

# **GOD'S** REVIVALIST

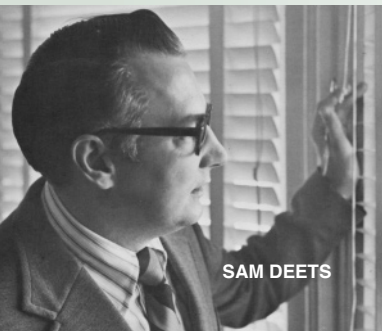
October 2023

*and Bible Advocate*



**Dr. Samuel Deets**  
1934-2023





# thinking out loud

## KICKED OUT

**K**icked out of the College Choir! How could that be? I was stunned as the director, uncomfortable and a bit embarrassed, delivered the news to me. He was simply passing along a mandate from the GBS administration.

Just a few months earlier, after my discharge from the U.S. Air Force, I had been gloriously saved and felt God directing me to GBS. It was the fall of 1974, and I was excited to be on campus. Classes were wonderful, and I especially enjoyed singing in the choir. Now I was no longer welcome in that venerable musical organization!

As the choir performed during a campus chapel service, I could only sit and watch from my seat in the congregation. It was around Veterans Day, and one of the platform leaders remarked that he was thankful for our veterans. As one of those veterans, instead of appreciation, I felt only the hurt of having been removed from the choir.

My father advised me to accept the decision and wait. If, after the choir had finished its travels for the school year, I still felt the need to approach someone about my seemingly unfair treatment, then it would no longer appear to be just a defensive maneuver on my part.

At some point, Vice President Barry Walker saw me on campus and asked how I was doing in school. When I responded, "Making straight A's," he was clearly taken aback. Then President Deets called me to his office. Apparently, soon after my arrival, the administrators had observed me engaged in rambunctious levity. Knowing I was a military veteran, older than most of my classmates, and a Christian for only a short time, they were nervous about me representing GBS on the road. President Deets admitted that his administration had misjudged me, and he reinstated me in the choir.

This experience taught me that even good, well-meaning people can draw wrong conclusions. It taught me that those who suffer from wrong conclusions should be sensitive to God's timing in their attempts to address them. It also taught me that misunderstandings should not ruin relationships. I established a good relationship with President Deets and always respected him for all he did for GBS.

I enjoyed my correspondences and occasional phone conversations with Dr. Deets in recent years. His friendship has provided interesting details about our shared GBS history. Our institution owes much to this man. —KF ■

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God's Bible School and College seeks to glorify God and to serve His Church by providing higher education centered in Holy Scripture and shaped by Wesleyan conviction, thus preparing faithful servants to proclaim Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness throughout the world.

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COVER PHOTO: An artistic rendering based on Patsy Arrington Dorsett's oil portrait of Samuel Deets on display in the Adcock Chapel.



# the president's page

## BEING PRESIDENT

*by Dr. Rodney S. Loper, President*

Not many people understand what it is like to lead God's Bible School and College. In its 123+ years of existence, there have only been eight presidents. (A triumvirate of women also managed the school for a 10-year period from 1901 to 1911). Whether because of the small number of individuals, the demands of the job, or some other underlying commonality, there is a kind of unspoken bond that connects us.

When I first met Dr. Sam Deets, I listened as he expressed his passion and zeal for God's Bible School. We rejoiced at how the good hand of God had guided His school through many difficult years. Sam's phone calls to my office were always brief. He called to encourage me or to recount a story about how some aspect of GBS came into existence—such as the way we obtained the portion of Young Street between Channing and Ringgold Streets.

As I recently made my way into the Dickson Family Funeral Home in Cochran, PA, and took my seat at the front, I found myself next to Sam's casket. I must admit that there was a sense of soberness that I have never felt at a funeral before. There lay the shell of a man who had carried what I am carrying; who was brought low by what brings me low; who understood pressures that I, too, feel; who dreamed dreams that I now dream; who cried out to God with the same requests that I now make.

My thoughts were interrupted by the voice of my immediate predecessor, Dr. Michael Avery, as he eulogized our colleague. I was reminded in that moment that each one of us had been tasked beyond our own abilities to lead this organization. This job requires total reliance on God. GBS is *His* school.

Dr. Deets, as long as I lead this grand institution, I am committed to the vision and passion that marked its founding. May we always be the Mount of Blessings—not because of geographic location, but because of God's divine presence. ■



# Dr. Samuel E. Deets

July 28, 1934 – August 14, 2023

*“Remember your leaders.... Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.” —Hebrews 13:7-8 (ESV)*

Every life has a story. Sam Deets' story began in 1934.

The world had not fully recovered from “the war to end all wars” until the players of the next great war were appearing on the world stage. Hitler was rising to power in Germany, Stalin in Russia, and Mao in China, as Japan stoked the fires of imperialism in the Pacific Rim. The world was a powder keg waiting to explode.

America was in the heart of the Great Depression, and President Franklin Roosevelt was implementing his “New Deal” to help revive the economy. Despite the low prices of commodities like gas (10 cents per gallon) and bread (8 cents per loaf), many people couldn't afford either as unemployment remained at 22%. This was America in 1934.

However, in Canal Township, Pennsylvania, in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains, on a 200-acre farm that was granted to Joseph Deets for serving seven years in the Revolutionary War, something exciting was about to happen. Samuel Edgar and Vera May (Cheres) Deets were getting ready for their sixth child. The birthing room in the old farmhouse was ready, and, on the hot summer day of July 28th, a son was born. He had brown hair and brown eyes, and they named him Samuel Edwin Deets after his father. He joined siblings Richard, June Eileen, William, and James. Robert, the oldest, had passed away earlier in a drown-



ing accident and Donald the seventh and last child would come later.

Growing up on a country farm during the recovery years of the Great Depression and the war years of WWII, Sam understood hardship and learned how to live without the modern conveniences of electricity and running water that we consider necessities. He began his formal education by walking a mile to the old one-room schoolhouse at Hannasville where he attended from 1940 to 1948. In 1948 he advanced to Franklin Junior-Senior High School and graduated from there in 1952.

In his growing-up years, Sam attended the Canal Street Wesleyan Methodist Church with his parents as well as the great Stoneboro Camp Meeting each summer. He had heard many sermons and had sung many hymns in church and at camp, but it



17 years old



college graduation 1959



was in the summer of 1954 in the corner of a pasture on the old farm that God found him, and he found God. He recounted this moment in a 1965 issue of *God's Revivalist* in which he wrote, "I gave my heart and life wholly over to Jesus Christ." Being completely unacquainted with God's Bible School, he planned to attend a denominational school. However, in a conversation with his pastor, GBS was mentioned. Again, he wrote about this moment saying, "I received my first direct guidance from God at this time" that I was to go to GBS.

He enrolled at God's Bible School in 1954 and went on to complete two degrees—a Bachelor of Theology and a Bachelor of Arts—graduating with both in 1959.

Sam may have been busy with academics, but he was not too busy to notice the girls. He had known Carolyn Benninger most of his life. They had attended Stoneboro Camp Meeting together. As a matter of fact, they had their first date at the camp. However, after her graduation from nursing school, Sam

decided it was time to do more than just date. He asked Carolyn to marry him and she said yes. They tied the knot on June 1, 1957. That "yes" lasted 66 years!

Sam and Carolyn lived in a boarding house for a while as he attended GBS, but later they moved to Gilman Avenue to become full-time caregivers for Frederick Dennis Lohmann, who was a famous painter, illustrator, and designer in Cincinnati.

During his college years, the focus Sam had had on preaching shifted to ministry through education. He subsequently enrolled in the University of Cincinnati in 1959 and completed a BS in Education in 1961 and an MA in History in 1963.

Sam remained active in GBS affairs, and while he was working on his graduate degree, he was hired as a





professor at GBS and began teaching English. In 1963 he was elected President of the GBS Alumni Association, serving until 1965. He completed his study at U.C. in 1970 with a PhD in Political Science.

In 1964, Michelle ("Shelly") entered the family circle, and she quickly became the apple of her daddy's eye. In 1965, when she was only 15 months old, life took a major change for the Deets family.

God's Bible School had gone into receivership in 1948 and had been placed under a court-appointed board consisting of the Honorable Carl Rich (U.S. Congressman, Mayor, Judge, and lawyer), the Honorable Charles Taft (Mayor, Councilman, lawyer, and son of U.S. President William Howard Taft) and the Honorable Allen C. Roudebush (Mayor, Judge, and lawyer). The school had incurred a debt of almost a million dollars and could not pay it. By 1965 that debt totaled 1.3 million dollars. (In today's money, that would be approximately 12 million dollars). The school's annual income was only about \$260,000. The school had gone through scandal, suspicion, and weak leadership. The board was looking for someone to take charge and either save the school or close it. All offers made by the board to prospective candidates were rejected. No one would touch it! The Alumni Association asked Sam (who was only 30 years old at the time) if he would take the presidency. He felt God telling him that he should. However, the board said no—he was too young and inexperienced they said. Nevertheless, the board changed their minds and offered him the job. He was inaugurated as president simply by signing the court order waiting for him in the law office of Charles Taft. He became GBS's fifth president in May of 1965. Their

Shelly, Carolyn, Sam 1967



## Greetings from the New President



REV. AND MRS. SAMUEL E. DEETS

# GOD'S REVIVALIST AND BIBLE ADVOCATE

ORGAN OF GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL  
VOL. LXXVII, No. 12  
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CINCINNATI, OHIO

## Meet the President



SAMUEL E. DEETS

The Trustees of God's Bible School and Missionary Training Home announced today that Reverend Elmer G. Marsh, the beloved President of the School, was retiring at the age of 85, after most valuable service to the School for more than fifty years.

Upon the advice of the special committee of the Alumni Association, the Trustees have elected Samuel E. Deets of Cincinnati as President of the School. Mr. Deets was born in Cochran, Pennsylvania, in 1934, and received his B. A. at God's Bible School in 1959. He has been on the faculty of the University of Cincinnati for two years, where he received a B. S. in 1961, an M. A. in 1963, and is a candidate for a Ph.D. in 1966, specializing in International Relations.

Mr. Deets is currently the President of the God's Bible School Alumni Association and has been very active in the affairs of the School.

God's Bible School was founded in 1900 by Martin

W. Knapp, as an interdenominational school. Mr. Knapp was also one of the founders of the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Its graduates have gone all over the world as missionaries, and its Camp Meetings are widely known in the Middle West. The current Camp Meeting begins on Friday, May 28th, at the School on Mt. Auburn.

The court-appointed Trustees of the School are Carl W. Rich, President, Elmer G. Marsh, Rudolph Ruzicka, Henry B. Street, and Charles P. Taft. Brother Marsh was elected as President-Emeritus and will continue as a member of the Board of Trustees. Wesley A. Robinson of Cincinnati is the Business Manager of the School.

CHARLES P. TAFT, SECRETARY  
Board of Trustees of  
God's Bible School

May 18, 1965

Samuel E. Deets was born on July 28, 1934, at Cochran, Pa. He was reared in a Christian home and attended, in due time, united with the Canal Wesleyan Methodist Church at Union, Pa. He attended the Hainsville Elementary School, 1940-48, and the Franklin Junior-Senior High School, 1948-1952, being graduated in the latter year.

Brother Deets came to God's Bible School in 1954 and was graduated in 1958 with a Th.B. degree, and in 1959 with an A. B. degree. He entered the University of Cincinnati in 1959 where he received a B. S. degree in Education in 1961 and an M. A. degree in 1963. Since that time he has been working toward a Ph.D. degree. He holds credentials of a Conference Preacher in the Allegheny Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

In 1957 Brother Deets was united in marriage to Carolyn May Benninger, R. N., of West Mifflin, Pa. They have one child, a fifteen-month old daughter, Michelle Benninger Deets.

Presidency a few days ago. In fact, if I had not been convinced that this was, indeed, the will of God, I would not have accepted.

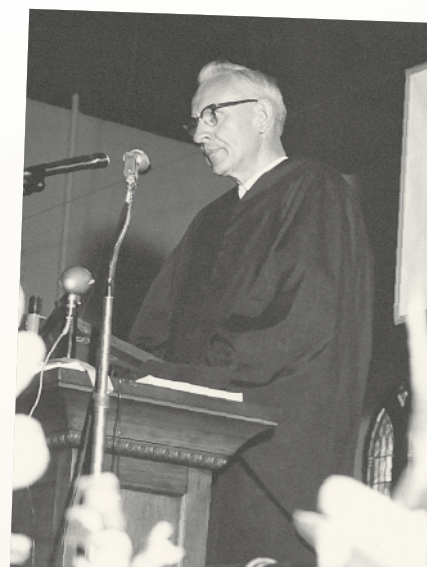
Having done so, I do now, of course, feel deeply and heavily the burden and the responsibility of the office. At the same time I am equally convinced of the ability and the willingness of the God of God's Bible School to lighten the burden of the holiness movement in this country. You are aware, as am I, that the crises which this School has experienced in the last few years have left it lying quite prostrate before the feet of its many critics. I, for one, cannot and have not, been able to agree that this is God's chosen position for His School. Rather, I have been convicted and convinced for some time that if His people who are interested in this type of institution will only hold on, in faith and in friendship, to the thread of hope which seems never to have quite disappeared. He will indeed resurrect the School to new life. I do not hesitate in saying that at this moment I feel that resurrection has begun. I further wish to add that as President...







Camp Meeting 1969



Millard Downing, E-Day 1969

first order to him was direct and to the point, "Make the school solvent or close it." The second was enough challenge to make the sweat break out: "Sam, don't ever come to a board meeting showing red ink."

Sam Deets took over an institution that was reeling from mountainous debt, aged buildings crumbling from neglect, and a constituency that despaired of its future. He went to God in prayer, "Lord, it's just You and me. Show me from your Word what to do." God's answer was, "Sam...put the Bible down...Look about the campus, see what needs to be done, roll up your sleeves, and begin. I will bless your work."

He did just that. His decade-long presidency was marked by tireless energy and a practical hands-on approach. It also marked a turning point in the history of the school. The long march forward was guided by a threefold plan: pay off the debt, prepare the school to run its own affairs, and rebuild the campus. Sam wrote at this time, "I shall spare no effort, no amount of time, and no amount of interest to see that this becomes a reality."

Sam poured himself into saving God's Bible School. He provided the school with strong, decisive administrative leadership that was crucial at the time but not always appreciated. He described himself as a "benevolent dictator." Whether that description was true or not,

what was true, as long as Sam Deets sat in the president's chair, there was never any doubt as to who was in charge of God's Bible School.

Sam worked in the office until noon, changed clothes, and worked on the grounds until sometimes ten o'clock at night. He installed a new boiler, scraped and painted walls, trimmed trees, and laid new stone walls around the campus. On one occasion, as he was laying a new wall, a visitor approached and asked where he could find the president. Sam pointed him toward the Administration Building and told him that the president's office was in that building. He then made a mad dash home to change clothes and rushed back to his office to meet with the visitor.

By the summer of 1969, Sam had eliminated all but \$8,000 of the debt. As camp meeting began, the crowd generously gave the remaining \$8,000 and more. So the long-anticipated E-Day celebration could finally take place. As the great orator Millard Downing dramatically personified GBS while telling the story of all that had happened, he said, "The working hands of deter-



mined youth have arisen—the busy hands of Samuel E. Deets—hands that build walls, mow lawns, and chart the course of GBS’s tomorrows. These caring hands have taken away disorder, illegality, suspicion, subterfuge, and strife.” The school was clearly on a new path—an upward path to better days.

Sam Deets had done all that Millard Downing mentioned and more. He paid off the debt, began an endowment, increased the enrollment by 60%, added 31 properties to the school’s campus, renovated the buildings, brought the GBS radio program back, enhanced the printing shop, built up the bookstore, demolished the old Ten-Weeks Building, and started the groundwork to build the new student center with the funds raised to pay for it. He had drawings and dreams for many more campus improvements.

By 1975, Sam Deets was exhausted. He knew his tenure had come to an end. He needed a less hectic schedule—less pressure. He wrote in *God’s Revivalist*, “As I reflect on the past ten years, I’d do it again.... What happened was that God took a faulty human instrument when none other was available and used it for the purpose for which it was born.”

This “faulty human instrument” saved God’s Bible School and College. It exists today because he was willing to take on a job nobody else would. He paid a significant personal price to do it. For that alone, we have reason to

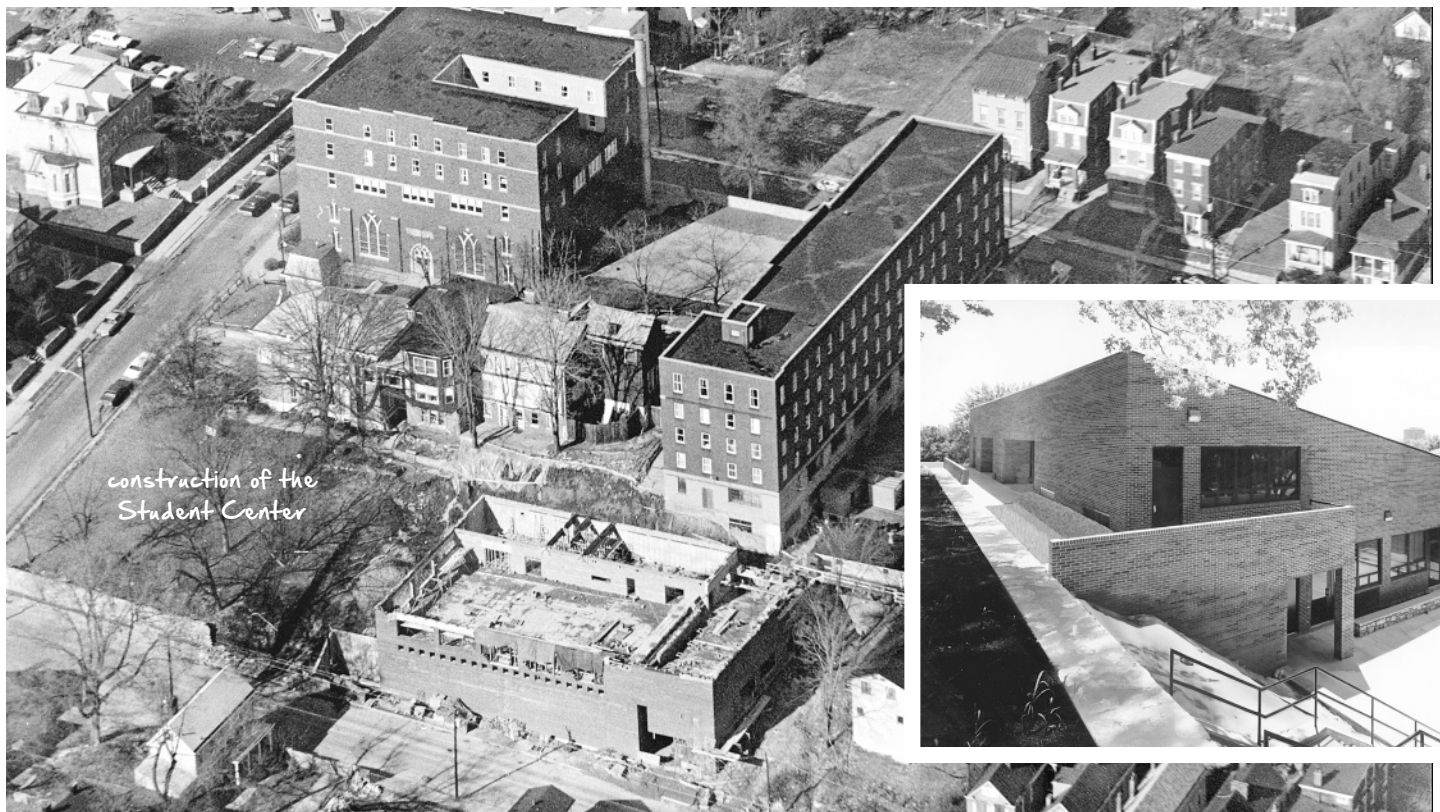
thank God for the life of Sam Deets. For that reason alone the GBS family must rise up and call him “blessed.”

His time at GBS ended, but life didn’t end with his departure from GBS. Going forward he would wear many hats. He was editor of *God’s Revivalist* for another year; he worked for New York Life Insurance; he assisted the Pillar of Fire organization in Zarephath, NJ, with editing their denominational paper, assisting in advancement endeavors, and general management work with their radio stations. He even had two of his own radio programs on WAKW in Cincinnati.

Back home in Pennsylvania, he served as the Director of Advancement for the Venango County Visiting Nurses Association. He helped start and build an endowment for them. He also was able to give time to his beloved coin, knife, and watch collections.

When the Deetses made the decision to retire to Pennsylvania, it was partly to look after Mr. and Mrs. T.W. Comadoll in their old age. In addition to being an evangelist, Rev. Comadoll had regularly been a visiting professor at GBS, mostly for his expertise in eschatology. As the Comadolls had no children, the Deetses made a commitment to take care of them in their senior years; and they did just that.

Retirement allowed Sam to spend lots of time in “his woods” (100 acres of the original farm) and with his family—especially his grandchildren Kurtis and





Shannon. He loved taking care of the property, driving his tractor, and using his chainsaws to clear brush and debris. He loved teaching his grandchildren about hard work. He was quick to tell you how intelligent, gifted, and hardworking Shannon and Kurtis were. Of course, he was bragging, but he also happened to be right. He was also enamored with his only great-grandchild, Loretta Ruth Brehm. The smile on his face as he held her was satisfaction itself.

When someone we love passes, we look back, remember, and consider his/her life. Sam Deets was a good man, but like the rest of us, he had feet of clay. He could be hard-headed, strong-willed, and plain-spoken. He did not suffer fools gladly. Wherever he sat at the table was the head of the table. There is a reason why his son-in-law

Nick called him “Chief”! While he could be passionate, caring, and generous, in his own words he was “a faulty instrument in the hands of God.” Nevertheless, Sam Deets answered God’s call and did his duty without shirking or taking an easier path. For that, many of us will remember him as a great man—a man who made a difference for eternity; a man who made a difference for thousands of Christian workers past, present, and future.

If Sam were speaking today, he would focus on something else. He would draw on his meticulous vocabulary to tell his bride of 66 years how much he loved her and how grateful he was for all those years of caring for him. From 2001 to 2021, Carolyn nursed Sam through numerous physical crises. She gave him the best care in the comfort of their own home as long as that was possible. God alone knows the sleepless nights and weary days Carolyn spent pouring her nursing skills and loving attention into his care. Thank you, Carolyn!

I think he would want me to say, “Thank you” to his daughter Shelly, who was next in line caring for him. She handled personal business matters and hundreds of other details. Thank you, Shelly.

Roger Patterson, the son he never had, was always there to help. Thank you, Roger. Karen Barton was a huge blessing and help in the last months of life. Thank you, Karen.

Last Monday morning, Sam Deets heard God’s final call. And once again he surrendered to that call. He passed over life’s last hill and out of our view. His night is over for he now stands in eternal day. Today we praise God for the life of Samuel Deets, and someday we will praise God with him. 🕊

***Dr. Michael Avery, Chancellor,  
God’s Bible School and College  
Eulogy presented August 19, 2023***



**L-R: Sam Brehm and wife Shannon (Hingl) holding Loretta Ruth, Nick and Shelly (Deets) Hingl, Kurtis Hingl and wife Emily; Carolyn Deets in front. Photo taken at Sam Deets’ funeral, August 19, 2023.**





was an open-gym period followed by a guided tour of the campus.

New Student Orientation started the next day. Students were able to register, get better acquainted with the campus and local community, have their photos taken for ID cards, and



audition for College Choir and Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble. After an evening prayer meeting, students enjoyed a campus-wide game of Capture the Flag. Thursday activities featured the "Riverfront Experience," which included a ride on the bus, a speed volleyball tournament, a walk on the Purple People Bridge from Cincinnati, OH, to Newport, KY, and other activities! By the week's end, all necessary information had been dispensed, var-

## NEW SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS!

We had a great time welcoming new and returning students to campus! Incoming freshmen arrived on Tuesday, August 15, for move-in day. Several area churches and many from the GBS campus family welcomed the students with snow cones, drinks, and help unloading their vehicles. After supper there



# 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.*

## BIRTH



**To Megan (Whittaker) (BA '20) and Brent LeClere (BA '19), a son, *Isaiah Lewis***, born August 1, 2023, at St. Joseph's Hospital, Breese, IL. Brent is a legal assistant at The Estate Planning Center, Salem, IL. In addition to being a stay-at-home mom, Megan also works as a part-time barista at 6:10 Coffee Company, also in Salem. Isaiah is welcomed by his sister, Eliana (2). The LeCleres live in Salem, IL.

## DEATHS

**Anna May Creech**, 82, passed away May 29, 2023. She was born January 19, 1942, to Irene and



**Fred Whitaker** in Bethany, MO. Her family moved to Columbia in 1944 where her father worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She graduated from the University Laboratory School and received a BS in Nursing in 1964 from the University of Missouri.

Anna practiced as a nurse at the University of Missouri Hospital for over 30 years and cared for many who were sick and in need of comfort. She retired in 2000 and spent time enjoying her grandchildren, quilting, gardening, and helping others. She also looked after many of her family members who needed her love and care. She was a GBS donor and a *God's Revivalist* subscriber.

She is survived by her husband; two daughters, Diana May Bond and Sylvia Jane Taylor; five grandchildren; and cousins, in-laws, and other family members. A funeral service was held at Nilson-Millard Cremation and Burial Center.



ious surveys completed, and class schedules finalized. The 2023-24 academic year had begun!

**Sunday Morning.** In the opening convocation of the 124th school year, Mike Yancey, Director of Development, presented scholarships, beginning with the Divisional and Endowed Scholarships and the Wingrove Taylor Legacy Awards for the 2023-24 academic year (details on following pages).

After the presentation of scholarships, President Loper began his sermon with the observation, "Have you ever considered that the more you see something, the less you actually see it?" He talked about driving west across the plains of Kansas and into Colorado. Then, on the horizon, something that looked like clouds appeared. Getting closer, he realized he was seeing the Rocky Mountains. They were quite a spec-

tacle, and he found it difficult to take his eyes off them. It was interesting for him to hear some of his friends say, "After having lived here for a short time, I don't even realize that they are there."

He proposed that this same dynamic is a real possibility for both students and staff at a Bible college. Theologian B.B. Warfield said it this way: "The great danger of the theological student lies precisely in his constant contact with divine things. They may come to seem common to him, because they are customary.... God's stately stepping in His redemptive processes may become to you a mere series of facts of history...."

There are various spiritual dangers lurking around the bend on the pathway to heaven, but when you boil down anything that may discourage, hinder, or entice you away from your faith, its origin ➡



President Loper preaches on Sunday morning.



Worshipping together on Sunday morning



**Rebekah ("Becky") L. Davison, 63,** passed away unexpectedly at home on July 27, 2023, after suffering illnesses for some time. Becky had a tender heart for God, enjoyed online church in her illnesses, and was known for her love of family, faithful loyalty, and trustworthiness. She attended Bloomington (IL) High School and God's Bible School (BRE '86). Highlights of her career included serving on staff at Wesleyan Christian Academy, Grand Cayman. She ended her career working at McClean County Nursing Home, Normal, IL.

Becky is survived by two brothers, Frederick G. Davison (BRE '82, ThB '84) and Don Davison (BRE '83); and a sister, Michaela J. Prokaski. In addition to being alumni, her two brothers have been employed by GBS: Fred in General Office and Don in Public Relations. A family-and-friends graveside service took place at East Lawn Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Bloomington, IL, officiated by Don Davison. Interment followed there.



**Norman Earl Black, 73,** of Butler, MO, died Thursday, August 10, 2023, at Research Medical Center, Kansas City, MO. He was born February 9, 1950, to Roland Valoris and Norma Jean (Silvernail) Black in Hudson, MI. Norman, one of three children, grew up in Hudson, where he attended grade school and part of high school. He graduated from high school at GBS in 1968 and continued in the college department. In 1971, Norman married Barbara Louise Manners. He transferred out of GBS and went on to complete bachelor and master degrees in theology. He also was a GBS donor.

Norman was a licensed practical nurse, pastor, Christian school principal and administrator, husband, father, and foster parent. He most recently was a pastor of the Appleton City Church of God (Holiness) until his retirement in 2019. Norman and Barbara moved to Butler, MO, in 2019 and became members of the Happy Hill Church of God. After retirement, one of Norman's greatest joys ➡



➡ may be in your becoming unimpressed with spiritual things. If you become complacent, stubborn, or bent on doing what you want to do, the cause may be that you are no longer awed by the awesomeness of God. You may have grown so *accustomed* to Him that you no longer see Him.

President Loper warned that being in “spiritual mode” all the time can exhaust a person spiritually. But remember this: God has not changed. He is still as beautiful as He has ever been. He is still as awe-inspiring, merciful, gracious, redeeming, and loving as He has ever been.

President Loper’s closing prayer was that God would help us not to lose the wonder of Who He is, and that we would be on guard so as not to allow the saturation of the spiritual environment at GBS to be the means by which we grow complacent and apathetic.

**Sunday Evening.** Dr. Michael Avery, GBS Chancellor, spoke on the topic “The Pursuit of God,” based on Matthew 5:6: *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”*

On a physical level, we know absolutely nothing about real hunger and real thirst in America. On a spiritual level, however, the trait of a healthy Christian is to be spiritually hungry or thirsty. David exemplifies this in Psalm 143:6: *“My soul longs for You like a thirsty land,”* and Psalm 63:1: *“My soul thirsts for You.”* The mainspring of the Apostle Paul’s life was a burning desire after Christ—*“That I may know Him.”*

The type of righteousness Jesus is talking about is *not* something external or lived from the outside in rather than from the inside out, not something situational which could be manipulated to get around the rules/law, and not something ego-centric, or self-centered. However, it

is a legal righteousness, a righteousness that comes by faith in the aton-



## REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ was to volunteer at Bates County Memorial Hospital, where he was named “volunteer of the year” in 2023.

Norman is survived by his wife, Barbara; daughter, Regina Marie Black; one grandson; one great-granddaughter; and a brother, John Richard Black. A Celebration of Life service was held at the Happy Hill Church of God.



**Dr. Samuel E. Deets** was welcomed into eternal rest on August 14, 2023, completing a life well-lived for 89 years. He was born July 28, 1934, to Samuel Edgar and Vera May (Gheres) Deets. He was President of God’s Bible School and College from 1965 to 1975. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Carolyn; daughter, Michelle (“Shelly”) Hingl; son-in-law Nick Hingl; granddaughter, Shannon (Hingl) and her husband Sam Brehm; grandson, Kurtis Hingl and his wife Emily; and great-granddaughter,

Loretta Ruth Brehm. A Celebration of Life service was held at the Dickson Family Funeral Home, Cochran, PA, officiated by Dr. Michael Avery. A private interment followed. (See extended eulogy beginning on page 4.)



**Phyllis Jean Arnold**, 93, passed peacefully to heaven on September 4, 2023, at Cox South Medical Center, Springfield, MO, with her family by her side. Phyllis was born September 26th, 1929, in Mahaska County, IA, to Everett and Dorothy (Poe) Dunwoody.

Phyllis grew up on a farm outside Eddyville, IA, where she was taught a work ethic that not only carried her through life, but which also set a standard for all who “came behind her.” In 1947, Phyllis and Ivan Arnold were united in marriage in Eddyville. Together they had three children—Lois, Wanda, and Ron—and celebrated nearly sixty years together. Phyllis was preceded in death



ing work of Christ on the cross. It is a social righteousness, not just a private affair, but one that overflows the heart and explodes in love and good works for others. It is a moral righteousness—not primarily rules and regulations, but relationships.

This must start with a relationship with God. He owns me so completely and fills me so thoroughly with His Spirit that I am now enabled to experience a love for God that displaces self-love and a desire to please God that overtakes the desire to please myself. This relationship continues and becomes “others oriented.” I seek the good of others! If this righteousness is effectively pursued, there is a satisfaction to be found. *“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life”* (John 4:14).

Chancellor Avery closed by reinforcing the fact that in all this, there is a principle to be embraced. We should “hunger and thirst after righteousness.” Nothing is gained unless it is pursued. God “initiates,” but He also “invites.” Grace is not opposed to effort—it is opposed to earning! *“I will pour water on him that is thirsty”* (Isa. 44:3).

**Enrollment.** Current fall semester enrollment is 472 undergraduate students, 25 graduate students, and



by both her husband, Ivan, and her son, Ron. She faithfully attended the Mt. Zion Church of God (Holiness), Ava, MO, after many years of ministry as a pastor’s wife and Sunday school teacher. She brought her helping hands to Mt. Zion Bible School in Ava and continued to minister in ways too numerous to count. She cooked, cleaned, tutored, coached, and drove a school bus. She was a caregiver, bookkeeper, and generally a force to be reckoned with. Phyllis eventually retired but never quit working.

Phyllis is survived by her daughters, Lois (Arnold) Kilgore and Wanda (Arnold) Greenwood; grandchildren, great grandchildren, great-great grandchildren, siblings, nieces, nephews, other relatives, and a host of dear friends. Funeral services were held at the Mt. Zion Auditorium, Ava, MO, Pastor Dean Greenwood and Pastor Trey Dodsworth officiating. Burial followed in the Mt. Zion Cemetery. ■

216 K-12 students in Aldersgate Christian Academy. We are grateful to God that so many students have made the commitment to prepare for God’s calling. Pray with us that this will be a great school year as we train the students entrusted to us.

## DIVISIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND WINGROVE TAYLOR LEGACY AWARDS

Divisional scholarships are awarded by each division and are based on merit. Recipients must maintain a cumulative GPA (grade point average) of 3.0 or higher, consider their academic studies a sacred trust, receive a good evaluation of spiritual and social relations, be recommended by their division, and remain in a bachelor’s degree program.

These are the most competitive scholarships given by the college, covering either half or full tuition, according to financial need. These merit-based scholarships are financially underwritten by endowed scholarships. Josiah England was awarded the *Martin Wells Knapp Ministerial Scholarship*; Briana Epp and Samantha Ryan Castle were awarded the *R.E. McNeill Music Scholarship*.

*Wingrove Taylor Legacy Awards* are given to international students with a need for financial assistance. Recipients must have a call to Christian ministry and a commitment to return to their home country immediately upon completing their degree to serve in an area of ministry for at least two years. They must be enrolled in a bachelor’s degree program, maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher, consider their academic studies a sacred trust, and receive a good evaluation of spiritual and social relations. We were pleased to recognize the *WTL Award* recipients for the 2023-24 academic year: Ana Castillon, Victoria Dupte, Mounica Gera, Mihret Yirga, Minha (David) Kim, Randy Mercado, Abigail Montero, Jasiel David Acalco Jimenez, Mahatma Alcala Solorzano, Jerome Koke, Jason Liu, Imer Landero, and Issac Makapa.

## ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

The Endowed Scholarships (see pp.16-17) were awarded by the divisions: Ministerial, presented by Dr. Philip Brown; Music, presented by Dr. Jana Pop; and Professional Studies (which includes missions, education, nursing, business, and all other general studies), presented by Lyle Witt.

There were also two awards from outside the institution: Evangelistic Faith Missions has chosen Jason Quimzon to receive the *Robert & Bonnie Thompson Memorial Missionary Scholarship*. Missions Helps gives a scholarship each year to assist and encourage mission students in



their preparation to get to the foreign field. They chose Randy Mercado as this year's scholarship recipient.

### NEW ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, we give special recognition to new endowed scholarships as they are being awarded for the first time. This year, we had the honor of presenting five such scholarships.

#### **Tim and Donna Bass Scholarship.**

This was established to help students whose parents are in ministry. Tim Bass died in June of 2020 after a long battle with cancer. He had a desire to help young people serve God. Before he died, he planned for the sale of his land to fund a scholarship that would bless students who need help with their school bill. Robin (Bass) Yoder, Tim's sister, presented this scholarship to the first recipients: Dalina Sobie, Grace Stetler, Jerrel Collins, Kaley Quesenberry, and Kaylee Bennett.

**Ronald Moore Scholarship.** This was established for a ministerial or missions college student. Ronald and his wife, Sarah, live in Pennsylvania. They are in their 80s and have health issues that keep them almost homebound. Although they have never visited GBS, they watch GBS services online and appreciate the wonderful messages by the president and the staff who speak in chapel.

When Ronald was young, *God's Revivalist* magazine was in their

home. After God saved and sanctified him, one of the first things he did was to subscribe to *God's Revivalist*. He has been a donor for many



Diana Sobie

years, and a Sustaining Donor for eight years. God impressed on him the idea to save money to start a scholarship for students going into full-time ministry as a pastor or cross-cultural missionary. The first recipient of the *Ronald Moore Scholarship* is Diana Sobie.

#### **W.C. Raker Memorial Scholarship.**

This was established for a ministerial or music major who is a determined learner who has grades reflective of true ability. W.C. received a call to preach at age 19 and came to God's Bible School, where he graduated in 1933. GBS was where he found his spiritual footing and direction. God



Raker Scholarship recipients

used his determination to win the lost by allowing him 65 years in the ministry, 45 of those years in active, full-time ministry. He was a traveling evangelist who planted three churches and nurtured three others. He and his wife Mary, who was an accomplished singer and musician, made many friends as they traveled and evangelized across the U.S., Canada, Cuba, and the Caribbean Islands. He died on May 5, 2002.

The scholarship was established by W.G. Raker's daughter, granddaughter, and great-grandson. The family desires that his life's work and service to the Lord be extended through this scholarship. His daughter, Holly Langster says, "Thank you, God's Bible School, for preparing my father for his life's work in service to the Lord. No other school could have recognized his uniqueness and prepared him as you did." The first recipients of the *W.C. Raker Memorial Scholarship* are Devon Moore, Jacob Mason, Jaqui Norris, and Kathryn Brown.

#### **Earl and Geraldine Yates Scholarship.**

This was established for any college student who has financial need. Geraldine Yates started this scholarship because of her desire to help students and to make a difference for Jesus Christ. She was inspired to do this because of former GBS graduate and employee, Glenn Black. She and her late husband enjoyed *God's Revivalist* and various GBS musical groups as they came to The Wesleyan Church in Westport, IN. Geraldine passed away in April of 2022, shortly after starting this scholarship. Geraldine's son Larry Yates presented the *Earl*



Mounica Gera



Bass Scholarship recipients with presenter Robin (Bass) Yoder on right



and Geraldine Yates Scholarship to its first recipient, Mounica Gera.

### **Cheryl Blankenship Gillespie Memorial Scholarship.**

This was established in honor of Cheryl Gillespie, who graduated from GBS with a BA in 1990. She home-



Ashley Wagner

schooled her children and used her musical talents in both the classroom and in church services. She provided piano lessons for many students and was known for her humility. It is the hope of her family and friends that this scholarship will enable other students to attend GBS and to use their gifts and abilities to make a difference for Christ. Cheryl's son and niece were in attendance as the Cheryl Blankenship Gillespie Memorial Scholarship was presented to Ashley Wagner.

### **OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Graduate Scholarship.** This year, the Charles and Deborah McWilliams Family Scholarship for Graduate Students was awarded to Tomas Petersson, an online student from the country of Sweden who is enrolled in GBS graduate studies.



Isaac England

**One-Time Scholarship.** The Orndorff Scholarship is provided by the Orndorff family in memory of siblings James Orndorff and Phyllis Orndorff and was awarded to Isaac England.

We are thankful for the many alumni and friends of GBS whose selflessness, generosity, and vision make these scholarship awards possible. Their loyal support, faithful partnership, and giving enabled us to award a grand total of \$195,230 in scholarships this year, a 7.4% increase over last year's \$181,800.

### **FALL PICNIC**

Around 9:30 AM Tuesday morning, August 29th, the school bus pulled away from campus. It was loaded with students headed for Lincoln Ridge Park, located in Independence, KY. Many followed in their own vehicles. Disembarking after the 18-mile journey, students and staff participated in a number of fun activities: softball, spike ball, corn hole, soccer, disk golf, and fellowship. Of course, the grill was handled by the Student



## **ALDERSGATE FORUM**

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Affairs crew with the assistance of Floyd Hyatt. A great time was had by all!

### **CHRISTMAS PROGRAM, DECEMBER 8, 9, 10**

Written by Michael DeStefano, *Fulfilled* highlights the joy of God's promises made visible. It calls attention to stories of Old Testament figures who pictured the nature of Emmanuel—and celebrates their fulfillment in Jesus! *Fulfilled* will be staged in two locations: the Adcock Chapel on Friday, December 8 (7:30 p.m.) and Sunday, December 10 (6:00 p.m.); and the Answers Center at the Ark Encounter on Saturday, December 9 (5:30 p.m.). Festive prelude music will begin 60 minutes prior to each campus performance. A combined choir of high school and college students, guest alumni, orchestra, and cast of actors will come together in the production. Special features this year, weather permitting, include pre-performance photo booths, after-performance complimentary refreshments (on-campus performances only), and festive lights following the Answers Center performance (ChristmasTime at the Ark Encounter). You may want to consider this in planning your arrival/leave time. More information will be forthcoming in the next issue of *God's Revivalist*, or consult our website: [www.gbs.edu](https://www.gbs.edu). ■





# ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

God's Bible School & College  
2023-24 Academic Year

*Endowed scholarships are investments held in perpetuity, the earnings of which are awarded to deserving students annually. Our goal is to ensure our education remains affordable for students and families, and we are grateful for the generous donors who have helped make that possible by partnering with us to establish the listed scholarships.*

## **Ada Mae Conrad Memorial Scholarship**

Abigail Montero

## **Allan Clarence Strong Scholarship**

Tristan Austin, Blake Castle, James Dockery,  
Minha (David) Kim, Jason Liu, Logan Marshall,  
Bryan Witt

## **Alvin and Gelene Hodge Scholarship**

Hannah Taylor

## **Betty L. Wallace Farmer Memorial Scholarship**

Abigail McHugh

## **C. Helen Mooshian Scholarship**

Grace Stetler

## **Carson W. and Stella Mae Scarbrough Memorial Scholarship**

Abigail Montero

## **Charles & Deborah McWilliams Family Scholarship**

Tomas Petersson

## **Chester C. Elliott and Leliah E. Roberts Scholarship**

Simon Silas

## **Connie A. Tiede Memorial Scholarship**

Ashley Going

## **Crawford Family Scholarship**

Norma Buchanan, Maritza Matias,  
Janae Myers, Brianna Rummell

## **David and Clare Martin Scholarship**

Christy Graham

## **Dr. Bence C. Miller Memorial Scholarship**

Abigail McHugh

## **Dr. Edward Palm Scholarship**

Tristan Austin

## **Dr. J. Louis Emmert Scholarship**

Daniel Beatty, Josiah England,  
Luke Paul

## **Dr. J. D. Young Memorial Scholarship**

Stewart Quesenberry

## **Dr. Leslie Wilcox Scholarship**

Kristy Bennett

## **Elmer C. Farmer Pastoral Scholarship**

Josiah England

## **Elwert/Rauhut Memorial Scholarship**

Jennifer Scott

## **Ervin and Jane Bohall Scholarship**

Luke Paul

## **Ethel Belle Baughey Scholarship**

Hannah Ribbey

## **Evelyn Ware Scholarship**

Nicole Derscheid

## **Far North Missionary Fellowship Scholarship**

Simon Silas

## **Frank Little Jr. Ministerial Scholarship**

Daniel King

## **Frederick Family Scholarship**

Rose James

## **General GBS Scholarship**

Rose James

## **George and Barbara Bass Scholarship**

Luke Paul

## **Gertrude Taylor Memorial Scholarship**

Allison Gardner

## **Glenn and Sharon Black**

## **Ministerial Scholarship**

Josiah England



**Graham Counseling Scholarship**  
Christy Graham

**Greatland Scholarship**  
Kayla Fry

**Hazel (Trouten) Scheid Memorial Scholarship**  
Ryan Cravens, Eron Miriye

**Hedstrom Memorial Scholarship**  
Josiah England

**Isaac T. Monce Memorial Scholarship**  
Anthony Paulus, Jayshaun Williams

**Jack and Janie Wetherald Memorial Scholarship**  
Abigail McHugh

**Jim and Dorothy Miller Memorial Scholarship**  
Kristy Bennett

**Jimmy and Maudine Wilcox Scholarship**  
Allan Brown III, Clarissa Burton, Malik Evgan, Ryan Wilson

**John Case Jr. Scholarship**  
Samantha Castle

**John O. (Mickey) and Annie E. McGuire Memorial Scholarship**  
Abigail Montero

**Joyce Ann Marshall Memorial Scholarship**  
JeNessa Watters

**Leonard and Janet Sankey Scholarship**  
Josiah England

**Leonard and Janet Sankey II Scholarship**  
Simon Silas

**Louise Rhyne Memorial Scholarship**  
Masayoshi Hamada, Pendili Stickle

**Marjorie Wolfe Bryner Memorial Scholarship**  
Brooklyn Williams

**Marvin Jewell Ministerial Scholarship**  
Luke Paul

**Mary Ann Bell Scholarship**  
Abigail McHugh

**McNeill Memorial Scholarship**  
Cassie England, Briana Epp

**Meredith and Florence Vance Scholarship**  
Nicole Derscheid, Kiana Kennedy, Randy Mercado, Bradley Thomas, Katelyn Welch, Clarissa Williams

**Merle and Anna Wolf Scholarship**  
Briana Epp

**Merrill and Yvonne Braymer Scholarship**  
Hannah Ribbey

**Messerschmidt Memorial Scholarship**  
Abigail McHugh

**Michael R. Avery Scholarship for Leaders**  
Brenna Fuller, Darya Sobie

**Minnie Ruth Wallbrown Memorial Scholarship**  
Rose James, Jason Liu

**Mr. and Mrs. K. W. Wong Scholarship**  
Samantha Castle, Jason Liu

**Myrtle Jessup Ministerial Scholarship**  
Luke Paul

**N. Keith and Sharon Waggoner Scholarship**  
Briana Epp

**Nathaniel Joslin Memorial Scholarship**  
Hannah Donovan

**New Life Community Church Mission Scholarship**  
Abigail McHugh

**Norma J. Sturgeon Memorial Scholarship**  
Briana Epp, Malik Evgan, Gregory Goren, John Rosario

**Oral E. and Lucille Cox Memorial Scholarship**  
Ryan Cravens

**Oscar Johnson Memorial Scholarship**  
Faith Jordan

**Pamela D. Gruver Memorial Music Scholarship**  
Chris Castle, Jenna Gordon

**Peter B. and Patricia J. Moran Scholarship**  
Nicole Derscheid

**Rev. and Mrs. G. W. King Scholarship**  
Devon Moore

**Rev. and Mrs. William Jackson Scholarship**  
Maritza Matias

**Rev. Dr. H. E. Schmul Sr. and Lois Schmul Scholarship**  
Karissa Fry, Kristin Ryan

**Rev. Francis A. Taylor Scholarship**  
Breanna Crowl

**Rev. Robert and Bonnie Thompson Scholarship**  
Dominic Gattone, Randy Mercado, Devon Moore, Dale Smucker

**Rev. Willie and Mamie E. Carroll Bramble Fund**  
Ryan Cravens

**Robertson Scholarship**  
Kristy Bennett

**Ronald M. Sherrill Memorial Scholarship**  
Rose James

**Rosemary Arnett Green Scholarship**  
Rebecca Bennett, Briana Epp

**Sherrard Family Scholarship**  
Juliana Beardslee, Audrey Rectenwald

**South Bend Union Chapel Scholarship**  
Josiah England

**Speth Student Fund**  
Juliana Beardslee

**Stanley and Evelyn Kendall Christian School Scholarship**  
Ashley Going, Madison Paulus

**The Aubrey Elam Indoor Camp Scholarship**  
Madison Paulus

**The King Family Scholarship**  
Elizabeth Horton

**Urban Ministry Scholarship**  
Grace Burkhardt

**Vaughn Somers Memorial Scholarship**  
Rebecca Bennett

**Vernon Scholarship**  
Kathryn Brown

**W.I. and Lillie DeBoard Memorial Scholarship**  
Daniel Beatty

**Wanda G. Farmer Scholarship for Musicians**  
Jenna Gordon

**Ward Family Legacy Memorial Scholarship**  
Audrey Rectenwald

**Zerbe Scholarship**  
Juliana Beardslee

#### *One-Time Scholarships*

**James Orndorff Memorial Scholarship**  
Isaac England

#### *New Scholarships 2023-2024*

**Cheryl Blankenship Gillespie Memorial Scholarship**  
Ashley Wagner

**Earl and Geraldine Yates Scholarship**  
Mounica Gera

**Ronald Moore Scholarship**  
Diana Sobie

**Tim and Donna Bass Scholarship**  
Kaylee Bennett, Jerrel Collins, Kaley Quesenberry, Dalina Sobie, Grace Stetler

**W. C. Raker Memorial Scholarship**  
Kathryn Brown, Jacob Mason, Devon Moore, Jaqui Norris

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# The Disciple-Making Church

by Nathan Brown

On April 15, 2019, a fire broke out in the attic of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Fueled by a lattice of support timbers, the fire spread quickly towards the cathedral's iconic spire. Inside the cathedral, a priest and a few hundred worshippers and tourists were shocked when the fire alarms sounded. Surely this was a false alarm?<sup>1</sup>

The first firetrucks fought their way through the evening rush-hour traffic, their sirens blaring at full volume. As they went, the firefighters reviewed their standing orders for what to do if a fire ever broke out at the cathedral. First, they were to evacuate the building and make sure no one was left inside. Next, they were to remove the most valuable works of art and get them to a safe place. Then, they were to remove the more valuable pieces of furniture. Last, they were to try to save as much of the existing structure as they could.<sup>2</sup>

When I learned of the protocol that was followed that day in Paris, I was struck by its clear order of priorities: focus first on the people, then save the art and furniture, and then think about the structure. What a great reminder of what matters most when it comes to the

church, for we sometimes get this the other way around. Sometimes we spend so much time focused on the structure, the programs, the meetings, and the events, that we miss the most fundamental part of what the church is all about—the people. Jesus called us to make disciples, who will in turn, make other disciples. In this way, Jesus promised to build his church (Matt. 16:18)

## The Great Commission and Church Discipleship

How does the Great Commission relate to the church? **First, it speaks to the church's identity**, for the local church is a group of disciples who are practicing discipleship together (Acts 2:42). They seek to commit, follow, imitate, coach, and persuade in a corporate setting and with a united purpose.

**Second, it speaks to the church's mission**, for making disciples who in turn make disciples is the principal mission of the church (Matt. 28:18-20). Every program, sermon, special, presentation, function, and activity should be evaluated by this criteria: is this helping to accomplish the mission of making disciples?



**Third, it speaks to the church's life,** for the local church is the primary community within which discipleship should take place (Heb. 10:24-25). Francis Chan comments, "While every individual needs to obey Jesus' call to follow, we cannot follow Jesus as individuals. The New Testament is full of commands to do this or that for 'one another.' Love one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, etc. So how can we teach people to 'observe all that I have commanded' if they have no one to love, pray for, or encourage? It's impossible to 'one another' yourself. It's impossible to follow Jesus alone."<sup>3</sup>

Let me pause here to note that our typical worship services are often not the best place to practice the many "one another" commands. For example, we are told to confess our sins to one another (James 5:16), but the Sunday morning gathering is not the best place to do this, especially considering the nature of certain sins. This means the church must exist as a community of believers who have relationships with each other and interact with each other apart from the normal services.

**Fourth, it speaks to the church's future,** for the church is a family of families who are evangelizing and discipling their children to carry on the identity, mission, and life of the church (Deut. 6:6-7; Psalms 78:5-8; Eph. 6:1-4). Why should the world be interested in following Christ if our own children don't? If we grow the church by making disciples of our kids, we'll have no trouble reaching the world. How tragic it would be if we lost our children to the world while we were out trying to convince the world to follow Jesus!

## Fulfilling the Church's Mission to Make Disciples

I believe all of us want our churches to be healthy, growing places where disciples are being made and discipleship is being done with unity and love, and I think we all want to do the best we can to make this happen. So, as we think about this issue, I want to acknowledge that the ideas I'm offering here are only a few of the many good and different ways to approach discipleship in the church (and you may already be doing some of them). I hope they can be of some value as we all work together to make discipleship come alive for our congregations. So, let's begin by answering this question—How can the church fulfill its mission of making disciples?

**First, by every member doing his/her part.** Paul compared the church to the human body (1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:7, 11-16; Rom. 12:3-8; cf. 1 Pet. 4:7-11). In the body, each member is necessary, and none can exist on his/her own. If one member of the body doesn't function properly, the whole body is affected. This means each of us has a responsibility to contribute and participate. The teacher must teach, but those being taught must listen and learn!

Francis Chan comments, "The moment you begin to believe that your church can be healthy while you sit on the sidelines, you have given up on God's plan of re-

demption. God placed you in your unique situation because He wants you to minister to and with the other Christians He has placed around you. If you are not active in the church, you are hurting your brothers and sisters. One paralyzed leg forces the rest of the body to work twice as hard to make up for that leg's inactivity."<sup>4</sup>

**Second, by providing leadership and training in personal and family discipleship.** It is essential that we give our people training in how to be a disciple and make disciples. Although there are many ways to do this, the suggestions below are built around the [comeafterme.com](http://comeafterme.com) website and make use of the materials available there. I suggest the following course of action:

- **Lead by example.** Pastors and church leaders need to tell their congregations that they are committed to practicing personal discipleship and then lead by example.
- **Train the men.** The men in the local church are the leaders of their families as well as the leaders of the congregation. This means they must be trained in personal and family discipleship. The church can't function properly if the men aren't thoroughly equipped in the basics of discipleship.
- **Begin with the core.** These are the men who attend faithfully, tithe regularly, and give sacrificially. These men should be trained with the stated goal that they, in turn, will be training others.
- **If possible, hold weekly training sessions.** Depending on the number of individuals, it may not be possible to train the core all at once. Start with one or two men and build from there.
- **Start with personal discipleship** and make sure they are firmly grounded in what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. The website provides all the material needed for teaching the basics of personal discipleship.
- Once they're established in personal discipleship, **begin modeling family discipleship.** The "Disciple-Making Family" lesson explains how to do this, and this approach can be followed for the weekly training sessions.
- After a while, **have them try leading one of the weekly sessions.** This will give them practice in family discipleship and prepare them to train others.

Spend a year with these men, and then have them begin training others. They should know at the beginning that this is the natural progression: be discipled so they can then disciple others. At the very least, if they do nothing else, they should be discipling their own families.

**Third, by caring for and nurturing new believers.** Consider this story: "In 1997, the Chicago Tribune reported the story of a mother who let her nine children, aged 8 months to 11 years, fend for themselves in a gritty apartment filled with trash and excrement. Public officials, responding to a neighbor's call, entered the apartment at 2 a.m. and took the children into custody. The mother, said the owner of the apartment building, was more interested in partying late than in caring for her children."<sup>5</sup>





© iStock: freedom007

## The Great Commission speaks to the Church's identity, mission, life, and future.

Now we're outraged by such a story and rightly so, because we all know how much children need love and care. New believers need that same love and care. We must be sure not to spend our time and effort persuading the lost to follow Jesus and then fail to make sure they are given the love and guidance they need to grow into healthy, mature disciples of Christ. The church must come alongside new believers and actively disciple and train them in how to follow Jesus.

**Fourth, by cultivating a sense of community.** Western culture is characterized by individualism. We place great value on independence and self-reliance, and we tend to think that the interests of the individual should take precedence over those of the group. Because of this, we often forget that we're members of the body of Christ, and our primary goal is to strive for the health and well-being of the body. The church must do all it can to provide venues and opportunities for connection and fellowship between the members of the congregation. The more interconnected families are, the more they are able to imitate each other and model for each other.

**Fifth, by promoting biblical understanding and holy living.** The church is uniquely gifted by the Spirit to help believers understand what God has said and how to apply it to their lives. This is essential for personal and family discipleship. When people have a proper under-

standing of the Bible and know how to live in obedience to God's commands, they are then able to be and to make disciples of Christ.

**Sixth, by providing discipline and accountability.** Being part of a local church involves not only a call to imitate the faith of church leadership, but also a commitment to obey them and submit to their authority (Heb. 13:7,17). Church leaders watch over our souls, for they must give account to God. We should live in such a way that they may do this with joy and not with grief. Believers

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

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Elms, LeRoy & Mark Beuving. *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*. Zondervan, 1978.

Hull, Bill. *The Complete Book of Discipleship*. NavPress, 2006.

Hull, Bill & Renaut van der Riet. *The Disciple-Making Church*. Baker Books, 2010.

Hull, Bill & Robert E. Coleman. *The Disciple-Making Pastor*. Baker Books, 2007.

Wilkins, Michael J. *Following the Master*. Zondervan, 1992.



are also called to submit to each other out of reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21). This means we are to hold each other accountable to live careful, godly lives.

**Seventh, by persuading those within our sphere of influence to become disciples of Christ.** This refers to our extended family, our friends and acquaintances, our coworkers, our neighbors, and others we encounter in daily living. This is done in two ways: first by living a godly life in front of them, and then by looking for opportunities to share our testimony and tell them the good news.

**Last, by supporting and participating in global missions.** This is done in a variety of ways: praying for our fellow workers in other parts of the world, contributing money and time in support of various missionary endeavors, personal participation in missionary activity, and

developing a passion in our children for spreading Christ's kingdom across the world.

## Conclusion

I would like to share a story from Faith Family Community Church in Winter Garden, Florida. The pastor, Melvin Adams, Jr., and the worship leader, Matt Stence, had a vision for what their church could become through intentional discipleship. To begin, they invited the congregation to join them in the [comeafterme.com](https://comeafterme.com) "Bible in One Year" plan, which models The Conversation (God talks to us through His Word, we think about what He said, and then we respond to Him in prayer).

They began on September 30, which is where the New Testament starts in the reading plan. (You don't

have to wait for a new year; you can begin the plan anytime). A core of people completed that year and were so excited they publicly called the entire church body to join them for the entire plan in the next year. Pastor Adams supported this effort by preaching his sermons from the previous week's readings. He and Matt shared the following comment from one of the participants: "I just wanted to thank you for introducing us to the [comeafterme.com](https://comeafterme.com) website. I decided to give it a try for the new year and I am finding myself spending HOURS a day in the Word. I've never done that, but there's something about this plan that truly does make you hunger for it."

I offer this story to give an example of what can happen when a church unites in their commitment to practice discipleship in community with one another. Let's join together as local bodies of believers and help each other as we strive to become more and more like Jesus! 📖

**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](https://comeafterme.com) (a discipleship website). He, his wife Charity, and two children live in Trussville, AL. All Scripture quotations are ESV.



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3. Chan, Francis. *Multiply: Disciples Making Disciples*. (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012), p. 51.
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# Belonging & Being Disciplined

Bringing New Christians into a Family of Believers

*by John D. Parker*

**M**y wife Cathy brought tears to my eyes recently when she looked at my dear old dad and said to him, “You know Dad Parker, this is the first time I can remember living in the house with a Dad!” We had just retired and moved into my parents’ house and were in the process of adding special quarters onto that structure in order to care for my parents in their own home.

Cathy’s comment touched me deeply! Her father had died before she had time to form memories of him. Her comment to my dad made me think back to 1976 when I first took notice of that super-cute little southern Indiana girl, and thought, “I’d like to make her a part of my family!” We were both sophomores at GBS. Little did I know that after 45 years of marriage I would be seeing the final culmination of that early goal. Let me reminisce a bit more....

During the two years of our courtship, I eventually took Cathy to visit my family in North Carolina. I noticed that she was not treated as a “guest” or “visitor.” We did not hand her a book on our Parker History and Genealogy to study. Nor did we enroll her in some class to study the Parker family. Rather, my mom, always busy caring for her ten children and busy pastor-husband, invited her to peel potatoes and shell pinkeye-purple hull peas and butterbeans, all the while engaging her in conversation and fellowship. My little sisters climbed on her lap and snuggled and giggled. My younger brothers teased her and took her squirrel hunting.

Now, growing up for Cathy was a bit different. With the death of her father, and with her two siblings being

older, Cathy was raised primarily by herself. It was Cathy and her mother, a very timid and soft-spoken lady, in a very orderly and peaceful little house. But she got pulled right into the loud and exciting atmosphere of our noisy family of 12. So, when I proposed, she gladly accepted my invitation to be a part of our family! She is as much a part of the family as I am. If it came down to choosing Cathy or me in my family...let’s just say I wouldn’t want to take that risk!

There is a parallel to be considered here when we seek to bring people into God’s family! Cathy’s culture and family experiences were totally different from mine. However, it was her relationship with me that caused her to be open to visiting my family. Similarly, the most effective means, by far, of getting new people into church and, consequently, into God’s family is through personal relationships.

What worked with Cathy will work with new people and God’s family! Inspiring in them a desire to be a part of the family of God (and our local body of God’s family, a particular church) will not be accomplished by sticking a book in their hand or pushing them into a training class or small group. All those things are good and will be helpful in due course. The priority of creating interest and desire to be part of this body of God’s family is not so much about “equipping” at first—it’s much more about BELONGING! New believers and even pre-Christian attenders to your church are often breaking with the “old life” and the old identities and relationships. They desperately need to feel they BELONG to God’s family.



They must be made to feel AT HOME! There will be little inspiration for spiritual growth or discipleship until they identify with God's family and feel they belong!

### CONNECTION IS KEY

In the context of being made to feel at home, relationships develop within God's family. Those relationships with mature and maturing Christians provide inspiration, encouragement, and hunger for spiritual growth. Relationships flourish in fellowship! Fellowship is critically vital to the bonding that facilitates healthy relationships. Churches that are successfully enabling new attenders and new believers to bond in a context of fellowship, and nurturing those healthy relationships, are more successful in keeping them coming and discipling them effectively. There is nothing the church does that is more vital to the spiritual formation of new ones than to provide opportunities and venues for fellowship. Connections formed through this fellowship will facilitate spiritual growth.

### COMMUNITY IS VITAL

In the context of fellowship, personal stories of grace are shared that the new believer can identify with and give them hope for their own spiritual journey. Some examples are: "I've been where you are;" and "This is what God has done for me." Inevitably, in the context of fellowship and connection, struggles are shared, and maturing believers eventually respond with their own stories of God's grace in their lives. This encourages a sense of community and bonding with God's family as they come alongside these new ones in their struggles. That bond of community is so very vital to the process of drawing new believers into the spiritual formation process.

### NURTURING IS NECESSARY

This is where the spiritual growth curriculum and invitations to small groups are helpful! Discipleship materials (books/curriculum) and small

groups will feed the spiritual hunger inspired by the connections with the community of believers. It may be helpful that those with whom they've identified go through these courses with them or attend their small group. We must always remember that it seems often to be more about "relationships" than "knowledge" or even "spiritual growth." However, through relationships, both knowledge and spiritual growth are enabled.

### SACRIFICIAL INVESTMENT IS NOT OPTIONAL

To disciple new believers requires relinquishing my rights to myself, my time, and my interests in order to be available to invest in the lives of those I am seeking to disciple. This is the PRICE that must be paid—the SACRIFICE that must be made to bring new ones into the family of God in a way that inspires them to stay! One of the successful pastors I consulted in preparing for this article said:

*My new favorite definition of "discipleship" is "living life together." It is not about material that is taught, but a life that is caught. I have become distinctly aware that living with my people accomplishes more than any sermon I preach. Being accessible to the new believer is key. So often we hear about boundaries, and we do need them. But some of those I have disciplined needed more access than just an hour on Sunday and Wednesday. Our new converts must know we have not abandoned them. Strategically connecting them with other more mature believers is at times more important than connecting with the pastor. This is especially the case with young people. They need more fellowship with peers.*

All of this requires sacrificial investment of ourselves, our time, our attention, and our praying! Jesus poured Himself into His disciples. We must also be willing to sacrifice selflessly our right to ourselves, our comforts, our personal space, our time,

and our plans to nurture new believers. Nothing we do will incentivize them to desire to grow and mature as Christians more than our giving of ourselves in genuine love for them.

### CELEBRATE GROWTH

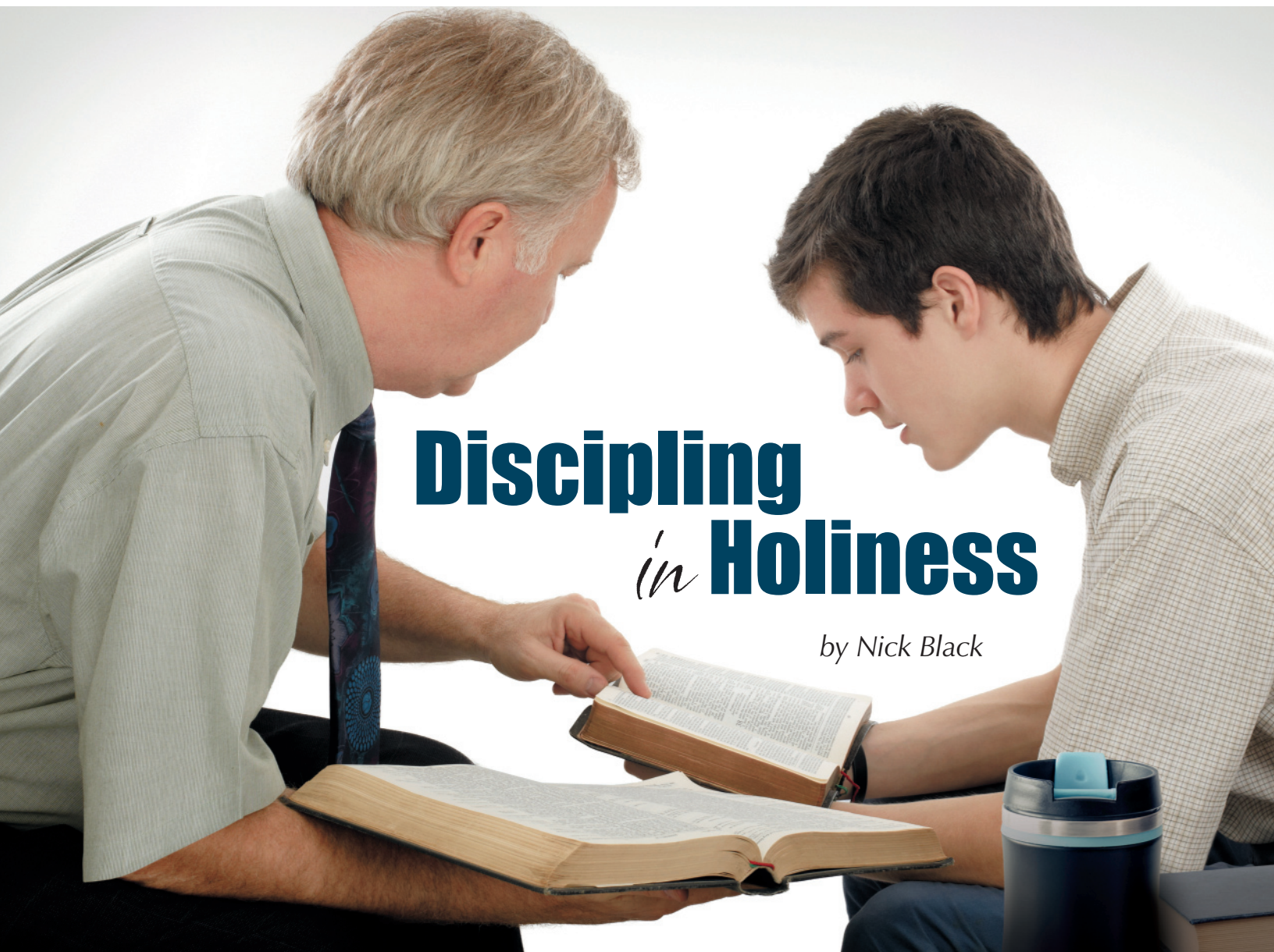
When discipleship results and spiritual growth happens, reward every measure of progress with a celebration! Encourage discipleship by celebrating growth. Create recognitions for incremental progress. Be creative in how that is accomplished with an awareness that not all people enjoy public celebrations or recognition. Study their personality and customize the celebration of their spiritual growth with something fitting to who they are. It may be a card, gift, or simply a word of affirmation and appreciation. With others it might need to be public recognition. Whatever the case, be a CHEER-LEADER for every new believer!

### MAKE DISCIPLERS

Equip every disciplined believer to become a disciple-maker of others! Be sure they understand throughout the process that the whole focus and purpose of discipleship and spiritual growth is to enable them to "pay it forward." Make sure they understand that the objective of discipleship is not just the making of "super Christians" or "strong believers" simply for the purpose of having spiritual heroes! The plan our Lord clearly gave us is to make disciples who can make disciples who are able to make disciples! It is only then we have successfully accomplished our mission and fulfilled our call. ■

*John D. Parker (BRE '78) and his wife Cathy (Horrall) (BRE '78) have been a vibrant ministry team, beginning with a church plant in Enterprise, AL, and followed by 34 years of pastoral ministries. John also served eight years as the Director of Missions for the Bible Methodist Connection and seven years as Conference President (Southern Regional Conference). He retired in July 2023 to Easley, SC, to care for his parents. Cathy and John have 4 adult children and 11 grandchildren.*





# Discipling *in* Holiness

by Nick Black

**D**iscipleship is a vital part of the Christian life as God has called all of us to help other believers. Specifically, He has called all of us to help disciple other believers into the experience of heart holiness. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-13 that we are all called to disciple via our own skill sets, some as “*apostles and some [as] prophets and some [as] evangelists and some [as] pastors and [some as] teachers for the perfecting of the saints... till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*” Joseph Benson, an early Methodist leader and commentator, points out that Paul here is calling them to lead others to the experience of perfect love.<sup>1</sup> God has

called all of us to disciple others, each in our own unique way, and to disciple others in holiness.

## **DISCIPLESHIP SHOULD HAVE HOLINESS AS A PRIORITY**

Scripture presents leading believers into the experience of heart holiness as a priority in discipleship.

The apostle Paul, when meeting some believing disciples, immediately made holiness a priority for them in Acts 19:2 by asking them, “Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?”

When Peter and John heard about the revival in Samaria (Acts 8:12-19) where people had been converted, they quickly headed down to Samaria. What



did they do there for these new converts? They disciplined them into holiness. Although these people of Samaria had been converted, they were young Christians who had yet to receive the Holy Spirit. Peter and John thus led the new converts in prayer, and they received the Holy Spirit.

The book of 1 Thessalonians was written to a group of believers in Thessalonica who had been converted under Paul's ministry. Unfortunately, due to persecution, Paul was forced to leave shortly thereafter (Acts 17). Paul then wrote to them the letter of 1 Thessalonians. In this letter, Paul told them that he was praying that their faith might be perfected (3:10) with the purpose of establishing their hearts "unblameable in holiness" (3:13). Paul continued to call them to holiness, noting that "it is the will of God, even your sanctification" (4:3). John Wesley says that this verse points to a second work of grace, noting it calls for "Entire Holiness of heart and life."<sup>2</sup> Paul later told the Thessalonians in 5:23 that "the very God of peace [will] sanctify you wholly."

If we are to take Scripture as our guide, our discipleship should likewise encourage other disciples into a real personal transformative experience of heart holiness.

#### **DISCIPLESHIP IN HOLINESS SHOULD BE SCRIPTURALLY FOCUSED**

Discipling believers into heart holiness should be founded and grounded in Scripture.

Some of the best passages with which to start are the Samaritan Pentecost in Acts 8, the Ephesian Pentecost in Acts 19, and Peter's explanation of what happened at Pentecost in Acts 15:8-9. One can then relate the promise of Acts 2:38-39, that this experience is available to us today so that we can have our own Personal Pentecost. Good discipleship, therefore, is God-centered, Scripture-based discipleship.

#### **CLEAR TEACHING ASSISTS IN HAVING A CLEAR EXPERIENCE**

Discipling believers into holiness should utilize clear instruction in order to avoid confusion that could prevent believers from experiencing heart holiness. A clear understanding often assists in having a clear experience.

When discipling believers, there are five areas of confusion I have found that have hindered them from seeking heart holiness. Clarifying these areas may help individuals both understand the doctrine and personally experience God's great gift.

##### **1. They may be seeking absolute perfection.**

Some individuals hear the term "Christian perfection" and assume this means "absolute perfection" (i.e., not making any mistakes ever) instead of perfect love. They then don't view Christian perfection as a possibility.

Clarifying the distinction between deliberate disobedience and human mistakes or errors has helped many.

**2. They may believe holiness is only consecration.** Consecration, a complete surrender to God, is a foundational prerequisite for entire sanctification, just as repentance and faith are prerequisites for conversion. However, sanctification, just like justification, is a work of grace that God does, not something that is achieved by human works.

Samuel Logan Brengle's comment here is noteworthy:

*God wants sanctified men. Of course, men must be consecrated—that is, given up to God—in order to be sanctified. But when once they have yielded themselves to Him, yielded their very inmost selves...when they have really done this and taken their hands off..., then they must wait on God and cry to Him with a humble, yet bold, persistent faith till He baptizes them with the Holy Ghost and fire. He promised to do it, and He will do it, but men must expect it, look for it, pray for it, and, if it tarry, wait for it.*<sup>3</sup>

**3. They may believe heart holiness is only gradually or progressively obtained.** While our surrender may take some time, clarifying that the reception of the purifying baptism of the Holy Spirit is an instantaneous experience may prove helpful. Wesley notes while "a gradual work of grace constantly precedes the instantaneous work both of justification and sanctification, the work itself of sanctification as well as justification is undoubtedly instantaneous."<sup>4</sup> Thus, Wesley taught, "Sanctification in the proper sense is an instantaneous deliverance from all sin."<sup>5</sup>

**4. They may have given only a superficial consecration.** Giving all of one's conscious self to God is required, but what God wants (for lack of a better term) is our unconscious self. In Psalm 139, David asks God to search his heart, so likewise believers need to ask God to search their hearts for any areas deep within themselves that they have not surrendered. This may involve, as one preacher explained, "a peeling of the onion of self," or, as the old-timers called it, "dying to self."

**5. They may be seeking someone else's experience.** Some believers, hearing the story of another person's experience, seek a similar experience. This can sometimes hinder them. God deals with each person uniquely. Encourage them to seek God without focusing on someone else's experience or expecting their experience to fit into a preconceived box.

#### **HOLINESS IS EXPERIENTIAL**

In discipling believers in holiness, it must be remembered that heart holiness is not just a doctrine—it's not just a belief system—it is a real, genuine experience. While discipleship must have an intellectual ele-



ment of teaching to it, holiness is not a dry, theoretical, abstract philosophy. It is both the experience of a moment and the lived-out passion of a lifetime.

## HEART HOLINESS IS NOT AN END TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

One important element of discipling new believers into holiness is to teach them that, while entire sanctification is an instantaneous complete work of grace, it is not the end to spiritual growth. A continual growth in Christlikeness should—and, in fact, must—follow the instantaneous experience. Dr. Peter Wiseman says sanctification “is not the end, but rather the beginning of a life of great possibilities. It is the doorway into unlimited fruitfulness and usefulness through grace.”<sup>6</sup>

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

In discipling new believers in holiness, there are some resources that may be helpful. Samuel Logan Brengle’s *Helps to Holiness* is a classic that many have found useful. The book *Sanctification Simply Explained* is a great basic introduction, while *From the Classroom to the Heart* by Paul Kaufmann is helpful for understanding the holy life. *Holiness and High Country, My Utmost for His Highest*, and *Time to be Holy* are excellent devotional book resources. For a more in-depth work, *Studies in Biblical Holiness* by Donald Metz remains the best standard work, while *A Teaching Outline on Entire Sanctification* is an excellent teaching resource for teachers, preachers, or small group leaders. Ultimately, however, the most important resource is the Word of God.

Discipleship is about teaching, encouraging, and guiding other disciples to be like Christ. Part of that process is leading fellow believers into holiness. God has a place for each of our skill sets in helping others into experiencing holiness and, ultimately, growing each and every day to be more like Christ. ■

**Nick Black** has been a GBS instructor in both the college and the academy since 2018. He is currently a doctoral candidate in Theology at Liberty University as well as a doctoral candidate studying Church Growth at Grand Canyon University. He lives with his wife Nikita in Cincinnati with their nephew, Dejon.

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2. Wesley, John. *Notes on the New Testament*, 1805. (Accessed on MyBible App, notes on 1 Thessalonians 4).

3. Brengle, Samuel Logan. *Helps to Holiness*. Salvation Army Book Department, 1912.

4. Black, Nicholas, editor. *The Basics of the Theology of John Wesley: A Primary Source Introductory Reader*. Lulu Press, 2021, p.281.

5. Ibid, p.287.

6. Wiseman, Peter. *Scriptural Sanctification*. Beacon Hill Press, 1951, p.15.

# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

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

I was very impressed with the editor’s article “Is It Real?” [April ‘23 GR p.2] and Josiah England’s article on the Asbury revival [April p.23]. Thanks to both of you for responding rationally without trying to “answer” for God. I just want to cooperate with God and never try to place Him or His people in my small box.

RICHARD MILES  
email

I do enjoy your cutting-edge publication. I am enjoying Nathan Brown’s discipleship series, and I do not want to miss an issue. This is one publication I go through from cover to cover as soon as it hits our home. Thank you for your excellent work and keep bringing us together through the printed page! We pray for GBS each day.

JIM BREWER  
Marcy, NY

I am in a discipleship group of pastors and am sharing the special discipleship issues with them. After retiring and enjoying hearing the GBS choir each year in Florida, we came back to Standish, MI, to pastor a Free Methodist church that was about to close, and we are now seeing new converts and growth. I appreciate the stand the college takes.

BURTON L. KINCAID  
Bad Axe, MI

We appreciate the articles, especially the ones that give tribute to a staff member of the past.

MIRIAM WEAVER  
Xenia, OH

Thank you so much for your articles on the Sankeys. I sang in a trio with Janet. I enjoy the magazine so very much. It is a blessing!

HERMA (CAMPBELL) CURRENT (HS ‘59)  
Washington Court House, OH





## student focus

### SUPREME COURT DECISIONS

**Christian Web Designer.** The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that Colorado cannot force a Christian website designer to create websites celebrating same-sex marriage. In the decision on the case of 303 Creative LLC v. Elenis, the high court ruled 6-3 that Lorie Smith of 303 Creative could not be compelled by state civil rights law to make websites that go against her sincerely held religious beliefs.

**The Mennonite Mailman.** Gerald Groff resigned from working as a mail carrier with the U.S. Postal Service when his superiors began taking "progressive discipline" action against him for refusing to work on the sabbath. He took his former employer to court for failing to make a "reasonable accommodation" for his religious practice as protected under Title VII. After losing his case in lower courts, his legal counsel requested a hearing before the Supreme Court.

Employers were protected by claiming that an accommodation would result in "undue hardship," and the lower court accepted "hardship" as anything above trivial or negligible. The decision by the Supreme Court overturned the lower courts with Justice Alito writing, "We think it is enough to say that an employer must show that the burden of granting an accommodation would result in substantial increased costs in relation to the conduct of its particular business."

### CHRISTIAN KILLED FOLLOWING RELIGION DEBATE

Ahamada Mafabi, a 37-year-old father of four, participated in a Christian-Muslim debate in eastern Uganda during which 13 Muslims publicly converted to the Christian faith. As he returned home from the debate, four men on two motorcycles shouting the jihadist slogan, "Allah Akbar," knocked him off his motorcycle, and killed him.

Following his conversion in 2020, Mafabi helped plan and promote Christian-Muslim debates. Within just one year, more than 100 Muslims had put their faith in Christ as a result. Mafabi had previously survived four assassination attempts. The fatal attack was just one of many instances of persecution of Christians in Uganda. Such persecution exists there, although Uganda's constitution and legal system provide for religious freedom, and Muslims make up approximately 12% of the country's population.

### UK COURT CANNOT REGULATE SILENT PRAYER

The United Kingdom decided to end a case against Adam Smith-Connor who had engaged in "silent prayer" in a "restricted" zone around an abortion business. The court case ended when the state decided it could not "regulate thoughts directed toward God." ■

**BROOKLYN WILLIAMS** grew up in Missouri and attended public school where she was very active in extracurricular activities. This experience influenced her to become a teacher. She decided to attend GBS for various reasons, including its regionally accredited elementary education program.

At GBS, Brooklyn has made "lifelong friendships with amazing people. I've also developed a deeper understanding of God's Word and His love for all His children. GBS staff and faculty are willing to help students academically and personally. That is my favorite part of being a student here."

Brooklyn is answering a call to teach in public schools and find creative ways to show God's love in this often-neglected mission field. She reports that her professors have been supportive and have allowed her to adapt lesson plans and assignments to center around this goal. She plans to graduate in the spring of 2024 with a BA in Elementary Education. ■

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

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

*or give online anytime at*  
**[www.gbs.edu/givenow](http://www.gbs.edu/givenow)**



# Amazing

*the Story of a Song*

# Grace

## A Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the Beloved Hymn

### PART 1

*by Joy Barnett*

**G**od made humans to be wired for music. Researchers believe that it is as intrinsic to our nature as language. Our hearts beat a rhythm. As babies, we bang, whistle and thump noises that eventually become lyrical. One study has proven that babies several months old can recognize melodies they have heard in utero. There are examples of those who have lost the ability to speak and yet can still make music. The Russian composer Shchepkin suffered from a series of strokes in his early fifties that left him unable to speak. Yet, he completed his Fifth Symphony 10 years following his first stroke. It was highly praised as “a brilliant creative work, filled with the highest emotions and full of life.” Beethoven continued to produce masterful compositions even after losing his hearing. Musical savants, who have below-average intelligence, can display amazing giftedness in music. So, it seems that despite extreme deficiencies in other areas, we can express ourselves musically. Indeed, it is almost as much a part of us as breathing. It is natural that our deepest emotions and experiences find expression in music.

In contrast to many other religions, Christianity is a “singing” faith. Muslims forbid most musical expression. Buddhists don’t do much better.



# Christianity is a “singing” faith.

The story is told of a pastor who had the opportunity to lead a group of his church members on a mission trip to Cambodia, a Buddhist country. They were able to visit a Buddhist monastery, where he had been teaching English. Although the group was a bit nervous about visiting a place like that, they found the monks open, friendly, and excited to practice their English. They listened politely as the Americans shared testimonies and seemed to enjoy a praise song that some of them joined together to sing. As the atmosphere was relaxed, the Americans spontaneously asked the monks to sing some of their songs for them. The group of monks gathered and began one of their dissonant chants. The chant didn't last more than a few lines, for realizing that they sounded nothing like their new friends, the monks trailed off. One of them apologized, saying, “We don't have any songs in our religion.”

***We sing out of obedience to God's Word***, which directs us to do so. There are hundreds of references to singing, and over 50 direct commands to sing. The Psalms, the longest book of the Bible, is a book of songs. ***We sing as an aid to memorizing the truth of Scripture***. Just as children learn the alphabet by singing, the profound truths of God's Word deeply imprint on our hearts through song. ***We sing to express the highest and best of feelings***. We are enabled to worship, “in spirit and in truth,” as we declare truths

about God, engaging both the intellect and the emotions. ***We sing to convey unity***. Joining together in worship through music-making bonds people like few other experiences.

There is incredible, life-altering power in a song. Nothing could be more appropriate than to sing about our most profound beliefs, our most intimate moments of worship, and our most explosive joy in the beauty of Who God is. Musical experiences can point to the Creator in a unique way that no other form of worship

been played by bagpipes for the funerals of fallen heroes, sung by celebrities from Elvis to Andrea Bocelli, and used as a rallying anthem for civil rights. It has been sung to different hymn tunes, adapted for different purposes and themes, and given renewed life with the addition of new verses and choruses. This year marks the 250th anniversary of the song's birth, and it has only increased in popularity. If the quality of a composition is demonstrated by the test of time, “Amazing Grace” has more than proven its value.

Although “Amazing Grace” is a familiar part of the soundtrack of our culture, we are less commonly familiar with the details of how the song came to be. We may know the basic facts about John Newton, but there is more to the narrative of his life and the life of the song for which he is legendary. It is a fascinating tale that adds richness to the meaning of the words we know so well.

We will explore that history in the following issue. ■



can. As Christians, we can both enjoy this innate gift from God, and then offer it back to Him as a “sacrifice of praise” (Hebrews 13:15). Whether it's the soul-stirring richness of a hymn, a lighthearted chorus, or a rousing gospel song, we give voice to the feelings that simply cannot be held inside us. “Amazing Grace” is one of the most treasured songs of our faith, declaring a redeemed past, dependence upon God for leadership today, and hope for tomorrow.

“Amazing Grace” is, without question, the best-known hymn in the world. Its simple melody has

## Resources:

[www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org). “Words of Wonder: What Happens when We Sing?” Bob Kauflin.

[www.themusiciansbrain.com](http://www.themusiciansbrain.com). “Are We Hardwired for Music?” Lois Svard.

**Joy Barnett** (BA '00) teaches voice and piano and writes articles for various publications. She and her husband Matt sing for revivals and camp meetings. They live in Hamersville, OH.





## PAUL PEAK'S PIANOS

Around 28 years ago, Paul Peak, a former GBS faculty member (1978-85), made a visit to GBS. He had bought an RV for a seven-week, cross-country, summer vacation trip extending all the way to Oregon, and GBS was his first stop. While here, he did some major work on one of our campus pianos. That work provided the gas money for his vacation.

Since moving to Roanoke, VA, in 2009, Paul makes yearly trips to our campus. For the past eight years he has been coming twice a year to keep the GBS pianos tuned and in good shape.

Paul grew up in southwestern Virginia. His brother Ray wanted to learn how to tune pianos when he was about 16, but he could not afford the cost for the correspondence course through the Niles Bryant School of Piano Tuning, Sacramento, CA. He asked Paul, who was then 14, to help him pay the \$250 fee for the course from the earnings Paul had saved by selling the weekly newspaper *Grit*. Both brothers began the training. A few years later, Paul finished the course and tuned his first several pianos free of charge—which he admits might not have been a good deal for those piano owners!

In 1973, Paul earned a degree from Southwest Virginia Community College, Tazewell, VA. When Shenandoah Conservatory, Winchester,

VA, restarted their School of Piano Technology the following year, Paul enrolled and earned an associate of science in piano technology, a bachelor of music education, and a bachelor of church music. During his last two years at Shenandoah, Paul was the piano technician for its 75+ pianos, and he taught piano tuning, regulation, and rebuilding to about 20 students.

In 1975, Paul married Donna Quintana. The money for their honeymoon was raised by Paul's mother scheduling about 20-25 piano tunings in the Tazewell area.

In 1976, Paul joined the Piano Technicians Guild and became a Craftsman member after a tuning and bench exam.

When Paul joined the music faculty at GBS in 1978, the school had about 15 pianos. In addition to his teaching load, he was also assigned to tune the pianos four times per year. Paul also continued his education at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, earning a master's degree in music education and choral conducting in 1983.

In 1985, he left GBS and went back to school to complete a doctorate in musical arts from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. In 1992, Paul moved to Hobe Sound Bible College where he

chaired the Music Department (1992-2009) and was minister of music at Hobe Sound Bible Church (1992-2008).

Since 2009 Paul has kept busy by starting a music program at Parkway Christian Academy, serving as a church music director, teaching online courses for colleges and universities, and continuing his vocation as a self-employed piano technician and piano technician for Apex Piano Showroom, Roanoke, VA. He is increasing his piano-tuning clients, rebuilding pianos in his shop, and providing short apprenticeships for young people with an interest in piano work. He also continues to return regularly to GBS where there are now 21 pianos and a harpsichord which require tuning and adjustments.

For decades, his tuning work was distinctly manual. Now he uses CyberTuner, a top-of-the-line tuning app. After tuning, he checks the pedals, listens for noises, and makes sure each note operates as it should. We and our pianos are always happy to see Paul back on campus! —KF

*Dr. Paul Peak has three adult children and seven grandchildren. After Donna's passing in 2016, Paul married Esther Easley in 2018. She also serves as his scheduler and shop assistant. They live in Roanoke, VA.*





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by Sonja Vernon

## SOWING AND REAPING

*“Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.” —Psalm 126:5-6 (ESV)*

Sowing and reaping—the cycle of life. Sow seeds; reap a harvest. No seeds; no harvest. It is a principle as old as time itself. The seeds we sow will bear fruit. They may bring harvests of blessing or crops of regret. What we sow and how we sow determine our destiny. The Psalmist was aware of this when he penned the words of our Scripture. He knew the secret known to all who wait and work in the place of prayer. When we sow prayers from burdened hearts, when we plant our seeds deeply in the soil of faith and water them with our tears, the great God who is the source of all life will cause those seeds to burst forth into a harvest of joy! Planting seeds is hard work; patiently tending them over time can be even harder. Laboring with no reward in sight may bring discouragement. We may wonder if it's worth it. But a harvest is inevitable. It will come to pass.

Over the years, I have been blessed to see beautiful fruit born from the prayers of God's people, given from the hand of a God who promises abundance. There is nothing small about our God, nothing mean about His gifts. Prayer is not like a giant vending machine. It is much more mysterious and meaningful. Somehow the divine, preeminent Lord of All allows us to partner with Him in His great work. Somehow, He answers when we pray. What a great mystery! How beautiful to be part of it. Sow on, my friends. The harvest is ahead! ■

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

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