



Flags, faith and fury

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM *on display in U.S. Capitol riot.*

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. AND HAMIL R. HARRIS | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON

Jesus Saves.”
“For the Glory of God.”
“God, Guns and Trump.”
As thousands rallied to support President Donald Trump’s unproven claim of a stolen election — a protest that turned deadly as an insurrectionist mob stormed the U.S. Capitol — many waved signs linking the Republican political leader to their Christian faith.

“Trump 2020” and “Make America Great Again” flags flew alongside banners with Christian symbols. Some of the mostly White demonstrators — both in the nation’s capital and at other pro-Trump events across the U.S. — carried large wooden crosses.

“I wanted to be here because I feel like the Democrats are slapping our Creator in the face: God Almighty,” said Diane McMichael, an evangelical Christian from California.

“We are certainly founded on ‘one nation under God,’” said her husband, Bob. “Our roots were there, and we’ve

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NEW CONGRESSMAN — *a church member and former Trump physician — witnesses attack.*

BY CHERYL MANN BACON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

The House was surrounded.”
On his fourth day as the U.S. representative from Texas’ 13th Congressional District, Republican Ronny Jackson found himself shoving furniture against the House Chamber entrance. A mob of Trump supporters intent on breaking into the large assembly room pushed against the doors until they began to buckle.

“The doors were going to be breached. They were either ramming them or throwing the weight of multiple bodies into the doors,” the lifelong Church of Christ member told *The Christian Chronicle*. “There were only a couple of Capitol police, and they were overwhelmed. We didn’t have near the number we needed.”



Jackson

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HAMIL R. HARRIS

Supporters of President Donald Trump demonstrate at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.



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Jesus emphasized peace to those who would follow him

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

— Matthew 5:9

Peace.

That was Domingo Reyes' prayer as the Wilmington, Del., minister taught his congregation's Wednesday night Bible study Jan. 6, just hours after a deadly riot inside the U.S. Capitol. "The

events that occurred were so disturbing that I had to change my lesson ... in an attempt to refocus our minds," Reyes said. "We were, and many still are, a bit fearful and anxious about what occurred and its implications on the future."

Reyes preaches for a racially and politically diverse church that worships 3.5 miles from the home of Joe Biden — the man elected to serve as America's 46th president.

I enjoyed visiting the Greenbank Church of Christ two years ago when I wrote about its formation through the merger of two congregations — one Black, one White.

Spanish speakers — many of them immigrants from Central America — make up roughly 20 percent of the church's average Sunday attendance of 150.

"I spoke about the political climate during the times of Jesus and how Jesus'

See **PEACE**, Page 4

An answer to prayer?

MOST CHRISTIANS welcome the COVID-19 vaccines, but some are skeptical.

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Many of the 700 members of the Grace Chapel Church of Christ in Cumming, Ga., north of Atlanta, are excited about the rapid development of vaccines to fight COVID-19.

"This is an answer to prayer, for certain," said Paul Huyghebaert, the congregation's lead minister.

When his turn comes, Huyghebaert, 42, said he definitely plans to roll up his sleeve.

He expects that most of the congregation — especially the older population — will be vaccinated.

But not all. "Some do see this as a government overreach," he said, "or even something



WHITNEY BRYEN, OKLAHOMA WATCH

A health care worker fills a syringe with the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer.

as extreme as the 'mark of the beast.'"

Nationwide, roughly three-quarters of 200 members of Churches of Christ who responded to a *Christian Chronicle* survey said they intend to get vaccinated or already have.

Like many fellow believers, Yolanda Greenway, a member of the Pleasant Grove Church of Christ in Dover, Ark., said she praises God for the first two COVID-19 vaccines cleared for use in

See **VACCINES**, Page 12

Leading by example: Christians who work in health care get shots

BY CHELLIE ISON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

EDMOND, Okla. — With the COVID-19 vaccine rollout underway nationwide, many Christians who work in health care are getting inoculated and encouraging others to do the same.

"The next day, my upper arm where I was injected was very sore," said Kacee Blackwell, a clinical pharmacist and member of the Edmond Church of Christ, north of Oklahoma City.

Blackwell received her first dose of the Moderna vaccine in early January.



Blackwell

For about a day, she could barely lift her arm above her shoulders. But by the next day, the pain was completely gone.

Nearly 1,800 miles away in Maine, nurse practitioner Julie Baither reported similarly mild side effects from the Moderna vaccine.

"My arm was a little sore, but that was it," said Baither, a Greater Portland Church of Christ member who works in hematology/oncology.

The women's experiences were not unexpected: Muscle, joint and injection site pain are common following the shot, according to the Food and Drug Administration. Patients also could experience headaches, tiredness,

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAVID SMITH

Dr. David Smith receives his COVID-19 vaccine in Little Rock, Ark. "Too many of my patients are dying every day" from the virus, said the church member and medical missionary to Haiti.



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PEACE: Jesus' vision for a divided nation

FROM PAGE 3

words must have sounded so out of place for many of the hearers," the minister said of the lesson he offered as tensions remained high in Washington, D.C., a two-hour drive from Wilmington.

"They were expecting a king who would restore Israel to their former state of prominence," said Reyes, the bilingual son of a Dominican Republic-born father and a Puerto Rican mother. "They were hoping for a king who would free them from Roman rule."

Jesus had a different vision. Be peacemakers. Go the extra mile. Pray for enemies.

"We discussed being part of a different kingdom with higher standards and expectations," Reyes said. "I also emphasized that God is in control and that we should have the same peace Jesus spoke to his disciples about in John 14:27."

That Scripture says:
"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid."



Reyes

Nearly 1,400 miles from Wilmington, my heart was still troubled.

The following Sunday, I worshiped with my home congregation, the Edmond Church of Christ in Oklahoma.

I found comfort in the words of our minister, Randy Roper. He reminded the church that followers of Jesus are "*citizens of heaven*" (Philippians 3:20).

"What is our response to everything going on in our world?" Roper asked. "Well, we can choose a side and jump into the muck and post the propaganda and spew the rhetoric that actually makes us look like the people of the world whose citizenship is in the world, and by so doing ... misrepresent the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, to a world that desperately needs to know the Good News.

"Or we can take a different approach," he said. "We can see all the chaos as an opportunity for a hurting world to find what they

need most: Jesus. We, as Christians, can make the deliberate and conscious choice to be united, not divided, in declaring what is most important and who we are to be — the instruments and ambassadors of Christ, to share the Gospel in this world."

Peace.

"Now, does that mean that Christians don't have political beliefs?" Roper said. "Does that mean we don't have opinions about the economy? Does that mean that we don't try to make our communities, even our nation, better? Of course not.

"But it does mean that all of those things and everything else bow in submission to the One who reigns eternal."

I also appreciated the encouraging message of my friend Tim Tripp, senior minister for the West Side Church of Christ in Russellville, Ark.

"Christians, it is time for us to shine!" Tripp wrote on Facebook. "When our world is in turmoil and our country is in chaos, where else can people look to find peace if it isn't to the followers of Jesus, the prince of peace!"

He proposed relying on Colossians 3:12-14 as a guide before posting on social media: "Ask: Is it compassionate? Is it kind? Is it humble? Is it gentle? Is it patient? Does it reflect a forgiving heart? Does it come from love? And does it bring people together?"

Back in Delaware, Greenbank elder Jim Friederichsen made a special announcement to the congregation that Sunday about the violence in Washington.

He urged the church to "embrace above everything else who we are (Christian), whose we are (Christ's) and what we are called to do in every circumstance (love the Lord our God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves ... and to follow the example of Christ the Lord in all that we do and say)."

Amen.

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

Nashville bombing disrupts churches

WITHOUT INTERNET OR PHONE service, one Christian couple takes communion in a McDonald's parking lot.

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Jim and Sylvia Willis shared Sunday morning communion in the parking lot of the McDonald's on U.S. Highway 31 in Columbia, Tenn.

They partook of the elements — unleavened bread and fruit of the vine — about 12 miles south of their home in Spring Hill. It was one of the few places they could find a strong enough signal to stream the worship service from their congregation, the Heritage Church of Christ in the Nashville suburb of Franklin, Tenn.

The Willises were among thousands of AT&T customers across multiple states who lost home phone, cell and internet service after a Christmas morning car bomb exploded in downtown Nashville, nearly 40 miles north of Spring Hill. Two days later, their Wi-Fi had not returned.

Thankfully, the reception in the fast-food parking lot allowed the couple to see the service on their cell phones, Jim Willis told *The Christian Chronicle*.

"We brought our own communion supplies. It was a wonderful service," he said three days after the bombing during an interview on his home phone, which had resumed working just hours earlier. "Everything was great. It was just on a small scale."

SEVEN STATES AFFECTED BY BLAST

About 6:45 a.m. on Christmas day, a recreational vehicle exploded outside an AT&T facility on Nashville's Second Avenue North, near historic music venues including the Ryman Auditorium. A woman's voice on a recording warned residents to evacuate before the explosion, *The Tennessean* reported. A 63-year-old man, identified as the bomber, died in the blast, which injured at least eight people and damaged more than 40 businesses, including a transmission facility that provides wireless service



METRO NASHVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Body camera footage from Metro Nashville Police Department first responder Michael Sipos shows the scene of the Christmas morning bomb blast.

to much of the region.

Airplanes were grounded at the Nashville airport, and police departments reported disruptions in their 911 services. AT&T announced that it would waive data overage charges for customers in 1,166 ZIP codes — including Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Indiana, Illinois, Georgia and Missouri — who may have been affected by the explosion.

The blast could be heard for miles, said Blaine McKinney, communications minister for the Mt. Juliet Church of Christ, east of Nashville. One of the church's elders, who lives about 14 miles from the blast site, felt his house shake as he prepared to light a Christmas morning fire, McKinney said.

AN EXTRA CHALLENGE FOR CHURCHES

The outages that followed the blast came at an already difficult time for Nashville-area churches, most of which have limited in-person

worship services or moved them online due to the region's surging COVID-19 hospitalizations.

The Mt. Juliet church's livestream was a bit sluggish, McKinney said, but it worked.

In Nashville, members of the Brentwood Hills Church of Christ drove to the church's parking lot on Saturday to use the congregation's Wi-Fi to check email and communicate with their families, said worship minister Andrew Leeper.

The church already had decided to move its Sunday worship online. Leeper sent messages to members reminding them that they could hear the service broadcast on an AM radio station — something the church has done for years — if their internet service was down.

During the online worship, the church replayed communion comments made by church member Drew Johnson on March 8, less than a week after an outbreak of tornadoes touched down along an 80-mile stretch

from west of downtown Nashville to Putnam County. The storms claimed 25 lives and devastated communities across Middle Tennessee.

"The beauty of the Gospel is that our hope does not lie in the sanctity of our homes," Johnson said. "Our peace should not, cannot, and it will not ever come from those things you can build or that you can acquire. Even our mortal lives are forfeit to him who is able to do immeasurably more than you can ask or imagine. ... Our fear and doubt is the reason Jesus instituted this weekly reminder."

The March 8 service was the last in-person gathering before the pandemic began to disrupt the church's schedule, Leeper said.

Johnson's comments seemed appropriate as the congregation took communion "on yet another Sunday following a very difficult week in our city," he added.

'WE'RE TRULY MISSING BEING TOGETHER'

In Franklin, the Heritage Church of Christ conducted socially distanced, in-person worship on the Sunday after the blast.

Jim Willis, 79, and his wife chose the church's online option.

"We hate missing," he said, "but we have sequestered ourselves. ... We certainly feel like we've had a Scriptural worship via the internet," but "you just love to see the smiles and the greetings and see the people that you love. We're truly missing being together, but we're grateful."

The couple didn't have family members over for Christmas. They learned about the internet outage when Jim tried to set up a Skype video chat with his brother-in-law in South Carolina.

As they took the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in the McDonald's parking lot, they felt "renewed appreciation for the technology that binds us," Jim Willis said. "I thank the Lord every day that we can stay connected."



McKinney



Leeper

One nation under God, divided

CHRISTIANS IN POLITICS *discuss the aftermath of one of the darkest days in America's history.*

BY CHERYL MANN BACON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

An acrimonious joint session of Congress was just beginning with the dark promise of 24 combined hours of debate over objections to electoral votes from six states. Then riots breached the citadel of democracy.

Six hours later, the Capitol was defaced, its windows smashed and hallways soiled. The joint session continued, no newfound unity in sight.

U.S. politics have never been nastier than on Jan. 6, 2021.

Christians in politics should be all about unity, right?

"If we are not the leaders in being able to draw a line in our politics when they get downright nasty, then who is?" asked Jane Hamilton, a Dallas West Church of Christ member who helps get Democrats elected in Texas.

Also discussing the dilemma in interviews with *The Christian Chronicle*: U.S. congressmen — all conservative Republicans — who are members of Churches of Christ.

"When you get to know people and know where they're coming from, it is possible to be friends with people who are so different in political beliefs, though sometimes that's difficult for constituents to imagine," said Rep. Lance Gooden, a member of the Rockwall and Brin Church of Christ in Terrell, Texas, east of Dallas.

Gooden is joined in the U.S. House by Kentucky Rep. Brett Guthrie, fellow Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson and Tennessee Rep. John Rose.

Just days after the Capitol riot, Guthrie, a member of the University Heights Church of Christ in Bowling Green, Ky., recalled being at the airport.

He saw Rep. Al Green, R-Texas, surrounded by a hostile crowd.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JANE HAMILTON

Then-candidate Joe Biden greets Jane Hamilton, a Dallas West Church of Christ member who served as director of his Texas campaign during the 2020 primary.

"People started screaming at him. Al had filed the impeachment articles, but it was like ..."

Guthrie's voice trailed off in thought.

"I just want to call for people to be civil. That doesn't mean you have to agree," the Kentucky congressman said. "The founding fathers were passionate and stood firm on their beliefs, but you have to absolutely treat people civilly regardless."

'WE ARE ONE IN CHRIST'

Hamilton served as director of Joe Biden's presidential campaign in Texas during the 2020 Democratic primary.

"I started in politics right out of undergrad," Hamilton said. She worked for longtime Texas Congressman Martin Frost, then was chief of staff and campaign manager for Congressman Marc Veasey of Dallas. Both are Democrats. She ran a 2006 campaign to

turn Dallas County blue and more recently managed the campaign of Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins. While none of those candidates are members of Churches of Christ, Hamilton does not see an absence of Democrats within the church.

"I think there is a very strong presence on both sides of the aisle," she said.

She believes "we have many differing views and affiliations. But we strive to always remember we are one in Christ."

According to the Pew Research Center's 2014 Religious Landscape Study, 50 percent of members of Churches of Christ identify with the Republican Party. Thirty-nine percent of members of Churches of Christ identify as or lean Democratic, that study reported. The remaining 11 percent indicate no political preference.

As an African-American woman, mother and "someone who holds strong to my faith," Hamilton said the things that matter to her are healthcare for all, resources for the

poor and nondiscriminatory workplaces, all causes where her faith "is absolutely consistent with my political views."

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Mel Hailey, a political scientist at Abilene Christian University in Texas, said the country has been this divided before.

"During the Vietnam War, the country was badly divided, and it took a long time for the healing process after Vietnam and

Watergate — to move beyond that," said Hailey, a member of the Sunset Ridge Church of Christ in San Antonio.

Going through a traumatic experience can bring people together. Whether the Jan. 6 Capitol riot has that impact remains unknown.

Even when members of Congress manage to build the relationships necessary to find common ground, voters back home may not understand.

Gooden, an ardent Trump supporter, said he has built relationships through out-of-the-building activities because inside the Capitol the parties are isolated.

One congressional trip brought a surprising friendship.

"I spent 10 days on a Middle East trip with Maxine Waters," Gooden said, "She's about as far left as they come, but we became friends."

Waters, a California Democrat, is also a believer, he said.

On Jan. 6, once out of the chambers and situated in a safe location, Gooden said he became angry.

"So much good Trump had done — and so many people believed in the work he had done — was tainted by the radical thugs that invaded the Capitol," Gooden said. "Now all we're talking about is how the entire movement is out of touch, and we're



Hailey



Gooden



Guthrie

all being made out to be the lawless ones, and it's a real shame."

Rose, who is a member of the Jefferson Avenue Church of Christ in Cookeville, Tenn., said his district overwhelmingly supported Trump's re-election.

Many of his constituents participated in the protest, he said, "to vindicate the views and ideals they have." He called the violence regretful and said he hoped none of them participated in that.

Guthrie reflected on the riot's impact more broadly.

"Just the image of Congress meeting to confirm an election, and people breaking into the chambers is embarrassing, and, number one, it's criminal," he said. "The Russians or Chinese couldn't have planned any more to make us look bad on the world stage."



Rose

Like the day President John F. Kennedy was shot or the day the World Trade Center towers fell, Americans will long remember where they were when they saw rioters breach the Capitol doors or carry a Confederate flag through the Rotunda.

"It was one of the saddest days I've ever experienced personally," Hailey said, "to see individuals who do not respect the process and see the president of the United States telling those who were vandalizing and engaging in criminal activities that he loved them."

"I just can't get my arms around that as to the depth of what that does to efforts to help heal our country."

Hamilton called it a dark, evil day. "We all know the difference between right and wrong at our core. What we saw in the last few days was absolutely wrong," she said. "Democrat or Republican, you know if something is just simply wrong." Or dark. Or evil.

Members of House, Senate have ties to Churches of Christ

BY CHERYL MANN BACON | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

When former U.S. Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, got to Washington, D.C., in 2005, he was the only member of Churches of Christ serving in the U.S. House.

But then Christians who shared Poe's faith heritage — and his conservative Republican politics — began winning election to Congress.



Poe

Kentucky Rep. Brett Guthrie, now serving his seventh two-year term, joined Poe in the House in 2009. As Poe retired two years ago, Texas Rep. Lance Gooden and Tennessee Rep. John Rose began their first terms.

And in November, Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson became the fourth member of Churches of Christ — along with Guthrie, Gooden and Rose — to win a seat in the current House. They don't always vote

alike, but all four did vote against impeaching the president.

In their 2019 paper, two researchers identified 31 members of Churches of Christ elected to Congress since 1904: 16 Democrats

and 15 Republicans. Abilene Christian University's Neal Coates and Union University's Sean Evans are updating their work to reflect the election of Jackson and Alabama Sen. Tommy Tuberville.




Tuberville

Since 1979, with those additions, only three of 13 have been Democrats.

Coates is an elder of the Hillcrest Church of Christ in Abilene, while Evans is an elder of the Skyline Church of Christ in Jackson, Tenn.

SEE AN EXPANDED VERSION of this story, including information on the stances church members in Congress took on objections to electoral votes, at christianchronicle.org.

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NATIONALISM: Bible says Christians are 'citizens of heaven'

FROM PAGE 1

turned our backs on it. ... I pray that through this, the light will shine through the darkness."

"Also," his wife added, "my Lord wants me here to fight for the unborn."

Plenty of disturbing scenes characterized the Jan. 6 chaos, from gunfire and gas masks in the citadel of U.S. democracy to rioters chanting "Hang Pence" after Vice President Mike Pence refused to stop Congress from certifying Democrat Joe Biden's Electoral College win.

That's not to mention the Confederate flags, the anti-Semitic T-shirts and the nods to QAnon conspiracy theories.

But to many faith leaders, the Christian nationalism on display amid the mob violence that resulted in five deaths was most alarming — and appalling.

"We have too many people in the church who aspire to be Christian Republicans, Christian Democrats, Christian something else. Their alliances and their allegiances are not first and foremost to Christ. People are compromised in their faith," said Melvin Otey, a minister and law professor at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Ala.

"People believe that being an American or being a patriot or being a part of a political party is part of their faith. It absolutely is not," added the former U.S.

Justice Department trial lawyer, who preached for the Georgia Avenue Church of Christ in Washington, D.C., for eight years. "That's what keeps people divided."

In Philippians 3:20, the apostle Paul writes that Christians are "citizens of heaven." But most Christians don't seem to understand that or even want to hear it, said Otey, who insists on preaching that message anyway.

"The good that I can be to my neighbor, the good that I can be in terms of unity to the church, is lifting my thinking out of this mire of liberal/conservative, left/right, Republican/Democrat," he said. "We need to get out of that and be the hands and feet of Jesus."



Otey



SHUTTERSTOCK

Protesters wave flags and climb the walls of the U.S. Capitol building on Jan. 6.

DIVINE CAUSE?

Most of the pro-Trump demonstrators who showed up in Washington that morning were peaceful.

Many believed they were standing up for a sacred institution, as



Beller

Christian nationalism "is built on the basic premise that America, its Constitution and its form of government are by God's design," said Jeremie Beller, congregational minister for the Wilshire Church of Christ

in Oklahoma City. As such, those believers viewed keeping Trump in office as the only way to "continue pushing the divine cause."

"However, the Christian symbols linking the re-election of Donald Trump — or any politician of any political party — with the will of God represent a false and dangerous misconception of God's will," said Beller, an adjunct Bible professor at Oklahoma Christian University whose doctoral dissertation focused on religion and racism.

"Given the dark history of Christian nationalism, it is highly plausible that even the violent par-

ticipants held the same view, just with greater passion," he added.

Christians can't remain silent, Beller warned, as the world watches to see if the Capitol violence truly reflects Jesus' followers.

"It is absurdity of the highest order to participate in any angry, vengeful, destructive mob while claiming to represent Jesus," Beller said. "Jesus proposed a radically different approach to changing the world and bringing about justice: Love your neighbor. Pray for your enemy. Go the extra mile."

Like Beller, Mac Sandlin pointed to Christian nationalism as a factor in the siege that has resulted in dozens of arrests and impeachment proceedings against Trump, whom Democrats and some Republicans blame for inciting the riot.

"The mix of signs, flags and symbols with allusions to Jesus and to America by the protesters was one of the most striking and unsettling aspects of the event to me," said Sandlin, a religion professor at Harding University in Searcy, Ark.

Sandlin stressed that he wanted to be careful about "attributing any blanket statement to the whole crowd."

"However, it is undeniable that Christian nationalism has played a

major role in American politics for decades and that it contributed in significant ways to the event," he said.

'BLUNT AND UNNUANCED NATIONALISM'

Historically, Christian nationalism has manifested itself in both major political parties, said Lee Camp, a professor of theology and ethics at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn.

"That being said, it is crucial to note that Donald Trump represents a blunt and unnuanced nationalism, often represented in language such as 'Make America Great Again,'" said Camp, author of "Scandalous Witness: A Little Political Manifesto for Christians."

According to an AP VoteCast survey, 81 percent of White evangelical Christians voted for Trump in the 2020 election. That's similar to the number who cast ballots for him four years earlier, according to other polls. Trump's opposition to abortion and support for religious freedom were among the reasons cited.

But in the view of Tanya Smith Brice, author of "Reconciliation Reconsidered: Advancing the



Brice

National Conversation on Race in Churches of Christ," Christian nationalism has become inextricably linked with White supremacy.

Brice, vice president of education at the Council on Social Work Education in Alexandria, Va., contrasted the number of police visible at the Trump rally with the security presence seen when Black protesters marched this past summer.

"There were militarized officers everywhere and low-flying helicopters," said Brice, who conducts research on the influence of race in Christianity. "We were there worshipping, singing, praying but were treated like hostile enemies."

"It didn't matter that we were Christians marching for justice," she said. "The only thing that mattered to the most powerful people in this land was that we were not White."



A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE: *The Christian Chronicle* organized an online panel discussion to discuss the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol. The panel featured Hamil R. Harris, Jerry Mitchell, Cheryl Mann Bacon, Kenneth Pybus, Melvin Otey, David Duncan, Neal Coates and Wendell Edwards. Bobby Ross Jr. and Chellie Ison served as moderators. Watch it at christianchronicle.org/capitolriot.

NOT A NEW PROBLEM

For the nation’s nearly 12,000 Churches of Christ — with roughly 1.4 million men, women and children in the pews nationwide — Christian nationalism ranks as a “significant problem.”

That’s the assessment of Sandlin, the Harding religion professor.

But he’s quick to add that the same is true “in almost all Christian groups in America.”

“Catholics have struggled with it since the Americanist movement of the late 19th and early 20th century,” said Sandlin, who attends the Beebe Church of Christ in Arkansas. “Evangelicals have struggled with it in obvious ways since the emergence of the so-called religious right. Mainline churches have struggled with it via the social movement gospel.”

Then again, the problem predates the United States.

“The Philippians seemed to have struggled with it in relation to Rome in the first century, too,” Sandlin said.

Because nations are powerful and can do so much good and so much harm, he said, they make for “especially tempting idols for the people of God. Churches of Christ have long struggled with the temptation to



Sandlin



A “Jesus 2020” flag is displayed outside the U.S. Capitol during the rioting on Jan. 6.

either completely repudiate America and its government as tools of the devil or, on the other hand, to conflate the nation with the kingdom of God.”

On the positive side, Sandlin said he’s pleased to see many examples within Churches of Christ of men and women who “model appropriate love and respect for the country.”

Jesus’ disciples included Matthew, who worked for the government, and Simon the Zealot, who wanted to overthrow it, noted David Duncan, preaching minister for the Memorial Church of Christ in Houston.

“Can you imagine what the discussions must have been around the campfire at night?” Duncan asked in an online panel discussion organized by *The Christian Chronicle*.

“Jesus was saying, ‘I’m bringing you into the same kingdom — to a better kingdom,’” the Texas minister said. “Somehow, our folks have to see that and demonstrate that so that we can be the light that Jesus called us to be.”

Prayer is crucial, stressed Wendell Edwards, who joined Duncan, Otey and other Christian scholars and journalists on the panel.

“Clearly, the divide is deep. The chasm is there,” said Edwards, a TV news anchor and member of the Riverchase Church of Christ in Birmingham, Ala. “But with the power of prayer, that is our best resource.”

Chronicle correspondent recounts the Capitol riot

WASHINGTON

My main goal in going to the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 was to talk to lawmakers about the previous day’s Senate runoff elections in Georgia, which gave Democrats control of both houses of Congress and the White House.

I listened at my Maryland home as President Donald Trump began speaking to the crowd at the Ellipse, south of the White House. About a mile and a half away, Congress was preparing to certify Joe Biden’s Electoral College win. This time, the normally routine process would be anything but.

I guess I just thought, “Oh, there might be something going on.” I also suspected it would be a long day.

Instead of taking the Metro subway as I often do, I drove. I knew something was different after I found a parking spot by the Supreme Court. I saw the crowd and heard this roar. Then I heard a little stun grenade. I thought, “Oh, they’re really getting rowdy. What’s going on here?”

I was hesitant, but I made it to the east front of the Capitol. I noticed the cops. I didn’t see many. Maybe four? But the crowd was very large. I mean, it was a little scary.

I was able to interview people because I had a suit on and said I was with *The Christian Chronicle*. That made the difference because I heard people in the crowd being really unfriendly to the mainstream media.

I actually took a picture outside of the guy who was earlier photographed inside the Capitol holding a Confederate battle flag. “It’s just beginning,” I heard Kevin Seefried say. He was later arrested on a federal unlawful entry charge.

It’s just a tale of two worlds. I talked to people because I wanted to learn more, but I’m thinking, “What happens now?”

From there, things just got crazier. I heard one guy say, “They shot that lady.” We later learned that Ashli Babbitt, a Trump supporter and Air Force veteran, had been killed as she and other rioters stormed the Capitol.

At the time, I just listened, not knowing exactly what was happening. I kept taking pictures. In D.C., there are always protests, but this was so different. It was a majority White crowd. I was one of the few Blacks I saw out there.

These people were very articulate and from all over. Most were peaceful, but groups had just pushed into the Capitol, and there wasn’t a large police presence. I literally walked up the steps. I didn’t know until later that the rioters were able to go all the way into the Rotunda.

I got an alert on my phone from the D.C. mayor’s office and learned about a 6 p.m. curfew that night and that lawmakers were on lockdown. At that point, I just turned my phone off and kept reporting.



Hamil R. Harris

HAMIL R. HARRIS is a *Christian Chronicle* correspondent and a veteran journalist who spent two decades with the *Washington Post*. He preaches regularly for the Glenarden Church of Christ in Maryland. After returning home from reporting on Jan. 6, he joined the *Chronicle* for an evening panel discussion of the day’s events.



SHEALAH CRAIGHEAD, WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER
President Donald J. Trump talks with Capt. Mark Kobelja, Dr. Ronny Jackson and Lt. Col. James Jones after a Jan. 12, 2018, physical at Walter Reed hospital.



PETE SOUZA, WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER
President Barack Obama speaks with Dr. Ronny Jackson, the White House physician, in the Outer Oval Office on Feb. 21, 2014.

CONGRESSMAN: Served as physician for Bush, Obama, Trump

FROM PAGE 1

Jackson and several other freshman House members from Texas and Oklahoma were seated near the doors. They helped armed officers drag furniture to barricade the exit and broke off pieces from hand-sanitizer stations to craft crude weapons for themselves.

“A fight or flight kind of thing kicks in,” Jackson said. “When you look around and there’s nowhere you can go, you go to fight.”

Jackson heard a “pop, pop, pop,” and someone shouted, “Shots fired!”

Capitol police decided to evacuate the members through one of two doors from the Chamber to the Speaker’s Lobby and hope for a safe exit path, he said. At the other end of the Lobby, one rioter was shot and killed as the mob sought to breach the second entrance.

A LONG WAY FROM LEVELLAND

Jackson, a 53-year-old retired U.S. Navy rear admiral, has been in war zones before.

But he grew up in aptly named Levelland, Texas, 35 miles west of Lubbock, attending the Austin Street Church of Christ.

The oil, cattle and cotton town of about 13,000 people is a long way from Washington, D.C., where, beginning in 2006, Jackson spent his last years in the Navy serving as a

White House physician to Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

Jackson hasn’t lived in Levelland for a long, long time.

A week after he left the Navy on Dec. 1, 2019, he went back to Texas and filed Dec. 8 as a candidate in the Republican congressional primary. Since then, he’s hailed from Amarillo, largest city in the bright red district, where the Jacksons bought a house in April 2020 and began making a new home in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. They visited The Colonies Church of Christ there during the campaign, according to minister Jeff Keele, but have not placed membership.

They still own their home in suburban Maryland, and their youngest son will finish high school, remotely, from the Maryland high school where he’s in the top of his class. For many years, the Jacksons were members of the Laurel Church of Christ there.

Laurel minister Bren White describes Jackson as “a straight arrow, the kind of person you can look eyeball-to-eyeball with and know he’s a person of great integrity, a very genuine person, very sincere.”

Whenever Jackson was in town,



White

White said, he was at church and “very engaged” despite demanding travel requirements. The congregation of about 550 members worships about 20 miles northeast of the White House, a 35- to 50-minute drive depending on traffic.

A BIG CHUNK OF TEXAS

In contrast, the 13th is the second largest congressional district in Texas, spanning 41 counties and stretching a six-hour drive from the northernmost border of the Texas Panhandle, south across the Llano Estacado and then east through the Red River Valley to just north of Dallas.

In 2016, 80 percent of district voters supported Donald Trump. In 2020, it was 79 percent, mirroring the total Jackson earned in the November election.

The March primary had been more challenging.

Jackson came in second, receiving 19.9 percent of the vote in a 15-candidate field.

Opponents criticized him as a Washington insider. Remarkably, one even tried to tie him to Obama’s healthcare initiatives because he had been the president’s physician.

Ultimately, however, the newcomer was victorious in a July runoff against Josh Winegarner, a cattle industry lobbyist whose own Beltway resume included service to

Texas’ longtime, former U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm and Texas’ senior senator John Cornyn.

THREE PRESIDENTS AS PATIENTS

While Trump’s endorsement proved pivotal to Jackson’s congressional victory, he said he enjoyed working for all three recent presidents, whom he described as “vastly different” in personality and approach.

He greatly admired Bush for his spiritual focus.

“I saw him rely a lot on his faith to help him make decisions and in hard times at the White House,” Jackson said of his fellow Texan. “I think I learned a lot from him.”

“He was 25 years my senior, and obviously, most of what I learned in life I learned from my mother and father, but it was great to have an example at the White House like President Bush who realized that it was God and country but always God first. That’s a good thing to have in a leader.”

To be precise, Bush, 74, is 21 years older than Jackson, but the point remains the same.

“All three treated me and my family very well, were very good to all of us,” Jackson said.

Evidence of that relationship took the form of a positive note from Obama and former Obama staffers who defended Jackson’s reputation



PETE SOUZA, WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER
Obama and former president George W. Bush joke with Jackson (off camera).



PHOTO PROVIDED BY U.S. REP. RONNY JACKSON
President Trump poses with Ronny Jackson during Jackson's campaign.



SHEALAH CRAIGHEAD, WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER
President Donald Trump speaks with Dr. Ronny Jackson in the White House on March 28, 2018, after nominating Jackson to serve as veterans affairs secretary.

when — after Trump nominated him to become secretary of veterans affairs in March 2018 — assorted allegations derailed the nomination, which ultimately was withdrawn.

Jackson denied all the accusations, calling them “garbage.” He remained in the White House as assistant to the president and chief medical adviser for the Executive Office of the President, a role created by Trump for Jackson.

That’s a long way from Levelland.

“I grew up in a small, rural, hardworking, blue-collar farming community — farming and oil and gas,” Jackson said. “I think that is a culture where you are always looking out for your neighbors as well as yourself.

“I think that led me to be successful in the military and has led me to a point where I want to continue service to my country rather than go out in the civilian sector focusing on making a lot of money and things of that nature.”

A WHITE HOUSE ENDORSEMENT

Jackson’s opportunity came in 2019, when former Rep. Mac Thornberry announced he would not seek re-election.

Thornberry, who had served since

1995, endorsed Jackson’s primary opponent. Jackson’s political benefactor one-upped him, however.

A Trump tweet praising Jackson was still featured on his campaign webpage days after the Capitol siege Jan. 6, and Jackson remained a loyal supporter of his former patient.

After the rioters were removed, the new congressman returned to the House chambers to vote in favor of objections to the electoral votes from Arizona and Pennsylvania, part of a last-gasp effort by Republicans that ultimately failed to overturn the results of November’s election.

Jackson said he never considered changing his plan to support the objections. The vote was not about keeping Trump in office, he said, but about protecting voter integrity and election security.

“I was voting for what I believe are constitutional reasons,” Jackson said, “reasons clear to me and other members who felt as I do. The Constitution says the state conducts elections per the state legislature, and many states changed rules to advantage Democrats without involving state legislatures. Their votes shouldn’t count because they didn’t derive from constitutional means.”



U.S. NAVY
Rear Admiral Ronny L. Jackson served three U.S. presidents.

Ultimately, the objections failed on a bipartisan vote in both the Senate and House after the joint session reconvened inside the ransacked chambers.

A BAD ENDING FOR TRUMP

As a White House physician, Jackson had built relationships not only with Trump but also with White House staff and Cabinet members.

During the campaign, he talked about those relationships as an asset. But with the election of Democrat Joe Biden, he insists the lack of such enviable assets will not affect his work.

“We’re in the minority. It would have been better to be in majority. It would be an advantage to reach in the White House,” he said. “But I’m still going to represent this district and work on the issues that are important to it — agriculture, armed services, healthcare reform — and also try to get the culture of the country back and establish a system of voting we can be confident in. That must be dealt with in the next two years.”

Jackson said the left needs to embrace the right to some extent rather than drive a wedge between themselves and the 74 million voters who supported Trump.

“They have the House, Senate and presidency,” he said of the Democrats. “They have the opportunity to move the agenda they’ve been talking about and do it the right way — legislatively.”

But he believes there’s more interest in punishing opponents.

During his campaign, Jackson

called Trump “the greatest president of my lifetime.”

In the president’s final days in office, Jackson insisted Trump had done a fantastic job, but allowed that his administration had ended “on a bad note.”

“I’m sad for the country and for the president that it ended this way,” Jackson said. “I still think he did a lot of great things in office — I think the Make America Great/Keep America Great movement he inspired will continue in a peaceful way.”

Jackson cited the booming economy of Trump’s first three years and protection of First and Second Amendment rights, “things my constituents believe in,” as the 45th President’s legacy.

On the morning of Jan. 6, just hours before he found himself barricading the House chamber doors, Jackson briefly visited with some of those constituents at the Ellipse, where crowds gathered to hear Trump speak.

The congressman said he saw “tens of thousands of patriotic, peaceful Americans down there protesting the vote but also supporting the president and his agenda.”

But the mob that later invaded the Capitol “crossed the line in a big way,” Jackson said.

“I hope they’re all identified and prosecuted. They are not representative of myself or my district.”

RONNY JACKSON talks about his faith and politics in an exclusive Q&A with Hamil Harris. Read the interview at christianchronicle.org/ronnyjackson.

VACCINES: 'We all want this terrible pandemic to end'

FROM PAGE 3

the U.S. — those made by Pfizer and Moderna.

"We all want this terrible pandemic to end," Greenway said. "There are some things only God has the ability to handle. This is one of them."

Sarah Palmer is a pediatrician who attends the North Central Church of Christ in Indianapolis. She was one of 9 million Americans jabbed with the first of two shots once vaccinations began in mid-December.

"I am grateful for the intense effort to develop the vaccine and know that it has the backing of years of research on vaccines in general," Palmer said. "I believe when God gave Adam dominion over the earth in Genesis, that included developing scientific knowledge to tame diseases."

A GAME CHANGER?

Nancy Henley's dad lost his 4-year-old sister to polio in 1949 before the first polio vaccine was developed by American physician Jonas Salk in the early 1950s.

"She died in her mother's arms going to be put in an iron lung," said Henley, a member of the Maryland Heights Church of Christ in Missouri. "Vaccines were a game changer for polio. I have prayed for a COVID-19 vaccine."

But even as the number of U.S. coronavirus deaths approached 400,000 and infections topped 23 million at press time, a quarter of *Chronicle* readers surveyed said they either don't plan to be vaccinated or remain undecided.

"I'm skeptical," said Trent Wheeler, a member of the University City Church of Christ in Gainesville, Fla. "I appreciate the rapid efforts to get a vaccine, but I have a distrust of the pharmaceutical industry."

Linda Anderson Sneed, 69, said she is high-risk for COVID-19 because of her age, autoimmune deficiency, respiratory weakness and other medical issues.

Sneed, whose husband, Denny, preaches for the Hereford Church of Christ in Texas, said she follows safety rules such as wearing a mask and observing physical distancing. She only goes out when necessary,



PHOTO PROVIDED BY TRINDI MITCHELL

Jimmy Ellis, a member of the East Montgomery Church of Christ in Alabama, receives a COVID-19 vaccine. He serves as the fire chief in Shorter, Ala.

such as for medical appointments.

But she's undecided about being vaccinated.

"I am not sure due to the fact that it was conceived so quickly and rumors that it was created using the cells of aborted babies," she said.

OPERATION WARP SPEED

Even a number of Christians who plan to receive the shots voiced concerns about potential unknown long-term effects.

In retrospect, Dr. Francis Collins, the physician-geneticist who heads the National Institutes of Health, said the name attached to the rapid vaccine development — Operation Warp Speed — might have given some Americans the wrong impression.

"It may also have conveyed that we cut corners," Collins said in a video discussion with Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. "I want to assure you — as a scientist, as a physician, as a researcher who has been in the middle of all of this since January (2020) — we have done nothing to compromise in even the smallest way the safety of the efficacy standards for these vaccines."

At the same time, Collins said a cell line derived in 1973 from a pregnancy termination in the Netherlands was not used in

the production of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, although it was used in preparation of some vaccines not yet approved in the U.S.

Quincy J. Byrdsong, vice provost for health affairs at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., echoed Collins' statement.

"The reference many are making to fetal cells and vaccines is the use of fetal cell lines, not fetal tissue, in the tests which ensure the vaccines work," Byrdsong said. "The tests are performed during what is known as the confirmation stage of vaccine development."

"For any drug development, there is preclinical work which needs to be performed before it can be introduced to humans," he added. "These preclinical studies include the use of animals and/or cell lines, and these studies are designed to not expose humans to risk unnecessarily."

In a recent story, The Associated Press reported that religious leaders at the forefront of the anti-abortion movement believe the leading COVID-19 vaccines "are acceptable to take, given their remote and indirect connection to lines of cells derived from aborted fetuses."



Byrdsong

50-50 SPLIT AT ONE CHURCH

At the Stockdale Church of Christ in rural South Texas, minister Kenneth Clapp said the congregation is split about 50-50 on being vaccinated.

"There are certainly those that see the vaccine as a solution and an answer to prayer," Clapp said. "Then there are those who are certainly very skeptical of the vaccine and what it may represent."

"I don't really see any theological objections being voiced," he added. "Most of them are political more than anything, a lack of trust in big pharmaceutical companies and the government."

"And like has been the case all along, there seems to be a portion at least that think this whole thing (COVID-19) is fake. I'll be honest: I don't really understand that. But it's their position nonetheless."

James Nesmith, minister for the West Broad Church of Christ in Richmond, Va., said he initially was suspicious of the vaccines, particularly given how quickly they were developed.

"But after I learned about the strict, stringent, multilayered process adhered to before these vaccines were approved, my apprehensions became far less pronounced," Nesmith said. "Based upon the evidence, I feel the vaccines are safe, and I look forward to taking mine as soon as I am able to do so."

On the other hand, Mike Lewis, worship and young adult minister for the Southwest Church of Christ in Tigard, Ore., said he does not take a lot of medicines and focuses on natural remedies.

Lewis said he rarely gets sick and has not had a real cold or flu for years.

He has avoided the coronavirus so far.

"I'm concerned there wasn't sufficient testing," he said of the COVID-19 vaccines. "It was rolled out too quickly."

He cited specific concerns: "Lack of animal testing stages. Long-term effects on the body. What an mRNA will do to our own DNA and body functioning."

HOW mRNA VACCINES FUNCTION

The COVID-19 vaccines rely on mRNA — or messenger RNA — a new technology that injects a piece of genetic code for the spike protein that coats the coronavirus, medical experts note.

The mRNA induces the body to produce harmless spike protein, enough to prime the immune system to react if it later encounters the real virus.

“The benefit of mRNA vaccines, like all vaccines, is that those vaccinated gain this protection without ever having to risk the serious consequences of getting sick with COVID-19,” said Jeff McCormack, chief academic officer at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City.



McCormack

“Let me be clear on the next point since I have been asked regularly about it,” said McCormack, who leads that Christian university’s coronavirus readiness task force. “They do not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. mRNA never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA (genetic material) is kept. The cell breaks down and gets rid of the mRNA soon after it is finished using the instructions.”

The reference that some COVID-19 skeptics make to the mark of the beast refers to the apocalyptic writings found in the Bible’s final book, specifically in Revelation 13:17.

“The mark signifies loyalty to those principalities and powers opposed to God’s kingdom,” said Vic McCracken, a professor of Christian ethics and theology at Abilene Christian University in Texas. “It has nothing to do with a medical procedure. Such a reading of Revelation would make little sense in the context of a book written to an audience nearly 2,000 years ago.”

Back in Georgia, Huyghebaert said he has seen no need to address that question with the full congregation since just a few members have expressed such an idea.

But when fellow Christians raise that point in one-on-one conversations, he tries to lead them through the Scriptures.

“People who receive the mark seem to be aware of what they are doing,” he said. “It doesn’t seem that people were tricked into receiving the mark, as is the fear with this vaccine. That is what the few I have talked with have worried about.”

Also, he explains that this is not the first time that believers “have had similar unfulfilled fears about things that could have been viewed as the mark.”

“Revelation is difficult to interpret, at best, and it’s even more difficult to make specific and exact applications of John’s words,” he tells them.

“I try to conclude,” Huyghebaert said, “by reminding folks what Revelation is ultimately about: God wins. So whether you choose to take the vaccine or not, make sure you are on his side and that he is the only one you give your worship.”

HEALTH CARE: Two shots are required

FROM PAGE 3

chills and fever with either vaccine. Such reactions are more common after the second dose, which neither Blackwell nor Baither has yet received.

When a vaccine requires two shots, the first shot helps the body recognize the virus and get the immune system ready, while the second shot strengthens that immune response, according to GoodRx.com. Three weeks are recommended between the Pfizer doses, and four weeks between the Moderna doses.

The virus touched Baither’s office early in the pandemic. Just one day after the first case was reported in Maine, she learned one of her nurses had been exposed.

“Of course, at that time, none of us was wearing masks, and it ended up being about five or six of our staff that got it,” she said.

The office shut down for two weeks.

Since then, they have worn masks and eye protection, hoping to protect themselves and the vulnerable cancer patients they serve.

“It’s been very scary for our patients,” Baither said, “because we give chemo, and so many already have compromised immune systems.”



Baither

While not directly treating COVID-19 patients, Baither said the pandemic has had a noticeable effect on those needing the cancer care her office handles.

“I have seen a couple of patients diagnosed with their cancers later than they should have been because some testing was delayed or they were afraid to seek out attention for symptoms,” she said. “I’ve seen a few patients die that might not have if it weren’t for these delays.”

However, now that the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have been approved for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration, she said most of her patients are eager to get the vaccine themselves.

But because the vaccine was developed so quickly, some have questions.

She tells her patients, “It goes through all the rigorous testing. It’s just that the testing was done in more of an urgent manner.”

Blackwell agrees.

“It has been tested through the same phases and scrutiny that any other vaccine has been tested — with a large number of participants with varying socioeconomic or racial backgrounds,” Blackwell said.

SNAPCHAT OF VACCINES?

Another concern Baither’s patients have had is regarding the type of vaccine — mRNA — which



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sarah Chase, a physician assistant who attends the Grace Chapel Church of Christ in Cumming, Ga., receives a COVID-19 vaccine.

is confusing to many.

Baither compares it to the widely popular app Snapchat.

“The messenger RNA (mRNA) just brings a little strand that goes into the cell and then disappears, like a picture on Snapchat disappears,” Baither said. “It just teaches the body how to fight it.”

Blackwell said she has heard conspiracy theories about the vaccine containing microchips or GPS devices. Those rumors are simply not based on facts.

“The formulation of these vaccines comes in multi-dose vials, so there’s not any way that whoever is doing the administration would be able to pick out exactly one microchip for each injection,” Blackwell said.

She also points out that any type of microchip would be too large to fit through the tiny needle used to administer the vaccine.

Blackwell said it’s important to note this type of vaccine, while never widely used, has been researched for years. This is just the first time it’s been needed and, now, used.

In fact, she said she wouldn’t be surprised to see this type of vaccine become even more common in the years ahead.

“It is possible that some of the vaccines that we are familiar with may be replaced by mRNA vaccines in the future,” she said. “It’s easier to produce and to fine tune to the specific pathogen.”

However, that is not a primary concern of researchers at this time, she said.

For now, Baither and Blackwell said it’s important for everyone to be patient while they wait for the vaccine.

“It’s going to take a long time to get everyone vaccinated,” Baither said.

Which is why medical experts say everyone needs to continue to wear a mask, wash their hands frequently and practice social distancing.

Amos Hosea Micah



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CAMEROON

WOTUTU — “Last year was characterized with lots of difficulties, trials and frustrations,” said Gregory Elangwe, minister for the Wotutu Church of Christ in this West African nation.

But Elangwe, director of the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Cameroon - Wotutu, said he was thrilled to begin the new year by welcoming 20 new students to the institute, which is associated with Denver-based Bear Valley. For two years the students will train to “preach the serving message,” Elangwe said.

“It was another joyous moment in Wotutu to welcome the sixth batch of students that will pass under our watchful eyes,” he said. “Please keep them in your fervent prayers as the task ahead of them is great.”

HAITI

GRAND BASSIN — “In spite of all the challenges of this crazy year, God is still reaching lost souls with the power of the gospel.”

That’s an excerpt of a recent report from the Center for Biblical Training, a ministry in Cap Haitien supported by Churches of Christ.

Four students from the center traveled to the village of Grand Bassin, where student Jocelyn Jean Bien Aime planted an *Église du Christ* (Church of Christ) a few years ago.

The students spent a week teaching classes on New Testament Christianity, door-knocking and



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JOHN DIONIO JR.

In pandemic, Filipino Christians focus on church plants

In the town of Ibung, on the northern island of Luzon in the Philippines, a newly planted congregation sings hymns. The church plant is an outreach of the Bangar Church of Christ, which meets about 11 miles south of Ibung. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, church members have focused on planting small congregations that can meet in homes or outdoors. Another congregation, the Villaverde Church of Christ (right), launched recently, said John Dionio Jr., a minister and director of the Philippine Bible College of Bangar. The college recently distributed relief to victims of Typhoon Ulysses.



preaching. “They faced some local opposition and stormy weather, but the community turned out to hear them,” the ministry reported.

Four people were baptized.

HUNGARY

BUDAPEST — A Church of Christ in this Central European capital is bringing much-needed “Good News” to its community.

That’s the name of a 24-hour internet radio station operated by church members who read scriptures, play Christian music, broadcast Bible lessons and share reports of good news happening around the world.

“With so many people dying of the COVID-19 virus, people are thinking about eternity and desiring to find answers to the most important questions of life and death,” missionary Curry Montague said in a recent Partners in Progress newsletter,

“and we are there around the clock.” More than 100 regular listeners tune in to the church’s Sunday worship.

INDIA

PALAKOL — Christians in India are suffering from COVID-19 and persecution by militant Hindus, said a minister named Elijah in this southern Indian town. His full name is withheld for security reasons.

Recently, a wooden chariot that belongs to a Hindu temple caught fire. Days later, four statues of lions were stolen from the temple.

Muslims and Christians were blamed for these acts, Elijah said, and days of “rallies, road rage and persecutions” followed.

In addition “we have lost six of our church members to COVID,” the minister said. “We are currently praying for better situations and conditions.”

SIERRA LEONE

BO — Joseph Kaipumoh delivers food and good news to the hungry in this West African nation.

The minister, who works with the World English Institute ministry, recruits students for the program’s correspondence courses and follows up with those who wish to be baptized. For those who cannot read, he translates the ministry’s Bible lessons into the local language.

“He has baptized numerous WEI students in ponds, lakes, rivers and irrigation canals,” the ministry reported in a recent newsletter. “During the COVID-19 pandemic, Joseph and local Christians have distributed bags of food to hungry villagers who are facing starvation.”



Kaipumoh



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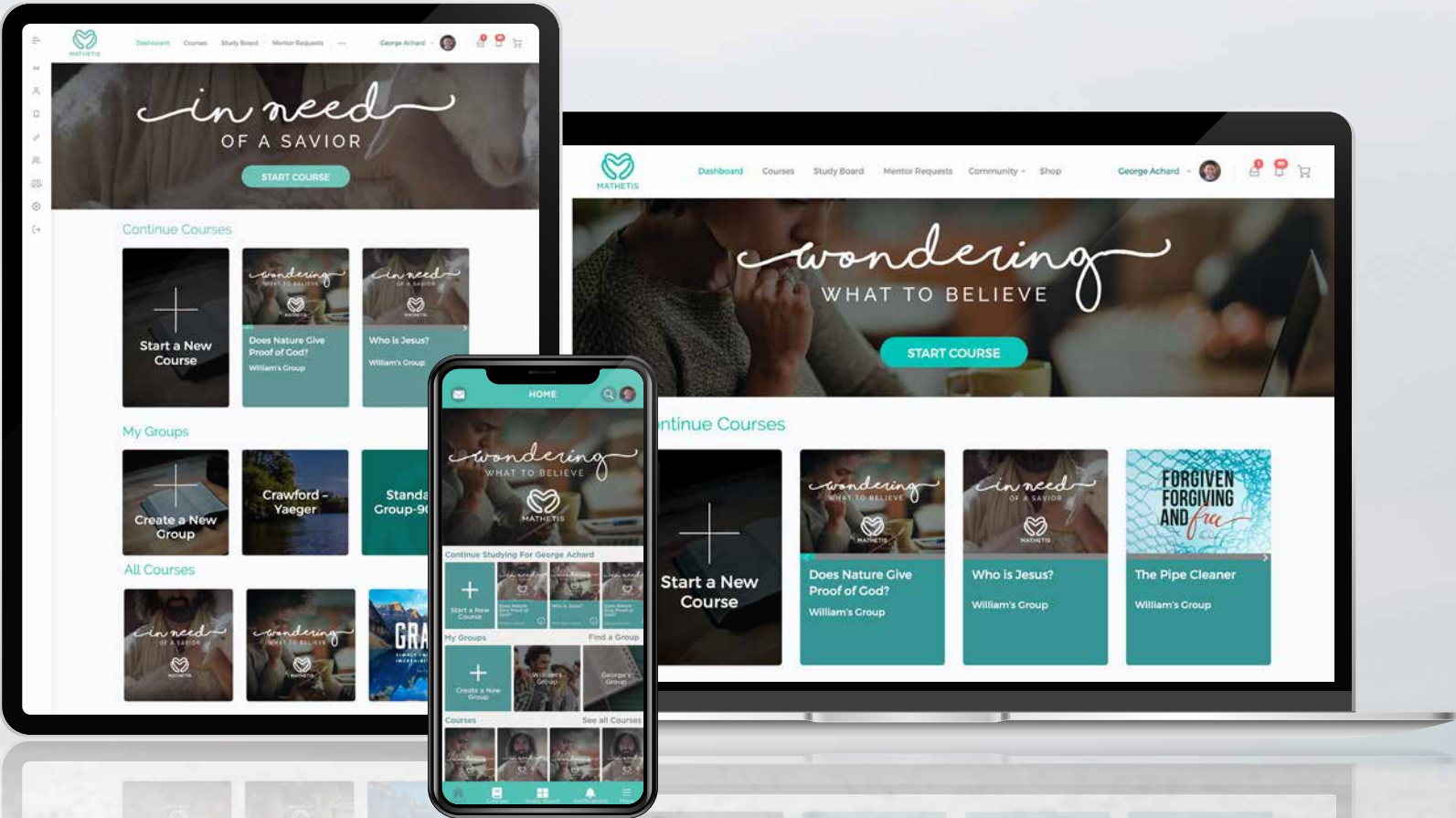
One of four baptisms in Grand Bassin.



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COVID-19 CANCELED the Nored family's summer mission to Croatia and moved their children's education online. That, they decided, was an opportunity to rebook and expand the trip – during the school year.

Distance learning

BY ERIK TRYGGESTAD | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

A mission trip? To Europe? Now? James and Becki Nored could think of only one reason not to go.

But it was a big one.

The COVID-19 pandemic had sequestered the couple in their suburban Virginia home, just west of Washington, D.C., for nearly six months. As the case numbers rose, dipped and rose again, they used text chats and video calls to stay in touch with their coworkers — a worldwide network of Christians who serve in a mission and discipleship ministry called Next Generation for Christ.

They stayed connected to their congregation, the Fairfax Church of Christ, via livestream and email. They used Zoom videoconferencing to participate in ministry meetings and small-group Bible studies.

Their three daughters — Gina, 19; Emily, 16; and Kaylee, 8 — finished one school year and had just begun another, entirely online.

The pandemic had canceled their summer trip to Europe. It would have included a family mission to Croatia.

Now Croatia was one of the few European countries allowing visitors from the U.S. The nation of just over 4 million souls had reported only a few cases of the virus. The church they had worked with in the city of Varazdin had invited them to return and help with outreach efforts and the Croatia for Christ ministry.

If they had to work remotely anyway, why did it matter where they worked? And if their kids had to do distance learning, why not add a little distance? Say, 4,490 miles?

"I took time to think about it and pray about it, but the answer was always, 'Why not?'" Becki Nored said.

This was, after all, Croatia, a place



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JAMES NORED

James and Becki Nored with daughters Kaylee, Emily and Gina board a flight from Washington to Amsterdam en route to Croatia.

they had traveled to twice before — a place that sparked their love of family mission trips. They knew the churches and the logistics of getting around. They would take precautions and quarantine after they arrived.

The circumstances, especially the kids' online schooling, "created a unique opportunity for us to be mobile and have an extended time to do mission work," James Nored said. "The early church grew during pandemics. They served. This door of

opportunity opened up for us to go."

So, on Sept. 18, 2020, the family of five strapped on facemasks and boarded a nearly empty flight from Dulles International to Amsterdam.

Some 15 hours and a plane change later, they arrived in Croatia.

CHILI POWDER AND A CELLO

They waited until the night before to pack. And it wasn't like packing for a typical mission trip. They had done a six-week trip before. This

one would last three months.

They'd be cooking for themselves, especially during quarantine, so they took measuring cups with U.S. Standard units. (Europeans measure food by weight instead of volume.) They packed chili powder and spices that can't be found in Croatia.

The girls had to bring what they'd need for school — computers, books, pencils and paper.

They also needed a cello.

CONTINUED

Republic of CROATIA

POPULATION: 4.2 million. **LANGUAGE:** Croatian. **RELIGION:** 86.3 percent Catholic, 4.4 percent Orthodox, 3.8 percent not religious/atheists, 2.1 percent undeclared, 1.5 percent Muslim and smaller numbers split among other groups (including Protestants).



CHURCHES OF CHRIST: Missionaries Otis Gatewood and Bob Hare visited Croatia in the late 1960s when it was part of communist Yugoslavia. David Gatewood and Bud Pickle moved to Zagreb and enrolled in a Croatian language class and converted their teacher, Mladen Jovanovic, in 1971. Croatia became independent in 1991. Churches of Christ meet in cities across the nation and host evangelistic outreach efforts.

NEXT GENERATION FOR CHRIST is a Christian nonprofit founded in 2016 that seeks to help churches reach people in today's culture with the gospel, said executive director James Nored. The ministry produces the "Story of Redemption," filmed in Israel and other locales around the world, that takes viewers through the story of the Bible. The series is available in 40 languages. The ministry also does mission and discipleship training. Nored has served as a preaching minister for Churches of Christ in Kansas City, Dallas and Washington. The ministry works with churches in the U.S. and internationally and has representatives in countries including Russia, India, Kenya, Ecuador, Israel and Croatia. It partners with ministries including Let's Start Talking, Eastern European Mission, Heartlight and Croatia for Christ. See nextgenerationforchrist.com and www.StoryofRedemptionFilms.com.

CROATIA FOR CHRIST is a television and print evangelism ministry that provides resources for churches in the Central European nation. The ministry publishes a magazine for families, helps organize Christian camps for families, teens and kids and produces video programs for Croatian TV stations, including Next Generation for Christ's "Story of Redemption" series with Croatian-language subtitles. See us.croatiaforchrist.com.

SOURCES: CIA World Factbook, "Churches of Christ Around the World" by Mac Lynn. Map via Wikimedia Commons.



James Nored and Gina, a sophomore at Lipscomb, make a morning coffee run.



Emily Nored, a high school junior, helps out at the Varaždin church building.



Third grader Kaylee Nored cuts out materials for a church craft.



Becki Nored, right, and her daughters do some socially distanced shopping.



James Nored, pictured here with his family and Croatian ministry partners at the Varaždin Church of Christ, grew up going on family mission trips. Next Generation for Christ encourages such trips, he said, to help children's spiritual development.

Distance learning

CONTINUED

Gina, a sophomore at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., would be taking courses in primary education, Hebrew, New Testament interpretation and orchestra. Thankfully, the managing director of Croatia for Christ, Jura Lazar, is a professional musician. He contacted a friend who had a cello they could rent. No need to lug one across multiple airports. When they arrived in Varaždin, about an hour north of the Croatian capital, Zagreb, they didn't get to take in the city's Baroque architecture or even make a quick stop at Fontana, a local ice cream shop where their youngest, Kaylee, particularly enjoys the green apple flavor. Instead, they went straight to their rented apartment, where they could finally take off their masks. Members of the Varaždin Church of Christ waved to them from outside and left bags of groceries. Two weeks of quarantine began. The apartment complex's stairwell became their exercise room. "I've gotta just go run the stairs!" was an off-heard phrase. The complex had a tiny grass courtyard where they



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JAMES NORED

Church members and visitors meet for Wednesday night discussion groups.

walked, played chase and made up games to pass the time. The girls went back to school, virtually. The apartment's Wi-Fi proved to be more than ample for them to attend classes via Zoom videoconferences. Thanks to the time difference, Kaylee's third-grade class didn't start until 2 p.m. "Good morning," her teacher would say. "Oh, except Kaylee. Good afternoon!" For Emily, a high school junior, class started at 3 p.m. and ran until 10. "I'm definitely not a morning person," she said, "so it was kind of nice. I had time to sleep in and do my homework before school." For Gina, classes began at 3 or 6

p.m., depending on the day. Some ran late into the night, but her professors recorded the Zoom meetings and let her watch them later. "We went to night school," Gina joked. "One thing that all of us realized, especially me and Emily, is that we don't need that much stuff. We each brought a suitcase and a backpack with our school things, and we really didn't miss anything for those three months." For her orchestra class, Gina recorded herself playing the cello and sent the files to her professor. During quarantine, finding a quiet space to record was a challenge. So was Kaylee's physical education class, which required jumping jacks. They didn't want to disturb their neighbors below, her mother said, "so we jumped very quietly." **A 'MORE CONCENTRATED' MISSION** When they emerged from quarantine, "it was like going back in time," James Nored said. "You could hug!" Croatia had, so far, avoided the worst of the pandemic. Restrictions were light. Churches still met in person. James Nored preached for the Varaždin congregation. He led church

members and visitors through the "Story of Redemption," a series of films shot in Israel and other locales around the globe, produced by Next Generation for Christ. The minister said that some have compared the videos to the Jule Miller filmstrips, originally produced in the 1950s and used by Churches of Christ for evangelism throughout the past half-century. The family conducted one-on-one lessons at the church building, helping Croatians improve their English using the "Story of Redemption" videos. Growing up, James Nored and his family had done similar work through the Let's Start Talking ministry. The church secretary suggested that they host their students at the same time each day. As James, Becki and Gina taught, Emily and Kaylee prepared handouts and games for a Saturday kids' class. They stamped the church's name and info into Bibles for members to give to friends. Instead of the sometimes-hectic pace of a summer mission trip, "this was just much more concentrated time together," Becki Nored said. "When we were driving home we could talk about all these experiences. We knew what we were praying for, who we were praying for." **AN EDUCATION IN JOY** Thirty years after Croatia's independence from the former communist

nation of Yugoslavia, Americans are still a big draw for churches, said Jura Lazar of Croatia for Christ. "James, Becki and Gina were working on a daily basis with people ... creating a conversational atmosphere to ask some serious questions about Jesus and their personal, spiritual lives," Lazar said. "I don't see how we Croatians would be able to do that." Also assisting in the one-on-one studies was Annette Chamber, another member of the Fairfax Church of Christ. She joined the Noreds for five weeks during their time in Croatia. Mladen Dominic, minister for the Varaždin Church of Christ, said that that the Americans' visit was a much-needed boost for the church, which usually hosts multiple groups who help coordinate camps and outreach activities. Because of the virus, none of those groups came. "They were such a refreshment for me as a minister but were even a greater blessing to my whole family," Dominic said of the Noreds. "Their kids connected with my kids. To have people who understand mission work and are able to carry the challenges of proclaiming the good news was a great gift to us from our Lord." Gina helped host a ladies' tea and organized an event for children as part of her internship for the Next Generation for Christ ministry. The



James Nored meets with Mislav Ilić, a minister in Zagreb, about future "Story of Redemption" seminars.

family visited church members and made new contacts for the church. "The joy of these people really stuck out," Gina said. "They're so happy to be there. I learned a lot about how to be joyful myself." Despite the pandemic, the Varaždin church experienced five baptisms in the past year, Dominic said. Attendance rose significantly on Sundays and Wednesday nights during the Noreds' visit. Becki Nored saw a sense of longing in the Croatians she spoke to during Wednesday night group sessions. They talked about cancer, their concerns for their grandchildren and their family members suffering from COVID-19. Most come from

nominally Catholic or unchurched backgrounds and weren't used to sharing their burdens. As the sessions ended, some asked, "Can we just keep doing this? Because I don't have anyone else to talk to about life," she said. Her husband added, "In the midst of a global pandemic, people were hungry for God." **EARTHQUAKES AND GOD'S WILL** They should've packed heavier coats. That became obvious after the Noreds extended their mission trip by about two weeks. In the final days, temperatures in Croatia began to plummet. And the virus began to surge. Croatia, which had a low number of cases when they arrived, was approaching 4,500 daily infections as they left, one of the highest rates in Europe. That rate has since declined. Church members lent the family their winter coats, and as Croatia tightened its restrictions on gatherings the family made arrangements to stay in contact with the souls they'd encountered. "It definitely got more serious," Gina said, "but we saw that it didn't stop us from having those relationships. There was something drawing people back. That was encouraging, even though it was a kind of discouraging way to leave." **CONTINUED**

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PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JAMES NORED

James Nored studies the “Story of Redemption” with Ivica Zrna in Croatia.

Gospel sets a Croatian prisoner free

VARAZDIN, Croatia — “I kneel only to God. I don’t see him here.”

That’s what Ivica Zrna said to the police officer who ordered him to his knees. Zrna was in the middle of a fight with a man that was sparked by money and extortion.

His profession of faith was actually a line from the TV show “Prison Break,” he said.

He really didn’t know God at all.

In prison, Zrna watched the “Story of Redemption” films on the Croatia for Christ broadcast. The videos “gave him great hope and strength for the future,” said minister James Nored, who produces the films through

the Next Generation for Christ ministry.

Zrna became a Christ follower and completed his prison term. While Nored and his family were on a mission trip to Varazdin, Croatia, Zrna visited the Church of Christ and shared his story.

He has written a memoir called “Living Free” based on John 8:32: “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

“This is an amazing story of God’s redemption,” Nored said. “I now like to joke that they are punishing prisoners by making them watch ‘Story of Redemption’ in prison!”

CONTINUED

The Noreds returned to Virginia Dec. 5. In the weeks that followed, Croatia endured three large earthquakes. The worst was a 6.8-magnitude quake that struck on Dec. 29, about 30 miles south of Zagreb, and devastated the small town of Petrinja. Seven people died.

Days after the quake, James Nored spoke to a Croatian medical doctor who was baptized during their first Sunday with the Varazdin church.

“People are fearful,” the physician said. “Because of COVID and everything else they’re depressed. As for me, I’ve turned my life over to Christ and it’s almost like I’m in another world. I place my hope in Christ.”

The physician now prays with his patients, James Nored said, and knows that he’ll be able to heal them

only if it’s God’s will.

Next Generation for Christ is working with Croatia for Christ to provide relief for the earthquake victims.

As their kids’ schools continue to meet online, the family is making plans to return to Croatia. They’ve been invited to conduct “Story of Redemption” outreach and training for the Varazdin church and the Kuslanova Church of Christ in Zagreb.

They know the trip will happen — only if it’s God’s will.

“With everything we do right now, we say, ‘Lord willing,’” James Nored said. “We always should, but it’s very apparent right now that God’s in control of the world; we aren’t. Hopefully, God will give us more opportunities to share the gospel in Croatia and around the world.”

EVENTS

NATIONAL LECTURESHIP

ORLANDO, Fla. — The 76th annual National Lectureship of Churches of Christ, originally planned for May 22-27 in Orlando, has been canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. “It is our desire that the National Lectureship will be able to convene in 2022 in a safe and healthy environment,” said Eugene Lawton, vice chairman of the event’s advisory committee.

Minister Samuel Pounds and the Hilltop Church of Christ in Winter Haven, Fla., south of Orlando, will host the Sept. 24-29, 2022, National Lectureship, Lawton said. It’s the largest annual gathering of Black Churches of Christ.



Lawton

HIGHER EDUCATION

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

ABILENE, Texas — Abilene Christian University expects to begin intercollegiate competition in the Western Athletic Conference in 2021.

ACU will transition from the Southland Conference along with Lamar, Sam Houston and Stephen F. Austin. Big Sky Conference member Southern Utah also will join the WAC.

“This is a historic move for ACU. We are excited about joining a conference with the WAC’s history and visibility,” ACU President Phil Schubert said. “The brand equity and recognition of the league remains strong and will benefit us regionally and nationally as we attract both students and student-athletes.”

Schubert said reasons for the change include a continued emphasis on academic and athletic excellence; an expanded geographical reach into the West, especially in major U.S. markets; increased TV and tournament exposure; and automatic bids to national championships and postseason play.



Schubert

HARDING UNIVERSITY

SEARCY, Ark. — The Dallas City Council has voted to rename a street after Botham Jean, the 2015 Harding University graduate who was shot to death in his home by an off-duty police officer.

The street that runs in front of the Texas city’s police headquarters and the apartment complex where the Dallas West Church of Christ member lived will be renamed Botham Jean Boulevard.

Fired officer Amber Guyger was given a 10-year prison sentence in Jean’s Sept. 6, 2018, murder.

“One day, a child will ask his or her mother or father, ‘Who is Botham Jean? And why does he have a street named after him?’” said his sister, Allisa Charles-Findley, president of the Botham Jean Foundation. “They’ll explain how he was taken from the world, but the best part of the story will be how Botham lived.”



Jean

MEDICAL

LIFELINE CHAPLAINCY

HOUSTON — Justin Thompson will serve as the next executive director for Lifeline Chaplaincy and Compassionate Touch. After 36 years as director, Virgil Fry will remain in a consulting role for a transition time.

“This is a pivotal time for Justin to join this unique, vibrant ministry,” Fry said. “We all welcome him as he provides the needed vision and leadership for continued ministry to hospital patients and caregivers.”

Thompson and his wife, Alison, the parents of four, served with a church planting team in Peru for 12 years.

Lifeline began at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, representing Churches of Christ. Now the ministry is present in all major hospitals at the Texas Medical Center as well as medical centers in Dallas, Fort Worth and the Austin area.



Thompson

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Might the moon be Christian astronaut's next destination?

BY BOBBY ROSS JR. | THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE

Before blasting off Nov. 15 on a six-month mission to the International Space Station — 250 miles above Earth — NASA's Victor Glover told *The Christian Chronicle* he had “sent up communion cups and a Bible.”

Might the Christian astronaut next worship God on the moon — roughly 238,855 miles from his home in the Houston area?

“I would love to go to the moon, but that’s not something I control,” the Church of Christ member told the *Chronicle* in a previously unpublished portion of his pre-launch interview.

Recently, NASA named Glover and 17 other astronauts to its Artemis team, which the space agency said “will help pave the way for the next astronaut missions on and around the moon as part of the Artemis program.”

“I give you the heroes who will carry us to the moon and beyond — the Artemis generation,” then-Vice President Mike Pence said during a National Space Council meeting at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. “It is amazing to think that the next man and first woman on the moon are among the names that we just read. The Artemis team astronauts are the future of American space exploration — and that future is bright.”

Under the Artemis program, the next moon mission is targeted for 2024.

“The lessons learned on my current mission aboard the International Space Station will pave the way for future exploration on the lunar surface, a dream within a dream,” Glover tweeted from space. “It’s an honor to be part of the NASA Artemis team.”

In his *Chronicle* interview, Glover — an astronaut since 2013 — discussed the possibility that his International Space Center mission could be his only opportunity to go



NASA PHOTO

On board the International Space Station, Victor Glove gives crew mate Soichi Noguch a trim.

into space.

Before beginning his NASA training, the former military pilot said, “I used to think I was patient, but I found out there’s a difference between discipline and patience. I have a lot of discipline, but this patience stuff is new to me. In the Navy, I would’ve done two or three different jobs by now and moved two to three times in between those. Being here for seven years — you’re right, you may have a career where you only fly once. This space station is a new way of going and living in space, and so this may be the only change I get.”

“I would love to go to the moon, but that’s not something I control,” he added. “That’s really helped me understand patience. I spent some time meditating and thinking about that and praying and writing about that. I’ve also gone back to journaling. I spent a lot of time journaling in these last three years that I’ve been assigned to this mission. It’s been really an exercise in patience.”

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



Glover

Milestones

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

Memorials

Walter L. Fennel
1935-2020

Walter L. Fennel was born in Hillsboro, Texas, during the midst of the Depression. Those were hard times, and his family knew the difficulties caused by hunger and want. His parents and siblings have preceded him in death.

In 1948 Walt's family packed up their early belongings and moved to Woodlake, Calif., to "get rich" by working in the fields. Walt said that the wisest decision he ever made was to give his life to Christ as a teenager. He remained faithful to that commitment all the days of his life. At Woodlake High School he played varsity baseball and lettered all four years, earning many awards. Walt spoke for several youth rallies in the area. A Christian man in the Woodlake Church of Christ, Uless Carruth, encouraged him to become a minister and attend Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tenn., to study Bible. He assisted Walt by helping to pay his tuition.

At Freed-Hardeman in 1954, Walt worked in the dorm and preached for a little country church in Roby, Tenn. Walt continued to play baseball and was even offered an opportunity to play professional baseball. After one week in the pros training camp, he decided that his heart was in preaching God's word. He graduated from FHC after completing his third year in Bible in 1957. He was named "Mr. Freed-Hardeman College."

On his way to attend Harding University, in Searcy, Ark., Walt had an automobile accident in Los Angeles. His car was totaled, and he ended up attending Pepperdine College. J. P. Sanders and Norvel Young helped him by hiring him as a recruiter. He worked out of the Office of Admissions, where he met a student who worked part time, Llona Elford. They were married on Dec. 12, 1959,



at the Whittier Church of Christ. Walt graduated from Pepperdine in 1960 and Llona in 1961. They shared nearly 61 years together in a great marriage. Walt's ministry was a shared experience. Llona was his partner and co-worker in all he did.

Walt preached in California in San Leandro, Napa, Escondido, Temple City, Fresno, and Rancho Cordova. He also served as a police chaplain while in Fresno and Rancho Cordova. He made several trips to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Africa, as well as to Ghana and many trips to Mexico to work at the City of Children and Niños de Baja. Sharing the word of God was his heart's desire. On May 10, 1975, Pepperdine awarded Walt the "University President's Award," and in 2002 he was awarded the "Andrew Benton Service Award." Walt retired as a full-time elder of the Cordova Church of Christ after completing 50 years in ministry.

Walt is survived by his wife, Llona; sons, Scott Wayne (Betty) Fennel and Troy Jason (Scarlett) Fennel; and 3 grandchildren, Cody, Micah and Savannah. A private family memorial was held at the graveside on Dec. 12, 2020. That would have been Walt and Llona's 61st wedding anniversary.

William Kenton Harvey
1937-2020

Kenton Harvey died Dec. 14, 2020, at the age of 83 years. He was a graduate of Azle High School where he was active in baseball, basketball, track and FFA. Kenton served as Texas state president of FFA and as an FFA exchange student to Great Britain in 1958. He married Shelia Stewart in 1959, and they remained married until Shelia's death in 2011. From 1960 to 1974 Kenton owned and operated a dairy farm in Parker County. His first love was preaching



the gospel of Christ. He served as minister for Churches of Christ in the cities of Poolville, Briar, Justin, and Aledo and occasionally Boyd and Santo. Kenton particularly supported the work in Mexico, Eastern European Missions, area youth rallies and devotionals. He enjoyed and often organized gospel singings. He was known to say that he did not read music, he only excelled in the lost art of reading shape notes. He is survived by his son, Perry and wife, Gloria; daughter Angela and husband Dan Archibald of Fort Worth; sister, Patsy Glover of Azle; and seven grandchildren. Family requests that any memorials be made to Eastern European Missions (eem.org) or *The Christian Chronicle*.

Betty J. Keeler
1932-2020



Phyllis, left, and Betty, right

Betty Jean Keeler, 90, died Oct. 26, 2020. She was born Aug. 24, 1930, in Stafford, Kan., to John Park and Minnie Hollis (Bemis) Smith.

Betty graduated from Stafford High School and attended Hutchinson Community Junior College. On June 25, 1950, she married Lloyd "Allan" Keeler in Hutchinson. They shared 47 years of marriage before his death on Nov. 13, 1997. She retired from the Dillon's Bakery after 20 years of service. Betty enjoyed reading, flowers, and playing Pitch, Solitaire, and Phase 10. She was also an avid Bridge player and enjoyed the friendly competition. She was a member of the Eastwood Church of Christ in Hutchinson. Betty always felt blessed, but she was also a blessing to many others with her warmth, love, and hugs.

Betty is survived by their children: Karen (Jim) Crain of Argyle, Texas, Kenneth (Jackie) Keeler of Oklahoma

City, Okla., and Kimberly (David) Gustafson of Hutchinson; 6 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; sister, Donna Kay (Jerry) Swanson of Loveland, Colo.; and sister-in-law, Glenda (Smith) Giles of Hutchinson.

A tribute from Phyllis Dean:

My husband Jess M. Guillems and I married in 1954. He was in the Naval AirForce, and after a short honeymoon, we traveled to Hutchinson, Kan., to make our home. We met Allan and Betty Keeler our first Sunday at 14th & Adams Church of Christ. Jess and Allan and Betty and I became best friends.

When we were transferred to a Naval base close to San Diego, Calif., Betty and I wrote each week. Our shared faith was a joy to us and our growing families.

Betty was always a reserved person until she began her hug ministry. No shyness there! She smiled and gave hugs to everyone and was a joy to so many. As we entered church after Sunday school, members waited eagerly to receive her hugs.

As Betty matured as a Christian she wanted to make a difference in everyone's life. What a blessing she was to all the people she met and hugged. She made a HUGE difference! Allan was always the person people called on when someone needed help. If he couldn't help, he knew all the people that could.

These friends were not wealthy in material things but they lived daily for God. They did say, "I am a Christian." They lived their life helping others.

Dr. Paul Hubbard Jr.
1927-2020

Paul Hubbard Jr. was a native of Forney, Texas. He attended and graduated from Bishop College in Marshall, Texas in 1949. He also enrolled in Perkins School of Theology in Dallas and received a theology degree in 1952. He served on the Board of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas.

Dr. Paul Hubbard, Jr. was well known throughout the United States and

Milestones (continued)

received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in June 1976 from Tennessee Baptist School of Religion. He studied with the late Bro. Marshall Keeble, and in 1951 he was baptized into the body of Christ by the late R. B. Thurman. He was the founding father and coordinator of the Western Michigan State Lectureship for the Churches of Christ.



Dr. Paul Hubbard, Jr. was preceded in death by his wife, the late Lena Mae (Curtis) of Gonzales, Texas, who was a retired secondary educator with the Grand Rapids Public Schools. He left his legacy to be carried out by his children, grand-children, great-grand-children and his church family. We are grateful and thankful to know Dr. Paul Hubbard, Jr.'s life was well lived and touched so many. Messages can be sent to secoc@sbcglobal.net

Dan E. Miller, M.D.
1935-2020

Dan E. Miller M.D. passed away Nov. 23, 2020, at the age of 84. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Ellie, three children, and three grandchildren.

An accomplished high school athlete and a life-long runner, Dan graduated from Fairview High School in 1954, attended Central Christian College in Bartlesville, Okla., Central State University, and earned degrees from Oklahoma State University and University of Oklahoma School of Medicine.

He served in the Army after graduating from Oklahoma State and was stationed in Germany for most of his short military career. He brought home with him from his military service an MG convertible. He always credited his cool car for his successful courtship of Ellie.

Dan practiced family medicine in Edmond until 1975 when he moved to Tulsa. There he joined Emergency Care, Inc., later serving as president. ECI doctors covered Saint Francis Emergency Department. He founded



one of the first urgent care medical facilities in Oklahoma – Tulsa Emergency Medical Center, later named MedCenter. In his medical career, Dan practiced family medicine, emergency medicine, and industrial medicine and was one of the first practitioners of telemedicine from Saint Francis Hospital. He was one of the founders of the public trust to provide ambulance service to Tulsa which later became known as EMSA. He was instrumental in establishing protocols and equipment for the startup of EMSA and Tulsa Life Flight.

Throughout his career, Dan was known for driving the oldest car in the doctor's parking lot. His frugality knew a single life-defining exception: generous giving to others. Countless coworkers, fellow church members, friends, and even strangers know that Dan's generosity took several forms – many of them private and anonymous.

Dan loved to travel. He took great joy in providing these experiences for his family, hosting ski vacations, a month-long trip to Europe and occasional island getaways with his beloved Ellie.

In retirement, he enjoyed music and writing. He and Ellie travelled more often to see their friends and fellow alumni of Central Christian College, which became Oklahoma Christian University. Dan and Ellie helped organize Central Christian Alumni reunions, and he served on the National Alumni Council of Oklahoma Christian University.

Dan is survived by his wife, Eleanor Jane Branum Miller of Muskogee, Okla.; daughter, Monna (James) Gilpin of Kingwood, Texas; son, Mike (Holly) Miller of Muskogee, Okla.; son, Matt (Monica) Miller of Muskogee; grandchildren Andrew Gilpin, Meghan Gilpin, and Annalea Jane Miller; brother, Doyle (Dot) Miller of Hennessey, Okla.; sister, Janice (Craig) Laughlin of Copper Canyon, Texas; and many nieces nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Melba Miller; brother, Duane Miller; and father-in-law and mother-in-law Vic and Ruth Branum.

Dan was interred at a private family service at Greenhill Cemetery in

Muskogee on Nov. 25, 2020. In the future a celebration of life is planned for extended family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, a donation may be made to either the Fletcher Center for Music Endowment at Oklahoma Christian or a memorial scholarship for pre-med students at Oklahoma Christian in the name of Dan Miller.

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G. K. Pennington
1948-2020

G. K. Pennington, 72, of Vienna, W.Va., passed away Sat., Dec. 19, 2020, at his residence.

He was born July 28, 1948, in Birmingham, Ala., son of the late Glenn Kirkpatrick and Joyce Lou Chaffin Pennington.

G. K. was a 1966 graduate of Aldine High School in Houston, Texas, and a graduate of Fort Worth Christian College, Oklahoma Christian University and Harding University Graduate School of Theology. He was a minister with over 51 years of service, currently working with the Riverside Church of Christ in Williamstown, W.Va. G. K. was a teacher and a professor at Ohio Valley University. He enjoyed fishing, woodworking, boating, and photography.

Surviving him are: his wife of 51 years, Glenda Jo Pitman Pennington; his daughter, Marisa B. Reinsch (Karl) of Snoqualmie, Wash.; his two sons, Michael G. Pennington (Alicia) of Bowling Green, Ky., and Steven E. Pennington; four sisters, Beverly Johnson (David) of Pasadena, Texas, Andrea Watson (Ken) of Buffalo Gap, Texas, Dale Rushing (Michael) of Porter, Texas, and Cheryl Gutierrez (Fidel) of Longview, Texas; and one grandson, Jacob Pennington.

In addition to parents, he was preceded in death by one sister, Elizabeth Pennington.

A family gathering for interment will



be at a later date in Houston, Texas, at the convenience of the family.

Eddie Stegall
1959-2020

Eddie Stegall was born July 27, 1959, in Borger, Texas. His family moved to Oklahoma where he was a talented baseball and basketball player at Gould High School and an active member of the Hollis Church of Christ. Eddie married his high school sweetheart, Julene Bailey, and they were married for 43 years.



After college at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, he moved to Mustang and began his long career with Nabisco Foods. He worked with youth groups and eventually answered God's call to full-time ministry. He served as the associate minister working with the youth at Lake Houston Church of Christ in Humble, Texas. He also served as the pulpit minister of Clarendon Church of Christ in Texas.

The family moved back to Mustang where Eddie worked several sales jobs before joining Indian Nation Wholesale. He loved riding and working on motorcycles, singing and Christ. Eddie shared Jesus on his many mission trips and at numerous church camps. He loved and cared about people. In the last few years, he taught and encouraged the people he met to love God and keep moving forward.

Eddie died Dec. 13, 2020, in Okla. City after a short battle with Covid-19 and pneumonia. Preceded in death by his parents, Edward and Earlene Stegall, he is survived by his wife, Julene; three children, Amy Barbee, Kyle Stegall, and Lee Stegall; three grandchildren, Madan, Bailey and Treyton; and his siblings, Becky (Tenny) Jones, Cathy (Craig) Kellison, and Jeff (Veronica) Stegall.

Memorial donations may be made to: The Way, c/o Goldthwaite Church of Christ, P.O. Box 443, Goldthwaite, TX 76844.

NEWSMAKERS

APPOINTED: Darren Williamson, as director of the Northwest School of Discipleship at the Southwest Church of Christ in Tigard, Ore. The school seeks to support Christians and churches in the Pacific Northwest through a transformative teaching program, a gap year initiative and a preaching ministry internship. Williamson previously served for 11 years as the preacher for the Keizer Church of Christ in Oregon.

Kendra Zickafoose, a housemother at Carpenter Place Children's Home in Wichita, Kan., will become director of family outreach this summer.



Williamson



Zickafoose

HONORED: Scott White, associate professor of chemistry and director of the Southern Arkansas University STEM Center for K-12 Education, as the 2020 Honor Professor. That is the highest honor bestowed on the university's faculty. He is an elder of the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Magnolia, Ark., and serves as a faculty sponsor for the church's campus ministry, Riders for Christ. **GSB Inc.**, with the 2020 People's Choice Award for Interior Architecture from the Central Oklahoma Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The award honored the architecture firm's work on The Branch dining space at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City.



White

TRANSITION: Jimmy Ellison, police chief at Abilene Christian University in Texas, is leaving the department after 20 years. He has accepted a position in Mont Belvieu, Texas.

GIFT: Lubbock Christian University in Texas received an \$810,000 gift to fund student scholarships and faculty development. The estates of Bill and Mildred Crozier provided the funding.

Milestones (continued)

Remembering

JT Molder
1932-2019

JT was born March 31, 1932, in Hunt County, Texas, the youngest of eleven children born to Lige and Callie Griffin Molder. He graduated from Commerce (Texas) High School in 1949 and Arlington State College in 1969 with a Bachelor of Science and Electrical Engineering Degree. JT was a member of Epsilon Nu Gamma and Phi Kappa Theta Society. He was in the first graduating class after Arlington State became a four-year college. JT served his country in the United States Air Force from 1952-1956 where he was an electrical instrument trainer. He worked for Convair as a

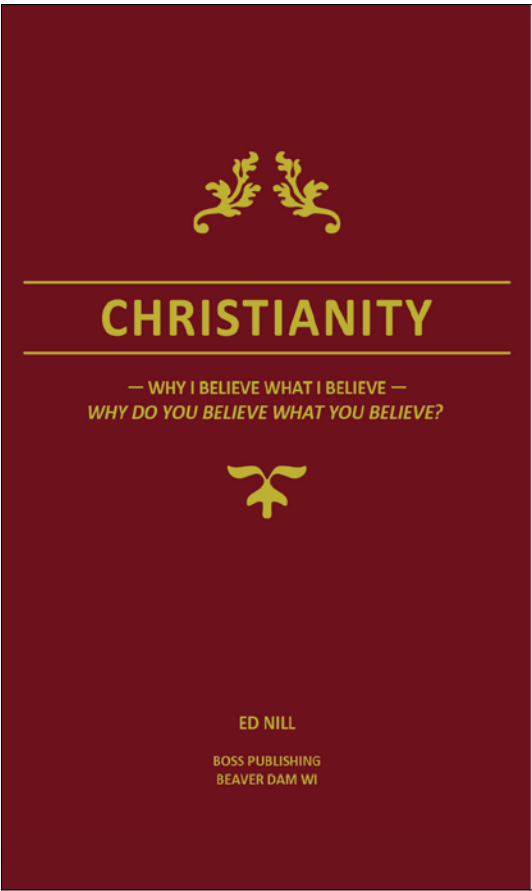


co-op student while attending college. JT retired from Lockheed Martin on Nov. 1, 1993, after 37 years. He retired as a project manager in the Systems Integration Laboratory. JT was a faithful member of The Western Hills Church of Christ. He was preceded in death by his parents, his ten brothers and sisters, and his stepdaughter, Martha Moxon. Per JT's wishes, his ashes were buried in the Cedar Vale, Kan., cemetery alongside other family members. JT is survived by his wife, Patricia Molder; stepson, Timothy Moxon, daughter, Kem Lively, and son, Jem Molder; grand-daughters, Amanda McReynolds, Chrissy Cain, Jennifer Molder and Rachel Davis; great-grandchildren, Ally, Cutter, Cambree, Raylee, Natalie, Madison and Dominic; and a host of nieces and nephews.

With Appreciation

The Christian Chronicle appreciates and acknowledges generous gifts received in honor of Charles L. and Jane G. Brown, June Doan, and Lynn and Phyllis Huff and in memory of Kerry Couch, Harold and Helen Cox, Kay Elder, Donna Galvan, Jack Greenwood, Jerome Kyne, Kyle Lewis, Lindy McDaniel, J. Adam McSween, Carl and Frankie Mitchell, Ruby Mobley, Mike Myers, Imogene Sardis, Bob Spann, James Lester Sparks and Peggy L. Sparks, Jonah Staebell, William Taylor, Gregory Thompson, Mary Joy Uebelein, Paul and Helen Ulmer, Bill and Vivian Wallace, John Weetman, Dorothy Wells, and Betty Wilson.

Contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org for rates and more information.



Ed Nill's new book "Christianity--Why I Believe What I Believe--Why Do You Believe What You Believe?" seems perfect for small group or Bible class discussions. Each of 17 chapters covers material in which a Christian should be well versed. Examples include: the sinner's prayer, how to discuss God with a skeptic, abortion, the rapture, the basics of Islam, etc. Only Scriptures directly related to a particular topic are used. A great deal of historical information is provided. Other topics are: grace, how, why & when of baptism, works, worship, etc. Greek definitions for key words are given. Discussion questions are provided. The author's writing style is such that he does not tell the reader what to do or believe; rather, he provides evidence and then lets the reader decide.

Purchase by email at: edbosspub@gmail.com. Provide mailing address for shipment. An invoice for \$20.00 per copy to cover cost and shipping will be sent with books. You may also mail your request to: Boss Publishing, 213 Webster St., Beaver Dam, WI 53916.

The unlovable, necessary press

CRIES OF 'FAKE NEWS!' point to the need for news literacy – and the truth that makes us free.

If you paid attention, you heard it. The jeers, the screams, the taunts: “Fake news! Get out of here.”

These were often followed by a litany of profane words. This was the steady, deep rumble heard beneath the violent outbreak in the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. It has been a steady, deep rumble for several years.

As a journalist, journalism professor and news literacy scholar, I am familiar with anger directed toward journalists and their work. And while this antipathy has escalated, it’s not new.

The American public’s relationship with the news media has been in crisis for decades — a 40-year decline in public trust, a fractured media landscape, the partisan nature of cable news, the digital disruption and disappearance of community newspapers and the shifts in news consumption because of social media platforms.

We are a society crying out for increased news literacy.

News literacy is an emerging area of education and research. It focuses on better teaching the knowledge and skills people need to understand the complexities of the news industry and

reporting the news. With increased knowledge and skills, news literacy should empower people to find credible news sources and be more aware of their own biases and preferences.

And yes, news literacy also teaches people to identify misinformation.

News literacy education can focus on any age, but there has been a recent push for teaching news literacy skills to kids and teens.

In my news literacy work with high school students, I often find their critiques of the news generally center on the idea that the traditional news and news reporters aren’t necessary. With bloggers, YouTubers and endless voices sharing information and opinions on social media, following your local news and your local journalists might seem irrelevant or unimportant.

“I would rather go straight to the source” is something I have heard over and over from high school students when they tell me why they won’t read or watch the news.

Going straight to the source is precisely what journalists do. They track down the truth.

Those of us of faith are taught to seek truth in our spiritual lives. But

what about when we turn on the channel, open our laptops or pick up our phones? Does truth matter as much when we are sharing a story as it does when we are reading a Scripture?

In Christian circles and in congregations, truth isn’t just a means to an end. Truth is a core understanding of who God is. When religious leaders of Jesus’ time continually cast his identity into doubt, he told them in John 8:32, “*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*”

Truth can lead to understanding. Reading and watching the news, especially our local news, can tell us what is going on in our communities, how our tax dollars are used and who among our neighbors is in need. And while the news can be sad, it can also tell us about people who do extraordinary things to help someone they have never even met. The news can also teach us about solutions that are working to solve the problems of our communities.

News literacy doesn’t teach that journalism is infallible. The news is reported by people, and people make mistakes. In fact, news literacy educa-

tion teaches audiences how to make sense of corrections or errors in the news. Newsrooms are reckoning with issues of representation and diversity and how, in some cases, the news may have contributed to stereotypes and damaging misunderstandings.

As people of faith, we know that information can be disruptive and truth can be life-changing. But we have to earnestly seek sources that present the truth in our communities and our world. Pay for a subscription to your local newspapers, and find a national, credible newspaper that is reporting on the government. Pay for and check those sources regularly.

Michael Schudson, a journalism scholar, calls the news media the “unlovable press.” The press doesn’t have to be loved, he argues, to be necessary. The press doesn’t have to be loved to be true.

ELIZABETH SMITH is assistant professor of communication and director of Pepperdine Graphic Media at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif. She is a children’s ministry leader for the Culver Palms Church of Christ in Los Angeles. She serves on *The Christian Chronicle’s* Editorial Advisory Council. Email her at elizabeth.smith@pepperdine.edu.


Views



Elizabeth Smith

RESOURCES

- The News Literacy Project newsliit.org
- MediaWise from Poynter www.poynter.org/mediawise
- Stony Brook Center for News Literacy centerfornewsliteracy.org





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Real news that honors God.

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Life in the Key of G

MINISTER REFLECTS on the life of Gerald Burnett Sr., ‘a man of passion, a man of talent, a man of God.’

Passion drives great people and great teams. Passion drove Chick-fil-A to become the premier leader in fast-food chicken preparation. Passion drives the Los Angeles Lakers, who won the franchise’s 17th NBA title in October. Passion drives great leaders.

People who are passionate, we remember.

Gerald Burnett Sr. was Mr. Passion.

Gerald, 41, music minister for the Mountain View Church of Christ in Dallas, led worship on Sunday, Jan. 3, and then died suddenly and unexpectedly.

I first met Gerald when his oldest sister, Sharyl, entered Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, in the fall of 1988. He was 10 years younger than I, but he made an impression.

Over my years as both student and staff member at Southwestern, I saw Gerald develop his love for a cappella music. He sang at every opportunity and wherever he could. He entered the college with a tremendous class, yet it was obvious that he would be a standout.

Before we cover Gerald’s time at Southwestern, something should be said about his musical family. His parents, Harold and Willie Eva, are accomplished vocalists and directors, and his four older siblings are legendary.

Sharyl was a member of the college’s renowned Summer Tour ’89-’90 and sings in the popular women’s ensemble Dawn. His brother Daryl Burnett and sister Carol Burnett have evolved as two of our brotherhood’s major talents. Daryl directs several groups in L.A. and sings in Straight Company. Carol sings with the Mountain View church chorus in Dallas and Dawn. She is also a featured speaker for ladies’ day programs. Gerald’s brother Harold Burnett is a solid bass and has

contributed musically in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for years. Gerald was born to do music and to excel in it.

While at Southwestern, Gerald’s gifts were honed. A foundation was laid for him to build an impressive musical career. Gerald sang in the freshman ensemble, Testimony, and was a leader in the chorus. He auditioned for and made Summer Tour and traveled all over our great brotherhood. He also connected with Barry Graham, who provided an environment where Gerald

would be bitten by the recording studio bug. After Southwestern, Gerald finished his musical training at Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City and then came back to Dallas, where he worked for 15 years in public high school choirs as assistant director and director. Gerald was driven to be great and accomplish great things.

Much could be said about Gerald’s investment in young people. He served the city of Dallas and invested and trained young people — musically. Most notably, he was one of the directors of the National Youth Vocal Camp, which takes place in Athens/Rogersville, Ala., every summer. Gerald wrote songs, arranged songs, mentored young people and established himself as a master ensemble and choir director.

As a solo artist, Gerald was a phenomenal vocalist and composer. He recorded his own songs as well as the songs of others. Some of his tracks are the best sounding and best recorded vocals available. Gerald had a nice, smooth tenor and always displayed humor and excitement when notes were sung and recorded properly.

He was a taskmaster in presenting music before the Lord to the best of his ability. His recordings are, therefore, classics. His live performances are lessons in rehearsal, song selection and conviction.

Perspective



John Edmerson



PHOTO PROVIDED

Gerald Burnett Sr. (Aug. 4, 1979 - Jan. 3, 2021) with his wife, Frederica.

When he took a choir out on stage, the audience knew that he meant business because their sound was always extraordinary.

Gerald was multidimensional. As his Facebook friend, I saw many pictures of his family, including his beautiful wife, Frederica, and their two darling sons. Gerald was a family man. He loved his family, and his ministry revealed his deep commitment to them. He was reared in a godly home, and he, therefore, led a godly home.

On Gerald’s final Sunday with us on this side of life, he led singing. When you go back and watch the service, you’ll see a professional musician doing what he absolutely loved.

There is an old saying we’ve all heard: “When I go, I want to go with my boots on.” It displays the sense of being in your calling when one is called to the other side. Gerald left here with his boots on. Though cardiac arrest stopped him from continuing with us, his work will live on in us.

Thank you, brother, for the many lessons and for your great passion.

Long live GNote — life in the key of G!

JOHN EDMERSON is an elder and the senior minister for the Church of Christ at the Vineyard in Phoenix, Ariz. He is also a well-known song writer among Churches of Christ.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about Gerald Burnett Sr.’s videos and recordings, see mtviewcoc.org.

Never forget

BLACK HISTORY should be important to Christians

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

— Romans 15:4 (New King James Version)

As Christians, we know that the Holy Bible is our spiritual guide to salvation through Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:2-3). But it is also a vast, meticulous record-keeping of historical events.

From Genesis through Revelation, God always reminds his children that he is the one who has provided for them, delivered them and protected them. In Joshua 4:1-7, God instructs Joshua to appoint a representative from each tribe of Israel to collect 12 stones from the Jordan River. The stones serve as a keepsake to remind Israel’s children and future generations how God allowed the Jewish people to cross over on dry ground.

The Jewish ancestry of Christ, beginning with Abraham, is carefully outlined in Matthew 1:1-17. Here in the United States, before President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, “Negro History Week” was created in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson.

The week — and now, month of February — was chosen because Black communities across the nation celebrated the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12) and abolitionist/orator Frederick Douglass (Feb. 14).

An ongoing topic of debate and discussion is this: How can this country squeeze the oh-so-many recognitions and contributions of Black Americans into the shortest month of the year?

See **BLACK HISTORY**, Page 28

In the Word



Trindi G. Mitchell



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Submit application materials to Dr. Jeff Mercer, dean, at jmercer1@harding.edu, 501-279-5205, or 915 E. Market, Box 12230, Searcy, AR 72149.

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Submit application materials to Dr. Rodney Richmond, chair and associate professor, at rrichmond@harding.edu or 915 E. Market, Box 12230, Searcy, AR 72149.

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EDITORIAL

Christians and conspiracy theories

Nearly 20 years ago, *The Oklahoman* published a column headlined "Internet deception runs wild."

In that July 2001 piece, the Oklahoma City newspaper highlighted the claim that an atheist group formed by the late "Madeline Murray O'Hare" had collected 287,000 signatures and was pushing to remove all Sunday morning worship service broadcasts.

"The good news is, the prayers have been answered — many times over," the columnist noted. "Since the false petition related to the late Madalyn Murray O'Hair (that's the correct spelling) began circulating in the late 1970s, the Federal Communications Commission has received more than 35 million signatures asking it to block her efforts."

Two decades later, Christians' susceptibility to conspiracy theories has not waned.

If anything, the rise of social media has made it worse. Much, much worse.

"This last year has just been one giant conspiracy theory about everything — the pandemic, the civil unrest, the election — and it all sort of culminated with this terrifying scene we saw on Jan. 6. That was an army of conspiracy theorists, pretty much," author Tea Krulos told Religion News Service.

In a 2020 essay titled "Christians Are Not Immune to Conspiracy Theories," writer Joe Carter traced the problem all the way back to Satan spreading lies in the Garden of Eden.

"Today's mobs are not found on the streets with sticks and stones; they're dressed nicely in office cubicles, sitting quietly in church pews and sipping coffee in the comfort of air-conditioned homes," Christian writer Daniel Darling recently told syndicated religion columnist Terry Mattingly. "The mobs are — us."

Those of us who claim to be people of Truth can — and must — do better.

Conspiracy theories are not a fruit of the Spirit.

BLACK HISTORY: Honor the famous and the unsung

FROM PAGE 27

My personal answer is simple: You can't!

Black history is American history. Our existence, our footprints and our journey have been woven and intertwined within the fabric of America since we were brought over as slaves from Africa to these shores.

As Christians first — and Americans second — we should all be more knowledgeable and celebrate the achievements of Black historymakers, both the famous and the unsung.

We all are familiar with Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, John Lewis and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. But do we know the contributions of Garrett A. Morgan, Roy Wilkins, Dorothy Height or Fannie Lou Hamer?

Are members of Churches of Christ aware of gospel preacher Marshall Keeble, who baptized about 40,000 people and helped found

Nashville Christian Institute? Or Fred Gray, the civil rights attorney who represented Parks and King?

Do we know that Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, is the only historically Black college funded by Churches of Christ?

Knowing our history always has been important to God. Every single Sunday, we take the Lord's Supper to commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of his beloved son, Jesus Christ.

As Christians here in America, we also need to be mindful of our country's secular contributors and simultaneously hold fast to Colossians 3:11 — "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all."

TRINDI G. MITCHELL is a member of the Henry Street Church of Christ in Gadsden, Ala. She is a Sunday school teacher, writer and mother of two children. Contact trindimitchell@gmail.com.

CALENDAR

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schedules are subject to change. Please contact event organizers for updates.

Jan. 21-23, 2021 SIBI Sunset Vision Workshop Online. (800) 658-9553. See sunset.bible/workshop.
Feb. 7-11 Freed-Hardeman Bible Lectureship. Henderson, Tenn. (800) FHU-FHU1. See fhu.edu/lectureship.
Feb. 16 Preachers Conference. Harding University. Live stream. www.harding.edu/preaching.
Feb. 20 Harding University Distinguished Lecture Series — Stephen M.R. Covey. Searcy, Ark. (501) 279-4497. www.harding.edu/asi.
May 25-28 Harbor: The Pepperdine Bible Lectures. Malibu, Calif. (310) 506-4270. See pepperdine.edu/harbor.
June 3-7 Blue Ridge Family Encampment. Smithville, Tenn. (615) 597-4298. See info.timothyhill.org/2020-blue-ridge-family-encampment-reunion.
June 9-11 Thomas H. Olbricht Christian Scholars' Conference Lipscomb University, Nashville, Tenn. See lipscomb.edu/events.
June 18 Legacy of Love Benefit Dinner & Auction. Lilyfield. Tulsa, Okla. (405) 216-5240. See lilyfield.org/auction.
July 3-10 The Kerusso Experience. Harding University. Searcy, Ark. www.harding.edu/kerusso.
July 18-23 Texas Normal Singing School. Abilene, Texas. (806) 777-8417. See singingschool.org.
July 31- Aug. 5 2021 Crusade for Christ. Detroit. See churchofchristcrusade.org.

FULL CALENDAR: christianchronicle.org

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Full-time Minister Position

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

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

Full-time Youth and Family Minister - Canyon View Church of Christ - San Diego, Calif.

The Canyon View Church of Christ in San Diego, Calif., is seeking an energized man to join our ministry team. The ideal candidate will be both an enthusiastic youth minister and a confident worship leader. His ministry will emphasize developing Jr. High through High School students into mature, saved, and spiritually strong Christian young adults. He will work with the families to equip them to share the Good News, to be engaged in service, and to be involved in missions. His ministry will also include being involved in the life of our congregation as a minister and a member. He is expected to work in partnership with the preaching minister in visitations, as well as attending weddings, funerals, church functions and events. In addition to youth ministry responsibilities, the applicant we seek will be our regular worship leader. He will lead the congregation in an energetic singing service, organize scripture readings, and work with the preaching minister to have a positive and uplifting worship service. The ideal candidate will have a college degree and/or prior ministry experience. The Canyon View Church of Christ is a loving, welcoming congregation of 200 members located in the Clairemont area of San Diego. We have an involved congregation and are active in service to our community. We offer a competitive salary and benefits package that includes relocation expenses. Please send your resume to: cvoffice@canyonview.org

Full-time Minister - Big Springs, Texas

Birdwell Lane Church of Christ is seeking a full-time minister to work with us in Big Spring, Texas. We are a small congregation which includes both English and Spanish services each week. We have a full-time Spanish minister and are looking for a full-time English minister to work with us. He should be married and have a school of preaching or college background and some experience. Must be willing to serve in preaching, teaching and outreach. Must have a spirit of evangelism and be willing to work with all ages. Our mission is to teach sound doctrine – the Good News of Jesus Christ – and practice New Testament doctrine.

Send resume and references to David Smith or Ralph Anderson at:

blcofc@att.net
Birdwell Lane Church of Christ
PO Box 2094
Big Spring, Texas 79720

FULL-TIME MINISTER – HOWELL, MICH.

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

belcher0804@att.net

Evangelist Needed - Kingman, Ariz.

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

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

Full-time YOUTH and FAMILY MINISTER - Humble, Texas

The Lake Houston Church of Christ is truly blessed to have a congregation of 400+ and a youth group of 75+ from K-12. Our servants consist of six elders, 14 deacons, a pulpit minister, and many other various ministry leaders. Our congregation strives to be a welcoming body of New Testament Christians who are willing to help nurture its youth with the support of their parents.

Requirements for the position: Become an active member of the Lake Houston church of Christ • Holy Bible as the sole source of truth • A baptized married believer with a supportive wife • 2 years preferred youth ministry experience • Ministry or related degree • Able to teach age-appropriate youth classes • Strong organizational skills • Work under the oversight of the elders • Salary commensurate with experience

Lake Houston Church of Christ, c/o LHCOC Search Committee
8003 Farmingham Rd, Humble, TX 77346
lhocsearch@gmail.com Check us out online: lakehoustoncoc.org

Full-time or Part-time Minister Search - Forsyth, Missouri

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

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

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

Full-Time Youth Minister

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

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



The Christian Chronicle Crossword

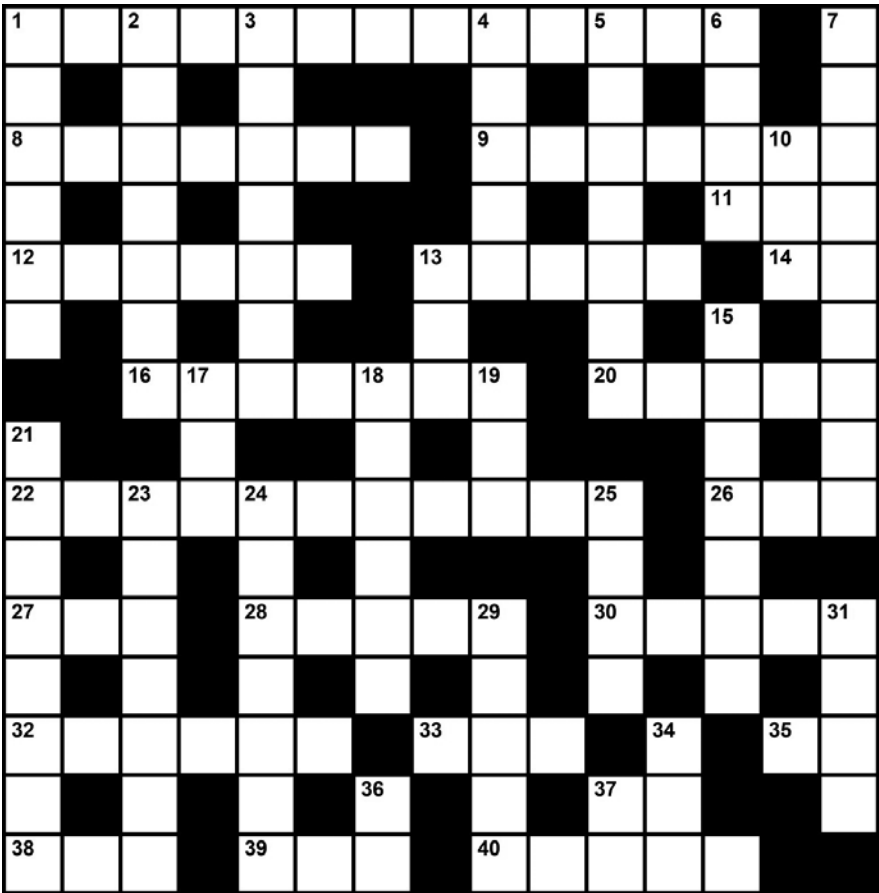
By Myles Mellor | www.ilovecrosswords.com

ACROSS

- Leonardo Da Vinci painting, three words
- Old Testament prophet.
- Wrong, evil.
- She lived in the Garden of Eden.
- Off the path of righteousness.
- "And whosoever shall not receive you, or hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, ___ off the dust of your feet"* (Matthew 10:14, King James Version).
- ___ Capitan.
- She betrayed Samson to the Philistines, Judges 16.
- Ruth's mother-in-law.
- One of the disciples.
- Scale notes.
- Pat, a wound for example.
- "I am the ___ of life," Jesus told them"* (John 6:35, Good News Translation).
- Pastoral.
- "That same night Jacob got up, took his two wives, his two concubines and his ___ children, and crossed the Jabbok River"* (Genesis 32:22, GNT).
- Creeper.
- Afternoon time.
- Scale note.
- Commandment pronoun.
- Transgression.
- Jacob had one about a stairway.

DOWN

- Disciple who doubted Jesus.
- Handel's Messiah, "Every valley shall be ___ and every mountain and hill made low."
- David's wife, see 1 Samuel 25.
- Husband of Bathsheba (before she became David's wife).



- Vine with an orange fruit.
- Seldom seen.
- Praises to God.
- ___ Maria!
- Galilee for one.
- "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all ___"* (2 Corinthians 1:3, KJV).
- Have some bread
- Matthew 6:28 *"Consider the ___ of the field, how they grow"* (Matthew 6:28, KJV).
- Son of Noah.
- "If ye be willing and ___, ye shall eat the good of the land"* (Isaiah 1:19, KJV).
- "Don't put your trust in violence, don't hope to gain anything by ___"* (Psalm 62:10, GNT).
- Biblical people.
- "In the beginning was the ___"* (John 1:1, KJV).
- He slew Goliath.
- "Behold the ___ of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."* (John 1:29, KJV).
- Noise from a flock.
- Supported by.
- Santa ___, N.M.

BIBLE BOWLING

- Questions from Revelation 2 from TheSeeker.org:
- To which church was the first letter written? **A.** Pergamum. **B.** Smyrna. **C.** Ephesus. **D.** Thyatira.
 - What had this church endured for Jesus' name? **A.** Hardships. **B.** Only a few trials of many kinds. **C.** A lack of motivation. **D.** Nothing. They were lukewarm.
 - What did Jesus hold against the church in Ephesus? **A.** They had forsaken the love they had at first. **B.** They had never loved God. **C.** They had forsaken the love they never had. **D.** They loved God first.
 - In its favor, the church in Ephesus hated the practices of the _____. **A.** Pharisees. **B.** Smyrnites. **C.** Pergamites. **D.** Nicolaitans.
 - The church in Smyrna had afflictions and poverty, yet they were this. **A.** Poor. **B.** Healthy. **C.** Rich. **D.** Blessed.
 - How long will some in the church in Smyrna suffer persecution? **A.** Twelve years. **B.** Seven weeks. **C.** Three months. **D.** Ten days.
 - Where was Antipas put to death? **A.** Ephesus. **B.** Smyrna. **C.** Thyatira. **D.** Pergamum.
 - How are the feet of the Son of God described in verse 18? **A.** Like shimmering silver. **B.** Like sharpened iron. **C.** Like burnished bronze. **D.** Like the purest gold.
 - Whose teaching misled the servants of Thyatira? **A.** John's. **B.** Satan's. **C.** Jezebel's. **D.** Jesus'.
- FIND MORE QUESTIONS** at TheSeeker.org.
- CROSSWORD SOLUTION** and Bible Bowling answers on Page 34. To sponsor this page, contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org.

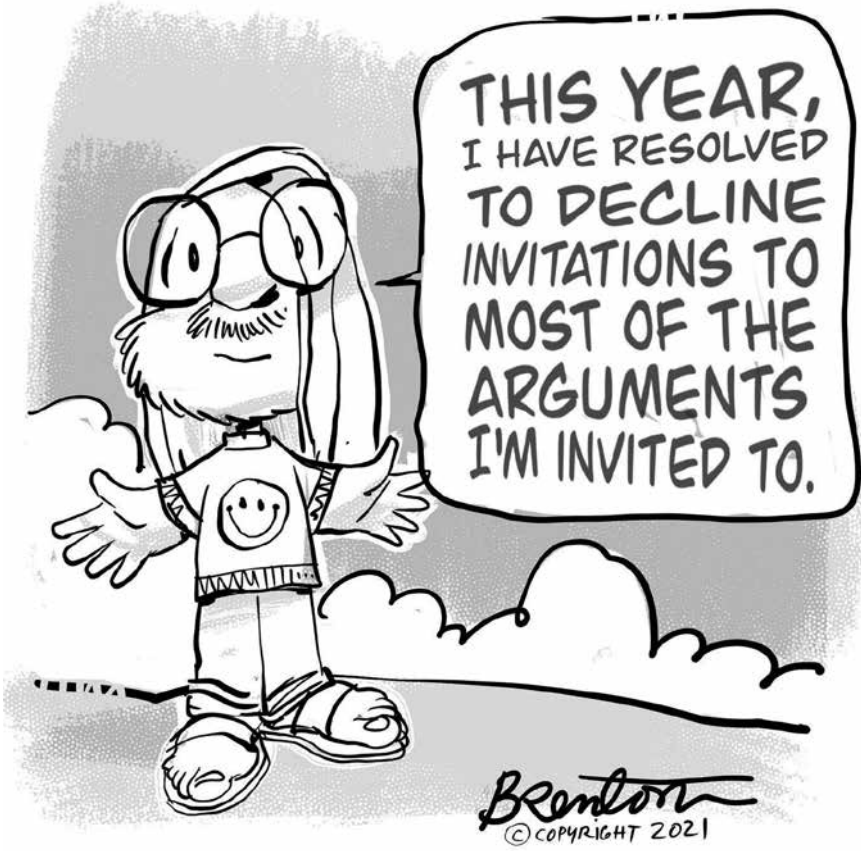
Word Find: The book of Genesis

By Betty Hollister | For The Christian Chronicle

R I G H T E O U S T C A T A S T R O P H E S
E E G Y P T I A N L R O B A S E M A T H T D
C P B A I I H E M E E E N U M A M R E A N L
O A H E R E L E S H A X L C N A S A L N A O
V G N R K D L L E C T S C A E D R K O U V H
E F H A A K E D A A I O H H T I A U R L R E
R S E G A I A N T R O A L E A I V N V U E S
H N S R A N M H E E N G K I R N V E C B S U
C I S E T D M I R R O N C L E T G E D E L O
E M A E E L M L P A A I O A G O S E S Z A H
L A N K A A E H R E H N T T I R T E N S M O
E J A B H A T T E B C N S H O A A S V R I A
M N M A M T S I T P O I E P N I N I E R N R
I E R H G E N A N U N G V A N G E R N I A A
B B S A C R I F I C E E I N C R E A S E R H
A I E L U F I T U A E B L E S S E D S I S P

Find the following words from the book of Genesis. The unused 39 letters form a sentence about the book. See page 34.

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| • ABIMELECH | • EGYPTIAN | • NAPHTALI |
| • ABRAHAM | • EMBALM | • NOAH |
| • ABUNDANCE | • ENOCH | • PHARAOH |
| • AGREE | • EPHRAIM | • PILLAR |
| • ANGER | • EXCHANGE | • PRIEST |
| • ANIMALS | • FAITH | • RACHEL |
| • ASHER | • GARDEN | • REBEKKAH |
| • BASEMATH | • GRAIN | • RECOVER |
| • BEAUTIFUL | • HARVEST | • REGION |
| • BEGINNING | • HOUSEHOLDS | • RELATIVES |
| • BENJAMIN | • INCREASE | • RIGHTEOUS |
| • BLESSED | • INTERPRET | • SACRIFICE |
| • CANAAN | • ISHMAEL | • SERVANT |
| • CATASTROPHE | • LIVESTOCK | • STALK |
| • CONCEIVED | • MAMRE | • TAMAR |
| • CREATION | • MANASSEH | • YIELD |
| • CUPBEARER | • NAKED | • ZEBULUN |



Meet Brenton, our new cartoon

Not every preacher gets his own cartoon.

Not every preacher is Brenton.

This month *The Christian Chronicle* presents our first installment of “Brenton” by Rick Gibson. The cartoon is based on the wit, witticisms and occasional wisdom of W. Keith Brenton, a longtime minister who this month retires from the pulpit of the Eastside Church of Christ in Eureka Springs, Ark.



Brenton

In addition to cartooning, Gibson serves as senior vice chancellor for Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif., where he is a member of the University Church of Christ. He also is a member of the *Chronicle's* Editorial Advisory Council.

If you'd like more than a monthly dose of “Brenton,” look for “brenton.daily” on Facebook and Instagram. And watch for more “Brenton” content soon at christianchronicle.org.



Gibson

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Our pandemic view may be all wrong, says N.T. Wright

Over the last year, I have wrestled and struggled with the appropriate response to the challenges of the day. I have prayed and lamented, been angry, felt powerless and spent time in the Psalms and Lamentations. I have struggled with the impact of the pandemic on me, on our country, on our church and on my rights as an American.

Many have expressed opinions in the news, on social media, in our churches and in church writings as to how Christians should respond. Some are based in Scripture, others not so much.

Then came N.T. Wright's book **"God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and its Aftermath."**

The book is just five short chapters — with rather vague titles. However, each one is filled with messages of comfort, hope and peace. Each one also is a call to action for followers of Jesus.

As Wright, a renowned theologian and scholar whose most recent works include "Paul: A Biography,"

leads us through a careful reading of God in the Old Testament, I am reminded that God's creation was good but that a "dark power ... from the start has tried to destroy God's good handiwork."

Wright reminds readers of the struggle Job faced that he could not understand — the same dark power that we too cannot understand but will face.

Wright says, "We are simply to know that when we are caught up in awful circumstances, apparent gross injustices, terrible plagues ... at those points we

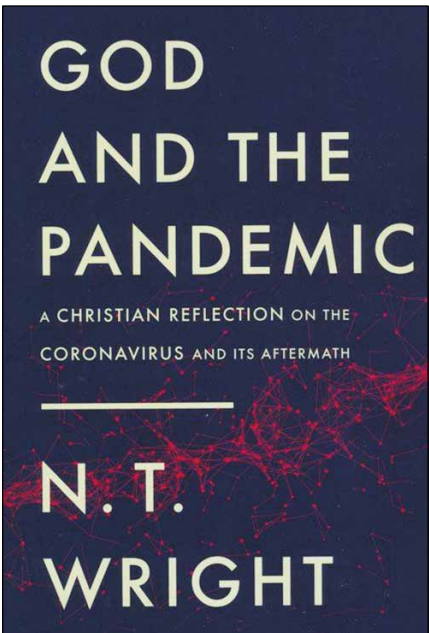
are to lament, we are to complain, we are to state the case, and leave it with God. God himself declares at the end that Job has told the truth (42:8). He has clung onto the fact that God is just, even though his misery seems to deny it."

In chapter 3, he carefully leads me back to Jesus and his followers in the New Testament and their response to tragedy, pain and suffering — reminding us that when Jesus' followers faced despair at the death of Lazarus, Jesus wept with them.

In Print



Patti Lehman



N.T. Wright. **God and the Pandemic: A Christian Reflection on the Coronavirus and Its Aftermath.** Zondervan, 2020. 87 pages. \$11.99.

Wright writes, "When (Jesus) does talk of wars, famines, earthquakes and the like he doesn't say, 'So when these things happen you must think carefully about what you and your society should be repenting of.' He

says 'Don't be disturbed; the end is not yet.' Matthew 24:6 ... In other words, if Jesus' followers are waiting for special events to nudge them into looking for Jesus' kingdom on earth as in heaven, or to tell them to repent when they were drifting into careless sin, then they've gone to sleep on the job."

In light of these ideas, I — and dare I say others — have had it all wrong. It's not about me, it's not about power, it's not about my rights or politics, it's not about who sinned or the end of time.

It is, rather, about me putting my faith in the sovereignty of God and accepting, as Jonah did, that God is God and I am not.

For me, as a Christian, it is about being shaped in the image of God, as a servant led by the Spirit of God.

My reading and study of this little book (only 87 pages) renews my spirit and restores my soul. It has reminded me of the peace that comes through a relationship with the triune God of the Bible.

PATTI LEHMAN is a retired public school administrator. She and her husband, Dave, worship with the Blue Starr Church of Christ in Claremore, Okla. They have three children and six grandchildren.

Minister, wife give a quick-but-meaningful study of marriage

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, and I'm excited.

I love any chance to celebrate my relationship with my husband, Travis. I remember our first Valentine's when we were dating. I wore pink jeans and red lipstick and gave him a CD of love songs, along with a lengthy love letter. Now, 17 years and four kids later, we are happy if we can go out to dinner alone.

And that's OK. Marriages go through seasons. But lately it's been easier to focus on his failings during endless days quarantined at home together and harder to muster up a sweet text message or put on

clothes that aren't loungewear. And forget eating alone anymore.

So I've been thinking. What we need most this Valentine's Day isn't chocolates and a Netflix marathon but focused time together building a stronger marriage. Maybe you need the same.

While there are thousands of books on marriage, I'm always on the hunt for a quick but meaningful Bible study that my husband and I will

actually stick to (confession: it's just as hard for a minister to stick with Bible study as it is for anyone else).

So when I found Trey and Lea Morgan's **"Wisdom For Your Marriage: A 31-Day Couples**

In Print



Laura Akins



PHOTO VIA THESTRONGERMARRIAGEBOOK.COM

Lea and Trey Morgan.

Devotional Guide Through the Book of Proverbs," it looked like a great fit for us.

Don't be fooled by the book's thin

size, large print and self-publication. (Honestly, sometimes this fact turns me off from a book.) This Bible study packs a punch and is worthy of your time. I was convicted before even beginning chapter one.

The Morgans write in the book's introduction: "A fool is one that knows what God wants for their life, marriage and family, but doesn't do it. This person is either too lazy to care or just thinks their marriage will be awesome without having to put any work into it."

Ouch. So often we sit on autopilot and hope for the best. Thankfully, this book doesn't simply show us our faults and tell us to pray about them. The authors give tangible ways to

See **MARRIAGE**, Page 33

MARRIAGE: ‘Continue to be a learner’

FROM PAGE 32
actively work on our marriages. “One of the keys to building a strong, healthy marriage is to continue being a learner,” write the Morgans, who attend the Childress Church of Christ in Texas, where

Trey serves as senior minister. “No matter how long you’ve been married, there is always more you can learn. Being teachable is one of the greatest traits you can have, and Proverbs will teach us that.”

This 31-day guide explores one chapter of Proverbs a day through a devotional thought, questions and a prayer prompt. Notable topics include: signs you are getting lazy in your marriage; things children need to see; warning signs you are headed to trouble; and an affair-proof checklist.

Each chapter ranges from four to six pages and is jam-packed with stories, advice and supporting Scripture that the Morgans have

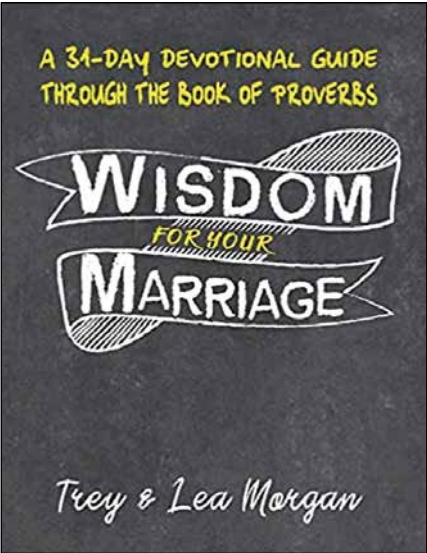
gleaned from more than 30 years of marriage. “We should make it a goal in marriage to never stop learning,” say Trey and Lea, who lead marriage workshops, run the Facebook page “Stronger Marriages with

Trey and Lea” and host “The Stronger Marriage Podcast.” “People change over time. That makes learning and relearning things essential to a strong marriage.”

Think about all the ways 2020 changed you and your spouse. Neither of you is the same person you were a year ago, let alone when you got married. This Valentine’s Day, let’s skip the empty gestures and get right to the good stuff. There’s no better

gift you can give your spouse than recommitment to each other and to the God who created us.

LAURA AKINS is Features Editor for *The Christian Chronicle*. Contact laura.akins@christianchronicle.org.

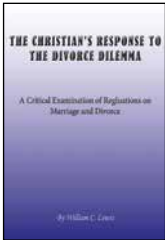


Trey and Lea Morgan. **Wisdom For Your Marriage: A 31-Day Couples Devotional Guide Through the Book of Proverbs.** Self-published, 2020. 171 pages. \$14.99.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE

William C. Lewis. **The Christian’s Response to the Divorce Dilemma.** Self-published, 2021. 75 pages, Paperback, \$5, Order from wclpub.com or WCL Publishing, PO Box 35, Imperial, NE 69033.



From the author: This book addresses the common doctrine of limiting marriage where the Bible does not, where divorce is

condemned and those involved consigned to certain destruction. Families are left devastated by man’s theory of what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount while his and the apostles’ teachings have been ignored. Twenty chapters give 20 scripture examples to dispute man’s regulations. You will be able to establish your status with the Lord and live and serve confidently.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY submissions are paid advertisements. Contact tonya.patton@christianchronicle.org for rate information.

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"His Hand and Heart: The Wit and Wisdom of Marshall Keeble"
--by Willie Cato

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We invite YOU to join us! Visit our website: **MountainViewCofC.org** and click "Mission Opportunity" for more info.

Youth/Family Minister


Westbury Church of Christ in Southwest Houston, Texas, is seeking a youth/family minister. The job description is on our website:

— **www.westburycoc.com** —

as well as an email address to send your resume. We are a mainline acapella congregation of 400 English-speaking members and 200 Spanish-speaking members.

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, mesas, rivers, lakes, farmland and Mesa Verde National Park. Locals enjoy skiing, hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, boating, mountain biking and golfing.

Crossword | From Page 30

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|
| 1 | T | H | E | L | A | S | T | S | 4 | U | P | E | R | 7 | A | | |
| 2 | H | X | B | | | | | | 3 | R | U | A | | | L | | |
| 8 | O | B | A | D | I | A | H | | 9 | I | M | M | O | R | A | | |
| 12 | M | L | G | | | | | | 13 | A | P | E | V | E | | | |
| 14 | S | T | R | A | Y | | | 15 | S | H | A | K | E | | 16 | E | |
| 17 | S | E | I | | | | | | | | | | | | | 18 | U |
| 19 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | O | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | B | A | R | T | H | O | L | O | M | E | W | | | | | 23 | F |
| 24 | E | O | E | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | D | A | B | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | I | B | R | S | A | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | E | L | E | V | E | N | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | N | R | W | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | T | H | Y | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Bible Bowling | From Page 30

1) C. Ephesus (vs. 1). 2) A. "You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name" (vs. 3). 3) A. "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first" (vs. 4). 4) D. "But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (vs. 6). 5) C. "I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich!" (vs. 9). 6) D. Ten days (vs. 10). 7) D. Pergamum (vs. 13). 8) D. Like burnished bronze (vs. 18). 9) C. Jezebel's (vs. 20).

Word Search | From Page 31

The unused 39 letters read: **"THE MESSAGE OF OUR SALVATION STARTS IN GENESIS."**

This year we need all the puppet shows and Bible bowls we can get

The first time I walked into the lobby of the Wyndham Anatole in Dallas I was overwhelmed — in the best possible way.

Hundreds — maybe thousands — of kids and parents rushed past the giant elephant statues in the lobby, carrying puppets or dressed up like shepherds or pirates. Some paced anxiously outside the banquet rooms, going over their sign language words. Vocal trios huddled under the stairwells for last-minute practice.

This was Leadership Training for Christ, an Easter-weekend tradition that happens in locales across the country. I was only a few months into my new job as a reporter for *The Christian Chronicle*. My editors, Bailey McBride and Lindy Adams, told me I had to go see it for myself.

Growing up in Macon, Ga., I had participated in Lads to Leaders, the program that predates and inspired LTC. Danny Gore and Mike Baker were my teachers. I lugged a massive red binder full of scriptures and sermon notes to Bible class. I still have the fruit of my labor — a "Leader of the Class" plaque emblazoned with Jack Zorn's signature.

But I never went to the big L2L convention in Nashville. Standing in that hotel lobby in Dallas, I saw what I'd been missing. I felt a sense of hope — hope for our fellowship of Churches of Christ, hope for our country, hope for the Kingdom.

As a body of believers, participating in these programs is one of the most important and meaningful things we can do for our kids. The hours of prep lay a firm foundation in scripture. And letting them have fun with it — writing their own skits and puppet shows — gets them invested in God's word.

I've been back to that Dallas hotel, now the Hilton Anatole, three times since — as a reporter, but, more importantly, as a parent. Our oldest started LTC in third grade. Our church has a robust, highly organized program coordinated by some truly dedicated Christian women. Their husbands pitch in, too. These folks

have stayed with us even after their own kids have grown up and graduated. (The son of one of our coordinators is a missionary in Austria.) I've talked to the coordinators of other LTCs in the same situation. They truly believe in this ministry.

One of the other dads and I coached a drama team a couple of years ago. Our skit was like "The Great British Baking Show" but with locusts and honey. Remind me to share that story sometime.

Our daughter loves it. On the way home from her first convention, she started reading the book that would be next year's theme.

Last year the theme was 2 Samuel, and my wife and I got involved in our Bible bowl program. I was a second-stringer for my high school academic team, mostly because I knew the Bible questions, so it was a good fit. (By the way, try writing multiple choice questions for kids about David and Bathsheba. Yeesh!)

Of course, last year's conventions didn't happen because of the pandemic. It was a huge disappointment in a year of disappointments.

I had hoped to present a report in these pages about plans for this year's conventions, but at press time many of them were in flux. The coordinators I've talked to are working on possible virtual events and alternate venues. Stay tuned.

With so many Bible classes not meeting right now, these programs are all the more important.

To that end, I'm including Bible bowl questions in each issue of the *Chronicle*, next to the crossword puzzle on Page 30. They're taken from TheSeeker.org, a website coordinated by Jay Crook that has hundreds of questions submitted by Bible bowl coordinators across the country (including the Trygggestads).

After the intense, PG-13-ness of 2 Samuel, this year we're tackling decidedly lighter fare: Revelation.

Insight



Erik Tryggestad

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



Pulpit Minister Search

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

Park Forest Church of Christ, Attn: the elders
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HOUSEPARENTS:
Have you considered devoting a period of your life to a ministry committed to helping troubled children? Look no further...

Southeastern Children's Home is located in the upstate of South Carolina between Spartanburg and Greenville, at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains. SECH has an opening for a houseparent couple to live in a cottage on the 50-acre campus. Both husband and wife are employed by SECH. Competitive salaries, paid time off, medical insurance, 24-hour backup and support by social work staff, housing, utilities, food allowance, gas allowance, and van for work use are provided. SECH is seeking ministry-minded Christian couples with strong marriages and team spirits. To learn more about SECH, go to: www.sech.org

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

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


COVID-19 Checklist

What is your congregation doing to protect your members?

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

After all the cleaning seems finished, have you cleaned the items touched by most members and even passed between individuals? Cleaning hymnals isn't easy and may even physically harm them. Now is the time to invest in the hymnal that doesn't need to be cleaned every week.

Go to www.PaperlessHymnal.com for details.
Use the discount code **C2020** for an additional 10% off your purchase through February 2021.



Youth Minister Search – Panama City, Florida

Jenks Avenue Church of Christ is a family-oriented and involved congregation with an active membership of +/- 400. Our ministry staff serves alongside six shepherds and 24 deacons. We are blessed with a wide range of families, ages and racial diversity.

Bay County, Fla, is a wonderful place to do ministry and raise a family. It boasts some of the world's most beautiful beaches, a state college, lots of outdoor activities and a friendly southern culture.

We are looking for a minister who is committed to God's mission to make and develop disciples for Jesus. Our youth ministry is primarily focused on encouraging the spiritual formation of our young people and helping them integrate with the body of Christ. We offer an exceptional total compensation package for an exceptional candidate.

If interested, please contact: **Todd Thompson (toddtjenks.64@gmail.com)**
and **Chris Donlan (cdonlan@gmail.com)**



CHURCH of CHRIST
at Jenks Avenue

JenksChurchofChrist.com

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The Christian Chronicle®

Vol. 78, No. 2 | February 2021 | Phone: 405.425.5070



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