

GOD'S REVIVALIST

April 2023

and Bible Advocate





thinking out loud

“IS IT REAL?”

A recent Sunday morning sermon at church was about revival—what it is and how it has evolved over the years. The pastor was trying to put what has been happening on the Asbury University campus since February 8th in its proper perspective. At the time of the pastor’s sermon, the Asbury revival had been going nonstop for 11 days and was viral on social media. Thousands of people had made the trip to the small town of Wilmore, Kentucky, to observe or participate. The pastor himself had twice driven down to Wilmore and reported that he had been receiving a lot of questions—with one being prominent: “Is it real?” This was usually asked in a hopeful rather than negative sense.

My mind went back to early March of 1974. I was alone at my parents’ house (The Wesleyan Church parsonage in Huntington, West Virginia) when I heard a knock. I opened the door to a stranger who asked, “Are you Ken Farmer?” He explained that he was on leave from the Air Force and was currently stationed in Misawa, Japan. Some there had asked him to stop by this address and see if Ken Farmer was “for real.” Had he *really* become a Christian?

I had been discharged several weeks earlier after a four-year term in U.S. Air Force intelligence. About two weeks afterward, I had been gloriously saved at a Wednesday night prayer meeting. I wanted to let my old Air Force buddies know about this, so I sent them a letter to tell them that Farmer was a changed man. I jokingly signed it “Ken Farmer, Sacred Agent” (instead of “secret”). That letter was what had brought this visitor to my door. I was happy to send him back to Japan with the confirmation that I was indeed a changed man. What had happened *in* me and *to* me was “real.”

How can we determine whether or not a revival is “real”? When the Spirit is moving, we must genuinely open our hearts in full surrender and receive what God is offering. Our positive response to God will result in positive change in us—and the change in us will be proof enough for those seriously asking “is it real?”

Throughout the years I have stayed in touch with some of those old Air Force buddies who knew and were quite fond of the “old” Ken Farmer. But one day a “new” Ken Farmer replaced the old, and the change in me was the proof.

Are you ready for the knock on your door?—KF ■

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COVER PHOTO: “Ozzie” (named for famous devotional author and GBS faculty member Oswald Chambers) belongs to Vice President for Student Affairs Sonja Vernon and is a member of the dog breed Coton de Tuléar. What a delightful addition he makes to the GBS campus! Editor Ken Farmer particularly likes this photo of Ozzie guarding the grassy area near the entrance of the Women’s Residence Hall. Photo by Rachel Pohl.



the president's page

WASTED ON JESUS

by Dr. Rodney S. Loper, President

In John chapter 12, there is a beautiful account of Mary anointing Jesus with expensive oil. Rather than rejoice at this selfless act, the disciples joined in scolding Mary for “waste.” But Jesus defends Mary by replying, “Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her” (Matt. 26:13 ESV).

Watchman Nee says that Jesus “intends that the preaching of the gospel should issue in something along the very lines of the action of Mary here, namely, that people should *come to Him and waste themselves on Him*” (emphasis, mine).

Have you ever scrolled through Facebook and noticed a post from a girlfriend to her boyfriend or vice versa; or perhaps a post from a wife to husband, or husband to wife? “I love you darling. The sun rises and sets by you. I can’t wait to see you.” I’ve often thought that they could just put their device down for a minute and tell them whatever they wanted to—directly—maybe just across the room.

I know that you are thinking, “That’s silly.” But wait! The honest truth is that we all have done things when we were dating that we look on as silly today. We can’t imagine doing what we did then. Things change. We grow up. Our love matures. These are all true, but this often leads us to lose sight of expressing love in extravagant ways. We become too practical. Perhaps you feel this way and side with the disciples in this passage.

Expressions of love that cost nothing are worthless. There must be some sort of outlay in expressing love. A quick read through the love chapter reveals that love is **COSTLY**. I contend that Mary’s anointing of Jesus with this perfume was costly in at least a couple of ways.

A FINANCIAL COST

First, notice that Mary’s love and devotion to Christ cost her financially. Here is a question to

ponder: “Do I treasure Jesus more than my stuff?” Pure spikenard was an expensive perfume made from the essence of nard that grew in the Himalayan mountains. It was a very aromatic essential oil distilled from roots, and it had numerous uses. It also required long-distance shipping to reach the Holy Land.

We aren’t told where or how Mary got this jar of perfume. Perhaps it was a family heirloom. We do know from the Scripture text that Judas estimated the perfume could have been sold for 300 denarii, which was equivalent to about 300 days’ pay for a working man. Converting its worth to today’s U.S. economy based on a \$15-an-hour wage, 300 eight-hour days adds up to \$36,000! Let that sink in. Do you have anything in your possession valued at \$36,000? Any way you figure it, Mary’s action was extravagantly costly!

Judas and the disciples who scolded Mary were only being sensible. She could have sold the jar of perfume, given 90 percent of the money to help a lot of poor people, and still had a sizeable amount to give to

only an ephod (2 Sam. 6:14-23), Mary cast public opinion to the wind and wiped Jesus’ feet with her hair.

Again, ask yourself, “Do I treasure Jesus more than my pride? Or, am I more concerned about what others think about me?” Look at the way you live your life. Look at the way you conduct your business. Is it evident that Jesus is the most important person in your life? Do you value Him above all others? Mary’s love and devotion to Christ resulted in criticism. But she valued Christ over her reputation.

Mark this down: If you give yourself without reserve to Jesus, you will be criticized. And the scariest part is that the loudest criticism may come from church members. It did in this passage of Scripture—the disciples led the charge!

The book *Shadow of the Almighty* tells the story of how Jim Elliot set his sights on going to the unreached people of Ecuador. His Christian parents asked him to consider whether his gifts could be better used among young people in the United States. He stayed true to

If you give yourself without reserve to Jesus, you will be criticized. And the scariest part is that the loudest criticism may come from church members.

the Lord. But were they really sensible? For some of the disciples, ministry was fast becoming a business to be budgeted rather than a savior to be loved.

Was this extravagant? Yes! But I like the way Isaac Watts said it, “Were the whole realm of nature mine / That were a present far too small / Love so amazing, so divine / Demands my soul, my life, my all.” Mary gave it all because she knew that Jesus is worth it.

Look at your life. Look at your bank statement. Is your devotion to the Lord costing you financially? If others looked at how you spend your money, would they conclude that you must love Jesus a lot?

A SOCIAL COST

Mary’s love and devotion to Christ also cost her socially. Ask yourself this question: “Do I treasure Jesus more than my pride?” Mary anointed Jesus’ feet. And rather than using a towel, she wiped the Lord’s feet with her hair. Some commentators suggest that respectable Jewish women never let down their hair in public. But Mary was so caught up with her devotion to Christ that she didn’t stop to consider what others might think about her. Like David dancing before the Lord wearing

his calling and went to the mission field where he and four others were murdered trying to tell a lost, savage tribe about the love of Jesus. They “wasted” their lives for Jesus!

Love is more than an emotion. Love results in actions, and sometimes those actions may seem outlandish to others. But Mary didn’t think she was being radical. She was simply giving her most prized possession; and, in doing so, she was abandoning herself to Christ. This oil was likely her security, her protection. Today we would call it her nest egg, her 401k, or her IRA. By pouring it out to Jesus, she was expressing her loving commitment to Him. Ponder one last question: “Do we trust Christ enough to abandon our lives to Him?”

The Bible doesn’t finish the story. I wish it did. Think with me about what happened after this event. Scripture does tell us that the house was filled with the aroma of the ointment. I also think that Mary carried the aroma—the “aroma” of Christ!

It is my prayer that each one of us will fall so in love with Christ that it shows. It shows in how we conduct our lives. It shows in how we handle our finances. It shows in the sweet aroma of Christ in our lives! ■

Discipleship Tools for Success

by Nathan Brown



INTRODUCTION

In part one of this series, we looked at what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and we did this in terms of five verbs: commit, follow, imitate, coach, and persuade. In part two, we answered the question, “How do I personally follow Jesus?” and we saw that it means:

- Resolving each day to be a disciple.
- Fostering a relationship with God.
- Following the example of Jesus and others.
- Showing others how to be disciples.
- Calling others to repentance and faith in Christ.

Now we are going to look at some tools that will help you succeed in putting these principles into practice. These tools can be found at the website <https://comeafterme.com>. The website was created to make a variety

of discipleship tools freely available to all who wish to use them. The menu includes:

- **Discipleship**—core material on discipleship with video lectures.
- **Lessons**—various topics related to discipleship.
- **Bible**—personal and family discipleship through the conversation.
- **Articles**—advanced issues related to discipleship.
- **Dear Phil**—answers to various questions related to discipleship and Christian living.
- **Tour Israel**—videos to help understand the geography of the Bible.
- **Links**—various helpful Christian websites.

Let’s go through some of these pages and look at how they can be used for personal and group discipleship.

DISCIPLESHIP PAGE

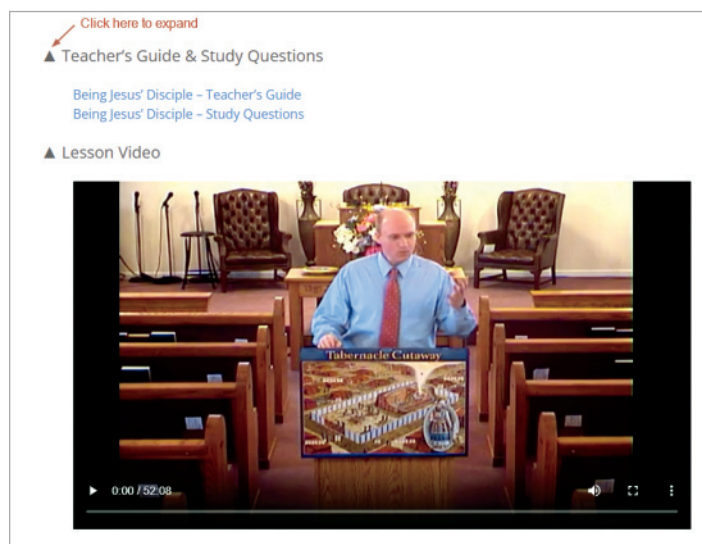
This page contains the core material on discipleship, and it covers everything in this current series of articles. The lessons include:

- **Being Jesus' Disciple**—the basics of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
- **I Follow Jesus**—how to live as a disciple of Jesus.



- **Discipleship Tools**—how to use the discipleship tools available on the website.
- **The Disciple-Making Home**—how to disciple your family.
- **The Disciple-Making Church**—how discipleship works in the church.

Each of these lessons has a Teacher's Guide and Study Questions that accompany the video presentations. You can access these by clicking on the triangles as shown.

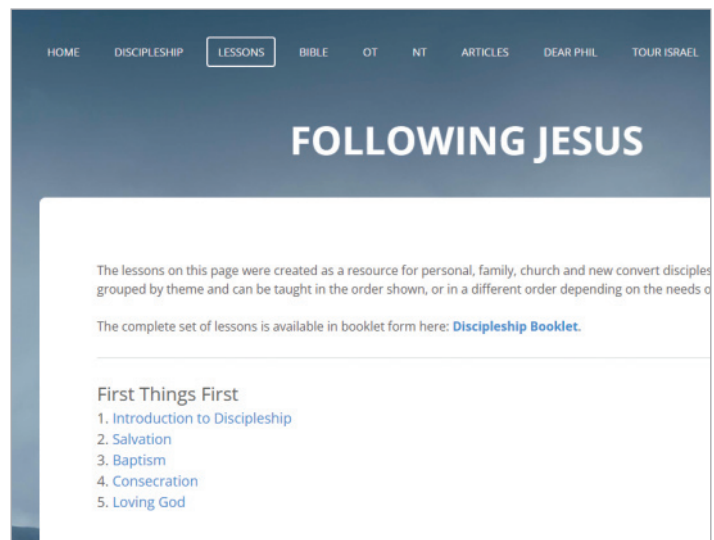


Families, small groups, and churches can use this page to host discipleship seminars. You can print seminar work-

books for the material using the link on the page or by ordering them from Country Pines Printing, Shoals, Indiana.

LESSONS PAGE

The lessons on this page are designed to ground new disciples in the basics of the Christian life. While they are



geared toward new converts, they are also useful for those who have never been discipled, and I've found that many who have attended church for decades have also profited from this material. The menu includes:

First Things First. This section covers the basics of salvation, baptism, consecration, and loving God. While the lesson on salvation may seem redundant, it's fundamental to the following lessons, and after reading the lesson, some new converts have realized that they didn't truly understand what it meant to become a disciple of Jesus. The salvation lesson also lays important groundwork for the lesson on witnessing in the next section. The lesson on consecration introduces new disciples to the basics of sanctification, while avoiding the more advanced wording that is typically used by various denominations.

Essentials for Success. This section covers four essentials for being a successful disciple: Bible reading (listening to God), prayer (talking to God), participating in church, and witnessing (sharing the gospel). If new disciples are not properly grounded in these disciplines, they will have difficulty going on to maturity. The fifth essential is memorizing and meditating on Scripture. This important discipline is at the heart of what it means to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2), and it forms the foundation for dealing with sinful habits.

Early Struggles. New disciples often go through times of persecution and discouragement, especially when they first decide to follow Jesus. This section deals with some of those early issues and teaches them how to cope with rejection, to forgive those who wrong them, and to understand the principle of sowing and reaping. It also gives them tools to deal with temptation and to conquer sinful habits.

New Perspectives. Following Jesus involves a radical change of perspective on life and living. This section introduces new disciples to the kingdom of God and tells them about their role in that kingdom. It also gives them a biblical framework for living and shows them how to think about life from a godly perspective.

Basic Doctrines. This section covers the basic beliefs of Christianity (doctrines), including lessons on God, angels, Satan, heaven, hell, and the resurrection of Jesus. It also teaches new disciples about the Bible, introducing them to words like “inspired” and “inerrant.” The last lessons in this section cover more advanced topics, like the security of the believer and the gift of tongues. It concludes with a very important lesson on faith—a concept that is important for you to understand correctly at the beginning of your walk with Jesus.

Future Events. Everyone is curious about the future, but there’s a lot of confusion about the establishment of Christ’s earthly kingdom. This section covers the rapture of the saints and the return of Jesus to rule on this present earth. Major emphasis is given to the book of Daniel as a guide to the future, and Jesus’ Olivet Discourse is covered in great detail. (The lessons are taught from a *futurist, pre-millennial* perspective).

Building Godly Character. This section covers the key character qualities of humility and diligence, which are so important to being a successful disciple. There is also a lesson which encourages you to examine your life and make any changes that would better conform you to the image of Christ.

BIBLE PAGE

This page models “The Conversation.” In the previous article, I mentioned that when we read the Bible, God is

speaking directly to us. We often think of reading the Bible as a solitary activity, but when we read God’s Word, we have just entered into a conversation with our heavenly Father. This means Bible reading and prayer are not separate from one another. They are two sides of the same relational coin. Here’s how it works: God talks to us through His Word, we think about and meditate on what He said, and then we respond to God in prayer, telling Him what we have learned. Since following Jesus means fostering a relationship with God, this conversation is essential to being a disciple of Jesus.

Date. The first thing you’ll notice at the top of the page is the date. Each time you open this page, it opens to the current date. You can use the calendar buttons to navigate to a particular date. The right and left arrows on either side of the month/year at the top of the calendar will let you move quickly across the months. You can use the “Today” button to return to the current day. Sometimes, you’ll want to locate a particular passage of Scripture, and you can do this using the “Select Book” and “Select Chapter” drop-downs under the calendar.

Text. The first section on the upper left is the “Text” section. This shows you what portions of Scripture are in that day’s reading. Directly under that is the “Chronology” section. This tells you the time period for the reading. Knowing this is helpful for making connections to other events in world history. To the right of the chronology, you’ll notice an “Index” link. This takes you to a PDF of the entire Bible laid out in chronological order. Every passage of Scripture is dated and harmonized, so you can quickly search for and find any particular event. Sometimes a particular day will also have extra links to specific chronological charts such as “Patriarchal Chronology” or “Mosaic Chronology” (see January 31 as an example). You can print these out and keep them for reference as you read.

Read. The next section is the “Read” section. There are four English translations available: the New American Standard Bible (NASB), which is an excellent word-for-word style translation; the King James Version (KJV), which is the Bible so many of us have grown up reading; the Lexham English Bible (LEB), another good word-for-word style translation from Lexham Press which is one of the only freely licensed English Bible translations; and the New English Translation (NET), another helpful translation that is freely licensed for non-commercial use. I chose these translations primarily because they allow the use of their texts without requiring payment. The only exception is the NASB, controlled by the Lockman Foundation, which gave me a separate license agreement to use their text. Next to each version is a small “(M).” This links to a complete month’s worth of readings for those who like to print out the entire month and have the pages in their hand as they read.

If you click on one of these translations, your browser will open a PDF file of that day’s reading. The files are made up of blocks of text, with titles in the headers that tell you the main thought, and dates in parentheses that

Sunday, August 7, 2022

Text
2 Kings 23:1–3, 21–27
2 Chronicles 34:29–35:19
Jeremiah 11–12

Chronology
622 BC (Index)

Read
[New American Standard Bible \(M\)](#)
[King James Version \(M\)](#)
[Lexham English Bible \(M\)](#)
[New English Translation \(M\)](#)
[New King James Version](#)
[New International Version](#)
[New Living Translation](#)

Listen
[ESV Narrated by David Heath](#)

Pray
[Daily Prayer \(PDF\)](#)
[Prayer Template](#)

August 2022

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

Today

use the calendar to select a date

--Select Book--

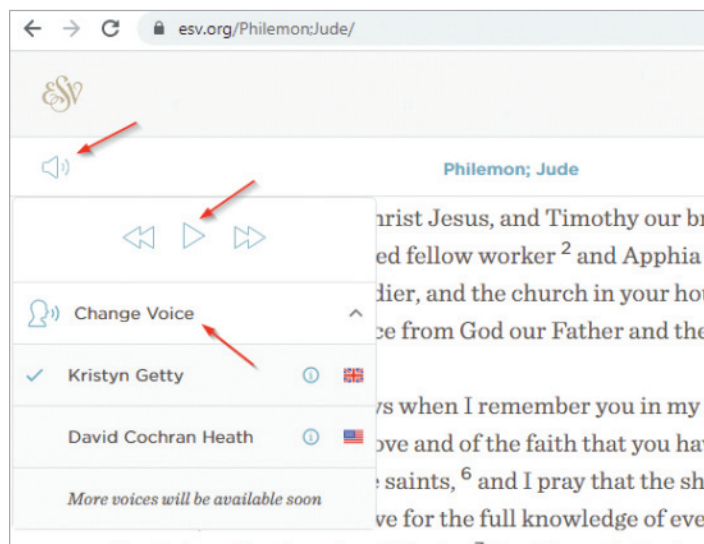
use the dropdowns to select a passage

give you the chronology. When more than one book of the Bible covers the same event, the text is presented in synopsis form—parallel columns of text that are harmonized at the word level (which is very rare). The synopsis form allows you to notice and appreciate the differences between harmonized passages of Scripture, and are very useful for study.

Many of the readings have “Chronological Notes” or “Textual Notes” at the end of the file. There are a total of 75 pages of these notes throughout the readings, and they give background and explanation for why I made certain decisions about chronological questions and arrangement of the text.

Another important feature of the PDF files is the captioning that is included with the text. You’re probably used to seeing this in your own Bible, and I have personally written or chosen every single caption that is found in the readings. They are helpful in making the text easier to understand. I also handpicked every single cross-reference that is included in the readings. You can click on them to open a new browser window where you can quickly read the reference.

Listen. The next section is the “Listen” section. Listening to the Bible can be a great way to add variety to your time in the Word. Many people find listening to be easier than reading, and it can really come in handy if you spend a lot of time in your car. I know several people who listen to the reading on their way to work. The link in this section will take you to the esv.org website made by Crossway. Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, is the owner of the English Standard Version (ESV), and their website is the only one in the world that allows you to listen to a verse-level audio recording of the Bible (all other audio versions are at the chapter-level).



To listen to the reading, click on the Audio icon to the left of the text, then click the Play button. Use the “Change Voice” option to choose between a male or female reader (currently David Heath or Kristyn Getty). If you ever have

difficulty hearing the audio on an iPhone, try using the Chrome browser rather than the default Safari browser. You can find the Chrome browser in the App Store by searching for “Google Chrome.”

Pray. The next section is the “Pray” section. As I mentioned earlier, “The Conversation” works like this: God talks to us through His Word, we think about and meditate on what He said, and then we respond to God in prayer, praising Him and telling Him what we have learned. Think about what this means for prayer. It means we don’t have to think up something to pray about each day. We can simply talk to God about what He just said. But how do we do that? How do we talk to God about Leviticus and Lamentations and Luke? This can be difficult if you’re not used to doing it, so I’ve included a sample prayer for each day of the Bible reading plan. If you click on the “Daily Prayer” link, it will open the prayer at the bottom of the Bible page. If you click on the “PDF” link, it will open a PDF file of the prayer that you can print. The sample prayers can be prayed as your own, or you can click on the “Daily Prayer Template” and use it to create your own prayers. If writing isn’t your strength, you don’t have to write them out; you can just use the template as a guide for your thoughts.

The prayers are designed to help you praise God, learn lessons from His Word, reflect on how Scripture applies to your life, ask God for grace and strength to live for Him throughout the day, and thank God for all He’s done for you. The goal is for your Bible reading and prayer time to be a conversation with God that challenges you and enriches your life.

Let’s walk through a sample prayer and get a feel for each part. We’ll be using the prayer for November 7; in the Scripture reading for that day, God tells us about Jesus’ night in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Praise. The “Praise” section is about praising God for Who He is and what He’s done. This part is usually straightforward, because everything that God is and everything that God does is worthy of praise! In this case, I focused on God’s love in sending His Son to die in our place and how that act of love is worthy of praise. This trains us to recognize that God’s actions and attitudes reveal His character, and His character is truly glorious to behold!

Today in Your Word. The “Today in Your Word” section is about learning something from what God just said to us. Paul makes it clear that all Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17 ESV). This means every part of the Bible has meaning and application for us today. As we read, we need to be asking ourselves, “What is this teaching me about how to be a disciple of Jesus? In what way does this show me how to love God and others?” When you ask those questions about the Garden of Gethsemane, you start to see how Jesus’ actions are a model for how to deal with intense times of trial and temptation.

Reflection

I always read the account of Judas' betrayal of Jesus with a mixture of revulsion and bewilderment. How could you spend three years with God's Son and come to such an end? Yet any time I say 'Yes' to sin and 'No' to the Spirit, I'm right there with Judas, betraying the Son of Man with a kiss. (Keep me from such madness!)

Reflection. The "Reflection" section is about challenging ourselves with the truth of God's Word. James said, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like" (James 1:22-24 ESV). God's Word is like a spiritual mirror. When we listen to what God says, we receive insight into the condition of our hearts and minds. We need to be sensitive to that, and not walk away without giving serious consideration to what changes might need to be made in our lives.

Request. The "Request" section is about asking God to help us put what we've learned into practice. You can use the applications from the "Today in the Word" section to inform your requests. We're very used to asking God for help with our physical issues, but are we asking God for help with our spiritual needs?

Thanksgiving. The "Thanksgiving" section is about thanking God for what He's told us and being grateful for the many blessings He's given us. Gratitude is essential for making it through the storms and trials of life, and this is a great way to end your time in prayer.

The prayers end with a suggested hymn and a verse you can meditate on during the day. Hymns are a wonderful way to impress the truths of Scripture into our minds, and the meditation verse is handpicked to help you keep your focus on Jesus throughout the rest of your day.

Think. The last section is the "Think" section. This section provides an easy and helpful way to promote group discipleship. Each day has a set of fill-in-the-blank questions that are taken from the prayer (see example below). If you click on the "M" link, you can print out a complete month of questions, which is handy for doing this in a group set-

ting. I answer these questions in my daily lectures. You can listen to the audio-only format by clicking the "Play" button or watch by clicking on the "Video Link."

If you miss an answer or want to make sure you've filled in the blanks correctly, you can click on the "Answer Key" link to see the answers. The goal of this section is to facilitate group discussion of the daily reading. I use this personally for family discipleship. Each person in my family reads the daily reading, and then we all listen to the lecture together and discuss what we've learned. It's perfect

December 21 Questions

- 1) Hebrews was an _____ letter to the Christian community in _____, who had recently gone through a time of _____. Many of them were discouraged and in danger of _____ from faith in Christ. Knowing this, the author of Hebrews warned his readers of the peril of _____ and urged them to endure to the end by _____. He did this by proving the _____ of Jesus and his covenant, and then calling the disciples to remain firm in their _____ to Christ. The author began by showing that the OT proclaims the Messiah to be the _____ of God (Ps 2; 45; 110). This means that Jesus is _____ than the angels, for they are ministering spirits sent out to _____ for the sake of the saints (Heb 1:14). This teaches us that we should pay very close _____ to what Jesus has said, lest we _____ away from it. The author continued by showing that the OT also proclaims the Messiah to be the son of _____ (Ps 8:4-6; Heb 2:9). As man, Jesus was made _____ than the angels for a little while, but _____ he is crowned with glory and honor, and all things will be put in _____ under his feet. His incarnation means that he is _____ and blood just like us, and his obedient suffering _____ him to be our High Priest. He made _____ for our sins, and because he himself _____ when tempted, he is able to help us when we are tempted. The author then showed that Jesus is superior to _____ (Heb 3:1). Moses was a faithful _____ in God's house, but Jesus was faithful over God's house as _____ and _____. If we remain _____, like Moses, then we will be a part of Jesus' house. But if we _____, like those Moses led from Egypt, then we will not enter God's _____. This teaches us to fear the danger of _____.

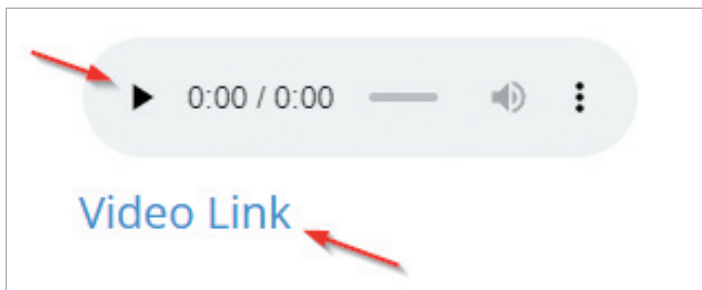
for couples, families, small groups, etc. If you've ever struggled to have a time of family devotions, this is as easy as pushing a button.

CONCLUSION

In closing, my hope and prayer is that you will find the tools on the comeafterme.com website to be useful in your own discipleship journey.

The next installment will focus on **The Disciple-Making Home**, followed by **The Disciple-Making Church**. I trust these will be a blessing. 📖

Nathan Brown is a senior engineer for Southern Company Services, Director of Discipleship for the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches, and founder of ComeAfterMe.com (a discipleship website). He, his wife Charity, and two children live in Trussville, AL. All Scripture quotations are ESV.



How to **SHARE** Your **TESTIMONY**

by Mark Bird

*A*s is acknowledged in many resources on disciple making, there are four main building blocks of spiritual growth: prayer, Bible reading, attending church with other believers, and sharing your faith with unbelievers. The latter—your personal testimony—can be a powerful tool for witnessing. Rightly presented, your testimony gives God credit for what He has done in your life; it brings Him glory.

Testifying in the presence of a large (or small) crowd of Christians can be intimidating. It can be even more intimidating to share your testimony one-on-one with an unbeliever outside of a church setting. Yet doing this can be very effective and rewarding. The primary purpose of this article is to encourage you to share your testimony with unbelievers (more) and to do so with maximum impact. To that end, I'll share a few tips and give a couple of examples.

THE TIPS

Avoid using "Christianese." Use language that your listeners will understand, given their background. For example, if they know nothing about Christianity, you might

not want to describe your experience with an expression like, "I went up to the altar and was washed in the blood of the Lamb!" If you say that, I'm not sure your listener will understand what happened to you without a lot more explanation. Even the term "saved" can be confusing. I heard of a Christian man traveling with a non-Christian friend on a business trip. The non-Christian noticed something spray painted on the wall of an overpass. He saw the words, "Jesus Saves" and thought out loud, "That's interesting. Jesus saves His money; that's a good idea. I need to do more of that!"

Draw a contrast between your old life and your new life in Christ. "Before I met Christ" should contrast with "after I met Christ" (and the middle part of your testimony should be "how I met Christ"). Sharing the contrast can have an emotional impact and show God's power to change your perspective, character, life, and/or destiny. You could draw a distinction even if you had a childhood conversion, because even without a long list of sins, you still needed a change in your relationship with God. Here are some examples of contrasts: Before I met Christ, I was lost; now I am found. Before, I had no purpose for living;



now, my life has meaning. Before, I was bound by sin; now, I have freedom. Once I was blind; now, I can see. Before, I was afraid to die; now, I have the assurance that my forever destiny is heaven, etc. Of course, your contrast would need to be explained with some details.

Connect it with a presentation of the gospel message. Let's say you use the bridge illustration (the "basic message of the Bible") to share the gospel. In this presentation, you explain how Jesus, the God man, is the bridge between you and God. The death and resurrection of Christ bring salvation to all who repent and put their faith in Him. Through Christ, we are reconciled to God. After you draw out this illustration, you can say something like, "Let me tell you my story—how I came across that bridge...." This will make your illustration of the gospel come alive; it will be more personal and real.

Choose an aspect of your story that you think your listener might relate to, and then use that to make an appeal to him or her. For instance, maybe you learn that a certain lady you are talking to suffers from a sense of hopelessness. If you share with her how God delivered you from hopelessness (if true), you can encourage her to do what you did so that she can be set free from hopelessness like you were.

THE EXAMPLES

Now, for a couple of examples that illustrate some of these tips. I'll first try to share my salvation testimony briefly without using too much insider language:

When I was 15 years old, I went for a week to one of those summer camps where you play softball much of the afternoon and then attend a church service at night. On that Saturday evening, the preacher spoke on the judgment of God. As he spoke, I felt a sense of lostness. I knew that if I died, I would not go to heaven. I felt the guilt of my sins and wanted to have peace. So, I went up to the front of the auditorium and prayed. Knowing that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, I put my trust in Him. I suddenly became aware that He had forgiven me! I stood up, overwhelmed with joy, as I thought: "Though I'm so small and unworthy, the great God of the universe has made me His child!" The fear of dying was gone, assurance of salvation replaced guilt, and my life has never been the same. If you are worried about your future as I was, turn your life over to God, and He will give you the same peace He gave to me!

Here's another example of a salvation testimony written by Diana Sobie, a student of mine (used here with her permission).

I grew up in a Christian family, so I was surrounded by God and the church from a very young age. But although I was raised in a Christian home, I just followed

through the motions of doing "Christian things" that I thought you were supposed to do to get to heaven. I didn't know Christ personally; I just knew about Him. So because of this, there was an emptiness in my life, and I found myself searching for purpose and meaning in others and myself. Whether it was in my friends, work, or school, I poured my whole heart into the temporary things of this earth. But unfortunately, I also became very fixated on myself and my image. I became very consumed with what people thought of me and was living for the acceptance of the world.

But these things never truly gave me any fulfillment, and at my lowest point, when I was alone and afraid, God drew me to Himself. I surrendered my will to His and confessed that I was a sinner. I acknowledged that He sent Jesus to die on the cross so I could be forgiven of my sin and have eternal life. I committed to living for God alone instead of for others and myself.

Since coming to know Him, God showed me that being a Christian isn't about just doing good works so that you go to heaven and not hell. He clarified that I do not have to earn my salvation or His love. He has given me fulfillment, a purpose, and joy as gifts of grace that I do not deserve and have not earned. I am not perfect and still mess up, but God loves me despite my flaws and imperfections. And while the things I was pursuing before continually let me down, God has never once left me. He has shown Himself to me in His Word, the Bible.

He can and WANTS to do the same for you. If you accept Him as your Lord and Savior, He can change your life forever and provide peace and a purpose that this world could never bring!"

Note the contrast in those testimonies, the simple language, and the appeal to others to do the same thing you did so they can also experience God's love and transforming power. Of course, we know that no experience is exactly the same, but God is the same, and His grace is the same and is offered to all. He "is not willing that anyone should perish but that all come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

If you decide that sharing your testimony is something you want to do, write it down. Practice it out loud. Then pray for opportunities. Properly placed questions will open many doors. You could ask an unbeliever, "Could you tell me about your religious background?" Take time to listen well, then ask, "Could I share with you a little of my spiritual experience?"

When you tell your story with confidence and passion, with genuine concern for the other person, and a desire to glorify God, you will be effective in sharing your testimony and may even be able to lead your hearer to Christ! ■

Dr. Mark Bird has been a GBS professor since 1997, teaching philosophy, theology, apologetics, evangelism, and other courses. He, his wife, and three daughters live in Alexandria, KY.



HILLTOP ART EXHIBIT

This event is a biennial gallery hosted by the Flexon Library during



Meagan Valentine displays several paintings.

the spring semester. Our goal is to feature some of GBS's finest artists in various mediums: painting, drawing, photography, woodworking, sculpture, pottery, calligraphy, taxidermy, etc. Submissions for the event are open for College and ACA high school students as well as staff and faculty. The artists submit a few examples of their artwork and entries are selected by a curating committee.



On February 3, the library was transformed into an art gallery for artists to display their work. Live music was performed by various campus musicians, and free coffee and treats were provided by generous campus bakers. Many enjoyed attending the special event which

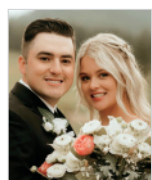


Isaac Singleton displays his photography.

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.

WEDDINGS



Nadia Solorio (2020-21) to Ethan Boardman (2020-21), June 25, 2022, held outside in the beautiful mountains of Sedalia, CO, at the Nationwide Youth Round Up (a church campground and youth retreat), with Mark Potter officiating. Ethan is self-employed as an entrepreneur, and Nadia is studying to acquire a real estate license. They attend Calvary Bible Methodist Church, Greenfield IN, and reside in Indianapolis, IN.

BIRTHS



To **Brooke (Evans) (AA '18) and Stephen St. Germaine (AA, BA '18)**, a daughter, **Aimee-Grace Angelique**, born October 20, 2022, at Alamance Regional Medical Center, Burlington, NC. Stephen is a veterinary assistant at Mebane Pet Clinic, Mebane, NC. Previously, while employed at GBS, Stephan was an assistant to the head cook. Brooke is a stay-at-home mom. Aimee-Grace is welcomed by her brother, Gideon (2). The family lives in Graham, NC.

To **Maria (Stetler) (AA, BA '12) and Bryan Robledo**, a daughter, **Sophia Jade**, born March 15, 2023, at Tacoma General Hospital, Tacoma, WA. While at GBS, Maria worked in advancement in var-



Kaitlynn Watters—photography and pencil drawings

showcased some really great talent that otherwise might have remained hidden.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT DAY

On Tuesday, February 7, 2023, Student Affairs hosted Daniel Ryan Day from “Reclaim Today” (a partner ministry of Our Daily Bread). He spoke to our students about the challenges Gen Z and Millennials face regarding spiritual transformation and the importance of allowing space into lives that are constantly bombarded with information. During the Q&A session, students peppered



Guest speaker for Student Development Day, Daniel Ryan Day

Daniel with questions about ways to implement the information into their everyday lives.

TIRE-CHANGING CLINIC

The GBS facilities team held a “tire changing clinic” on the evening of February 7th. Around 20 students and campus family members showed up. The attendees were divided into two groups and assigned to a specific facilities team. Each team demonstrated the complete procedure twice—taking a tire off and putting it back on. A car was hoisted on a lift so that everything under the car could be

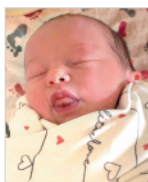


Participants position the jack during the tire-changing clinic.

seen. This assisted the team leaders in demonstrating where to place a jack safely. Refreshments were served, making the event both instructive and enjoyable. Vice President for Student Affairs Sonja Vernon, one of the participants, remarked, “Attending the tire-changing clinic was a fun experience and a great refresher course. Our facilities team did a fantastic job!”

GBS CLASSIC TOURNAMENT

The 2023 GBS Classic Tournament was held February 9-10. This event brought approximately ➡



ious capacities (2012-17). She maintains her GBS connection by serving as an adjunct faculty member. She is the owner of MediaSense Solutions. Bryan, a graduate of Hobe Sound Bible College, pastors Star Lake Church in Federal Way, WA.

The family lives in Federal Way.

DEATHS



Marie Smith, 88, a lifelong resident of Eldorado, IL, went to be with the Lord on December 6, 2022. She was born on February 21, 1934, to Cletus and Emma (Reichelderfer) Phelps of Eldorado. Marie graduated from Eldorado Township High

School in 1951, and in 1954 she married Charles E. Smith. Together they owned and operated the Smith Standard Amoco service station in downtown Eldorado for 30 years. They equipped many missionary automobiles with new tires and visited 17 international foreign missions while serving under One Mission Society.

Marie was a former member of the Eldorado First United Methodist Church and Faith Chapel Church of Harrisburg. She was also very actively involved with the Beulah Holiness Camp in Eldorado, IL, and with Avon Park Holiness Camp, Avon Park, FL. Marie was a GBS donor and *God's Revivalist* subscriber.

In 2015, her husband preceded her in death. She is survived by two sons, Dennis and Barry; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; two sisters, Emma L. Smith and Lillie Rippey; two brothers, Bill Phelps and ➡

➡ 100 students and their parents and chaperones to our campus from the following high schools: Bourbon Christian Academy (KY), Frankfort Covenant Academy (IN), Heartland Christian School (IN), London Christian Academy (KY), Pleasant View Christian School (KY), Stone City Christian Academy (IN), and our own Aldersgate Christian Academy.

Between the rousing games of basketball and volleyball, guests sat in on college classes, attended a chapel



service in which President Rodney Loper delivered a challenging message, and took a trip to Coffee Emporium for some hot drinks.

Congratulations to the Heartland Saints for their first-place finish in both volleyball and basketball, and to Aldersgate Christian Academy for their first-place finish in B-team basketball! We thank the Lord for safety, fun, and a spiritual emphasis.

HILLTOP IVORIES

Hilltop Ivories, an annual piano ensemble performance, was held in the Adcock Chapel on Tuesday, March 7, at 7:00 pm. Dr. Jana Pop, Music Division Chair, welcomed the audience and prayed the opening prayer. Participants included students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends. There were 19 separate performances involving multiple players. For example, "Wonderful



Participants in Hilltop Ivories

Grace of Jesus" featured alumnus Matt Barnett on piano accompanied by faculty member Jessica Smith on the organ. Claude Debussy's "En Bateau" from *Petit Suit* featured two students on the piano, Ana Castillon and Jake Stetler. One interesting number featured four of the music faculty: J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 was performed by Dr. Jana Pop, Tim Crater, Jessica Smith, and Michael DeStefano. Ms. Sonja Vernon, Vice President for

REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ Rev. Ray Phelps; and several nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at the Watson Funeral Home, Eldorado, with Rev. Ray Phelps officiating. Burial followed in Douglass Cemetery, Eldorado.



Wilma Jean (Monce) Gallup, 93, passed away January 2, 2023, at her residence in Nashville, TN, while surrounded by her loving family. She was born April 24, 1929, in Middletown, OH, to the late Issac and Lula Monce. She graduated from the GBS high school in 1946.

Wilma retired after decades of service as an RN. A lifelong member of the Church of the Nazarene, she always placed faith, family, and friends at the forefront of her life. She was a GBS donor and a subscriber to *God's Revivalist*. Her father is memorialized at GBS by the "Issac T. Monce Memorial Scholarship."

Wilma was preceded in death by her husband, Wayne Gallup. She is survived by two daughters,

Debbie Tucker and Melissa Flatt; four sons, Todd, Douglas, Jeffrey, and Gregory; 19 grandchildren; and 25 great-grandchildren. A Celebration of Life Service was held at Trevecca Community Church, Nashville, TN.



Rex Alfred Bullock, 75, passed to his heavenly reward on January 12, 2023, in Tualatin, OR, surrounded by family who sang over him "Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly." Rex was born in 1947 to Foy and Doris Nell (Spears) Bullock of Jacksonville, Texas. At the age of 16, Rex made a decision to follow Jesus Christ while attending a camp meeting in Caldwell, ID. The following year he recorded his first album, *At the Altar*, with his parents. Through the years he recorded and produced numerous albums and ministered through song to many congregations.

During his senior year of high school, Rex met the love of his life, LaWanda Mae Gordon, and after spending about two years trying to impress her, he finally suc-



Student Affairs prayed the closing prayer. It was a delightful evening for all in attendance.

HEARTLAND YOUTH RALLY

GBS was privileged to participate in the Heartland Bible Methodist Youth Rally. This event was held March 17 at the Bible Methodist Church in Franklin, OH. The pastor, Brian Wardlaw (Heartland Conference Youth President), was a gra-



Brooklyn Loper, Kaley Quesenberry, and Breanna Loper singing at the Heartland Youth Rally.

cious host and opened the service to a full house. A ladies' trio composed of GBS students sang; student Stewart Quesenberry led worship music; and President Rodney Loper preached. Many seekers lined the altar. Activities after the service included volleyball, basketball, ping pong, cornhole, and table games. The games were competitive, but fun. Plentiful pizza, chips, and drinks were provided. A good time was had by all.

2023 CHOIR TOUR

On Wednesday, February 22, the GBS bus and trailer headed for its first destination on the 2023 Late-Winter Tour. This year's trip involved seven stops in six states—Indiana, Alabama, North Carolina, Florida, South Carolina, and Ohio. This included the normal two Florida stops at the Light and Life Free Methodist Church and the Florida Holiness Camp, both in Lakeland, FL. ➡



Loading the Bus



ceeded. They were married on June 8, 1967, in Duncan, OK. In their first years of marriage, Rex attended Augustana Lutheran College and worked full-time, often during the night, as a broadcaster for Moody. This paid for his schooling and supported his growing family. Their oldest son, Jonathan Rex, was born in 1969 in Rock Island, IL. After graduating with a BA in 1970, Rex relocated his family to Chattanooga, TN, where he continued working as a broadcaster and a school-teacher. They welcomed their second child, Sherilyn LaRose, that same year.

He and his family frequently toured the Holiness Movement camp meeting circuit, dedicating themselves to full-time evangelistic singing and preaching. Drawing on his background in radio broadcasting, Rex helped launch Dayspring Ministries (now Day Media) in 1977 to teach "God's standard for holy living." Originally conceived as a 30-minute radio variety show, it was aired on hundreds of stations and to thousands of people

around the world. In 1980 he became a father again when Mark Brittian was born.

Rex then earned a master's degree in pastoral ministries/conflict management from Trinity College and Theological Seminary. For over 40 years he planted churches, pastored multi-site congregations, worked with outreaches and missions, and led various denominational efforts. He continued to preach into the final months of his life. Rex was a subscriber to *God's Revivalist*.

Rex is survived by his wife, LaWanda; his children Jonathan, Sherilyn Lombos, and Brittian; seven grandchildren; brother Knox; sister Beth; and nieces, nephews, in-laws, cousins, and their children. After a celebration of life service, Rex was buried in the Old Palestine Cemetery, Alto, TX.

Barbara Lou Bias, 79, of Huntington, WV, passed away January 26, 2023. She was born July 24, 1943, in Huntington, WV, the daughter of Lucille (Woods) Bias. She was a graduate of Huntington East High ➡



Final Service at the Franklin Bible Methodist Church

➡ Chad Bickel commented on the service at the Talladega Bible Methodist Church, February 25, where, in addition to the GBS Choir, there were 150 or so in the congregation. "If you thought we were crammed in, it was because WE WERE. The community noticed. Cars lined both sides of the street. What a great time that was to be with God's people in one place and hear such great songs and truth!"

Concerning the final service held March 2 at the Bible Methodist Church, Franklin, OH, staff member Valorie Quesenberry said, "The final night of the tour was a service of praise. God helped the choir pull out the stops once again and lift their voices to worship Him and encourage others. Then the big bus headed for Cincinnati. It's all over until we do it again in just 12 months!"

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REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ School and earned her master's degree from Marshall University, Huntington. She was an elementary school teacher in the Cabell County school system



for 40 years, primarily teaching at Guyandotte and Meadows Elementary, both in Huntington. She received the Cabell County Teacher of the Year Award for the 1988-89 school year.

Barbara was a charter member of First Wesleyan Church, Huntington, WV, where she served in many capacities throughout her life. She was a GBS donor and a *God's Revivalist* subscriber.

Barbara is survived by her close friends, Larry and Joyce Arbogast, Debby Simms, Anna Myers; and beloved dog, Coal. Funeral services were held at ReClaim

Church, Huntington, WV, with Pastors Larry Arbogast and Corey Adkins officiating. Burial followed at Spring Hill Cemetery in Huntington, WV.



Gwendolyn L. Lecates, 83, passed into

eternal rest from her home in Archdale, NC, March 8, 2023, after a 4-year bout with an incurable blood disorder. She was born on April 22, 1939, in Sussex County, DE, to Douglas Hill and Mary Wells. In

1943, Mary moved with the children to Wilmington, DE. After two years they returned to Selbyville, where they lived with Gwendolyn's maternal grandparents while Mary worked in a chicken processing factory to provide for her children. Gwendolyn finished high school at Selbyville Central School, where she graduated with

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

honor in typing and a business diploma. During her high school years, she was a member of the high school glee club and also learned to play the piano and accordion.

She was converted during the 1955 fall revival at the Bethel Methodist Church. In April 1956, she met her future husband as she sang and he preached in a revival at the Methodist Church, Gumboro, DE. After a three-year courtship, she married Edward S. Lecates, and they immediately began traveling in evangelism, followed by 52 consecutive years of pastoring churches in Texas, New York, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina before retiring in 2012. During these years she filled the roles of Sunday school teacher, ACE reading monitor, music accompanist, singer, youth leader, and gracious hostess. She traveled with her husband in missionary administrative work, raising funds for missions and visiting missionary headquarters in

Manaus, Brazil. Even in retirement she continued to serve as Sunday school teacher and church janitor.

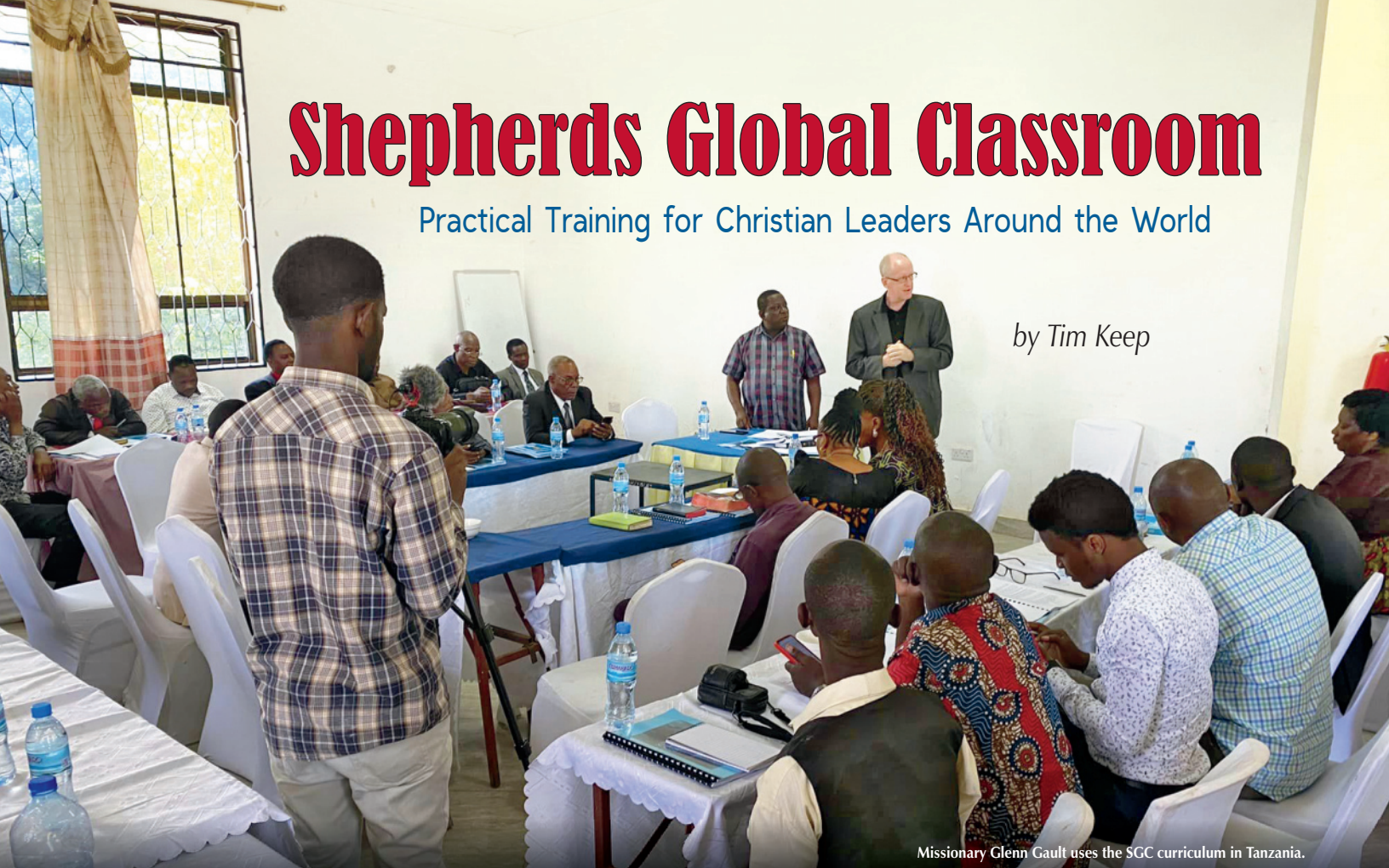
The Lecateses subscribed to *God's Revivalist* and were GBS donors. They purchased an apartment building adjacent to existing school property and had it completely renovated before donating it to the school. The building was named "Gwendolyn's Gateway" (see GR December 2022, p.22).

Surviving Gwendolyn are her husband of 63 years; son, Samuel; daughter, Dawn Packer; six grandchildren; brother, Houston Hill; and two special cousins, Marietta Hall and Barbara Savage. A funeral service was conducted at the Piedmont Bible Church, Thomasville, NC, officiated by her husband, Rev. Dr. Edward S. Lecates, Rev. Barry Whitaker, and Rev. Tim Cole. Burial followed at Trinity Holiness Church Cemetery, Sophia, NC. ■

Shepherds Global Classroom

Practical Training for Christian Leaders Around the World

by Tim Keep



Missionary Glenn Gault uses the SGC curriculum in Tanzania.

In April 2012, I was traveling with other missionary trainers through East Africa, teaching a diverse group of pastors and laypeople in small villages and in very rustic settings. In each place, pastors and Christian leaders gathered under the shade of mango trees, under simple make-shift shelters, under tents. It was a wonderful, eye-opening season of ministry. These men and women who had had almost no access to theological training were eager students. I was often amazed by their spiritual depth and insight, but also saddened over their lack of resources. And as we taught, it became evident that some of the pastors and leaders we were training had the heart, the capacity, and the gifts to teach as well. They didn't really need us. They needed us to equip them to do what we were doing.

The Call to Create SGC

Later, while sitting on the porch of a rustic mission house in a Mozambique village, a salty breeze from the Indian Ocean rustled gently through the coconut palms, while a farmer cultivated his pineapple garden close by. I had my Bible open to John 13. As I read, I was struck by a phrase from the story of Jesus washing His disciple's feet. "Do you know what I have done to you...*I have given you an example*, that you also

should do just as I have done to you" (John 13:13-15, ESV, emphasis mine).

As I pondered this word, the events of the past days, the men and women I'd been privileged to teach, and this strong desire God had given me to equip Christian leaders, the thought came to me that we could serve Jesus' disciples best by providing a training resource suited for them and their context. *What if we had a training curriculum that was theologically robust, but simple, clear, and concise to put into the hands of these pastors?*

That morning I sensed the Holy Spirit was saying in my heart that if we would find a way to develop this needed resource for the sake of His body—as a service to His diverse body—He would prosper the effort.

Over the next few months, God affirmed this calling and providentially brought together a team of qualified, dedicated cross-cultural trainers and educators to begin the work. Within a year or so this nameless vision became known as Shepherds Global Classroom, Inc.

Since the planting of the first tiny seeds in 2012, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been invested into twenty foundational English courses and numerous translations. These courses are already equipping leaders to train thousands of men and women in thirty-seven countries for the harvest. Our free Shepherds Global Classroom App has been downloaded in ninety-one countries.

GOD'S REVIVALIST and BIBLE ADVOCATE

The Mission and Vision of SGC

SGC exists because a vast majority of churches around the world are led by people who have no formal education in theology or ministry. These rising church leaders need training to care for the growing Church. It is imperative that training be scaled through informal and non-formal training programs. This is the mission of SGC.

We envision homes, sanctuaries, cafes, and even shade trees as “classrooms” where underserved Christian leaders will be discipled and sent into the harvest. In recent years, Uber and Airbnb have radically transformed the taxi and hotel paradigms. They have scaled both by making use of private vehicles and homes. The SGC team believes we can do something similar—scale indigenous theological classrooms—by tapping into the gifts and resources already present within the body of Christ around the world.

The Curriculum of SGC

At the heart of the SGC mission is the unique curriculum tool—a theological curriculum which is Christ-centered, adaptable to various contexts, and makes training reproducible.

SGC curriculum is deep but written in a clear and simple language—language easier to grasp for ESL (English as a second language) learners. It is a set of twenty foundational, fifteen-week courses, covering a broad range of biblical theology, for a robust (2-3 year) training program. We are not a training institution but provide excellent training tools so that informal and nonformal training institutions can be formed where they currently do not exist. With this curriculum, classes can be structured to fit any context.

Each course has been developed by credentialed, experienced, cross-cultural leaders and trainers with a passion for God’s word. No textbooks are required (full text is included), and tests and answer keys are provided.

Translation of this 20-course curriculum began with languages representing some of the world’s greatest populations. As of January 2023, 156 courses have already been translated, with 113 in progress. We hope to have these six languages completed in 2023: traditional Arabic, Chinese (traditional), Chinese (simplified), French, Hindi, Russian, and Spanish.

An exciting aspect of this is that SGC scales up this theological training by equipping local Christian leaders, pastors, and missionaries as trainers who then form

their own grassroots training programs. Through SGC, Christian leaders are being prepared as pastors, teachers, and ordained elders. All curriculum is offered to trainers around the world FREE OF CHARGE in digital form (webpage and app), even granting printing and distribution rights to anyone. SGC charges no royalty or membership fee when denominations, agencies, institutions, or individuals download and distribute SGC curriculum within the context of their ministry. Additionally, we have moved to a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International License that allows for each course to be copied and distributed freely in print and digital format but not altered in any way or sold for profit (although printing costs may be charged). Educational institutions may use these course materials even if they charge tuition fees.

SGC has two partner schools: Columbia International University (CIU) and God’s Bible School and College. Both offer certificate programs using SGC curriculum. See more about this on our webpage or contact us.

Conclusion

We get many stories from around the world of training ministries being formed and lives being changed through the SGC tool. Let me close with one.

In San Gabriel in southern Mexico, missionary Brennan Muir, a GBS graduate (BA ’10) writes: “SGC was instrumental in helping us to start Ezra Biblical Seminary. Since 2019, attendees have included pastors, church leaders, laypersons, and professionals. As we have grown from only a few students to more than sixty, we have seen the value of SGC for making disciples of Christ, no matter the level of one’s education.”

Although Brennan does in-person training in the San Gabriel classroom, he is now training students in six Central American countries

through online learning. This is not only happening in foreign countries, it is also happening in churches right here in the U.S. This is what SGC is all about—training disciples and equipping them to do the same! ■

Rev. Timothy Keep pastored for five years in the U.S. before he and his wife Rebecca served for thirteen years as missionaries in the Philippines, training and equipping Christian pastors and leaders. They have been blessed with five children, a son- and daughter-in-law, and five grandchildren. Tim is founder and president of Shepherds Global Classroom (www.shepherdsglobal.org).



GBS alumnus David Martinez leads a class in Mexico utilizing the SGC curriculum.

Dear Phil

IDOLATRY

1 John 5:21 says: "Little children, guard yourselves from idols." How do you define idolatry? Is it limited to false gods? Are there forms of idolatry in our culture? —Cale

Dear Cale,

People often define an idol as "anything that takes the rightful place of God in our lives." I think this is valid, but we need to flesh that out a bit more.

First, the primary sense of "idol" in Scripture is an image of a god other than the one true God (Gen. 31:19; Zech. 13:2). The Old Testament unsparingly condemns both the making and worship of images of gods other than Yahweh (Lev. 26:1; Deut. 4:25; Judges 3:7; 1 Kings 18:19; 2 Kings 23:4). Yahweh Himself mocks such images as helpless (Jer. 10:3-9), senseless (Psalm 115:4-7), and worthless (Jer. 51:17-18). And under His rule, such idolatry was a capital crime (Deut. 13).

Second, any physical representation of the one true God for the purpose of worship is an idol. Deuteronomy states this clearly: "Watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that Yahweh spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth..." (Deut. 4:15-18).

Note the phrase "you saw no form on the day that Yahweh spoke to you" (Deut. 4:15). Yahweh insists that His people make no physical representation of Him. This is precisely what Aaron did when he made the golden calf and then declared to Israel, "These are your gods...tomorrow is a feast to Yahweh" (Exod. 32:4-5).

It's worth pondering, why does it matter so much to God that we make no image to represent Him? I suspect there are multiple reasons. Perhaps chief among them is that no image can rightly represent Yahweh. What universal principle lies behind this prohibition? Does this prohibition teach us that our mental image of God—who He is, what He's like—matters a great deal to God? When we speak of God in unworthy ways, it is called blasphemy. If we choose to think of God in ways that are contrary to His revelation of Himself in Scripture, wouldn't that be idolatry?

Third, according to Paul "every-one who is...covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ" (Eph. 5:5; cf. Col. 3:5). The covetous person is greedy, often desiring what belongs to others. Paul may have drawn this

inspired conclusion from Jesus' statement, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24). When we prioritize getting stuff over obeying God, we are serving it. In essence, covetousness or greed makes an idol of self. By logical extension any conscious choice to disobey God is a choice to value self over God, i.e., self-idolatry.

Putting these elements together, we can say that Scripture identifies three types of idolatry: (1) worshiping another god besides God with or without images, (2) worshiping God with images or concepts that are contrary to His self-revelation, or (3) worshiping self by choosing self's desires over God's desires.

The text in 1 John 5, which seems so abrupt, may be John's application of the second element of idolatry. Throughout his letter, John combats false beliefs about God. For example, John says that the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, denies God the Father and thus worships a false God (1 John 2:22-23). John also teaches that the one who affirms the full deity of Jesus yet denies His humanity (1 John 4:2-3), worships a false Christ, an "antichrist." In other words, worshiping an unscriptural Jesus of our own making is idolatry.

Admittedly, Revelation warns against eating things sacrificed to idols, so literal idolatry was still an issue (Rev. 2:14, 20). I believe it is safe to conclude that we should guard ourselves against idolatry of all varieties. Types two and three listed above are insidiously rampant in the 21st century. My prayer is "Lord, show me where I'm prone to idolatry, and help me guard myself from idols!"

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.



MEETING DAILY WITH GOD (part 2)

by Danny McCain

Scripture: *“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” —Matthew 6:6 NIV*

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of this sermon, I examined Jesus’ teachings about prayer in this verse and explained that our quiet time should be certain, regular, and personal. It should teach us, challenge us, and provide us with regular communion with God. I will now attempt to make these truths more practical.

COMPONENTS OF PRAYER

What should our prayer time include? Though there are many prayers found in the Bible, there is no specific formula for daily communion with God. Fortunately, Christians have been praying for 2,000 years and have learned a few things about meeting with God daily. The following are some simple suggestions.

- **Reading the Bible.** The Bible is a special revelation from God of His general communication to us. It speaks to us whether we feel anything when we read it or not. It communicates because it is in writing and can be accessed any time. Thus, we should read it daily.
- **Activating the human spirit.** When we meet with God every day, we should be praying—sending up our requests and thanksgivings and praise to God and listening for what God wants to tell us. Prayer and worship are a function of the human spirit (John 4:23-24).

- **Meditation.** Meditation is an age-old biblical practice. It is spending time thinking and reflecting and contemplating. It can include both reading and prayer but primarily allows thoughts about God to flow through our mind.

The quiet time is when you stop your daily activities and suspend thinking about the other things calling for your attention and just interact with the Lord about your relationship with God, God’s will, and God’s service. This is spiritually and emotionally energizing.

A METHOD OF PRAYER—INTERACTIVE PRAYING

I have personally practiced a kind of interactive praying for many years.

In 1974, I was asked to teach my first college-level course, a course on the prophets. I started preparing seriously. I checked out all the books on the prophets allowed by the library. To prepare for class, I would primarily read. If I were going to teach about Habakkuk, I would read all the books available on Habakkuk. I would mark the references and even take some of the books to class and read various quotations. I only took the briefest of notes which were designed to jog my short-term memory.

One day, about six weeks into the class, I was trying to remember something I had taught earlier. One prophet talked about beating plowshares into spears and another prophet talked about beating spears into plowshares. I could not remember who said what, so I looked at my notes to find out. Unfortunately, that information was not in my notes. I tried to remember other things I had taught, and many of those were also gone. I suddenly realized that my students had better notes than I did.

This experience convinced me that I had been very foolish, so I confessed my error to God. I promised Him that if He would give me the opportunity to study and learn, I would go the second mile and write those things down. And I have tried to fulfill that promise. Even in the second half of that class, I started writing out my notes completely.

As I started writing more, I discovered a serious truth. The more I wrote things down, the more I learned. I expanded my writing to include writing out my sermons completely. And after a few months, I added the practice of writing while I had my quiet time. And that has truly been one of the biggest blessings of my life. I now have my quiet time with my Bible propped up beside my laptop where I write out what God is teaching me.

REASONS FOR WRITING DURING QUIET TIME

The more I wrote the more I learned the advantage of writing as one studies, including writing while one is having a quiet time.

- **Writing helps concentration.** Sometimes when I am reading the Bible, I will read like this, “God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son...I wonder what my wife is preparing for breakfast.” In other words, in the middle of what I am reading, my mind wanders. Taking notes and making observations on what you are reading helps to stop that. It keeps you focused.
- **Writing forces you to see truth you would not see otherwise.** When you force yourself to write something about every verse, you gain insights you would not have had. When you take time to write out your thoughts about a verse, you will be surprised at what you see.
- **Writing helps to remember things.** One of the reasons our minds wander is because we are using

will have something to give to others. If you do not write things down, those truths may be useful only one time.

- **Writing serves as a foundation for future lectures, sermons, articles, books, and other things.** I have published 30 books and teaching manuals; three more are complete and waiting to be published, and several more are over 90% complete. I never sat down to write any of those books. They grew out of various presentations I had written. Be faithful in writing your quiet time thoughts and sermons will come from them. Be faithful to write out your sermons and books will come out of them.

I started the process of writing in 1974. The earliest record I can find of my quiet time notes is a notebook of hand-written meditations from October 1976. Amazingly, I can go back and see things the Lord spoke to me about on a specific day 47 years ago.

Starting on October 25, 1988, I decided I wanted to read through the whole Bible and take notes while doing so. I finished this exercise on May 31, 2013, almost 15 years later. I had written 6,128 pages of devo-

The real rewards from this practice of praying and writing through the Bible have been the insights, challenges, and blessings I have received.

only a small portion of our mental ability when we read. When you read and write at the same time, you are using a greater amount of your mental capacity plus a part of your body—your fingers. That means you have less mental capacity to wander off, thinking about other things. And the more you concentrate, the longer you will remember what you have read and thought.

- **Writing preserves a permanent record of what God is teaching you.** Psalm 137:5-6 urges the readers to remember God’s blessings. “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill...if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy” (NIV). If you do not write things down, you are going to forget them.
- **Writing gives you a useful tool to help other people.** If you are faithful to write things down, you

tional notes on my laptop during that period. I have continued that process and have now typed over 11,000 pages of quiet time notes since 1988. The statistics are just points of interest. The real rewards from this practice have been the insights, challenges, and blessings I have received from praying and writing through the Bible.

CONCLUSION

One of my former diploma students at the University of Jos was a missionary who has completed a BA in Bible, three master’s degrees and a PhD from the UK. He told me once, “The greatest thing you ever taught me was how to write as I study the Bible.” ■

Dr. Danny McCain, a former pastor and Christian educator in the U.S., is Professor of Biblical Theology at the University of Jos, Nigeria, where he lives with his wife, Mary.



THE ASBURY OUTPOURING

The “unscheduled” 2023 Asbury revival began February 8 during a routine chapel service. Following a message on Romans 12:9-21, the speaker exhorted the Asbury University students to love others actively in response to the love of God. After the message, students remained in prayer and worship, which continued around the clock for more than two weeks. The news of the Holy Spirit’s outpouring spread throughout the world, and tens of thousands of people swept through the little town of Wilmore, Kentucky, to be in God’s presence.

I traveled to Asbury University on Saturday evening, February 11, with three other God’s Bible School students. When we arrived at Hughes Auditorium, communion was being served, after which Asbury students led in singing. At first, I felt uncomfortable in an environment different from that to which I am accustomed. However, I realized that God is not limited to bringing glory to Himself only through people like me.

After an hour, a campus pastor directed the crowd into corporate prayer and explained “four calls”: the call to salvation, the call to the “deeper work” of surrender, the call to healing (physically, emotionally, spiritually, etc.), and the call to be “a Levite,” which I understood as a call to ministry.

As we were leaving several hours later, my friends and I dis-

cussed our surprise at the absence of intensity and drama. We had simply witnessed a quiet sense of God working and being worshiped.

According to reports, at least 22 colleges and universities visited Asbury, and a similar revival spirit spread to both religious and secular campuses. Back at GBS, President Loper announced an early morning prayer meeting on Monday. The regularly scheduled chapel service also turned into a prayer service. Another student-led prayer meeting took place that evening. While the choir was at Christian Nation Church on Sunday, February 19, several students left the risers to pray during the song “He is Here.” On Wednesday, February 22, God came again in a powerful way during chapel, and many students went forward to pray.

The “Asbury phase” of this “outpouring” ended on February 24 when the university closed public meetings at their Hughes Auditorium. They announced that they are not the sole keepers of this outpouring and pray that it continues to spread.

Some key lessons that I have learned from my experience both at Asbury and at GBS are: (1) Humility and unity are a key part of God’s work; (2) God may work in ways that I am not used to or comfortable with; and (3) Revival proceeds from authentic confession and persistent prayer. —Submitted by Josiah R. England, sophomore in the GBS Ministerial Division. ■



student focus

BRADLEY THOMAS, of Findlay, Ohio, attended public schools. Even so, he says, “the Lord was able to reach me and save me.” That occurred at age 13 at Beulah Grove youth camp. While he did go through a “lukewarm” period, last summer he fully placed himself back on the altar.

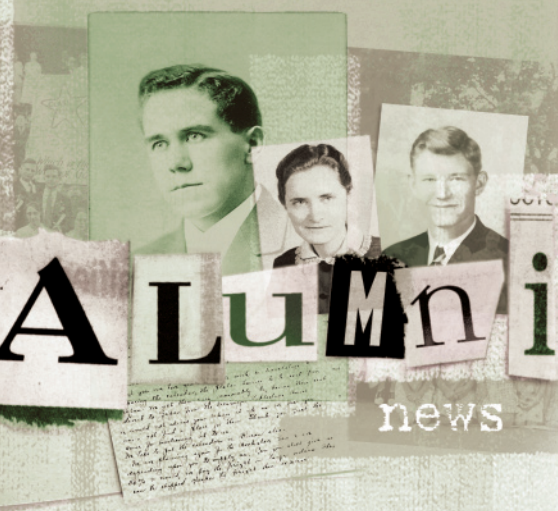
Bradley decided to attend GBS because he felt that a compass inside himself kept pointing there. It also helped that his older sisters and a number of friends attended GBS as well. “GBS changed me. Since day one, I have been thriving.” He is a member of both the orchestra and choir. “I really like the time I spend in both...because I enjoy worshipping the Lord through music.”

Bradley plans to graduate in 2024 with an AA in business. “Maybe the Lord will want me to stay for a ministry degree, or maybe He will send me across the world for an entirely different reason. God is in control and I know that His plan for me is going to be great!” ■

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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Cincinnati, OH 45202

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



GBS alumni are encouraged to submit updates on their lives and current ministries. —KF

HENRY JOHN “H.J.” OLSEN

A life dedicated to ministry

submitted by Jim Olsen

In 1864, two young daughters of Ole and Bertina Jensen came to America. They were from the tiny fishing village of Floro, up the west coast north of Bergen, Norway. They were only 18 and 16 respectively, did not speak a word of English, and had only four meager years of schooling. Their journey started by sailboat down the coast to Bergen, then by steamboat to New York City. They arrived with less than fifty dollars between them plus one-way train tickets to Chicago and the ad-

dress of a Lutheran pastor in that city. They managed to find the parsonage, a place to stay, and began the next day as cleaning women in offices. Within two years they had saved enough and sent money for Recepha, their younger sister, to join them in the “land of plenty.”

With the three girls working hard and saving their money diligently, by 1870 they were able to bring over the three boys. Andreas was the oldest of the children, and since he had married in Norway, was probably the last to come with his wife Karoline. He was my great-grandfather.

By that time, all the other children had relocated to Oceana County, Michigan. From New York City, their trip was through Detroit, Grand Rapids, Muskegan, and finally to the small town of Hart, where the train ride ended. They must have quickly become citizens, as they took advantage of the opportunity for all citizens to acquire land by the simple but hard-working practice of “homesteading.” This meant clearing the land of timber and bringing

under cultivation a designated acreage. Two years later, in 1872, the children brought their parents over to America. Ole and Bertina Jensen could hardly believe the vastness of this land of freedom. From 1815 to 1905, Norway was under the dominion of Sweden, and peasants especially were little more than slaves, so the new world was truly a land of opportunity and freedom. They were my great-great-grandparents.

Andreas and Karoline Olesen had four children—three boys and two girls. The youngest was my grandfather, Henryk John Olsen.

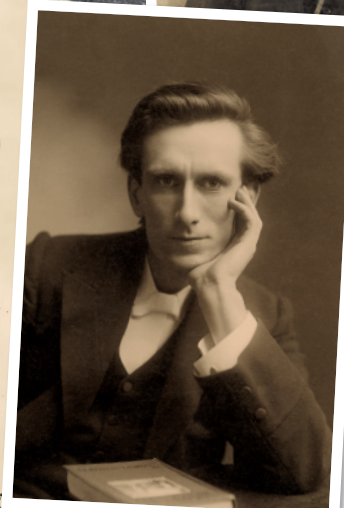
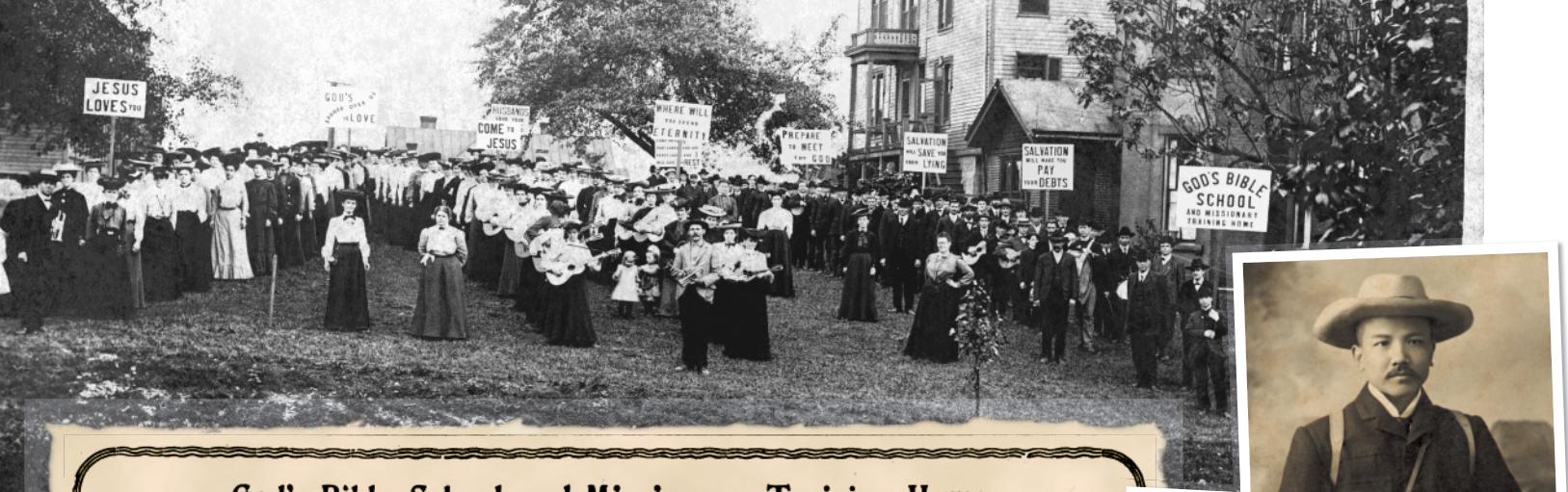
Let me pause and briefly explain the different surnames. Norway has

a custom of assigning to their children a surname that is the father’s first name plus “sen” for a son or “dotter” for a daughter. Therefore Andreas was Andreas Olesen. Some of the family shortened the family name from “Olesen” to “Olsen” and passed that surname along to their children, the naming custom of America. Therefore, “Henryk John Olsen” was born January 19, 1879. He would later drop



Historic photographs of New York City circa 1860





top: GBS organizes for a series of coordinated street meetings in downtown Cincinnati in 1905.

insets: Juji Nakada and Oswald Chambers

left: God's Revivalist advertisement for 1906 Christmas Convention during which H.J. Olsen was ordained

God's Bible School and Missionary Training Home

CHRISTMAS CONVENTION,

December 21-30, 1906,

AT GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL AND GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL GEORGE STREET MISSION, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

Meetings at "Mount of Blessings" every day at 10:30 A. M. and 2:30 P. M., and at George Street Mission every night at 7:30 o'clock.

FATHER, SON AND HOLY GHOST IN CHARGE.

WORKERS:—George B. Kulp, L. B. Compton, E. A. Fergerson, Arthur Green, Lew N. Standley, M. G. Standley, and Brother Nakada, Brother and Sister Cowman's co-worker in Japan, Fred T. Fuge, and others.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS.

RAILROAD RATES:—The railroads in the state of Ohio have all reduced the fare to two cents per mile. Please bear this in mind.

MEALS:—Three meals served. Breakfast, 20 cents; dinner, 25 cents; supper, 25 cents.

LODGING:—Rooms in the girls' or boys' dormitory for the ten days or any portion thereof, \$4.00. These rooms have double beds, and also space for one or two cots, if desired. Rooms with double furnished bed and one furnished cot, for the ten days or any portion thereof, \$5.50. Furnished cot in either ladies' or men's lodging department, 25 cents per night,

or \$2.00 for the entire ten days. Ministers, lodging free.

BAGGAGE:—Be sure and bring your baggage checks direct to "Mount of Blessings" instead of giving them to any agent when arriving. In this way you insure getting your baggage much quicker and in safety.

BOOKSTAND:—Come prepared to purchase a good supply of the best Holiness books and new beautiful mottoes. We expect to offer them at low rates. Beside getting these rates, you will save the postage or express.

WHEN TO COME:—The rooms on "Mount of Blessings" will not be ready for occupancy until December 20th. Kindly date your arrival accordingly.

LET THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS ASCEND CONTINUALLY FOR THIS MEETING.

the "k" from his first name and was commonly called "H.J."

The entire extended family lived in Mears, Michigan—all within walking distance of each other as they had in Norway. The family was faithful in attending the Norwegian Lutheran Church. In fact, during those rigorous years of pioneer living, Andreas gave three acres of land at the corner of one of his fields, so the Wesleyan Methodists could build a church. In 1904, Rev. Edward Haight, a Wesleyan Methodist evangelist, came to conduct a series of meetings in that new church. During those meetings H.J. sought and found Jesus as his Savior, as did a

number of his family and friends. He said that even before he sought the Lord, he felt a call to the ministry. However, H.J. stayed home with his parents until the title was free and clear for the homesteading requirements, even though this meant a delay in starting his training to answer God's call to the ministry.

It is not clear how he decided to attend God's Bible School. The family, including aunts and uncles, were not happy about him leaving his parents, but he followed his call. He arrived in Cincinnati, December 22, 1904, just in time for the 10-day Christmas convention of the International Apostolic Holiness Union held

on the GBS campus. Under the ministry of Rev. Seth C. Rees, H.J. sought and found sanctifying grace. Two years later, during the annual Christmas convention, H.J. was ordained on December 29, 1906, with eight other candidates. One of the eight signatories on his certificate of ordination was the well-known British devotional author Oswald Chambers (*My Utmost for His Highest*), who had just arrived at GBS en route to Japan with evangelist Juji Nakada. Oswald paused his travel plans and began a six-month teaching stint at GBS the following week on January 4, 1907.

Throughout his life, H.J. served in many different aspects of the

Lord's work, mostly with the Pilgrim Holiness Church. He began with a pastorate at Baltimore, Maryland (1907-1915). In 1909, he married May Barnes, one of the young ladies in his first pastorate. Their only child, Henry Paul, was born November 12, 1911. When May died of tuberculosis in 1912, Henry Paul was less than a year old. His mother's sister, Vertie Blann, loved and raised him until H.J. married a Maryland school teacher, Mary L Brown, on June 19, 1914. She was also an ordained minister of the International Apostolic Holiness Union. H.J. had to have known her since he was one of the signatories on her Certificate of Ordination dated August 15, 1908. During their 28 years together, the following children were added to their family: Mary Caroline (1915), John Francis (1917), Clarence Andrew (1919), Roger Brown (1922), and Alvin James (1924).

H.J. next pastored in Providence, Rhode Island (1915-1917), followed by 15 years simultaneously at several Maryland churches (1917-1932). He conducted Sunday morning and evening services at Trappe and Sunday afternoon services at Easton. Of course, there was a midweek prayer service at each church, as well as a cottage prayer meeting in Oxford. The Oxford prayer meeting eventually became an organized church. During these pastorates, his salary was not sufficient to support his family, so he hung wallpaper, sharpened cross-cut saws with a hand file, and supervised employees at the Graham Price Farm, where the workers were paid by the pound to pick string beans. In the spring, H.J. and his sons helped plant thousands of tomato plants at the farm and then helped pick them. The extra money helped offset the meager income during depression days. The Olsen family also had a large garden behind the parsonage.

His next pastorate was at Binghamton, New York (1932-1938). This was quite a move for the family. After small-town living, they had to adapt to life in the big city. The church building was a converted mansion with an attached parsonage on the back. Toward the end of this tenure, H.J. went on a three-month evangelistic trip to the West Indies and South America. Shortly after his return, H.J. was elected as District Superintendent of New York Pilgrim Holiness Conference (1938-1943) and moved across town. During this time, his wife Mary passed away from stomach cancer (January 17, 1942).

At the end of his superintendency in April 1943, H.J. spent several months evangelizing in the Northwest states of Oregon and Washington. In August, he was asked to be supply pastor for the Seth C. Rees Memorial Church in Pasadena, California. While there, he married Susie Reynolds Sandusky, a widow in that congregation (November 28, 1943). About that time, he was asked to be the regular pastor. He consented to do so and served there until June 1945.

The following summer was spent in camp meetings, and that fall he accepted a position at Pilgrim Holiness Headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana. For two years he served as editor of the *Pilgrim Holiness Advocate*. He also wrote "Points to Ponder" in the denomination's Sunday school literature and authored a short book on the Israelite tabernacle, of which he had built a scale model.

Next, his Bible-teaching abilities were used at Pilgrim Bible College, El Monte, California, from 1946 through 1949. The summer of 1949 was spent at Mile High Pines Youth Camp as one of their workers. From January through March of 1950, H.J. took an evangelistic mission tour in both the Caribbean islands and throughout the



The church at Trappe
as it stands today

far right: The Oxford church building
is now a community center.

right: Jim Olsen stands with his
grandfather (1967) at the building
named in H.J.'s honor at Southern
Pilgrim College, Kenersville, SC



northwestern United States before helping again at Mile High Pines Youth Camp during the summer.

The Missionary Department of the Pilgrim Holiness Church asked H.J. to assist with convention work from January 1951 until June, when he pastored the East Los Angeles church until the end of the church year in June 1952. For the remainder of the year, he conducted services throughout the eastern United States.

H.J. gave a lecture series at Allentown Bible Institute (ABI) in Allentown, Pennsylvania, for a two-month period in 1953 and again in 1954. This was followed by a lecture series at Southern Pilgrim College, Kernersville, North Carolina, before he returned to ABI to present another series.

In August of 1954, H.J. and Susie moved to the campus of the Southern Pilgrim College, where he was a full-time faculty member, mainly teaching ministerial and Bible courses, until 1970. He enjoyed his interactions with young people and the activities at the college. For many of those years, he endorsed his monthly paychecks and handed them back to the college to be applied to various students' school bills. He was very generous with what little he had monetarily.

When Susie passed away in 1959, H.J. stayed at the college and continued to teach Bible courses. By 1968, because of his age, his teaching schedule was reduced to one class daily. Later, he only taught two or three students in his small apartment on campus. This apartment consisted of a small kitchen with a table where he ate his breakfast and lunch, a bedroom, and a bathroom. There was a door between his apartment and that of the young couple who lived in the adjacent apartment. The door was left unlocked in case he needed help at any time. This couple often invited H.J. to share their evening meal. On May 5, 1972, after such an occasion, as H.J. was leaving, he paused at the door to relate a funny story he had read, then went into his apartment and shut the door for the last time. That night, while sleeping, he peacefully went to be with Jesus. He was 93.

What a life!—a life worthy of emulation, well-spent in meaningful ministry. This spirit was passed down to his children and can be seen in each generation that has followed. Now all of H.J.'s six children have passed on, too; but his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren are serving the Lord in various church capacities. A godly heritage started in the late 1800s continues now into the year 2023. ■

This article was adapted from material written long ago by three of H.J. Olsen's children—Mary, Roger, and Alvin—submitted along with additional information by H.J. Olsen's grandson, Jim Olsen, CPA, Hobe Sound, FL.



by Sonja Vernon

KEEPING OUR WORD

"O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right...who swears to his own hurt and does not change." —Psalm 15:1-2a,4c (ESV)

Do you keep your word? We know integrity is important, and usually it doesn't seem that hard. But what about when we "swear to our own hurt"? What about the commitment we made that's become inconvenient or the once-in-a-lifetime job opportunity that would mean breaking a promise? What then? In Joshua 9, we read the story of the Gibeonites who dressed up like travelers from a far country to fool Joshua into making a covenant of peace with them. Joshua didn't inquire of the Lord and was taken in by the deception. However, when Israel found out what Gibeon had done, the leaders chose to stand by their promise because "we have sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them" (Josh. 9:19). In Joshua 10, Gibeon called on Israel to honor their covenant and send them aid, and God gave His people a sweeping victory over the armies of five Amorite kings (causing the sun to stand still in the process). In 2 Samuel 21, we read that Israel suffered a three-year famine because, in his zeal, Saul struck down the Gibeonites contrary to Joshua's pact with them hundreds of years before, and God held Israel accountable. The famine didn't end until amends were made, and they were costly. Do you keep your word? It matters. It matters to God, and it matters to a watching world. Have you sworn to your own hurt? Stay the course. Maintain your integrity. Let God take care of the details. ■

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

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