

GOD'S REVIVALIST

May 2017

and Bible Advocate



Farewell,
PRINCIPAL BILL MARSHALL



about this issue

BILL MARSHALL

When I arrived on campus in 1974, Bill Marshall was already here as a student. I remember being told that his plans for a career in medicine had changed when he felt called to attend GBS.

Not only was he a good student, but he was also a good athlete. One of my recollections of Bill involved a softball game at Filson Park adjacent to campus. As I recall, the losing team was batting in the bottom of the ninth inning and things were looking bleak. It appeared that all the other team needed to do was to walk the next batter and then get the last out. However, that “next batter” was Bill Marshall—a very good hitter. As Bill stepped to the plate, the pitcher attempted to walk him by pitching way too high. I still remember Bill reaching straight up with the bat and taking a nearly vertical swat. You guessed it: Bill’s team won.

I had the privilege of working with Bill in the 1980s. I was teaching in the college department and he was in the high school, first as teacher and later as principal. We both moved on to other schools in 1990.

Then in 2007, during my time as GBS Vice President for Academic Affairs, I was facing a transition in the academy at the end of Principal David Crosley’s tenure. I remembered Bill’s earlier performance as principal here and knew of his good reputation as principal at Hobe Sound Christian Academy. I was glad that he was available and willing to return to his alma mater in that capacity.

One of the things that most impressed me about Bill was his ability to connect with students who were, shall we say, “challenging.” He liked people “on purpose,” and his calm, steady demeanor helped him to navigate difficult situations.

The profile of Bill (p.4) was written by his son Kirk and is followed by an introduction to Principal Designate Tim Makcen (p.7).

Thanks, Bill, for being a great colleague and friend! Your service to GBS has been outstanding. —KF

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COVER: Principal Bill Marshall flanked by several Aldersgate Christian Academy students.

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the president's page



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FAREWELL

by Michael R. Avery, President

The words that flow from my heart and fall on this page are the last words I will write on The President's Page in *God's Revivalist*. I endeavored to say "thank you" in the April issue, so my words in this final article are just a simple, yet sincere, farewell!

Life on the Hilltop has been good!

I am so incredibly blessed to have had the kind of tenure that makes saying goodbye so hard! The last twenty-two years have been wonderful! GBS is one of the greatest places in the world to work. The alumni are supportive, the friends of the school are many, and the Hilltop family is the best!

The future is bright!

I can't tell you how positive I am about the future of GBS! President-elect Loper already has a firm hand on operations. He brings remarkable talent and clear vision for the future. He is a gifted speaker, and, as a careful networker, he knows the value of relationship-building. The best days of GBS are yet to come!

What is next for me?

First, I will forever be about the business of promoting GBS! It is the best Bible college in the Wesleyan tradition in the whole wide world! Second, I will be spending more quality time with Ruth and the grandkids! Third, I will be available for a variety of services to churches as of July 2017. I hope to be used in revivals, camp meetings, conventions, Bible conferences, leadership training, strategic planning sessions, conflict resolution, ministerial conferences, and other special events. I especially enjoy what I call "Deeper Life Conferences" (teaching on personal holiness).

God Bless you all! ■



Climbing the ladder: Bill Marshall, from young cowboy to academy principal.



Bill Marshall: A TRUE SERVANT-LEADER

by Kirk Marshall

My dad dropped by our house recently. As he relaxed on the couch, I asked him to share some stories—stories I had heard before; but now I pressed him for details. As I pressed, I learned. My dad, a man in whom God created a passion for education and ministry, stoked my own passion for education and ministry. He shared about the godly influences that formed his purpose, the powerful friendships that sharpened his passion, and the crucible moments that sculpted his character.

— Celebrating 40 Years in Christian Education —

William Clay Marshall was born on June 19, 1953, in a neighborhood of Ashland, Kentucky, called Westwood. He was the only child of Johnny and Evelyn Marshall. He grew up watching and reenacting wrestling from TV with his best friend Phillip Dixon, who lived right across the street. He played pickup sports around the Westwood neighborhood, mastering his rebounding in basketball and his tackling in football. To this day, he can give you a tutorial in those skills. He'll explain it. It'll make sense, even though it involves physics. He's been a great teacher since the early days.

It was this same friend who invited "Billy" (that's what folks in Westwood called him) to the 39th Street Christian Baptist Church. He continued to attend church and found a church family with the Dixons, including Phillip's dad Amos, who pastored in Ashland for over fifty years. On October 21, 1968, at the age of fifteen, my dad was saved during a Monday night revival service in the Westwood Christian Baptist Church, and he was baptized nearby at the Hoods Creek waterfall. Recently Phillip told me, "I would pray for him to get saved and later on he did. It was such a blessing to have a close Christian friend."

Dad went to Fairview High School from 1967 to 1971. I knew he dabbled in high school sports, but I had never heard the backstory. His frame was probably too slight for football and basketball, but he did play varsity baseball for a brief spell during his junior year. It happened when all of Fairview's senior players were suspended for participating in senior skip day. He played outfield and second base and posted a respectable .286 average in seven plate appearances. That means he got 2 hits in 7 times at bat. My dad loves stats for almost any sport. He can help you grasp the complexities, the averages, and the splits. Like I said, he's a great teacher.

After high school, dad attended Ashland Community College where he took pre-med classes, graduating with an associate's degree in 1973. He then transitioned to the University of Kentucky for a semester. However, in 1974 he felt God calling him to go to Bible college. He chose God's Bible School. There he developed a deep commitment to ministry and had contact with godly influences. It was there, during a late-night study session, that his friend Dean Welbaum told him that he would make a great teacher.

It was also there that he met Sherilyn Troyer. Soon after his arrival on the Hilltop for the spring semester in 1974, he caught her attention. She recalled how their relationship began. "I was secretary at GBS for Bro. Kenneth Stetler, and I met Bill when he was waiting in line to register for classes in the Theology and Christian

Workers Department. Some mutual friends told Bill he should take me to the spring picnic—and we went as friends. I liked cool cars, and he had a 1968 Chevy SS. I liked sports, and he was an athlete. I liked that we were friends first and there wasn't a lot of pressure to be in a serious dating relationship too quickly." She noticed his focused approach to education, as he tackled Bible courses and eventually converted his pre-med degree into a BA in Science. Also, they shared a passion for ministry. Dad served at the Laurel Homes Mission with his roommate Larry Pope and his friend David Potter. In the summer of 1975, he traveled with another friend, Bill Fry (the friend who deserves credit for kick-starting my parents' romance), to the Society of Indian Missions in South Dakota where they coordinated vacation Bible schools. Mom had made the same trip the previous summer after they started dating, and my dad wrote her a letter every day for two months. "No poetry," he assured. But there's no evidence to prove that.

The following summer, on June 26, 1976, Edsel Trouten performed their wedding in a Methodist church in Apple Creek, Ohio. They moved into an apartment on Parkway Avenue in Hartwell, about eight miles from GBS. Dad worked as a janitor for the Cincinnati Board of Education while he continued working on his degree. Remembering his time as a student at GBS, he thanks God for R.G. Flexon's passion for soul-winning and for those appointed moments in J. Wesley Adcock's classes. "God would come and meet with us and we'd pray and share testimonies. That happened frequently."

After graduating with a BRE (Bachelor of Religious Education) in 1977, he and Mom moved to Peoria, Illinois, where Dad took his first job as an educator—the principal of a school at Peoria Bible Methodist Church where Rudy Potter was the pastor. He worked there for over five years, and it was while there that the Marshall family began to grow. Matthew Clay was born in 1979, William Kirk in 1980, and Sarah Ashley in 1983.

Paul Reynolds, the GBS high school principal at the time, contacted Dad about a position teaching science. So in 1983, we moved back to Cincinnati. In 1986, after serving as a teacher, my dad became the high school principal. Both Dad and Mom built a tight-knit community with the high school faculty and others on the GBS campus.

It was during those years that I started to understand my dad was "cool." Don't get me wrong: it's not unusual for a seven-year-old boy to think his dad is cool. But my dad was *really* cool. Even high school guys thought he was cool. He played ball with them; he went on senior trips with them; he joked with them... and they laughed!



Bill Marshall Family 1984



Bill Marshall Family 2013

Seven years later, in 1990, my dad decided it was time for a change. After a conversation with Robert Whitaker at IHC that year, the decision was made. We moved to Hobe Sound, Florida, in July, where dad became the high school principal at Hobe Sound Christian Academy. He worked alongside Cliff Churchill, who was the elementary principal. "He made me the administrator I am today by interacting and working with me," Dad said about his great friend, Dr. Churchill. The Churchill family invited us into

their family, taking us camping, doing Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners together, and playing street football and board games.

In 1994, my dad took full principal responsibilities of the elementary and high school. His time working at HSCA was his longest uninterrupted period at a school. He served his teachers and built great community in Hobe Sound during his seventeen years there.

I asked him to mention a few standout students from the HSCA years. He mentioned three: Mark

Weaver, John Budensiek, and Jim Budensiek. It made us both laugh because they were the usual suspects whenever a prank went too far. But my dad respected, believed in, and loved his students. All of them—even the ones who hid the history teacher's bicycle on the roof.

The latest chapter in my dad's life began in 2007 when he returned to Cincinnati to be the principal of Aldersgate Christian Academy at GBS. He said that he moved back partly to be closer to his mother, whose health was failing. Dad was able to be of assistance to her as she lived in a nursing home in Cincinnati for the last three years of her life. Another reason for the move was to be closer to Mom's sister and brother who had both recently become Christians. Dad says that those things make hard career choices worth it.

Many things had changed at GBS since he had left in 1990. An elementary department had been added to the high school, and the classrooms of both had been consolidated in the Revivalist Memorial Building. There were many changes in the Marshall family as well. All of Dad and Mom's children had grown up and gotten married—and they even had their first grandchild!

For these last ten years, Dad has faithfully served and invested in the lives of younger teachers, getting them ready to step into leadership positions. Aldersgate has experienced growth and improvements under his principalship. For example, the elementary department converted from ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) to conventional classrooms, making it the same as the high school. This necessitated structural changes to the facilities to move from larger, open areas to separate classrooms with appropriate walls, furniture, and equipment. Better science equipment/materials, a large, modern computer lab, and electronic smartboards for each classroom made the learning envi-

ronment more robust. Dad has built a culture that values an overarching purpose of service, with initiatives like Serve-a-Thon and Everybody Gives, where teachers, students, and parents serve together to bless each other, their local community, and the world.

"I'm going to miss the families and the students," Dad said when I asked him about leaving ACA. "But I'm looking forward to spending time with family and having the grandkids around."

Nothing speaks more to my dad's impact than how much his family respects him. I've learned so much about fatherhood, mercy, and my Heavenly Father. The only way someone can so consistently show grace to others is by having a face-to-face relationship with the Creator who has so consistently shown grace to him. That has been the example Dad passed on to me and to the many others he has served.

My siblings and I agree that we want our kids, the next generation of Marshalls, to have Bill Marshall's humility, dedication to the Kingdom, and perseverance. Matt said, "He cares about people and is a great model of servant leadership. He never sees hard work as being beneath him and he loves serving the people with whom he works."

My mom added, "I learned at our first school in Illinois that he didn't ask others to do jobs he wouldn't do, like cleaning toilets or vacuuming classrooms. With students, he gives second chances and shows mercy. With people in general, he gets over hurts and disappointments. He forgets and doesn't hold grudges."

"You have to forgive people, no matter what they do to you. You have to love people, no matter how they treat you," Dad told me that night as we reminisced. I asked him if he had a verse to live by, and he told me it was I Corinthians 1:27, which says, "But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong" (ESV). Actually, that verse defines Dad. Not because he is foolish or weak, but because he is humble and he leaned expectantly into his Heavenly Father to use him and empower him. Because he located the source of his strength in God and lived out a purpose of building into others and serving them, I think he is one of the wisest and strongest men ever to live. ■

***Kirk Marshall** is the second-born of the three Marshall children. He taught at the GBS Aldersgate Christian Academy (2008-2016) and is currently involved in student ministries at Crossroads Church in Cincinnati, OH, where he, his wife Jodie, and their children live.*



Timothy Makcen: Principal Designate

On July 1, Tim Makcen will assume the position of principal for Aldersgate Christian Academy.

Tim has been part of the GBS campus family for fifteen years. During his student days in college (2002-06), he was active in student government, worked on the summer Youth Camp Team, and assisted with VIP Day and other youth-oriented events. When he graduated in 2006 (BA in General Studies), he was offered a full-time position in Student Recruitment. He had always enjoyed working with teens, and this was an opportunity to do that.

After four years, he began to feel a change was needed. In May 2010, academy teachers for both social studies and Spanish were leaving, so Tim stepped into a teaching position in the fall. He had always thought about working in education, but his inclination was toward the "administrative side" more than the classroom. Even during his days in high school, people had commented about the leadership qualities they saw in him, noticing how he naturally takes charge of things.

When Principal Bill Marshall was contemplating retirement, Tim talked with both him and Aaron Profitt, GBS Vice President for Academic Affairs, about possibilities for the future. Over the years, he had become involved in many activities beyond his actual teaching assignments, and during the 2016-17 school year, he was named assistant principal and began learning administrative responsibilities from Principal Marshall. Tim has appreciated his time with Bill, noting, "Mr. Marshall is an extremely kind and encouraging principal. He will build you up, and he can find the good in about anybody and make sure to bring it out. He is committed to working *with* people, seeing his role as assisting teachers as they do their job."

Tim has been involved in various projects this year, but one is especially important to him and the school. It concerns establishing an identity for ACA in a way that communicates the goals they are trying to accomplish. Tim has been in charge of an effort to refine the academy's mission statement. ACA has settled on a three-pronged declaration of purpose: "To help students excel academically, grow spiritually, and serve compassionately."

Tim is married to Arlette (Silva) (BA '05) and they live on campus with their two children: Aliyah Estelle (3) and Abella Kate (1). We welcome Principal Designate Timothy Makcen to his new area of responsibility. Keep him in your prayers. ■

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love." —John 15:9

Jesus Loves Me, This I Know by Joy Barnett

If ever a word has been run into the ground, it is the word "love." People love their pets, love chocolate, love crocheting. But they also love their spouse, love their families, and love the One Who made them. The same word describes everything from the shallowest of opinions to the deepest emotions and commitments possible in this life. Because it is so worn out, "love" can easily become just a cliché, lacking the true depth of meaning behind the words. And yet, in spite of the word being over-used and undervalued, real love has never been longed for more than now.

"Jesus Loves Me" is one of the first children's songs many children hear and learn. It's sung quietly as a lullaby. It's sung boisterously in Sunday school. It's sung for family devotions. It's sung to comfort, as well as to catechize. Besides being one of the most popular children's songs, it is one of the first songs that missionaries teach to their converts because of its simple, pentatonic melody and instructive, easy-to-remember

words. Surprisingly, this most familiar of tunes did not start as a song at all; but as part of a story, instead.

Anna Bartlett Warner and her sister, Susan, were daughters of well-known New York lawyer, Henry Warner. In 1837, during a depression, the family lost most of its wealth, and, as a result, Henry moved his family to an old house across the Hudson River from the West Point military academy. The girls opened their home to the West Point cadets and held Sunday school every week, for which Anna regularly wrote hymns. In order to supplement the

family's small income, the sisters also began to write novels and children's books. Under the pen names Amy Lothrop and Elizabeth Wetherell, they both became quite successful authors. *Say and Seal*, published in 1860, became a best-seller. The book was actually authored by Susan, but she wanted a poem or song for a particular scene in her story. In the book, a dying child asks his Sunday school teacher to sing for him. Susan asked Anna to write something

appropriate, so Anna wrote, "Jesus loves me, this I know; For the Bible tells me so...."

Several stanzas of the poem were included.

It was a tumultuous time in the nation.

The Civil War

Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong.
They are weak,
But He is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me,
The Bible tells me so.



a Pastor's **Unspoken Conversations**

by Paul Mills

was imminent. And the unpretentious poem spoke to the hearts of millions. One of the people who loved the poem most was a composer and publisher of church music. William Bradbury had already composed the music for songs such as “The Solid Rock,” “He Leadeth Me,” and others. But Anna Warner’s heart-warming poem begged to be set to music, so he added a simple chorus: “Yes, Jesus loves me, / Yes, Jesus loves me....” and the children’s song as we know it today was born. Later, a hymnal editor, David Rutherford McGuire, added two more stanzas that have become widely used.

Wonderful stories about this little song witness to its power to touch hearts. One incident occurred during the worst persecution of Christians in Communist China under Mao Tse Tung. A Christian wanted to communicate with friends that the church was thriving, but had to do it in a way that would make it through the censors. The message simply said, “The ‘*this I know*’ people are well.” That phrase from the little song told the friends everything they needed to know. The account is often told of the noted theologian Karl Barth who, when asked what the essence of the Christian faith was, responded, “Jesus loves me, this I know, / For the Bible tells me so.” And in 1943, during World War II, a PT boat was rammed and sunk near the Solomon Islands. Native islanders, who had learned the children’s song from missionaries, remember that as they returned with survivors of the sunken boat (including John F. Kennedy), the rescued Marines had sung “Jesus Loves Me” along with the natives as they rode to safety.

The names of Anna and Susan Warner are known by few. And, certainly, their flowery, sentimental stories were popular only for a period and have long faded into history. But the legacy and the message they left will never be forgotten. We were all born with a hunger for true love. And even in our post-modern times, when people seem so sophisticated, that yearning still sends them on a quest that leads them to nothing but disaster until they experience the only Love that satisfies the heart. With their little song, the Warner sisters remind us that we are deeply, passionately, consistently, sacrificially, truly cared for by the One who knows us best—far beyond a preference, passing feeling, or tender sentiment. And with child-like trust, we can confidently rest in the simple yet profound truth that “Jesus loves me.” ■

Joy Barnett is a GBS alumna (BA '00) who teaches private voice and piano lessons and has a small residential cleaning business. She and her husband Matt lead the worship music at their church as well as sing for revivals and camp meetings. They live in Bethel, OH. This article was first published in *The Ladies' Companion*.

Resources: “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know,” www.hymnary.org. “Jesus Loves Me,” Hymn Story, www.lectionary.org. “Jesus Loves Me,” www.sermons4kids.com. “Yes, Jesus Loves Me, the Song and the Story,” www.sharefaith.com. “History of Jesus Loves Me, This I Know,” www.whatistruth.info. “Jesus Loves Me,” www.wikipedia.com.

Several years ago, I was thinking of a few things that I wanted to express but was hesitant about actually saying to some in my congregation. So I began to write down my side of those “unspoken conversations.”

- I wish all of you would study your Sunday school lesson during the week.
- Please bring your friends to church and visit others for the express purpose of inviting them to church. They need to know who Jesus is, too.
- If all of us paid our tithe, which is only 10%, there would be plenty of money in the treasury to meet the needs of the church. We still get to keep 90% of our check. God is very generous.
- Why do you hold the standards higher for my family than you do for the other church members?
- I wish you could give a *fresh* testimony during prayer meeting, and maybe even on Sunday.
- Sinner friend, I have been preaching salvation messages to you for years and *still* you haven't accepted Christ as your Savior. Why do you linger so long? It's dangerous.
- Don't have a critical attitude, it affects you spiritually.
- I wish you would not gossip about church problems to others, but talk about our good points.
- Please don't discuss church problems in front of your children.
- I am fearful that some of you aren't having family devotions with your children.
- I wish you would be faithful and get to service on time. If you went to work the same way you come to church, you would lose your job! Is serving God of less importance?
- Please move closer to the front of the church like you would do if you were riding on a bus.
- I wish you would give your undivided attention to what is going on in the front of the church.
- Please shut your cell phones off until after the service.
- Fingernail clippers are really noisy when used during a service.
- If you intend to give me your right hand of fellowship, please cough in your elbow or your left hand.
- Let's not let our children run and play in the church. Let's teach them to reverence God's house. ■

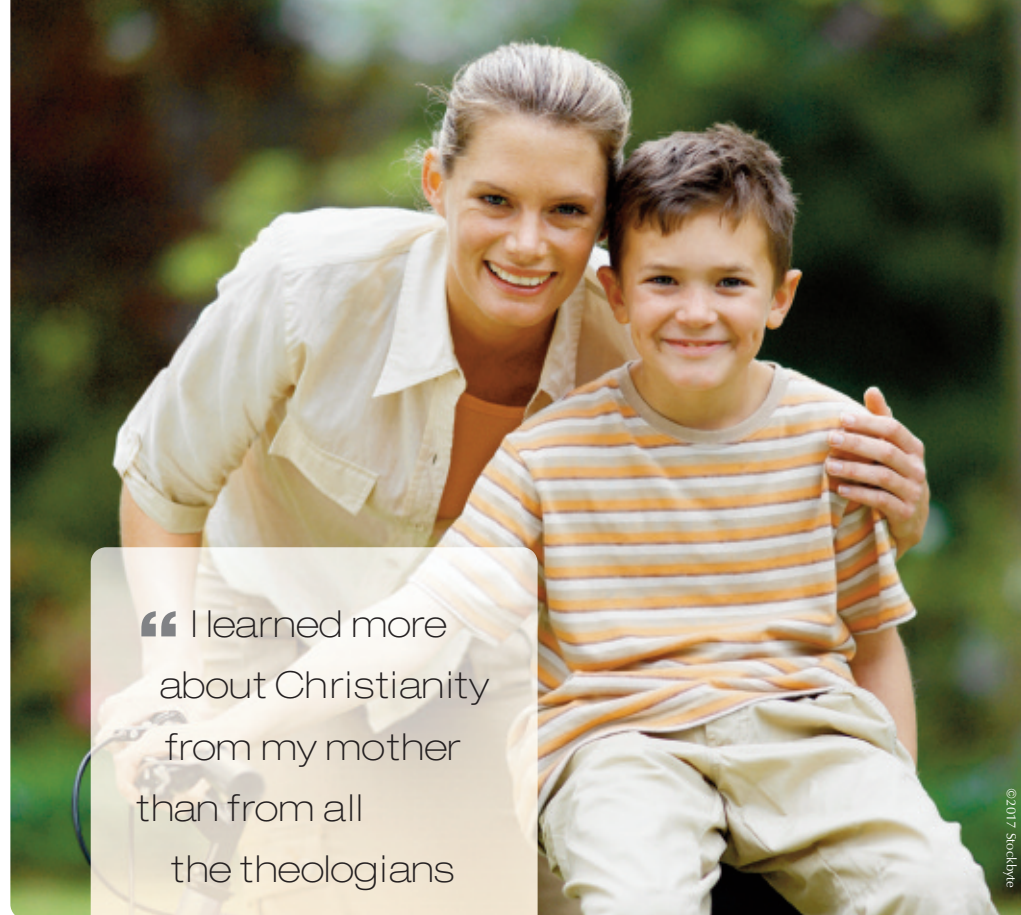
Paul Mills is a GBS alumnus (CWC '53) and former trustee. He pastored for The Wesleyan Church until his retirement.

✠

BOYS *need their* moms

✠

by Tim Challies



“I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians of England.”

—John Wesley—

Thinking back, I wonder if people thought I was a bit of a mama's boy. I grew up in a stable home and loved and respected both of my parents. I regularly spent time with each of them. But I was always closer to my mother. If this was true when I was young, it was even more pronounced when I was a teenager. In those years I was a boy, a young man, who needed his mom.

Boys need their dads. We know that. Boys need their dads to model masculinity, to model the love and affection they ought to have for a woman, to teach them the kind of life skills they will need. *Girls need their dads, too.* They need their dads to protect them, to be affectionate with them, and in that way to display healthy physical boundaries. They need their dads to hold the boys at bay and, eventually, to give their blessing to that special one. *Girls need their moms.* They need their moms to model femininity, to teach and train them to be women, to model patience and wisdom. Books, blogs, and sermon illustrations abound for each of these relationships. But what about boys and their moms?

Boys need their moms—I am convinced of it. Even teenage boys, boys who are nearly men. I see this when I look back at my own life. It wouldn't be overstating it to say that my mother was my primary coun-

selor and most trusted companion through those turbulent teenage years. It's not that I didn't have peer friendships, but that none of those friends influenced me as much as she did. I would often spend that time between school and dinner chatting with her while she prepared our meal. I would come along with her on errands just so we could talk. I confided in her and depended on her wisdom and her interpretation of my thoughts and feelings. We talked about girls and God and pretty much everything else I was thinking and experiencing. I relied on her for physical affection. In so many ways I wanted to be like her, to model much of my life and character after hers. It was really only when Aileen entered my life that this friendship, this dependency, began to diminish. The relationship I enjoyed with the most important woman in my childhood slowly declined as the relationship with the most important woman in my adulthood increased. The first had in some way prepared me for the second.

a Congregation's Unspoken Conversations

by Paul Mills

The relationship between a boy and his mother is a unique and precious one. Sadly, it is one we often look upon with suspicion, as if closeness between a boy and his mother is a warning sign, as if it may indicate a latent femininity or perhaps even homosexuality. We have names for boys who are close or too close to their moms—they are mama's boys or sissies or pansies. A boy who is close to his mom is a boy we believe to be weak, not strong.

Yet James Dobson, in his book *Bringing Up Boys*, dedicates a whole chapter to mothers and sons and says this: "The quality of early relationships between boys and their mothers is a powerful predictor of life-long psychological and physical health." Writing to mothers [in *What a Difference a Mom Makes*], Kevin Leman says, "Although it might be natural to think that the man in your son's life...would have the most influence on him since they're both males, the opposite is true. *You* influence your son directly and have a much greater impact on the man he will become." In the Bible we see Timothy mentored and discipled by his mother and grandmother (2 Tim. 1:5), we see Solomon warning his son not to depart from his mother's teaching (Prov. 1:8), we see Jacob's closeness to Rebekah (Gen. 27). In history we encounter many great men who were shaped by their mothers as much as by their fathers—many great men who ascribe who they became to the influence of their mothers.

And yet, even in Christian circles, there is little attention given to the relationship of boys and their mothers, at least once they pass the toddler stage. It is rarely mentioned and rarely celebrated. We still look askance at a boy who spends a lot of time with his mom, or a mom who is close to her boy. There is still that suspicion—that irrational and unfair suspicion. There is still that fear that a boy necessarily ought to be closer to his father than his mother.

Today I have a teenage boy of my own. He and I are close, but I suspect that he and Aileen are closer. I see and celebrate the unique relationship between them. He shares with her, he confides in her, he depends upon her, he receives affection from her. And this is good, this brings me joy. He is a boy who needs his mom, just like I was. I trust that she will help guide him through these formative years with a perspective I simply do not have. I trust that the relationship he enjoys with his mother is in some way preparing him for the relationship he will someday enjoy with his wife. Perhaps, like me, he will be able to echo John Wesley and say, "I learned more about Christianity [and life] from my mother than from all the theologians of England." ■

Tim Challies is an elder at Grace Fellowship Church in Toronto, Ontario. He is a prolific blogger and the author of several books. This article appeared at www.challies.com and is used here with permission.

While thinking of a few things that I wanted to express but was hesitant about actually saying to some in my congregation (see page 9), I also wondered what members of the congregation would like to say to me. Here are some guesses:

- Teach me how to read my Bible so that I can really understand it.
- Teach us how to do personal work, one-on-one.
- Explain God's love *for* me and *to* me.
- It has been a trying past week. Give me some promises to stand on.
- Please cut your sermons to one-half hour, or no more than 40 minutes. My children are restless and the seats are hard for my elderly parents.
- I know doctrine isn't everything, but teach it to me anyway. I need answers.
- Teach me how to deal with the unbelieving members of my family.
- Please study more during the week so your sermons will be fresh and have some meat on them.
- Recommend some good inspirational books that would help me to grow in grace, knowledge, and wisdom.
- From your personal life, tell us about some of your prayers that have been answered.
- A good shepherd only shears his sheep once or twice a year. Please don't "shear" *us* more than that!
- Please preach on hell. I don't want to forget that there is such a place, and I want my children to know about it as well.
- When you preach about hell, could you shed a few tears, being fearful that some in the congregation might go there?
- Tell me of heaven and what it is like. I want my children to know about it, too.
- I am hurting this week. My spirit is wounded. Could you apply some healing balm?
- My husband laughs at me for coming to church. Do you have any good advice to give me?
- I have fallen behind in Bible study and prayer. I have been so busy doing other things. I haven't prayed yet today, but preach "good" and bless me if you can. ■

Paul Mills is a GBS alumnus (CWC '53) and former trustee. He pastored for The Wesleyan Church until his retirement.



Following are favorite quotations from Oswald Chambers and comments from our readers about how the writings of Chambers have influenced them. Send your submissions to kfarmer@gbs.edu for inclusion throughout 2017, the year which marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Chambers. We reserve the right to edit and condense as needed. —KF

"The type of sanctified life is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the characteristic of His life was subordination to his Father. The only way to get right with God is to soak in the atmosphere of the life of the Lord Jesus.... The characteristic of the Holy Ghost in a man is a strong family likeness to Jesus and freedom from everything unlike Jesus." (*If Ye Shall Ask*, p.624)

BOB RAWLINS
DeMotte, IN

"We have cheapened the doctrine of sin and made the Atonement a sort of moral 'lavatory' where men can come and wash themselves from their sins and go and sin again and come back for another washing." (*Biblical Ethics*, p.130)

JOHN TAYLOR
Grand Rapids, MI

"One student a year who hears God's call would be sufficient for God to have called the Bible Training College into existence. This college has no value as an organization, not even academically. Its sole value for existence is for God to help Himself to lives. Will we allow Him to help Himself to us, or are we more concerned with our own ideas of what we are going to be?" (*My Utmost*, p.265)

DON DAVISON
Cincinnati, OH

Over the past fifty years, I have been a student of Oswald's teachings which have enriched my life more than any other author. Here are four truths' I live by, with quotes from Chambers' *My Utmost for His Highest* for each one:

There is an absolute necessity for Spiritual initiative; not just human initiative.

When God sends his inspiration, it comes to us with such miraculous power that we are able to "arise from the dead" and do the impossible. The remarkable thing about spiritual initiative is that the life and power comes after we "get up" and get going. God does not give us overcoming life—he gives us life as we overcome. (p.750)

We have many God-given roles, and none of them involve playing God.

One of the hardest lessons to learn comes from our stubborn refusal to refrain from interfering in other people's lives. "It takes a long time to realize the danger of being an amateur providence, that is, interfering with God's order for others. You see a certain person suffering and you say, 'He shall not suffer, and I will see that he does not.' You put your hand straight in front of God's permissive will to prevent it, and God says—'What is that to thee?'" (p.845)

A missed opportunity is not our last opportunity.

When we realize we have not taken advantage of a magnificent opportunity, "we are apt to sink into despair." But Jesus comes and lovingly says to us, "That opportunity is lost forever and you can't change that. But get up, and let's go onto the next thing." In other words, let the past sleep in the sweet embrace of Christ, and let us go on into the invincible future with Him. (pp.750-751)

Criticism should always begin and end in front of a mirror.

"The average Christian is the most penetratingly critical individual known." Criticism is one of the ordinary activities of people, but in the spiritual realm nothing is accomplished by it. "The Holy Spirit is the One in the true position to criticize. He alone is able to show what is wrong without hurting and wounding." There is always at least one more fact which we know nothing about in every person's situation. (p.792)

STEVE HICKMAN
Indianapolis, IN

Would **YOU** Want to **COME** **HOME** to You?

by Melissa Edgington

I'm sure you've seen the Facebook post floating around. It's a picture of a Nerf gun with a note attached from a wife: "Husband: Welcome home. I'm hiding in the house with a Nerf gun. Here's the other one. The loser cooks dinner tonight. May the odds be forever in your favor. XOXOXO" It's usually accompanied by some comment like "Relationship Goals."

I have to admit that every time I see it, I roll my eyes. Because, really...

It honestly, truly isn't a goal of mine to have a Nerf gun battle when Chad gets off work in the evening. In fact, most nights I'm more interested in the extra set of hands that walks through the door when he arrives. Three kids, homework folders, dinner, math assignments, extracurricular activities, baths—and I guess in between all that I forgot to schedule a playful Nerf gun battle with the only adult that I will interact with today!

But, despite my bad attitude about grown up Nerf wars, I do think there's an important element of that Facebook post that husbands and wives often overlook. We need to stop and ask ourselves a question: Am I pleasant to come home to? Sure, I may not be plotting an elaborate game to play when he walks in the door, but am I generally a person who isn't easily irritated? Who doesn't fly off the handle at the least little provocation? Am I someone who inquires about my spouse's day? Makes him a priority? When my husband thinks about seeing me at the end of a long day, does he look forward to getting home?

Chad and I spend a fair amount of time counseling couples who are having marriage struggles. One thing I often find myself telling these couples is simply to be nice to each other. No one wants to come home to find a grouchy husband or an irritated wife. We all want to walk into the door of our homes at night knowing that we're walking into a pleasant place, where we are loved and supported and listened to.

Not every night is going to be loads of fun and wildly memorable. But, with just a little bit of thoughtfulness and effort, most every night really can be a pleasant and encouraging experience. People sometimes comment about how much Chad and I seem to like each other. And, it's true. We are friends, and we treat each other as such. Of course we have said things that were unkind. We have spoken in tones that weren't so sweet. But, for the most part, we enjoy being together because when we're together we are having fun. Not Nerf-gun-battle fun, but fun.

Now is the perfect time to examine yourself and decide, "Would I want to come home to me?" If the answer is no, it's time to make some changes and become the kind of spouse that is pleasant to be around. I think you would be surprised what a difference it can make in your marriage! ■

***Melissa Edgington** is a pastor's wife, a former English teacher, and a stay-at-home mother of three children. This article originally appeared on her blog yourmomhasablog.com and is used here with permission.*





FINE ARTS WEEKEND

Aldersgate Christian Academy hosted its first-ever Fine Arts Weekend on March 10-11. This



event gave high school students from several Christian schools the opportunity to gain valuable musical instruction under the expertise of both campus and guest musicians. The event also introduced a number of new students from surrounding schools and churches to our campus.

RÉSUMÉ WORKSHOP

Many thanks to Cheryl Comparativo, Director of the Academic Resource Center, for organizing an informative résumé workshop for students on March 16! A panel of experienced leaders comprised of Dr. Aaron Profitt (GBS Vice President for Academic Affairs), Rebecca Kelley (development officer and GBS trustee), Michael Kelley (financial analyst and GBS adjunct professor), and Maria Stetler (GBS Director of Institutional Advancement) provided students with résumé-building and interview-preparation tips.

BLOOD DRIVE

GBS held its annual blood drive on March 20. Organized by the Student Council and hosted by the Hoxworth Blood Center, this was a wonderful opportunity for our campus family to give back to the



President-Elect Loper donates blood.

community. Forty volunteers donated or attempted to donate, and 26 units of blood and platelets were collected.

SENIOR BANQUET

The annual senior banquet was hosted at the beautiful Rolling

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist Family," and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.

DEATHS



Viola V. Pratt, 87, of Sabina, OH, passed peacefully on Monday, March 6, 2017. Born in 1929 in Xenia, she was the daughter of Samson and Bertha (Newland) Hilderbrant. Viola was a devoted homemaker and a member of the Sabina Church of Christ in Christian Union. She was involved in home missionary work with The Appalachian Project, and was a part of inner-city missions and community work her entire life. Viola is survived by her children, Brenda Jo, Robert, Connie, Dale, Yolanda, Regina, Virginia, Rebecca,

Melissa, and Denise. (Denise and husband Gary Mitchell both work at GBS.) Viola is also survived by several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren; and sisters, Elizabeth and Judy. Funeral services were held at the Sabina Church of Christ in Christian Union, Rev. James Slaughter officiating. Interment followed at Sabina Cemetery.



Rev. Forrest Edgar Tyler, 82, of Shelbyville, IN, went home to be with the Lord on Monday, March 20, 2017, at Major Hospital in Shelbyville, IN. He was born August 28, 1934, in Lamar County, TX, a son of the late James Elbert and Beatrice Ella (Tubbs) Tyler. After graduating from McGregor High School, he earned a BA and a ThB from Bethany Nazarene College. On April 5, 1960, he married the love of his life and faithful companion in ministry, Dorothy Lorene Manning.



Meadows Ranch in Lebanon, OH, on March 24. Everyone enjoyed wonderful food and fellowship while honoring the graduating class of 2017. Highlights included games, music by Renee Muir, and President Avery's prayer over the seniors. A good time was had by all.

HILLTOP IVORIES

Nearly sixty students, faculty, and guests performed in this year's Hilltop Ivories piano concert on March 28. Hosted by the Division of Music, the event featured a lively variety of piano solos, duets, and

quartets. The division is grateful to Mrs. Martha Miller for organizing this event and coordinating with groups and teachers. You can view a video of the program at www.gbs.edu/ivories2017.

MARC SANKEY JOINS STAFF

Marc Sankey has joined the GBS staff as Vice President for Constituent Relations. He graduated from GBS in 1994 (BRE), then pastored the Franklin, OH, Bible Methodist Church before becoming a missionary to Mexico under the auspices of Bible Methodist Missions. He later served as vice president of Evangelistic Faith Missions.



Marc and his wife Melodie (Miller) (BA '94) have three sons, Jordan, Cameron, and Logan. We welcome the Sankeys to the campus family!

EASTER EGG HUNT

On March 28, about 40 campus children roamed the south lawn of the Standley Administration Building looking for hidden Easter eggs. This event was hosted by the Division of Educational and Professional Studies whose personnel had hidden the many colorful, plastic eggs. Among those that were filled with candy were also several gold eggs which could be exchanged for prizes. Truth be told, the hunt was enjoyed by the adults as well as the children, as many parents eagerly snapped pictures of their participating little ones. ■



Rev. Tyler was a minister for 40 years, pastoring churches in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Indiana, and Michigan. He was also a college professor at Covenant Foundation College, Greenfield, IN, for fourteen years; and Academic Dean at Union Bible College, Westfield, IN, for seven years. Rev. Tyler was a communicator who loved people. His passion was young people and teaching them how to live and have good relationships with their spouses, often using his marriage of almost 57 years as an example. He was patient, reasonable, conscientious, careful, and disciplined. He lived his life with purpose. When able, he and his wife enjoyed traveling to see family.

Those left to cherish Forrest's memory include his loving wife of nearly 57 years, Dorothy Tyler; three children, Deanne, Lora, and Jeffrey; a grandson, Andrew; four siblings, Virgil, Herbert, Lois, and Janice; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at the Bible Holiness Church, Shelbyville, IN, with Pastor Joseph Smith officiating and the Reverends Darrell Stetler and Rollin Mitchell assisting. Burial followed in Forest Hill Cemetery in Shelbyville. ■

We Want To Hear From You!

Please submit information for inclusion in "Revivalist Family." In addition to the standard announcements of births, marriages, and deaths, we especially encourage alumni to keep us informed about major life changes, books written, new positions taken, retirements, etc.

Revivalist Press, 1810 Young St., Cincinnati, OH 45202
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NICHOLE BARR

In February, Hope International Missions held a commissioning service during the annual Sea Breeze



Camp at Hobe Sound, FL. Two GBS graduates were commissioned by HIM President Sid Grant.

Nichole Barr, an Intercultural

Studies and World Missions graduate (BA '12) will be going to Mongolia on August 21. Until that time, she will be involved in deputation services, after which she will be in language school in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, for her first year on the field. Nichole will be teaching English and working with English/Bible clubs.

JANNA CRESSMAN AND FAMILY

Janna (Hooker) Cressman is an Elementary Ed. graduate (BA '01) and GBS adjunct professor with an MEd from Mount Vernon Nazarene University (2007). Janna, her husband Wesley, and



three-year-old daughter Ella arrived in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in February after spending a year at

the Rio Grande Bible Institute (RGI) language school in Edinburg, TX. They will be training national workers involved in education.

A group of people from the Tiloarque congregation, where the



commissioning weekend

MAY 19-21

commencement

Saturday, May 20, 10:00 a.m.

reflections on 22 years

Sunday, May 21, 10:30 a.m.

Outgoing President Michael Avery

installation

Sunday, May 21, 3:30 p.m.

Incoming President Rodney Loper

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Cressmans will be based, greeted them at the airport. The congregation also prepared a great Honduran meal to welcome the Cressmans to their new home.

The Cressmans are thankful for the prayers of their supporters as they transition to a new culture. Little Ella was quoted as saying, "I am excited, but a little scared."

BRENNAN AND IVON MUIR

In 2013, Brennan (BA '10) and Ivon (Garcia) (BA '11) Muir left GBS where Brennan had worked in the Facilities Department. After a year of language school (RGI), they moved to the mountain village of San Gabriel in southern Oaxaca, MX. They are engaged in wide-ranging work of supporting numerous local churches through youth and children's ministry, teaching classes in music and English, working with musicians to enhance and lead worship, and preaching.

Their work requires extensive traveling, often over roads that are too dangerous for their fourteen-year-old vehicle with 220,000 miles.



The GBS family took up the challenge of raising funds to purchase a Toyota 4Runner, an SUV especially suited to their needs. Faculty,

staff, and students raised more than \$9,400 and Bible Methodist Missions also contributed, bringing the current total to over \$13,000. However, approximately twice that amount is needed.

Brennan, Ivon, and nine-month-old Brennan Alexander returned to the U.S. to begin deputation in April. To contribute to this project, send a check to GBS with "Muir Vehicle" in the memo line, or call the school at (513) 721-7944 and speak with the Business Office. ■



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AGE	RATE*
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75	5.8%
80	6.8%
85	7.8%
90+	9.0%

Two-Life Rates

AGE	RATE*
65 - 65	4.2%
70 - 70	4.6%
75 - 75	5.0%
80 - 80	5.7%
85 - 85	6.7%
90+ - 90+	8.2%

* Effective Rates as of November 1, 2016



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MAY 29 - JUNE 2, 2017

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by Sonja Vernon

ARE YOUR FEET WASHABLE?

"[Jesus] got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.... Peter said to Him, 'Never shall You wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.'" —John 13:4-5,8 NASB

It's easy for me to be judgmental of Peter. I'd like to think that I would quickly have submitted to the Savior with His basin and towel. But, truthfully, I probably would have done the same thing Peter did. Letting someone serve us can be a very humbling experience. We Americans seem especially prone to this mentality. We are so self-sufficient, so individualistic, so proud of our independence that we often open ourselves to undo stress, depression, anxiety, and other ailments simply because we refuse to ask for help. We feel embarrassed to allow someone else to "wash our feet," to open ourselves to such vulnerability, to feel needy. In my case it took a heart attack to show me the depth of my fierce independence. Not until I was truly helpless did I realize how entrenched my pride and self-sufficiency had become. I was comfortable in the role of nurturer, but I balked at allowing others to nurture me. Today I am still learning the art of allowing others to "wash my feet," but I am finding the blessing that comes when I do. By humbling myself and admitting my neediness, I open myself to grace from God and His people, and I experience freedom from the prison of my ego. I challenge you to do the same! ■

Sonja Vernon is Dean of Women at God's Bible School and College.

MAY 2017

Dear Phil

UNION WITH CHRIST

You mentioned in Sunday school that union with Christ is the basis of our justification as well as our sanctification. Why don't more people talk about union with Christ? —Shelley

Dear Shelley,

I suspect union with Christ did not get much attention in most preachers' systematic theology classes. What a shame! It is foundational to salvation, sanctification, the Church, and even eschatology. My friend and colleague, Dr. Steve Oliver, wrote a fine dissertation on this subject, which bears extensive quoting. He writes, "Election, justification, redemption, and eternal life are all found in Christ. Believers are reconciled to God and are the righteousness of God in Christ; anyone not in Christ is not saved.... Union with Christ involves the entire Trinity, bringing one into union with the Father (1 John 3:24) and the Spirit (Rom. 8:9) as well as the Son. The Spirit is the One who initiates and witnesses to union with Christ (Rom. 8:2, 15-17), and Christ and the believer share the same Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21).

"The New Testament contains five main metaphors for union with Christ: manna, the vine and branches, the body of Christ, marriage, and the Temple or a building. The manna metaphor emphasizes the new life that union with Christ provides (John 6:49-58), while the vine metaphor presents Christ as the

ongoing source of spiritual life and growth (John 15:1-8). In its various contexts, the body of Christ metaphor pictures the relationship between believers (1 Cor. 12:12-27; Rom. 12:4-5), the authority of Christ as Head (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23), and the life that Christ provides for the body (Eph. 4:11-16). The marriage metaphor presents the need for a holy life (2 Cor. 11:2) as well as the close relationship between Christ and the believer (Eph. 5:22-33). The building metaphor sometimes focuses on corporate growth (Eph. 2:20-23; 1 Pet. 2:4-5) and other times on God's dwelling with or in believers (2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 3:12; 13:6).

"Every phase and aspect of the Christian life involves union with Christ. Growth in the Christian life comes through union with Christ (John 15:2). The moral obligations of the Christian life relate to union with Christ (1 Thess. 4:1; 5:18).... The blessings that the believer enjoys are in Christ (Eph. 1:3) or in the believer as Christ is in the believer (1 John 4:16). The experiences of Christ are reflected in the lives of believers, so that salvation is "death with Christ to sin" (Gal. 2:19-20), the righteous life of believers is sharing Christ's resurrection life (Rom. 6:4), suffering is "sharing the sufferings of Christ" (1

Pet. 4:13; Rev. 1:9), and dying is being "conformed to His death" (Phil. 3:10). Believers now possess the life of the eschaton as a result of their union with Christ, and death does not end this union. They will experience closer and deeper union throughout eternity. In union with Him, their bodies will be "conformed to His glorious body" (Phil. 3:21), they will inherit all things (Rev. 21:7), will rule with Him (Rev. 2:26-27), and will bring eternal glory to the Father (Eph. 3:21).

"When we recognize that salvation is obtained only through union with Christ's death and resurrection, we also recognize the utter absurdity of salvation by works. Our works express our union with Christ: they certainly do not accomplish it. Similarly, progressive sanctification—growth in grace, in knowledge, in love, and in faith—is growth in union with Christ. The all-too-human attempt to use works alone to achieve a higher level of spirituality is futile.... A life of sin is inconsistent with union with Christ's resurrection (Rom. 6) and thus indicates a lack of union with Christ (1 John 3)."

To expand on Steve's last point, Romans 6 teaches that our union with Christ has broken sin's power over us. Experiencing freedom from sin is the personal application and appropriation of what is already ours in Christ! As we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God and yield ourselves as obedient servants to God, we enjoy the victory over sin that Christ has already won. No wonder Paul says, "Blessed be the God...who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings...in Christ!" ■

Blessings,
Philip

A. Philip Brown II is the graduate program director and a member of the ministerial faculty at God's Bible School and College.



MISSION REJECTS FEDERAL FOOD DONATIONS

The Bethesda Mission located in Harrisburg, PA, has served the homeless community for 102 years. However, it is no longer accepting food donations from the federal government because of new regulations that prohibit the mission from offering prayers before meals. The executive director of the facility said that food recipients are not required to pray or participate in religious services in order to be fed. However, the organization's objection to the regulation is about the principle. Therefore, they will no longer accept food donated with those conditions attached. Thankfully, the roughly 1,000 pounds of food per month that the mission had been receiving from the USDA, is only about 0.5 percent of the food the shelter gives out monthly.

STATUS OF NUCLEAR FAMILY

Rasmussen Reports finds that 92% of American adults still believe it is "important" for children to grow up in a home with both parents, with 70% who consider it "very important." The fact that these are higher than previous surveys shows that the nuclear family model is still strong in America. Also, 68% believe children who grow up in a home with both of their parents have an advantage over children from a single-parent home. Nearly 75% still believe it is

important to be married before having children. Lastly, 70% say being a father is the most important role for a man to fill in today's world, and 59% say the same of women and motherhood.

NEW UMC GROUP FORMED

A group of clergy and laity within the United Methodist Church have created "The Wesleyan Covenant Association" with the goal of seeking to go in a theologically conservative direction. The group held an inaugural one-day conference in Chicago, IL, that was attended by over 1,800 people. One of the leaders of the WCA remarked, "I am convinced God is doing a new thing among those of us who claim the historic, Orthodox, evangelical, Wesleyan expression of our faith."

ABORTIONS HIT RECORD LOWS

According to a new report from the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the number of abortions in the U.S. has now dropped below one million for the first time in more than four decades. Given reports that about 50% percent of abortions are repeat abortions, that means the number of women who have abortions each year is probably closer to 500,000 or even below. Those who are pro-life interpret these statistics as the result of grassroots efforts to save lives by providing counseling, information, and assistance. ■



student focus

ILYSSA MYERS of Nicholson, PA, decided to attend God's Bible School because GBS has a "phenomenal music program." Also, while at GBS she is able to take classes at the University of Cincinnati without paying any additional tuition.

Being at GBS changed Ilyssa "in so many ways that it is hard even to put into words.... I have been able to see tremendous growth in every aspect of my life: From my relationship with God, how I approach ministry, and my love for others, to how I view myself."

While being trained for musical ministries, Ilyssa is also a Court Appointed Special Advocate, working with children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. She hopes to continue that ministry. "I want to be able to show them who Jesus is, give them a family, help them work through their disappointments and questions, and push them to reach their God-given potential." ■

Seventy-five percent of our students receive some form of financial aid which enables them to attend GBS. If you would like to support students with financial needs, you may send a gift to:

Student Fund
God's Bible School and College
1810 Young Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

or give online anytime at
www.gbs.edu/givenow



— Called Unto Holiness —

In this space we use writers both past and present to discuss various aspects of Christian holiness.

A DEEPER DEATH TO SELF

by George D. Watson

There is not only a death to sin, but, in a great many things, there is a deeper death to self after the soul has been sanctified. This deeper crucifixion is the unfolding and application of all the principles of self-renunciation which the soul agreed to in its full consecration. Job was a perfect man, and dead to all sin; but in his great sufferings, he died to his own religious life; died to his domestic affections; died to his theology—all his views of God's providence; he died to a great many things which in themselves were not sin, but which hindered his largest union with God. The very largest degrees of self-renunciation, crucifixion, and abandonment to God take place after the work of heart purity. There are a multitude of things which are not sinful; nevertheless, our attachment to them prevents our greatest fullness of the Holy Spirit and our amplest cooperation with God. Infinite wisdom takes us in hand, and arranges to lead us through deep, interior crucifixion to our fine part, our lofty reason, our brightest hope, our cherished affections, our religious views, our dearest friendship, our pious zeal, our spiritual impetuosity, our narrow culture, our creeds and churchism, our success, our religious experiences, our spiritual comforts; the crucifixion goes on till we are dead and detached from all creatures, all saints, all thoughts, all hopes, all plans, all tender heart-yearnings, all preferences; dead to all troubles, all sorrows, all disappointments; equally dead to all praise or blame, success or failure, comforts or annoyances; dead to all climates and nationalities; dead to all desire but for Himself. There are innumerable degrees of interior crucifixion on these various lines.

In contradistinction from heart-cleansing, this finer crucifixion of self is gradual; it extends through months or years: the interior spirit is mortified over and over on the same points till it reaches a state of divine indiffer-

ence to it. A great host of believers have obtained heart-purity, and yet, for a long time, have gone through all sorts of "dying daily" to self before they found that calm, fixed union with the Holy Ghost which is the deep longing of the child of God. Again, in contradistinction with heart-cleansing, which is by faith, this deeper death to self is by suffering. This is abundantly taught in Scripture, and confirmed by the furnace experience of thousands. Joseph was a sanctified man before being cast into prison; but there the iron entered into his soul (see Ps. 105:18), and by suffering he reached the highest death of self. There are literally scores of Scripture passages, like Psalm 71:19-21, teaching that the upper ranges in the sanctified state are wrought out through suffering. Perhaps the most remarkable passage of the Word on this subject is in Romans, fifth chapter; the first verse teaches justification by faith, the second verse teaches full salvation by faith, and verses three to five teach a deeper death and fuller Holy Ghost life by tribulation. When the soul undergoes this deeper death of self, it enters into a great wideness of spiritual comprehension and love; a state of almost uninterrupted prayer; of boundless charity for all people; of unutterable tenderness and broadness of sympathy; of deep, quiet thoughtfulness; of extreme simplicity of life and manners; and of deep visions into God and the coming ages. In this state of utter death to self, suffering, sorrows, pains, and mortifications of all kind are looked upon with a calm, sweet indifference. Such a soul looks back over its heart-breaking trials, its scalding tears, its mysterious tribulation, with gentle subduedness, without regret, for it now sees God in every step of the way. ■

George D. Watson (1845-1923) was a Methodist pastor, evangelist, and author. This selection is adapted from *Soul Food, Revivalist Office*, 1896, pp.11-13.



LESSONS IN OBEDIENCE

PART 1

by Allan P. Brown, Chair

GBS Division of Ministerial Education

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-14

Genesis 22 gives us a rare chance to look on as someone's character is put to a heart-wrenching test. The story is short and the characters are few: God, Abraham, and his only son Isaac. But their story teaches us many lessons. Let's watch as God tests Abraham to determine the depth of his loyalty and obedience.

[1] And it came to pass after these things, that God did [test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

[2] And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Here we find Abraham and his family in the southern-most end of Israel, somewhere between the towns of Beersheba and Kadesh-Barnea. The land currently belonged to the Philistines, but Abraham had the permission and blessing of Abimelech, the king of Gerar, to stay in that territory.

"These things" in verse one refers to chapter 21 which records three main events in Abraham's life: (1) the miraculous birth of Isaac; (2) the banishment of Hagar and Ishmael; and (3) the Covenant between Abimelech and Abraham concerning a disputed well. Abraham was then a wealthy, powerful man who was enjoying watching his son Isaac grow into manhood.

We're not sure exactly how much time passed after the covenant with Abimelech before God spoke to Abraham. The only clue we have is in verse five when Abraham refers to Isaac as a "lad." The same word is used of Ishmael in Genesis 21:12, who at the time was 16 years old. So it seems reasonable to guess that 12-14 years have passed and Isaac is a young teenager. And now God hands Abraham a test. Why did God choose to test him? For that matter, why does God choose to test us?

LESSON #1: God tests us to help us grow and become more like Christ.

This is the first lesson we need to learn because all of us **will** be tested. Peter writes, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Pet. 4:12). James tells his readers to "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials]" (James 1:2).

Yes, the Bible is clear. All of us will be put to the test. But why? Let me share with you two main reasons:

- To expose the areas of our lives that need improvement, and to refine our character like a precious metal in the fire (Deut. 8:2-3).
- To build the spiritual muscle of endurance so that we will be able to persevere to the end (James 1:2-4).

Tests are intended to make us more like Christ. When we choose to trust and obey, in spite of the pain and heartache, we grow and our character is refined.

LESSON #2: God cares about us and the things that are dear to our hearts.

Did you know that God is not insensitive to our feelings? Our English translation of verse two lacks the tenderness that comes across in the Hebrew. I think we often picture this booming voice from heaven calling down to Abraham.... That's not how it was. God knew what He was asking of Abraham; He knew it was the most heart-wrenching command Abraham could ever be given—so God softened His command by phrasing it as a personal request. This is how it would have sounded to Abraham: "*Please* take your son, your only son, whom you love...."

Notice those extra phrases describing Abraham's feelings for Isaac: "your only son, whom you love." Now Isaac wasn't Abraham's *only* son; he had another—Ishmael. But Isaac was the son of promise and the son of Sarah. God wanted to show Abraham that He knew the intimate relationship between father and son. He knew how deeply Abraham loved Isaac.

And that love, of course, gave the test its bitter edge. How would you respond to such a request?

Let's just pause here for a moment and focus on this scene. Let's watch Abraham with sympathy and uncertainty—will he obey? What will he *do*?

[3] And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his [donkey], and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

Wow! You can't help feeling admiration and amazement as you read those words—to watch as a man faces the greatest challenge his faith has ever encountered, and see him respond in simple obedience. I find myself thinking, "I wonder what I would have done?"

LESSON #3: We must obey God without delay.

How long did Abraham wait before he started out on his journey? Did he say, "God, give me a month, and then I will go and sacrifice my son to you." No, Abraham obeyed without delay. How many of us delay in our obedience? Friends, when God asks us to do something, He shouldn't have to ask twice. There is no substitute for instant obedience.

Abraham got up early the next morning, but I doubt it was because he was eager to begin the day. I rather think it was because he hadn't slept much that night. Yet he got up and began preparations for the journey. Did you notice that verse three is filled with verbs—verbs of obedience. Abraham "rose," he "saddled," he "split" wood, he "arose and went." Abraham loved God, was fully surrendered to Him, and was proving it with every step he took.

At first glance these verses seem so cold and detached—no sign of emotion from Abraham. But wait! God is telling this story—what greater words of praise could God give than to speak of Abraham's simple obedience. God is emphasizing what is most important to Him—obedience to His commands!

And so they started their journey—Abraham, Isaac, and two young servants set out north toward the mountains of Moriah. Actually, Abraham and Isaac were walking toward Jerusalem—walking toward the place that would one day be the place where the Lamb of God would be offered as a sacrifice for our sins. Abraham was unaware of this, but God wasn't. And that makes the story all the more meaningful to us as we read it today.

[4] Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

[5] And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the [donkey]; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

Three days. Three days of walking beside a son you knew you were soon to sacrifice—not watching from a distance, but up close, with your own hands bringing the knife up to cut his throat. What agony of soul Abraham must have suffered. Few narratives in the Old Testament pull at your heart as this one does. Yet, strangely enough, the story gives us no hint of Abraham's true thoughts and feelings.

Have you ever wondered what Abraham was thinking during those days of traveling? The text in Genesis leaves us in the dark in this regard. It's not until almost 2000 years later, in Hebrews 11, that God finally pulls back the curtain and reveals to us what filled Abraham's mind as they made their way north toward the mountains.

[17] By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

[18] Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

[19] Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

LESSON #4: We must anchor our faith in the person and promises of God.

Each day as the mountains drew closer, Abraham was thinking about God's promise. He knew God promised that it would be through Isaac that his descendants would come, and they would be as numerous as the sands of the sea. He also knew the person of God—that what God said, God **would** do. But now this same God was asking him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering; how then could the promise be fulfilled? The only possible way was the resurrection of Isaac from the dead. And that's what Abraham believed God could do!

That is why Abraham told his servants that he and Isaac would return to them. Did you notice that in verse five? Abraham wasn't lying to them in order to conceal his true purpose; Abraham was convinced that if Isaac was offered to God, God would bring him back from the dead.

What do we do when life's circumstances seemingly contradict God's promise? How do we respond when we watch everything we expected God to do disappearing before our eyes? Do we question God? Do we question His goodness? Abraham's faith was anchored in the rock of God's word, and when the storm was upon him and the cable strained, his trust in God held him fast! And so it must be with us. We must believe that God will do what He has promised, no matter what impossibility may stand in the way. ■

(to be continued)



BARNACLES

by President-Elect Rodney Loper

While living in Florida, I noticed that occasionally boats had to be pulled from the salt water for maintenance. It really didn't matter how new a boat was or what material it was made of. If it had been in salt water for any length of time, barnacles would have collected on the underside of the vessel.

Distantly related to crabs and lobsters, barnacles attach themselves to various things under the surface of the water. To the boat owner, they are a nuisance. As they attach themselves to the bottom of the vessel, over time they can actually impede its maneuverability. Though small, they cause big problems.

Every so often these boats must be "dry-docked." That process exposes the underside of the watercraft, providing easy access to the barnacles. The job of removing them can involve hammers, putty knives, or other instruments. Why go to all this trouble? To restore the ability of the vessel to maneuver as it was designed.

Every now and then, the Lord asks me to dry dock my spiritual vessel. When this happens, what is under the surface is revealed. All the little, and sometimes not-so-little, "barnacles" are exposed—unseen and perhaps even unknown, until the skillful hands of the Holy Spirit begin this sometimes painful, yet always helpful, process. He reveals actions, motives, responses, attitudes, frustrations, ill feelings, hurts, and disappointments—issues that hinder my walk with Him. While the process is sometimes unpleasant, embarrassing, and humbling, it is needed. You see, in the rush of life, things (the Bible calls them cares) build up and impede our spiritual maneuverability.

Not only are these "issues" taken care of, but we are also groomed and graced by the Holy Spirit.

Far too often we "get saved and entirely sanctified," and we rest on our laurels. We justify ourselves by pointing over our shoulder at some experience in the past. Friends, the Christian life is not to be lived in the past tense! Christianity is a present-tense religion! We are to be daily walking in step with the Spirit—allowing Him to do His work in, on, and through us! A surrendered life is more than a trip to the altar; it's more than a doctrine on paper—it is a way of life. Holiness is lived out in work clothes, in board rooms, on social media, and in front of our family!

For the sincere children of God, there is a desire to allow Him to groom, guide, and grace our lives. We must remain submitted and yielded in the hands of the Master Craftsman as He shapes us into the sea-worthy vessel He wants us to be. ■



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