



Christian Challenger

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NO. 7

DISCIPLES MAN OF THE YEAR 2010

Congratulations to Jim Zug, our Disciples Men "Man of the Year" for 2010. He was born in Arkansas but raised in Las Vegas where he graduated from Las Vegas High School.

He spent his college years in Orange, CA, at Chapman College, now known as Chapman University, which is one of our denomination's facilities for higher education. The first week of his freshman year he met a very special girl from Fresno, CA. They married the following summer and returned to college as married sophomores.

Our honoree moved to Texas in 1960 to attend Brite Divinity School at TCU, where he excelled in all of his classes, graduated with honors, and then was ordained a Disciple of Christ minister. Over the years he served as minister for churches in Hurst, Corpus Christi, Denver, Abilene and Wichita Falls. He originally came to Wichita Falls to serve as the director of the MHMR Center here and served in that capacity for 15 years before returning to the pastoral ministry. He was Associate Minister here at FCC in the early 1980's and has been a member of our congregation for almost 25 years. He has authored several published articles and won a sermon contest several years ago.

He and his talented wife, Vivian, have four adult children, one of whom is now deceased, and enjoy their 8 grandchildren. They have been married 53 years. In his spare time, if it isn't raining or snowing he loves being out on the golf course. He also enjoys collecting rocks.

This dedicated man serves Wichita Falls in many ways and has written several successful grants for non-profit groups which have brought in over a million dollars, most notably in helping to secure funds to move Interfaith Ministries to its new location.

Now that he is retired he is serving our church in many capacities—contributing his strong voice to our Chancel Choir, serving as Chair of the Advisory Board of our Common Ground Recovery Ministries, and teaching in three different Sunday School classes. He has given invaluable service by shepherding our members who joined us from Highland Heights and by being a faithful counselor to our members. He is a loyal member of the Disciples Men organization. As Dave Hartman says, "This honor tonight is the praise instead of a raise" for this dedicated "dollar a year" man on our church staff. Congratulations again, Jim!

ANNUAL BIRTHDAY LUNCH

The Annual Birthday Lunch will be held Sunday, March 7th, at 12:00 noon in the Fellowship Hall. Make your reservations in worship this Sunday or by calling the church office.

We are still looking for 9 volunteers to pick a month in the year and decorate that table in a theme for that particular month or the birthday party theme you choose for that table.

If you would like to choose a table to decorate, please contact Sheila Barrett at 613-4862 or sahbarr@sbcglobal.net. You may also sign up through the church office by calling 692-2282.

CALLING ALL

CAKE/PIES/DESSERT BAKERS

It is once again time for the Annual Birthday Lunch and Cake/Dessert Auction to benefit the youth of FCC. We will need at least 12 cakes, pies or desserts for the auction. Each month will be able to bid on the desserts for their table during this fun event.

If you would like to bake a dessert of any kind, please contact Sheila Barrett at 613-4862 or sahbarr@sbcglobal.net. You may also sign up through the church office by calling 692-2282. Thank YOU for making this annual event such a fun and exciting time for the entire congregation!

BLOOD DRIVE

Sunday, March 7, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, Gym
Call the Church Office to make an appointment

This Sunday:

8:45 & 10:45 Services:
"We Don't Have Forever"
Luke 13:1-9
Dr. David B. Hartman Jr.

5:30 CGRM Worship Service:

Sarah Lutteringer

Across Dave's Desk...

THE POWER OF POETRY

A couple of months ago, when the allegedly professional football team in Washington, D.C. that I have the misfortune to be in thrall to began its predestined plummet to the depths ("You live in hope, you die in despair" in the immortal words of team broadcaster and NFL Hall of Famer Sam Huff), an anonymous source in Wichita Falls offered the following online to a *Washington Post* sportswriter during a postgame wake. Modeled after the William Ernest Henley poem *Invictus*, it was entitled *'Skinvictus* and went

Out of the night that covers me
Dark as the pit from poll to poll
I blame the gold and burgundy
For my disconsolate soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
Haynesworth wheezed and moaned aloud.
Under the bludgeoning of fans,
Zorn was dazed, confused and cowed.

Before these years of wrath and tears
Loom the dreams of glories by;
Whatever happens on the field,
We'll always win July.

It matters not how bad the teams,
How charged with graft the parking tolls,
Dan's still master of our fate,
The clueless captain of our souls.

For the uninitiated, Haynesworth is an overpaid, underachieving defensive tackle, Zorn is the hapless former head coach and Dan is Dan Snyder, its current owner. Cindy Boren, the sports editor to whom the poem was proffered, responded, "Outstanding work; exceptionally high brow. Suffering really is good for creativity." Indeed. The suffering part, I mean.

It would take Sherlock Holmes to uncover the name of the poem's mysterious and supremely gifted author, so well hidden are the tracks, but the editor's point about suffering being good for creativity is well-taken. One hears the term "melancholy" as an adjective for "poet" far more often than "happy" or "hilarious." Consider Henley's *Invictus* (my apologies to his shade, "shade" in this instance being a poetic synonym for "ghost" or "spirit"), with its defiant opening invocation:

Out of the night that covers me
Black as the pit from pole to pole
I thank whatever gods there be
For my unconquerable soul

and its ferocious benediction,

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

Invictus arose out of Henley's life-long battle with bone tuberculosis, which resulted in an amputation when he was 16, years of hospitalization, and the death of a beloved daughter at 5. Sufferings like his tend to produce either devout believers or angry agnostics; *Invictus* obviously skews to the latter, though Henley's final poem, *Margaritae Sorori*, with its evocation at the last of "a shining peace" is the most gentling meditation on one's own demise I have ever read.

The most devastating war poem I have ever read is a two-liner by Rudyard Kipling, the grand old champion of British imperialism. Kipling had lobbied a number of Army officials and pulled many strings in order to secure a commission for his severely nearsighted son, Jack; he did not want him to miss the "glory" of serving during what became the meat grinder of World War I. Jack disappeared during the Battle of Loos in 1915 and was eventually pronounced dead. Disillusioned and guilt-ridden, Kipling would soon after write,

If any question why we died,
Tell them, that our fathers lied.

World War I produced a trove of writers whose experiences seared their poetry. Wilfred Owen invoked Abraham's near sacrifice of his son Isaac in *The Parable of The Old Man and the Young*.

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps
And builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretchéd forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! An angel called to him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him, thy son.
Behold! Caught in a thicket by its horns,
A Ram. Offer the Ram of Pride instead.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

A week before the Armistice took effect on November 11, 1918, Owen was killed. His parents received word of his death as the church bells of his hometown pealed out the joyful news of peace.

Of course, strong feelings can be invoked by many things other than war. William Butler Yeats, desperately in love with an unreceptive Maud Gonne, envisioned her in *When You Are Old* sitting by the fireside and regretfully contemplating his book of poems:

How many loved your moments of glad grace
And loved your beauty with love false or true.
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

Yeats, like Owen, also used Biblical imagery to describe the unspeakable horror he saw arising out of the war and his foreboding that the antichrist would soon stalk the earth. In *The Second Coming*, he wrote,

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

...And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?

Of course, the seminal source of western poetry is the Book of Psalms.

To be continued.

Dave

Brett Briefly...

KNOWLEDGE AND FULL INSIGHT

It was about five years ago that I went through my final ordination interview at the regional office in Fort Worth. A room full of ministers and lay leaders from throughout the Southwest Region (including our own Cheryl Appling) interviewed me on matters of theology, practical ministry, Disciples history, and any thing else they felt was relevant to my ordination in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In preparation, I spent a great deal of time re-studying many of the potential topics in order to solidify my answers to some of the various questions that might be asked.

In the midst of this "brushing up on theology," I asked the same question I found myself asking during my time in seminary: Why exactly am I doing this? The answer came to me from Paul's letter to the Philippian church.

[T]his is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more *with knowledge and full insight* to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. (Philippians 1:9-11, NRSV, italics mine)

As a minister, it is important to the life of this church and the church universal that I have an understanding of the many theological issues that surround the work of the church today, and more importantly, how those issues affect each of us in our daily lives. But Paul did not write this letter to trained, ordained clergy. He wrote it to "all the saints...in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). The letter was not written to the bishops and deacons, but to those believers who were with them.

AND THE POINT IS...

My call to know and understand the Gospel and how it relates to issues of our time is not a call extended to me because I am an ordained minister or a pastor. The call is extended to me because I claim Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior—I am a Christian. In the same way that the call to "knowledge and full insight" is mine, it is also yours. So I echo Paul's prayer for each of us, that our love may overflow with knowledge and full insight... through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. Amen.

Walking with you on our Easter journey,

Brett



2010 CAMP & MISSION TRIP DATES

Grand Beginnings Camp (4 years--3rd grade)	June 4-6
CYF Conference (Completed grades 9-12)	June 6-12
Chi Rho Mission Trip	June 16-19
JYF Camp (Completed grades 4 or 5)	July 11-15
Chi Rho Camp (Completed grades 6 or 7)	July 11-16
CYF Mission Trip	July 17-25
8th Grade Conference (Completed grade 8)	July 25-31
Registration Sunday will be April 25th.	



- Sunday Youth Groups Chi Rho @ 4; Praise Band @ 5; CYF @ 6.
- Check In every Wednesday night from 6:30-8:30.
- CYF Spring Break Mission Trip to LBCR is March 14-19. If you are wanting to go, I need your forms as soon as possible.
- Chi Rho Cake Auction is March 7 at the All Church Birthday Luncheon after worship. Make plans to be there for this fundraiser for our Mission Trip this summer.

OTHER YOUTH INFO

Sunday School Schedule

Children's Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.

3 - 5 year olds meet in room 6

K - 2nd grade meet in room 5B

3rd - 5th grade meet in room 15B



Jesus And Me

for children ages 3 to 4 years on Sunday mornings at 9:30 am in room 6B and following the Children's Moment during the 10:45 service



SUNDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUPS & CHOIRS

- 3:00 - Chancel Ringers (Grades 9-adults) (Stratten Hall)
- 4:00 - Chi Rho Youth Group (Grades 6-8) (Rm A3)
- 4:15 - B.L.A.S.T. Choir (Grades K-5) (Stratten Hall)
- 5:00 - B.L.A.S.T. Youth Group (Grades K-5) (Rm A2)
- 5:00 - Youth Praise Band (Rm A3)
- 6:00 - CYF Youth Group (Grades 9-12) (Rm A3)



FCC ON FACEBOOK

First Christian Church is now on Facebook. Become a fan of FCC by searching for "First Christian Church, Wichita Falls" on Facebook. Receive updates on upcoming events and sermons. Join our online Facebook community today.



WEEK OF COMPASSION OFFERING

Dear Friends,

In Jesus' last encounter with his disciples after his resurrection (*John 21:15-19*), the Good Shepherd tells Simon Peter to take care of his sheep. "Do you love me?" Jesus asks. "Yes," Peter replies. Then, "Feed my lambs," Jesus tells him. "Tend my sheep."

Three times, Jesus passionately repeated his instruction. In this last moment with his disciples, he pressed his followers to hear this call: If you love me, take care of the people I so deeply love. Live your love for me by actively tending these for whom I have sacrificed everything. Give food to the hungry, clean water to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, health care to the sick; welcome the refugee and the stranger (*Matthew 25:34-40*). Share your strength and refuge with the fearful (*Psalms 28:8-9*), rescue those in danger (*Ezekiel 34:10*), and bring justice to the oppressed (*Ezekiel 34:16*).

At the time of Jesus' plea to his disciples, the world held about 300 million people. Today, the earth is home to more than 6.7 billion. With so many people, how can we possibly care for Jesus' far-flung flock, whose needs run so deeply?

We can join hands with our brothers and sisters of faith in support of Week of Compassion. Through this offering, we live our love for our Shepherd by bringing immediate material aid to disaster victims and refugees; helping build strong communities with safe water, education, medical care, and secure sources of food; and supporting the self-development of struggling peoples.

Because Jesus loved Peter, Jesus called him to a different future from what Peter had imagined. He was not to spend years crippled by guilt from having denied his Lord at a critical point in Jesus' life. No, Peter was to go out and tend Jesus' flock. Not only did Peter's future radically change, but an amazing future opened to all who were reached through his ministry.

Similarly, Jesus' call to us to tend his flock changes our future. We connect more deeply with human realities throughout the world and become part of the compassionate community that actively reaches out to care for people when they are in need. And our caring helps shape a new and brighter future of hope and health for all who are touched by Week of Compassion. Sharing resources, changing lives—including our own.

Thank you for helping to change lives through this ministry we all share as Disciples – Week of Compassion. Blessings be upon you!

Your Partner in the Gospel
Amy Gopp
Executive Director,
Week of Compassion

(First Christian Church will again receive the Week of Compassion Offering this Sunday, February 28th. World Outreach Dept.)

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN NUMBERS

Total Number of Pledges	190
Total Amount Pledged	\$1,331,113.00
Total Amount Received on Campaign	\$966,796.66
Total Amount Received This Week	\$1,285.00
Total Amount Paid Out on <i>Restoring</i> ,	\$1,248,726.83

Refreshing, Renewing The Household of God

MEMBER NEWS

♥**Hospitalized:** at URHCS is Alex McKethan in Rm 583; at Presbyterian-Dallas: is Corliss Wyatt; at Senior Care Rehab is Paul Irwin in Rm 212A; at Windmill Rehab is Mike Spiller in Rm 1811. Released and back home are Lou James, Debbie Carlton & Todd Pullam.

♥**Military Deployed:** are Ryan Arnold, son of Bobby & Neina Dean; Eric Best, son of Billy & Kathie Best; Zach Harris, son of Phil & Margo Harris; and Jon Hartman, son of Jessica Hartman and Dave & Joanne Hartman. Please keep them in your prayers.

We want to be as inclusive as possible with our Member News, so if you know about an honor someone received, an important event in someone's life, or about illness or death, please call the church-692-2282. Thanks!



FIRST TIME VISITORS

We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time this past Sunday were: Taylor Saunders.



NEW IN THE LIBRARY

Rose-Mary Rumbley – What! No Chili!

Hank finds out what it takes to run a Texas Café when Cuisinie the Genie, a hot chili pepper, takes him on a whirlwind tour of food festivals all over the state. Young and old alike get a great taste of Texas history with some meaty and little know facts about Texas towns. And if it's more than history you have a craving for, look in the back of the book and find some interesting recipes – all using chili peppers.

Jack Canfield – Chicken Soup for the Golden Soul: heartwarming stories about people 60 and over

This collection offers readers loving insights and wisdom—all centering on the prime of life. Readers of all ages are sure to cherish this invaluable collection as a reminder that the soul of those young at heart is truly golden. They will turn to this book again and again for the timeless wisdom that will help them live their lives to the fullest.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you requested offering envelopes for 2010, they are located on the counter behind the front desk in the Church Office.



OPEN FLOWER DATES

If you would like to donate the flowers for the worship service in the Sanctuary, the following dates are open: March 7 & 14. To donate or for more information, call Peggy Fitts, Flower Coordinator, 781-2426.

