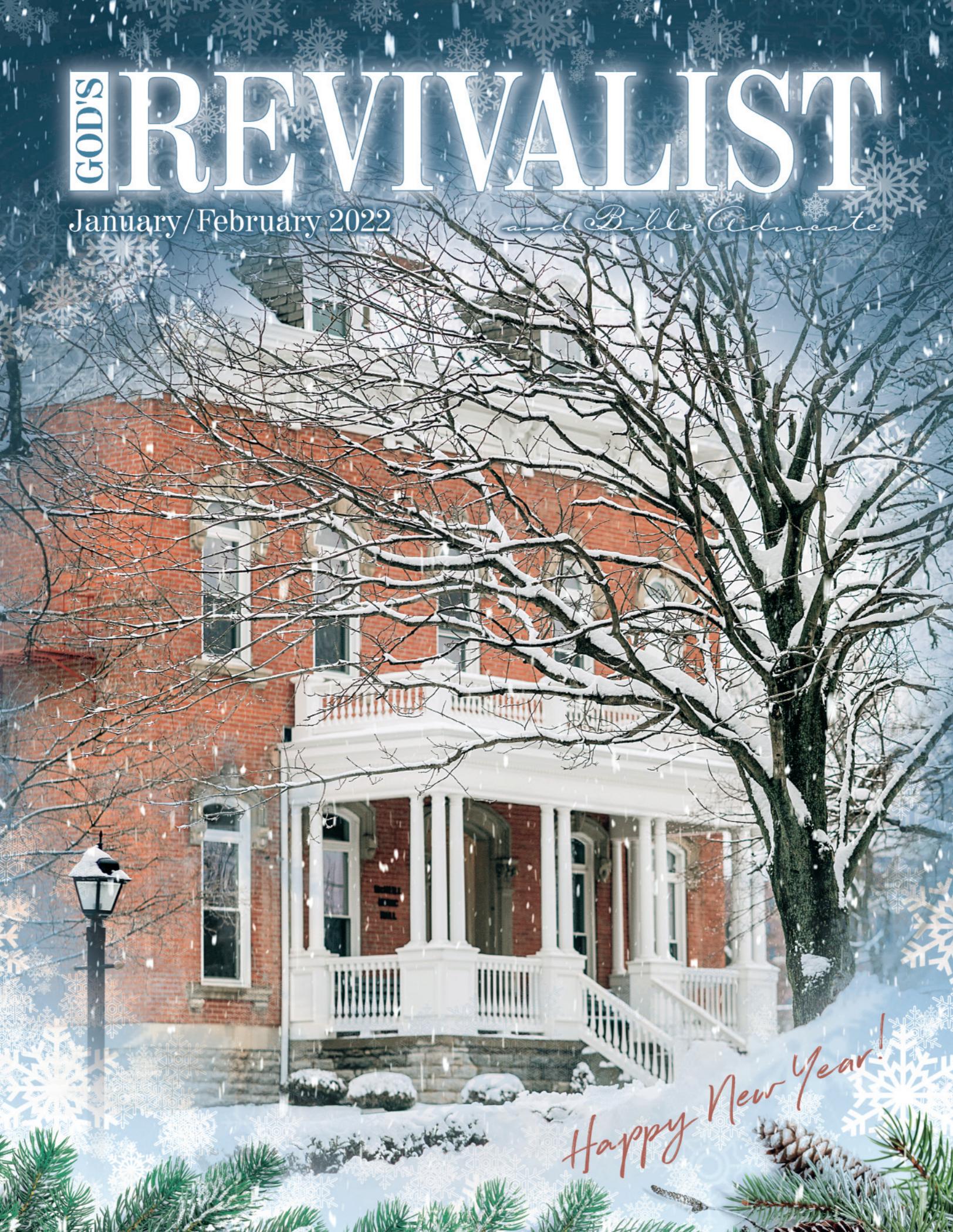


GOD'S REVIVALIST

January/February 2022

and Bible Advocate



Happy New Year!



thinking out loud

OLD WARRIORS NEEDED

I didn't know much about W.L. (Lester) Boone until a year or so ago. Yes, I knew he was a *God's Revivalist* contributing editor back in the 1970s and '80s; but that was about it. Then, I received a letter from him extending greetings and sharing an item he had written. Several such letters followed. This evolved into phone calls and emails. The more we corresponded, the more I learned about Lester. He grew up in the western states, earned three degrees at Colorado Springs Bible College, spent 64 years in the pastorate, was a general evangelist, and wrote several books and countless articles for *God's Revivalist* and other publications. But what most impressed me was how focused he was on ministering, even as he was getting close to 90.

On July 13, Lester told me that the Lord had entrusted him with a huge prayer list. He would set aside the hour between 3:30 and 4:30 each morning and pray in "sections." "An aging mind has not abetted this," he wrote, "but intercession has been entrusted to both my wife and me. I wish more of God's children could catch the vision of intercessory prayer, particularly retired Christians. It is such a huge need in the church!"

One of the "sections" of his prayer time primarily focused on Christian inmates, because for many years he had been writing to inmates. Another "section" of prayer was for every lost soul on earth. "This arose because God helped me see that because He shed His blood for every lost soul, I had the right to pray daily for each lost soul."

In addition to this prayer ministry, he also continued writing and speaking. I was glad when he told me that his latest book had just gone to press, but I was more excited when he said, "Tomorrow morning the Lord will help my old mind find a place on my prayer list for you, your precious wife, and family. You have a big job. God will continue to help you do it!"

Lester suddenly passed away on August 27 (see GR November 2021, p.25; also note pp.5, 18, this issue). Just before his death he had been active in the camp meeting he attended each year, helping around the altar and preaching his last sermon.

So, another old warrior is no longer with us. Who will step up and take his place? —KF ■

CONTENTS

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2022
Volume 134 No. 1

FEATURES

The Greatest Love by W.L. Boone	5
Downstream by Sandy Mayle	6
Keeping Time With God (Part 4): Lent by Larry D. Smith	8
How Clear Is Clear? by Johnathan Arnold	21

DEPARTMENTS

The President's Page	3
Letters To The Editor	7
News From The Hilltop	10
Revivalist Family	10
Dear Phil: A Biblical Response	16
World Pulse	17
Student Focus	17
Called Unto Holiness	18
Revivalist Pulpit	19
Thoughts For The Quiet Hour	23

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COVER: God's Bible School's McNeill Music Hall in winter. Main photo by Rachel Pohl. Additional photos/art ©iStock: robertsrob; MiljaPhoto; karandaev; igoriss

PAGE 2 PHOTO: ©iStock: Angie Photos

the president's page



FASTING AND PRAYER: Duty or Delight?

by Dr. Rodney S. Loper, President

We live in a time when there is no lack of resources available to Christians. At our fingertips we have Bible apps, devotional apps, websites, and a host of other helps. These are in addition to ALL the available books. If you google best-selling Christian books, you will find a long list of titles to motivate us to become better Christians.

This encourages my heart. I am excited at the easy access that the world has to Bibles, devotionals, and other Christian related materials. I am also encouraged about the seriousness that many of you have in your passion to do what God has called you to do.

But sometimes what we *don't* see or hear can be as enlightening as what we *do* see and hear. I recall an exchange in a Sherlock Holmes mystery in which Holmes refers to “the curious incident of the dog in the nighttime” during a robbery. A fellow detective, confused at Holmes’s comment, responds that “the dog did nothing in the nighttime”—to which Holmes responds, “That was the curious incident.”

J.I. Packer pointed out that when Christians meet, they talk to each other about their Christian work and Christian interests, Christian acquaintances, the state of the churches, and the problems of theology—but rarely of their daily experience of God.

We spend little time focusing on the inner realities of fellowship with God. Do sermons contain much sound doctrine—but little relating to the relationship between the soul and the Savior? It seems we do not spend much time dwelling on the wonder that God and humankind have communion at all! I am afraid we make it plain that communion with God is a small thing to us.

Think about it. Where are the passionate conversations today about communing with God through fasting and prayer? It has morphed into a

photo by Shane Muir

duty—a means to an end instead of a delight! We seem to find it easier to talk about OUR plans and what WE want to accomplish rather than what the power of God is doing in and through our lives.

Friends, apart from dependence on and desperation for God, not only will we miss the ultimate point of our life and our call, but we also will neglect the ultimate need of our souls. The best that we can do as Christians is to feast on God! Jesus indicated this when He told the disciples that He had food that they couldn't comprehend (John 4:32).

We were made to feast on God. In the words of the psalmist, we were created to cry: "O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psa. 63:1–5). We also must be on guard lest we "earnestly seek" after things *from* God rather than God Himself.

There is spiritual delight to be found in God that far supersedes the physical diet of this world. Focusing on the spiritual rather than the material/physical can be aided by fasting and prayer. Fasting is the means by which we say to God, "More than our stomachs want food, our souls want You." You see, fasting and prayer is more about our hearts than about our stomachs.

So, why are we even talking about this? Appetite dictates the direction of our lives. The weakness of our hunger for God is not because He is unsavory, but because we keep ourselves stuffed with "other things." What we hunger for most, we worship. Fasting can make our hearts more attentive to God.

PURPOSES FOR FASTING

In Isaiah 58, God speaks of those who "seek me daily, and delight to know my ways" (v.2) and gives instruction on fasting. Here are nine main purposes for fasting identified in this chapter:

- Fasting to get freedom from addictions (v.6: "loose the bonds").
- Fasting to solve problems (v.6: "undo heavy burdens").
- Fasting for revival and soul-winning (v.6: "let oppressed go free").
- Fasting over difficult relationships and things to which you are in bondage (v.6: "break every yoke").
- Fasting to meet the physical needs of others (v.7: "deal thy bread to the hungry").
- Fasting for clearer insight in decision-making (v.8: "then shall thy light break forth"). Note that this is different than problem-solving. This is when you're seeking God's will in a major area of life and need His direction. The result is like God turning on the lights so that now you know what to do!

- Fasting for health reasons or healing (v.8: "thy health shall spring forth speedily." Do you have a loved one that's terminally ill? Get serious and fast for them! When there's no hope from a human perspective, put it in God's hands. It may be His will to honor that.
- Fasting for a more righteous life and influential testimony (v.8: "thy righteousness shall go before thee"). It's easy for a Christian to grow cold, so pray, "Lord, light a fire under me! Make me like I was when I was first saved!" If you get serious enough to deny yourself in the physical realm, it will be amazing what God will do in your soul spiritually!
- Fasting for the glory of the Lord (v.8: "the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward").

POTENTIAL DANGERS OF FASTING

Fasting doesn't necessarily produce a blank check made out from God to us. There are some possible dangers to avoid.

- Attempting to manipulate God with our fasting (Isa. 58:1-5). Israel was living wickedly, but they would still fast for things they wanted. However, when their fasting didn't produce the desired results, they'd get mad at God, and He had to rebuke them for fasting incorrectly—trying to appease a God angry with their sin!
- Attempting to impress others with our fasting (Matt. 6:16-18). We aren't to make a public display of our fasting, but rather "anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father." An exception would be someone who needs to know, for example, your spouse if they're cooking for you, etc.
- Becoming legalistic about fasting (Gal. 5:1). "Standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not being entangled again with the yoke of bondage" reminds us that fasting is not a command, it's a choice.
- Becoming prideful about fasting (Luke 18:10-12). We are specifically warned not to be "Pharisaical" (rigid and perfunctory) in our fasting, and publicly proclaiming this, assuming it qualifies you for God's attention and assistance. Rather, approach God with a humble spirit and rely only on His mercies.

CONCLUSION

Christian, answer His call today. "Seek me daily, and delight to know my ways.... Take delight in approaching to God." Prayer and fasting can be a big part of this! ■

THE GREATEST Love

by W.L. Boone

The greatest love is the one that gives and shares. Love is expressed in serving. The persons who walk the closest to God—those who know Him most intimately—are the givers and the servers. They are the least interested in their well-being and most interested in that of others. They are usually preoccupied with the problems and troubles and burdens of others more than their own.

You will remember how quickly Jesus told James and John (Matt. 20:25-28) that the big shots in His coming kingdom would be those who served rather than the ones who were being served. In fact, Jesus told all of His disciples that He Himself came to earth to serve and give, and for them to do and be the same!

There is no place among God's children for self-importance, positioning, status seeking, officiousness, and self-honor. God is not like this! Pride is peculiar to a fallen humanity. God does not strut! Just arrogant individuals do. God is not pompous, but people act that way, even in church circles. However, persons who spend time with God bear His unmistakable mark upon their spirits and in their attitudes and on their countenances. It is always so refreshing to witness selflessness wherever you see it. It is so uplifting to see any person surrender a right or yield to an opinion in favor of someone else. If no sin is involved, if no biblical truth is ignored, if no moral principle is being surrendered, what difference does it make who appears to be correct, or particularly who gets his or her way?

I am on rock solid ground as I make this assertion: 95% of all that Christians argue over and get upset about and separate over has nothing to do with what is sin or right or wrong. The trouble is the result of having our own way or not getting it, or having our feelings hurt. We are way too short on forbearance and understanding. I have been deeply pained to watch Christians get upset over some little, tiny remark that, at other times, they merely laughed off or joked about. The reason is self. The culprit is pride. Generally speaking, people get peeved who are "peeveable." When I was a kid, folks like this were called "on the peck," somewhat like a nasty-spirited sitting hen.

This is very different from recognizing that good Christians get their feelings hurt at times. The only saints who never get hurt are in glory. But when feelings are hurt, there are appropriate responses: (1) Do not hold it against the

perpetrator. (2) Do not get peeved. (3) Do not stop working together with them. (4) Do not start talking against them to everyone who will listen. (5) Do not leave the church. And finally, (6) do not backslide and blame everyone for it who will listen.

Dear saints, 1 Corinthians 13 is not for some far off, heavenly, glorified state. It is for the daily grind. It is for the stress and strain of our daily needs and challenges. God's marvelous grace is specifically designed for our lowest point of resistance, for when our determination is maxed out, for when our courage has vanished and our faith is bankrupt. When we "write our last check" on our strength and resources, God is just kicking in His blanket coverage! When our pantries are empty, God opens up His!

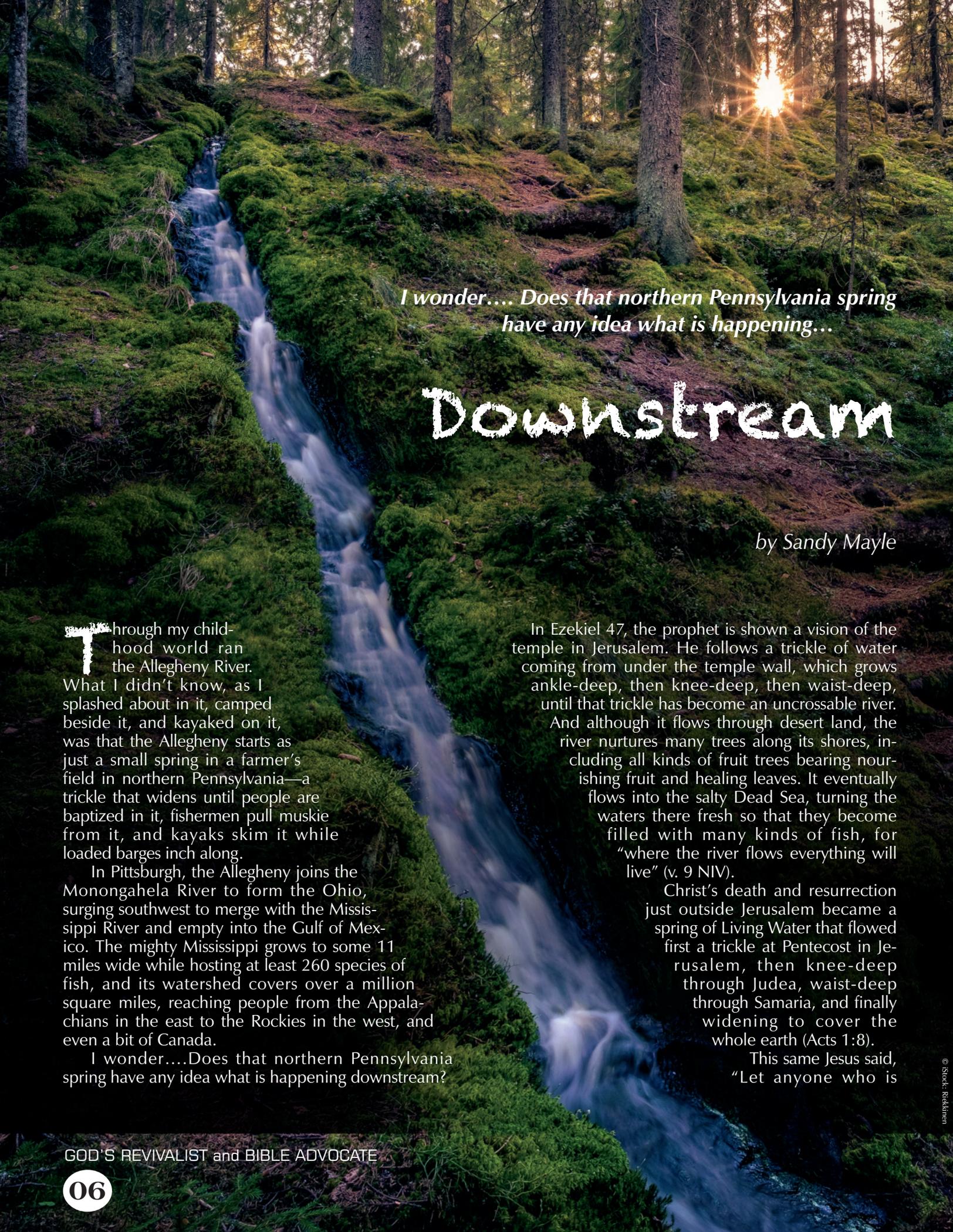
Too long the church has wimpishly excused lousy behavior and dirty, rotten attitudes as, "This is just the way I am! I cannot help it!" God's grace has better "stuff" than that. I have been around the church long enough to verify sweet spirits and loving responses and kind reactions. Praise God, I witnessed 1 Corinthians 13 in action!

Why not purpose today to allow His grace to work in you so that His love will be an outflow as you give and serve! ■

Adapted from: Boone, W.L. The Path to Grace and Greatness. Chapter 5: Loving is Giving. Country Pines, 2021, pp.55-57.

W.L. Boone, a prolific writer, pastor, and general evangelist for 64 years, was a longtime contributing editor of God's Revivalist. (See obituary, God's Revivalist, November 2021, p.25.)





I wonder.... Does that northern Pennsylvania spring have any idea what is happening...

Downstream

by Sandy Mayle

Through my childhood world ran the Allegheny River. What I didn't know, as I splashed about in it, camped beside it, and kayaked on it, was that the Allegheny starts as just a small spring in a farmer's field in northern Pennsylvania—a trickle that widens until people are baptized in it, fishermen pull muskie from it, and kayaks skim it while loaded barges inch along.

In Pittsburgh, the Allegheny joins the Monongahela River to form the Ohio, surging southwest to merge with the Mississippi River and empty into the Gulf of Mexico. The mighty Mississippi grows to some 11 miles wide while hosting at least 260 species of fish, and its watershed covers over a million square miles, reaching people from the Appalachians in the east to the Rockies in the west, and even a bit of Canada.

I wonder.... Does that northern Pennsylvania spring have any idea what is happening downstream?

In Ezekiel 47, the prophet is shown a vision of the temple in Jerusalem. He follows a trickle of water coming from under the temple wall, which grows ankle-deep, then knee-deep, then waist-deep, until that trickle has become an uncrossable river. And although it flows through desert land, the river nurtures many trees along its shores, including all kinds of fruit trees bearing nourishing fruit and healing leaves. It eventually flows into the salty Dead Sea, turning the waters there fresh so that they become filled with many kinds of fish, for "where the river flows everything will live" (v. 9 NIV).

Christ's death and resurrection just outside Jerusalem became a spring of Living Water that flowed first a trickle at Pentecost in Jerusalem, then knee-deep through Judea, waist-deep through Samaria, and finally widening to cover the whole earth (Acts 1:8).

This same Jesus said, "Let anyone who is

thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me...streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Spirit" (John 7:37-39 NIV).

Every true believer in Jesus Christ becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), Who fills us and flows from us. It simply happens when we're temples, but not because of us. It's not our river; it's totally God's. *He flows out; He swells and surges; He brings the dead to life and makes the living to bear fruit and causes the fruit to nourish and sustain others.* Our role and our concern are simply to be the temple of the Spirit.

Although you cannot see it, do you realize the Spirit is flowing from you into the Dead Sea of your world? Sometimes we can become depressed by questions that hound us. ***“What have I accomplished on this earth? I’ve served Christ...but has it made any difference? If only I could be more useful, see more fruit from my labor....”***

“A river reaches places which its source never knows,” wrote Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest*. “And Jesus said that, if we have received His fullness, ‘rivers of living water’ will flow out of us, reaching in blessing even ‘to the end of the earth’ (Acts 1:8) regardless of how small the visible effects of our lives appear to be. We have nothing to do with the outflow—‘This is the work of God, that you believe...’ (John 6:29). God rarely allows a person to see how great a blessing he is to others” (entry for September 6).

As a writer, I seldom find out about what happens “downstream.” Whether you’re a pastor or a Bible study leader or a mentor or a parent or grandparent or anyone who follows Jesus, you probably don’t, either. None of us knows where the Spirit will bear our witness or how He will work far out of our sight and well beyond our reach. It’s not our business; it’s His. Ours is to focus on just being His temple—enough to know that our labor in the Lord “is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58 NIV) and to “not become weary in doing good” (Gal. 6:9 NIV).

One day we will see all that Christ has done downstream. In the meantime, the life-giving Spirit flows on, soaking into dried spirits, filling abandoned hearts, buoying stranded hopes, spawning joy and life. And we did not—we *could not*—do anything to make it happen. We just tempted the Holy Spirit of God and, like a spring in a farmer’s field, out He flowed—downstream, on and on. ■

Sandy Mayle is a freelance writer. She and her husband Dave live in Erie, PA. They have three adult sons and four grandchildren.

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.

I have to say that even though I have no connection to GBS other than my writing several stories about Oswald Chambers and the Cowmans’ associations (maybe Juji Nakada, too), I enjoy looking through the magazine. GBS comes up in both my biography of Bidley Chambers and Lettie Cowman (which, alas, has yet to find a publishing home!) I’m particularly blessed reading about the good people who have lived so long supporting the school, as well as their missionary services. Thank you!

MICHELLE ULE
Santa Rosa, CA

I currently am an Ambassador for FreedomWorks. We work with grassroots activists around the country to fight for change in national and state policy. I don’t know if the editor remembers this, but he invited me to join the Mt. Auburn Community Council years ago! That helped me realize that I can make a difference in my community. [See birth announcement, p.10 —KF]

PETER LINKO
Cross Creek, PA

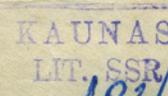
It is always a joy to get *God’s Revivalist* and read it cover to cover. The information is very good. May God continue to bless the school and college.

RAY R. THOMPSON
Greenup, IL

I appreciate the write up in *God’s Revivalist* [December p.23] about my success in law school and becoming a licensed attorney. My hope and prayer is that this snippet about my life inspires other Christians, both men and women, to see that they too can serve God in a “secular” career. As Christians, everything we do in life is to be for the glory of God. Thus, a “secular” career, such as mine, is not secular, but is sacred.

ROANNA THAWLEY
Cleveland, OH

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022



KEEPING



TIME WITH GOD

The Christian Year, Part 4

LENT

Preparation for Easter

Continuation of a Yearlong Series

by Larry D. Smith

March 2, 2022, ASH WEDNESDAY

The first day of Lent, the Church's period of preparation for Easter. Lent continues through April 14.

Ring around the rosies, a pocket full of posies!" Do you remember these words from a favorite old nursery rhyme? For centuries now, boys and girls at play on both sides of the Atlantic have sung them, while holding hands and marching in a circle. "Ashes! Ashes!" someone suddenly cries, "We all fall down!" That's exactly what everybody does. Giggling and tumbling over each other, the children drop to the floor; then, still gripping each others' hands, they scramble to their feet to begin the same sequence again. "Ring around the rosies, a pocket full of posies!"

No one knows for sure the source of this antique bit of doggerel. But some historians suggest that it comes from medieval Europe, the land of our ancestors, where during the 14th through the 17th centuries, forty to sixty percent of the population was wiped out by the horrors of the Bubonic Plague, or as it is also called, the Black Death. Everywhere the Grim Reaper cut down his writhing victims. In the great cities, millions of bloody, shrouded corpses were carried out to the rickety death carts which rattled over the cobblestone streets, as their drivers cried, "Bring out your dead! Bring out your

dead!" So the stench of suffering, death, and corruption seemed to permeate the atmosphere and even drifted into Asia. Over two continents, the tolling church bells sounded the death knell that brought terror to both the palaces of the rich and the hovels of the poor.

Every part of the old nursery rhyme is supposed to point to some aspect of the awful Plague. "Ring around the rosies" portrays the bloody circular sores that broke out on the victims' groin and armpits. "A pocket full of posies" refers to the small satchels of dried flowers that many wore in a futile effort to ward off the disease. "Ashes! Ashes!" brings to mind the stench of burning corpses as they were reduced to crumbling ashes. "We all fall down!" describes the intensity of universal suffering and despair.

"Ashes! Ashes! we all fall down!" In our journey through the Christian Year, the Church's ancient liturgical calendar, we have now arrived at a time for ashes, not indeed to mourn the devastation of a plague, but seriously to reflect upon our mortality, penitently to confess our trespasses, and earnestly to pray for spiritual revival and renewal. This is Lent, Christianity's traditional

forty-day period (Sundays are not counted) for both personal and corporate preparation for Easter, the great celebration of Our Lord's resurrection from the dead.

Lent—the word comes from Old Saxon and means “spring”—begins on Ash Wednesday, which, as its name implies, uses ashes as a symbol of human frailty and mortality. “The symbolism of ashes is ancient,” explains author Martha Zimmerman, who also insists that we must understand this symbolism to grasp its relevance to historic Lenten observance. “What do ashes signify in Scripture? In Genesis 18:27, Abraham reminds us, ‘I am nothing but dust and ashes’ (NIV). Job repeats the same understanding when he says, ‘I am reduced to dust and ashes’ (Job 30:19 NIV). Ashes are a symbol of humility and a visual reminder of the vast difference between creatures and their Creator.”¹

“Ashes were also used as a sign of sorrow and genuine regret. God’s message to the people of Nineveh—delivered by Jonah—confronted their disobedience. The consequence was to be total destruction of the city. When the king heard the news, he covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes (Jonah 3:6 NASB) as a sign of penitence.”² In a similar time of great urgency, the prophet Daniel tells us, “And I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes” (Dan. 9:3). So the well-known symbol of crumbled ashes has been used for many centuries, and it is still used in the Church’s historic burial service, when a clergyman commits the body of the Christian dead to the grave, “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.”

So also on Ash Wednesday in liturgical churches, congregations gather for divine service in which there is strong emphasis on human frailty and failure and the corresponding need for penitence, discipline, and renewal. Then the pastor invites his congregation to approach the altar. There he dips his thumb into a bowl of crumbled ashes, and on the forehead of each parishioner he makes a cross of ashes, saying, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The people leave the church challenged to participate humbly and faithfully in a 40-day pilgrimage to shore up their spiritual foundations.

Granted, few if any of us will be marked with a cross of ashes this Ash Wednesday, for that is not emphasized in our movement’s 19th-century tradition. But what the cross of ashes represents is a clearcut call to renewed Christian discipleship for us, as well as a forceful reminder of the brevity of life here and the certainty of life hereafter. It also comes with God’s binding pledge that if we shall draw near to Him, He will most assuredly draw near

to us. Thus we hear the call of Ash Wednesday, which is, of course, the call of the whole season of Lent.

In a sense, Lent is like a time built into the Christian Year for a spring revival, a tradition with which we are certainly familiar. Like any other revival, what we get out of Lent will be measured by what we put into it. Even if the ashes on our foreheads are invisible, if we have sincerely traced them there, let them be a reminder to us that the weeks immediately before we commemorate Christ’s death on Good Friday and His resurrection on Easter Day is a most fitting time to flee to Him for His Spirit’s refreshing streams of grace and renewal.

In conclusion, here is a summary of what must be done to keep a holy Lent: (1) Approach your Heavenly Father with deep humility and steadfast purpose to clear any cloudy areas in your relationship with Him. (2) Search your own heart carefully to see if all is right with others, and if you are troubled about anything, set the matter straight. You may find it helpful to consult a trusted soulmate who is not afraid to ask you the old Methodist class meeting question, “Brother, Sister, how does your soul prosper?” (3) Confess your failings to God and to anyone to whom you owe an apology. Remember Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us.” (4) Devote special times to prayer and Bible study, accepting the usual Lenten disciplines, such as fasting, special times of prayer, ministering to the poor and neglected, and reading helpful spiritual materials. (5) Trust in the mercies of a merciful God who has promised that if we seek Him we shall find Him.

Yes, a holy Lent will lead us to a holy Easter! “Ashes! Ashes! We all fall down!” ■

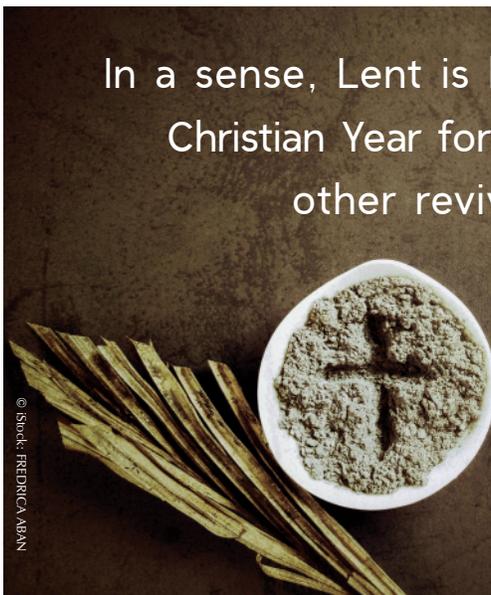
(The next installment will focus on Holy Week and Easter.)

Dr. Larry D. Smith served as a GBS instructor and editor of *God’s Revivalist* from 1995 until his retirement in 2016. He lives in Cincinnati, OH, with his wife, Carol (Wiseman) (‘78 BA).

1. Zimmerman, Martha. *Celebrating the Christian Year*. Bethany House Publishers, 1993, p.104.

2. *Ibid.*

In a sense, Lent is like a time built into the Christian Year for a spring revival. Like any other revival, what we get out of Lent will be measured by what we put into it.



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NEWS

from the Hilltop



sions accreditation with stipulations for initial-licensure level! This allows graduates from licensure-track programs to pursue teacher licensure from Ohio, and it also provides opportunities for licensure in most other states. Now students can pursue God's calling in their lives to minister in public schools and other settings where licensure is required.

NEW TEACHER ACCREDITATION

We are grateful for God's blessing and help as we have pursued accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) for our education programs. In October 2021, CAEP's Accreditation Council awarded our Music and Professional Studies divi-

The "stipulation" refers to the newness of our licensure programs. Because we did not yet have any graduates who had sought licensure in the 2021 spring semester, we were unable to provide data from licensed graduates, which is a CAEP expectation. As graduates receive licenses, we will track data on their work for CAEP review in a future visit.

Dr. Marcia Davis, Kendra Muir, Rebecca Pohl, Dr. Jana Pop, and Lyle Witt were responsible for the crucial work for the CAEP accreditation process. They have poured much time, thought, and energy into making our programs excellent so that our graduates can glorify God in their educational ministry!

—Dr. Aaron D. Profitt, vice president for academic affairs



Marcia Davis, Lyle Witt, Kendra Muir, and Jana Pop

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.

BIRTHS



To **Ivon (Garcia) (BA '11) and Brennan Muir (BA '10)**, a daughter, **Alessandra ("Ally") Ivon**, born June 16, 2021, at The Christ Hospital, Cincinnati, OH. Ally is welcomed by brothers Brennan (5) and Jared (3). The Muirs have been working with Bible Methodist Missions since 2013 and live/work in San Gabriel, Mixtepec, Mexico. Discipleship is their passion and they train leaders (using Shepherds Global Classroom materials) in the Ezra Biblical Seminary (www.facebook.com/SeminarioBiblicoEsdras) which they began in 2019 under a lean-to Brennan attached to their home. They also conduct discipleship groups (Brennan leading a men's group and Ivon leading a women's group), assist full time in ministries at their local church, and visit the other Mexican Bible Methodist churches.



To **Kyla (Tichenor) (BA '15) and Tim Lanigan (BA '16)**, a daughter, **Caroline Autumn**, born July 26, 2021, at Community Hospital South, Indianapolis, IN. Tim is associate pastor at Southport Church of the Nazarene, Indianapolis, IN, and Kyla is a busy homemaker. Caroline is welcomed by older siblings: Charlotte (4), Cora Jane (2), and Henry (1). The Lanigans live in Indianapolis.



To **Laurie (Beck) (BA '17) and Patrick Dewhurst (BA '17)**, a daughter, **Norah Christine**, born October 31, at Winnie Palmer Memorial Hospital, Orlando, FL. Patrick has pastored the Monterey Christian Church, Batavia, OH, since 2018. In addition to rearing their two children, Laurie teaches online on a part-time basis. Norah is welcomed by her older sister Chloe (3). The Dewhursts live in Cincinnati, OH.

To **Erica (Crouch) (2014-15) and Peter Linko (AA '19, BA '21)**, a son, **Liam John**, born November 5, 2021, at West Penn Hospital, Pittsburgh, PA. Peter serves as



FIVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

The GBS Enrollment department hosted the Five Days of Christmas celebration during the week after Thanksgiving. Each day, students who had registered for the spring semester were entered into a drawing to receive prizes. Over 30 prizes were given away during the week. The prizes included mini-



projectors, gift cards, Keurigs, and more. Each day of the Five Days of Christmas, the enrollment team also organized special holiday activities and snacks for the GBS students. Favorite activities included turkey bowling, stars-versus-stiffs volleyball game, annual Christmas tree lighting, and ice skating. Students loved the events which helped bring holiday cheer to the campus!

EMPLOYEE CHRISTMAS DINNER

The annual GBS Christmas Dinner was held Thursday, December 2, at Higher Ground Conference and Retreat Center, West Harrison, IN. As the 233 attendees assembled, they were favored by music from Michael Yancey and Jessica Smith. After opening greetings and prayer by President Loper, dinner was served. The dinner featured prime rib and pecan chicken, accompanied by salads, vegetables, and a choice of dessert.

President Loper served as MC for the evening. Entertainment featured specials by the Hallam and Quesenberry families, with additional music by Michael Yancey and Jessica Smith. Interspersed were trivia questions for adults and children with gift cards for the ➡



an Ambassador for FreedomWorks, an agency that works with grassroots activists around the country to fight for change in national and state policy. Erica is an ESL (English as a Second Language) Educator. The Linkos live in Cross Creek, PA.



toward nursing degrees at Northern Kentucky University. After receiving both his RN and BSN in 2019, he began working in the medical intensive care unit (MICU) at The Christ Hospital. After teaching three years at Independence Bible School, Independence, KS, Kara returned to GBS in 2017 to teach in the junior high school at Aldersgate Christian Academy. She now serves as kindergarten teacher. The Olsons live in Cincinnati.

WEDDINGS



Callie Line (current student) to Zachary Potteiger (BA '20), October 8, 2021, at Willow Creek Barn in Frankfort IN, with Austin Line officiating. Since graduation, Zac has been teaching fifth grade at Aldersgate Christian Academy while Callie continues working toward her own teaching degree at GBS. The Potteigers live in Cincinnati, OH.

Kara Moore (BA '14) to Michael Olson (BA '14), November 21, 2021, at Covenant-First Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, OH, David Hartkopf officiating.

Michael worked at The Christ Hospital as a patient care assistant (PCA) from 2015 to 2019 while working

DEATHS

Ruth Naomi (Vance) Maloney, 98, of Lancaster, OH, passed away October 7, 2021, at Bickford of Lancaster, Ohio. She was born in Gallia County, OH, to David and Elizabeth (Crabtree) Vance on September 20, 1923. She was the youngest and last surviving of eight children. Ruth graduated from Jackson High School with honors in 1939. She married Frank Maloney in 1941. They were in their 60th year together when Frank passed away. ➡



The Quesenberry Family



Mike Yancy and Jessica Smith



The Hallam Family

➡ winners. Children were further occupied with coloring pages, puz-

zles, and guessing the number of candies in a candy jar. Some of the trivia questions were specific to GBS, for example, "How many employees does GBS currently have?" The correct answer was 89 (76 full-time and 13 part-time). Another question was, "How many new properties have been purchased by the Loper administration?" (13). Rachel Pohl and crew took family photos through the evening. The beautiful fireplace background was an excellent setting. A favorite event

of the night was the presentation of Christmas gifts to all the children by President and Mrs. Loper. A great time was had by all!

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

For the second time, the GBS Christmas program was presented in full at two separate locations: the Adcock Chapel of God's Bible School and the Answers Center at The Ark Encounter in Williamstown, KY. Guests arriving for this year's

REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ She was a member of the Pilgrim Holiness Church (now The Wesleyan Church) and served as Sunday school teacher and youth leader. She was retired from employment at Ohio Power (now AEP). She was a GBS donor and faithful subscriber to *God's Revivalist*.

In addition to her husband, Ruth was preceded in death by her only child, Paul Maloney. She leaves behind her grandson, Ryan, her great granddaughter, Megan, and several nieces and nephews. Graveside services were at Buckeye Cemetery in Jackson, OH.



Dorothy Elizabeth (Hayes) Basham,

91, departed this life on November 11, 2021. Dorothy was born December 11, 1929, in Louisville, KY, to Lorine Leslie and John William Lynus Hayes. She completed her undergraduate work at Kentucky Wesleyan College and received her master's degree from Western Kentucky University in 1966.

She taught in the public school system for many years and was an accomplished pianist and organist.

After marrying John Wilson Basham in 1950, Dorothy enjoyed being a minister's wife for 63 years. They shared in the ministry of three Wesleyan churches, annual summer camp programs, various women's and missionary groups, Hobe Sound Bible College, and Hobe Sound Bible Church. International missions was a passion for both John and Dorothy, and for many years they opened their home in Hobe Sound to international students. They traveled internationally to eight European countries as well as Egypt, Israel and Papua New Guinea. In 2000, they accepted a four-year missionary assignment to Taiwan, where John pastored Tsoying Bible Church and they both taught college classes. During John's later years, Dorothy supported him in his prison ministry at the Martin County Correctional Institute. After

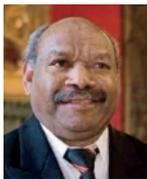
campus productions, December 6 and 8, were welcomed by festive Christmas lights, a main campus Christmas Tree, and a free coffee and hot chocolate bar. Guests attending the production at the Answers Center enjoyed both the beautiful “ChristmasTime at the Ark Encounter” and the GBS Christmas production free of charge. The auditorium was packed, and special features included the LED video wall, which projected breathtaking visual images behind the choir and orchestra. In addition, thanks to the graphic design work of Shane Muir, original large set designs on the LED wall were a new feature for the drama this year. Special thanks to Ken Ham and his team of amazing people for so graciously hosting the event.

Desire of Nations, the musical drama written by music faculty member Michael DeStefano, was an invitation to come and worship ➡



John’s death in 2013, she continued to support that ministry for a number of years.

Dorothy is survived by sons Sam White and Lau Ghioc; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; the Hayes family cousins; and Basham family. The funeral service was held at Fern Creek Funeral Home, Louisville, KY, with burial following in Resthaven Memorial Park.



H.E. Peter Pulkiye Maginde (BA '77), 70, passed away November 18, 2021. Born in Maral village, Imbongu, Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, he was the second child in a family of seven. He started primary school at the age of 10 because of the late introduction of the colonial administration to that part of the country, but he went on to complete his studies in different parts of the world, becoming the only member of his family to do so. Even from his youth, Peter focused on helping others. While wait-

ing to graduate from Grade 10 at Mendi High School, the country was gravely affected by El Niño, so Peter signed up as a volunteer for the colonial administration to distribute food in Muli village.

Although his original dream was to be an engineer, he was a spiritual young man who felt God leading him to further his education in the United States. He, along with Pilipo Miriye, were the first of two men from the Southern Highlands to enroll at GBS in 1974. Both graduated in 1977, Peter with a BA and Pilipo with a BRE.

After graduation, Peter returned to PNG, where he first taught science in Pabrapuk High School. However, he eventually realized that God’s calling for him was to work for his government. Then he accepted a job within the Department of Planning, which was responsible for all the provincial planning functions. In 1979 he was sponsored by the United Nations Development ➡

➡ the Incarnate Word. Audiences accompanied the Wise Men in their discovery of a baffling sight in the heavens and their journey to find the new King. They came, found the King, worshiped, and were changed. The cast totaled approximately 130 people and included members of the College Choir, Christmas Choir, High School Choir, Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble, and drama cast. Assisting Producer Jana Pop were Timothy Crater and David Hartkopf, music directors; Michael DeStefano, drama writer and director; and support staff: Rachelle DeStefano, Timothy Long, Martha Miller, Nicolae Pop, Jessica Smith, and Lane Webb. Each performance was well received by those who packed the chapel on Friday and Sunday, those who joined via live-stream, and by approximately 1,800 guests at the Ark Encounter. The campus family invited many guests, including those in the community. We thank all of the many volunteers who helped make our Christmas celebra-

tion so special. We hope that you make plans to attend next year!
—Dr. Jana S. Pop, Chair, Division of Music

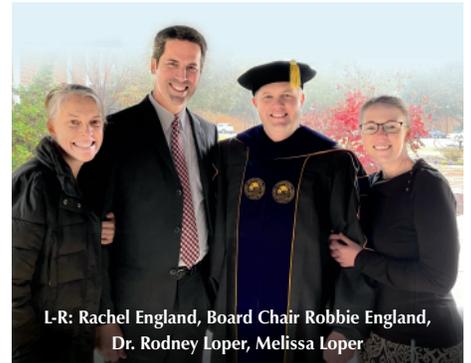
PRESIDENT LOPER HOODED

In the October issue of *God’s Revivalist* (p.11), we reported that President Loper had successfully completed his doctoral studies and



would be participating in the commencement ceremony later. On December 10, that occurred. Here is a brief report from our own Dr. Rodney S. Loper:

“It was a whirlwind trip to Columbia, SC, where Columbia International University is located on a beautiful 400-acre campus. The staff, faculty, and students were gracious and very welcoming. They hosted a banquet for graduates of the PhD in Organizational Leadership the evening before graduation. Dr. Scott Rodin, Senior



L-R: Rachel England, Board Chair Robbie England, Dr. Rodney Loper, Melissa Loper

REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ Program to take part in an eight-month development planning course in Japan. The knowledge he



PNG Ambassador Peter Maginde working on Interim Partnership Agreement between the European Commission and the Pacific States (2010)

gained from this would later be applied in his work as a public servant. In 1984, he was awarded a scholarship by the Dutch Government and earned a Master’s in Public Policy in the Netherlands.

From the 1980s to 2011, Peter held various important government positions under four different governments, including chief of staff for Prime Minister Somare in 2002, followed by his appointment as high commissioner to Malaysia and ambassador to Belgium. Through his public service and as a member of the Imbongu community, he contributed tremendously to the development of the country.

With whomever he spoke, Peter always emphasized the importance of an education, saying that if it was God’s will, it would happen. He was a loving family man, humble servant of God, and proud leader of his people. 📌

Consultant/Chief Strategy Officer for The Focus Group and a Senior Fellow of the Association of Biblical Higher Education, gave a challenging devotional on overcoming the temptations that leaders face. The graduation ceremony was a rousing event! The dean encouraged the audience to celebrate along with their graduates as their names were announced. It was a loud joyous occasion! I had the privilege of being hooded by GBS alumnus Dr. Rick Christman (BRE '90). CU President Dr. Mark Smith, former GBS trustee (1995-2004), briefly told the audience of the storied history of GBS as I was called to walk across the stage." 📌

EARL AND GERALDINE YATES SCHOLARSHIP

Geraldine Yates is a member of The Wesleyan Church, Westport, IN. When she saw in a recent issue of *God's Revivalist* that Glenn and Sharon Black had initiated a scholarship at GBS, it triggered her thinking. In years past the Blacks had pastored Westport Wesleyan, and they remain close friends of Geraldine, who called Glenn to let him know that what the Blacks had done in creating a scholarship had inspired her to do the same. Glenn encouraged her to follow through with her intention. After contacts were made with GBS, a meeting took place on December 13. President Loper, Development Director Michael Yancey, and Glenn Black met with Geraldine and helped her establish the Earl and Geraldine Yates Scholarship for needy students. Geraldine's husband Earl had been a commercial truck driver and had passed away about 20 years ago. In addition to being a homemaker and raising four children, Geraldine worked various jobs. Now 98 years old, she is excited about founding this new scholarship and hopes that it will motivate others to do the same. 📌



Dr. Loper helps Geraldine Yates create a scholarship.



PHONATHON

WE REACHED OUR GOAL...

...of raising \$60,000 for two vans to transport our singers and musicians across the United States to bless people with their music!



THANK YOU for giving our student callers a warm welcome! They were very excited and encouraged to make so many connections with alumni and friends! You generously responded to help meet our needs. If somehow we missed you and you wish to give to this or other projects, please give us a call!

God Bless You!

GBS Donor Development Office
513-763-6566

Dear Phil



READING PROVERBS THEOLOGICALLY

I've heard you talk about reading Proverbs theologically. How do you do that? —David

Dear David,

Thanks for the question! Reading and understanding Proverbs can be a struggle. For some, reading 25-30 disconnected proverbs in one chapter overwhelms and bewilders them. They think, "What do I do with all this?" For others, it's the repetitiveness of Hebrew poetry, or how many times the author says the same thing, e.g., stay away from the "strange woman." Sometimes it is the overly rosy picture that Proverbs seems to paint. They wonder, "The righteous don't go hungry? Really? Not even in North Korea?" "Your foot won't stumble (3:23) but the righteous rises seven times (24:16)? Do the righteous stumble or don't they?" And so on.

I freely admit that there are interpretive challenges in Proverbs. I'm also totally confident that however they should be resolved, they reflect the mind of God. So, to read Proverbs theologically, I don't let the things I don't understand stop me from the benefit of what I do understand.

A first step to reading Proverbs theologically may be to change the way you read Proverbs. Many of us have practiced reading Scripture a chapter or more at a time. In fact, some of us feel like we haven't "read

our Bibles" unless we've read several chapters. I relate. This reading strategy is a poor one for Proverbs 1-9. It doesn't work at all for reading Proverbs 10-31 theologically. It's not how proverbs are designed to be read. Proverbs are for pondering, not for drive-by-shopping. They are compressed wisdom. Unpacking them takes time. Time requires patience. Proverbs 25:2 says, "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter." God intentionally buries His treasures. That makes the search and discovery process much more rewarding! God is glorified when we care enough about understanding Who He is and how He thinks to search for Him like treasure (Prov. 2:1-4).

A second step is to pay attention to the use of God's personal name, Yahweh. God's name occurs 86 times in Proverbs. The God of Genesis–Deuteronomy is the same God Solomon talks about in Proverbs—the covenant-making, covenant-keeping God who always keeps His promises. Look for the verses that use God's name and begin piecing together the mosaic of Yahweh they produce. The key questions are: "Yahweh, what are You revealing to me about (1) Who You are, (2) what You like or don't like, and (3) what You do?"

A third step is to see that Solomon says that all wisdom comes from

Yahweh. "For Yahweh gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Prov. 2:6). If all wisdom comes from Yahweh, then all wisdom reflects Yahweh's perspective. That means all the lectures in Proverbs 1-9 and each of the sentence-sayings in Proverbs 10-31 teach me something about Yahweh's perspective. From this angle, there is nothing in Proverbs that isn't theological. Ask, "Father, what are You revealing to me about Your perspective in this proverb?" The more you ask, the more you see.

A fourth step involves applying the pattern we see of Yahweh calling His people to imitate His character: "Be blameless as I am blameless" (Deut. 18:13; 2 Sam. 22:31), "Be holy as I am holy" (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26). Applied to Proverbs, this pattern means that the moral virtues Yahweh encourages are reflections of His character. Yahweh need not say, "I am diligent" for us to understand rightly that since the wise man is diligent, Yahweh must be diligent. What Yahweh wants from us, with few exceptions, is what is true about Him. We're supposed to be slow to anger (Prov. 14:29) because Yahweh is. We're supposed to be just in our thoughts (Prov. 12:5) because Yahweh is.

A fifth step is recognizing that Yahweh disciplines us so we can share His holiness (Prov. 3:11–12). A wise man loves the one who rebukes him (Prov. 9:8). In Proverbs, Yahweh rebukes a great many of the ways we aren't like Him. When proverbs poke us or pierce us, that painful discipline expresses Yahweh's love for us. He chastens every son whom He receives. His goal is that we share His holiness (Heb. 12:10).

Blessings,
Philip

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

pbrown@gbs.edu



student focus

THE MOST COMMON MENTAL ILLNESS IN AMERICA

In February of 2021, Harvard University reported that the global pandemic had “deepened an epidemic of loneliness in America.” The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 31% of US Adults experience an anxiety disorder at some time in their lives. While professional help is always encouraged, we should not overlook the wide range of health benefits of attending religious services. Those attending frequently were 29% less likely to become depressed, 50% less likely to divorce, and five times less likely to commit suicide than those who never attended. Regular service attendance helps shield children from depression, substance abuse, and premature sexual activity. People who attended church as children are more likely to grow up happy, to be forgiving, to have a sense of mission and purpose, and to volunteer.

MISSISSIPPI ABORTION CASE

In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in the landmark decision *Roe v. Wade* that a woman has a constitutional right to obtain an abortion without state interference within the first trimester of her pregnancy. Almost two decades later (1992), the Supreme Court reaffirmed a woman’s right to obtain an abortion in the landmark case *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, but struck down

the previously established trimester framework in favor of a “fetal viability” standard, typically 24 weeks into pregnancy, ruling that state laws restricting abortion before the fetus was viable created an “undue burden” on women seeking abortions and were therefore unconstitutional as they violated a woman’s right to due process under the Fourteenth Amendment. However, the court also ruled that this right was not absolute and must be balanced with other considerations the state may have, such as advancements in technology making the point of fetal viability earlier.

Since October 2020, when Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed to the Supreme Court following the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the different ideological makeup of the court creates the possibility of overturning the *Roe v. Wade* decision. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* is a pending U.S. Supreme Court case dealing with the constitutionality of a 2018 Mississippi state law that bans abortion operations after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy. Lower courts had ruled in preliminary injunctions to prevent enforcement of the law on the basis that the law violated the holding of women’s rights in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which generally allows a woman to opt for abortion within the first 24 weeks of pregnancy. Oral arguments were held in December 2021, with a decision expected by the end of the 2021–22 term. Be in prayer about this case. ■

Since coming to GBS, **ALEX SINGLETON** of Hamilton, OH, has “learned more about God in classes and chapel, and how to better serve Him. The people here also edify each other, and that has significantly impacted me. Because of this, I’ve found that I have an even deeper love for God now than I had before. From that, my relationship with God has grown.” He loves “the atmosphere. The teachers are willing to get to know you in and out of the classroom, and that’s something I appreciate.”

Alex is a singer/songwriter who has been posting Christian music online for several years. He hopes that God will use his music to encourage and edify other believers. He is working towards a degree in church music. He says that his classes have helped him to grow both musically and spiritually. It will be several years before he graduates. Although he is not sure of his plans after that, he knows he would like to lead worship at a local church. ■

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.

PRIDE: THE ORIGINAL SIN

by W.L. Boone

The awful sin of pride has generally been treated too lightly among holiness people. Pride is the original sin. Jealousy is a close second. This is based on Isaiah 14:13,14 and Ezekiel 28:2, 5, 15, and 17, which reference Satan and his damning act of moral mutiny against God. “A lifted up heart” identifies his haughty and mutinous act. Until this deed and moment, the universe had no sin or death.

Pride is one of the seven deadly sins (see Prov. 6:17 and 8:13). The “pride of life” is distinctly opposed to the will of the Father (see 1 John 2:16, 17). As there is no biblical support for any redeeming aspect of pride, holiness people should deny it any influence while decrying its singularly evil nature. One may find a distinction between righteous anger and carnal anger, but there is no such thing as righteous pride as contrasted to carnal pride. There should be no parlaying, pampering, or philosophizing about it.

Respect is a character trait which shows itself in appreciation, honor, and gratitude toward persons and institutions. Self-respect is the corollary that should cause us to press our pants, coordinate our colors, shine our shoes, use deodorant, wash the car, and mow the lawn. In man’s fall from grace, pride subverted respect and established its evil motivations in each succeeding newborn soul, Jesus Christ being excepted because of His divine conception.

Respect and self-respect can exist within a holy heart—they have no conflict with the moral nature. But pride? It is devilish, mutinous, rebellious, and totally degenerative. *There is nothing left to pride when it has been cleansed.* Since it is totally immoral, it can have no place in a holy heart. If the stirrings of pride are manifested there, a death blow is needed.

This is *not* to suggest that Christians who use the terms “pride” or “proud” in their conversations have

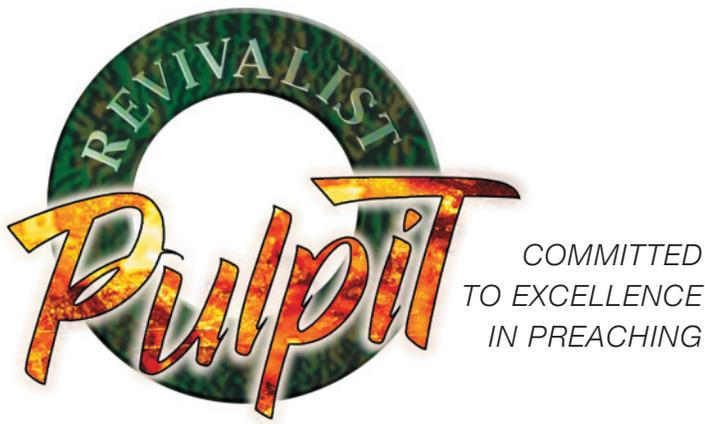
not had carnal pride removed from their hearts. It *does* suggest, however, that this usage can confuse unsaved or unsanctified people from distinguishing between the evil nature of pride and the wholesomeness of respect.

Terminology is important, especially when it relates to matters as critical as eternal gain or loss. The term “pride” is used so freely in many holiness circles anymore that one might assume it is an emotion naturally compatible with the holy life. I must admit this deeply troubles me. The casual use of the term “pride” has surfaced with some equally troublesome expressions such as, “I gave them a piece of my mind,” “No one is going to use *me* for a rug,” “God doesn’t expect me to be weird and odd,” and many other statements that do little to reflect lowliness, humility, and meekness. The terms in themselves do not effect backsliding, but they are not meaningless. Minimizing their implication seems to lessen the abhorrence of the evil that they represent.

Oh, that God would pour holy fire from off heaven’s altar onto the altars of our churches!—until souls are cleansed of self-serving idols; until once again men’s affections are anchored in the will and love of God; until once again the constant goal of mind and soul is to be like Jesus; until each thought, decision, and action is made in view of the character and honor of God!

There is abundant grace to cleanse and keep us free from the polluting nature of all sin. Where there is provisional grace, there exists an equally required pursuance and residence of that grace. All glory be to our Christ and His abundant freedom from all sin! ■

W.L. Boone, a prolific writer, pastor, and general evangelist for 64 years, was a longtime contributing editor of God’s Revivalist. (See obituary, God’s Revivalist, November 2021, p.25.) This article was edited and condensed from one originally printed in the January 6, 1983, issue of God’s Revivalist.



LOVING GOD: PRIMARY PRINCIPLE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

by Allan P. Brown

Scripture: *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” —Matthew 22:36-38*

INTRODUCTION

Can we distill the essence of Christian life to find the part that really matters? Jesus gives us the answer in the Gospel according to Matthew. He said the most important thing in life is to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind. Love is the key to every other requirement of the Christian life. If we learn how to love God properly, love for others, the second most important command, will flow out of that love. Obedience to God and His Word will flow out of that love. Holiness of life will flow out of that love.

I. THE COMMAND TO LOVE GOD TOTALLY (Mat. 32:27)

Jesus says that the command to love God is the most important commandment in all Scripture. This immediately raises the question, “What does Jesus mean by the terms “heart, soul, and mind,” as Matthew gives it, or “heart, soul, mind, and strength,” as Luke 10:27 states? First, understand that Matthew and Luke are giving us interpretive statements of what Jesus taught from Deuteronomy 6:5. *Jesus stressed the fact that every part of one’s being must be committed totally to loving God.* The terms “heart, soul, mind, and strength” are not mutually exclusive; indeed, they are overlapping categories. We are to love God with our total inner being (all our heart), with every one of our faculties (soul—includes our mind, will, and emotions), to the utmost extent of our capacity (with all our strength). This is the first and greatest of all God’s commands.

The second most important command is similar. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:39). Jesus said, “on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:40). If we learn how to keep these two commands properly, we will also be keeping all of God’s other commands.

II. THE CONFUSION ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO LOVE GOD TOTALLY

Most of us associate “love” with feelings of affection or emotion. We talk about loving our favorite food, pets, job, car, house, and children. How strongly we feel “love” for any particular thing or person is largely dependent upon our frame of mind at any given moment, so our “love” fluctuates greatly. When we talk about “loving” something, we are usually talking about a positive feeling. As a result, if you asked the typical professing Christian, “Do you love God with all your heart, soul, and mind?” he or she would probably say, “Yes.” However, many would feel a bit uncomfortable with their answer, because of our strong association of “love” with feelings of strong emotion. Most Christians do not sustain a continual strong emotional feeling of “love” for God. Because of this, some would suggest that it is impossible to love God continually with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

An important premise, when interpreting God’s commands, is the premise that the Creator Who knows our design will not command the impossible. Therefore, His commands bring to us the needed grace and ability to obey. Our goal is to find out what God means when He commands us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVING GOD TOTALLY

John Wesley, in his sermon “On Love,” gives one of the best definitions of what it means to love God. He says that it is “to delight in Him, to rejoice in His will, to desire continually to please Him, to seek and find our happiness in Him, and to thirst day and night for a fuller enjoyment of Him.”¹

Let’s examine several elements involved in loving God totally.

A. Committing to the Object of our love. This is implied in Matthew 22:37-38 in the phrase “with all your heart, all your soul, and all your might.” This does not happen accidentally. *It requires a conscious choice and the cultivation of that choice.* An illustration of the need for such a commitment is given in Deuteronomy 13:1-4. God tells Israel He may test their love by allowing a false prophet to prophesy accurately some sign or wonder. The false prophet would then use his prophetic success to try to entice Israel to serve

another god. God warns, “You shall not hearken to the words of that prophet, or the dreamer of that dream, because the Lord your God tries you, to know whether you love your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 13:4). When God commands us to love Him, He is commanding total commitment. There must be no rivals for our affection and no reservations in our commitment.

B. Delighting in the Object of our love. Psalm 37:4 gives us the command, “Delight yourself in the Lord.” Proverbs 3:12 shows that loving a person involves delighting in him. This passage likens God’s love for His people to a father’s delight in his son. “For whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.” When we love God, we commit ourselves to delight in Him. In addition to delighting in God as a Person, we can join with the psalmist who says, “I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love” (Psa. 119:47). We can also delight in God’s works. “Great are the works of the LORD; they are studied by all who delight in them” (Psa. 111:2).

C. Rejoicing to serve the Object of our love. This element of love relates to the servant-master aspect of our relationship with the Lord. Deuteronomy 11:13 says that to love God is “to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Further, Psalm 100:2 tells us that we are to “serve the Lord with gladness.” *God does not want reluctant service; He requires rejoicing service.* Listen to the warning in Deuteronomy 28:47, 48. “Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD shall send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you.” When we love God totally, we will be supremely pleased and satisfied with Him as our portion and rejoice in our service to Him.

D. Desiring to please the Object of our love. When you love people, you enjoy doing things that please them—that make them happy. The same is true in our relationship with God. Jesus said, “So that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me” (John 14:31). John wrote, “Whoso keeps His word, in Him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him” (1 John 2:5). Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). When we love God totally, we will desire to please God in everything we do. Paul speaks of making sure we do what is pleasing to the Lord (Eph. 5:10), and of walking in a manner that is worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in everything (Col. 1:10).

E. Seeking happiness in the Object of our love. In *Reflections on the Psalms*, C.S. Lewis says, “All enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise.... The world rings with praise—lovers praising their sweethearts, readers their favorite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favorite game.... I think we delight to praise what we enjoy, because praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment.”² Blaise Pascal wrote, “All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, all tend to this end.... This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.”³ To love God totally is to seek our happiness in Him. “Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walks in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee” (Psa. 128:1). The psalmist well understood that ultimate happiness comes from loving God. “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches” (Psa. 63:5, 6).

F. Thirsting day and night for a fuller enjoyment of the Object of our love. Love doesn’t just find happiness in the loved one; love wants to enjoy that loved one more. David expresses this kind of love when he wrote, “One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to meditate in His temple” (Psa. 27:4). Loving God totally expresses itself in a desire to enjoy God more. “As the deer pants for the water brooks so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God” (Psa. 42:1).

CONCLUSION

The most important thing we will ever do in this life is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. When may a person say that he or she loves God totally? Adam Clarke wrote, “He loves God with all his heart, who loves nothing in comparison of Him, and nothing but in reference to Him; who is ready to give up, do, or suffer anything in order to please and glorify Him; who has in his heart neither love nor hatred, hope nor fear, inclination nor aversion, desire nor delight but as they relate to God and are regulated by Him.”⁴ Let us commit ourselves to loving God totally. ■

Dr. Allan P. Brown I is chair of the Division of Ministerial Education at God’s Bible School and College.

1 John Wesley, “On Love,” *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), Sermons IV, #149, p.383.

2 C.S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958), pp.94-95.

3 Quoted by John Piper, *Desiring God* (Multnomah Books, 1996) p.16.

4 Adam Clarke, “Matthew” in *Clarke’s Commentary*, Vol. 5, p.215.

How Clear is Clear?

The Church and the Clarity of Scripture

by Johnathan Arnold

Ordinary Christians should read the Bible. This conviction is stamped on the DNA of Protestant Christians. It's rooted in our belief that Scripture is clear. If the doctrine of the *clarity* or *perspicuity* of Scripture were untrue, then it would make no sense to place a Bible in the hands of every ploughboy. But how clear is clear? What do we mean and *not* mean when we confess the clarity of Scripture?

First, we do not mean that *everything* in Scripture is clear. In fact, the Westminster Confession begins its statement on the clarity of Scripture by acknowledging, "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all" (WCF 1.7). If we're honest, most of us feel a bit like Peter when reading Paul's epistles: "There are some things in them that are hard to understand" (2 Pet. 3:16).

Our groans may unwittingly suggest that this is a fluke, as though it would have been better "if only God had made such-and-such clearer." But the Bible is more than a roadmap for life in which the Spirit succeeds by giving us clear step-by-step instructions on the highway to heaven.

Scripture is the progressive revelation of an incomprehensible God and his eternal plan in Christ. It's designed for lifelong study and reflection. Its stories and sermons, poems and proverbs, force us to slow down, think, wrestle, and struggle with the complexities of life in a fallen world and the transcendent Creator who, in Jesus, has inhabited His world to save and redeem. As we engage our minds and hearts, we are changed.

Because of its very nature, there are varying degrees of clarity in Scripture. Some things are unambiguous, like the matters of "first importance" which define the Christian faith in 1 Corinthians 15:3. Other things are bizarre and puzzling, like what Paul means a few verses later when he says that people are baptized on behalf of the dead (1 Cor. 15:29). Clarity is on a scale from more clear to less clear, and we need to be honest about the degree of certainty with which various truths can be known.

Second, we do not mean that individuals should read the Bible in isolation from the Church. In Acts 8, Philip meets an Ethiopian court official who is reading Isaiah 53.

Philip asks "Do you understand what you are reading?" and the man replies, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:30-31). Too often, Philip is thrown out of the chariot. The doctrine of the

What do we mean and **not** mean when we confess the clarity of Scripture?



clarity of Scripture is hijacked to justify a “me and Jesus and the Bible” mentality. The irony is that no one can honestly read the Bible and conclude that this is what Jesus intended. Christianity is not about “me and Jesus,” it’s about me and Jesus and the body of Jesus. Reading the Bible in isolation from the Church does not mean that you have a high view of the Bible; it means that you have a high view of yourself.

After all, the Bible was given *to* and *through* the Church. The Spirit worked through the Church to establish the canon, and the Church continues to translate and copy the Scriptures. As “a pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15), the Church is the guardian of Scripture, even as Scripture holds final authority over its life and practice. God has given teachers to the Church (Eph. 4:11) to guide the Church in its interpretation and application of the Scriptures (2 Tim 4:2; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16). The Bible is the Church’s book, and it ought to be interpreted by the Church, not by a disjointed hand or foot in isolation from the other members of the body.

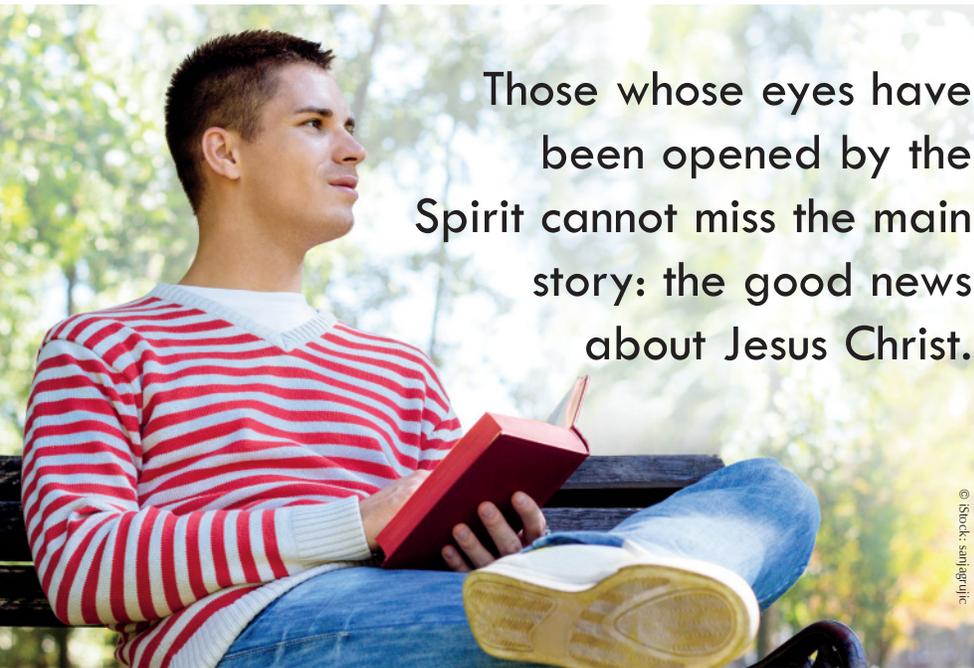
due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them” (WCF 1.7).

As a public school teenager who could not identify Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob in a game of Bible trivia, I read the Scriptures and came to saving faith. The light of the gospel shone clearly through its pages, even when I did not have a pastor or a teacher to instruct me. Truly, “the unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple” (Psa. 119:30). But even then, I was reading a Bible that had been translated into modern English and printed by the Church. One of the copies of Scripture that I read included study notes and doctrinal summaries at the bottom. And when I began attending a local church, the preaching provided a much-needed confirmation that I had correctly understood the major truths of Scripture.

While Scripture was sufficiently clear for me to come to faith, it would have been dangerous for me to read alone in the high school library forever. The Church equipped me to be a better Bible reader and helped me to avoid devastating pitfalls. The same Spirit who inspired the Scriptures also leads its readers into fellowship with the Church. If we reject the Church and its role in biblical interpretation and doctrinal formulation, we are on dangerous ground. Like the heretic Arius who misread Jesus’ words “the Father is greater than I” (John 14:28), we may end up denying the catholic faith in the name of being “more biblical.” Belonging to the Church places us into vital conversation with the great tradition of interpretation. The Christian creeds provide boundaries within which to think and aid us in rightly dividing the Word. The one person, two natures theology of Chalcedon, for example, leads us to interpret Jesus’s words “the Father is greater than I” (John 14:28) as a reference to Christ *according to his human nature*.

The doctrine of the clarity of Scripture should give us confidence to place a Bible in the hands of our next-door neighbor or to fund the distribution of Bibles across the globe. But it should not cause us to withdraw from the Church or assume that good, Bible-believing Christians will agree on everything. Instead, we should unite around the matters of first importance which are unambiguous in Scripture, hold our secondary and tertiary commitments with humility, and assume a listening posture towards other Christian traditions in which the Spirit of truth is surely at work (John 16:13). ■

Johnathan Arnold is president and founder of Holy Joys. He serves as a preaching and teaching pastor in Newport, PA, where he lives with his wife and son. This article was originally posted at holypojoys.com.



Those whose eyes have been opened by the Spirit cannot miss the main story: the good news about Jesus Christ.

What, then, do we mean by the clarity of Scripture? Kevin Vanhoozer is helpful: “Scripture’s clarity does not mean that reading works *ex opere operato*, as if simply pronouncing the words magically yields understanding. Nor does clarity mean that Scripture wears doctrines like the Trinity on its sleeve. Rather, it means that *those whose eyes of the heart* (Eph. 1:18) *have been opened by the Spirit cannot miss the main story: the good news about Jesus Christ*” (emphasis added). To come back to the Westminster Confession, it means that “those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a

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by Sonja Vernon

GOOD INVESTMENT ADVICE

“Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”
—Luke 12:33-34 ESV

I was a sophomore in high school. My family lived frugally but wisely. We didn't go on many big vacations, but my parents tried to do things that would make meaningful memories. This trip was extra special. We had saved our money and were going somewhere we'd wanted to visit for a long time. My brother and I were over the moon. I carefully placed a precious \$20 bill in my pocket and spent the day looking for the perfect item to commemorate the occasion. I remember the horror and disappointment when my hand went into my pocket and found it empty. A search ensued, but the money was gone. I learned an important lesson that day. In order to hold on to my treasure, it must be in a safe place. Jesus reminded His followers that treasure held on earth is in constant jeopardy. Stock markets crash, banks go under, investments lose their value. But, as another version of Luke 12:33 states, “the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes.” So, friend, where is your treasure? Is it in a safe place? Is your heart constantly in turmoil trying to make sure of it? Jesus said there is a remedy, a way to have peace. It's the safest investment with the most monumental returns. Invest in an eternal Kingdom that never fades, in eternal souls that never die. I promise you won't regret it! ■

Sonja Vernon is Vice President for Student Affairs at God's Bible School.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022

23

**COLLEGE CHOIR
LATE-WINTER TOUR 2022**

Wednesday, February 23 | 7:00 PM
Mackey Church of the Nazarene
9612 East Main St., Mackey, IN 47654
Pastor Jared Henry | (812) 795-2708

Thursday, February 24 | 7:00 PM
Talladega Bible Methodist Church
120 Brecon Access Rd.
Talladega, AL 35160
Pastor Andrew Durst | (217) 390-8392

Friday, February 25 | 7:00 PM
Faith Bible Church
14461 US Highway 11 N., Coaling, AL 35453
Pastor Bob Blankenship | (256) 589-3188

Saturday, February 26
To Be Announced

Sunday, February 27 | 10:00 AM
Light and Life Free Methodist Church
5730 Deeson Rd., Lakeland, FL 33810
Rev. Chuck Frankenfeld | (863) 858-6361

Sunday, February 27 | 2:30 PM
Florida Holiness Camp
3335 South Florida Ave.
Lakeland, FL 33803
Dr. Ted Lee, President | (863) 646-5152

Monday, February 28 | 7:00 PM
Avon Park Holiness Camp
1001 W. Lake Isis Ave.
Avon Park, FL 33825
Dr. Tom Hermis, President | (863) 453-6831

Tuesday, March 1 | 7:30 PM
Easley Bible Methodist Church
855 Gentry Memorial Hwy.
Easley, SC 29640
Pastor Dr. R.G. Hutchison | (865) 635-1894

Wednesday, March 2 | 7:00 PM
Faith Community Chapel
345 Faith Chapel Rd.
Thomasville, NC 27360
Pastor Jonathan Heath | (336) 472-6881

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