Can America be saved? Yes, say these Christians

DOMESTIC MISSION EFFORT focuses on reaching lost souls in the U.S.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ROME, Ga.

Julie Trujillo has traveled to Honduras and Peru to help with medical missions. She has flown to Panama to evangelize. The 45-year-old Christian was looking for her next chance to share Jesus in Latin America when she learned about a door-knocking campaign in Rome — the small town in northwest Georgia, not the Italian capital.

“We don’t need to go to Central and South America to see people who are lost,” said Trujillo, a member of the Haverhill Road Church of Christ in West Palm Beach, Fla. “America is lost.”

COVID-19 travel concerns prompted Latin American Missions — sponsored by the Forrest Park Church of Christ in Valdosta, Ga. — to cancel its international mission trips last summer and again this summer.

“It would just be very hard to take 30 to 50 people down there and do a successful campaign because of curfews and testing,” said Austin Fowler, the organization’s director.

Instead, Latin American Missions partnered with the House to House/Heart to Heart School of Evangelism — a ministry of the East Ridge Church of Christ in Chattanooga, Tenn. — to organize the recent American Mission Campaign.

First female president makes history at Lipscomb

Candice McQueen visits with Mike Engelman after her introduction Aug. 5 as the first woman to lead a university associated with Churches of Christ. McQueen, 47, will succeed Randy Lowry as president of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn. Engelman is Lipscomb’s director of construction and maintenance.

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Singers celebrate hymnal’s 100th anniversary

BY JOEY ROBERTS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ABILENE, Texas — Each summer, Levi Sisemore enjoys a spiritual mountaintop experience in flat, dry West Texas.

For Sisemore, the annual Texas Normal Singing School in Abilene brings a reunion with fellow believers who love singing praises to God as much as he does.

“I started off making friends at the singing school, and over the years, friends have become family,” said Sisemore, worship and involvement minister for the Fredericksburg Church of Christ in the Texas Hill Country.

He met his future wife, Sara, at the 2001 event. The singing school’s 75th anniversary coincides with the 100th anniversary of the “Great Songs of the Church” hymnal. Both milestones were celebrated as more than 100 students and staff from 18 states and Mexico gathered.

Songleading students ranged from Levi and Sara Sisemore’s 7-year-old son, Benjamin, to Curt Harris, a 74-year-old member of the South Anchorage Church of Christ in Alaska.

“I have seen the awesome power of God’s...
The two-year Bachelor of Biblical Studies degree is the core training program at SIBI. Students study 40 courses equaling 120 college-level credit hours that cover the entire Bible. Each student also chooses a four-course emphasis in preparation for his or her chosen ministry. Students may choose an emphasis in congregational ministry, family & youth ministry, missions, or Christian interpreter training.
A wrong turn, a lesson learned on Georgia trip

ROM, Ga.

As I made a right turn on the way to my hotel, a homeless man standing in the highway median waved feverishly, begging me to stop. I ignored him. I was tired and ready to grab a quick dinner and relax.

Even as I cruised past the man, he kept yelling, his frantic movements reflecting in my rearview mirror. Give him credit for persistence, I thought, as I started to accelerate.

But then I noticed something else. A one-way sign. My right turn had been the wrong one. I was headed straight into oncoming traffic. Fortunately, the ramp remained clear at the moment.

I hit the brakes and made a quick U-turn in the grass. I slowed down at the stop sign and rolled down my passenger window. The man I had brushed off as a panhandler patted his chest. “You about gave me a heart attack,” he told me as he leaned into the window. “I’m sorry about that,” I replied. “Thank you for trying to warn me.”

In my first five minutes in this northwest Georgia town — where I had come to report on the American Mission Campaign — I already had survived a hair-raising experience. And

The happiest place on earth?

IN DISNEY WORLD’S shadow, Equip Conference brings together pandemic-weary Churches of Christ.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ORLANDO, Fla.

Mickey Mouse may be the big draw for millions of tourists who flock to Central Florida each year. But for the roughly 1,000 Christians who met recently at an Orlando hotel, the chance — at long last — to sing, pray and mingle with fellow believers beat Walt Disney World.

After over a year of virtual services and social distancing, the Equip Conference, a regional gathering of members of Churches of Christ, buzzed with handshakes, hugs and happy reunions.

“I hope this is the next chapter to normality, you know what I’m saying?” said Brandon Smith, a worship leader for the Fifth Avenue Church of Christ in St. Petersburg, Fla. “This is awesome.”

For nearly four decades, Equip — formerly known as the Spiritual Growth Workshop — has helped strengthen ties among church

Dixie Fire burns down California church camp

BY AUDREY JACKSON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

The Dixie Fire that ravaged Northern California destroyed Sierra Bible Camp, a mainstay of Churches of Christ for 67 years. The second-largest wildfire in California history leveled the Plumas County camp, which the state Department of Forestry and Fire Protection earlier had used as a base of operations.

“The winds shifted, and the Dixie Fire came back at camp from the southeast side,” camp administrators posted on Facebook. “We are so sad to report that the fire went through camp. Please keep the families and communities in that area in your prayers.”

Founded by three northern Sacramento Valley preachers, Fletcher Cauthen, George Dickson and Paul King King, Sierra Bible Camp leased the current location from the U.S. Forest Service in 1954.

The Aug. 6 fire wiped out all 21 buildings, including several that were
Perhaps I learned a lesson about paying attention.

My travels with *The Christian Chronicle* have taken me to all 50 states and 14 nations.

After staying home for over a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am blessed to be fully vaccinated and covering news in person again.

Most of my time on the road — and in the air — is pretty boring, standard stuff.

Airport security lines. Rental car check-in counters. Fast-food drive-thru lanes.

But occasionally, I run into a bit of excitement (even when I follow directions correctly).

In 2015, I flew into Rapid City, S.D., on a Saturday and then drove 300 miles to the state capital in North Dakota. I stayed overnight at the home of minister Walter Clark and his wife, Cindy, before Sunday worship with the Bismarck Church of Christ.


I was excited about visiting the youth and family camp, a longtime gathering point for members of Churches of Christ in the Dakotas and surrounding states.

But somehow I missed the memo that the Black Hills camp session coincides with the world-famous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, which each August draws hundreds of thousands of bikers to the southwestern region of South Dakota.

“My sincere thank you goes out to Google Maps for taking me through downtown Sturgis with the sun shining in my eyes and a million motorcycles on the road,” I posted on Facebook. “No picture available since I was concentrating on not killing anybody.”

I was exaggerating. But only slightly. Maybe there’s a reason my wife, Tamie, always insists on driving when we’re together.

My favorite road trip was one where I didn’t have to handle the steering wheel.

In 2018, I rode shotgun with John Kincaid, a volunteer truck driver with Churches of Christ Disaster Relief Effort in Nashville, Tenn., as he delivered emergency supplies after Hurricane Michael struck Florida.

Kincaid navigated through the night — 466 miles — pulling his big rig into the parking lot of the Jenks Avenue Church of Christ in Panama City, Fla., just after 2:45 a.m.

Here in Georgia, the homeless man explained that a town ordinance prevented him from asking for money. However, the look on his face indicated that he would accept any help I offered.

Grateful to be alive, I reached into my wallet. I had a wad of $1 bills that I had brought in case I needed to tip an airport shuttle driver.

I grabbed all the cash and handed it to him.

He thanked me and proceeded to offer proper directions to my destination.

As I drove away, I was reminded of Hebrews 13:2: “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

BOBBY ROSS JR. is editor-in-chief of *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact bobby@christianchronicle.org. Follow him on Twitter at @bobbyross.
‘The church has lost a giant’

JACK ZORN, founder of Lads to Leaders, dies at 86 after an extended illness.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Jack Zorn, the influential founder of Lads to Leaders, a Christian youth-training program that started in 1968 with just eight boys but has grown to more than 20,000 participants each year, died Aug. 12 after an extended illness, his family said. He was 86.

“Daddy passed,” Rhonda Zorn Fernandez, a member of the Concord Street Church of Christ in Orlando, Fla., said in a text message. “Pray for us.

“I’m truly thrilled for Daddy to receive his heavenly reward,” she added. “I knew I would feel broken. I just did not know I would feel shattered.”

Zorn, famous in Churches of Christ for his bright red blazer, died peacefully at the Orlando-area home where he lived with Fernandez and his son-in-law, Halo Fernandez.

Roy Johnson, executive director of Lads to Leaders and brother of Zorn’s late wife, Frances Zorn, said the family and the Lads to Leaders staff “are heartbroken at the loss but know what a legacy his life has been in the lives of thousands upon thousands of Christians!”

From its humble start, Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes Inc., based in Montgomery, Ala., now hosts eight annual regional conventions in the U.S. and four in other countries. Through the program, young members of Churches of Christ memorize Scripture, practice song leading and participate in other Bible-based activities. Over the past half-century, at least a quarter-million children, parents, ministers and church leaders have participated in the program, according to Johnson.

“He later attended Alabama Christian College (now Faulkner University) in Montgomery, where he met fellow student Frances Johnson. Zorn lost his wife of 61 years in 2017, when she died at age 80.

Besides his bachelor’s degree from Faulkner, Zorn earned a master’s from Harding School of Theology and a doctorate of religious education from the International Bible Institute and Seminary.

After college, Jack Zorn preached full time in four states and did mission work. While preaching in Warner Robins, Ga., he founded Lads to Leaders in 1968. The youths he helped train for the program gave their first public speeches on Sunday morning, Jan. 5, 1969. Frances Zorn helped train the first Leaderettes — participants in a version of the program for young women.

When Jack decided to give up preaching and teaching to devote his life to spreading Lads to Leaders, he had no funding,” Roy Johnson said in 2017. “Frances took on three jobs — working days, nights, and weekends — to provide enough money to feed the family and travel money for Jack to visit churches and hold workshops across the nation.”

‘LIFETIME OF SERVICE’

After retiring from the ministry for health reasons, the Zorns settled in Sylacauga, Ala. They were active in the Hollins Church of Christ.

The Christian Chronicle featured the family in 2016 in a series on Christian caregivers. In that article, Rhonda Fernandez discussed the challenges of caring for aging parents. Read that story at christianchronicle.org/zornfeature.

Earlier this year, Faulkner, which is associated with Churches of Christ, honored Jack Zorn as its Alumnus of the Year. Zorn, who served on the university’s board of directors, was honored for his “lifetime of service dedicated to the Lord’s work, his ingenuity and his love for young people.”

In 2017, Harding University in Searcy, Ark., presented Zorn with an honorary Doctor of Laws for his contributions to the development of Christian leaders through his groundbreaking work with Lads to Leaders and Leaderettes.

Survivors include two other daughters, Resa Byrd and Sonya King; two sisters, Ina Griffith and Betty Brown; a brother, Buddy Pryor; five granddaughters; 10 great-grandchildren; and lots of nieces and nephews. Zorn was preceded in death by his twin sister, Chasie Walker.

Funeral services will be at 2:30 p.m. Aug. 28 at the University Church of Christ in Montgomery, with visitation beforehand starting at 12:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Lads to Leaders’ Zorn Memorial Fund.
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Veteran gospel teachers David Shannon, Eddie Cloer, David Riley, Charles Box, David Banks, and Larry Krause speak on their experiences in leading others to Christ.

David Banks, the evangelist at the Rena Road church of Christ in Van Buren, Arkansas, speaks on teaching others from within a genuine relationship:

“Not taking advantage of an opportunity to teach another would be to fail Christ because we are afraid that person will be offended. We are not talking about coercing people with ‘The Life of Christ.’ We are speaking about sharing with them Jesus Christ—the hope of eternal life.”

David Riley of the Mars Hill church of Christ in Vilonia, Arkansas, shares how to use “The Life of Christ” in personal evangelism through finding, befriending, and teaching others:

“At the congregation of which I am a part, we studied through The Life of Christ, 1 & 2. There are members who will tell you, ‘That changed my life. I probably learned more from that study than any other study.’ There is something about a systematic study through ‘The Life of Christ’ that can just make you better.”

Larry Krause, the minister at the church of Christ in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, speaks on the importance of teaching others through example, persistence, and love:

“I look back over my life, and I think the thing that helped me grow the most as a Christian was sitting down and sharing Jesus. I don’t know of anything that will help you grow more than telling people about Christ.”
KENTUCKY
FRENCHBURG — A flash flood damaged the Menifee County Church of Christ parsonage, where minister Randy Imel and his wife, Cathy, have lived for 21 years.
The couple lost appliances, furniture and personal mementos, and the July 30 flooding damaged the floors, cabinets and bathroom fixtures.
The Rolling Hills Church of Christ in Mt. Sterling, Ky., which oversees mission work in Menifee County, helped with cleanup and let the couple live in a cabin at Rolling Hills Christian Camp.
“Cathy and I have lost much due to (the) flood, but we still rejoice in the Lord!” Randy Imel posted on Facebook. Their son, Justin Imel, started a GoFundMe page to raise $15,000 to help replace their losses.

MISSOURI
ROLLA — As delta variant cases surge, Rolla Church of Christ elder Jeff McKune sees vaccines as part of God’s plan to end the pandemic.
McKune, a former EMT, said his faith led him to be vaccinated.
“I cannot pray to God, ‘Please end this pandemic,’ and then limit how he should answer that prayer,” McKune said in an open letter published online by The Christian Chronicle. “I cannot ask God for his intervention and then say, ‘Just so long as I don’t have to get a vaccine.’
“The Bible is filled with examples of people of faith being required to do something,” McKune wrote.
Read the full letter at christianchronicle.org/elder-covid.

NEW YORK
GREECE — Six years and one pandemic later, the Northgate Community Garden started by the Lawson Road Church of Christ keeps growing. The church built the garden in 2015 to connect with the community. Since then, the garden has doubled in size, with 20 beds available for planting.
“It has provided opportunities to engage the community in ways that we wouldn’t be doing otherwise,” minister Peter Horne said.
The church had a waitlist of gardeners for 2021. Facebook advertising and the pandemic helped increase interest, Horne said.
“This year was our best year for actually recruiting community members,” he said.

TENNESSEE
HOLLADAY — Joshua Burton Henley, 32, former minister for the Holladay Church of Christ, has been arrested on three state charges of statutory rape by an authority figure and one count of aggravated sexual battery.
He also faces federal charges in the Western District of Tennessee for the sexual exploitation of a minor, receipt-distribution-possession of child sexual exploitation material, enticement and solicitation of a minor and interstate transportation of a minor to engage in criminal sexual conduct.
At the time of his June 18 arrest, Henley was serving as youth minister for the Washington Avenue Church of Christ in Evansville, Ind.
He previously held ministry roles with the Elkhart Church of Christ in Kansas, Black Mesa Bible Camp in Kenton, Okla., and the Central Church of Christ in Hereford, Texas.
The Washington Avenue church terminated his employment following the arrest.
Initially booked into the Benton County jail on a $500,000 bond, Henley was later moved to a federal facility in Jackson, Tenn., and his bond was increased to $1 million. Henley has entered a “not guilty” plea, according to C. Mark Donahoe, his defense attorney.
The investigation is ongoing.
Read the full story at christianchronicle.org/joshhenley.

Tennessee congregation has a vision for making church ‘a more inclusive environment’
Volunteers at the Highland Church of Christ in Cordova, Tenn., welcome Asher Honshell, center, to a recent Vacation Bible School for children and adults with disabilities. “Our church has a vision for making the church a more inclusive environment for those with special needs,” said Hanna Thrasher, a Highland youth minister. Smiles were contagious as participants, who ranged in age from 5 to 41, experienced a VBS tailored to their needs. Read the full story at christianchronicle.org/highlandvbs.
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CAMPAIGN: ‘There are still souls that need to be saved’

FROM PAGE 1

The Oak Hill Church of Christ in Rome is a 250-member congregation known for feeding the hungry and welcoming thousands of neighbors to watch Fourth of July fireworks from its property. That congregation hosted the campaigners.

“The world starts next door,” said Matt Wallin, an Oak Hill deacon who serves as director of promotions for House to House/Heart to Heart, an evangelistic publication mailed to as many as 2.4 million U.S. households each month. “A knock could change everything.”

About 150 Christians knocked on 2,475 doors in this town in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, about 65 miles northwest of Atlanta. The domestic missionaries talked to 1,097 residents, including 367 who asked for prayers, Bible study or food.

When not canvassing neighborhoods, the campaigners studied soul-winning techniques with Rob Whitacre, the evangelism school’s director.

“We’re going to prove that in the United States of America, you can still evangelize,” Whitacre said. “There are still souls that need to be saved.”

Given the ongoing pandemic, each participant received a mask and was urged to wear it in any scenario where it seemed appropriate.

Whitacre encouraged the door knockers not to make an issue of masks — or no masks — and to avoid political discussions, so that as the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22, they might “become all things to all people” and save some.

STILL FISHERS OF MEN?

In what’s sometimes called “post-Christian America,” numbers tell part of the story.

The ranks of the religiously unaffiliated — or “nones” — have grown from about 5 percent in the early 1970s to at least 30 percent in 2020, according to Ryan Burge, an Eastern Illinois University professor who conducts religion research.

Among Churches of Christ, the estimated number of men, women and children in U.S. pews has dropped by 14 percent — or 231,247 souls — in the last two decades, according to a national directory compiled by 21st Century Christian.

Specifically, the 2003 directory put the fellowship’s total number of adherents at 1,656,717. The latest count via the Nashville, Tenn.-based publisher’s online fact sheet: 1,425,470.

“We’ve become keepers of the aquarium rather than fishers of men,” Whitacre said.

Before launching the House to House/Heart to Heart School of Evangelism three years ago, Whitacre preached for the Willette Church of Christ in Red Boiling Springs, Tenn.

Attendance at the Middle Tennessee church hit 300 during Whitacre’s 11 years with the congregation. He baptized about one-third of that number, he said, citing his family’s passion for reaching lost souls.

“If you don’t practice it, you shouldn’t be preaching it,” said Whitacre, a 1997 graduate of the Southwest School of Bible Studies in Austin, Texas.

Now a member of the Jacksonville Church of Christ in Alabama, he emphasizes the need for Christians to make contacts and create opportunities for Bible studies. That congregation has converted about a dozen people to Christ so far this year, he said.

“When my family is home … we’re evangelizing,” said Whitacre, who presents evangelism seminars at Churches of Christ across the nation about 40 weekends per year.

“We’re having people in our home or meeting with them for dinner somewhere or having a Bible study with them because that’s the most important part of evangelism.”

But he’s frequently on the road, often joined by his wife, Nicole, and their two children, Hannah, 22, and Jared, 18.

Knocking on a door and expecting someone to show up at a gospel meeting that night might have worked in the 1960s.

Not anymore, Whitacre said.

Still, he believes connecting with neighbors — through door knocking or other means — can help build relationships and open the door for Bible studies.

“Too many believe we can solve our problems with programs and missions,” he said. “There’s no magic formula. It’s Bible studies. It’s worked since Acts 2.”

Part of the challenge, as Whitacre sees it, is convincing Christians that America can be saved.
He leads an annual mission trip to Jamaica and said it’s much to easier to raise money for foreign works.

“Money just pours in,” he said.

But he warns, “Our local churches are dying. If we don’t change directions and do it soon, there won’t be any funds to send (overseas) because we won’t be here.”

TOO LATE FOR AMERICA?

Trujillo, the Florida church member, and her son Micah, 20, drove 700 miles to participate in the Georgia campaign.

“I do struggle with the feeling that it’s too late for America,” she said. “But after listening to (Whitacre), I’m definitely energized. God can do anything, and it does take people who are willing to go.”

The Trujillos teamed with Ted Okolichany, a member of the St. Augustine Church of Christ in Valdosta, Ga., to knock doors in Rome — a town with three winding rivers, and seven hills, just like its European namesake.

Like his teammates, Okolichany, 61, had made multiple mission trips to Latin America.

But he said he was just as eager to spread the Good News closer to home.

“I’ve been in some neighborhoods where dogs will get sixed on me, and I almost got hit by a rake to get out of a yard, and different things of that nature,” he said. “But I think in today’s climate in America, people will be more receptive to somebody coming in and offering them what the savior of the world can give them.”

Scott and Melissa Cain brought their three sons — Walker, 16; Tanner, 13; and Hunter, 12 — with them to Rome.

The entire family knocked doors.

“It went very well,” Scott Cain, who preaches for the Mercedes Drive Church of Christ in Vance, Ala., said after the first day.

His wife added, “Anybody that we got to speak to was happy to speak to us.”

Melissa Cain said the experience reminded her that evangelism at home is just as important as mission work abroad.

“I think a lot of times we want to send money overseas because that’s the easy thing to do … instead of digging in and getting into the work at home where it starts,” she said. “I often get in my own way in evangelism, and I wonder if it’s like that for a lot of people.

“If we could just get out of our way and get to work and just be about the Father’s business, we’d be better off.”
SINGING: ‘Listening to our brothers’ and sisters’ hearts and voices’

FROM PAGE 1

unity in our practice of congregational, a cappella singing,” Levi Sisemore said in an email. “I teach my students that congregational singing is only half about the words we sing or the tune we’re sounding; the other half is about listening to our brothers’ and sisters’ hearts and voices.”

INFLUENTIAL HYMNAL

Some of those words and tunes were written by composers and lyricists whose names are familiar to many who grew up singing in Churches of Christ: Fanny J. Crosby, Tillit S. Teddle, Albert E. Brumley and Alton H. Howard.

Elmer Leon Jorgenson’s name is less familiar, but Jorgenson changed American church hymnody forever on May 16, 1921. That’s when he introduced 350 songs over five nights to the Highland Church of Christ in Louisville, Ky., as part of the first volume of “Great Songs of the Church.”

A century later, churches still benefit from his work.

“E.L. Jorgenson started compiling songs for his hymnal in the spring of 1910,” said hymnologist D.J. Bulls, who preaches for the Gilmer Church of Christ in East Texas. “We owe a lot of debt to him because for him, it was about getting the best songs compiled into the same hymnal.”

Bulls spoke about Jorgenson’s influence at the singing school’s worship leader conference, where participants sang from the 100-year-old hymnal.

Bulls spent years researching the hymnody of Churches of Christ and noted that in the 1800s and early 1900s, Edwin Othello Excell and Charles McCallon Alexander owned a lot of the copyrights to songs that were popular in gospel meetings.

Both men, along with Homer Rodeheaver, were well-known song leaders at the time and traveled to lead singing at the meetings. But, Bulls said, getting them to work together was a tall order, and seeing their songs in the same book was unheard of.

“Hymnology can be both unifying and divisive,” Bulls said. “Many of the people who owned the copyrights of the songs at the time didn’t want their songs mixed with those of other hymnals. Excell and Alexander owned a lot of the copyrights to thousands of songs, and Jorgenson worked to get the permissions he needed to put all the songs in the same book.”

Jorgenson was only 24 when he began what would become an 11-year project to gain copyrights to the 350 songs released in the first edition of “Great Songs of the Church.”

His goal, to compile the best songs of all the hymnals in one book, was thought impossible by some, but he persevered.

“What Jorgenson did affected every American hymnal thereafter,” Bulls said. “Every hymnal that has followed since owes a great debt of gratitude to E.L. Jorgenson.”

Multiple editions have been published over the years and old hymnals sent overseas with missionaries.

Bulls described the hymnal’s influence on hymnody, singing and worship practices in Churches of Christ as monumental.

“Most people have no idea just how different 20th Century American church music would be without Jorgenson’s work,” Bulls said.

SINGING SCHOOL’S ROOTS

The idea for the Texas Normal Singing School was born in 1944 when Edgar Furr and Austin Taylor met and began to share insights into the need for song leadership training.

Two years later, they formed a partnership to establish a summer singing school.

The school was established in Sabinal, Texas, and met for two weeks each June. The idea was to teach teenage boys, but over time, the school also attracted adult students.

The term “normal,” now an archaic term, at the time described schools that did not offer scholastic credit.

In 1985, the school moved to the campus of Trinity University in San Antonio for three years. From 1988 until 2019, it was conducted on the ACU campus. In 2020 and 2021, because of COVID-19 protocols, the school moved to the Oldham Lane Church of Christ in Abilene.

The school now meets for one week in July, and it offers training in three major areas of church music: song leading, songwriting and singing with excellence. The school’s goal is to train both men and women to excel in the public worship and assemblies of the church. However, while women provide instruction to men and women on reading music and singing well, they only lead groups of other women, according to Levi Sisemore, the school’s treasurer.

“The singing school seems to attract my favorite kind of people: spiritually invested Christians who want to serve their congregations,” Sisemore said. “There are so many of our song/worship leading students who have taken their first steps in public service at the singing school.

“We’ve encouraged dozens to go on to ministry training programs,” he added, “and many are serving in full-time ministry because of it.”
original to the camp’s founding as well as the newest facility, which was completed this year, camp directors said. Clint Evans, the Redding-Reno session director and a Sierra Bible Camp board member, said his camp session was evacuated July 14 as the Dixie Fire escalated. The board canceled all other scheduled activities. “As far as it can be told, it took out everything that wasn’t concrete,” Evans said of the overnight blaze.

A PLACE OF SALVATION

Ghavinn Crutcher, who has directed the camp’s Roseville session for 16 years, marked many important milestones at the Sierra Bible Camp.

Crutcher, now minister for the Elk Grove Church of Christ, south of Sacramento, was baptized at the camp at age 17.

Later, he immersed both his wife and oldest son into Christ there. “We’re hoping that this is a unifier — you know, how tragedy can actually bring people together,” Crutcher said. “This may be a time where churches in the Northern California area get unified again for a purpose, a common goal that we’re all pulling on the same side of the rope to get the place back up and running so we can continue to build foundations of faith in young people for many more years to come.”

‘I DON’T THINK GOD IS FINISHED YET’

For Tim and Roxanne Cowan Kelley, the camp was where they first met.

Both attended the Sierra Bible Camp as campers but didn’t meet until 1970. That summer, Tim worked as a counselor. Roxanne, who was baptized at the camp when she was 12, attended the session to recruit for York College in Nebraska, which is associated with Churches of Christ.

Two years later, the couple — now members of the Littleton Church of Christ in Colorado — returned to the camp as a married couple. “It was a place conducive to perceiving the presence of the Holy Spirit,” said Tim Kelley, an alumnus of Pepperdine University. “I don’t think God is finished there yet.”

Some of the burned buildings were insured, but the 15 cabins were not, camp directors said. A fund-raising effort will be needed to help rebuild. The future of the physical camp is uncertain, but hope remains. “The true life of the camp was the people,” Evans said. “And all the people are safe.”

Nathan Franson, minister for the Mariposa Avenue Church of Christ in Citrus Heights, Calif., echoed Evans’ sentiment. “It is a difficult time, but we will get through it together. The fire may destroy the camp, but it will not destroy the memories.’”
EQUIP: Attendees ‘thrilled to be back together’ after online event

FROM PAGE 3

members in Florida and beyond.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the biennial event moved online last summer, featuring a shortened, two-night program on racial reconciliation. The success of the coronavirus vaccines allowed the in-person conference to return.

“It was a great, great event online, but we are thrilled to be back together,” said Larry Cline, a former Florida Gators football player who directs Equip. “It’s so much better.”

COVID-19 IMPACT STILL FELT

The four-day conference’s attendance numbers were down, particularly for the children’s program, Cline said, amid concerns over COVID-19’s delta variant and rising numbers of infections in Florida.

A front-page editorial in that weekend’s Orlando Sentinel characterized the Sunshine State as “at a tipping point.” The banner headline begged, “Please, Florida, get vaccinated this weekend.”

“I think some people were apprehensive about coming,” said Cline, who preaches for the Hardin Valley Church of Christ in Knoxville, Tenn. “But for the ones that are here, I don’t know that I’ve seen more excitement and the desire to connect across all lines. It’s just really been good.”

A few participants — along with registration desk clerks at the Rosen Centre Hotel, where Equip was held — wore masks, but most saw no need to do so.

“It’s great, especially being vaccinated, to feel safe to shake hands with everyone, to give hugs, to talk and be in close proximity,” said Roslyn Miller, an Orlando church planter who attended Equip with her husband, Andy. “I’ve seen so many old friends and people I’ve known for years.”

Andy Miller added: “It’s encouraging to see some that we haven’t seen in over a year. It’s also encouraging to see how God is working in different places and to see people’s enthusiasm to move on with the Lord’s work.”

A racially diverse event, Equip highlights Black and White presenters as well as a special program for Spanish speakers, along with a separate track for teens.

James Moore, a longtime minister and church leader, was instrumental in the conference’s creation.

Moore was honored at this year’s conference with the Batsell Barrett Baxter Legacy of Ministry Award, presented by the Herald of Truth.

Baxter was an influential preacher who was the face of the Herald of Truth’s national television ministry in the 1960s and 1970s.

“I knew Batsell Barrett Baxter, and yes, I listened to his Sunday morning addresses,” Moore said. “I wish I could be half the man I knew him to be.”

Kenny Bachhaus, minister for the Mandarin Church of Christ in Jacksonville, Fla., came with his wife, Sandi, and their 13-year-old daughter, Hannah.

“We’re absolutely delighted to be here and just soak it in,” Johnson said.

Likewise, Tim Archer, director of international ministry for the Herald of Truth, said he was “thrilled” to be at Equip. He reflected on the lessons learned during the pandemic.

“I really feel that we’ve learned how to be apart, but we’ve also learned the importance of being together,” said Archer, an elder of the University Church of Christ in Abilene, Texas. “And I think the pandemic has helped us even learn to appreciate a little more the value of being together.”

“Scott actually being able to be face to face with people and sit down and talk — it just means so much more.”

GIDDY TO BE TOGETHER

At one time, Equip drew crowds of 3,000 people.

That number has been closer to 1,200 in recent years, said Wesley Leonard, an Equip board member and the evangelist for the Southside Church of Christ in Orlando. The last in-person Equip occurred in 2018.

Leonard’s congregation just returned to in-person worship on the Fourth of July.

“The pandemic, of course, knocked us down and slowed us down and fractured our fellowships across the board,” Leonard said. “So this first big gathering we’ve had where a lot of the restrictions have been lifted — no masks, no 6-foot distancing — it’s good.

“Equip is all about giving people tools to help them in their walk with God,” he added. “And so, there’s two prongs: We get the information, and it’s like a family reunion, really, after three years.”

Attendees interviewed by The Christian Chronicle seemed almost giddy.

“Oh, it’s wonderful to get to see the people and be with so many fellow Christians, especially in the assemblies, and hear the singing and hear the preaching and hear the amens,” said Joy Shepherd, an Orange Avenue church member whose husband, Chuck, serves as an elder.

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Each attendee interviewed by the Herald of Truth had a different reason for being at Equip.

“Please, Florida, get vaccinated this weekend.”

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“Scott actually being able to be face to face with people and sit down and talk — it just means so much more.”
AMID WAVES OF VIOLENCE, fueled by misinformation on social media, Churches of Christ in South Africa use the internet to call believers to an hour of prayer during their locked-down worship services.

Lions, lies and hope

J. Gerber

John Gerber remembers praying for rain — and the cloud-burst that followed.

It happened in the 1980s, during a period of extreme drought in the Highveld, the interior plateau of his native South Africa. Gerber and his family bowed their heads during a national hour of prayer in the city of Welkom.

His father was working near Johannesburg and prayed with the Boksburg Church of Christ. There, Gerber said, an older gentleman known as Oom Jaap — “Uncle Jaap” in Afrikaans — “did not simply lead the church in prayer but instead spoke to God in his plea for rain and had the whole church in tears.”

As the family drove home, from Welkom to Riebeeckstad, Gerber saw flashes of lightning on the endless horizon. That night, and in the days that followed, rain poured from the sky into the parched lands.

Four decades later, South Africa is again “in dire need of godly intervention,” Gerber said, after what some news reports dubbed the worst wave of violence since the end of apartheid. The mayhem in two of the country’s nine provinces claimed more than 200 lives, cost 50 billion rand ($3.4 billion) in lost output and placed 150,000 jobs at risk, according to Bloomberg.

That’s why Gerber, a member of the Rietfontein Church of Christ in the town of Ballito and on the Dolphin Coast, designed social media posts for the #PrayerHourSA event and promoted it on Instagram and Facebook. “I am just glad I could be used as a vessel to spread some positivity and hope into the country,” she told the Chronicle.

Nearly 700 miles away, Motshabi Sophia Mtshazo, a member of the East London Church of Christ, helped to translate the prayer request into multiple South African languages.

Protesters march in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2017, demanding that President Jacob Zuma step down. Zuma resigned in February 2018 after he was recalled by his party, the African National Congress.

GUNSHOTS AT NIGHT

The recent jailing of former South African president Jacob Zuma sparked days of protests and looting.

“At night you could hear the gunshots and the helicopters,” Lou Theron, a member of the Turffontein Church of Christ, told The Christian Chronicle via WhatsApp from his home in Johannesburg.

Zuma was charged with contempt by South Africa’s highest court after he failed to appear before a commission investigating multiple accusations of corruption during his years in office (2009 to 2018).

Doctored images and false claims on social media — including a fake story that protesters had released lions from a game preserve — further fueled the violence.

In Zuma’s home province, KwaZulu-Natal, some church members spent days manning barriers or patrolling farms to keep looters at bay, said Shane Sweeten, a missionary from Texas who works with the Dolphin Coast Church of Christ in the town of Ballito and on a farm outside the small town of KwaDukuza.

In the Soweto suburb of Eldorado Park, “the community risked their lives and formed a cordon around their neighborhoods, preventing the looters from entering,” said Pieter Gerber, a member of the Rietfontein Church of Christ in Pretoria and Johan Gerber’s cousin. “They stood shoulder to shoulder and braved the danger and cold, as it is mid-winter in South Africa. These civilian groups included Christian brothers and sisters.”

‘POSITIVITY AND HOPE’ GO VIRAL

Long-simmering social and economic issues set the stage for unrest, church members said.

More than 27 years after South Africa’s segregationist apartheid system ended, the nation suffers from a widening gap between rich and poor, COVID-19 lockdowns and, most recently, an aggressive wave of the delta variant. The lockdowns prevent churches from meeting in person, so many congregations use digital platforms including YouTube, Facebook, Zoom and WhatsApp.

Johan Gerber, himself recovering from a recent bout of COVID-19, and fellow Christians contacted more than 200 church leaders across South Africa about #PrayerHourSA. The team reached out to media outlets, more than 100 of the country’s largest denominations and the South African Council of Churches.

Devereaux Manuel, who grew up in the Athlone Church of Christ and now worships with the Bellville congregation, designed social media posts for the event and promoted it on Instagram and Facebook. “I am just glad I could be used as a vessel to spread some positivity and hope into the country,” she told the Chronicle.

…”
languages for the #PrayerHourSA website. The site included contacts in 13 languages for Churches of Christ across the country.

“We know that when the church comes together to pray, the Lord will intervene,” Mtshazo said, citing 2 Chronicles 7:14: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

OPPORTUNITIES AND OPEN ARMS

Southeast of Cape Town, five members of the Somerset West Church of Christ said prayers during the church's #PrayerHourSA service. One noted that “today is national day to pray for our country, but this day should be every day,” Mtshazo said.

In coastal KwaZulu-Natal, elders of the Durban Church of Christ prayed for their government, for medical personnel and for Christians to remain strong in their faith during this time of testing, church leader Brian Lister told the Chronicle via WhatsApp.

Despite his homeland’s hardships, “the Gospel always thrives when things go bad,” said Lister, who was baptized by the late missionary Tex Williams at age 11 in 1968. “There are opportunities right now, and we need to grab them with open arms.”

In Pretoria, Kobus Gerber read from Psalm 10 (“Why, Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?”) during the Rietfontein church’s service. He also read from the next chapter, Psalm 11 (“For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice”).

“This reminded us that there is a God. He is alive,” Pieter Gerber said. “In him we live, and we survive.” In the sermon that followed, he stressed the need for unity in worship, in compassion, in relationships and in love.

‘A COMEBACK NATION’

Johan Gerber said he was impressed by the Christians who helped organize the nationwide effort.

A tweet shared widely during waves of violence in South Africa was labeled “misleading” in a fact-checking post by the BBC.

“There were all these talented, eager, willing people who rallied behind the idea,” he said. Since the event, he has received several messages from participants who said, “We should think outside of the box more often; we should mobilize the whole country more often.”

“Even when churches are small,” he said, “these days we have all the tools to make a massive impact if you put in the time.”

Despite the recent tension, turmoil and negative news, “South Africa is a story of hope,” he added, “of how we’ve overcome and kept on overcoming a lot of differences and difficulties, all through my life.”

Lou Theron agrees. He’s a graduate of the Southern Africa Bible School in Benoni, near Johannesburg. More than half a century ago, the government told school officials that they could train only White evangelists.

The school, now named Southern Africa Bible College, trains ministers of multiple ethnicities from countries across the region.

Theron and his wife are the only White members of the Turffontein Church of Christ, a multiethnic congregation whose 60 members hail from a dozen different nations.

“We’re known as a comeback nation,” Theron said of his homeland. “Currently, what’s happening is that people are standing together, probably stronger than ever before.”

LIONS: Gospel ‘thrives when things go bad’
A special delivery for expectant mothers

Expectant mothers line up to receive fruits and vegetables from Rodgers Namuswa at the Kalomo Hospital Mother’s Shelter in Zambia. The shelter gives women from rural villages with few health-care facilities a place to stay as they await the births of their babies, who are delivered at nearby Kalomo Hospital.

“Because they cannot predict how long they will need to stay, the women often feel isolated from their families, and they often run out of food,” workers with Zambia Mission Fund, which oversees the shelter, posted on social media. Namuswa, an evangelist with Namwianga Mission, visits the women weekly to share the word of God, offer counseling to those who are sad and lonely and provide food assistance. He also helps the women communicate with their families back in the village.” See zambiamission.org.

Churches in Russia, Europe, U.S. mourn death of longtime missionary Eileen Emch

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Eileen Rose Emch described herself as a “Gypsy for Jesus.” From her base of operations in southern Russia, she roved across Europe and around the globe, encouraging churches wherever she went.

Emch, 68, died unexpectedly in her sleep June 16. After 22 years of service with a Church of Christ in Rostov-on-Don, she recently had relocated to Dallas to serve as a librarian for her supporting congregation, the Prestoncrest Church of Christ.

Days before her death, she had served as a volunteer for the church’s Vacation Bible School, preaching minister Gordon Dabbs told The Christian Chronicle.

Born in Youngstown, Ohio, she earned a degree in home economics from Abilene Christian University in Texas and a doctorate in philosophy from Texas Tech.

In addition to her Russian church family, she worked closely with a congregation in Lviv, Ukraine, and churches across the region.

Church members around the world posted tributes on social media.

“My life with God was an example for many,” wrote Natallia Golos in Minsk, Belarus. “Your dedication to people was full of love and compassion. I will never forget time we spent together. I thank God for the gift of knowing you.”

Churches in Russia, Europe, U.S. mourn death of longtime missionary Eileen Emch
BUILD A HOME
For a Widow & Her Children

For $3500, a real home can be built... one with windows, doors, sheeted interior walls, a concrete floor, a real roof to keep out the rain and insulation to protect from the heat and cold. This will also provide a start-up supply of household goods to get the family going. You or your congregation can help fund all or part of one of these projects to get a Widow and her Orphan Family out of the mud huts and slums of Nairobi, Kenya.

This is a ministry of Orphan’s Lifeline and the Churches of Christ of Kenya.

For Details, email Tim at timm@orphanslifeline.org or call him at 406-257-0868. You can also donate at orphanslifeline.org or mail to: Orphan’s Lifeline Int’l. 135 Kelly Rd. Kalispell, MT 59901

21st Annual Churches of Christ
Orphan Sunday
Miracle
Nov 14, 2021

It is truly amazing what just a few hundred Church of Christ congregations have done over the last 21 years from this once a year Orphan Sunday free-will offering. Thousands of children have been saved from starvation. Thousands have come to know the Lord and follow Jesus. Children’s homes have been built. Thousands have been cared for and educated. Schools and medical clinics for thousands have been made possible.

Don’t you want your congregation to be part of this miracle?

We need to have your congregation, big or small, become involved in this miracle of love and care. This year, will you please join us in this ministry to save and give hope to an orphan child or a widowed family?

Just email or call Tim or Kelvin, and we will sign you up for this year’s Orphan Sunday materials and our latest newsletters for you and your leadership. Go to orphanslifeline.org/orphan-sunday for photos and more information.

Tim Murphy
timm@orphanslifeline.org
Cell: 406-871-0248
Kelvin Hoover
celvinh@orphanslifeline.org
Cell: 406-220-2143

A ministry of the Churches of Christ for over 21 years
‘We brought the church with us’

AT ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY, historic Brazil mission team celebrates past, present and plans for future ministry.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

ADDISON, Texas

'It’s unlike any other mission team that has ever existed or will ever exist again."

Caroline John used those words to describe the 26 adults and 18 children who boarded a boat bound for the South American nation of Brazil in the summer of 1961.

Six decades later, 16 surviving members of the team — including John’s mother, Carol Vinzant — gathered in a Dallas-area hotel. Surrounded by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, they traded stories from their shared past as their descendants shared dreams for the future.

“When I was in the seventh grade, I prayed that God would use me to be a missionary,” said Dot Stewart, “to go to Africa or anywhere. And I didn’t remember that prayer until I was in Brazil.”

Stewart served alongside her late husband, Ted Stewart, on the 1961 team. “We were all naïve and inexperienced,” she said, “but to think about what God did with us, with our little team … it just grew and today it’s amazing.”

The 13-family team was “little” only in comparison to its mission field — São Paulo, Brazil’s most populous city. The team, joined by three more families a few years later, probably could have fit into the meeting places of the two Churches of Christ that existed in São Paulo at the time, said team member Howard Norton, but that would have left no room for actual Brazilians. So the young missionaries fanned out across the city, sharing Jesus, planting new churches and training new believers to evangelize their homeland.

“And today, over 350 churches have been established, due in large part to your efforts,” Michelle Mickey told the veteran missionaries, including her parents, David and Carolyn Mickey. “The many lives this team has brought to Christ are too numerous to count.”

Then Mickey announced that the second generation had raised $50,000 to launch an endowment to “continue accomplishing what our parents dreamed about: sending Brazilian Christians to disciple and equip new believers all over Brazil.”

Great Cities Missions, a nonprofit created by members of the São Paulo team, will oversee the project, dubbed Shoulder to Shoulder. The announcement was “a surprise beyond a surprise,” said team member Phyllis Huff. “We went believing that we would be able to touch every soul in Brazil. We were very imperfect people depending on God’s grace.”

‘A DIVINE SIGNAL’

Huff’s husband, Lynn, said that before the team left for Brazil, “We learned to survive people slamming the door on us, dogs chasing us, going without a meal or two.”

Selling Bibles door to door was a West Texas boot camp for missionaries, Norton said.

“We got used to dogs and guns,” Norton said with a chuckle, as he added, "..."
Among the São Paulo team’s second generation are Chris Kreidel (center, with Cindy) and Lucado, minister for the Withamsville Church plantings ministry. Team members Muehring and Rosalinto Muehring were touring the United States for “Shoulder to Shoulder” to Great Cities Missions, will continue the São Paulo team’s church-planting ministry. Team member Budo Perry, an engineer who did mission work in Brazil in the late 1960s, prays “We brought the church with us” during a time of fellowship among family and friends of the São Paulo team.

Two sons of missionaries, Budo Perry (left) and David Muehring (right), were touring the United States for “Shoulder to Shoulder” to Great Cities Missions, will continue the São Paulo team’s church-planting ministry. Team member Budo Perry, an engineer who did mission work in Brazil in the late 1960s, prays

“The reunions remind her that her husband, her father and many more are among the ‘cloud of witnesses’ mentioned in Hebrews 12, watching from heaven.

Budo Perry, an engineer who did mission work in Brazil in the late 1960s, prays ‘We brought the church with us’ during a time of fellowship among family and friends of the São Paulo team.

Lucado, the son of a missionary to Brazil, is a former missionary to Brazil. Lucado was born in Brazil to a Portuguese father and an American mother. He was raised in the United States and returned to Brazil in 1991 to serve as a missionary for five years. Lucado is a former missionary to Brazil, and he and his family have returned to Brazil to help with church planting efforts. Lucado is a former missionary to Brazil, and he and his family have returned to Brazil to help with church planting efforts.

Lynn and Phyllis Huff react to a montage of photos of their time in Brazil. Behind them, far left is Bryan Gibbs of Great Cities Missions.

*“Legacy” is a mixed media work by Cuban-American artist Rolando Diaz “depicting what God has done through this team by showing the souls saved in heaven because of them,” said Michelle Mickey, a representative of the mission team families who signed prints of the piece, one of which is shown above. The original will be displayed at Abilene Christian University. Lynn and Phyllis Huff react to a montage of photos of their time in Brazil. Behind them, far left is Bryan Gibbs of Great Cities Missions.*

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Cold Harbor Road Lectureship
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David: A Man with the Heart of God

The Heart is so important. It directs our steps, it can be trained, it could lead us off a cliff. As we examine the heart of David, let us each examine our own.
Judging others: a Christian influence in court

ALABAMA DISTRICT JUDGE serves God by upholding justice, showing compassion.

BY LYNN Mc MILLON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

C arole Coil Medley, a district judge of Lauderdale County, Ala., has run unopposed since 2010. Medley, 57, was originally appointed to the bench by then-Alabama Gov. Bob Riley in 2008. When elected, she became the first Republican to win the seat since the Civil War, according to Ballotpedia.org.

Her late father, Charles Coil, was a leading evangelist among Churches of Christ, serving as president of the International Bible College in Florence, Ala. — from 1971 to 1989.

Medley attended Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City from 1982 to 1985 before earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of North Alabama. She also completed a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Athens State University in Alabama.

Later, Medley contemplated pursuing a doctorate in education. But attorney friends at the Mayfair Church of Christ in Huntsville, Ala. — Mark and Henri McDaniel — encouraged her to seek a law degree.

“They had heard my father, Charles Coil, preach,” Medley said, “and Mark told me that since I would not be able to preach that I should use my passion to help people in the courtroom.”

The Killen Church of Christ member has tried to do just that since her appointment as a district judge.

What path led you to become a judge?

I attended Jones School of Law at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala., graduating in 1995. I eventually returned to Florence, Ala., to practice law. In addition to a solo law practice, I had the opportunity to serve as a special prosecutor for the district attorney’s office.

Twelve years into private practice, I was invited to interview for a judicial vacancy and received the appointment from the governor of Alabama.

In my role, I see the harsh reality that the gospel of Christ is needed today more than ever. The distinct and quickly widening void of God-fearing parents modeling respect for the law, work ethic, coping skills for controversy, discipline and perseverance in times of trial is my greatest challenge.

That, in turn, makes me cherish my parents and my incredible experience at Oklahoma Christian all the more.

Does service to God affect your role?

I am able to discuss my belief in God if the defendant/litigant opens the door to such dialogue. Once/if that occurs, I speak freely of my faith and hope that can be experienced by knowing God.

I see the dark side of lives wreaked by drug abuse, rampant access to pornography, sexual abuse of children, all the work of evil every day. It is my job, for this season in life, to reflect true hope that can only be known by serving God.

Are there any Scriptures that guide you?

Oh yes! I love James 3:17, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

My most favorite: II Timothy 1:17, “For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but one of power, and of love, and of sound mind.”

I am also grateful that my father reiterated to me that “I was made in the image of God” — such has helped me as I deal with criminal defendants knowing that they are made in his image.

I cherish serving in this role and the unique opportunities it has afforded for God to be revealed to broken people through my role as a judge.

Are you appointed or elected, and do you have to contend with political influences?

Though originally appointed by the governor, I had to run for my seat two years later. The state of Alabama runs their judicial races as partisan, and I was elected to be the first Republican countywide office holder in Lauderdale County. I have been blessed to run unopposed since.

Contending with political influences is secondary to my primary vow to uphold the laws enacted by the Alabama Legislature.

Most important to me is my desire to be a just and good judge, use my God-given sense of right and wrong, have wisdom to discern fair implementation of punishment and, above all, ensure trust in the judicial process for all litigants.

American citizens deserve a fair process, an ethical criminal justice system, trials by a jury of their peers and to be completely heard by the American courts of law.

How does your faith impact your ability to do your job?

Knowing, which surpasses believing, that God is the ultimate judge of all gives me great peace, especially knowing I make mistakes, knowing I do not always have all the facts needed to make the best decision, knowing he will restore to those everything lost and will pick up the pieces from all the places where people are scattered.

Because of my faith, I pray every day before I take the bench to be an instrument of his mercy, understanding, patience, discernment and compassion.

Carole Coil Medley

on her job as a district judge
Looking for a Mission-minded Person
BEREAN CHILDREN’S HOME
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Spring 2020   /  Magnolia Messenger
19
“A FAMIL Y with a HEART”

FACULTY POSITIONS AVAILABLE
All candidates must be active members of the church of Christ and committed to Christian education.
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.
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DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY. Seeking full-time, nine-month faculty member with a doctorate in the biological sciences. The ideal candidate has teaching experience in anatomy or physiology, but other fields will be considered. Preference will be given to candidates who can mentor undergraduate research students.
Submit application materials to Dr. Rebekah Rampey, chair, at rrampey@harding.edu, or 915 E. Market, Box 12251, Searcy, AR 72149.

DEPARTMENT OF PHARMACY PRACTICE. Seeking full-time, 12-month faculty member. Applicants with internal medicine, acute care and/or ambulatory care experience are encouraged to apply. Qualified applicants will possess a doctor of pharmacy as well as residency/fellowship training. Candidates with board certification and at least two years of academic experience are preferred. Eligibility for pharmacy licensure in Arkansas is required. Responsibilities include didactic instruction in pharmacotherapy and related clinical sciences, active engagement in scholarship as well as maintenance of a clinical practice site for the purposes of service, and experiential teaching.
Submit application materials to Dr. Rodney Richmond, chair and associate professor, at rrichmond@harding.edu, or 915 E. Market, Box 12230, Searcy, AR 72149.

These additional openings are available at harding.edu/facultyjobs:
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JUDGE: Guided by Scripture, serving U.S. citizens in court
FROM PAGE 23
What was your most memorable experience as a judge?
Most memorable thus far in my judicial tenure was the day an inmate became unshackled, grabbed the gun of my officer, threatening to kill himself. Only with the help of the Holy Spirit was I able to step off the bench and persuade him to give me the gun. “You can’t deny God’s presence when he gives you the strength to deal with a situation as frightening and scary as this was,” I said in an article published by AL.com. I have been invited to speak across the state of that day, thus enabling me to share the story of God’s power in that moment.

What can Christians do to support a just and fair judiciary?
First, Christians can fulfill their duty to serve on jury trials. America is known for maintaining the greatest judicial system in the world and prides itself on trial by jury of peers. Being willing to listen to the evidence and be an active participant in the fair decision process of trials is crucial to the support of our system.
Secondly, Christians should research those running for judicial office and elect men and women with the highest reputation for integrity and adherence to the law. Such applies not only to the judicial branch of government but to all branches.
I ask: Where would this great country be but for the courageous men of faith, writers of the Constitution, who were clearly seeking God’s wisdom and favor when America was founded?
Lastly, many states have now included what are called specialty courts such as drug court, veterans court and mental health court which enable greater help to those in need without the necessity to further fill our overcrowded prison systems. We need Christians in governmental leadership roles to support such positive programs.
Shults-Lewis Child and Family Services is seeking to fill the opening of EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of the agency. Those wanting to be considered for the position should have the desire to help at-risk youth reach their full potential, strong administrative skills, excellent people and networking skills, and the ability to represent the agency in public and church settings.

Duties will entail overseeing the agency, which includes in-residence homes for at-risk youth, resident counseling services, and an on-site accredited Jr/Sr High School. The Executive Director will also be the “public face” of the agency. They will represent the agency in public and will actively cultivate support for the agency and its programs.

Though not a requirement, a license in Clinical Social Work or other Clinical Counseling license or Masters level degrees that can become licensed would be highly desirable.

Shults-Lewis Child and Family Services, located in Valparaiso, Ind., is a dynamic treatment program for at-risk youth and their families. At Shults-Lewis, we believe that families shouldn’t have to struggle alone, and our residential environment, staffed by Christian houseparents and counselors, offers counseling, love, acceptance and, most of all, hope to teens and their families.

Salary will be commensurate with education, experience, licensure, etc.

You may read more about Shults-Lewis Child and Family Services on our website at: http://www.shultslewis.org

You may submit your resume or curriculum vitae on-line at board@shultslewis.org.

Night Staff: 10:00 PM-6:00 AM, days will vary Sunday-Saturday, full-time or part-time. 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.

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
For the first time, a woman will serve as president of a university associated with Churches of Christ.

Trustees of Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., have chosen Candice McQueen, a former Tennessee state education commissioner, as her 6,000-student alma mater’s first female CEO.

McQueen, 47, worked as the dean of Lipscomb’s College of Education from 2008 to 2014 and also as a senior vice president for one year. At the end of 2014, former Gov. Bill Haslam, a Republican, appointed her to oversee the Tennessee Department of Education, a high-profile role she held until 2018. Since 2019, she has guided the nonprofit National Institute for Excellence for Teaching.

Lipscomb’s board of trustees unanimously elected McQueen at a recent special meeting. A six-month national search for longtime President Randy Lowry’s successor drew more than 130 applications and nominations.

When she takes the helm Sept. 7, McQueen — whose family attends the Hillsboro Church of Christ in Nashville — will manage more than 1,000 full-time faculty and staff at the university and nearby Lipscomb Academy, a K-12 Christian school.

“I am honored and humbled to be chosen to serve as the president of Lipscomb University,” the 1996 Lipscomb graduate said in a news release.

“I know firsthand how life-changing this community can be, and I want to ensure that experience for countless others for many years to come.”

In his own statement, David Solomon, chair of the board of trustees, said, “We are thrilled about Dr. McQueen’s return to the university. I am confident that her vision, deep expertise, passion for faith-based education and love for Lipscomb will lead us boldly into a new season of greatness, exemplified by excellence, diversity and immersion in our community as together we work to transform the lives of our students.”

‘PROFOUNDLY HISTORIC MOMENT’

Trace Hebert, a Lipscomb higher education researcher, called McQueen’s appointment a “profoundly historic moment” for the university, which David Lipscomb and James A. Harding founded as the Nashville Bible School in 1891.

“Our institutions of higher education have historically been heavily influenced by both church theology and behavior that has limited the roles of women in the life of many churches,” Hebert told The Christian Chronicle. “Even though we have long stated that colleges and universities are not ‘the church,’ our behavioral patterns have overlapped, and this has heavily influenced decision-making in respect to presidential appointments.”

John Mark Hicks, a Restoration Movement scholar and theology professor at Lipscomb, said the choice marked a reversal of the traditions of the university’s founders.

“David Lipscomb, James A. Harding and their generative group opposed any public role for women in both church and society — including any kind of public leadership in a college that invested them with authority over men,” Hicks said. “This appointment is a reversal of that tradition.”

McQueen will succeed Lowry, who announced Feb. 6 that he would transition to chancellor after 16 years as president.

Lowry exalted McQueen in a Lipscomb publication after she was named the College of Education’s 2017 Innovator in Education.

“Candice can see beyond what is to what could be,” Lowry said. “She also has a sense of creativity and a level of excellence that was beyond even our own expectation. She also has a sense of tenacity.”
‘STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS’

A woman never has served as president at Lipscomb or 13 other coed, residential colleges and universities associated with Churches of Christ — from Abilene Christian University in Texas to Harding University in Searcy, Ark., to Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.

However, some scholars make a case for the late Meta Chestnutt Sager, a pioneer Oklahoma educator. Sager led El Meta Christian College — later renamed El Meta Bond College — in Indian Territory from about 1895 until its closing in 1920, according to “Churches of Christ in Oklahoma: A History” by W. David Baird.

Sager, inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame in 1939, is credited with organizing the Sooner State’s first coeducational institute of higher learning. She came to Oklahoma during the Land Run of 1889.

Born in North Carolina, Sager lived from 1863 to 1948. She received degrees from the Peabody Normal School (now the Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University) in 1888 and the University of Nashville in 1889, according to the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

Leonard Allen, dean of Lipscomb’s College of Bible and Ministry, sent an email to colleagues sharing an excerpt about Sager from Baird’s book, published last year.

“She had been sent from Nashville as an educational missionary to the Indians in the Oklahoma Territory,” Allen wrote.

Hebert said his research has focused on the history of current universities.

“None of it includes the history of the multiplicity of small religious institutions that sprang up across the American frontier in the 19th and early 20th century but didn’t survive,” he said.

Darryl Tippens, a scholar at ACU and former provost at Pepperdine, believes Sager merits recognition.

“Her work with Native Americans is an inspiration, as was her effort not to be divisive when the C of C split with the Disciples,” Tippens wrote in a letter to The Christian Chronicle.

A 1906 federal census formally noted a separation between Churches of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), both part of the Stone-Campbell Movement, also known as the Restoration Movement. The two groups differed on doctrinal issues, including the use of instrumental music in worship.

Sager “deserves to be remembered as the first female president of a Stone-Campbell Movement-related college,” Tippens said. “I congratulate Lipscomb University on the appointment of perhaps the second female president of a Church of Christ-related institution of higher learning. When Candice McQueen assumes Lipscomb’s presidency, she will be standing on the shoulders of giants.”

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Candice McQueen is not the only member of her family connected to Lipscomb. Andy McQueen, her husband and a Hillsboro church elder, is a Lipscomb alumnus who played on the men’s basketball team from 1991 to 1995. Their daughter, Abigail, will join their alma mater as a freshman this fall, and Henry, their son, will begin ninth grade at Lipscomb Academy.

Education and ministry have always been a part of Candice McQueen’s life.

Her parents, Brenda and Nelson Hunter, spent three years in Iran teaching at the Tehran American School shortly after McQueen’s birth. Her mother later worked as a principal and teacher for three schools while her father served as both a minister and an educator until his death in 2007.

“When your faith influences your personal decision-making and behavior, it can’t help but impact your professional life,” McQueen told the Chronicle in 2015 after her appointment as education commissioner. “Prayer was a critical part of my decision to accept this role — and it will continue to be so. I love God, and I love others. This won’t change.”

SEPTEMBER 2021

THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE
Full-time Minister Search - Enterprise, Alabama

Adams Street Church of Christ is seeking a full-time minister who has an in-depth knowledge of God’s Word. The candidate should be willing to minister to the needs of the congregation and join our leadership team in glorifying God. We are a predominately black congregation of 40-60 members (pre-COVID-19) with an engaged, and committed to expanding the borders of the kingdom. Applicants should be experienced, focused, self-directed, and have a passion for evangelism. Duties include community outreach, preaching, teaching, and other traditional ministerial roles as required. Please submit a current resume, references, and three recent multi-media sermon files or streaming links to:

jcoon1949@yahoo.com or ewdvtech58@gmail.com

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

Preacher Search-Powell, Wy.

Our preacher of 19 years is retiring. Powell is a faith-filled community and a wonderful place to raise a family. We have between 50 and 75 members, and we’re located 77 miles east of Yellowstone National Park in a town of 6,300 people in NW Wyoming (95 miles south of Billings, Mt.) Please submit a letter of interest, resume, and references to the email below.

Powell Church of Christ
fullquiverbowman@gmail.com
(307) 254-1014

University Park Church of Christ is searching for a Preaching Minister to serve a highly diverse congregation in Hyattsville, Maryland. Please download our vacancy announcement (PDF) from our website: http://www.upccc.com; or call our church office (301-927-7277) for a copy. Applicants should respond to the requirements stated in the vacancy announcement.

Position open until filled.

Preaching Minister Search

Seeking Full-Time Minister - Cortez, Colorado

The Cortez church of Christ is located in the beautiful Four Corners area of Colorado. We are a loving congregation of 80+ members who want to grow. We are involved in community service, mission work, Leadership Training for Christ, and a local youth camp. We provide a competitive salary and a nice, four-bedroom home.

If interested, send a detailed resume including references and information about yourself and your family to: cortezcofc@live.com.

The Cortez area is home to scenic mountains, deserts, mesa, rivers, lakes, farmland and Mesa Verde National Park. Locals enjoy skiing, hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, boating, mountain biking and golfing.

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**NEWMAKERS**

A rendering shows what the northwest exterior of ACU’s Pat Boone Theatre will look like after renovations.

HONORED: Abilene Christian University will rename the Cullen Auditorium after Pat Boone in 2022. Boone, who funded endowments at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., and Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., was a prominent singer in the 1950s and 60s.

HIRED: Logan Pipes as the youth and family minister for the Edgemere Church of Christ in Wichita Falls, Texas. David and Kathy Jones by the Tri-Cities School of Preaching & Christian Development in Elizabethon, Tenn. David will serve as a school instructor, and Kathy will work with the women and current secretary.

APPOINTED: Andy Burcham as chief financial officer and Lisa Fraze as the director of alumni relations for Lubbock Christian University in Texas. Jason Morris as executive director of ACU’s Center for Building Community and director of the Lynay program. Morris, who has worked at ACU for 25 years, will continue to serve as dean of the Honors College and director of the Office of Major Scholarships.

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**Milestones**

**Anniversaries**

John and Evelyn Bradley 70 years

John and Evelyn Bradley will celebrate 70 years of marriage Aug. 27, 2021. They were married in Statesboro, Ga., in 1951. Originally from Southeastern Pennsylvania, they have resided in Edgewood, N.M., since 1986. John “Jack” has been in construction since leaving the U.S. Navy and has been involved in building several Churches of Christ. Evelyn has pretty much always been able to be a full-time housewife and mother to four. They have been blessed with good health and are dearly loved by all their family and blessed with many dear friends.

They would love to hear from you:

PO Box 606, Edgewood, NM 87015.

Clyde and Gwen Antwine, 65 years on Sept. 8. The former missionaries to Europe are members of the Memorial Road Church of Christ in Oklahoma City.

**Memorials**

Leona Janae Carpenter 1921-2021

Leona Janae Carpenter, 99 3/4, passed on July 26, 2021, at Hospice House in the North Kansas City Hospital. She was born on Oct. 16, 1921, in Lamar, Ark. She was briefly married to Wayne Dale. Later she married Allan L. Carpenter. They had been married for 70 years when he passed away in 2013.

Leona is survived by her sons, Jerry (Pat) and Ken (Judith); five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and her sister Edna Ward in Carthage, Mo., who is the last surviving member of their family of 15 children. Leona also is survived by hundreds of Christian brothers and sisters who knew and loved her.

Leona was a member of the Liberty Church of Christ in Missouri. She will be remembered for many things, including her devotion to God and family as well as her dedication as a Bible student and teacher. For 25 years in a row she read her Bible through from beginning to end. During her last years she regretted being limited to only reading through the New Testament each year due to poor eyesight.

Leona was honored and remembered on Aug. 7 at Heartland Church of Christ in Kansas City, Mo. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Fair Haven Children’s Home, 3132 N Fairhaven Loop, Strafford, MO 65757.

Marcus Brian Semanek 1976-2021

Marcus Brian Semanek, 45, of Morrilton, Ark., died July 29, 2021. He was born July 18, 1976, a son of Ron and Gereta Semanek. He was a faithful member of the Church of Christ. He graduated from Oklahoma Christian University and began his career in computer science engineering in 1998. His career was cut short because of his battle with cancer.

He is survived by his parents; his nieces and nephews Hannah, Emily, Andrew, Miranda and Brennan.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hope for Haiti’s Children, PO Box 62328, Cincinnati, OH 45262-0328.

**Remembering**

Evangelist Arnelious Crenshaw Jr.

Oct. 27, 1949 — Aug. 28, 2017

Hey Arnelious, *GODFATHER*.

It’s your sisters Gwen, Rosalind, Lutricia, Valerie and brother Ron.

In our dad’s famous words: “WE’RE JUST THINKING ABOUT YOU!”

Hardly a day passes over the last four years that we don’t think about you and feel your presence in a room.

Even though you’re gone, we can still hear you opening “THE BOOK,” finding the place, and bringing sense to the Word through your sons in the gospel David Wilson, Tommy Palmer, and Ron Ward, just like Ezra, the priest, the scribe, and the Levites taught the people from “THE BOOK” (Nehemiah chapter 8). After all, YOU were and still remain “THE GREATEST STORYTELLER OF ALL TIME.”

Your family is also mindful of you when we read the book of James (1:12): “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive a crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him.”

ALWAYS LOVE YOU *BUD*, ALWAYS!

Ὁ Θου Μαν του Θεου

Ω άνθρωπε του Θεου

*O Thou Man of God
Ω ἄνθρωπε του Θεου*
How Churches of Christ can grow again

Are we still planting seeds? Jesus instructed us to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). And we know that God gives the increase — not us (1 Corinthians 3:7).

But we’re not seeing a lot of increase these days. In the past two decades, the number of us who worship with Churches of Christ has dipped by more than 230,000. And that’s based primarily on pre-COVID-19 estimates. The actual figure could be worse.

What’s the problem? We know we aren’t ashamed of our faith (Matthew 10:32-33). Certainly, we share our savior’s passion to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

We’re sharing a lot, actually, but it’s mostly on social media. On The Christian Chronicle’s Facebook page, we post stories that draw a lot of reader feedback and spark debates. (Sometimes the folks who comment even read the stories we’re promoting. We wish that happened more often!)

We recently asked for tips for evangelism from our readers. Unfortunately, this post produced only a handful of responses. To be honest, the engagement level was a giant thud.

We know we live in a challenging time in which organized religion in the U.S. is struggling. Churches of Christ are far from alone in that respect. But we serve a mighty God who “rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Rob Whitacre directs the House to House/Heart to Heart Evangelism School, which partnered with Latin American Missions to sponsor the recent Georgia campaign featured on Page 1. Whitacre, 46, told us he prays that Churches of Christ will grow again in his lifetime. Amen, we respond.

Whitacre’s approach might not mesh with everyone. Given our nation’s overall religious decline, some might advocate focusing more on teaching people with no religious affiliation than trying to convert other believers — Baptists, Methodists, Catholics — to Churches of Christ.

But here’s what we love about Whitacre and the faithful Christians who converged to knock doors in the small town of Rome, Ga.: They refuse to give up. They still believe that the Gospel is “the power of God that brings salvation” (Romans 1:16).

What will it take for Churches of Christ to grow again? We don’t claim to have all the answers.

But here are a few thoughts (with credit to Whitacre for some ideas):

• We must stop being so inwardly focused. Our churches shouldn’t be more intent on keeping longtime members comfortable than on welcoming lost sheep (of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds).

It’s sad how often guests show up at church services and are greeted by no one because members are too busy talking to each other.

We must love and talk to the people we hope to save. We must meet our neighbors and share a love that will make them want to know God.

• We must stop making politics an idol. As Whitacre put it in an interview with the Chronicle, “I’ve seen members in Churches of Christ almost come to physical conflict over political discussion. I wish they’d get as riled up over souls.”

He was not speaking about any particular side of the political aisle.

Idols are a problem on the right and the left.

• We must open our Bibles. Most of us believe that the Scriptures are inspired and “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

So why do so many of us — in a time when we can quickly access multiple translations on our smartphones — neglect to open God’s holy word, except maybe on Sunday?

If God speaks to us through the Scriptures, we need to make listening to him a daily priority.

These ideas are just a start. We welcome your feedback, either via our email address at letters@christianchronicle.org or by the postal address below. — Bobby Ross Jr. and Erik Tryggestad, for the Editorial Board

JOIN US FOR A LIVE Q&A: The Christian Chronicle’s Editorial Board — Jeremie Beller, John Edmerson, Audrey Jackson, Trindi Mitchell, Bobby Ross Jr., Tamie Ross and Erik Tryggestad — will discuss this editorial at 4 p.m. Eastern/3 p.m. Central on Wednesday, Sept 1. Watch at facebook.com/christianchronicle.

‘These ideas are just a start. We welcome your feedback.’
Readers respond to news story, editorial on same-sex marriage

I am appalled by the article in *The Christian Chronicle* that I read (“To affirm or not? That is the question,” Page 23, August).

Over and over in the Bible, it states one man and one woman, but this present age thinks they can change the Bible to suit themselves. Yes, I believe we should love everyone and do our best to help them understand the Scriptures. However, I do not think we can rewrite the Scriptures to suit ourselves. That there should be any debate is appalling.

NANCY GEARY | Tulsa, Okla.

Thank you and the Editorial Board so much for advocating the clear biblical position on the topic of so-called same-sex marriage (“Same-sex marriage and gender questions,” Page 30, August).

I read the article on pages 23 and 24 before getting to the opinion section and seeing the *Chronicle*’s position. While reading the news article on pages 23 and 24, I became very sad to see Christians advocating behavior that is so clearly contrary to biblical teaching.

It was very uplifting and encouraging to later reach the opinion page and read the truth.

LARRY KNIGHT | Tulsa, Okla.

Homosexuality, like other sexually related sins, is not new. It was discussed by Jesus and the apostles. They spoke the truth in love and instructed us to do the same (Ephesians 4:15). And so we need to do this.

We need to build relationships with all sinners, no matter what their sin. Wisdom teaches us both to listen and to speak.

The greatest wisdom of all is to listen to the Lord and follow wherever he leads. In the final analysis, the Lord does not allow us to accept people as brothers and sisters who continue in sin.

BRIAN GISELBACH | Covington, Ky.

Kudos for hosting the discussions. I believe that all would have been clearer had it been introduced against the basic assumption that we live in a broken world and are faced with many choices.

Same-sex attraction is no less real and no less God-pleasing than promiscuous attraction, in my humble opinion. The choice is about who do we choose to please: ourselves or God. God makes it easy by offering celibacy or heterosexuality as options.

CHUCK REED | Rawlins, Wyo.

I appreciate your courage in addressing an issue, same-sex marriage, that would be much easier to ignore. An unintended but tragic consequence of forbidding marriage to gay Christians is that they will often then marry a Christian of the opposite sex in an attempt to follow God’s will for their life. These marriages usually fall apart sooner or later, causing great pain for all concerned.

In the Genesis narrative, it is God who says that “It is not good for man to be alone.” Every understanding of Scripture that leaves millions of people with no realistic option other than a lifetime of celibacy runs directly counter to God’s will that every person have a “help” or sexual life companion who is appropriate for them.

My thoughts in this letter are based upon my own experience as a gay Christian and as a former minister in Churches of Christ for 25 years.

GARY PEARSON | Baltimore

I was in a gay relationship for about 13 years. I quit church, not because of anything anyone said to me, but because I knew it was wrong and that if I stayed in that lifestyle, on the day of judgment, hell was going to be my eternal reward.

Then something happened that totally changed my perspective about living in a same-sex relationship. My oldest sister passed away at the age of 53. She was my best friend and the only one in the family that I told about my life. I realized that if I wanted to see my sister again, I needed to get myself right with God, and that meant leaving the gay lifestyle. I left my partner and moved back home.

If we start accepting same-sex marriage or affirming it, then where do we draw the line? What is the next sin we will accept or affirm?

AMY HARDEMAN | Rogersville, Ala.

I suspect the issue for many Christians is simply where to draw the line. I don’t want to compromise my beliefs, but I do want to show the love of Jesus to people I know (some of whom are more dear to me than you can know) who are caught up in the “gender blender” and the homosexual life.

I will confess to having no idea of how to do this. Nor do I suspect that anyone can tell me how. This is one of those things that we are just going to have to blunder around in, make mistakes and rely upon the grace of God to make up the difference.

HOWARD COX | Lufkin, Texas

For readers struggling with these subjects, you have simply and succinctly laid out the truth from God’s word. The absolute importance of possessing a loving heart when presenting these truths to someone cannot be understated. Well done!

KAREN LAWSON | Fort Worth, Texas

Too many of our brethren only wish to be “judges” when it involves practices that would never be tempting to themselves.

Struggles of the gay/lesbian community, issues that the transgendered face, women contemplating abortion, couples choosing to live together instead of obtaining a marriage license … all of these are things that most of us in the Churches of Christ will never face.

Therefore, it is easy to make it very black and white, and call it all sin, and shame our brethren in the process. That is certainly not the way Christ would have approached these subjects, and I’m quite certain he would have insisted we all take the logs out of our own eyes first before pronouncing judgment.

SUSAN GRAYSON | Tucson, Ariz. 

‘Brenton’ by Rick Gibson and W. Keith Brenton

See more by following brenton.daily on Facebook and Instagram.
**Vacation Bible School makes an eternal difference**

**DECADES AGO**, a simple figurine made at VBS became priceless as it set young souls on a path to Christ.

In 1936, when Walter Moseley Jr. was 9 years old, he lived in a South Dallas neighborhood where he played with a group of boys. The boys were best friends and did everything together — except attend church. Walter, one of the youngest boys, was the only one who spent Sunday mornings learning about Jesus and the heroes of the Bible.

Each Sunday morning, Walter walked the three blocks to church past the elementary playground where his friends played football. He endured their taunts and teasing and walked on, embarrassed but stoic. He figured they were giving him a hard time for fun, but it was still painful.

The summer after he turned 10, Walter walked the same route back from his church’s Vacation Bible School one Monday. In his hand he carried a figurine he had painted at VBS. It was a gift for his mother.

When his friends spotted him, they raced to meet him and asked what he had. He told them. One of the boys wistfully said that he wished he could paint a figurine for his mother. Walter assured him and all the others that if they came to VBS, they would get to make all sorts of things. They were hooked.

For the next four days, Walter and his friends attended VBS together. Guided by a sweet, grandmotherly “church lady,” they made all sorts of wonderful keepsakes from bits and pieces of yarn and paper, paint and glue.

Eventually, Walter’s friends — all of them — started coming to church on Sunday mornings. By the time they had reached their mid-teens, each one had embraced the message of the Gospel.

They grew up, and, as World War II raged overseas, each one entered the service as he turned 17. One friend died in Italy in 1944 at Salerno, another on Iwo Jima in 1945. Several more were wounded. Walter became a radar operator and was eventually sent to Hawaii at the close of the war.

Many decades later, Walter recalled this little band of boys and the amazing power of a little painted figurine he took home to his mother that summer day. He expressed how grateful he was to those who worked to make VBS memorable for a bunch of kids the church people didn’t even know.

“There were learned about Jesus,” he said, “and that means everything to me when I think about how their lives played out.”

Walter was my father. He passed away in 2018 just a few weeks before his 91st birthday.

When he shared this story with me a year before his death, I felt incredible gratitude for the VBS teachers he encountered in his life. They made all the difference.

Thank you to everyone who has ever helped with VBS. May God bless you for your tireless work in the struggle to protect young souls from a world of sin and hopelessness and to put them on the path to peace in this world and heaven in the next.

BECKY JOHANSON worships with the La Vernia Church of Christ in Texas. She is a retired math teacher and administrator, women’s Bible class teacher, elder’s wife of 49 years, mother of two and grandmother of four. Contact her at bj31954@yahoo.com.

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**Sex abuse victim: ‘I thought what happened was my fault’**

I was only 13.

I was in eighth grade at a Christian school. I stayed busy with my church youth group. I hung out with my friends, crushed on boys and listened to Prince’s “Purple Rain” album on repeat. I was a pretty typical 13-year-old in 1985.

I believed in the strong moral code promoted by the adults in my life. If I stayed away from “bad” places such as bars, dark alleys and public school dances, I would be safe. So I did. I only went to safe places, which were home, school, youth group events and church. I was a good kid.

Church was especially safe. Three generations of my family were among its membership. The men in my family had been ministers and elders there. Church was my home, and the people there were my family — some by our own genetics and all of them by the blood of Jesus Christ.

That year, one of the boys in my youth group and I had been crushing on began showing me attention.

We both served in the puppet ministry during Bible Hour for the younger kids on Sunday nights.

One night, he and I were the only ones in the show. After it ended, in the darkness behind the puppet stage, he locked the door that led out into the hallway and sat close to me on the floor.

I was shocked when he said everyone at school was saying that my best friend and I were in a lesbian relationship. I had no idea such a rumor had been circulating about me.

If I did what he wanted, he said, I would prove the rumors were false.

He was older and more popular than I was, so I believed him and did what he said. I knew it wasn’t right, but as is typical of sex abuse victims, I thought what happened was my fault.

I was only 13.

I confided in a friend, and word of what had happened eventually reached my parents. They met with his parents, who forced him to apologize to me. He never spoke to me again. And as far as everyone was concerned, that was the end of it.

But it wasn’t.

He went to my school, and between school, church and youth group events, I had to see him six days a week. Sometimes seven. As a cheerleader, I had to cheer for him at basketball games.

He and his family finally moved away a few years later.

I was only 13. And in those moments behind the puppet stage, church stopped being my safe place. I don’t know what could have been done to protect me from that situation or the aftermath. It wasn’t my job to figure that out at 13.

But as a collective body of believers, we must make our congregations as safe as possible for our children. This means changing the way we think and talk about abuse and abusers. This means using resources to educate ourselves about abuse in church settings. It means understanding the importance of protecting survivors, not abusers. It means getting uncomfortable, asking tough questions and receiving tougher answers. But we must do this for our children.

I was only 13.

DEANA NALL has worked as a freelance writer for 28 years. A graduate of Abilene Christian University in Texas, Nall lives in the Little Rock, Ark., area. Contact her at deananall@gmail.com.
Youth and Family Associate Minister AND Pulpit Minister Position

The Jasper Church of Christ is seeking TWO minister positions (Youth and Family Associate Minister and a full-time Pulpit Minister) to help fulfill the spiritual needs of our congregation. Our congregation is located in deep East Texas with rolling hills; it’s a thriving community surrounded by many outdoor opportunities, including three major lakes. We are seeking family-oriented people who have the strong desire to serve the Lord through teaching God’s word and working with all age groups. If interested in either position or for further information, please contact:

Jasper Church of Christ
PO Box 151, Jasper, Texas 75951 (409) 384-3229

Full-Time Youth Minister Position – Palmetto Church of Christ

Palmetto Church of Christ in Irmo, South Carolina, is seeking a Youth Minister to lead a program that is focused on the biblical education and spiritual development of our young men and women. The Youth Minister should work and teach in a manner that is consistent with Palmetto’s desire for its families to develop an intimate relationship with God, build strong loving relationships with each other and other Christians, and love those who do not yet know Jesus by sharing the Gospel. Palmetto is searching for someone with a college degree, and some experience is preferred. We offer a competitive salary, allowance for moving expenses, vacation days, 401K contribution, and continuing education support.

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The Puyallup (Wash.) Church of Christ is announcing an open pulpit minister position. The Puyallup church, located in the south Puget Sound region of western Washington, is a growing, diverse group of believers and children of around 250. It is served by 4 elders, 8 deacons, and an associate minister. We are seeking a married man with a minimum experience of 5-10 years of full-time ministry, demonstrating excellent interpersonal and communication skills (both verbal and written). He should have a Bible degree from a brotherhood preaching school, college or university – Bachelor’s required; Master’s preferred. More importantly, his lessons should accurately reflect and convey biblical truths, the gospel of Christ, and the nature of God.

Responsibilities include: weekly preaching; teaching of Bible classes; supporting the Bible class ministry; encouraging the body through counseling opportunities (evangelism, premarital, etc.), reaching out and visiting members who are shut-in, sick, or discouraged and actively welcoming and engaging with visitors.

Salary commensurate with experience. Please send resume with references, and CD/DVDs of or links to two sermons to: Puyallup Church of Christ, Search Committee, 402 5th Street SW, Puyallup, WA 98371 or via email: office@puyallupcofc.org.

The Hot Springs Village Church of Christ is seeking a full-time Youth and Family Minister. We are in the world’s largest gated community with lots of amenities and are served by two school districts. We are a very active community and mission minded congregation of 200+. We are seeking someone with a strong biblical background with a desire to teach and learn. We have an active and involved youth group. Worship/Song leading ability is a plus.

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Chad Knappier, 210 Balboa Rd
Hot Springs Village, Arkansas 71909
(501) 226-9060 or readthischad@gmail.com

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CALENDAR

Sept. 11-14 Abundant Living Retreat. Branson, Mo. See abundantlivingseniors.com or call (501) 279-4055.
Oct. 9 Greater Houston Church Leadership Workshop. Contact occg.institute or call (281) 599-9914.
Oct. 11-14 Abundant Living Retreat. Branson, Mo. See abundantlivingseniors.com or call (501) 279-4055.
Nov. 5-7 24th Annual Cold Harbor Lectureship. Mechanicsville, Va. See coldharborroadcoc.org or call (804) 746-8224.
Nov. 7 Blackwell Church of Christ, Centennial Plus One. See blackwellcoc.com or call (580) 789-1029.

Full Calendar: christianchronicle.org

JOB OPENINGS

Churches

Farmington Church of Christ, 10055 State Rt 564 S, Farmington, KY 42040, (270) 293-6276, jmayes46@gmail.com.
Hugoton Church of Christ, 212 W 1st, Hugoton, KS 67951, (620) 543-5382, bdh1294@pld.com.
Church of Christ at East Side, 5701 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Austin, TX 78721, (512) 804-6818, mr.albrown@gmail.com.
Lancaster Church of Christ, 1779 Granville Pike, Lancaster, OH 43130, (304) 483-6991, mem@lancchurchofchrist.com.
University Church of Christ, 3155 Dave Ward Dr, Conway, AR 72034, (870) 612-2644, tim.l.bruner@gmail.com.
Hi-Dessert Church of Christ, 135 Woodbine Dr, Terre Haute, IN 47803, (812) 235-9322, tomwoodason@joink.com.

Children’s Homes

Sunnybrook Children’s Home, 222 Sunnybrook Road, Ridgeland, MS 39157, (205) 218-5347, mgrade@sunnybrookms.org.
Happy Haven Children’s Home, 2311 Wakefield Dr, Cookeville, TN 38501, (931) 526-2052, hhbymun@yahoo.com.

See christianchronicle.org/advertise to place your classified ad.
The Christian Chronicle Crossword

By Myles Mellor | www.ilovecrosswords.com

ACROSS
1. Prophet who served under Eli.
4. “And after the uproar had ceased, Paul called upon his disciples and ___ them” (Acts 20:1, King James Version).
5. “the crooked shall be made straight and the ___ places plain” (Isaiah 40:4, KJV).
8. “The Lord is long suffering and of great mercy, forgiving ____ and transgression” (Numbers 5:31, KJV).
10. Creator of the universe and supreme being.
11. He denied knowing Jesus three times, Matthew 26.
14. Vane direction, abbr.
15. “For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto ___” (Psalm 48:14, KJV).
16. Ointment or salve for wounds.
17. Be in place for another.
18. She was made the queen by King Ahasuerus.
19. Christ’s followers.
20. Woman referred to.
22. “And ___ life means to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom you sent” (John 17:3, Good News Translation).
23. “He maketh me lie down in green ___s” (Psalm 23:2, KJV).
31. Fisherman’s equipment.
32. “I have seen how they acted but I will ___ them. I will lead them and help them, and I will comfort those who mourn.” (Isaiah 57:18, GNT).
33. Woman referred to.
34. “And he ___, and behold a ladder set up on the earth” (Genesis 28:12, KJV).
35. Woman referred to.
36. “He maketh me lie down in green ___s” (Psalm 23:2, KJV).
42. Woman referred to.
43. “But he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, house and brethren, and ___ and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions” (Mark 10:30, KJV).
44. “And ____ life means to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, whom you sent” (John 17:3, Good News Translation).
45. Woman referred to.
46. Prefix for profit.
47. Walk softly.
48. Melancholy.
49. “No one knows how the clouds move or how the thunder roars through the sky where God ____” (Job 36:29, GNT).
50. Fisherman’s equipment.
51. “I have seen how they acted but I will ___ them. I will lead them and help them, and I will comfort those who mourn.” (Isaiah 57:18, GNT).
52. Before, prefix.
53. Ashes holder.
54. Woman referred to.
55. Prefix for profit.
56. Walk softly.
57. Melancholy.
58. “No one knows how the clouds move or how the thunder roars through the sky where God ____” (Job 36:29, GNT).
59. Fisherman’s equipment.
60. “I have seen how they acted but I will ___ them. I will lead them and help them, and I will comfort those who mourn.” (Isaiah 57:18, GNT).
61. Before, prefix.
62. Ashes holder.

DOWN
1. “The Son of Man will die as the ___ say he will” (Matthew 26:23, GNT).
2. Sermon on the ___.
3. Old anesthetic.
5. Severed.
6. Carry out.
7. “Make priestly garments for your brother Aaron, to provide him with ___ and beauty” (Exodus 28:2, GNT).
8. Prefix for profit.
9. Even so.
10. Son of David who rebelled against his father.
11. Hem and ___.
12. Collected up.
13. Animals used by Antiochus as part of his army when he invaded Egypt.
14. “Do you not yet understand neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many ___ you took up?” (Matthew 16:9, KJV).
15. Walk softly.
17. “No one knows how the clouds move or how the thunder roars through the sky where God ____” (Job 36:29, GNT).
18. Fisherman’s equipment.
19. “I have seen how they acted but I will ___ them. I will lead them and help them, and I will comfort those who mourn.” (Isaiah 57:18, GNT).

Which Bible book ends with the following verses? Quiz by Steve Whitehead of the British Bible School, britishbibleschool.com.

1. “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
2. “And he died, an old man, and full of days.”
3. “And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”
4. “… and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”
5. “… and were continually in the temple blessing God.”
6. “For God will bring every deed into judgement, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”
7. “Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.”
8. “Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”
9. “Praise the Lord!”

Answers, crossword solution on Page 34.
Word Find: The gospel of Mark

By Betty Hollister | The Christian Chronicle

The following words from The Gospel of Mark. The unused 30 letters form a statement about the purpose of the book. (Find the answer on Page 38.)

PERSECUTION  JECNATNEPER  RHYPOCRITES  ESSUOIRAVEI  EEADULTEROUS  ANSWEREGS  GAAJ  RCONIZEDUSLARIARH  CVLEI  ISSREVEILEBYOIEPT  HEOACSUMMONEDALONAART  IINSSRTFYSNHTSYRO  NLEGMAETYEESEDHECTCEU  GYLNERMN  SHEEPN  RIESD  SALTISSEDISOWNSOEAEAEDHNS  HESHIMRGNITLUSNINFIPAE  HTVOTESENUTROPPTOROXR  ARPZHOUASDNYHIOPRED  BAAPSANHEDRINTERTMPLL  BMEARIMATEAFEDZAMAI  AHEALTHYAEIFECERONOH  SYNAGOGUENFTOISSAPMOC

Find the following words from the Gospel of Mark. The unused 30 letters form a statement about the purpose of the book. (Find the answer on Page 38.)

- ADULTEROUS
- ALARM
- ALEXANDER
- AMAZED
- AMAZEMENT
- ANSWER
- APOSTLES
- ARIMATHEA
- BAPTISM
- BELIEVERS
- CHILDREN
- COMMOTION
- COMPASSION
- DECEIVE
- DISOWN
- EVERYONE
- FIFTY
- GREATER
- HAPPENED
- HEALTHY
- HEAVENLY
- HONOURED
- HYPOCRITES
- INSULTING
- ISAIAH
- MARVEL
- NATIONS
- OPPORTUNE
- PARABLES
- PERSECUTION
- PHARISEES
- PREACHING
- PRIESTS
- PROPHECY
- RECOGNIZED
- REGIONS
- REJECT
- RELEASE
- REPENTANCE
- RIGHTOUS
- SABBATH
- SANHEDRIN
- SHEEP
- SHEPHERDS
- SUMMONED
- SYNAGOGUE
- TESTIFY
- THIEF
- THINGS
- THOUSANDS
- THREE
- VARIOUS
- YEAST

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Through disease, witchcraft and war, missionary nurses follow call to serve

Visiting Nigerian Christian Hospital several decades ago, I felt I was on holy ground, because it was set apart, unlike any mission work of Churches of Christ in the 1960s.

Traveling there with my cousin, Henry, who had been there as a missionary, made it special. I also remember two nurses from there, Iris Hays and Nancy Petty, visiting in our home in Jerusalem in 1967 on their way home on furlough. Their stories captured our hearts. I remember my mother saying, “Someone needs to write a book on this.” Someone has!

Sulis Academic Press recently published “A Time to Heal: Missionary Nurses in Churches of Christ, Southeastern Nigeria (1953-1967)” by Martha E. Farrar Highfield, the daughter of the founding doctor of the hospital, Dr. Henry Farrar. Highfield is a professor emeritus of nursing at California State University/Northridge and serves on the Board of the International Health Care Foundation/African Christian Hospitals.

As a missionary kid in Nigeria from 1964 to 1967, she observed her dad and her mother, Grace Farrar (also a nurse), devote themselves to giving spiritual and physical hope to hundreds in a region where there was only one physician for every 35,000 to 50,000 people. Today the hospital is staffed and governed by Nigerians.

The book has 33 chapters, a timeline of the medical mission from 1942 to 2020, hand-drawn maps, pictures, and many insightful stories — with data from private collections, personal communications, correspondence, diaries, interviews and publications. The stories of failures and successes leave the reader with timeless lessons on faithfulness and endurance.

The narratives of these nurses — Glenna Peden, Mary Kelton, Grace Farrar, Iris Hays and Nancy Petty — document their challenges, heroic commitments to God’s mission, care for people, humorous experience working cross-culturally and real-life issues in the face of an Asian flu, a measles epidemic or exhausting work. Their small clinic would triage 180 to 250 people a day. The book shares stories of persistence as they treat people at their back door, equip local nurses and travel to serve 19 villages. They open a clinic and brave multiple challenges to establish a hospital.

Their experiences highlight the faithfulness of God. Highfield has gifted us with a priceless missiological legacy, capturing the difference a few faithful disciples of Christ can make when they follow their calling into an unknown world, through difficult team dynamics, inadequate support, tropical diseases, witchcraft, home sickness, attacks from Christians back home, government dysfunctions and wars.

You will want to read how “their only obligation was to do what they could,” as Highfield writes, and how “intentional health care saved evangelism.”

EVERTT W. HUFFARD is a professor emeritus of leadership and missions at Harding School of Theology in Memphis, Tenn. He serves as facilitator for church equipping for Mission Resource Network. He and his wife, Ileene, worship with the Millington Church of Christ in Tennessee.
Although many churches teach and enforce regulations on marriage and divorce, you cannot find the doctrine embedded in scripture as you have been told. If you have heard the manmade regulations taught as fact and have doubts about it, the reader, to share a copy with a friend as an evangelistic effort and not be ashamed of how the material is presented. My goal has been achieved. Nearly 36% of sales have been multicopy orders intended as gifts to friends and relatives or for small group study.

See [www.bosspublishing.org](http://www.bosspublishing.org) for table of contents and narrative description of the book, along with reader testimonials and ordering information. Single copy cost with shipping is $20.00. **Multiple copy 15% discount is available.** See website for additional information.

![Plague Worship @ Home Radio & Net](https://churchofchristpreaching.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radio Station</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Time</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>770 AM Radio</td>
<td>(DFW &amp; North Texas)</td>
<td>11 am-noon &amp; 10 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1340 AM</td>
<td>(Abilene, TX)</td>
<td>Noon-1 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1300 AM</td>
<td>(Nashville, TN)</td>
<td>11:30 &amp; 4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1360 AM</td>
<td>(Nashville, TN)</td>
<td>Noon &amp; 6:30 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600 AM</td>
<td>(Memphis, TN)</td>
<td>4 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1640 AD</td>
<td>(San Francisco - Oakland, CA)</td>
<td>4 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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![COVID-19 Checklist](https://www.paperlesshymnal.com)

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Do we really need a Lord’s Supper devotional on Sunday night?

MIDLAND, Texas

When Tim Tannich passed the seven-minute mark in his communion devotional, I squirmed in my pew.

I mean, this was the 5 p.m. Sunday service — the Lord’s Supper make-up round for folks who weren’t here for the morning assembly.

Shouldn’t we ask if anyone actually needs to hear this?

Honestly, it’s rare even to find a Sunday night worship these days. Even before the pandemic, many churches had canceled them entirely or switched to a small-group format. And I’m guessing that, after the virus finally does subside, a lot of Sunday night services won’t be coming back.

So I was happy to find a vibrant, well-attended evening worship at the Westside Church of Christ in Midland. Minister Mike Vestal invited me to stop by on my way back from the West Texas town of Iraan after I preached there on Sunday morning.

(It was my second time with the Iraan Church of Christ, an amazing, mission-minded congregation.)

The Westside church started its Sunday evening with an old-school “pack the pews” event for kids. I got to hear a heavenly host of young men lead songs, coordinated by minister Adam Orr.

Vestal gave a great overview of 1 Timothy, a book written by the apostle Paul to his younger colleague, Timothy. Its six chapters are full of wise counsel on doctrine, worship, leadership, relationships and godliness.

But what stuck out the most to me was the communion devotional by Tannich, a recently retired dentist in Midland. He had pages of notes and really dug into how the bread and the fruit of the vine represent our Savior’s body and blood — how they unite us.

I’ll be honest: I’ve phoned in communion devos, especially on Sunday nights. Most of the churches I’ve attended (that still do Sunday nights) dismiss the folks who missed Sunday morning to a back room to take the Lord’s Supper there.

But Dr. Tannich brought his A game — on a Sunday night.

It turns out that the long devotional is by design, brother Vestal told me as he treated me to a Texas Burger after worship. The church’s elders want the flock to really understand the significance of the words etched into so many of our communion tables: “Do this in remembrance of me.”

“Tim is one of about 25 different men we’ve asked to offer these Lord’s Supper meditations,” Vestal said, “and we’ve been so blessed by their thoughts.”

All of this brings a sad memory to mind. It was a Sunday morning at my home church when I noticed two visitors, a mother and daughter, on the front row. I think we just did quick prayers for communion that day, and the reaction these ladies had to the trays as they were passed is best described as a full-scale freak-out.

I made a mental note to talk to them, but after the closing prayer they bolted out the door. I never saw them again.

They could have used Dr. Tannich’s devo, the same one that made me squirm.

In our increasingly unchurched world, we should never assume that those who take the bold step of crossing our thresholds know everything that’s going on. Take the time to explain.

Even if you already know it, someone needs to hear it.

As Paul writes in that letter to Timothy, we serve a God and Savior “who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

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