

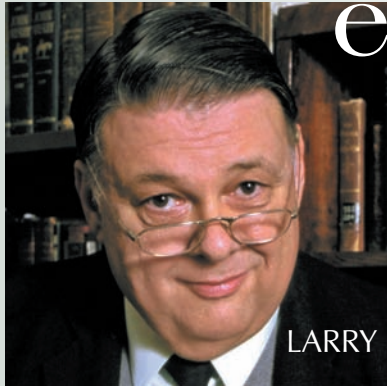


GOD'S REVIVALIST

Winter 2013

and Bible Advocate

GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL
AND
COLLEGE



the editor's view

LARRY D. SMITH

SO WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Concluding Our Series on *A Call to the Conservative Holiness Movement*

“Wellington defeated....” These words, according to unauthenticated reports, were flashed by signal flags from Winchester Cathedral, Monday, June 19, 1815, bringing England its first word from Waterloo. For near that town, about eight miles southeast of Brussels, Belgium, a French army under Napoleon Bonaparte had met the day before in ferocious combat with English forces and their allies commanded by Arthur, Duke of Wellington. His countrymen were gripped with almost unbearable suspense, for as they knew, that bloody battlefield would decide the fate of Europe.

At last, a sailing vessel brought eagerly-awaited news. This was to be relayed to London by semaphoric code, beginning at Winchester, where high in the cathedral tower an operator began to arrange his flags to send the message. But unexpectedly a heavy fog descended to blot it out. All that anyone had been able to read were those two dreaded words, “Wellington defeated....” Gloom filled the atmosphere. But then the fog lifted, and the operator was able to send his entire message: “Wellington Defeated Napoleon at Waterloo.” Despair gave way to celebration.

So it is for us! Too often the message of Christian triumph is obscured by the devastating terrors that surround us. Then faith gives way to fear, and our faltering hearts are gripped with discouragement and dismay. Reports of betrayal and defeat leave us reeling with a sense of casualty and loss. Then suddenly the mists are lifted, and we see the full message of Christian triumph blazing out again in the enshrouding darkness.

This message centers “in the resplendent hope that we have through Christ’s victory accomplished in His (p21)➡

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COVER PHOTO of GBS campus taken the last week of December 2012 by Stephen Harms.

the president's page



RENEWING THE VISION

by Michael R. Avery, President

Charles C. McCabe was the Director of Church Extension for the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as a brilliant strategist. In the spring of 1881, he was riding a train in the Pacific Northwest when he saw an article about the National Convention of the Free Thinkers of America. The newspaper included the text of a speech delivered by prominent atheist Robert Ingersoll. As McCabe read the speech he became quite angry. Ingersoll had said, "The churches are dying out all across America. They are struck with death! By the dawn of the 20th century, churches will be but relics of a bygone day."

McCabe got off the train and fired off a telegram to Mr. Ingersoll in Chicago. It read, "Dear Bob, We are building more than one church a day for every day of the year and propose to make it two a day!" The story got out, and someone composed the following chorus: *The infidels, a motley band, in council met and said, / "The churches die throughout the land, the last will soon be dead." / When suddenly a message came that filled them with dismay, / "All hail the power of Jesus' name, we're building two a day." / We're building two a day, dear Bob; we're building two a day! / "All hail the power of Jesus' name," we're building two a day!*

Charles McCabe clearly shared the vision of John Wesley, Methodism's founder, "to reform the continent and to spread scriptural holiness across these lands." Methodism envisioned itself as a reform movement. This vision propelled the Methodist Church to the forefront of outreach and pioneer evangelism in America until it could be said that the Methodists owned the 19th-century!

Despite the multitude of stories telling of the Church's transformative impact on cities, countries, and civilizations, there has been no shortage of hostile voices predicting her demise. Yet even while the scoffers scoff, the Church of Jesus Christ steadily penetrates a darkened world like yeast penetrates a loaf of bread "until the whole be leavened." It will continue to do so until that day when "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The future of the Church does not hang in the balance! Victory for the Church of Jesus Christ is inevitable!

The truth in the paragraph above stands without equivocation. However, any thinking person who reads the above statement and then simply looks at what is happening in the vast majority of churches in North America and Europe today would have cause to question the veracity of what I wrote. It is true that the Invisible Church of Jesus Christ is and will be triumphant. But it is not true that every part of the visible church on earth experiences that same conquering spirit. While the Church is harvesting a bumper crop in Asia, Latin America, and

A CALL TO THE CONSERVATIVE HOLINESS MOVEMENT

X. A CALL TO RESURGENT HOPE

All Christian life is centered in the resplendent hope that we have through Christ's victory accomplished in His incarnation, atoning death, and resurrection. The sure and certain anchor of the soul, this hope has given gladness and assurance to faithful believers all throughout the centuries of the Church's struggle with the forces of entrenched evil. It assures us of present victory in our personal lives and corporate ministry, but it also points to the final triumph when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Never have we so needed a renewed sense of the hope that we have in Him. We know the power and devastation of sin, and we acknowledge the increasing degradation of our culture. We are Wesleyans, however; and as our theologians have said, the keynote of our theology is not the "pessimism of [fallen] nature" but the "optimism of grace." We therefore call our movement to the joyous expectation of victory which so motivated our spiritual forebears to claim the American frontier for Jesus Christ. We cannot cower before the darkness, paralyzed by "the encircling gloom" which continually we must confront. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The same power which brought the Roman Empire to bow before the cross, renewed the Church in the days of the Protestant Reformation, and reshaped the culture in the Wesleyan Revival is also ours as we encounter the moral depravity and sneering secularism of our times. Let us be joyfully faithful, then, creatively relevant, and utterly confident that Jesus' victory is our own. With gladness we do the work which He has given us, even as we await the consummation when all the earth shall echo with the song of conquest, "Alleluia! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns!" ■

Africa, the harvest seems to be rotting in the field in Europe and North America.

The problem is certainly not with the Lord of the Church or with His power to prevail. The problem lies with a Laodicean spirit that has gripped the visible church of North America and Europe. The problem is not new! Read Paul's words to a church that was not yet twenty-five years old! Take a moment to read again the first three chapters of the book of The Revelation. Take a literary walk down the pages of church history, reading the stories of the reformers and the revivalists, and you will see what I mean!

A willingness to acknowledge historical fact and present reality about certain parts of the Church should not turn us into pessimists. One does not have to join the "Church is dead" movement to be able to admit that the visible Church has at times lost her way, backslidden, become unfruitful, and needed major reformation and revival. As a matter of fact, I believe the Church in America is in such a time right now. James MacDonald says the evangelical church is experiencing a time of "epic failure." He further says, "Until we acknowledge that the church in North America is failing, we won't take the steps necessary to see that trend reversed." MacDonald's word to the evangelical Church should be taken to heart by the Conservative Holiness Movement as well.

A Call to Resurgent Hope

Along with the faculty of God's Bible School and College, I have the greatest appreciation for, and the

deepest commitment to, that part of God's Church identified as the Conservative Holiness Movement. This is the tradition that GBS has lived and worked within long before there was such a name designation or a movement identified as such. "A Call to the Conservative Holiness Movement" was written by our faculty as an attempt to restate the strengths of that tradition, to acknowledge its weaknesses, and to dialogue on how to restore what is vital to its future. By the very nature of such a call, we are acknowledging problems, struggling to find answers, and humbly offering solutions.

The last section, Article X, in *A Call to the Conservative Holiness Movement* is "A Call to Resurgent Hope." The CHM needs a renewed vision for its future. It lacks a "grand idea" to marshal its youth and to propel it forward. The absence of such a vision has caused the movement to become disoriented and allowed it to drift away from its historical landmarks – the things that made it special in the first place. However, the key to a renewed vision or a new vision altogether begins with a willingness to acknowledge apparent problems with an eye to corrective measures.

An Elephant in the Room!

It has been obvious for a long time to many of the leaders within the CHM that the movement is in a state of serious decline. It has failed to grow numerically by means of new conversions, while membership rolls in some of the largest and oldest denominations have

decreased as much as 60%. Unfortunately too many key leaders have simply ignored the obvious. You could say it is “the elephant in the room” that nobody wants to talk about!

To reinforce my own observations with facts, I had a third-party survey conducted. The survey was conducted among the eighteen denominations that identify with the CHM. The leadership of each denomination was asked to identify its top two churches so that the pastor of these churches could be interviewed. (It should be pointed out that using the top churches in each group heavily weighted the survey towards a more favorable outcome.) Fifteen of the groups cooperated with the survey, which allowed us to question the pastors of 30 of the top churches in these denominational groups. I then surveyed four of the largest independent churches in the CHM and added the results to this survey.

The pastors were asked three questions: (1) How many conversions of unchurched people have you had in the last five years that have been disciplined to the level of membership (not yet a member but ready to be)? (2) How many conversions of unchurched people have you had in the last five years that have been disciplined to the level of maturity that allows them to be involved in ministry? (3) How many third-generation Christians do you have in your church?

What We Found:

1. 80% of the top churches in the CHM have had no unchurched person converted and disciplined to the level of membership within the last five years.

2. In the six largest churches surveyed only one had unchurched people converted and disciplined to the level of membership in the last five years. Only two had converts disciplined to the point of ministry involvement.

3. The churches with the most third-generation Christians tended to have the least number of unchurched converts, while churches with the least number of third-generation Christians tended to have the most unchurched converts.

4. The majority of the churches surveyed had at least one convert that had been disciplined enough to use in ministry but was still unable to be considered for membership.

5. There were three churches that I considered “outliers” and set them apart in the

survey results. Together these three churches had 180 converts of unchurched people in the last five years. Sixty of these converts were disciplined to the level of membership. One-hundred-twenty of these converts were disciplined to the level of ministry. All three churches had a combined total of only 24 third-generation Christians (that is an average of only eight each). These churches are exceptional and have something to teach us!

This survey highlights a number of problems. First, most CHM churches are not reaching the unchurched. Second, when a CHM church does see unchurched people converted it rarely retains these converts. This problem of attrition has several contributing causes, but it is primarily because the average CHM church has failed to address the process necessary to grow these converts and to assimilate them into the core fellowship of the church (the process of becoming and belonging). Hence, most of them backslide or go to another church. Third, the survey revealed something else that I had only surmised. It revealed that churches with high numbers of third-generation Christians do the poorest job of reaching the unchurched. This is true despite the fact that many of these operate impressive ministries to that very population. It is alarming to see that these large churches that are resource-rich can operate impressive outreach ministries and never truly “reach out.”

This is the elephant in the room!

How Do You Eat an Elephant?

Occasionally one of my colleagues or students will share with me what seems to them to be an insurmountable problem. I will listen carefully, then ask them this question, “How do you eat an elephant?” While they are looking at me in absolute bewilderment, I will answer for them, “One bite at a time!” All of our problems, no matter how large, can and must be addressed “one bite at a time.” For the CHM, the process of addressing the serious problem of decline will be a long-term deliberate strategy that must be implemented “one bite at a time.”

Success in eating the elephant means that the CHM must avoid the danger of two ex-

One does not have to join the “Church is dead” movement to be able to admit that the visible church has at times needed major reformation.

tremes. The first extreme is to do nothing. Since the elephant is so big and the challenge is so overwhelming, the danger is that we just ignore it and do nothing at all. On the other hand, we must avoid the other extreme of trying to eat the elephant in just a few bites. Massive and sudden change can divide, demoralize, and possibly destroy a church or movement.

Doing Nothing is Not Acceptable!

However insurmountable the problem may appear, to be doing nothing is not an option. Like a man paddling across the Atlantic with a hole in his boat, we can neglect the problems of our movement for a while, but if they are not eventually addressed we will certainly sink. Complacency can be one of our biggest enemies. It is sometimes hard to spot complacency

because it can hide its failure to act behind impressive rationalization.

Complacent leaders and pastors will pose the argument that true success cannot be measured or quantified. They say that such measurements are the world's way of evaluating a successful ministry and that simply counting conversions, members, offerings, buildings, etc., is not the way God measures success. They contend that the only true criterion for ministry is faithfulness. There is so much truth in this argument that it is difficult to debate. There is much to be said from the Word and from practical ministry about faithfulness. It is extremely important in both the eyes of God and men.

However, holding up faithfulness as the final measure of true success can be a "cop out" for failing to do the hard work of reaching people. Even if that isn't the case, it

is certainly an oversimplification. I agree with Timothy Keller when he says that there is another biblical gauge for evaluating ministry beyond basing success mostly on *faithfulness*. That gauge is *fruitfulness* (John 15:8)!

If complacent leaders and lay members can comfort themselves with an appeal to their faithfulness (one that has certainly been uncoupled from the concept of fruitfulness), then that may prove to be a strong enough "sleeping potion" to keep them from addressing the

true barrenness of their particular denominations and churches. I am afraid that as long as the various groups that make up the CHM can afford to hold the annual IHC, operate their annual camp meetings, and give respectable offerings to a foreign missions program, they will remain complacent – even accepting – toward the failure of the local church to be fruitful and reach its surrounding community.

The Importance of Vision Renewal

If you have ever driven a car with misaligned wheels, you know that it is difficult to keep the car in the middle of your lane, for it constantly wants to pull to one side. That is what it is like to be in a movement, church, or organization that lacks vision. Everyone may be very busy doing something, but they are continuously pulled off center, away from the main thing. Without a compelling vision to motivate, energize, and direct, people will wear themselves out with meaningless activity. Any church or movement that is engaged in such activity becomes the breeding ground for skepticism, criticism, and a host of "rabbit trails" that take it away from its main objective.

In greyhound racing there is a little mechanical rabbit covered in fur that sits on the end of a long metal rod that circles the track ahead of the dogs. The operator of this mechanical rabbit always keeps the rabbit ahead of the dogs so as to keep them running but never allowing them to catch it. In one race, while the dogs were hotly pursuing the rabbit, there was a short in the electrical system that caused the rabbit to explode. With no rabbit to chase the dogs didn't know what to do. Some of them went crazy jumping through the fence. Others just wandered aimlessly around the track. Still others laid down on the track and howled at the spectators. Not one dog finished the race. Without a vision to pursue, dreams fade, people drift, and once-vibrant movements slowly die.

Vision Obstacles

The CHM is resource rich! It has a wealth of talented people who are deeply committed to their faith. It possesses what it takes to move forward with the work of vision discovery, renewal, and implementation. Yet it does have some major "vision obstacles" that will have to be overcome. These include the following:

There is another biblical gauge for evaluating ministry beyond basing success mostly on faithfulness. That gauge is fruitfulness!

Reluctant Leadership. So much rises and falls around leadership. The CHM struggles to be open to the kind of visionary leader that has the capacity to lead it from where it is to where it needs to go. Even where that kind of leadership exists, it has too often bowed to the politics of fear or lacked the resolve to push beyond the obstacles.

Pietistic Pride. The CHM battles with a strange paradox. On the one hand, it struggles with an inferiority complex, while on the other hand, it struggles with pietistic pride. There are times when our opinion of ourselves is too exalted – so much so, indeed, that we tend to look down on the rest of Christ’s body as “not quite where we are.” This sanctimonious arrogance needs to be replaced with a little sanctified humility. After all, pride made the Devil the Devil!

Preoccupation with the Past. When CHM folks get together you will hear far more talk about our “holiness heritage” than you ever will about our “holiness future.” Our Methodist Holiness history is fascinating! But it is still history! The past must serve as a guidepost, not a hitching post. It should be the rudder on the ship, not the anchor. God consistently reveals Himself as One who is forward looking. He is primarily interested in where we are going, not where we have been. It is the Devil who wants us pre-occupied with the past! Movements and churches that have been mightily used of God in the past and for one reason or the other get stuck there will be set aside and someone else or something else will be raised up to take their place.

Resistance to Change. Continual change is the reality of our time. The church is not an isolated island from the rest of society, and by its very nature it cannot be. It, too, is changing. As a matter of fact, change is not new to the Church. For those of us within the holiness tradition, John Wesley and the early Methodists serve as an example of innovative and creative change to meet the ministry needs of their time. The CHM has proven quite resistant to change in methodology, technology, and organizational structure, even when it is apparent that change could advance the kingdom without any compromise to the message.

An Unhealthy Focus on Single Issues. Churches were never meant to have a single focus like Pizza Hut or Jiffy Lube. The Church must be fully Biblical and properly balanced in

all its priorities and emphases! To be a healthy body, it must be a whole body. Too many CHM churches are known for one thing, and that is the lifestyle positions they embrace. When this single focus prevails, it can hurt the church both internally and externally. Biblical holiness does in fact have behavioral consequences that impact my lifestyle. But it also casts them as a part of discipleship and growth where they are lived out in an atmosphere of relaxed self-discipline and humble dependence on God, never as the main thing.

Fear-Driven Decision Making. Movements, churches, and pastors who constantly test the winds of “what others might think” end up neurotic, paranoid, and pathetically immobile. Fear has been the catalyst for many needless rules and regulations. The fear of what others “might think” has killed many positive outreach initiatives. A man-fearing spirit and the general fear of change have hindered churches from needed adjustments that would have positioned them to better serve their own people as well as those they might reach.

Vision Begins with God!

God is more than willing to help a struggling or failing church or movement to regain its footing, but He will not climb over the impediments of no vision, poor planning, weak execution, horizontal thinking, and a lack of faith. Leadership must take seriously the work of vision casting.

For me to propose a vision or even attempt to restate a vision for the churches, the denominations, and the organizations that make up the 21st-century CHM would push the boundaries of arrogance or ignorance (I will let you decide). The work of vision casting and mission development is not a “cut and paste” moment achieved by a few hours of “googling” all the good web sites.

Vision comes from the Lord! It comes when leaders and laymen seek God, find a divine burden, and mold it to their situation! Vision is not some mystical dream detached from reality. Whatever vision God gives a church, it will have some parallel to the mission and vision laid out for us in the book of

The past must serve as a guidepost, not a hitching post. God is primarily interested in where we are going, not where we have been.

Acts and duplicated throughout the centuries by the Church. Vision is anchored in one's core values, grows out of one's main reason for existence, and fits perfectly within the context of one's ministry situation (gifts and resources).

Vision is birthed when someone has a heart that aches so badly to know how to advance God's Kingdom that he or she is willing to get alone with God long enough to say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant heareth," and then stay still long enough for God to speak to the situation. Vision is not solely owned or produced by one person, but I do believe that God normally puts the vision for a church, an organization, or a movement into the heart of one person and not a group of people. I also believe that He confirms and refines that vision as the leader shares it with a small group of elders or spiritual leaders to whom he is accountable or with whom he shares oversight of the ministry.

The CHM has become primarily a preservation movement. A renewed vision should make the Great Commission a vital part of its main mission.

Vision Components

A vision statement explains where a church or denomination is headed and helps to formulate a picture of what it will "look like" as it accomplishes its mission. I can't author a vision statement for the CHM or the individual churches that compose its membership, but if I could, the following components would be a central part of that statement.

UpReach. I believe prayer and worship are two core elements that are struggling to survive in ways that truly impact the CHM. We live in a post-Christian culture where not only do men sin with no sense of remorse, but where anti-Biblical values and anti-Christian views are entrenched at the highest levels of the institutions that undergird and govern our society. Only prayer can break such a stronghold. We must once again become a praying church.

The culture we are called to win is one that is lonely, empty, and materialistic. Men and women are desperately seeking for something they do not have – something transcendent. They are crushed by the disappointment

that they cannot create happiness for themselves beyond the momentary. They have a deep longing in their souls to know, to experience, and to worship God. The church that provides an experience of unashamed worship marked by the presence of God is the church that will never lack for people. We must return to the kind of worship that is marked by God's presence. This may be our greatest need!

OutReach. Many holiness churches began as storefront missions. They located where the sinners were because they believed it was their main job to see sinners saved, sanctified, and established in the family of God. It seems that the CHM no longer believes that this is its main mission, and unfortunately the statistics support such a conclusion. The CHM has become primarily a preservation movement. However, that can change! A renewed vision for the CHM should make the Great Commission a vital part of its main mission so that we might "reform the nation and spread scriptural holiness across this land."

InReach. According to Dr. Brian Black, there are approximately 3,000 churches in the USA that in some way identify with the CHM. (Compare this to the North American church numbers for the Nazarenes, 4,800; the Wesleyans, 1,710; and the Free Methodists, 957). With all these churches and all the individual talent within the CHM, one would think the movement could and should be doing something significant for the Kingdom of God.

However, we are resource-rich and cooperation-poor. We have miserably failed to reach within – to join hands and unite for the greater good of advancing the work of God in church-planting, education, printing, missions, and compassionate care. Instead of one or two strong mission organizations, there are thirty-one struggling ones. Instead of one or two strong colleges there are eight struggling ones. Instead of one strong holiness church in town there are four "family controlled" struggling ones. Cooperation for stewardship reasons alone would free up millions of dollars to further the Kingdom and the message of scriptural holiness! No movement on earth could gain more from just simply working together than could the CHM.

DownReach. The CHM has a wealth of Biblical, theological, doctrinal, and (p21)►



— Called Unto Holiness —

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

HOPE FOR SO GREAT A SINNER

by Daniel Steele

QUESTION: *“I am in great distress, having been pardoned and baptized with the Holy Spirit, a happy, aggressive Christian worker, then knowingly and deliberately committing sin and repeating it for months and years. Do you think there is any hope for so great a sinner?”*

ANSWER: Your case is a very sad one, but I see one ray of hope. Your desire to be restored to the state from which you have fallen is an indication that the Holy Spirit has not left you. He who commits the irremissible sin has, we are told, no longing for restoration. Hebrew 6:4-8 may be quoted against our position, but this text does not apply to you because you are not “crucifying the Son of God afresh,” but rather you are earnestly seeking Him as your Savior. Hebrews 10:26-32 has also a present tense denoting persistent sinning: *“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”*

It should also be borne in mind that the apostasy of a Christian Hebrew is the rejection of the Christian system and return to Judaism, in which such an apostate will find no effectual sacrifice for sin. But should he return to Christ, He will not cast him out:

*There’s a wideness in God’s mercy
Like the wideness of the sea.*

The adversary, the devil, often tempts backsliders to believe that they have committed the unpardonable sin. A dying sailor once said to me, “There is no mercy for me. I have broken all of God’s Laws.” But when I quoted the divine promises, his despair was changed into faith in Christ. He found pardon and died in peace. My

advice to you, sorrowing inquirer, is to go to Jesus saying, “If I perish I will pray and perish only there.”

Depth of mercy! Can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forebear?
Me the chief of sinners spare?

I have long withstood His grace,
Long provoked Him to His face.
Would not hearken to His calls,
Grieved Him by a thousand falls.

Now incline me to repent;
Let me now my sins lament,
Now my foul revolt deplore,
Weep, believe, and sin no more.

Kindled His relentings are;
Me He now delights to spare;
Cries, “How shall I give thee up?”
Lest the lifted thunder drop.

There for me the Savior stands,
Shows His wounds and spreads His hands.
God is love! I know, I feel;
Jesus weeps and loves me still. ■

Dr. Daniel Steele (1824–1914) was a Methodist clergyman, author, and educator who took a prominent role in the 19th-century American holiness movement. This selection is from Steele’s *Answers* (Christian Witness Co., 1912), edited by LDS. The appended hymn, “Depth of Mercy,” was written by the great Methodist hymn writer Charles Wesley.

NEWS

from the Hilltop

PHILIP BROWN HONORED WITH OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARD

“Dr. Philip Brown is a wonderful luxury for a teaching-focused college like God’s Bible School and College: a gifted and respected scholar who is a master teacher and effective mentor.” In these words, Aaron Profitt (right), assistant vice president for academic affairs, acting on behalf of GBS, presented an award for outstanding teaching to faculty member Philip Brown (cen-

ter) at the Celebration of Teaching event, November 9. Sponsored by the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities, this was held at Xavier University, Cincinnati. Profitt remarked that Dr. Brown “is noted for his ability to make complex, challenging material clear, coherent, and intelligible” and is not only “a stellar teacher,” but a “wonderful person, and spiritual leader.”



NEW MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN ON CAMPUS



Byron Fling, new maintenance technician on the GBS campus, brings with him a varied background in ministry.

Converted at the age of 13 under the influence of Rev. Steven Mills, he graduated from Allegheny Wesleyan College; and after his ordination, he and his wife Michele spent five years as missionaries to Peru. He has accumulated pastoral experience in Canton, Ohio, and Shepherdsville, Kentucky, and has also served at Montezuma Indian School. The Flings have one son, Samuel, whom they adopted in 2011. “We are appreciative of God’s leadership in our lives,” comments Byron, “and we are abandoned to His will alone.”

REVIVALIST FAMILY

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

DEATHS

Rev. Robert C. Painter of Virginia died November 9, 2012. He attended God’s Bible School in the early 1930’s during which time he worked in the school’s kitchen to help pay the cost of his tuition. Later, after military service during World War II, he attended Bonebrake Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, from which he graduated in 1954. He served The Methodist Church and then the United Methodist Church from 1952–1987, retiring from ministry at Mathews Chapel United Methodist Church in Cobbs Creek, Virginia, where he and his beloved wife, Roberta, continued to be faithful members. Funeral services were held at his church, Pastor Harry Lloyd, officiating, with interment in the church cemetery.

Rev. Leonard E. Waller, Jr., 48, Oblong, Illinois, passed away November 15, 2012, following a courageous battle with cancer. An alumnus of GBS (BRE ’86), he served as pastor for 27 years in southern Indiana and Illinois. At the time of his death he was pastor of Oblong Wesleyan Church, as well as a bank teller at First National Bank in Oblong. His passion was preaching, and he enjoyed theological discussions.



He is survived by his wife, the former Marilyn Betts (GBS HS ’78; BA ’82); his son, Nathaniel; his daughters, Hannah and Esther; his granddaughter, Abigail; his parents, three brothers, grandmother, and other relatives. Funeral services were held at Oblong, Pastor Phil Kessen, officiating, with burial in the Oblong Cemetery.

Those wishing to contact me may call (618) 592-3746 until March or write to me at 201 W. Missouri St., Oblong, IL 62449. I would enjoy hearing from anyone else who may remember us. —Marilyn Waller



Mandy, have donated a purebred German shepherd to God's Bible School and College to train for that purpose. The dog arrived as "Norton" but was renamed "Sarge" by popular vote of the student body. Sarge is in training with GBS alumnus and master K-9 trainer, Daniel Buzek (GBS '03-'08). Dan operates his family-owned business, Super Dog K-9 Training Academy, in Cincinnati.

MARK BIRD PRESENTS PAPER ON THE TRINITY

Dr. Mark Bird attended the Evangelical Theological Society meeting, November 14-16, in Milwaukee, presenting a paper, "Thomas Torrance and Colin Gunton on Structure in the Trinity." Its purpose was to show that though the members of the Holy



Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are equal to each other, they each possess distinctive personal properties through the way they have related to one

another from all eternity (e.g., the Father begets the Son). This determines the particular roles that they take in the salvation of mankind, including the Son's submission to the Father in His earthly mission.

Positive reaction to the paper included a request from a seminary professor for a PDF copy to be used as supplemental reading in his systematic theology class. The paper can be read at www.wesleyantheology.com.

ESTHER HOLLOWAY CITED FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE

At the annual Christmas staff and faculty dinner, December 10, ➡

CAMPUS SECURITY DOG DONATED TO GBS

GBS has a new campus security dog. James and Rachel (Arndt) (GBS BA '01) Rickenbach, of Frankfort, Indiana, along with their daughter

MISCELLANY

C. Dexter Westhafer, GBS alumnus '35-'38, writes: "I am quite excited that the Lord has allowed me to reach the unbelievable age of 95, while still enjoying excellent health and living in Merrill Gardens Retirement Center (Naples, Florida). I wish everyone of you...a wonderful start in 2013."

NOTICES

Assistant Pastor Needed. An independent church located in beautiful Pennsylvania is in need of a young assistant pastor. Priority duties include, but are not limited to: building connections with and working in the community to "grow" a group of younger families into an already established but progressive church. Please send resumé to email address: pastoritchey1@windstream.net or Pastor Randy Ritchey, 10 Oak Grove Rd., Mercer, PA 16137. 📌

your thoughts, please! 



God's Bible School and College is preparing for its Strategic Planning Summit in the spring. We invite our alumni and friends to participate in a survey to be completed before February 8 to help us gain valuable information for this planning session. Please go to our website www.gbs.edu for instructions on how to participate. Your involvement in this process is very important to us! —Ken Farmer, VP for Academic Affairs

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NEWS FROM THE HILLTOP continued

➡ President Michael Avery presented a plaque of appreciation to Mrs. Esther Holloway for three years of faithful service as Facilities Administrative Assistant and campus nurse. Mrs. Holloway, who had resigned these positions and who is returning to her home in Florida, will be replaced by Erina Miriye, who was hired in August as supervisor of custodial services. She will hold the title Facilities Office Manager.



SECOND SEMESTER ADEP CLASSES ANNOUNCED

GBS' Aldersgate Distance Education Program (ADEP) has scheduled several blended courses this spring (courses that are mostly online but also have a two-day block session on campus). These include *Theology of John Wesley*, (taught by Dr. Bill Ury of Wesley Biblical Seminary and offered for both Master's and undergraduate level credit), *Introduction to Church and Family Leadership* (taught by Aaron Profitt), *Introduction to the Philosophy of Music* (taught by Garen Wolf), and *Archaeology and the Bible* (taught by Justin Singleton and Henry Smith, who is from the Associates of Biblical Archaeology). For more information about these courses or about the many other courses that are available completely online, contact ADEP Director Dr. Mark Bird at mbird@gbs.edu. ■

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GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL & COLLEGE

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Letters should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, or emailed to revivalist@gbs.edu. 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.

CREAM OR SKIM MILK?

I viewed with interest your editorials in the October 2012 issue. I also viewed your showcasing of Troy Castle going to Bob Jones University, not exactly a part of the CHM. I also reflect on my own family, grad-

uates of GBS, who now minister in Wesleyan, Free Methodist, and Nazarene churches.

You seem to be in a unique position to bring about a change in the CHM. You have our young people for three to five years. I hope you institute the changes necessary at GBS to produce leaders for the CHM. We in New York could use some pastors who would be able to train others. Otherwise we will be like the five foolish virgins whose lamps are going out, and you will reflect D.L. Moody's comment, "You preach cream, but produce skim milk."

DAVID CASE
Email

Light in the Darkness

by Becky Keep

Some of us have experienced times when unthinkable doubts have persistently demanded a seat of honor. We have been in the midst of such dark and fiery trials that God's presence could neither be seen nor felt, and questioning that presence and even the reality of His existence seemed tempting. Most Christians have found themselves in circumstances so overwhelming that, because they could not see the light of the Savior, they were tempted to believe that He was not there.

Recently, the Holy Spirit gave me a powerful reminder of His constant nearness in the darkest of times as I reflected on an event which took place in our family a number of years ago. Our four-year-old son Jesse had just lost his second eye to cancer. Those were heart-wrenching days for us as we watched him struggle to understand why he could no longer see. Blindness did not seem fair to him, and he let us know. We grieved as we observed his anger and fear often demonstrated in tears, temper, and long periods of withdrawal and silence.

One night about two weeks after he had become blind, my husband Tim and I tucked our little son into bed; and as we were leaving the room, he surprised us by asking that we please leave the light on! At first we refused, reminding him that we always turn off the lights at night; but he insisted.

We were bewildered! Jesse can no longer see the light, and yet the light is still so important to him! Why?

He became so visibly upset about the prospect of sleeping in a dark room that we finally agreed that the light would remain on. We kept our word, knowing that while the light did nothing to illuminate his world, the knowledge that light was present brought comfort and peace to his heart. To our amazement, the promise of light yielded immediate calm and Jesse fell into a peaceful sleep.

I realized that our son could not see the light; and yet through complete trust in his parents' promise, "Jesse, the light is on," he knew that it was so. This knowledge of the presence of light, through trust, produced peace and the ability to rest even while his eyes were veiled by darkness. Jesse's blindness to the light did not alter the fact that the light was present. While his own senses signaled that all was dark, he slept all the while in a room flooded with light!

And so it is in our lives. While the blackness of suffering is often a veil between us and the light, we can rest in the promise that our Light has not gone out. As faithful followers of Jesus, we work and live and sleep in a world flooded with light. Our Heavenly Father has promised, "Even in darkness, light dawns for the upright." We may not see the light, but our comfort rests in the truth that His light is always on. ■



Becky Keep is a busy homemaker and former missionary to the Philippines. She lives in Cincinnati with her husband Tim and children.

WINTER 2013



Dear Phil

ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE

A friend is struggling to understand Acts 13:48—“...as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” Can you help? —Esther

Dear Esther,

Context is always key to interpretation. In Acts 13:14-41, Paul speaks in a synagogue in Psidian Antioch and proclaims Jesus as the promised Messiah. When he finishes, the people plead for more (vv. 42-43). The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembles (v. 44). As Paul preaches, key synagogue leaders reject the gospel (45-47); however, many Gentiles accepted it – “as many as were ordained to eternal life” (48).

There are three key questions concerning v. 48 that have to be addressed: (1) what does the word “ordained” mean; (2) by whom were they ordained; and (3) on what basis were they “ordained.”

First, most scholars agree that the word “ordained” means “appointed,” and that is certainly the ordinary sense of the word (see Acts 15:2; 22:10; 28:3). Since nothing in the text or context requires a different sense, we should go with the ordinary sense.

Second, the text does not say who appointed them to eternal life. The grammar requires only that their appointment took place before they

believed. The options for who appointed them include God, themselves, or both God and themselves. All three are possible theologically.

God: According to Rom. 8:29, God predestined to be like Jesus those whom He foreknew [would believe]. Eph. 1:4 teaches that God chose those [He foreknew would be] in Christ to be holy and blameless. Since God knows all things, He knew who would believe in Jesus and appointed them to receive eternal life (cf. John 6:40; 1 Pet. 1:1-2).

Themselves: 1 Cor. 16:15 speaks of the house of Stephanas appointing themselves to the service of the saints. Given this NT usage, we could understand that the Gentiles’ appointed themselves to eternal life by their attendance upon and acceptance of the gospel.

Both: I’m inclined to think the “both” option makes the best sense since the context highlights both divine grace and human choice. In addition to the fact that God has ordained that all who believe shall be saved, the context highlights God’s grace in the Gentiles’ interest in and attendance at the preaching of the gospel (vv. 42, 44). Such interest testifies that God’s grace had been at work to incline their hearts to the gospel (v. 43; cf. Phil. 2:13).

On the other hand, the Gentile’s choice to hear and receive the gospel is emphasized in contrast to the Jews’ choice to reject it. Notice what Paul says in v. 46: “you are judging yourselves unworthy of ever-

lasting life...” By rejecting the gospel, the Jews were judging or pronouncing themselves unworthy of eternal life. Their unworthiness was a function of their choice. By choosing to seek, listen to, and respond to the gospel, the Gentiles cooperated with God’s prevenient grace and appointed themselves to eternal life. In this way, they vindicate the justice of God’s prior appointment of them to eternal life.

Third, the basis upon which they were appointed to eternal life is implicit in the text. With regard to their self-appointment, the basis was their desire to respond to God’s drawing grace. With regard to God’s appointment of them, the basis was His (fore)knowledge of their acceptance of Christ.

In sum, God has appointed to eternal life all those He foreknew would believe, and people appoint themselves to eternal life by responding to God’s saving grace as it comes to them.

Blessings,
Philip

P.S. Interestingly, the word “unworthy” occurs in a similar context in Matthew 22. Jesus tells a story of a king who invited people to the marriage feast of his son. The people, however, refused his invitations and murdered his servants. In response, the king sent out his armies, destroyed the murderers, burned up their city, and said, “The wedding is ready; but they which were bidden were not worthy” (Matt. 22:8). The King’s multiple invitations indicate that He genuinely intended for the invitees to come. Their unworthiness, like that of the Jews in Acts 13:46, was a function of their choice. In contrast, those who were gathered from the highways and hedges to the wedding feast were called “chosen” (Matt. 22:14). Their “chosenness” came both from the King’s invitation and their response to it. ■



student focus

USA REMAINS A DEEPLY RELIGIOUS NATION

“Sixty-nine percent of American adults are very or moderately religious, based on self reports of the importance of religion in their daily lives and attendance at religious services,” according to Frank Newport, reporting the results of a Gallup Poll. “Within that group, 40% are very religious, meaning that they attend services regularly and they say religion is important in their daily lives.” The poll also showed that 29% of the respondents called themselves “moderately religious,” while 31% said they were “nonreligious.”

The report also noted the following:

1. “Religiousness increases with age.... Americans are least religious at age 23 and most religious at age 80.”

2. “Women are significantly more religious at all ages and within all race and ethnic groups.”

3. “Blacks are more religious than any other race of ethnic group in America.”

4. “Mormons are the most religious of any specific religious group.... Jews are the least.”

5. “Religiousness is highest in Southern states, including Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana.”

6. “Religiousness is lowest in states located in the northeastern corner of the country....”

7. “Upscale Americans are less religious than those with lower levels of education and income....”

8. “Blacks are a major exception to the significant correlation between religiousness and Republicanism. They are at the same time the most religious and the most Democratic race and ethnic group in America.”

The report also noted that more than three-fourths (77%) of American adults in 2012 identify with a Christian religion.... Among those Americans who have a religious identity, 94% are Christians, with the rest spread across several religious categories.

S.C. EPISCOPALIANS LEAVE THEIR LIBERAL DENOMINATION

After years of struggle and controversy, the Diocese of South Carolina has withdrawn from the Episcopal Church (TEC) “in response to disagreements over theological differences between the diocese’s bishop and the denomination,” according to an October 19 report in the *Christian Post*. This is the fifth diocese of TEC that has left the denomination since 2006. In the case of South Carolina, the diocesan action was caused by the denomination’s action against Bishop Mark Lawrence, accusing him of “abandonment of the communion of the church” and inhibiting his ministry.

Bishop Lawrence has been one of the most outspoken Episcopal leaders opposing TEC’s increasing acceptance of homosexuality and other departures from biblical teaching. The Diocese of South Carolina has over 20,000 members. ■

ASHLEY MUIR comes from a long line of GBSC alumni. Her father and mother, all of her siblings and both of her sisters-in-law are GBSC graduates. The daughter of a pastor, Ashley grew up in Warren, Ohio, and was very attracted to the college because of the people and the “spiritual atmosphere.” Ashley is grateful for her time at school as it has helped her learn how to consistently love God and others, and her “zeal for God and focus on His Kingdom” has strengthened.

A senior in the Division of Music with a major in church music, Ashley has traveled and performed with the College Choir, the Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble, as well as several smaller groups, and enjoys being a part of musical worship in local churches. Ashley is excited about God’s plan for her life and is grateful for a call to minister through music. ■

Seventy-five percent of our students receive some form of financial aid which enables them to attend GBSC. If you would like to support Ashley or a student like her, you may send a gift to:

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

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www.gbs.edu/givenow**



Classics

COMFORT FOR THE NEW YEAR

by Thomas Whittaker

“My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.” —Psalm 31:15

“Happy New Year!” This is the familiar greeting that we exchange on the first day of the new year. Yet how many utter it with a sore and troubled heart. Let us then consider our text from Holy Scripture, for it is full of consolation to every believer.

Our Dependence upon God. The ungodly disown God’s providential government. But every believer rejoices that “the Lord reigneth.” This thought reconciles us to the present evils that we face and fortifies us against future ones. We are thus convinced that nothing is casual or accidental with God, who has shaped our lives from our earliest infancy. For “our times are in [His] hand,” and He distributes blessings and withdraws them as He chooses for our good and for His glory.

Our Security in God. This brought David great comfort and confidence. Like him we are often exposed to great perils. But our text assures us that in God’s hand we are always safe. “*Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.*” All throughout Scripture this principle is set before us. Think of David trusting God as he was hunted by Saul. Remember Our Lord Jesus as he said to Pilate, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above...” (John 19:11). Think of St. Paul as he lists his perils from which the Lord had delivered him.

Yes, we Christians are immortal until our work is done. None can hurt us without His permission. Remember His words, “And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” (I Pet. 3:13).

Seek God without Delay. Do nothing that will offend Him. Do not despise His patience and forbearance. Begin now to seek Him as you have never sought Him before. Pray as did the Psalmist, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Ps. 90:12). Remember that true wisdom comes in knowing God in Christ Jesus His Son.

Learn to serve Him without fear. Servile fear is banished from a believer’s life. It is the fear of man that often brings a snare. So let the thought of His dear presence dispel fear. Every trial that He allows to come into your life will be carefully measured and weighed. So learn to trust Him without the agony of servile fear. Where could our times be in better hands? Remember that He does all things well. To Him, therefore, let us commit ourselves in the year that lies before us. ■

Thomas Whittaker as quoted in Holy Days and Holidays, published by Funk and Wagnalls 1899. Prepared and edited by LDS.

understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince [a demon] of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael [an angel], one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia" (Daniel 10:12-13).

Persistence in prayer is not for the purpose of persuading God to do something He is reluctant to do. Rather persistence in prayer demonstrates not only the intensity of your sincerity and desire, but it also gives you experience in overcoming satanic opposition. When we are persistent and learn whatever lessons of growth God is wishing to teach us, the Holy Spirit is released to bind Satan and to answer our prayer.

VI. God has chosen not to do some things in human history unless His people pray.

Let us remind ourselves of the words of God recorded by Ezekiel: "I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezek. 22:30-31).

Prayer is extremely important for the Christian. If Christians do not pray, there are some things God will not do. And let us remember that Jesus made only one prayer request of His redeemed people: "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mat. 9:38).

In conclusion, let us remember that prayer should be the main business of each believer. As someone has said, "When the books are opened and the spiritual history of the nations of the world is unfolded, it will be written for all to read that the pray-ers, not the mayors, kings, prime ministers, presidents or president's men, are the real molders of events. When the archives of heaven are thrown open for the universe to behold, it will then be revealed that history was made, not in the council chambers of the great, nor by armies and navies, nor by parliaments of nations, but in the hidden and secluded prayer closets of the saints. The movements of men and nations of earth are conceived, inspired, and motivated in the unseen. The spirit forces in the unseen are monitored, influenced, and controlled by the power that is released only by the prayers of God's people."



—sermon by DR. ALLAN P. BROWN

"COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE
IN PREACHING"



PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER

by Dr. Allan P. Brown, Chair
GBS Division of
Ministerial Education

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

One of the greatest blessings that we Christians enjoy is the privilege of prayer. Through prayer we find peace to replace anxiety (Phil. 4:6-7), spiritual strength from God through His Spirit (Eph. 3:14-16), wisdom for the bumpy journey of life (Jam. 1:5), and power to pull down strongholds of Satan that hinder the work of God (2 Cor 10:3-5).

Prayer is multifaceted and should include praise, petition, and expressions of our thankfulness. Note Col. 4:2, which urges us to "continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Jesus addressed an aspect of prayer when He encouraged His disciples to pray, and not to lose heart (Luke 18:1), admonishing them, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mat. 26:41).

God has given Scriptural guidelines to help us understand the different aspects of prayer. Let's consider these "principles for effective prayer."

I. Prayer is to be offered "in faith."

Jesus said to His disciples, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Mat. 21:22). Thus, when we pray we must have faith in God and in His ability to answer. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him [God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). God is always ready to build our faith.

Once when a father brought his child for healing, Christ asked, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” The father responded, “Lord I believe; help thou my unbelief!” Here is a pattern for us as we cry to God for help in difficult conditions.

We are also told that we have the help of God’s Word to strengthen our faith. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). As we learn through Scripture who God is, what His purposes are for our lives, and how trials and even suffering are part of His plan to mold us, we will gain insight into how best to align our prayers with His will. Thus our faith will be strengthened.

II. Prayer must be in harmony with God’s will.

God always answers the prayer that is offered with an attitude of submission to His will. “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (1 John 5:14-15).

However, Paul cautions that we do not always know how to pray as we ought (Romans 8:26-27). We therefore need the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit in our praying (Jude 1:20). We must be careful that we do not insist that God answer our prayers in the manner we think is best. As sincere as we may be, we can insist on the wrong thing in prayer. If God answers our prayer the way we want Him to, the end result may be terrible tragedy. Remember the prayer of Hezekiah requesting God to heal him from a fatal illness. God answered his prayer, but the answer brought a curse upon the entire nation of Judah in the form of a son born to Hezekiah after he was healed. This son was to become the most wicked king Judah ever had (2 Kings 20:1-11; Isaiah 38:1-9 and 2 Kings 21:1-3).

Jesus provided the proper example for us to follow in His prayers at Gethsemane. In His hour of greatest need He prayed, “Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done (Luke 22:42). Too often our prayers are unanswered because they are more concerned with our will than God’s will. James warned, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions [your own desires]” (James 4:3).

III. Prayer must be offered in the spirit of humility.

Jesus emphasized the importance of humility in prayer when He gave the example of the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican. God heard and answered the prayer of the publican because of his humil-

ity (Luke 18:9-14). Isaiah reminds us that God’s presence dwells with the contrite and humble (Isa. 57:15). And as the psalmist asserts, He will not ignore nor forget the cry of the humble (Psa. 9:12). God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

IV. Prayer is to be offered from a clear conscience.

A clear conscience is achieved by walking in all the light God gives a person. Jesus said, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). If a person does not daily read God’s Word and strive to align his life with it, his conscience will become clouded, darkened and confused. A Christian must keep his conscience “void of offense” toward God and his fellow man daily (Acts 24:16), for John tells us that “if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 John 3:21-22).

A clear conscience requires that there be no willful sin in your life. Willful sin may nullify all prayer except the prayer of repentance, for the psalmist said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psa. 66:18). Further, there must be no unforgiveness toward anyone in your heart. Unforgiveness is sin. And Jesus said, “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone: so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions” (Mark 11:25-26). We must correct our relationships with others (as far as possible on our part), before we can expect God to answer our prayers (Mat. 5:24).

V. Prayer must be steadfast and persistent.

Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened” (Mat. 7:7-8). It is well known that the verbs *ask*, *seek*, and *knock* are in the present tense and signify persistence in the activity. The failure to receive an immediate answer to prayer does not mean the answer is not on the way.

Perhaps the best example of persistence in prayer is Daniel. He humbled himself, fasted, and prayed for twenty-one days before he received God’s answer. God sent an angel who informed Daniel that Satanic forces had fought against the answer. The angel said, “Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to



outside the box

POSITIVE PRESENCE IN THE PARK

Uniting Effort To Bring Christ To Cincinnati's Price Hill

“God touched 600 peoples’ hearts through the body of Christ at ‘Positive Presence in the Park.’” In these words, Pastor Joe Reimann (GBS BA ‘05) describes what happened, September 22, 2012, in his continuing efforts at Christian witness in Price Hill, a desperately needy and diverse area in inner-city Cincinnati. Pastor Joe and his wife Joanna (GBS ‘01-’02) have lived in the Price Hill community of Cincinnati for seven years now in a vigorous effort at planting New Life Bible Methodist Church.



Pastor Joe led the outreach with his church organizing 55 volunteers from nine different churches and faith-based organizations who made “Positive Presence in the Park” a reality. “Our goal for the event was to unite our community together and to God,” Joe explains. “God worked in a wonderful way as many lives were touched through the body of Christ.” He continues to describe the event:

“‘Positive Presence in the Park’ was held at the Olden Tot Lot in Price Hill, which has been a problematic area of our community. On most days guys are using and selling drugs in this park, but that was a different day. For we made a positive difference in our community.



“Everyone was served scrumptious hamburgers and hot dogs, and free clothing was distributed. One hundred fifty families received a bag of groceries, and kids played organized games throughout the afternoon. Six different Christian musical presentations brought the gospel through songs and testimony.

“I preached the gospel message of how God can forgive your sins and change your heart, enabling you to love God and each other. With God’s help I challenged my listeners to change the Price Hill community by allowing God to change their own heart. My message – ‘The change begins with you.’

“Prayer stands were set up with prayer teams praying for people. Many people were

touched by the prayers of others. We are so thankful for God’s presence uniting all our volunteers for a great day of sharing the gospel with love and compassion in our community.” ■



compiled by Rev. Jack Hooker, President,
National Alumni Association of GBS

RICKENBACHS TO JOIN ACE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM IN HONDURAS

Alumna Rachel (Arndt) Rickenbach (BA '01) and her husband James have accepted the invitation to join the administrative team of Accelerated Christian Education Central America. They will be working as volunteers at the regional headquarters in Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras. They write, "We are honored to be working under the leadership of 29-year veteran directors, Rolando and Jenny Mejia. Our hearts rejoice that God has expanded His plans for our continued involvement in Christian education. After a year of rest and transition,



we will be relocating to our new ministry by the end of January 2013." Follow their ministry on Facebook at *James N Rachel Rickenbach*.

MISSIONARIES R.G. (BA '98) AND SARAH (THOMAS) (BA '97) HUTCHISON REPORT FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Earlier this week I was riding a bus to Manila, seated beside a young man. I later learned that his name is Ronie, and he is living in Metro Manila while completing a master's degree in educational management at one of the universities. Little did I know that the two of us had an appointment with God that afternoon. As we rode along together in silence for several hours, I was reading a book, taking a nap, and just passing the time. To my surprise, when we were about ten minutes from our destination, he asked if he could talk with me. He had noticed the book I was reading, and thought that I must be a Christian. In a few short minutes he told me that he was searching for true peace and had even thought of taking his own life. I shared with him that his greatest need was to have peace with God, and that Jesus Christ died and rose again in order to give him that peace as a free gift. He was receptive to the message, and with tears in his eyes he allowed me to pray with him. A few days later, I received an e-mail from Ronie. Here are a few excerpts of the testimony which he shared with me:

"Good day, sir. Do you still remember me? We met three days ago at the bus. Honestly, sir, when I met you and when I opened up my life situations to you, I experienced and felt that there was somebody who will care and be concerned about me. And that time I had lost hope and was very tired. Do you remember when I asked you, 'How

can I find a true peace?' You said that ONLY JESUS can bring peace, joy, and love. When we prayed at that time, I felt the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He holds my hands and says that 'I can do it' because of Him and His grace. And I want to change my life step-by-step. You know what, sir, after we prayed and left each other, I was crying and crying, tears of joy were flowing from my eyes. I don't know, sir, I can't explain what I'm feeling at that time. It's just like something different inside in my heart.... That



night, the day we met, I couldn't sleep and started praying to the Lord. I asked God to forgive me from all of my sins that I'd made. You know what, sir, I surrendered my life to Him. I want God to change my whole life and I want to know Him more. Sir, please continue praying for me, sir, especially my mom. And now, I want to find and attend a Christian church this coming Sunday."

Since writing this, Ronie has attended a church service, and I was also able to send him a Bible and devotional book. There are many people just like Ronie who are all around us everyday.

Editor's Note: R.G. and Sarah Hutchison are serving in the Philippines as missionaries for the Bible Methodist Church. ■

➡(p8) practical teaching that is not being passed down to new Christians or to younger generations. The CHM needs a renewed commitment to discipleship, mentoring, and preaching. Discipleship is the perfect arena to “teach” many things that should not and cannot be adequately “preached.” Mentoring is the key to helping our immature converts and young people maneuver the choppy waters of life successfully. Just keeping the few converts we do have coupled with saving our own would double our population numbers within a few years.

Preaching as it is being done in many CHM churches is passionate exhortation with the goals of inspiration, motivation, and evaluation. Preaching in today's world needs to be passionate explanation with the goal of transformation and application. Postmodern minds today don't want someone “yelling” at them. They want someone explaining the Bible and giving ways to apply it to life right now!

Someone Has Got to See It!

Francis Asbury saw an American frontier evangelized for Christ, and the circuit rider was born. William Booth saw the poor of England sinking in despair, and the Salvation Army was born! Martin Wells Knapp saw a school to train a new generation of Christian soldiers, and God's Bible School was born. Rev. Eber Teter saw the state of Alabama without the message of heart holiness, and the Friendship Wesleyan Methodist Church was born – the church at whose altar I found saving grace. Someone must see what can be before it can or will come to pass!

The founder of Disney World, Walt Disney, died five years before Disney World was completed. On opening day in 1971 someone said to director Mike Vance, “Isn't it too bad Walt Disney didn't live to see this?” To which Vance replied, “Oh, Walt did see it! That's why it's here.”

Somebody has got to dream and envision a renewed holiness movement. I long for a movement unified in purpose, linking arms together in mission and message! Martin Luther King saw an America where racial inequality was abolished. Remember how he explained that vision. “He (God) has allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land!”

I, too, have been to the mountain top, and I've seen the other side! The CHM just needs more mountain climbers who will get above the fog at ground level and see what “can be” in our tomorrows! ■

➡(p2) incarnation, atoning death, and resurrection,” as Article X of *A Call to the Conservative Holiness Movement* so forcibly reminds us. “The sure and certain anchor of the soul, this hope has given gladness and assurance to faithful believers all throughout the centuries of the Church's struggle with the forces of entrenched evil. It assures us of present victory in our personal lives and corporate ministry, but it also points to the final triumph when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

Yes, the final triumph! In the gladness of this “resplendent hope,” we conclude our series about the CHM, its direction and its destiny. Granted, ours is only a tiny part of Christ's universal Church, but still it is dear to us who love its heritage, affirm its mission, and serve its altars. For months we have considered the repeated “calls” issued by the Bible/theology faculty at God's Bible School, challenging us candidly to evaluate ourselves, affirming our strengths and strengthening our weaknesses.

So what of the future? United with Christ personally by faith and corporately in baptism, we are members of His Body, which is the Church. As such, we have no fear of its future, for He has promised that not even the gates of hell ever shall prevail against it. But as we also know, Our Lord has made no such promise to the CHM or to any other movement or denomination that ever has arisen. Such groups often have emerged within the Church, sometimes with great enthusiasm, gradually drifted from their original mission, and finally disappeared. That fine old English scholar Isaac Taylor once warned that “a moral wave measured eighty years – forty to reach its crest and break, and forty to subside and be lost.”

Yet decline and disappearance are not inevitable – or at least, they can be greatly delayed – if we will remain faithful to the original vision that gave us origin and translate that vision into vigorous, relevant and creative ministry. Remember that God “raised us up” as a reform movement with the specific purpose to bring revival and renewal to both the Church and to the culture, commissioned specifically “to spread scriptural holiness over these lands.”

This is the particular niche that He gives us still, our *raison d'être* – the only purpose of our existence, the DNA of our Methodist heart. For with the authors of the *Call*, we are convinced “that a renewed commitment to the essential principles of scriptural Christianity which we have received in classical Methodist belief, piety, and mission will prepare and strengthen us for the challenges that

confront us....” This does not mean cultic preservation centered in tribal traditions and taboos, for it is always unmitigated tragedy to turn our treasures into relics. But this does mean principled fidelity, unswerving devotion, and unrelenting purpose all invested in unselfish service to Christ, to His Church, and to the world for which He died.

“We know the power and devastation of sin, and we acknowledge the increasing degradation of our culture,” as the *Call* insists. “We are Wesleyans, however; and as our theologians have said, the keynote of our theology is not ‘the pessimism of [fallen] nature’ but the ‘optimism of grace.’” It is this grace so freely offered from the Father’s loving heart that provides the holiness that He requires and that we preach. It is this “optimism of grace,” so characteristic of our movement at its best, that must ignite us again with the Spirit’s power and purpose to escape the irrelevance and disintegration that have faced so many other “holiness movements” before us. Otherwise, like them, we will become merely another sad display in the museum of lost religious causes.

So again we ask, “*What of the future?*” That question may well be answered by what we do with the appeals addressed to us in *A Call to the Holiness Movement*. For cogently and forcefully they point the way to what we can become again – a vital, healthy, and flourishing spiritual force ministering to our families, changing our neighborhoods, and impacting our culture. Let’s look again at the nine specific “calls” that have preceded this final one, noting that each of them, *affirms*, *warns*, and *calls* us to a scriptural and Wesleyan model of renewal.

1. Biblical Fidelity, *affirming* devotion to “the Holy Scriptures, as the inspired and inerrant Word of God”; *warning* of focusing on issues and demands “which we cannot legitimately establish from the Scriptures”; and *calling* for “renewed submission to the absolute authority of the Bible, not as a revered icon but as the touchstone for both our personal lives and our public proclamation.”

2. Historic Roots and Continuity, *affirming* “allegiance to the classical Christianity of the centuries, confessing its faith, sharing its historic witness, living out its godly discipline, and claiming all of its treasures as our own”; *warning* of historical ignorance, sectarian bigotry, and spiritual isolation; and *calling* for a “league offensive and defensive with every soldier of Christ,” reclaiming the richness of our Christian heritage and our essential unity with all who truly confess Him as Lord.”

3. Christian Community, *affirming* our unity with Christ’s visible church, “the community of the faithful” in which the “pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ’s or-

dinance”; *warning* us of “a narrow and individualistic approach to our Christian Faith,” and *calling* “for renewed understanding of the Biblical doctrine of the Church as ‘the pillar and ground of the truth,’ reverence for its orthodox confessions, submission to its holy discipline, and faithfulness to its common life.”

4. Christian Holiness, *affirming* that holiness of heart and life is the “central idea of Christianity; as God’s redemptive purpose for our fallen humanity”; *warning* “that our passion for holiness of heart and life has sometimes been reduced merely to external codes and prohibitions, and ‘holier-than-thou’ attitudes toward those who differ from us”; and *calling* “to a renewed love for God from which will blossom consistent and winsome lives of holiness,” continuing “to accentuate both of the definitive moments we identify as works of divine grace, conversion and entire sanctification, all the while giving proper attention to the progressive growth in grace by the Spirit....”

5. Methodist Piety, *affirming* that earnest personal devotion so characteristic of our spiritual forebears, a devotion grounded in “profound reverence for God” and in “sober and steadfast love” for Him; *warning* that “our appeals to holy conduct...have often been based more in the impulse to preserve the taboos of our religious subculture than in allegiance to the Word of God and its demands”; and *calling* for return “to our originating commitment to principled covenant with God,” based in these three historic commitments: “(1) the renunciation of all known sin; (2) the embracing of all positive virtue, and (3) the faithful practice of the means of grace, especially ...the Word, prayer, fasting, Christian fellowship, and the Lord’s Supper.”

6. Authority in the Church, *affirming* that Christ “has delegated the powers of government to duly-appointed officers in the Church...”; *warning* against “the spirit of autonomy and even anarchy which so often has marked our movement”; and *calling* “for renewed exposition of the Scriptural qualifications for leadership within the Church, corporate exhortation to beware the deceitfulness of sin, and biblical obedience and submission to those whom God has made under-shepherds over us.”

7. Corporate Worship, *affirming* corporate worship of the Holy Trinity as “the exalted glory and central pulse of every Christian congregation...to be conducted with decency and order”; *warning* of over-emphasis on the subjective and emotional to the neglect of the solid and objective; and *calling* for “the renewal of our corporate worship, based in the mandates of Scripture and in the tradition of evangelical orthodoxy, centered in the faithful ministry of Word and Sacrament.”



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THOUGHTS

for the quiet hour

by Sonja Vernon

SHINE!

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” —Matt. 5:16 NASB

Light is of no use unless it is brighter than its environment, and the darker the surroundings the more brilliant its appearance and the greater change it effects. We are a nation in darkness. Principles that were once thought to be at our core are now up for debate. Our sense of propriety has been turned on its head. Morality is viewed as relative. Looking at the scope of the lengthening shadows, it would be easy to become discouraged. What can one small light do against such a vast night?

I recently visited a dying saint who for ten years had lived in a small room in a nursing home. Before that she stayed almost exclusively at home, first to raise eight children and run a parsonage, and then as caregiver to an ailing husband. What could her little light do in such a tiny sphere? Ask the missionaries and Bible colleges who received her meager but consistent offerings. Ask the workers who opened the countless gospel tracts she mailed to addresses off bread wrappers or cereal boxes. Ask nursing home staff and community people who visited her room to ask for prayer only to hear her begin her petitions before they made it out the door. Ask the thousands touched by her offspring.

Did her tiny light make a difference? Ask the throngs who will be in heaven because of this quiet saint who shone in her small corner. The darkness, though great, is no match for the light. Bearers of the light, shine! ■

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

8. Consistent Discipleship, affirming Christ's mandate "to make disciples through Trinitarian baptism and instruction in all His commands"; warning that "we have largely abandoned our Methodist system of spiritual formation and forgotten how to fulfill our Lord's command to make disciples.... We have emphasized spectacular conversions and neglected the Biblical necessity of disciplined growth in faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love"; and calling for a "commitment to equip our laity for the work of the ministry, for the establishment of solidly Wesleyan curricula for systematic discipleship, and for the implementation of these training methods in all our churches."

9. Christian Social witness, affirming that true holiness demands that we follow Jesus who "ministered to both the spiritual and physical needs of people"; warning against withdrawal from society with its suffering and loss "into the cloistered walls of a narrow and narcissistic piety"; and calling us to "lovingly and forcefully proclaim Christ's power to liberate from sin, both public and private, asserting the claims of His Kingdom against all that militates against it."

In North America and Europe, at least, the Church has its back to the world. But that has happened again and again throughout history; and in every case God has summoned men and women to band together in fervent prayer, renewed commitment, and vigorous witness to His truth. With His help and intervention, they have become "storm centers" of revival and revitalization; and in doing so, they have saved the Church from irrelevance and the culture from disintegration. The *Call to the CHM* points the way for us to do the same. Let me appeal to all of us – leaders and followers, clergy and lay people, young and old – to consider the *Call* and its nuanced summons and respond affirmatively, vigorously, and decisively. We ignore this opportunity at our peril. "Upon the original foundations of our movement, therefore, we must build determined, effective, and contemporary witness to God's unchanging summons to holy hearts and holy lives."

Yes, the message of the final triumph flashes all along the line from heaven to earth. Granted, this often seems obscured by the descending fog of discouragement and disarray that surround us. But as the *Call* declares, "We cannot cower before the darkness, paralyzed by 'the encircling gloom' which continually we must confront. 'But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' With gladness we do the work which He has given us, even as we await the consummation when all the earth shall echo with the songs of conquest, 'Alleluia! The Lord God Omnipotent reigns.'" Alleluia! ■

COLLEGE CHOIR LATE-WINTER TOUR

February 21, Thursday
Change Of Venue
Call GBSC Public Relations for location
(513) 763-6510

February 22, Friday, 7:00 PM
South/Central Alabama GBS Choir Rally
Bibb County Board of Education Auditorium
721 Walnut, Centreville, AL
Rally Coordinator: Rev. Steve Vernon
(334) 624-4298

February 23, Saturday, 7:00 PM
Gulf Coast GBS Choir Rally
Oak Ridge Wesleyan Church
11000 110th Ave. North, Largo, FL
Dr. Phillip Gray (727) 393-9182

February 24, Sunday, 10:45 AM
Tampa First Church of the Nazarene
5902 N. Himes Ave., Tampa, FL
Rev. Lynn Nichols (813) 879-0505

February 24, Sunday, 2:30 PM
Full Afternoon Concert
Lakeland Holiness Camp
Florida Holiness Campground
3335 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL
Rev. Glen Allison (863) 646-5152

February 24 Sunday, 6:00 PM
First Church of the Nazarene
1875 Nursery Rd., Clearwater, FL
Rev. Pat Glenn (727) 536-1498

February 25, Monday, 7:00 PM
Florida Heartland GBS Choir Rally
Avon Park Camp Association
1001 W. Lake Isis Avenue, Avon Park, FL
Information: (863) 453-6831 (office)

February 26, Tuesday, 7:30 PM
Pell City Area GBS Choir Rally
Bible Methodist Campgrounds
1355 Chula Vista Dr., Pell City, AL
Mr. Wayne Fleming (205) 956-2857

February 27, Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Easley Bible Methodist Church
855 Gentry Memorial Hwy., Easley, SC
Rev. Terry Going (864) 855-3892

February 28, Thursday, 7:00 PM
North Carolina GBS Choir Rally
T. Austin Finch Auditorium
406 Unity St., Thomasville, NC
Information: (513) 763-6510 (GBS PR)

March 1, Friday, 7:00 PM
Greater Charleston GBS Choir Rally
Dunbar Church of the Nazarene
1334 Lightner Ave., Dunbar, WV
Rev. Greg Hudson (304) 768-7454

March 2, Saturday, 6:00 PM
South/Central IN GBS Rally
Faith Mission Church
1817 26th St., Bedford, IN
Rev. Steven Hight (812) 675-4230

March 3, Sunday, 10:30 AM
Independent Nazarene Church
5152 Hornet Ave., Beech Grove, IN
Dr. Gene Hood (317) 787-9770

March 3, Sunday, 6:00 PM
Franklin Bible Methodist Church
6000 S. Dixie Hwy., Franklin, OH
Rev. Jack Hooker (937) 746-8281

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