the life, press the breath out of him — what kind of system is that? What kind of culture exists within the law enforcement community? What kind of culture would give the person the impression that they could do something like that in broad daylight with people watching and filming it?

  “We can’t applaud ourselves too quickly (despite the guilty verdict). We can’t celebrate as if we have made a touchdown. We’ve only gained five to 10 yards on the field. That we get.

  “Let us defuse this fuse that has been lit among us by people who have been engaging in extreme rhetoric. People have lit the fuse who want to see this country blow up. They want some type of racial chaos or race war or what they want to call it.

  “But those who know Christ and believe that he is the Lord of this world and the Lord of our lives, we have to do some serious wrestling and struggling to ask what we are contributing to. Are we contributing to peace? Or are we continuing the ongoing Civil War that never ended in 1865?

  “Despite (President Abraham) Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation, the Civil War is still continuing. We’re not shooting bullets at each other, but the animosity that gave birth to it is still there.

  “What role do we have as Christians to help defuse that fuse which is leading to the confusion that exists among us in this country? I think Christians have the greatest tool chest in our possession to contribute to being peacemakers. And that’s not a cheap peace. That’s a peace that is based on truth-telling and forgiveness but also on truth-telling and repentance.

  “And I want to make sure that we make that statement as we talk about peace because sometimes we conclude that when we talk about peace because sometimes we conclude that when we talk about peace that means to overlook, ignore. That’s not what we’re saying.

  “We’re saying that we’ve got to deal with the problems together because the common salvation of the country depends on a common effort by a commonwealth of people gathered here on the North American continent.

  “The question is: Can we work out our salvation together in fear and trembling? I believe Christians are in a position to lead the way in doing that.”

**WEBSITE:** carlspaincenter.org

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**Minister and Bible professor Jerry Taylor** is founding director of the Carl Spain Center on Race Studies and Spiritual Action at Abilene Christian University.
THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

PARTNERS

JUNE 2021

Chronicl e names new trustees

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Three Christians with experience in media, education and business recently were named to The Christian Chronicle’s Board of Trustees.

They join a group of 13 fellow members of Churches of Christ to provide leadership, oversight and support for the international newspaper and its mission to inform, inspire and unite by providing “real news that honors God.”

The three new trustees are:
- Andrew Benton, president emeritus of Pepperdine University.
- Taneise Perry, advertising executive and entrepreneur.
- Joel Reed, executive vice president and general counsel for Stanley Martin Homes in Reston, Va.

Benton graduated from Oklahoma Christian University and earned a law degree from Oklahoma City University. He served as the university’s seventh president from 2000–2019 and is the longest-serving person to hold the office. He and his wife, Debby, recently returned to Oklahoma to be close to grandchildren.

“Our return home has been just delightful,” Benton said. “I am honored to serve The Christian Chronicle and pray that it will be strengthened and that our fellowship will be encouraged and supported.”

Perry co-founded Be Glam and Grace, which seeks to “inspire teen girls and support young women still navigating through life’s path” in a “world of unholiness and unrealistic physical standards,” she said.

She also operates an online apparel company, Church Pew Slay. She and her husband, Kevin, worship with the Kingdom Church of Christ in Charlotte.

“The Christian Chronicle was a staple in my grandparents’ home and continues to be an influential voice and resource,” Perry said. “I’m honored to hold this position and am fortunate to work with other dedicated board members and an incredibly passionate staff.”

Joel Reed is a graduate of Harding University in Searcy, Ark., and earned a law degree from Duke University in North Carolina.

He has served as chair of Missions Resource Network’s board of trustees. His wife, Lori, writes curriculum for Ethos, an online program of Greater Atlanta Christian School. They worship with the Fairfax Church of Christ in Virginia.

“I am humbled to become part of the team,” Reed said. “I look forward to dreaming and planning for how The Christian Chronicle will continue to serve our churches for generations to come.”
Full-time Pulpit Minister - Brenham, Texas

The Brenham Church of Christ is approximately 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 can welcome to visit our website at 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. We pray that 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

We look forward to hearing from you!

Minister - Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

Palo Verde Church of Christ is looking for an experienced member of the Lord's body who is able to preach sound doctrine, to hold classes to help spiritually feed the flock, and who has the desire to reach a community in need of God's Word. Small congregation with a parsonage available. Would like to have someone semi-retired.

Dennis Grosser
(928) 486-7370, ddgrosser@gmail.com
www.lakehavasucitycoc.com

Willing to fill in?
Great vacation spot with furnished home available. Ask for details!

Pulpit Minister Needed

Bellevue Church of Christ (Belleview, Fla.), a small and loving congregation, is in need of a pulpit minister. Duties will include preaching and teaching Sunday morning and Sunday evening. Retirement or other support may be needed.

If interested please contact:

Gregg Smith at (352) 427-6131
Terry Whalin at (352) 209-9919

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 a 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

Full-time Minister - Sierra Madre, California

The Sierra Madre Church of Christ is an independent, tightly knit, family-oriented group of believers who have worshipped faithfully together for over 60 years. The demographics of the ethnically diverse congregation include retirees, working families and presently few youth members. Most of the members live in adjacent towns, and average attendance on a typical Sunday is 30. Many members have an affiliation with Pepperdine University and are supportive of the school. Members also sponsor several local and international ministries. The congregation owns a facility on Lima Street in Sierra Madre, suitable for supporting a diverse set of activities for a congregation of up to 200 members.

Theologically open-minded and truth seeking, with practices consistent with the Church of Christ traditions, members share a common love for God's word and an interest in continuing to minister in the area. The predominant ministry model has been to hire Pepperdine-affiliated faculty/staff to preach on a rotating basis.

The church has never employed a full-time pastoral or preaching minister, although a few of the current preaching ministers have a history with the congregation that dates back many years. An eldership assisted by deacons historically has shepherded the congregation, but the current leadership model comprises a group of deacons/board of directors (no elders).

Skills: Ability to ideate, lead and organize ongoing efforts for church renewal and revitalization. Plan and implement church growth strategies and community outreach. Desire to pastor among the congregation, encouraging members, visiting the sick/homebound, organizing follow up on various needs. Leadership ability to organize members for worship participation, curriculum development, small groups and general congregational life. Strong interpersonal and public speaking skills. Ability to build consensus, while still embracing differences of opinion and working within a diverse group of members.

Qualifications: Demonstrated ability to shepherd congregational growth, academic degree in a related field and several years of full-time ministry experience in a local congregation of the Churches of Christ, Christian Church, or similar tradition. The congregation will also consider a candidate with other ministry occupations such as missionary, counselor, or religion professor who has served as a part-time minister.

Contact Doug Hurley (805) 300-8780; doug.hurley@pepperdine.edu
Learn more about us at: sierramadrechurch.org

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.

For further information and to apply, visit our website: churchofchristmedford.org

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.

Please send resume:
Church of Christ
c/o Richard Ecord
1207 W 15th
Ottawa, KS 66067

Full-time Minister - Los Angeles

The Redondo Beach Church of Christ is looking for a full-time minister to preach, teach and make disciples for Christ. We are a loving congregation located in the beautiful South Bay Area of Los Angeles with three elders and an average Sunday attendance of 75 members. Our building has pews, a pulpit, a projector and hymn books. We are involved in community service and mission work. If interested, send a current resume along with references, information about yourself and your family, and links to two sermons to:

elders@redondochurchofchrist.com

Pulpit Minister Search - Kalispell Church of Christ - Kalispell, Montana

The elders of the Kalispell Church of Christ are looking for a minister to come work with our congregation. Responsibilities include: preaching, teaching and being part of our church family. The ideal candidate would be able to minister to our members regardless of age.

Our congregation is located in northwest Montana approximately 70 miles from the Canadian border and 40 miles west of Glacier National Park. Our attendance is approximately 125 on Sunday. We currently have three elders. We have a three-bedroom parsonage on the church property. The compensation package would include a salary of 50-70K a year depending on experience.

We will be accepting applications until the position is filled. Interested parties should send resume and video lessons to the address below.

Kalispell Church of Christ Elders
241 Stillwater Rd, Kalispell, Montana 59901
elders@kalispellchurchofchrist.org

Full-time Pulpit Minister - Frederick, Md.

Frederick Church of Christ, fccc.org, is seeking a full-time pulpit minister—a biblically-sound leader with a heart for God, His people, and the community.

A degree from an accredited higher educational institution in Divinity, Ministry or Bible is required.

Please provide resume and references to: elders@fccoc.org

Our total compensation package includes a competitive salary and benefits package.
Howard and Dorothy King 75 years

Howard and Dorothy (Sarchet) King are celebrating their 75th wedding anniversary. They were married May 12, 1946, in Agra, Kan., after Howard had completed his service with the Navy during World War II.

Howard attended Fort Hays State College and began teaching industrial arts in Dighton, Kan., and later moved to Scott City, Kan., where he taught for more than 25 years. He retired from teaching and purchased King’s Aluminum and Glass, which they owned for 10 years. He was also a rural mail route deliverer. He loves to do woodworking, and has continued making segmented bowls as his hobby.

Dorothy was a busy mother, volunteering for leadership roles in Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Welcome Wagon, Pink Lady and teaching Bible classes. She was also a seamstress extraordinaire. She made all the clothes for her family and also costumes for many high school musicals.

They have seven children: Ken, Jim, Ron, Carmen, Karen, Carla and Jeff. They also have 12 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

They have been members of the Church of Christ in Scott City for 70 years, where Howard served as an elder. They are a wonderful example of a loving, Christian couple.

Samuel ‘Ray’ Frizzell, Jr. 1929-2021

Ray was a dedicated, Christian servant who was in his 75th year of preaching the gospel of Christ. At the time of his death, he was in his 28th year of preaching for the Shackle Island Church of Christ in Tennessee. Ray passed away on April 8, 2021, at the age of 92.

Kenneth Joines 1935-2021

Kenneth Joines was born Dec. 27, 1935, near Belton, Ky., to Guy and Truly McElvain Joines. He grew up there, graduating from Hughes-Kirkpatrick High School.

In his senior year, he met Janrose Forgy, and they married the following December while he was a student at David Lipscomb College. It was during the following year, while still 18 years of age, that he answered the call to become the full-time preacher for the church at Butte, Mont.

He later served churches in Claremore, Okla.; Augusta, Kan.; Sebring, Fla.; Elizabethtown, Ky.; Merkel, Texas; Greenville, Ky.; Hixson, Tenn.; and the Whitehaven Church of Christ in Memphis, Tenn., which later relocated and became the Goodman Oaks Church of Christ in Southaven, Miss.

He preached for Goodman Oaks for 29 years. During his ministry, Goodman Oaks grew to become the largest congregation of Churches of Christ in Mississippi. Following retirement in 2004, he remained at Goodman Oaks while doing interim work for the Woodland Hills Church of Christ in Memphis, twice in Sebring, Fla., and twice in Lake Placid, Fla., as well as preaching by appointment in states from Florida to Alaska and from Texas to West Virginia.

In addition to studying at Lipscomb, he took additional training at Central Christian College (now Oklahoma Christian University), Abilene Christian University, and Murray State University.

An avid big-game hunter, he enjoyed numerous trips to Colorado and Wyoming where he took bull elk and antelope as well as numerous mule deer. He was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel by Governor Louie Nunn and served two terms as president of the Whitehaven Civitan Club.

For several years he served the Shelby County Juvenile Court as Auxiliary Probation Officer, working with numerous young men in rehabilitation.

In 2012, his first wife, Jan, died of pulmonary fibrosis. Two years later he married Sue Noto, a member at Goodman Oaks. Many times he observed, “It is almost unbelievable that God gave me two of the very best women to walk and work beside me. I am blessed and have never been happier.” Ken died April 2, 2021.

Ken was preceded in death by his parents and by his older brother Virgil, sister Marjorie Rhoads, and son-in-law Robin Enochs.

He is survived by his wife of six years, Sue; son Mike of Seattle; daughters Laura of Denver, Pam (Steve) Peraza of Abilene, Texas, and Jennifer Enochs of Tupelo, Miss.; as well as stepsons Joseph (Bethany) Noto of Bono, Ark., and Matthew (Christina) Noto of Olive Branch, Miss. He is also survived by his sister Shirley (Eugene) McPherson of Greenville, Ky., and brother Jimmy (Mary) of Snellville, Ga., as well as four granddaughters, one grandson and two great-grandchildren.

Barbara Oteka Kee 1930-2021

Barbara Oteka Kee, 91, passed away April 28, 2021, in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Barbara was born April 25, 1930, in Bartlesville, Okla., to Charley Lindsey and Lola McFarland. She attended Florida Christian College, Central Christian College (now Oklahoma Christian University) and Harding College (now University), where she met her husband Robert Windle Kee. The couple married June 6, 1953, in Tulsa, Okla., at the Eastside Church of Christ.

The couple began planting churches in the Northeast, including Levittown, Penn., Salisbury, Md., and Collinsville, Ill. They then spent 20 years as missionaries in Cameroon, West Africa. They later worked in Belize.

The couple also lived in Onalaska, Texas, until they retired to Wichita Falls. Throughout Barbara’s life, her genuine love for literally everyone she met endeared her to many and led her on countless unscripted adventures!

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents and her sister Lee Myers.

Barbara is survived by her husband of 67 years, Windle; her two sons Carl Kee and wife Pat of Lubbock, Texas, and Paul Kee and wife Janet of Cameroon; her daughter Alicejoy Taylor and Joe of Wichita Falls; a brother Bud McFarland and Sarah, of Edmond, Okla.; five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, as well as many beloved nieces and nephews; and a large spiritual family around the world.

Memorials in Barbara’s name may be made to the Cameroon Mission Fund through the Faith Village Church of Christ, 4100 McNiel Ave, Wichita Falls, TX 76308.

WITH APPRECIATION: The Christian Chronicle appreciates gifts received in honor of Alan Phillips and Glen and Lilla Boss and in memory of Kenton Harvey, Jason McDonald, Sam Volpe, Mary Washam, Bob and Ava Wimbish, and Sylvia Mattlin.

More Milestones, Page 25
Ken Vanderpool
1936-2021

Dr. Kenneth Gene Vanderpool
died Thursday, April 8, 2021, at 84
years of age from complications of
advanced Alzheimer’s.

Ken was born Sept. 3, 1936, in
Comanche, Okla., in a two-room
shack. He was named after two
of his mother’s favorite singing
cowboys: Kenneth Maynard and
Gene Autry. Ken grew up dirt poor
but became a self-made man, ac-
complished in education, church
ministry, athletics, and music.
Ken graduated from Adding-
ton High School in Oklahoma
and earned bachelor’s degrees in
physical education and Bible from
Harding College in Searcy, Ark.
He earned his M.Ed. and Ed.D. in
health and physical education from
Temple University in Philadelphia.

While at Harding, he met the love
of his life, Lucia DuBois, while
working in Patti Cobb Cafeteria.

Before either one completed school,
they married at the College Church
of Christ in Searcy on May 26,
1957.

Ken had 60
years of higher
education teach-
ing in the areas of
exercise kinesiol-
ogy, physiology,
and anatomy and
physiology. Most
recently, he re-
tired from South-
west Tennessee
Community College in Memphis,
Tenn. He also taught at Rutgers
University in New Brunswick, N.J.;
Northeastern Christian Junior Col-
lege in Villanova, Pa.; Northeast-
ern University in Boston; Navajo
Community College in Tsaile, Ariz.;
Shelby State Community College in
Memphis; and Delta State Univer-
sity in Cleveland, Miss.

Ken was preceded in death by his
wife, Lucia DuBois Vanderpool,
daughter Melanie Denise Van-
derpool Jerden, grandson James
Gilbert Hodge, and nephew Mark
Rockford LaMarr; his parents,
Jesse James Vanderpool and Nancy
Adelaide Hatfield; sister Jessie Fay
Vanderpool, and half-brother Billy
Ray “Bill” Hibbert.

He is survived by his children
Suzanne Vanderpool Hodge
(Wally), Kenneth Gene Vanderpool,
Jr. (Jo Ann), and Nancy Kathleen
Vanderpool Manning. Ken is also
survived by seven grandchildren
plus a large number of nieces, neph-
ews, cousins, and in-laws.

Family and friends gathered
Saturday, May 1, for a memorial
service at Memphis Funeral Home
and Memorial Gardens where they
paid tribute to an amazing father,
husband, brother, uncle, and Chris-
tian man. You may read his full
obituary on their website.

HIRED: Richard England as executive
director of French African
Christian Education.

England is retiring as a
professor of education
and music at Freed-
Hardeman University
in Henderson, Tenn.
His wife, Barbara, is a
professor of art at FHU.

ELECTED: Jan Dockery,
a member of the La
Grange Church of
Christ in Texas, as the
city’s mayor. She is La
Grange’s first Black
mayor. The church
celebrated her election
with a cookout.

AWARDED: Theo
Westbrook, a high
school senior and
member of the College
Church of Christ in
Searcy, Ark., with an
$8,000 Lads to Leaders
Scholarship from
Harding University
for his many years of
participation in Lads to
Leaders events.

SELECTED: Judge Terri
Bozeman Lovell, as the
first woman to serve
as executive director
of the Alabama State
Bar since its founding
in 1879. She is a 1995 Juris Doctor
graduate of Faulkner University’s law
school.

Milestones

PHOTO PROVIDED BY BILL DENTON

Virgil Strobridge is a new elder of the
Rodenberg Church of Christ in Biloxi,
Miss. He is pictured with son Tavian,
daughter Jasmyn, wife Tonya and
daughter Tenia.

Included
The Christian Chronicle
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The Heritage Circle includes those
who bless the Chronicle
through their will or estate plan.

Help secure the future
of The Christian Chronicle.

The Christian Chronicle

Call Stephen Eck of the Chronicle Planned
Giving Office for free assistance (405) 425-5080
A year has passed since the shock of seeing a man die under the knee of another man on national television. For a year we have wondered what the jury would say. Was there a valid explanation beyond what our eyes suggested? Would the verdict further divide an already fractured nation, or worse, the Lord’s church?

George Floyd’s death reignited difficult conversations. Though neither the prosecution nor defense raised the issue of race in the trial, echoes of our nation’s past make it unavoidable, particularly for Black friends and neighbors.

The lingering effects of slavery and Jim Crow still haunt us. Laws have changed, but too many hearts have not.

These difficult conversations have also unfolded in the church. In recent years, the church has faced its own failings. Undoubtedly, there were godly women and men who spoke boldly against the sin of racism, but their voices were often drowned out. Secular schools integrated almost 10 years before some of our Christian colleges. White and Black churches met on opposite sides of town. Bible lecturerships, conferences and publications scarcely acknowledged the painful reality of racism, even at the heart of the civil rights movement’s height.

The silence was deafening to the Black community, creating sincere doubts and mistrust that persist. If only we had attacked racism with half the vigor that we attacked denominationalism, where might we be today?

That said, some of these conversations have prompted meaningful actions. We praise God for Christians who — heartbroken over Floyd’s senseless death — have rallied for justice, put love above partisan talking points and asked God to help connect them with minority brothers and sisters.

These conversations did not begin with George Floyd, and neither will they end. But watching his death has amplified them.

As our culture and the church wrestle with these questions yet again, we wonder how Jesus might respond.

Would he focus more on the value of national symbols or the cries of a hurting community? Would he demand retribution or seek redemption? Would he parse the rhetoric of whose lives matter or simply minister to those hurting most? If we are willing to listen, the answer is right before us: “Love your neighbor as you love yourselves.”

It matters how Jesus would respond because the church is his body, his presence in the world today. Jesus refused to accept the social distinctions built by culture. He ate with sinners, sat with Samaritans and healed a centurion’s servant. That is what it looks like to “love your neighbor.” When a lawyer attempted to create a loophole with his question — “Who is my neighbor?” — Jesus refused to budge.

“Neighbor” is all-inclusive. The church must be no different. Our commitment to Christ must make our voice sound different from other voices around us. We tell a different story and work toward a better end. We do not ignore the cries of individuals or entire communities. We hurt with them and seek solutions. We do not gloss over the sins of discrimination and racism in defense of any system or structure.

We acknowledge those sins and work toward redemption. We seek reconciliation in place of cancellation. We are ambassadors of Christ sent to redeem everything we touch.

Thankfully, there are signs of hope. Churches once separated by race are uniting to worship and serve their communities with one voice. Christian schools once closed to Black brothers and sisters are now open to all and giving special attention to the work of reconciliation.

Leadership in churches is slowly beginning to reflect the diversity of their communities. You are reading an editorial written by Black and White brothers and sisters, in a publication trying to tackle the issue honestly. Christians are fully recognizing the image of God in each other and listening to one another.

But much work remains as we keep building bridges and learning to trust, all while the world watches. More than that, God is watching. “Love your neighbor” is what Jesus did. It is what he sent us to do. There are no exceptions.

— Jeremie Beller and Trindi Mitchell, for the Editorial Board
Mental Health Specialist
to Work with Children & Families
Impacted by Trauma

- LPC, LCSW, LMFT or eligible in Oklahoma
- $40K-$60K/Year Plus Benefits
Licensure Supervision Available

Night Staff: 10:00 PM-6:00 AM, days will vary Sunday-Saturday, full-time or part-time. This is an hourly position starting at $9.00 per hour; duties are to supervise residents during sleep hours.

Teacher Assistant: 8:00 AM-2:30 PM, Monday-Friday. Responsible for assisting the classroom teacher in general supervision and management of students. This is a salaried position.

Teacher: 8:00 AM-2:30 PM. Must be licensed in the State of Tennessee and have experience working with at-risk youth. School is in session through the summer. This is a salaried position.

Residential Counselor (couples) responsible for day-to-day care, guidance, and training of adolescent males ages 12-18. This is a salaried position. You will work two weeks on and have one week off.

Executive Director: Needed for Pinson, Tennessee Campus.

Salaried positions are eligible for benefits including pension, medical/vision/dental, and life insurance.

Dana Lawson, MBA, HR/QI Director
PO Box 10, Spring Hill, Tennessee 37174
(931) 486-2274, ext. 225
dlawson@tennesseechildrenshome.org

Apply Online At
www.hopeharborinc.org/jobs

Houseparents

The Albuquerque Christian Children’s Home is a ministry that is passionately dedicated to fostering at-risk children.

We are looking for a faithful married couple who love children, model their faith, and want to serve full time in our ministry as Houseparents.

Benefits include: housing, utilities, vacation, medical, and short and long-term disability. Salaried position.

Interested couples will send their cover letter of interest and resume(s) to:

Everett White, Executive Director
Email: sroberson@acch4kids.org

Job description available upon request.
Look us up on our website: Acch4kids.org

Must be members of the Church of Christ.
Are you looking for a ministry to lead where you can help nurture deeply hurting girls to restored relationships with God, family, and community? Carpenter Place is seeking a leader who will guide and manage our agency with the heart of a servant and a Christ-centered spirit.

To learn more about the responsibilities and qualifications of this position and our agency, please visit:

carpenterplace.org

Resumes may be sent to:

executivecommittee@carpenterplace.org

For more information:

Carpenter Place
1501 North Meridian, Wichita, KS 67203
(316) 942-3221

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**Immediate openings for:**

- Vice President of Development *(fundraising experience required)*
- Middle School Bible Teacher
- Secondary Science Teacher
- Elementary Teacher
- House Parents

**Benefits Include:** Salary, Retirement Plan, Health Insurance, Life Insurance, and School Tuition.

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

Send Resume and letter of interest to:

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

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**Praise for love shown after tornado**

In a politically divided America, this true story of Christian love among Christian people is one that needs to go viral so that the love of one’s neighbor can be shown as it was expressed in the state of Alabama (“Tornado victims mourned,” Page 1, May).

This one surprised me: Three Americans of African descent being the first Black people to be buried in an all-White cemetery! It is a sad first, but it is a first, and it should become well known. This racial barrier has been broken in 2021.

ELOISA BROWN | Hitachi, Japan

I am blessed to be able to say Ed Harrell and I were friends (“Religion scholar’s life was a study in respectful disagreement,” Page 36, May).

He often appeared on the Faulkner lectureship program. He was a prince of a man as well as a superb religious historian. I miss him.

CECIL MAY JR. | Montgomery, Ala.

One thing we need to keep in mind is that *The Christian Chronicle* is a newspaper. We do not always agree with what we read. The *Chronicle* does an excellent job of keeping us informed about what is happening in churches around the world.

I am always interested in another way to reach the lost. The *Chronicle* reports on other ways of evangelism. I also enjoy reading about the lives of my brothers and sisters in the church. I enjoy reading the book reviews. The *Chronicle* has been a blessing to me and my family for nearly 50 years.

JERRY BAILEY | Berne, Ind.

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**Great story! Great testimony of long-term love! (“After 75 years of marriage, Florida husband and wife still devoted to each other — and their faith,” Page 1, May)**

PAUL BRAZLE | Antwerp, Belgium

Thank you for all you do.

BEVERLY SIMMONS | Huntsville, Ala.
Initial application should include a letter of interest and curriculum vitae. To complete the application, two spiritual references, two professional references, and official transcripts for all degrees earned are required.

Salary and rank are determined based on credentials and experience.

**CANNON-CLARY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.** Seeking full-time, 9-month faculty member in the area of general education with summer hours required under a separate arrangement. The successful candidate should have teaching experience in a K-12 school setting, and a doctorate in education or a related area is preferred. Experience teaching in higher education with leadership responsibilities and research and statistics is preferred. Experience working with accrediting agencies such as CAEP is helpful. Candidates should hold a current teaching license. This position includes teaching responsibilities, advising, serving on committees and other assigned tasks.

Submit application materials to Dr. Clara Carroll, associate dean, at ccarroll@harding.edu, or 915 E. Market, Box 12265, Searcy, AR 72149, 501-279-4941.

**CARR COLLEGE OF NURSING.** Seeking two full-time, 9-month faculty members teaching in the undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. One 9-month position requires teaching clinical and didactic courses in nursing of pediatric patients. The position requires at least two years working as a Registered Nurse in acute or critical care pediatric settings. The second 9-month opening requires teaching clinical and didactic courses in nursing of adult patients. The position requires at least two years working as a Registered Nurse in chronic, acute or critical care adult settings. For both positions, the successful candidates should maintain an active, unencumbered nursing license; be eligible for RN or APRN licensing in the state of Arkansas; and have a terminal degree in nursing or a related field. Teaching experience is preferred. Responsibilities include but are not limited to teaching undergraduate and graduate nursing courses in a variety of formats, and working collaboratively in shared governance and accreditation compliance with the College of Nursing administration and faculty.

Submit application materials to Dr. Susan Kehl, dean, at skehl@harding.edu, or 915 E. Market, Box 12248, Searcy, AR 72149, 501-279-4334.

**COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES • ARCHITECTURE.** Seeking full-time architecture program director. The position will establish and develop a master’s degree program in architecture, including the steps to accredit the program with the National Architectural Accrediting Board. Successful candidates will have a terminal degree in architecture and a background in both the profession and academia. The preferred candidate will have experience in shared governance and accreditation compliance with the College of Architecture administration and faculty. The ideal candidate would have graduate coursework in both English and in either pedagogy, assessment, administration or curricular design, and an ability for creating positive partnerships with other teachers, schools and colleges.

Submit application materials to Dr. Terry Engel, chair, at tengel@harding.edu, or 915 E. Market, Box 12248, Searcy, AR 72149, 501-279-4941.

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT.** Seeking full-time, 9-month faculty member to support our teaching licensure program. Graduate degree in English or education, record of excellence in teaching and mentoring students, and teaching experience in secondary school or teaching licensure with experience at the college level required. The candidate must be willing to travel to area schools and work a flexible schedule as part of supervising student teachers. The ideal candidate would have graduate coursework in both English and in either pedagogy, assessment, administration or curricular design, and an ability for creating positive partnerships with other teachers, schools and colleges.

Submit application materials to Dr. Terry Engel, chair, at tengel@harding.edu, or 915 E. Market, Box 12248, Searcy, AR 72149.

These additional openings are available at harding.edu/facultyjobs:
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The Christian Chronicle Crossword

ACROSS
1. “... store up ___ for yourselves in heaven” (Matthew 6:20, Good News Translation).
4. “... not even King ___ with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers” (Matthew 6:29, GNT).
8. “Whichever one of you has committed no ___ may throw the first stone at her” (John 8:7, GNT).
10. “Solomon also built a ___ for himself and it took him 13 years” (1 Kings 7:1, GNT).
11. Half.
14. Jacob said to Joseph ‘I never ___ to see you again, and now God has let me see your children’” (Genesis 48:11, GNT).
16. “The rich man was told that the manager was ____ his master’s money” (Luke 16:1, GNT).
18. “For my part, even though I am not physically ____, I am with you in spirit” (1 Corinthians 5:3, New International Version).
21. “... your rod and your ____ , they comfort me” (Psalms 23:4, NIV).
22. What a kindly R.N. dispenses, abbr.
24. Faucet.
25. “In the middle of the garden stood the ___ that gives life and the ___ that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad” (Genesis 2:9, GNT).
30. “Then he will divide them into two groups, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the ___ s” (Matthew 25:32, GNT)
31. Queen who visited Solomon.
32. Charge for services.
33. “Don't worry about them! They are blind leaders of the blind; and when one blind man leads another, both fall into a ___” (Matthew 15:14, GNT).
34. Martyr (Acts 7:54).

DOWN
2. “So Samson took hold of the two middle ___ that were holding up the building” (Judges 16:29, GNT).
3. After Proverbs.
5. Single person
6. “It returned to him in the evening with a fresh ____ in its beak. So Noah knew that the water had gone down” (Genesis 8:11, GNT, two words).
9. In the middle of.
15. Date of Christmas Day.
16. Jesus turned water into this at a wedding, (John 2:6).
17. John and others.
18. Group in the Bible that conspired to destroy Jesus.
20. “From James, a ____ of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1).
23. “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world” (John 3:17, KJV).
27. “____, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever” (Psalms 44:23, KJV).
29. Many years old.

Odd one out

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING people, places or things do not belong with the other three?
Quiz by Steve Whitehead of the British Bible School. Learn more at britishbibleschool.com.

1. Ephesus, Pergamum, Miletus, Smyrna.
2. Joel, Elisha, Obadiah, Amos.
3. Deborah, Phoebe, Miriam, Sarah.
7. Athens, Corinth, Cyrene, Rome.
9. Abigail, Bathsheba, Michal, Naomi.
10. Crete, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Malta.
Word Find: The book of Job

By Betty Hollister | For The Christian Chronicle

Find the following words from the book of Job. The unused 29 letters form a statement about the book. (See the answer on Page 34.)

- ALMIGHTY
- ANGELS
- ANGER
- APPEAL
- ARRIVE
- ATTACKED
- ATTENTION
- CALAMITIES
- CAMELS
- CARAVAN
- COLLAPSE
- CRUSH
- DENY
- DESCENDANTS
- DESPISE
- DESTINY
- DESTRUCT
- DETECT
- DISPUTE
- DISTRESS
- DREAD
- DREAD
- ESCAPES
- EXPLAIN
- EXPRESSION
- FATHOM
- GROWLS
- INCITED
- INHABIT
- INTEGRITY
- LEVIATHAN
- MISERY
- NAKED
- OFFER
- PENALTY
- PERFORMS
- PERISHED
- PERVERT
- PROSPEROUS
- PUNISHMENT
- REACH
- RESTORE
- RETURNED
- SHADOWS
- SPEECHES
- SPROUT
- STRENGTH
- SWORD
- TEACHING
- TEMA
- TRADE
- UPRIGHT
- WICKEDNESS
- WISDOM
- WONDERS

Theme: “The GOD Who Keeps His Promises”

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Classes: Ralph Gilmore, Jackson, TN; Trey & Lea Morgan, Childress, TX; Wayne & Tami Roberts, Oklahoma City; Chris Swinford, Wichita Falls, TX.

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A tragic end to a remarkable life

On March 31, 2019, Nipsey Hussle passed away from gunshot wounds, bringing a tragic end to a remarkable life. Sadly, he was shot in the front of his business, The Marathon Clothing.

I first noticed Nipsey in a photo shoot he had completed with his girlfriend, Lauren London. If you haven’t seen it, you should. It captures Nipsey’s undeniable star power. Even beside a beautiful woman and white stallions in Los Angeles, Nipsey is the one who captivates.

As word spread of Nipsey’s passing, I discovered that his family once attended the Normandie Church of Christ in Los Angeles. In 1983, my father served as the associate minister at Normandie. Nipsey and his siblings were a part of the youth group. He, his brother Samiel Asghedom and sister Samantha Smith were all baptized at Normandie in the 1990s. Even though I never met Nipsey in person, I feel as if I knew him because of our connection with the Normandie congregation.

Michael Smith, a longtime Normandie member and owner of the Bayou Grille in Inglewood, Calif., is Nipsey’s former stepfather. Michael once ran a summer youth camp at Normandie. Michael is one of the nicest Christian men I have had the privilege of knowing. Though there weren’t a ton of details in Nipsey’s biography about their relationship, I know Nipsey was in good hands as a teenager with Michael.

Nipsey was a rapper from the streets of Los Angeles. His vocabulary reflected his life and the struggles of growing up in the inner city. You can hear his music “profanity-free” only with an edited clean version. Setting the language and lifestyle aside, Nipsey’s story is one of remarkable achievement and missed opportunity.


The newly published “The Marathon Don’t Stop: The Life and Times of Nipsey Hussle” is an unauthorized biography by Rob Kenner.

Kenner relates the humble beginnings of Ermias Joseph Asghedom, later to be called Concept and then Nipsey Hussle. Ermias’ story is one heard quite frequently. His father wasn’t at home with him, but his mom was devoted and committed to his well-being. He grew up around the Rollin’ 60’s Neighborhood Crips and drug dealing. Though Nipsey was extremely gifted academically and seemed to have a knack for business, he eventually made two choices that turned out to be tragic in his life.

Nipsey had a drive toward success. His first job was working at the Bayou Grille and repairing shoes. Nipsey was so successful that he was able to buy his own school clothes and shoes. He later moved into clothing and other goods.

Eventually, the temptation to earn substantial sums of money tempted Nipsey into drug dealing. Drug dealing seemed to be more of a means to an end than a lifelong pursuit.

By the final years of Nipsey’s life, he had become a successful entrepreneur, buying up prime real estate in Los Angeles and opening commercial space for artists and others to gather.

Had he lived longer, Nipsey undoubtedly would have created a model to reimagine the inner city with real opportunity for all.

Nipsey had a passion for family and friends. His Eritrean heritage had planted deep familial roots, and Nipsey fiercely loved and protected his family and friends.

Growing up in certain L.A. neighborhoods, it is difficult not to choose certain detrimental lifestyles. Though Nipsey was surrounded by several who tried to steer him away from the streets, he chose to become a Rollin’ 60’s Crip. The authorities have not fully released their thinking behind why Nipsey was murdered.

The greatest tragedy of Nipsey’s life is trying to envision what the church missed out on by not capturing the heart and imagination of this young man.

After reading his biography, I am wondering how many more young men and women we have missed. At least for the church, the responsibility for missing Nipsey’s potential reaches far beyond the cracks.

The book’s “How To” section is loaded with practical suggestions and tools that will make any parent’s dream of having solid family worship attainable. Williamson explains the components of family worship — reading the word, recitation of key texts, singing, and praying — with practical suggestions for each area.

The last 54 pages of the book are filled with resources to put meat on the bones of a family’s worship time, including worship guides, discussion questions, Bible reading plans, and songs.

“The Family Worship Guide” arrives at a propitious time. Because of today’s busy lifestyles, more important responsibilities too easily fall between the cracks. Anecdotal evidence suggests most Christian families today do not have regular worship time together, and parents who want to make this commitment simply feel inadequate. This book addresses both challenges.
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How a Sunday Bible hour became a masterclass in suffering and grit

OKLAHOMA CITY

‘H’i, my name is Tyler, and I’m an alcoholic.”

That’s not what I expected to hear in Sunday morning Bible class.

I thought we were doing 1 Corinthians this quarter.

One of our elders, Steve Brookman, had changed the class format to a one-on-one discussion with Tyler. I was surprised to see Steve taking such a public role. His mother, a beloved member of our congregation, had passed away just two days before.

But today was important. Tyler was right on the cusp of a milestone — a solid year of sobriety. And he had agreed to share his journey with us.

So our regular teacher, John Wilguess, stayed seated and masked as Tyler went to the front of the room and took a seat, socially distanced from Steve. Tyler took off his mask (I’m only now realizing the symbolism of that act) and told us how his flirtation with alcohol as a child had turned into an addiction.

He described the crushing grip the disease had on his life — how it followed him to South America and back, how it bled into his marriage, his job.

He didn’t drink socially. He drank “to maintain,” he said, to keep his hands from shaking.

To function.

Finally, lovingly, one of our elders confronted him and helped him get into treatment. Tyler talked about withdrawal. Short version: “It sucks.” He didn’t mince words.

He talked about relapsing, about how many guys he knows in Alcoholics Anonymous who have multiple one-, two- or six-month chips. He said he only ever wants one — the next one.

A few weeks earlier, I had done a 6 a.m. Zoom call with Justin and Jennifer Gerhardt in England for our Post-Pandemic Church series. They’re veteran creators of adult education content, and we talked about revamping our Bible classes as folks begin to reassemble. The Gerharts stressed the need for quality content and urged churches to use the resources they have in their pews. It doesn’t always have to be a Corinthian commentary, they said. Bible lessons can come from a combat veteran discussing faith under fire or an elderly saint sharing how he prays.

As Tyler shared his story, he taught as one with authority. This was a masterclass on suffering. And lest ye think it had no connection to 1 Corinthians, see the Lord’s Supper fracas in chapter 11.

Staying sober for a year is amazing. Staying sober in this year is miraculous. COVID-19 lockdowns have created scads of new addicts — a pandemic within the pandemic. Alcohol sales have soared, and here in Oklahoma we’ve passed a law that allows grocery stores and wholesale clubs to sell hard liquor. The stuff you used to have to go to the package store to get is now next to the chip aisle at Target.

I don’t know how Tyler did it. Scratch that. I do know. He told us. God showed up. He showed up in the patient love of Tyler’s wife, in the letters and texts he got from all of us. He showed up whenever Tyler prayed. And he prayed a lot.

Tyler shared one of those prayers — the Step 3 prayer, page 63 of the Alcoholics Anonymous manual. They call it “the Big Book.” “God, I offer myself to Thee — to build me and do with me as Thou wilt. ...Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy power, Thy love and Thy way of life.”

Tyler said he hopes that his story will help others. It helped me. And it helped all of us to see what a post-pandemic Bible class can be.

That’ll teach, brother. That’ll teach.
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