

GOD'S REVIVALIST

June, July, August 2019

and Bible Advocate



KINDNESS



about this issue

KINDNESS

What if someone were described to you as being “hardworking, warm, practical, and determined”? How would you perceive that person? Chances are you would have some good initial impressions. Why? Words matter. While “hardworking” is thought of as a positive trait, “warm” carries much more power. In fact, some personality traits are so strong that they tend to color our perception of other traits.

Researchers in the psychology of personality refer to these as “central traits.” When “warm” is placed amongst other traits, it tends to have a positive effect on the entire array of traits—indeed, even to how the person possessing those traits is perceived. Including “warm” tends to signal the presence or absence of other traits. A “warm” person would probably be “generous” instead of “stingy,” etc. Now place the trait of “cold” in that same list—“hardworking, cold, practical, and determined. It sounds like a different person. Often it is. Just look at “hardworking and determined.” If these are possessed by a “warm” person, this could well indicate someone who is dedicated to the task, someone who can be trusted. For the “cold” person, this could mean that you should keep your eye on him, as he quite possibly might cut corners and ignore ethics in order to complete the task at hand.

First, let me say that Christians ought to be “warm” people. Possessing “warmth” makes them more approachable and better positions them to help those in their circle of influence. Christians also ought to be “nice” and “kind.” In fact, I would say “kindness” is a central trait for Christians.

I remember a supervisor once challenging me about an interaction I had with a coworker. My response was, “Christians ought to be nice. He is not nice.” Blunt, but true!

I guess we need to ask God periodically to assess how we interact with others and how they perceive us. Do we come across as “warm,” “kind,” and “loving”? Do others see us as easy to work with? Do we try to get along with others, even when we disagree?

The profile of personality traits varies from person to person, and we all have areas of strength and weakness. However, it is our responsibility to work with the Spirit in allowing the proper fruit to mature in our lives and be enjoyed by others. Kindness is one of those fruits. —KF ■

CONTENTS

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2019
Volume 131 No. 5

FEATURES

Kindness: Habitual Christian Generosity	5
by Larry D. Smith	
Kind Hearts Are The Gardens	7
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	
Kindness Matters	7
selected quotations	
Kindness Changes Everything	8
by Stephen Witmer	
2019 Commencement Address	18
by Sonja Vernon	

DEPARTMENTS

The President's Page	3
Letters To The Editor	9
News From The Hilltop	10
Revivalist Family	10
Revivalist Pulpit	19
Called Unto Holiness	21
Dear Phil: A Biblical Response	22
World Pulse	23
Student Focus	23
Alumni News	25
Thoughts For The Quiet Hour	27

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God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate (ISSN 0745-0788) is published monthly except for combined issues in January-February and June-July-August for **\$12.00 per year (\$28.00, Canada; \$60.00, other countries)** by the Revivalist Press of God's Bible School, College and Missionary Training Home, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. Periodical postage paid at Cincinnati, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER: send address changes to God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.**

God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate, the official organ of God's Bible School, is a magazine founded by Martin Wells Knapp in July of 1888. We seek to proclaim the good news of salvation; to stir a revival spirit among Christians; to stimulate Christian growth and responsible Christian living; to present the happenings and interests of God's Bible School.

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the president's page



BE YE KIND

by Rodney Loper, President

We tend to think of kindness as being nice, having a pleasant expression, getting along well with others, or doing good. While these are expressions of kindness, I believe that kindness is much deeper. Kindness is listed as a fruit of the Spirit and must therefore be spiritual in nature.

Kindness in its truest form is an expression of God's heart. Scripture makes this clear when it commands us to "be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32). So when you are kind and forgiving, you are acting like God acts.

Divine kindness is conveyed in God sending His only Son to redeem sinful man. We call it love, mercy, favor, compassion, tenderness, gentleness, and grace. All of these words help us to understand the scope of kindness. It can be summed up simply as "true love's expression." In 1 Corinthians 13—the "Love Chapter"—we learn that one of the descriptors of love is kindness.

KINDNESS CAN BE PAINFUL

Kindness can be painful, and it isn't always easy to embrace. There will be times when kindness is a conscious decision to be made—we choose to be kind...even if it is painful. A parent says "no more candy" to spare the child from cavities or too much sugar consumption; a surgeon inflicts a wound to cure a larger problem; We hold a child firmly while the doctor injects a needle. While pain is present, it is only to ensure a greater good. Jesus looked at the scribes and Pharisees and condemned their loveless, empty, self-centered religion. Painful? Yes, but

His condemnation was only an attempt to shake them from their religious complacency.

KINDNESS DOESN'T VARY WITH CIRCUMSTANCES

Many people use the action and statements of Jesus to the scribes and Pharisees as justification for being unkind. They have deceived themselves into believing “this is just who I am” is sufficient justification for being mean, demeaning, rude, and/or degrading. There is never a time and place for a Christian to leave kindness behind. Kindness is more than a spirit; it is also an action. How then can we express this fruit of the Spirit?

KINDNESS SHOULD BE “NATURAL” FOR CHRISTIANS

For the Christian, kindness should be a natural expression. Kindness is at the center of a Christian's life. We live in a world where kindness goes a long way. We never know what our coworker is facing. We see smiles that are glossing over pain. When we show kindness, we are showing Christ's love to the world, and it really doesn't matter if our actions are reciprocated. This should not, and cannot, be our motivation.

The early Church father Augustine, in reflecting on his conversion, credits the kindness of a pastor. Augustine left the rural setting to live in a large city and fell in with the wrong crowd. He lived a wild and dissolute life, becoming involved in many things which almost destroyed him. But one day he heard a preacher, and, though he did not particularly appreciate his preaching, he was intrigued and went to hear him again. As a result, that preacher was able to lead him to Christ. This is what Augustine wrote of this pastor: “I began to love him, not at first as a teacher of the truth, which I despaired of finding in the church, but as a fellow creature who was kind to me.” What an open door kindness can be!

KINDNESS IS A CHOICE TO BE MADE

Kindness is a choice. In Colossians 3, we are given a long list of attributes that we are to put on as Christians. Included in this list is the injunction to put on kindness (v.12). The idea is that we wear these attributes like a cloak. The thought is similar to “getting dressed” in the original language. We put on our garments. We are confronted with many opportunities ei-

ther to show kindness, or indifference, or worse. How do we respond when a person does or says something with which we do not agree? How do we respond when our patience is put to the test?

Clothing says a lot about a person. The way people are dressed can indicate that they are policemen, firefighters, nurses, doctors, or pilots. Can a person look at the way we conduct our lives and determine by our actions that we are Christians? Is kindness such a part of who we are that it is obvious to those with whom we interact? You see, it is in these moments—in the daily grind of life—that we are required to put on kindness...every day—both good days and bad days.

Pause for a moment and think about those who have shown you kindness. Think with me about the kindest person you know. Most of the time, those whom we recall are not the ones who have done big extravagant things—it is those who have repeatedly shown kindness in every situation in life. These individuals have chosen to “put on” kindness.

CONCLUSION

When I was a young minister, I had the privilege of pastoring some of God's finest children. One older gentleman, Max, was as Christlike as anyone I have ever known. I spent a good deal of time with him as we worked together on many projects related to the church. I would use that time to soak in as much wisdom as I could from him. One day he told me a story of when he was a younger Christian. There was an elderly person in his church whom he looked up to. Everything in this man's life seemed to point to Christ. One attribute was especially attractive to Max—his kind demeanor. When Max expressed that he wanted to be a sweet old man like him, this elderly saint replied with great wisdom, “If you want to be a sweet old man, you have to be a sweet young man first.”

I have thought of this story many times since. It is so easy to believe that it is okay to wait until later in life to become what God wants us to be. Satan would like us to believe that we can wait until the kids get older, a painful situation is past, or when we move into retirement. Later. Later we can learn these lessons and practice these behaviors. But that is the enemy's trick to keep us from ever being and behaving as God intends. God's plan is that we put on kindness today. Yes, today!

My prayer is, “Lord, help me to embrace today what will make me be more like You tomorrow!” ■

**This elderly
saint replied with
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KINDNESS

Habitual Christian Generosity

by Larry D. Smith

“On the pen of Paul, and as a fruit of the Spirit,” writes W.E. Sangster,* kindness “is a strong and noble word. It is love in its smaller manifestations, and love is the first fruit of the Spirit and the basis for all the rest. To be kind is to be loving in the briefer contacts of life”—that is, in the simple, every-day details of ordinary life, as well as in its more dramatic moments. So basic is kindness as an attribute of a true believer that one “might as well speak of a ‘square circle’ as an ‘unkind Christian.’” In early Christianity, as the famous British scholar adds, “pagans sometimes confused the words ‘kindly’ and ‘Christ’ because they were so much alike...but as Tertullian justly remarked, they were so allied in meaning that no harm was done in the confusion.”

By way of further explanation, Sangster tells us, kindness “has been described for English ears as ‘a constant feeling in us about our *kind*—a resolute recollection of our one-ness with our race as objects of the love and mercy of God: the moving out of supernatural love to our fellow-travellers on life’s hard and flinty road.’” In other words, Christian kindness is altogether about how as Christ’s representatives we treat other people as He would have treated them; and in addition to Sangster’s definition of it as “love in its smaller manifestations,” we may further describe kindness with such words as “a warm heart,” “affection,” “gentleness,” “compassion,” and “benevolence.” It is fascinating to note that the *Wesley Study Bible* insists that kindness reflects “an attitude of generosity” and that goodness, another of the Spirit’s fruit, is “kindness in action.”

True Christianity is always ethical—that is, it is always insisting that its true believers be consistently and con-

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2019



stantly opposing what is wrong, and, like the Lord Jesus whom they love and serve, be going about doing good. Like Him, they love righteousness and hate iniquity; and their entire lives are spent in spirited advocacy of the first and forthright conflict with the second. As the Holy Spirit directs and empowers them, they throw themselves energetically into the massive crusade to bring the whole cosmic order to acknowledge the crown rights of Jesus. Good works prompted by love for God flourish in their lives, not indeed as meritorious acts to earn their salvation, for that is the free gift of divine grace, but as their glad response offered as a reply to that gift. As our Methodist forebears used to say, we are not saved by our works, but neither are we saved without them!

These works, pleasing to God and produced in the lives of all true Christians by His Spirit, are dramatically profiled for us by St. Paul in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Galatians. This stands as a vigorous protest against selfish life centered in the “flesh,” and a vibrant testament to Christly life controlled by the “Spirit.” The contrast could not be more decisive. We are either following the dictates of the one or of the other, and the great apostle gives us two contrasting lists of actions, attitudes, and attributes that spell out the difference. On the one hand are the “works of the flesh”—an ugly lot, which includes various sexual offenses, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, heresy, envies, murders, drunkenness, all of which would disqualify one from inheriting the Kingdom of God.

How beautiful then is the opposite list of the “fruit of the Spirit,” which is as follows: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Love, of course, is first, for it is both foundational and fundamental to all the others, prescribing, defining, and applying them to the realities of our existence. Without question these are activated by the Holy Spirit who creates them, all centered in divine love, and making believers like the Lord Jesus whom they love.

Fifth in this lovely harvest of the Spirit is kindness, defined, as we have seen, as “loving in the briefer contacts of life,” and otherwise explained as an attitude of habitual generosity prompting believers to treat other people as Our Lord Jesus would have done. No Christian virtue is more essential to our work and witness as followers of Him. If there is anything in our lives that will attract others to Him, it is His gentle kindness displayed in us to everyone—the feeble and the strong, the poor and the rich, the despised and influential—in all the struggles and surprises of human life.

“See how they love one another,” remarked their pagan neighbors of the early Christians, as they noted the fruit of the Spirit directing their lives in their gracious treatment of one another. The Roman emperor

Julian the Apostate, moreover, declared that believers wanted to care kindly not only for their brothers and sisters in Christ, but also for the suffering pagans around them. Together with a bold witness for their crucified and risen Savior, kindness was the invincible weapon the first Christians used to bring the Roman Empire to kneel in surrender before His cross. So the saints—those blessed believers of exemplary Christian virtue—have brought Jesus into their world by their perpetual kindness reflecting “an attitude of generosity” both to those who deserve it and to those who do not.

In vivid contrast are those shrivelled professors of religion whose occasional attempts at kindness are only play-acting, often betrayed by a grumpy, cantankerous, self-serving disposition which breathes nothing of the atmosphere of heaven. It is no wonder, then, that John Wesley is quoted as having said, “Sour godliness is the devil’s religion.” How blest to walk the highway of holiness with the saints whose gentle love “suffereth long and is kind”—always unselfish, always forgiving, always extending others the benefit of the doubt. “Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” How miserable, though, to live with those whose piety is “sour godliness,” whose kindness may be demonstrated by occasional splurges of altruism, but whose usual pattern is nagging their family members, complaining about their church officials, and gossiping about their neighbors. Remember the Pharisees whose rigid forms of external religion were merely a cover for their lack of godly love in their miserable treatment of others.

But the saints—yes, the real flesh-and-blood saints—show us that Christianity is more than idealistic advice, and that the universal kindness that it enjoins is made possible by the Holy Spirit recreating them in Christ and producing His lovely fruit in their lives. Thus they bring grace and hope to this shattered and embittered world, pointing to the fullness in glory that will consummate all our suffering here. Sangster points especially to Livingstone and Wilberforce in their great crusade against the horrors of slavery. We could add the names of many other loving, valiant saints, whose kindness brought light where before there was only darkness. The great English scholar’s words are trenchant. “Nothing so much as the kindness of God’s servants could interpret His own tender heart to those intermediate generations or witness to them as they suffered without hope on earth that there was still hope in heaven.” ■

* Sangster, W.E. *The Pure in Heart*, The Epworth Press, 1955.

Dr. Larry D. Smith, retired GBS instructor and former editor of *God’s Revivalist*, lives in Cincinnati, OH, with his wife, Carol (Wiseman) (‘78 BA).

Kind hearts are the gardens,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the flowers,
Kind deeds are the fruits.

Take care of your garden
And keep out the weeds,
Fill it with sunshine,
Kind words, and kind deeds.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) was an American poet educated at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, ME, and a professor of English literature at Harvard.



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“Teaching Holiness to New Christians”

October 22-24

on the Campus of God’s Bible School

KINDNESS matters

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“If you want to be holy, be kind.” —Frederick Buechner

“As unkindness has no remedy at law, let its avoidance be with you a point of honor.” —Hosea Ballou

“A good man is kinder to his enemy than bad men to their friends.” —Joseph Hall

“You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson

“A kind heart is a fountain of gladness, making everything in its vicinity freshen into smiles.” —Washington Irving

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.” —Mother Teresa

“Kindness is more than deeds. It is an attitude, an expression, a look, a touch. It is anything that lifts another person.” —Neil Strait

“I choose kindness.... I will be kind to the poor, for they are alone; kind to the rich, for they are afraid; and kind to the unkind, for such is how God has treated me.” —Max Lucado

“Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.” —Mark Twain

“Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate.” —Albert Schweitzer

“He that is kind is free, though he is a slave; he that is evil is a slave, though he be a king.” —Augustine

“Kindness is the noblest weapon to conquer with.” —Thomas Fuller

“With the help of grace, the habit of saying kind words is very quickly formed, and when once formed, it is not speedily lost.” —Frederick W. Faber

“The first thing a kindness deserves is acceptance, the second, transmission.” —George MacDonald

“If I treat people with the same courtesy and kindness I would like to be treated with, it may change some people, but the person it changes most is me.” —Steve Groll

“Kindness does not require us to be blind to facts or to live in fancies, but it does require us to cherish a habit of goodwill, ready to show pity if sorrow appears, and slow to turn away even if hostility appears.” —Alexander MacLaren

“The greatest thing a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some of His other children.” —Henry Drummond

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2019



KINDNESS

CHANGES *everything*

by Stephen Witmer

Kindness is underrated. We equate it with being nice or pleasant, as though it's mainly about smiling, getting along, and not ruffling feathers. It seems a rather mundane virtue. But the Bible presents a very different, and compelling, portrait of kindness.

Kindness Is Supernatural

When Paul laid out his case to the church in Corinth that he was a true apostle, he did so by detailing the trials he endured for the sake of the gospel, the inner spiritual life God granted him despite this suffering, and the God-produced spiritual fruit in his life (2 Cor. 6:1-13). Surprisingly, kindness made his list of spiritual fruit. "You want proof I'm an apostle?" he said, in effect. "Okay, here it is: I'm kind."


True kindness is Spirit-produced (Gal. 5:22). It's a supernaturally generous orientation of our hearts toward other people, even when they don't deserve it and don't love us in return. God himself is kind in this way. His kindness is meant to lead people to repentance (Rom. 2:4), which implies they haven't yet turned to Him and are still His enemies.

We imitate God's kindness, therefore, by loving our enemies. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil" (Luke 6:35 ESV). Our kindness reflects the heart of our Father. "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32 ESV).

Kindness may not be pleasant. In fact, it may feel more like a blow to the head. "Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it" (Psa. 141:5 ESV). Jesus called the Pharisees a brood of vipers. That wasn't pleasant, but it was kind, because Jesus was exposing their sin. A kind physician cuts deep to get your cancer.

Kindness Is Powerful

In her memoir about the journey from being a committed lesbian to a committed Christian, Rosaria Butter-



Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Letters should be emailed to revivalist@gbs.edu or addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of God's Revivalist nor those of the administration of God's Bible School. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense.

The Lord and you are doing a great job. It is good to see fruit from former students. Those are treasures that do not rust and cannot be stolen. After 42 year of teaching, I have "retired" from the classroom and now help my husband in a prison ministry.

ELNORA RATCLIFF GRANT
Sarahsville, OH

Editor's note: Elnora Ratcliff Grant (BA '67) was GBS librarian (1965-80 and a member of the college faculty (1968-80). During that time, she was married to the late Dr. Charles Ratcliff, chair of the Arts and Sciences Department and registrar.

I just picked up the November 2018 issue again and remember your dad and mom [Elmer and Betty Farmer, p.10] from the early 1960s when we attended the church your dad pastored in Fayetteville, WV. When I was in eighth grade, I had the terrible flu. Your dad came over, sat by the bed, and prayed for me. It still brings tears. I went on to earn my PhD and pastored for 44 years in the Church of the Nazarene. I was converted under James W. Adcock in 1967.

HORACE SMITH
Logansport, IN

I really enjoyed the article by James Plank ["Peace," April 2019]. I find it so amazing that God has a plan for us and can give us peace in our souls and victory over all sin.

NICK BLACK
Cincinnati, OH

I have been dealing with some stressful situations and President Loper's article "Be a Peacemaker" [April 2019] was a big help. Thanks for addressing a tough topic in a very scriptural way.

BILL MARSHALL
Cincinnati, OH

field* says that, as a non-Christian, her impression of evangelical Christians was that they were poor thinkers, judgmental, scornful, and afraid of diversity. After publishing a critique of an evangelical Christian group in her local newspaper, she received an enormous volume of polarized responses. Placing an empty box in each corner of her desk, she sorted hate mail into one and fan mail into the other.

Then she received a two-page response from a local pastor. "It was a kind and inquiring letter," she says. It had a warmth and civility to it, in addition to its probing questions. She couldn't figure out which box to put the letter in, so it sat on her desk for seven days. "It was the kindest letter of opposition that I had ever received." Its tone demonstrated that the writer wasn't against her.

Eventually, she contacted the pastor and became friends with him and his wife. "They talked with me in a way that didn't make me feel erased." Their friendship was an important part of her journey to faith.

Are We Kind?

The biblical witness and Butterfield's testimony should make us wonder how we're doing. Are we generously inclined toward those around us, or do we think and speak harshly to, or about, them?

For some, watching sports or talent shows (like *The Voice*) provides an opportunity for airing harsh opinions on physical appearance, ineptitude, or lack of talent. Verbal slashes too easily become part of the entertainment itself.

For others of us, the daily commute becomes the crucible of kindness. Am I generously inclined toward other drivers, including the guy who just cut me off and the other one who's tailgating me? Some of us have to admit that we too often twist the verbal knife of cruel sarcasm, saying what we don't mean in order to drive home more deeply what we do.

Kindness is no small thing. It yields marvelous fruit both in our lives and the lives of those around us. "Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor" (Prov. 21:21 ESV).

We open ourselves to the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit when we ask Him to produce in us kind hearts that overflow through kind lips. ■

* Googling "Rosaria Butterfield" will lead to various articles and videos describing her conversion and subsequent ministry.

Stephen Witmer is the pastor of Pepperell Christian Fellowship in Pepperell, MA, teaches New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and helps to lead Small Town Summits, which partners with The Gospel Coalition New England to serve rural churches and pastors. He and his wife, Emma, have three children. This article first appeared in desiringGod.org and is used here with permission.

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2019



09



classes, divisional time, a parent/sponsor session, and recreation, the event schedule was packed. About 20 guests even joined members of our campus ministry teams downtown, handing out bottled water and gospel tracts and staffing a prayer station. The closing chal-



VIP Day guests rehearse with the College Choir

2019 VIP DAY

VIP Day 2019 was a tremendous success! 159 potential students graced our campus for our college open house on Friday, April 26. With campus and city tours, mini



VIP Day classroom session with Dr. Allan Brown

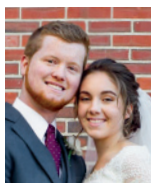


VIP Day guests enjoy game night

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.

WEDDING



Abby Gresham (HS '18) to Josh Loper (2016-18), March 23, 2019, at First Baptist Church, Hamilton, OH, officiated by Rev. Rob Loper (Josh's father) and Rev. Steve Gresham (Abby's father). Josh works for Crown Equipment Corporation of Bermen and also owns his own landscaping business, Loper Landscaping. Abby is employed at Chick-fil-A and will be attending school in the fall. The Lopers reside in Colerain Township, in the greater Cincinnati area.

BIRTH

To **Bethany (Cravens) (HS '11, AA '14) and David Frederick III (HS '09, AA '11)**, a boy, **Conner Mark**,



born April 28, 2019, at Community Hospital, Anderson, IN. David is a funeral director at Sproles Family Funeral Home, Anderson, IN, and Bethany is working at Community Hospital as an Obstetrics Clinical Support Specialist. Conner is welcomed by his older brother, Channing (2). The Fredericks live in New Castle, IN.

DEATHS



Winfield Poe, 91, passed away February 1, 2019. He was born in 1928 to Pearl and Myrtle Poe in University Park, IA. Winfield struggled with dyslexia, but one of his teachers taught him to read after school hours. This drove him to work very hard, and his grades began to reflect his determination and dedication. He eventually wrote six books. As an evangelist, Winfield traveled to 32 states and 15 countries, with 37 years spent in Haiti, where for 20 years he was direc-



VIP Day prayer around the Adcock Chapel altar

lenge was delivered by President Loper, and several attendees went forward to the altar for prayer. The Enrollment Team hosted a "game night" and felt it went amazingly well! We expect to see many VIP Day guests as new students this fall!

LOCK-IN

The annual Student-Government-sponsored Lock-In was held at The

Web in West Chester, OH. From 11:00 PM to 3:00 AM, Friday, April 12th, GBS students, family, and friends had exclusive use of the facility. They participated in bumper car racing, arcade games, a climbing wall, laser tag, miniature golf, and bowling, and enjoyed pizza and drinks. A good time was had by all.

CHAPEL MEDIA PROJECT UPDATE

Phase three of the chapel media project was completed just in time for the closing events of the school year. This involved relocating three main speakers that had been placed in a cluster in the middle of the auditorium. Unfortunately, this had been creating some "dead spots" along the side areas of

the chapel due to both speaker misplacement as well as wave cancellation caused by output overlaps. After separating the three speakers and repositioning two of them to better locations, the entire system was retuned.

The last and most expensive phase involves relighting the entire platform area. We are thankful that the initial three phases are now complete and fully paid. If you would ➡



tor of the Holiness Pilgrim Mission. Winfield also pastored churches in Missouri, Arkansas, Indiana, and South Dakota, preaching many camp meetings in the United States and Canada. In later years, he also worked as a Chaplain at Ozark Community Hospital, Gravette, AR.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Laura (Heathman) Poe; sons Theodore and James; sisters Ethel Curtis and Mary Thompson; 4 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great-grandchildren. The funeral was held at the Bella Vista Funeral Home Chapel, Bella Vista, AR. Burial followed at Hillcrest Cemetery in Gravette.



William Crosley, Jr., 88, of New Palestine, IN, went home to be with his Lord and Savior April 8, 2019. He was born in 1930 in Fortville, IN, to Will E. and Bertha (Hennis) Crosley. Bill graduated from Fortville High School and devoted nearly 40 years of service working as a systems analyst programmer at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, IN. He was also very active with the

Independent Nazarene Church of New Palestine and enjoyed vegetable gardening, fishing, and traveling with family. Bill also stayed busy helping family and friends with their taxes and managing his rental property.

Bill is survived by his wife of 63 years, Myrna (Pigg) Crosley; 2 sons, Steve and David; daughter Barbara Hood; 7 grandchildren; and 9 great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at Flanner Buchanan-Washington Park East Funeral Home, Indianapolis, IN. Burial followed in Washington Park East Cemetery.

William's son, David (BRE '87) is a current member of the GBS board of trustees. David earlier served at GBS in academic administration, first as principal of the elementary school (1991-02), and then as principal of the entire academy (2002-07) when the elementary school and high school merged to become Aldersgate Christian Academy. His wife, Tamarah (Huber) (BA '87) served as his administrative assistant during those years.

Robert M. "Bob" Pratt, 70, of Washington Court House, OH, went home to be with his Lord and ➡

➡ like to help us reconfigure the lighting of the chapel platform, contact Ken Farmer by phone (513.763.6650) or by email (kfarmer@gbs.edu).

GBS WELCOMES JANANNE STETLER

Jananne (Glick) Stetler is the new GBS Admissions Counselor replacing Mica Terrian (AA '17), who is leaving that position to prepare for her upcoming marriage to Josh Klotz (HS '13).



Mrs. Jananne Stetler

After attending Hobe Sound Bible College (2010-11), Jananne returned to her hometown of Westfield, IN, where she worked at Compliance-dashboards (Indianapolis, IN) as an account manager for six years.

In November of 2015, she married Kent Stetler (BA '15), who was serving as GBS student recruiter at that time (2013-17), becoming the current registrar in 2017. After moving to Cincinnati, she enrolled at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, working toward a degree in cardiovascular diagnostic medical sonography. Jananne is the daughter of Jerald (BA '83) and Becky (Burrell) (1979-83) Glick, Westfield, IN.

MUSIC DIVISION ENDS YEAR WITH CONCERTS

The Music Division ended the spring semester with several presentations.

TRUSTEES AFFIRM LOPER PRESIDENCY



During its semi-annual meeting in May, at the close of Pres. Rodney Loper's second year in office, the GBS Board of Trustees unanimously voted to extend his term of administrative service another four years.

On Thursday, May 9, 2019, at 7:00 pm, in the Adcock Memorial Chapel, the Oratorio Choir, directed by Mr. Tim Crater and accompanied by Mrs. Martha Miller (piano) and Ms. Jessica Smith (organ), performed "Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs," inspirational selections by various American composers. Featured vocal soloists included students Autumn Quesenberry and Erica Biggers, while Josue Diaz (cello) and alumna Katrin Crater

REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ Savior, April 28, 2019, at his home surrounded by his loving family. He was born on July 24, 1948, to Robert Dale and Viola (Hilderbrandt) Pratt. After graduating from high school in 1966, Bob earned a Master of Theology degree from International Seminary, Plymouth, FL.



He was the owner and operator of Pratt Construction and was subcontracted by the Columbus Zoo. He attended Heritage Memorial Church and had previously established the Wesleyan Holiness Church on Washington Waterloo Road, where he served as pastor and founder of their day school. He enjoyed fishing, working, helping others, and loving his family and grandchildren. He was a devout Christian who spent many hours reading and studying the Bible.

Survivors include his loving wife, Belinda (Bogard) Pratt; children Jodi, Rob, John, Aaron, and Janessa; siblings Brenda, Connie, Denise, Dale, YoLande, Ginny,

Jeannie, Becky, Missi; mother-in-law, Wilma Bogard; special brother-in-law, Danny Bogard; 16 grandchildren; several nieces, nephews, cousins, a host of friends and his trusted canine companion Socrates. The funeral was held at Heritage Memorial Church with Rev. Joseph Duvall officiating. Burial followed at the Washington Cemetery.

Bob's sister, Denise (Pratt) Mitchell (BA '04), is the resource room director at GBS, and her husband Gary (BRE '84) is a technician in the facilities department. One of the last times Denise and Gary visited Bob, he asked them to sing "It Is Well with My Soul." Denise said, "He raised both hands in testimony as the tears ran down his face. I am so glad that he is no longer in pain and that I know I will see him again!"

Rev. Calvin Richard Sones, 85, of Wellsville, PA, went to be with Jesus while surrounded by family at his home on May 11, 2019. Calvin was born in 1934 to William Leroy "Roy" and Sovilla Jane (Wagner) Sones of

(violin) were featured in accompanying roles as well. Some of the repertoire was later featured as an encore prelude to the Sunday evening service of Commissioning Weekend.

On Tuesday, May 14, 2019, at 7:00 pm, in the Adcock Memorial Chapel, the Division of Music presented "An Evening with the Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble," an entertaining program of concert music. The performance featured a 56-piece orchestra directed by Mr. David Hartkopf and accompanied on piano by Ms. Jessica Smith. The SWSE was joined by the Aldersgate Christian Academy (ACA) Advanced Band for an arrangement of music from *Ben-Hur*, which was conducted by Mr.



Mr. Tim Crater directs the Oratorio Choir in "Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs"



Katrin Crater and Josue Diaz



An Evening with the Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble

Michael DeStefano, GBS music faculty member and ACA band di-

rector. In addition, the performance also featured horn soloist ➡



Tyrone, PA. He was saved at the age of 19 and several years later received a call to preach. Calvin attended GBS, graduating with a Bachelor of Theology degree in 1961. Three months later, he married Wanda Cranor (GBS 1955-61). Together, they pastored from 1961 to 1975 in the Oil City Conference of the Free Methodist Church (Marienville, Mayburg, and New Castle, PA) and Calvin also served as the conference youth advisor. From 1975 to retirement in 1995, they pastored in the Alabama Conference of the Bible Methodist Church (Cordele, GA, Birmingham, AL, and Miltonvale, KS).

Calvin took great joy in spending time with his family, being outdoors, and working with his hands. He enjoyed music, whether he was singing, playing guitar, or playing his harmonica. Rev. Sones had a gift for loving people and led his congregations with a pastor's heart.

He became a mentor to many young pastors and a trusted colleague among his peers.

Calvin is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Wanda; siblings Joan, Adaline Daugherty, Fred, and Frances Fuller; son Rodney; daughter Janice Russell; four grandchildren; and many nephews, nieces, and cousins. Funeral services were held at Cocklin Funeral Home in Dillsburg, PA, with Pastor William Reese officiating, assisted by Rodney Sones, Rev. Chris Cravens, Rev. Al Sones, and Rev. Stirling Walsh. Interment followed at Dillsburg Cemetery.

Calvin's son, Dr. Rodney Sones, is a GBS graduate (BA '89) who was employed by the school from 1990 to 2003, teaching in the Music Division and serving as registrar. He is currently employed at Ohio Christian University. His wife, Rachel (Heilman) (BSM '89) also worked in various GBS offices from 1984 to 1997.

Erma Stamper, 74, of Erlanger, KY, went to be with Jesus on May 11, 2019, at Boonespring Healthcare ➡

➡ Rachel Craig, and included several alumni and guest performers from Stone City Christian Academy with their teacher, Mrs. Ronna (Hughes) Craig (BA '94).

Dr. Jana Pop, Chair of the Division of Music, expresses deep appreciation for the generosity of individuals who have contributed to the Annual Fund, thus enabling the presentation of guest clinicians throughout the year, as well as scholarships for upperclassmen to attend professional workshops and events. Persons who are interested in making contributions for the coming year should contact Dr. Jana Pop at jpop@gbs.edu or 513.763.6547.

SPRING PICNIC

While frequently held at Miami Whitewater Forest in Harrison, OH, during past years, the college spring picnic was held at a new location this time—Lincoln Ridge Park in In-



Floyd Hyatt, Sonja Vernon, and Daryl Muir at the grill

dependence, KY. On Wednesday, May 15, under mostly sunny skies and pleasant temperatures, staff and students enjoyed fellowship, a picnic lunch, and a variety of recreational sports, including softball, volleyball, flag football, disc golf, and frisbee. It was a time for relaxed interaction and refreshment following semester exams.

COMMISSIONING WEEKEND

The annual candlelight celebration service honoring the graduating college seniors marked the beginning of Commissioning Weekend. Students, staff, and visiting guests gathered on the south lawn for a

REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ surrounded by her family. She was born in 1944 to Rev. Robert and Ruth (Clem) Kendall in Trimble County, KY. She graduated in 1963 from Trimble County High



School. After school she worked at G.C. Murphy's department store in Madison, IN, and in 1966 married Marvin Stamper. Erma was a homemaker that poured her love into her two boys. She worked at Florence Christian Church Day Care for 20 years caring for infants. She was a skilled seamstress, excellent cook, and found great joy in growing flowers. Erma was a faithful member of the Gideon's International Women's Auxiliary. She loved her church family at Burlington Bible Church, where she and Marvin attended for many years.

Erma had strong connections to GBS. Marvin (HS '56) served as business manager from 1982 to 1986. Their sons Tim (HS '86) and David (HS '87) were graduates as well, and several of their grandchildren have attended both high school and college at GBS.

Survivors include her husband of 52 years; two sons, Tim and David; 12 grandchildren; a sister, Sue Webb; as well as many nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at Burlington Bible Church, Burlington, KY, Rev. Darrell Stetler officiating. Burial followed at Mt. Gilead Cemetery in Carthage, KY.

HITHER AND THITHER AMONG US

GBS congratulates Union Bible College on receiving initial accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE). UBC was recognized for achieving this milestone at the ABHE annual meeting in February. At the same meeting, Allegheny Wesleyan College received reaffirmation of its accreditation.

Along with AWC and UBC, Hobe Sound Bible College, Kansas Christian College, Kentucky Mountain Bible College, Penn View Bible Institute, and GBS are accredited by ABHE's Commission, which accredits Bible colleges throughout the US, as well as in Canada and the Caribbean. These institutions also collaborate in the College Administrators Roundtable, which meets annually in Dayton, OH, during the Interchurch Holiness Convention. —*Dr. Aaron D. Profitt, Vice President for Academic Affairs*

Pastor Needed. The Pilgrim Holiness Church, 2105 Curry Road, Schenectady, NY, is seeking a full-time pastor. Candidates should send a letter of interest and a resume to: Isabelle Whitney, church secretary, izwhitney@reagan.com. Call (518) 872-7064 for additional information. ■

time of singing and testimonies. Several students were also baptized in a portable baptistry. The service culminated in a candle-lighting ceremony, as the attendees, holding small candles, passed the flame from candle to candle until the hillside was lit by the many tiny, dancing lights, each representing those who leave campus to minister in various parts of the world.

Speaker for Commissioning Weekend was Rev. James Plank, pastor of the God's Missionary Church in Beavertown, PA, and General Secretary of the Interchurch Holiness Convention.

The text for his opening sermon on Thursday evening, May 16, was Mark 6:45-51, the account of the disciples caught in the storm, struggling



2019 College Graduates of God's Bible School



Allyson Robertson's baptism



Go light your world!

2019 GRADUATES* OF GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL, COLLEGE, AND MISSIONARY TRAINING HOME

HIGH SCHOOL

Elisabeth Cramer
Kimberly Derby, Salutatorian
Mark Gordon
Jedaiah Harlan
Jewel Hailu
Mihret Haileysus
Abebe Lema
Brandent Mills, Valedictorian
Sofija Nikolovska
Aaron Wilson
Rodney Scott Loper

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN GENERAL STUDIES
*Matthew Lawrence Burcaw **
Curtis Stephen Epp
Kaitlyn Elizabeth Fourman
Kendra Alysha Herron
Brayden Kent Jeffries ***
Peter John Linko
Monica Lee Payne
Holly Lynn Scott
Abigail Marie Stitt
*Danette Melynn Teed ***
Hannah Marie Walker *

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN BIBLE AND THEOLOGY
Joshua Christian Walker

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS IN GENERAL BUSINESS
Clara Jean Geerligs
Martha Joy Wegener **

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
Gabriela Montero Hernández

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN MINISTERIAL EDUCATION
Nicholas Scott Adams

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN MUSIC MINISTRY
*Heather Dawn Kessen, Valedictorian ****
Jonathan Kent Leach
Moses Levi Robertson
Sarah Lea Smith *
Austin Benjamin Wireman
Catherine Rose Woodard

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
*Charles Allen Chapman III, Salutatorian ****
Peter Isaac Highley
Jarod Mark Mahan
Michael Lee Nelson

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN CHURCH AND FAMILY MINISTRY
*Dawn Michelle Campbell, Salutatorian ****
Rachel Renee Craig
Brent William LeClere

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN INTEGRATIVE STUDIES
Zachary R. Barkman ***
George Festus Blamoh *
Dana Renae Fourman
Christiana Rose Frederick **
Heather Dawn Kessen ***
Jordan Tyler Messner *
Denae Leann Miller *
Monica Lee Payne
Brooklynn D. Potteiger
*Wheesung Son **
Priscilla Kay Vernon
Laura Ashley Wurst **
James Matthew Young

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MINISTERIAL EDUCATION
Cory David Bishop
David Anthony Walker Jr.
Joshua Franklin Wilson

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MUSIC EDUCATION (K-12 NON-PERFORMANCE TRACK)
Jonathan Kent Leach
Judah Bahatan Yucaddi

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MUSIC EDUCATION (K-12 PERFORMANCE TRACK)
*Sarah Lea Smith **

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN TEACHER EDUCATION (ELEMENTARY)
Shernelle Latifah Thea
Princess Benjamin
Ilse Karina Castro
Gallardo
Karen Itzel Castro
Gallardo
Betsy Ann Poe
Rebecca Danielle Pohl *

★ pending completion of all course requirements
italics indicates graduates in absentia

* Cum Laude (3.50-3.79) ** Magna Cum Laude (3.80-3.89) *** Summa Cum Laude (3.90-4.00)



Commissioning Prayer



Rev. James Plank

to row. Jesus saw them, came to them, spoke to them, and calmed the storm. Rev. Plank aimed his remarks at anyone who has felt the effort of the enemy to get them to give up. Even with God blessing and working in one's life, there are times when a contrary wind makes rowing difficult. Although it might be easier to quit, the only thing to do is to keep rowing. During contrary winds, remember that you are not alone. The eyes of Jesus are upon you. He will come and still the storm. Rev. Plank reminded students that GBS can be the graveyard of dreams for those who quit. So, keep rowing!

The sermon Friday night from Galatians 2:20, examined what the remarkable statement "I am crucified with Christ" represents. The Saturday evening service began with a move toward the altar during congregational singing. The sermon was from Acts 2:1 and focused on what it actually means to be the Church today.

The Sunday morning service focused on Exodus 3, when God

talked to Moses, letting him know that He had heard the cry of the children of Israel and that He was sending Moses to Pharaoh in order to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. But Moses had serious ques-

tions about his fitness for the task. God responded by asking what Moses had in his hand (4:2). Moses replied, "A rod." God proceeded to show him what could be accomplished if Moses and his rod were offered in obedient service.

Rev. Plank acknowledged that one of our greatest fears is that we are not going to make it. Whatever we are going through right now is tough. When we are overwhelmed and the devil throws doubt in our face, we need to respond: "I don't expect that *I* can, but **God** will." Don't give up on the brink of a miracle.

The Sunday evening service began with a 30-minute musical prelude by the College Choir. As President Loper took the podium, he asked the congregation to sing, "O Come Let Us Adore Him." A spirit of worship was evident and numbers made their way to the altar to find needed help. The service closed with a commissioning prayer for the graduates and their families, as board members, faculty, and staff gathered around.

These services, including Commencement, are viewable on the GBS Facebook page.

COMMENCEMENT

College commencement took place Saturday, May 18, at 10:00 a.m. in the Adcock Memorial Chapel. President Rodney Loper conducted the service, and Mrs. Martha Miller was the organist.

Harold Fourman of Port Clinton, OH, delivered the invocation, and Josue Castro Valenzuela of Jalisco, Mexico, read the Scripture lesson. Special music, "Beyond the Open Door," was sung by graduates Josh Wilson, Priscilla Vernon, and Jon Leach. Director of Student Affairs Sonja Vernon gave the commencement address, sharing a very practical list of reminders for the graduates (see p.18). Presenting college graduates was Dr. Aaron Profitt, Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Heather Dawn Kessen was recognized as valedictorian, and Dawn Michelle Campbell and Charles Allen Chapman III were named co-salutatorians.

The GBS academic division chairs presented the following student awards: **Division of Ministerial Education** (Dr. Allan Brown, Chair): *Zondervan Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Study of Biblical Greek*, Tyler Edwards; *Oswald Chambers Ministerial Leadership Award*, Joshua Wilson; **Division of Professional Studies** (Lyle Witt, Chair): *Educated Christian Award*, Jorden Messner; *Oscar Johnson Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Service*, George Blamoh; *Stu-*



Heather Kessen,
college valedictorian

Get the NEW GBS App

After graduating from GBS (BA '16), Andrew Blankenship moved to Texas and pursued additional studies in computer programming at LeTourneau University. Recently Andrew started his own company, Andrew Blankenship Development (AB Dev), specializing in mobile applications as well as process analysis and automation. His goal is to provide affordable software for Christian organizations and small businesses. Fortunately for his alma mater, one of Andrew's first projects was developing Android and iOS apps for GBS. Both are now available free of charge in the Apple and Google stores or by going to the GBS App page: <https://www.gbs.edu/app>.

At this point, the app has only a few features, depending in which cate-

gory the user best fits (current student, alumnus, donor, *God's Revivalist* reader, etc.). Users can customize the features in the "Settings" menu. More updates and more features will be coming soon! Feedback is welcome at any time and may be submitted as indicated in the "About" section of the app.

Andrew and wife Angie (Carpenter) (BA '16) reside in Longview, TX, and are involved in the Bible Wesleyan Church (PNC) at Whitehouse, TX. Andrew works in software development at General Dynamics, and Angie is currently employed with Buckner Children and Family Services, which is a Christian organization helping to support and educate families in life skills in addition to providing adoption and other social services. ■

dent Teaching Award, Rebecca Pohl; Charles Cowman Missions Leadership Award, Heather Kessen and Zachary Barkman; **Division of Music** (Dr. Jana Pop, Chair): *Student Growth Award*, Timothy Long.

Mrs. Stephanie Owens, Director of Library Services, awarded Zachary Barkman with the Association of Christian Librarians Research Award. President Loper conferred the degrees on the graduating class of

2019, and James Kessen of Aurora, IN, offered the benediction.

ACADEMY GRADUATION

Aldersgate Christian Academy held its graduation ceremony at 7:00 p.m., May 24, in the Adcock Memorial Chapel, where Principal Timothy Makcen and GBS Academic Dean Aaron Profitt presented 11 high school graduates with diplomas.

Special recognition was offered to Brandent Mills, valedictorian, and Kimberly Derby, salutarian. Four graduates received Academic Honors Diplomas and blue-and-white tasseled cords in recognition of their excellence in academic achievement for having completed honors courses: Kimberly Derby, Mihret Haileyesus, Abebe Lema, and Brandent Mills. The ceremony also honored 13 students graduating from eighth grade to high school: Cameron Alexander, Brianna Chapman, Alex Donohue, Joseph Gichuru (valedictorian), Kamryn Glenn, Ryan Gresham, Brooklyn Loper, Jacob Mason, Wesley Mitchell, Megan O'Donnell, Micole Pickett, Kimberly Pommering, and Grant Sackett (salutarian). Retiring teacher Mr. David Reynolds was honored for 42 years of service in Christian schools (the *Hilltop 2019* yearbook was dedicated to him), and GBS President Rev. Rodney Loper gave the address, "Keep Your Eyes on Jesus." ■



Aldersgate Christian Academy high school graduates

2019 Commencement Address

God's Bible School & College



by Sonja Vernon

I am honored to be standing before you today. As I contemplated this address over the last several weeks, my thoughts have gone in many different directions, but there have been two words that captured my attention. As my mind sifted through clichés, aphorisms, and pithy sayings that I thought might grab your attention, again and again these words remained. I grappled with how to stand out, how to leave you with memorable and lofty ideas. But again, nagging at the edges of my consciousness, these two words—words that I knew would warm the hearts and stir the souls of every graduate seated before me today. And so I give you those words, the words that will guide me, will serve as my lodestar, as I deliver my commencement address. These words: BE BRIEF.... And so I shall!

In the last few years, those of you sitting before me have been privy to enormous amounts of information. Avalanches of wisdom have fallen from the lips of your professors and burrowed their way into test questions and term papers. In fact, you were likely overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude. So, I'm not sure that a few more wise words in a commencement speech will make or break you at this point, but if you will indulge me, I would simply like to share a list of reminders that I hope you won't forget. And since, after you leave, you will no longer be subjected to my daily deluge of email reminders (and assorted memes), let me leave you with a few more things I think are important, things that I believe will serve you well as you move on from this place and this time. They are practical, mostly common sense, and you probably know them already. But reminders are like that, and by now, I'm good at reminders.

Be Financially Wise

Too many people do not follow God's call because they are bound by unwise financial obligations. It is God's

job to supply, but it is ours to manage that supply. You are a steward of God's resources...so steward. Be ethical in all your dealings. Work. Save. Give. Steward. And if God grants you wealth, remember...Sonja Vernon, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH, 45202. In all seriousness, God has a lot to say about money. Let Him guide you as you use His money for His glory. And by the way, start a retirement account...soon.

Read

I know your world has recently been fraught with reading reports and reflection papers, but never stop reading. Reading even 30 minutes a day will allow you to read the equivalent of 24 books in a year. That's a pretty small investment for such massive dividends. Reading increases intelligence and empathy—both of which will enhance your effectiveness as disciples of Christ in this present world. College didn't teach you all you need to know. It simply gave you the tools to keep learning, and hopefully, opened the door to the vast amounts of knowledge still to be mined. (p24)➡



WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR? Responding with Kindness

by Robert W. Booth

Scripture: *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." —Galatians 5:22-23 ESV*

"And he answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.' But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'" —Luke 10:27-29 ESV

Introduction

Recently I read about a famous actress who was treated with harshness and disrespected online. She simply did something that many of us have done—she posted a simple update about her life on Twitter, a social media platform. Later, while scrolling through hundreds of replies, there was one that stuck out to her. An individual who was apparently not a fan of hers replied to her in a very unkind manner.

She could have either ignored him, or reacted herself with equal aggression. After all, that is the normal thing to do nowadays. But, shockingly, she demonstrated level-headed compassion. She took the time to read the Twitter feed of the man who said horrible things to her. She then kindly responded to him. He was shocked with her gracious response, and the conversation began to flow. He opened up, explaining that he'd been hardened by childhood

abuse, countless letdowns, and long-standing back injuries, which he couldn't treat due to lack of finances. He was also a drug user.

About mid-way through the conversation, this man apologized to the actress and asked her to forgive him. She did, but she did so much more. She leveraged the power of her millions of Twitter followers and found a doctor near where he lived in order to help with his back issues. She also found a rehab center that was willing to accept the individual. And she paid for it all.

As I read that story, I had two initial thoughts. First, an unbeliever who was treated very unkindly took the time to respond with kindness and generosity. Second, what would happen if believers responded in a similar manner? Don't get me wrong. I am not asking you to pay for medical bills or to find treatment centers for complete strangers. But I do wonder what would happen if we intentionally began to live out a life of kindness. Galatians 5:22 tells us that kindness is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and it is this fruit that we are going to look at in this sermon.

Who Is My Neighbor?

In Luke 10, Jesus was asked by a lawyer how to receive eternal life. Jesus responded by asking, "What is written in the law?" The lawyer replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus acknowledged that he was correct. "If you love God and love your neighbor, you will have eternal life." But the lawyer challenged, "Just a minute, Jesus, just what do you mean by neighbor? Be precise here. Who exactly is my neighbor?" Jesus then launched into the parable which is now known as the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus' parable is about a man who, while traveling down to Jericho, was attacked by robbers and left near death beside the road. He was in desperate need of help. A priest, and later a Levite, came across the injured man, but they intentionally avoided him. The point of including these two examples is pretty obvious. Both of these men were religious and would have been expected to help the injured man, but they did nothing. Their lack of kindness and mercy produced unkindness. They crossed to the other side of the road and did nothing while continuing on their journey.

Then came a Samaritan. Now Jesus is, of course, Jewish, and I am going to assume those who were listening to this parable and most of the characters in the parable were also Jewish. In the middle of this story, a Samaritan entered the scene. Perhaps you remember

that the Jews and Samaritans had a bitter history of racial and religious hatred. The injured man would not have expected any help from a Samaritan. He may not have even wanted a Samaritan to touch him; but it is this Samaritan who was moved with compassion and kindness, not the religious leaders. The Samaritan tenderly cared for the injured man. Even though they were not friends, the Samaritan showed kindness to the man.

After Jesus concluded the parable, He asked the lawyer, “So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” The lawyer did not even want to utter the word “Samaritan,” so he simply replied, “The one who showed mercy.”

“Go and do likewise,” said Jesus, just as simply.

Loving God Produces Kindness

When the lawyer asked how to gain eternal life, he already had the answer—love God and love others. We are producing fruit all of the time, and it is either good fruit or bad fruit. Loving God and living for Him produces the fruit of the Spirit. So it must be understood that, as Christians, we must exude kindness. Kindness is not an option.

Rosaria Butterfield used to be a lesbian activist and atheist. I recently read her memoir, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert: An English Professor's Journey Into Christian Faith*. [See page 8 for Stephen Witmer's perspective on Butterfield's story.] In this book, Butterfield recounts her journey to Christianity. She wrote that when she was a lesbian, her impression of evangelicals was that they were sour and unkind. She wrote an opinion piece in her local newspaper that was critical of Christians. She received an enormous amount of responses. She began sorting the letters into two different boxes as she read them. One box was for the hate mail, which was primarily from Christians, and the other box was for fan mail from her supporters.

But in the middle of reading and sorting through the letters, she received one letter that she didn't know what to do with. It was a letter from a local pastor. As she mentally prepared to place it in the hate box, she began to read it. It was one of the kindest letters that she had ever received. She struggled with knowing what to do with the letter. It sat on her desk for days. At one point she threw it away and then retrieved it, all the while struggling with what to do. She eventually contacted the pastor, and over a period of time Rosaria became friends with him and his wife. They had her over to their house for dinner, and eventually she had them over to her house for dinner as well. She said that they talked to her in a way that didn't encourage

her lifestyle, but still treated her with the respect and kindness that she deserved. Dr. Butterfield eventually gave her life to Christ and was transformed—all because someone reached out to her in kindness. This pastor and his wife believed that being a Christian meant treating people, even people who opposed them, with kindness. I wonder what would happen in this world if you and I lived this way? Loving God produces the fruit of kindness.

Conclusion

We live in a world that is full of anger, hostility, and unkindness. Sadly, both you and I have seen horrible instances of Christians treating other Christians and non-Christians with volatile unkindness that does not come from being connected to the vine of Christ. We can do better than that. We need to do better than that. We *must* do better than that.

The parable of the Good Samaritan, Rosaria Butterfield's testimony, and even the story of the actress mentioned in the introduction should make us pause—all of us. We should pause and ask God how we are doing with kindness. Are we treating those with whom we come in contact with genuine kindness? Or are we speaking and acting with harshness? As followers of Christ, we don't have to have the last word. We don't wield the knife of cruel words. Instead we have the opportunity to stop along the wayside and pick up the wounded and bind the wounds like the Good Samaritan did. We have the privilege of loving God and loving others, and putting it into practice!

Kindness not only produces fruit in our lives, it also creates a warm, friendly environment which can foster positive interactions with others. It provides opportunities to extend the hand of Christ. It leads to life-changing encounters with Christ. Proverbs 21:21 says, “Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor” (ESV).

So who are our neighbors? They live all around us. We work with them. We pass by them when we are in the grocery store. We see them when they are driving in front of us, sometimes agonizingly slowly. They interact with us on social media. They watch how we live our lives, even when we aren't aware of it. These are who our neighbors are. And how do we treat them? Well, as believers in Christ, we treat them through the power of the Holy Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit—even the fruit of kindness. ■

Robert W. Booth is the High School Administrator and a Bible teacher at Hobe Sound Christian Academy. He is also the creator of Kids Bible Travels. He and his wife Arlene have been married for 19 years, and they have 3 daughters: Kalena, Natalie, and Kyleigh.



— Called Unto Holiness —

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

PERFECT, YET PRESSING

by C.W. Ruth

In Philippians, third chapter and fourteenth verse, Paul says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and then says in the very next verse, "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." While he included himself with such "as be perfect," doubtless referring to the perfection of love, he is still on the stretch for more. While he claims Christian perfection, he is still pressing forward, and "reaching forth unto those things which are before."

Perhaps the greatest danger of all to Christians is that of resting in a past experience and taking for granted that because of some glorious experience and marvelous manifestation of the Spirit in the past, we are all right, thus settling down in a sort of complacent, self-satisfied condition. This is the beginning and explanation of much of the backsliding of the day. One could not well backslide while pressing forward.

We need ever to remember that immobility is inconsistent with our being, either mentally, physically or spiritually.... In order to retain a clear and satisfactory heart experience, there must be continual advance. It would prove fatal to regard any experience, however glorious, as a finality. Whatever the experience of the past, it should be regarded as preparatory to something better; as a steppingstone to higher altitudes of grace.

While one cannot grow into sanctification any more than one could grow into justification, seeing in either case it is a divine act—an act of God, divinely wrought—it is, nevertheless, true that after the heart has been fully cleansed from all sin, and been made holy, there is limitless and endless growth in grace, and continual advance in the deep things of God. Indeed, this is the condition and experience where the obstacles to growth have been removed, and progress may now be made by leaps and bounds. Men frequently inquire, "If you were perfect, how could you grow?" We may illus-

trate by two children: One is deformed and diseased, while the other is perfectly formed and in perfect health; which of these two children would grow most rapidly? Of course, everyone would say the one enjoying perfect health. We would answer, "What perfect health is to the body, Christian perfection is to the soul; sin is a malady, a disease of the soul; holiness is a freedom from sin; wholeness, spiritual soundness, perfect soul health." A child may be just as perfectly formed and enjoy as perfect health as does an adult, and yet continue to grow. But we must continually distinguish between growing in grace and growing into grace. As we cannot grow into pardon, no more can we grow into purity....

But it seems to me that the language of Paul denotes even more than would be implied by the term growth. He says, "I PRESS toward the mark." This denotes intensity; he is giving particular attention and diligence, applying himself, and with consecration and concentration putting forth real effort to reach a certain goal...on winning the prize. There is a sense in which one may grow without much effort, but Paul has evidently caught a glimpse of some mountain peaks of Christian experience he has not yet attained, though he has obtained Christian perfection, and as though he were on the racecourse, he presses forward for the "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This is evidently the lack and need of many of our holy people today; instead of acting as though we had all, we need to redouble our diligence, buckle the armor on a little tighter, and "press toward the mark for the prize." ■

Christian Wismer "C.W." Ruth was one of the ten founding fathers of the Church of the Nazarene, when, in 1902 he merged the Spokane, WA, holiness churches of the People's Mission into the Church of the Nazarene. This excerpt is taken from *The Second Crisis in Christian Experience* (The Christian Witness Company, 1912, pp. 105-09).

Dear Phil

IDOLATRY AS IT APPLIES TO US

I've heard messages against idol worship that consisted of anything that a particular preacher had a problem with people doing—baseball, football, hunting, fishing, etc. I teach that a god is ANYTHING that pulls your affection and allegiance away from our Holy God. I am not so sure I have the clearest explanation. I'd like your input! —Tom

Hi, Tom,

Many think of idolatry as worshipping what isn't God, but worship of idols is a result, not the root; it's a symptom, not the disease. As best I can tell, idolatry is *relying or depending on anything besides God*—for satisfaction, hope, happiness, security, success, strength, wisdom, deliverance, etc. Ultimately, the root of idolatry is unbelief that God is enough for us.

When God isn't enough, we want something besides God, so we look for it elsewhere. Wherever we look for satisfaction becomes an idol, i.e., it is in God's rightful place in our lives; and God's rightful place is being the source of all our satisfaction. Scripture teaches this in several ways. First, by how it describes idol worship. Second, by how it urges dependence on Yahweh. Third, by its identification of greed as idolatry.

Isaiah describes idol worshipers who prayed and looked for deliverance from something other than Yahweh (Isa. 44:17; 45:20; 46:7). What they wanted was safety and salvation. Their idolatry was looking for it from something besides Yahweh. Jeremiah records idol wor-

shippers who said they received "abundant food and freedom from misfortune" from the "queen of heaven" (Jer. 44:17). What they wanted was satisfaction and success. Their idolatry was looking for it from somewhere besides Yahweh. Yahweh's sad lament is "My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves ... broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13). They were relying on something besides Yahweh for their satisfaction.

Second, when God calls His people away from idolatry, He doesn't just say, "Worship only Me" (Deut. 6:13; Matt. 4:10). He calls them to trust Him alone (Isa. 30:12, 15; 31:1; 42:17). He calls them to look for salvation and deliverance from Him alone (Isa. 43:11-13; 45:21-22). He calls them to open wide their mouths to receive His bounty (Psa. 81:10-16). We avoid idolatry not just by worshipping Yahweh alone, but by relying solely on Yahweh for all that we need and all that we want. When we turn to other persons or things to satisfy our longings, we are idolaters.

Third, Scripture identifies greed as idolatry (Col. 3:5; cf. Eph. 5:5). Several versions translate Col. 3:5 as "covetousness is idolatry." As a result, it is often equated with the 10th commandment. However, the wording isn't the same. The 10th commandment forbids coveting (*epithumeo*), i.e., wanting what belongs to others for oneself (Ex. 20:17). Col. 3:5 forbids greed (*pleonexia*), which is broader than coveting. Greed is a desire for more than one needs, which expresses itself in exploiting others or selfishly withholding good from others.

In Luke 12:15, Jesus warns His followers to be on guard against every kind of greed (*pleonexia*). He illustrates this warning with the story of the rich fool who kept more than he needed. He was "not rich toward God" by sharing with the poor. In Luke 16, Jesus tells the Pharisees who were lovers of money, "You cannot serve God and money" (Luke 16:13). This statement helps us see how greed is idolatry. Persons who love and serve money don't worship money. They don't bow down to it. No, they look to money for their security (Luke 12:32-34). They rely on money rather than God to meet their needs and so don't make His kingdom their primary objective (Matt. 6:24-33). They are guilty of idolatry because they are relying on something besides God for their security and satisfaction.

People often err by calling things "idols." The problem is not hunting, fishing, etc., but how and why we use such things. If we make our life about possessions or pursuits or people, no matter how legitimate in themselves, we are idolaters. In sum, idolatry is relying or depending on anything besides God. ■

Blessings,
Phil

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



student focus

TRUST IN CLERGY HONESTY AND ETHICS AT ALL-TIME LOW

A Gallup poll of 1,025 U.S. adults last December found that only 37% of respondents had a “very high” or “high” opinion of the honesty and ethical standards of clergy, 43% gave them an average rating, while 15% said they had a “low” or “very low” opinion. The 37% score for clergy is the lowest since it began asking the question in 1977. The historical high of 67% occurred back in 1985, and the score has been dropping below the overall average positive rating of 54% since 2009.

PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL ON CHILDREN'S SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

A new study from the Barna Group found that 65% of Protestant pastors and 50% of Catholic priests believe school is a negative influence on a child's spiritual development. “Culture/society” was ranked the most negative influence with 94% (Protestant pastors) and 92% (Catholic priests). The top three positive influences, all above 90%, were parents/family, church, and Christian community.

HEARTBEAT ABORTION BANS

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed a bill (SB 23) into law in April that bans abortion when an unborn baby's heartbeat is detected, although he acknowledged legal chal-

lenges will decide its fate. The ACLU of Ohio, in fact, has said it will “fight to the bitter end to ensure that this bill is permanently blocked.” Ohio Right to Life says an ultrasound can detect a heartbeat between 8 and 12 weeks after conception. In early May, Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed a bill into law that bans abortions once a fetal heartbeat has been detected and recognizes fetuses as natural persons.

ABORTION WORKERS QUIT

The movie *Unplanned* shares Abby Johnson's journey as she rose through the ranks of Planned Parenthood. Then, after watching a doctor perform an abortion via ultrasound, she joined the pro-life movement. Within the first two weeks of the movie's release, 94 clinic workers have sought help leaving the abortion industry after seeing the movie, which was ranked number eight in the top ten during this time period.

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION NEAR GENOCIDE LEVELS

A British report ordered by Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt concluded that persecution of Christians in parts of the world is at near “genocide” levels and warns that Christianity “is at risk of disappearing” in some places. The report points to figures which show that Christians in Palestine represent less than 1.5% of the population, while in Iraq their numbers have fallen from 1.5 million before 2003 to less than 120,000. ■

REBECCA POHL decided to attend GBS after visiting the college several times. Each visit made her “more and more excited about the atmosphere on campus and the focus on passionate and practical ministry. I longed to be a part of that!”

During her four years here, she has learned “that God will always provide what I need. I have become more grounded in my beliefs. God has also given me a bigger love for others.”

Rebecca grew up near Middletown, OH, with two sisters. They learned to love the outdoors and interact with all kinds of animals. At age 10, she invited Jesus into her heart. “More than just saving me, He continued to guide me and to mold me.”

She is thankful for GBS ministry opportunities, from music ministry to street evangelism. Having graduated in May with a degree in elementary education, Rebecca will be employed by GBS in the fall and intends to further pursue options in the field of education. ■

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:

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Don't Be Too Impressed With Your College Education

It's important. Of course, it is...or the faculty and staff of this great institution wouldn't have poured their hearts and souls into your training. And, quite frankly, we've trained you well! But as I just said, it's only the beginning. And learning doesn't just take place in a brick-and-mortar classroom. View the world as your classroom and every individual as your teacher. Everyone can teach us something. Everyone. Be teachable. Stay humble. Keep learning.

Excellence Doesn't Happen By Accident

The tiny, everyday decisions you are making right now are affecting the quality of your life in 10 years, 20 years. Not *will* affect the quality of your life. They already are. You are the sum total of your everyday decisions. Make them wisely. If you want excellence later, you must strive for excellence now.

Sin Is Deadly

Run from it. I beg you. Run.

Never Forget That You Are Transient

As the psalmist said, "Lord, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am" (Psa. 39:4 NASB). You are fleeting, just a blip on the radar screen of time, but that blip can make an eternal difference.

Love People

They matter. They are all that is eternal in this world. Invest in what lasts forever. Live in the messy inconvenience of love in the real world. True love is a natural outflow of the life of Christ within us and will guide others toward the great Source of Love Himself.

Take Scripture Seriously

Study it daily. It is a means of God's grace to you. It is one of God's greatest transformative tools in the life of the believer. Let Scripture shape the way you think, the way you act. Let it take root deep in your heart and do its beautiful work within you.

Go!

Go, you beautiful, imperfect, beloved class of 2019. Go and live the gospel. Go share the blessed good news that, while sin is costly and terrible and has lasting consequences, God's grace restores and redeems and makes us new. There are no second-class sons and daughters of God. We all stand on the merits of grace alone. Pedigrees and good works and college degrees don't pass muster. We are totally dependent on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that brought us from death to life as well. And that is good news worth sharing! The Holy Son of God gave everything to reconcile us to Himself. He gave Himself, and we must give ourselves as well. So, go. Go tell it. Go live it. Go in Jesus' name. 📌

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ALUMNI CHOIR REUNION

by Joy (Bender) Barnett (BA '00)

On Saturday, March 16, 2019, a group of former choir members who had sung under the direction of Garen L. Wolf I (Music Division Chair 1976-2010) gathered for the second GBS Alumni Choir Reunion. The event was again hosted by alumni Rod (1980-84) and Joni (Lang) (1981-82) Puckett at Montgomery Assembly of God in Cincinnati, where they serve as worship pastors. The event was organized by three couples who form the Cincinnati Alumni Choir Planning Committee: Matt (1988-00) and Joy (Bender) (BA '00) Barnett, Paul (BA '81) and Robyn (Myers) (BA '82) Clemens, and Rob (BA '99) and Stephanie (Thompson) (BA '99) Ryan. A large group of over 40 alumni and friends volunteered to help staff the reunion. Participating alumni arrived from over 10 states, including Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Alabama, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. It was also a delight to have several former music staff members in attendance, including Saralynn Clouse Vaughter, Jewel Smith, and Larry and Trish Jewett.

The reunion began at 9:45 a.m. with Steve (BRE '84) and Karen (Foster) Mills (BA '85) overseeing registration and John (BA '90) and Pat (Sechrest) Neville (1985-87) serving as greeters. The host church graciously provided a delicious breakfast. Coffee was supplied by our

alma mater, allowing guests to sample the new, exclusive 1810 blend by Coffee Emporium. A memorabilia table with a variety of photographs, vintage recordings, and old choir uniforms greeted attendees. A slide show of old pictures, compiled by David Jowers, played constantly on the church media screens.

A full-day children's program was provided by Esther Byer (BA '15), as well as a staffed nursery for children under three, allowing parents to relax and enjoy the day. Lisa (Burton) Robinson (BA '02) organized the children's registration.

To begin the morning rehearsal, the group was honored to have President Rodney Loper (BRE '01) give a personal greeting. Event organizers took a moment to greet alumni who were joining with the Alumni Choir online through Facebook Live. Garen Wolf then conducted songs that had been part of the choir repertoire throughout his tenure. Martha (Madden) Miller (BSM '82) provided piano accompaniment, along with Jessica Smith

(BA '07) on keyboard. As Mr. Wolf shared his wisdom, and voices joined together in song, hands were lifted and tears flowed in praise.

Following the morning rehearsal, Brian Fink (BA '80) played a worshipful rendition of "Your Grace Still Amazes Me" on his clarinet. Then Mark Wilcox (1978-84) shared some devotional thoughts on the topic of



prayer. Former PR Director Larry Jewett and his wife Trish led choir members in a special time of congregational harmony, during which God's presence was real and precious. The group then gathered in the fellowship hall to eat a meal provided by event planners and other alumni.

During lunch time, Rob Ryan and Duane Quesenberry (BA '94) hosted "Traveling Light," with a special emphasis on trivia and stories from the bus. All of the alumni bus drivers present were honored and given a gift. Bus drivers Steve Mills and Tom Eckert (1985-89, '92) shared amusing stories from their years of driving the choir bus. Larry Jewett and Brant Luther (BA '96) kept the crowd laughing with their funny memories. Bro. Jewett shared a story about an animal on the bus, while Brant reminded the crowd what it felt like to stand on the risers at the end of choir services, wondering who was going to be your host for the night. There was a very special moment as Rob Ryan led the group in one of the songs they enjoyed singing on the bus. "I Can't Even Walk Without You Holding my Hand," rang out in beautiful harmony. A fun auction followed, with Garen Wolf serving as auctioneer. Things got

rowdy as items donated by the Wolfs, alumni, and local businesses were auctioned to help raise money to pay for the expenses of the day.

The choir members then moved back into the sanctuary for a final afternoon rehearsal. The original soloists chosen by Bro. Wolf for the songs were on hand for both rehearsals. These included Dr. Nick Pop (BA '00), Matt Barnett, Mandy (Davison) Hood (BA '09), Nathan Dahler (AA '07), Joe Hough (BA '10), and Joy Barnett. In a tender moment, Dr. Jana (Burroughs) Pop (BA '03) shared her deep appreciation for Bro. Wolf and her heart for seeing the Music Division go forward.

At the close of the afternoon, alumni children joined with their parents to sing, "Loving God, Loving Each Other." Bro. Wolf closed with a prayer of blessing over his former choir members, encouraging them to keep in touch and be supportive of each other. It was a wonderful day, connecting the Alumni Choir members together once again as a family, as they laughed, cried, shared memories, worshiped, and sang.

Pictures for the event were provided by Nick Pop, as well as various alumni. Alumni who have sung under the direction of Garen Wolf may find further information by joining the Facebook group: GBS Alumni Choir (1976-2010).

ALUMNI RECEPTION AT IHC

by Maria Stetler (BA, AA '12)

Our annual alumni reception was held Wednesday, April 24, during the Interchurch Holiness Convention in Dayton, OH. More than 400 alumni and family members gathered to enjoy a light meal, fellowship with classmates, and hear updates from campus. Vice Presi-



dent for Constituent Relations Marc Sankey welcomed our guests and introduced the brand new small group recording, *Were It Not For Grace* (see advertisement, page 24). Following this, Adoration and Assurance Quartets sang several selections from the album.

We were excited to welcome our friend Larry Jewett to the event to discuss this year's Homecoming festivities. Coordinating with the Alumni Council, the Jewetts are helping plan a 1980s-themed Homecoming, "Those Were the Days." We look forward to welcoming alumni back to the Hilltop for a very special Homecoming 2019!

President Rodney Loper informed us about various campus projects, specifically focusing on the potential acquisition of three new properties near campus. Dr. Aaron Profitt, Vice President for Academic Affairs, announced an exciting technological advancement—the development of a GBS app for both Android and iOS devices (see p.17). We are thankful for each alumnus who was able to attend and for each of our corporate sponsors who make events like this one possible (www.gbs.edu/sponsor). ■

Alumni are encouraged to email updates and pictures of their lives and ministries to Maria Stetler, mstetler@gbs.edu.

PREVIOUS PAGE, BOTTOM: Mrs. Melissa Loper poses with alumni and their new babies. PREVIOUS PAGE, TOP: President Loper explains the new GBS app. BELOW, TOP: Adoration sings a song from the new GBS recording. BELOW, BOTTOM: Alumni families fill room 305/306 at the Dayton Convention Center.



by Sonja Vernon

THE POWER OF KINDNESS

"But when the kindness of God our Savior...appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done... but according to His mercy...." —Titus 3:4-5c NASB

Do you remember the story from 2 Kings 6, when Syria's king sent an army to capture the prophet Elisha because he kept sharing Syria's military secrets with the king of Israel? When Elisha's servant saw the army surrounding Dothan, he panicked, but Elisha calmly said two prayers—the first for his servant's eyes to be opened to see the mountains filled with horses and chariots of fire, and the second for the eyes of the army to be blinded. Both prayers were answered, and Elisha, posing as a helpful bystander, led the confused army to "safety" in Israel's capital city of Samaria. When God opened their eyes, the soldiers were terrified. But here's my favorite part of the story: Elisha instructed the king of Israel to feed them and send them home! The last part of verse 23 demonstrates the power of that kindness: "And the Syrians did not come again on raids into the land of Israel." Kindness accomplished in minutes what years of fighting had failed to do.

In Galatians 5:22, God calls His children to the same kindness that God showed when He sent Christ to save us. This had nothing to do with our worthiness. Titus 3:3 is a powerful reminder of who we were without Christ—foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved, hateful. Yet into that reality, the kindness of God appeared and accomplished what judgment never could. Are you living God's kindness today? Whose narrative does God want to change through you? ■

Sonja Vernon is Director of Student Affairs at God's Bible School.



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