

YOU CAN SAY GOODBYE TO ME, BUT NOT THE THOUGHT OF ME

MEMORIAL DAY

May 23, 2026

ILLUSTRATION

There's a story about a city fellow who was visiting relatives on a farm and the farmer gave a whistle and his dog herded the cattle into the corral, then latched the gate with her paw.

"Wow, that's some dog. What's her name?" The forgetful farmer thought a minute, then asked, "What do you call that red flower that smells good and has thorns on the stem?" "A rose?" "That's it!" The farmer turned to his wife. "Hey Rose, what do we call this dog?"

1. There are times when we humans can be quite forgetful.
 - a. Been there, done that, haven't you?
2. We celebrate Memorial Day
 - a. to remember those who fought
 - b. and died for this country of ours.
3. The freedom we cherish, was paid for with the blood of our heroes.
4. As Christians, the freedom we cherish w
 - a. as also **paid for**
 - i. with the blood of
 - ii. God's one and only Son.
 - b. As he paid the penalty for our sins at Calvary,
 - c. **we remember** that sacrifice every week
 - i. as we partake of the **Lord's Supper**.
5. We can never forget or become laissez -faire about the salvation we have
6. **And since Memorial Day is about** those who have gone before us
 - a. and are no longer with us,
 - b. we need time to remember these heroes
 - c. and how their lives contributed to the church
 - d. and the perpetual growth of God's Kingdom.
7. And we don't grieve over people like those who have no hope,
 - a. because our hope is in Jesus!
8. We may shed some tears
 - a. but it's not the same
 - b. as those who have no hope.
 - c. (Those who don't have Christ)

I Thessalonians 4:13-14

“Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.”

9. Those who have **fallen asleep** are Christians
 - a. who have passed on to the next life.
 - b. And to be absent from the **body**
 - c. is to be at home with the **Lord!**
10. THAT’S OUR HOPE!
11. THAT’S OUR PROMISE!
12. Paul **doesn’t** refer to these people as having died,
 - a. but rather as *“fallen asleep.”*
 - b. They are **not** dead.
 - c. They are only **gone from this life**
 - d. **to a better life.**
13. Obviously, when our loved ones believed in Christ
 - a. and were baptized in Him,
 - b. it gives us hope that someday
 - c. **we’ll see them again.**
14. **So today**, on Memorial Day,
 - a. **not** only do we remember our loved ones
 - b. who have gone before us,
15. but we need to look back in history
 - a. to remember some of the more recent **“men of faith”**
 - b. who blazed a spiritual trail
 - c. in their respective generations.

Hebrews 12:1

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

Alexander Campbell was an influential religious reformer, preacher, debater, and educator who helped lead the 19th-century Restoration Movement in the United States. He was born on September 12, 1788, in County Antrim, Ireland (now Northern Ireland), and immigrated to America with his family in 1809.

Campbell and his father, Thomas Campbell, sought to restore what they believed was the simple, original Christianity of the New Testament. They opposed denominational divisions and emphasized unity among believers based on the Bible alone. Their slogan was often summarized as: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

Alexander Campbell became widely known through public debates, preaching, and publishing. He founded influential journals including *The Christian Baptist* and *The Millennial Harbinger*, which spread Restoration Movement ideas across the growing United States. He strongly promoted weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper, believer’s baptism by immersion, and the authority of Scripture.

In 1840, Campbell helped establish Bethany College in what is now West Virginia, serving as its first president. He believed education and religious understanding should work together.

Campbell’s work became foundational to groups that later developed into the Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ. Though these groups later divided in some ways, Campbell’s emphasis on biblical authority and Christian unity left a lasting influence on American Christianity.

He died on March 4, 1866, in Bethany, West Virginia.

Barton W. Stone was an American preacher and religious reformer who became one of the most important leaders in the early Restoration Movement, which helped shape groups such as the Churches of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and independent Christian churches.

He was born on December 24, 1772, in Maryland. As a young man, he was educated in the frontier regions of Virginia and North Carolina and eventually became a Presbyterian minister. During his early ministry, he became troubled by Calvinist teachings and the use of denominational creeds, which he felt were not fully supported by the New Testament.

Stone became widely known during the Cane Ridge Revival of 1801 in Kentucky, one of the largest frontier religious gatherings of the Second Great Awakening. The revival greatly influenced his thinking about Christian unity and simple New Testament Christianity.

In 1803, he and several other ministers left the Presbyterian Church and briefly formed the “Springfield Presbytery.” Soon after, they dissolved it in a famous document called the “Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery” (1804), declaring their desire to be simply Christians and to follow the Bible alone rather than human creeds.

Stone later led a movement simply called the “Christians,” emphasizing unity among believers and rejecting denominational divisions. In the 1820s–1830s, he joined efforts with Alexander Campbell, and together their movements merged in 1832, forming what became known as the Restoration Movement. Stone and Campbell groups emphasized:

- “no creed but the Bible”
- restoring the New Testament church pattern
- rejecting denominational labels

Stone spent his later years continuing to preach and write as he moved west with frontier settlements. He died on November 9, 1844, in Missouri, and is remembered as one of the key founders of the American Restoration Movement and a strong advocate for Christian unity.

Billy Sunday was one of the most famous American evangelists of the early 20th century, known for his energetic preaching style and large revival meetings.

He was born on November 19, 1862, near Ames, Iowa. His father died shortly after serving in the American Civil War, and Sunday grew up in poverty. As a young man, he became a talented baseball player and eventually played professional baseball in the National League, including time with the Chicago White Stockings.

While in Chicago, Sunday experienced a religious conversion after hearing gospel preaching at a rescue mission. He left professional baseball to work with evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman and later began conducting his own revival campaigns.

Billy Sunday became nationally famous for dramatic sermons, emotional invitations, and forceful preaching against alcohol, gambling, and immorality. His sermons often included athletic movements, vivid illustrations, and plainspoken language that connected with ordinary audiences. During the height of his ministry, thousands attended his meetings across the United States.

Sunday strongly supported the temperance movement and became one of the best-known public advocates for Prohibition before the Prohibition in the United States era.

Though not strictly a Churches of Christ preacher, Billy Sunday had connections to the broader Restoration Movement tradition through his early religious influences. He remained one of America's most recognized evangelists until his death on November 6, 1935, in Chicago, Illinois.

Marshall Keeble was one of the most influential evangelists in the history of the Churches of Christ, especially among African-American congregations in the United States.

He was born on December 7, 1878, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, to formerly enslaved parents. Raised in poverty with limited formal education, Keeble developed remarkable speaking ability, wisdom, and a deep knowledge of the Bible.

Keeble became known for his powerful gospel preaching, simple teaching style, humor, and ability to connect with audiences of all backgrounds. Beginning in the early 1900s, he traveled extensively across the United States holding gospel meetings and revivals. Thousands were baptized through his preaching, and he helped establish and strengthen many congregations, particularly in the South.

Despite living during the era of racial segregation, Keeble gained respect from both Black and white members of the Churches of Christ. He often preached to large interracial audiences, something uncommon in that period. His preaching emphasized salvation, obedience to the gospel, Christian living, and unity in Christ.

He also worked closely with educational efforts connected to Freed-Hardeman University and other Christian schools, encouraging the training of preachers and church leaders.

Marshall Keeble's influence spread far beyond his lifetime through the congregations he helped establish and the many evangelists he inspired. He died on April 12, 1968, in Nashville, Tennessee.

Ruel Lemmons was a preacher, editor, writer, and influential voice within the Churches of Christ during the mid-to-late 20th century.

He was born in 1919 and became known for his thoughtful preaching, strong writing ability, and leadership in religious publishing. Lemmons preached for several congregations and gained national influence through his editorial work.

He is best remembered as the longtime editor of the *Firm Foundation*, a major publication among Churches of Christ. Under his leadership, the journal addressed biblical studies, church issues, Christian living, and discussions about fellowship and unity. Lemmons became known for encouraging thoughtful dialogue and a more compassionate tone in religious discussions.

Throughout his ministry, he emphasized Bible study, Christian grace, evangelism, and the importance of maintaining faith while dealing respectfully with differing viewpoints among believers. His work influenced many ministers (most significantly Chuck Lucas) and church members during a period of significant discussion and change within Churches of Christ.

Ruel Lemmons died in 1991, leaving a lasting impact through his preaching, writing, and editorial leadership.

Richard Rogers was a preacher and teacher at the Sunset International Bible Institute (a prestigious church of Christ School of Ministry). He was one of the most respected expository Bible teachers in all the Churches of Christ during the twentieth century. Born in 1936 in Dallas, Texas, he studied at Abilene Christian University and Florida Christian College before dedicating his life to preaching, evangelism, and training ministers.

Richard served for more than thirty years as an instructor at Sunset School of Preaching (later Sunset International Bible Institute) in Lubbock, Texas. He was a scholar in Biblical Greek and frequently only used a Greek Bible whenever he preached. He was also noted for having the entire Bible committed to memory. You could pick any scripture in the Old or New Testament, and he would quote it to you. He helped train thousands of preachers and missionaries from around the world and became known for his deep biblical insight, clear expository preaching, and strong emphasis on missions and soul winning. I first met Richard in the living room of Clay Landes in Houston, Texas. I was a young convert at Texas A&M and our Bible study group would drive from College Station to Houston once a month where Richard would come teach our small group of Christians. His lessons provided spiritual nourishment for a handful of starving college students. Throughout my life as a disciple, I have listened, taken classes and been inspired by what I would consider the greatest preacher of my lifetime.

Throughout his ministry, Richard Rogers preached for congregations in Blue Ridge, Azle, Midland, and the Sunset Church of Christ in Texas. He also traveled extensively, speaking in forty states and more than thirty countries. He mentored church-planting teams in places such as Mexico, Thailand, California, and the Philippines.

In addition to preaching, Richard authored numerous teaching workbooks and sermon outlines. Many of his sermons and Bible classes were recorded and are still used today through Sunset's extension studies materials. He was especially remembered for his powerful teaching through books such as Romans and the Life of Christ.

Richard Rogers died in July 2000, but he continues to be highly regarded among gospel preachers and Bible students for his faithful teaching, missionary spirit, and influence on generations of ministers.

Charles Howard Lucas, commonly known as “Chuck” Lucas, was a prominent preacher and campus minister within the Churches of Christ. Born in Mobile, Alabama, in 1939, he attended Harding University, where he earned a degree in Bible. He later completed graduate studies in history and mental health counseling.

Lucas became widely known through his work at the Crossroads Church of Christ (originally the 14th Street Church of Christ) in Gainesville, Florida, where he served from 1967 to 1985. There he launched an influential campus ministry called “Campus Advance” at the University of Florida. The ministry emphasized evangelism, mentoring relationships, small-group “soul talks,” and intensive discipleship. As a two-week-old Christian, I heard Chuck preach in Austin, Texas and was inspired by his sermon – so much so that I decided to move to Gainesville, Florida and get the spiritual training that was offered at the Crossroads Church of Christ. I got to know Chuck personally as I volunteered to mow his lawn every week and spend time with his family. Years later, I later on got to know him more intimately, as I visited him about every two weeks in Thomasville, Georgia for nearly a year. I would drive from Orlando to Thomasville to meet with him for a couple of hours and learned a great deal about his overall experiences in the ministry

The methods developed under Lucas became known as the “Crossroads Movement.” Lucas mentored many young ministers and campus leaders all over the US during the 1970s and 1980s. The movement strongly influenced later ministries that became the International Churches of Christ (ICOC) and the International Christian Church (ICC), both of which became world-wide movements. While many praised the movement for its evangelistic zeal and rapid growth, its discipling structure also drew criticism from some within the Churches of Christ for being overly controlling and hierarchical.

After leaving Gainesville, Lucas continued preaching and counseling work in Thomasville, Georgia. He died on August 9, 2018, at age 79. Though opinions about the Crossroads Movement remain divided, Chuck Lucas is remembered as a major figure in modern Church of Christ campus evangelism and discipleship ministry.

Sam Laing was an evangelist, preacher, author, and teacher who became widely known through ministries connected to the Crossroads Movement and later the International Churches of Christ (ICOC). Sam was born on October 7, 1949 in Tallahassee, Florida. He was converted to Christ at the University of Florida where he later became one of the first Campus Ministers at the Crossroads Church of Christ. As a young campus minister, he helped influence the campus ministry movement begun by Chuck Lucas during the 1970s. This new approach to campus ministry emphasized personal commitment, mentoring relationships, Bible study, and aggressive campus outreach. This is when I first got to know Sam (known as Sammy back in those days).

Sam later served as an Evangelist in Atlanta, Boston, Miami and the Triangle area in North Carolina. His leadership spearheaded the conversion of many, many souls for Jesus. While in Boston, Sam and I (along with his wife Geri and my wife Liliana) worked together to build a great ministry for the Boston church. Our ministry, at the time, became a model for the entire Boston church. Sam Laing, in addition to being a highly effective ministry leader also became a prominent teacher within the entire ICOC fellowship. The Laings traveled extensively around the world conducting seminars and workshops on Christian living, marriage, parenting, leadership, and discipleship. He became especially known for practical and motivational preaching aimed at spiritual growth and strong family relationships.

Sam also authored several Christian books, including *Mighty Man of God and Warrior: A Call to Every Man Everywhere*, focusing on biblical leadership, character, and faith. In later years he continued preaching, counseling, and mentoring church leaders internationally.

During his last years he stepped out of the Evangelist role and focused on his role as an elder and teacher in the Triangle Church of Christ in North Carolina. Sam went to be with the Lord on December 12, 2024.

Roy Larson was born in 1961 in Shoreview, Minnesota where he developed a passion for football, fishing, and Rock'n'roll. He graduated from High School in 1979. In 1986, Roy married Chelly Dykstra, a 100% Dutch, God-fearing farm girl from Northwestern Iowa. Early on, Roy's life was transformed by the love of God and that love overflowed to anyone and everyone that he got to know. Roy and Chelly spent 17 years in ministry together sharing their love for Jesus and subsequently converting hundreds of people in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, Chicago, Illinois, Boston, Massachusetts and Madrid, Spain. Roy, later on after leaving the full-time ministry, had a successful career building a Recruiting and Staffing company, ultimately finishing as an industry leader in Minnesota. He sold his business and retired in 2016.

Roy was notorious for his unfiltered encouragement and gut-filled desire to lift everyone up with kind, sincere words and his off-the-wall humor. Roy made friends with anyone and everyone; it didn't matter if it was the guy changing the oil in his car or a CEO of a billion-dollar organization. Roy could become everyone's best friend almost instantaneously, but he especially loved the underdog. This is what endeared Roy to me. He proposed to me an opportunity to walk away from my successful computer business and take a lesser paying, more demanding career in the Full-time Ministry. This was an unprecedented offer in the churches of Christ - to take on a 44-year-old family man with 3 kids to support and begin a new career in ministry. I would certainly be considered an underdog, by anyone's standards. Yet, Roy was able to see what most people were unable to see. Potential. Roy passionately loved his savior Jesus, his wife, his family and others well.

Roy passed away while fishing at Lake Vermillion and staying at 'the cabin' on Center Island, where he frequently visited since he was 7 years old. He passed away at his favorite place on earth while doing something he loved (musky fishing).

Doug Meacham early in his life developed a love of camping while in the Boy Scouts, later earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Doug graduated from Upper Arlington High School, where he played lacrosse and was captain of the wrestling team. He received a Mechanical Engineering Technology degree from Clemson University where he was converted as a freshman. At Clemson, he served as a campus minister until reduced funding closed this door and he moved to Boston.

He met his wife, Linda, in the early nineties while serving with the Boston Teen Ministry. Doug's spirit was full of grace and joy that he always carried with him; Doug became a great example by adopting two young children (Laura and Andrew) about the same time his daughter Rebecca was born. Doug became a best friend of mine while serving the Lord in Boston. I was the ministry leader and Doug (and Linda) worked with the teens in our ministry. We literally lived around the corner from each other. After Liliana and I left Boston, Doug and Linda moved to Columbus, Ohio where he lived and served in the local church there.

Doug decided to move to Sarasota in 2016 with the purpose of helping Liliana and I build a great church here. He served as the Chairman of the Board for the Sarasota Christian Fellowship where he also led singing, Soul Talks and from time-to-time preaching. Doug loved Christian Music. Frequently, he could be found in his red truck jamming out to Classic Rock with a White Castle slider in hand. His faith was always on display no matter the challenges being faced, especially when his physical heart became very sick! He had multiple heart surgeries in late 1973.

Doug battled hard to recover and his faith shined through it all, always sharing his faith while he was hospitalized; he also encouraging all those who visited. Doug was never discharged from an ICU environment and passed 3 months later to receive the reward for his faithfulness to Jesus.

Doug lived in the Spirit of Jesus, no matter his journeys. His example strengthens the faith of many of those who knew him.

Fallen Faithful Heroes in my Life

Who have gone on to be with the Lord:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Chico Garcia | 11. Richard and Martha Whitehead | 22. Kevin Surret |
| 2. Leah Combs | | 23. Gloria Baird |
| 3. Barry Beaty | 12. Bill and Evelyn Hogle | 24. Bob Gempel |
| 4. Dan Rice | 13. John Whitehead | 25. Jay Allison |
| 5. Phillip Lester | 14. Marc Parramore | 26. Ralph Brooks |
| 6. Chuck Lucas | 15. Estelle Walton | 27. Joe and Bev King |
| 7. Sam Laing | 16. Reggie Solomon | 28. Joe Macintosh |
| 8. Clay and Pat Landes | 17. Richard Maxwell | 29. Jim Parham |
| 9. Richard Rogers | 18. Malu Omeonga | 30. Jim Faulkenburg |
| 10. Rogers and Marjorie Bartley | 19. Roy Larsen | 31. Brad Bynum |
| | 20. Doug Meacham | 32. Don Price |
| | 21. David Lamb | 33. Frank and Linda Bogle |