

# GOD'S REVIVALIST

October 2024

*and Bible Advocate*





# thinking out loud

## VOTING

A long-standing habit of mine is keeping up with the news. I have always thought that Christians should be mindful of their environment and positively engaged with it. This is why for years I have been active in various community organizations. In the late 1970s, I was often in the minority as I represented a conservative viewpoint. But instead of backing away, I chose to stay involved. I admit, that was a process, but I was soon accepted as I actively worked for the betterment of the community while holding several positions in various organizations.

My commitment to active involvement in the community extends to exercising my right to vote. Scripture informs us, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: But when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn” (Prov. 29:2). I want to do my part to see that those elected to positions of authority are “righteous.” I take that to mean that it is my duty as a citizen in our democracy to vote for the one I determine would be the best person for each position.

While personality does matter, for me, *policy* predominates. Candidates who change their positions according to whom they are addressing are likely just saying what they think a particular group wants to hear. If your candidates once held positions that differ from what they are now advocating, be sure you understand the rationale for the change. These may be examples of political expediency. Determine the policy viewpoints that are most important for you. Mine include sanctity of life, family values, religious freedom, rule of law, limited but effective government, etc.

During political discussions, make it a point to listen to the opposing view. If you are just formulating a counterargument while someone is speaking, you may miss some of the nuance of the other position. And people can usually pick up on the fact that you are not really listening. You want others to listen to you, so listen to them.

Think before you respond. Always be kind. Be sure you are addressing someone’s argument and not attacking the person. Resist either impulse to respond in anger or to retreat. If you choose not to engage, you are giving up your opportunity to have your viewpoint heard.

Educate yourself and vote! And then pray for the winner—no matter who that is! —KF ■

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COVER PHOTO: GBS students on the main campus patio. Photo by Isaac England.

PAGE 2 PHOTO: istock.com / gorodenkoff

# the president's page



## A CALL TO THE MINISTRY Three Types of Calls

by Dr. Rodney S. Loper, President

I am often asked about my call to ministry. People of all ages are interested in hearing how I came to understand that I was called to preach. Young people are especially interested as they try to discern God's call. In this last installment of this series, let me share with you three types of calls, give a bit of explanation for each, and provide examples.

### BURNING BUSH

My call to ministry was what I call a "burning bush" experience. This type of call finds its source in the Old Testament call of Moses. While tending sheep on Mount Horeb, Moses encountered a bush that was on fire but was not being consumed (Ex. 3:1-10). God commissioned Moses to go back to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of slavery. This pivotal moment in Moses' life transformed him from a shepherd into a leader tasked with delivering Israel from Egypt. The call was clear and unmistakable.

No! One of my father's shrubs didn't catch on fire when I was called to preach! But that event was just as clear—at least to me. I WAS called! Was it an audible voice? I really can't answer that question with specificity. I was alone in my car when it came, and I DO know that it was AS CLEAR AS an audible voice. In that moment, I knew that I had a choice to make. Would I "answer" the call to preach, or reject what I knew I was called to do?

The prophet Jonah received a clear call to go to Nineveh to preach repentance. However, at first he rejected God's call. I did not want to follow his example. I said, "Yes," and accepted the call.

I have talked to many people who have described their call to ministry as “definite,” “sure,” or “very clear.” Each of these descriptions indicate a specific time or event in their lives when their calling to ministry was made clear to them. While there may have been some ambiguity about “where” and “how” to proceed, the “what” of their call was settled in a moment of time.

### **BURNING HEART**

The next type of call is the “burning heart.” There are many examples of this type of calling in Scripture as seen through those who feel a passion to do something for God. Isaiah exemplifies this type of call. In chapter 6 of Isaiah, God revealed Himself to the prophet in a powerful way. Once Isaiah got his eyes off of the earthly situation, saw God high and lifted up, and had a live coal placed on his lips, he was in a position to hear the voice of God. Notice in this account that God didn’t call Isaiah by name as He did with Samuel many years before (1 Sam. 3). It is as if God was look-

**The issue isn’t with God’s calling—it is with our hearing. If you are a Jonah, quit running! If you are an Isaiah, ask God to pick you! If you are an Esther, step in and offer a helping hand!**

ing for a willing heart—“Whom shall I send, and who will Go for me?” It is Isaiah who responds by saying, “Here am I, send me” (Isa. 6:8). His acceptance could be interpreted as, “God, in light of Who You are and what You have done for me, I am willing to be used by You—however You choose.” This willingness to serve was a crucial aspect of Isaiah’s prophetic call. God then commissioned Isaiah with a difficult message for the people of Judah—one that eventually resulted in them receiving judgment after they had hardened their hearts.

I can’t help but wonder what the Church world would look like if we embodied this response. “God, in the light of Who You are, and what You have done for us, we raise our hands and say, ‘Please pick me!’” This type of call is just as important and meaningful as a burning bush experience. While many long for the burning bush call, many have also answered the call of a burning heart. While they may not be able to point to a specific moment in time that they were “called,” they have a deep assurance in their hearts that they are doing what God wants them to do. This assurance may happen in a moment of realization, or it may slowly develop over a long period of time. As these individuals keep following God and walking in the light, they receive more and more assurance that this is what God wants them to do.

### **BURNING HANDS**

The third type of call is “burning hands.” This refers to those who want to help wherever they are needed. This often involves persons who aren’t looking for leadership but are unwilling to watch things spiral out of control. They hear and respond to Jesus’ words, “If you offer a cup of cold water in My name, you have done it unto Me.” These folks see a need and fill it.

An example of this in Scripture is found in Esther. When the decree was made that all Jews were to be killed, Mordecai asked Esther to appear before her king to plead for their lives. Reluctant at first, due to the danger of appearing before the king uninvited, Esther eventually faithfully proclaimed, “If I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16).

“Burning hands” people would rather do something than sit around and critique those who are doing nothing. There have been great holiness leaders whose chief motivation was stepping in when help was needed. They may not have had a definite call as some, but they didn’t use that as an excuse to do nothing. Mission fields have been carved out, churches expanded, classrooms filled—all because someone saw the need and stepped in to help.

### **CONCLUSION**

On a regular basis I receive calls, letters, and messages from churches and church leaders asking for pastors. Pulpits of good churches stand empty. Good parishioners try to press forward without a shepherd. I do not believe that God has stopped calling. I refuse to believe that God has washed His hands of this generation and has turned His back in frustration. The issue isn’t with God’s calling—it is with our hearing. If you are a Jonah, quit running! If you are an Isaiah, ask God to pick you! If you are an Esther, step in and offer a helping hand! ■



# HOLINESS SEED SPROUTS AGAIN

*New Life Emerges  
from Methodism's Demise*

*by* LARRY D. SMITH

**W**ithout doubt, polished, well-educated scholars have been able to explain perplexing theological concepts in more impressive terms than could “Uncle” Buddy Robinson, the colorful Nazarene evangelist of the last century. Yet Robinson was also a gifted wordsmith whose homey, colorful definitions are still remembered decades after his death. For example, when discussing the durability and success of faithful Christian witness, he quipped, “Holiness seed never rots!” For “holiness seed is so durable,” as the old evangelist explained, that it “will keep for many years in any climate on earth, and grow as well in poor climates as in rich.” Even when it is neglected or opposed, it will not disappear; but in God’s own time, it “will produce an abundant harvest in the poorest soil on earth,” whether now or in ages yet to come.

Every page of Christian history bears eloquent witness to this foundational truth. Think, for example, of that vicious paganism which slaughtered the holy martyrs, who yet in their sufferings led those earliest Christians in triumph over mighty imperial Rome and its entrenched and bloody paganism. Thousands of the Faithful have “followed in their train.”

Recall, too, those damning heresies exposed and routed by the plucky Nicene Fathers who were determined

that at whatever cost, the Holy Church visible would always clearly confess both the full and sinless humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His supreme and absolute deity. “Begotten of His Father before all worlds; God of God; Light of Light, Very God of Very God; Begotten, not made, being of one Substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.”

Ponder also the medieval church’s grotesque distortions of the Christian faith, which stout-hearted reformers confronted and “in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword,” drove out of the House of God. Remember also Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich, which was supposed to shake the world and last a thousand years. But it was tossed into the trash-bin of history after only twelve! Heaped there also beside it in abject ruin is Stalin’s designs for Soviet Communism with all its cruel gulags and its strident atheism. All human history thus records that in His time, God shall conquer every force that opposes Him or the “holiness seed” that He commissions His messengers to plant.

For, in its broadest sense, at least, planting “holiness seed” simply means the faithful delivery of God’s central message to our sinful, shattered race. This message, of

course, is His demand for holiness of heart and life, for as He Himself has said, without holiness none of us will ever see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). But not only does He require holiness, He also makes full provision for us to pursue it successfully. In this sanctifying process He first leads us by way of Mt. Sinai, where we are confronted by the Holy Law, which God has enacted to reveal His own character, and to confront us with His unrelenting demands upon us. For if we are ever to walk the highway of holiness, we must begin our journey by repenting of our sins and fixing all our loyalties on His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. In His great love for us, He has made full atonement for all our sins, and now He invites us to come to Him, partake of the very life of God, and thus be transformed “from glory into glory” by the Holy Spirit into the true likeness of Christ.

This “holiness seed” is thus all about the blessed gospel which indeed will never “rot”—that is, it will never be destroyed, diminished, or defeated. Its final and absolute triumph will be celebrated in the consummating glory of eternity with Him. In the meantime, as we have already noted, all our history is filled with Jesus’ triumphs, each one of which is both a certain pledge and a welcome harbinger of the final one.

One of the most dramatic of Jesus’ triumphs and a certain proof of the durability of holiness seed is the massive disruption now taking place in the United Methodist Church (UMC), as literally hundreds of thousands of faithful but battered orthodox Christians in vast numbers of congregations are leaving their beloved church home in a determined stand for biblical principles and genuine Christian Holiness.

For this is not some minor squabble over the color of vestments, but rather a historic contest which ultimately

strikes at the very heart of the Christian religion. Is the Church really the community of Christ’s faithful ones, submitting to the absolute and unalterable rule of the Bible, speaking clearly for God and confessing the ancient faith “once and for all delivered unto the saints”? Granted, there are subsidiary issues, but the pivotal one causing the great divide is that the UMC has chosen to deny the clear scriptural prohibition of homosexual sin, thus defending what God has condemned, and by this betrayal of divine truth, placing itself outside the community of the faithful.

We can hardly grasp how widespread this revolt and ultimate schism has become in the UMC. According to the highly respected evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*, 7,659 churches had disaffiliated from the UMC by the end of last year. This means that under “a temporary plan allowing disaffiliations, nearly one out of four of the denomination’s 30,000 congregations decided to split over issues of sexuality and authority.... This is also the largest denominational divide in the United States since the Civil War,” as the magazine reports.<sup>1</sup> “While there have been several notable church schisms [in the 20th century], including those which gave birth to the Presbyterian Church in America, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the North American Lutheran Church, and the Anglican Church in North America—none involve more than 600 or 700 separating congregations. The UMC split is more than 10 times as large.”<sup>1</sup>

It seems certain, moreover, that more withdrawals will follow. Already a new Wesleyan denomination called the Global Methodist Church, pledged to maintain biblical standards and Christian orthodoxy, has been formed as a home for the departing UMC congregations. It re-

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# 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.

My dear, sweet mother passed away yesterday. [see DEATHS: Vivian Whittle, p.12.] Her photo was in every *God's Revivalist* for many years!

VANESSA HEPPEARD  
Cincinnati, OH

Close-up of Vivian Whittle in the "Revivalist Family" header graphic, which can be seen in context on pp.12-19.



EDITOR'S NOTE: the header graphic for the "Revivalist Family" section of *God's Revivalist* subtly features an artistic rendering of part of a large photograph of the participants of the 1997 GBS camp meeting that commemorated 100 years of camp meetings in Cincinnati. The Salvation Park Camp Meeting predated *God's Bible School* by several years and was promoted in the pages of *God's Revivalist*. It was moved to the campus of *God's Bible School* after the institution's founding in 1900 by Martin Wells Knapp, who had previously established his periodical *The Revivalist* (later renamed *God's Revivalist*) in 1888.

Vivian Whittle was in attendance at the 1997 commemorative camp meeting and was in the large crowd gathered on Young Street on the day the panoramic photo was taken. Hers just happens to be one of the few recognizable faces in the random sliver of photo used as the header graphic! At the time of the photo, her daughter, Vanessa Heppeard, was the executive assistant to then GBS President Michael Avery, and she also had served in the same capacity to the previous president, Bence C. Miller. ■

ports over 4,000 congregations located in all 50 states. Others will certainly follow, especially since the recent General Conference removed the *Book of Discipline's* disapproval of homosexual practice, marriages, and ordinations. Moreover, according to *The Roys Report*, one of the UMC's African annual conferences with over 1.2 million members has also voted to leave, declaring that this action was for reasons of "conscience before God and His word, the supreme authority in matters of faith and life."<sup>2</sup> Other regional conferences will probably become autonomous Methodist bodies or unite with the new Global Methodist Church.

Yes, "holiness seed never rots." We who have our spiritual home in the American Holiness Movement should rejoice at the abundant signs that the long-buried seed is sprouting again in the soil of mother Methodism, to which we owe an incalculable debt. Founded in 1784 under the direction of John Wesley in England to "spread scriptural holiness over these lands," the Methodist Episcopal Church (the original name of the denomination) sent out multitudes of intrepid "circuit riders" who went everywhere on horseback, raising up enthusiastic congregations, challenging sin, fighting the Devil, and claiming our opening frontier for Jesus. How faithfully they planted holiness seed, and God crowned their labors with glorious success. By the 1850s the Methodists had become the largest Protestant denomination in America.

But we also know the sad story of the MEC's gradual move away from its originating principles, as it compromised with the forces of the worldly enculturation usually associated with historical drift. Thousands of loyal Methodists joined to call the church back to its spiritual roots. But when these efforts failed, they formed the Holiness Movement, establishing new congregations, new schools (such as GBS in 1900), and eventually new denominations. But the MEC continued its movement away from its Wesleyan and holiness foundations.

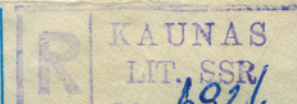
To be sure, there has remained a faithful remnant in the UMC who remember the glory that once crowned her altars. But now that the denomination has surrendered to the hostile forces that blight our culture and twist the Scriptures to accommodate their sin and heresy, multitudes of faithful Methodists, determined to be true to God, the Bible, and their own Wesleyan foundations, are forming new structures to accomplish this. Those old circuit riders who so faithfully planted "holiness seed" 150 years ago will rejoice in heaven that that seed did not rot, but that even now it is sending up new and healthy sprouts that promise to mature into an abundant harvest. For as "Uncle Buddy" said, "Holiness seed never rots." ■

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

1. "United Methodists Down 7,659 Churches As Exit Window Ends" at [www.ChristianityToday.com](http://www.ChristianityToday.com), December 18, 2023.

2. "1.2 Million West African Methodists Leave UMC After Denomination Redefines Marriage" by Mark Tooley in *The Roys Report* at [www.julieroy.com](http://www.julieroy.com).

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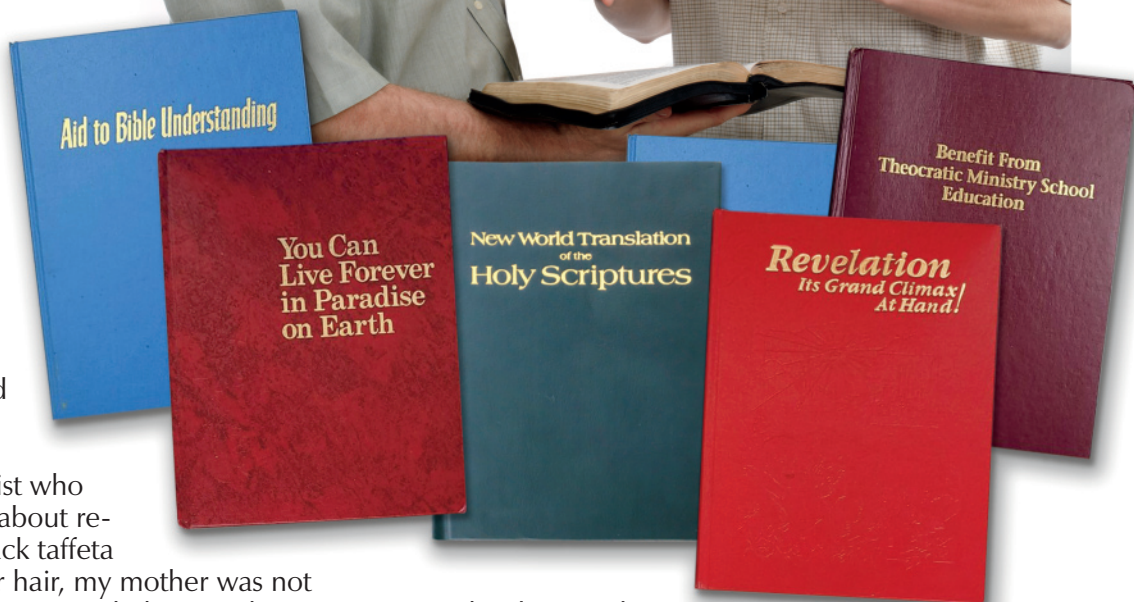
# Searching *for* Spiritual Truth

by David Gumbiner

**M**y mother was reared on a farm. Although her mother was a Bible-reading, old-time Baptist who quoted Scripture and talked about revivals in which women in black taffeta dresses “shouted down” their hair, my mother was not especially churchy. She did, however, believe in the validity of the Ten Commandments, and she sang many of the old hymns.

My father was half Jewish and grew up in synagogue until he was 14, the year his father died at the age of 49. After that, as my father’s mother was not Jewish, they attended First Christian Church. When Dad and Mom got married, they also considered that to be their church, although their attendance was spotty at best. However, we children were frequently sent to Sunday school even when my parents did not attend services.

It was at this church that I first began questioning things I observed. It was the late 1950s, and I was probably seven or eight years old. Each Sunday, after gathering in the sanctuary, we would be sent downstairs to Sunday school, where we would sing songs before the Sunday school superintendent collected the offering.



As he dismissed us to our respective classes, he would say, “All right! We’re going to our classes now, and while you’re away, Jesus will pick up the offering.”

One time I got to my class before my teacher arrived. As I peeked back out the door, I made the disconcerting discovery that it was the Sunday school superintendent who was picking up the offering, not Jesus! I remember feeling disillusioned by that.

I continued to attend church off and on through my preteen years, and once, when I was 12, I responded to a powerful message by going forward during the altar call. This eventually led to my baptism. I can’t say that I was actually saved, but I was definitely affected by my experience, and I continued attending youth meetings.

We often played with the children of a Baptist minister who lived down the street from us. When they invited



us to their vacation Bible school, we went. I remember being asked to sign a card that said we pledged not to swear, drink, smoke, or lie. I was still only 12 or 13, but I knew that signing that pledge would not keep me from doing any of those things.

In an uncanny repeat of history, my father died at the age of 49 when I was 14, so Mother had to rear three kids by herself: my younger sister, who was seven; a young nephew, who was two; and me. She did the very best she could.

Several years went by, and around the age of 16, I joined DeMolay International, a Masonic-related organization open for membership to young men between the ages of 12 and 21 who acknowledge a higher spiritual power. It was around this time that I started smoking and my mother got involved with the Jehovah's Witnesses. They tried to draw me in, too, as I would be watching TV nearby while they were having their home meetings. Finally, I agreed to meet with one of their men, and we began having Bible studies.

In the first session, he explained that many churches and denominations take things out of context and don't preach the complete Bible. Ironically, we actually never opened the Bible during our studies. Instead, we read their officially sanctioned books. Although I studied with them for four-and-a-half years, I knew I could never agree with some of the things they taught. Although they tried to get me to come to their church, I never did.

In 1968, I graduated from high school. I was depressed, lost, and suicidal. I remember looking up to the ceiling of my bedroom one night and praying, "God, if You're real, make Yourself known to me." Although obviously I did not commit suicide, neither did I become religious. I remained troubled.

I went to Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, to study accounting. I drank and partied my way through my freshman year, all the while struggling and searching. I decided to talk to a Jewish rabbi.

He gave me two books and said, "Read these and then come back and talk to me."

I read the books and returned about two weeks later.

He said, "If you're interested in joining us, a regular membership is \$1,000 a year and a student membership is \$500 a year."

I thanked him and left. I was sure that wasn't what religion was supposed to be about. As I was also no longer meeting with the Jehovah's Witnesses, I found myself searching for spiritual truth on my own. I tried reading the Bible on several occasions, but other than the more interesting stories like David and Goliath, it didn't mean much to me.

In 1976, at age 26, while I was working at a bank as a programmer, one of the tellers brought a new hire up to our floor and introduced her. I didn't know anything about Debra at the time, but I felt my heart doing a flip-flop! I found out that her father was a Holiness preacher pastoring The Wesleyan Church in Hammond, Indiana.


Debra was backslidden. She had recently graduated from high school and was looking for a new job. One of the men who attended her father's church worked at the bank where I worked and promised to put in a good word for her with the bank president. She had just been given a new job as a teller when our coworker introduced her around the bank. Several days later, the controller who was my boss asked for another secretary, and Debra was moved upstairs to take this new position on the same floor where I worked. I tried on several occasions to get her to go out with me, but to no avail. I knew she had a religious background, so I tried talking to her about what I'd learned from the Jehovah's Witnesses. Even though she wasn't serving the Lord, she would correct my erroneous ideas using the Bible.

Things continued in this vein for a couple of years, and Debra still refused to go out with me. Then in 1978, my brothers and I opened a hardware store near Indianapolis. As I was getting ready to move there, I decided to ask Debra out one last time. I said, "I'm leaving. What about just one date?" She agreed!


After I moved, we continued dating every other weekend for the next two-and-a-half years. I would call her on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. (This was long before cell phones, and calling rates were cheaper at night.)

One Wednesday night in 1980 when I called, she was in tears. I tried to get her to tell me what was wrong, but she just cried and cried.

Finally she blurted out, "You're probably not going to want to go out with me anymore because I got saved."



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looking up to  
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I didn't know what that meant, but I did know that I didn't want to give up on our relationship. So I agreed to make any necessary changes, and we continued dating. When I went to see her on weekends, we attended Sunday morning and evening services together. I heard many sermons, but they didn't have any effect on me. Although I had no sense of being under conviction, the Spirit was at work. Little did I realize it then, but ever since that night in 1968 when I had cried out to God, He had been working through all that was happening in my life.

In June of 1980, I began to wake up spiritually. I always had my rings sitting on the nightstand and would put them on each morning when I got up. One was turquoise and silver, but it had no real meaning. The other one was the ring that my father got after his bar mitzvah. My mother had given it to me when I graduated from



top: The Gumbiner Family (David on right).

inset: David during the time he was studying with the Jehovah's Witnesses.

above: David and Debra during their dating years.

high school, so it meant a lot to me. But on that particular day, for some reason, I just took the rings and put them in the nightstand drawer. I didn't give this much thought, but I never went back to wearing them.

Debra and I continued dating. And then it happened! One Sunday in August 1980, during the evening service, her father gave an altar call. I didn't even know what he had preached, but at that moment, I fell under heavy conviction. I stood at the pew, gripping it tightly, not knowing what to do. Finally, I went forward to the altar.

I really didn't know how to pray, but the pastor encouraged me to confess anything that came to my mind. So, as God revealed things to me, I confessed them. In the end, I couldn't think of anything else to confess, and he explained that I now had to believe that Jesus does what He promised. By faith, I believed! Although I did feel somewhat lighter and cleaner, there was no dramatic emotional response. I wasn't sure what had happened. The next morning, however, while driving back to Indianapolis, as I was coming up to the exit for Lafayette, God's Spirit fell on me in the car, and I just started bawling.

I knew enough to read my Bible, and God the Holy Spirit began to open my understanding of Scripture. Before I went back up to see Debra, I felt the need for a haircut. It wasn't because I had heard preaching on this topic. It was because God's Spirit was guiding me to make changes in my life. Debra's father helped me find a church to attend in Indianapolis. Then God started dealing with me about working on Sunday, so I told my brothers I couldn't work on Sunday anymore. The Holy Spirit kept helping me make additional changes and establish a set of personal convictions, all without me having heard any preaching on any of these things. I simply listened to and followed the leading of the Holy Spirit.

\* \* \* \* \*

I'm concerned about the condition of our churches today. On the one hand there are liberals who point at conservatives and say, "You don't need to live like that." On the other side there are conservatives who try to live their religion through their standards without their hearts being right. I believe God told me to stay in the middle of the road and not go to one extreme or the other, and that's what I'm trying to do.

I'm so grateful for a God who, in 1968, heard the cry of a teenage boy, moved a family from central Indiana to northwest Indiana, and took a particular young lady and put her in proximity to me so that I could find the very thing for which I had cried out to Him!

And, just in case you were wondering, I married that young lady in 1982! 📌

**David Gumbiner** is a Senior Program Manager for Anthology Inc, a software company that implements various systems for colleges and universities. He has also worked in banking, state and local government, and higher education. Dave and his wife Debra live in Crown Point, IN.

*out of darkness into light*

CONVERSION STORIES

# from HEAD KNOWLEDGE to PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

by Nathan Gumbiner

I was privileged to grow up in a strong Christian home with parents who took us to church, emphasized loving and serving Jesus, and worked hard to make sure we knew how important a relationship with Jesus is. Even with all of that Christian influence in my life, my conversion didn't happen until the summer between my sophomore and junior years at God's Bible School.

I had asked God to forgive me many times as I grew up, but many of those moments were tied to an emotional event or my feelings of guilt for something I had done. Those moments were often followed by a week or so of trying to live for Jesus and have a devotional life; but, all too quickly, I would easily give up.

Something special happened to me when I was 13. I felt God place a call on my life to be a pastor. Whether that was the result of an emotional moment or God actually speaking to me through his Holy Spirit, I'm not sure. What I do know is that this became a defining moment for

me. From then on, all I wanted to do was to go to GBS and become a preacher.

As many young people do, I struggled spiritually during my teen years. When I enrolled in college at GBS in the fall of 2004, I was not even following Jesus. But I went knowing I was called into ministry. I was too scared to do anything else.

While in my freshman year, the facade I had fabricated blew up. During the spring semester I spent many hours in meetings with the Discipline Committee. I lost the opportunity to travel on the College Choir tour and Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble tour. I even failed one of my classes. I was embarrassed and humiliated.

When I returned to school for my sophomore year, I was determined to clear my name. I moved into a new room, went to class, and worked hard. Pretty soon I had created a *new* facade that everything was going well. But deep inside I knew that I really wasn't following Jesus. I spent all day learning about Him and how to tell others about Him, but I did not have a personal relationship with Him.

I went home for the summer and worked for my uncle on a construction job. I was miserable. Here I was, halfway through my college experience, preparing for ministry, and I didn't even know Jesus personally!

But I'll never forget the day of July 20, 2007. I was standing on the side of a half-finished house when I had an encounter with God that changed me completely. It was in that moment that I finally surrendered my life to Jesus and asked him to forgive me. He became my Lord and Savior. Many moments of surrender and repentance have happened since then, but on that day I became a one-hundred-percent follower of Jesus! ■

*Nathan Gumbiner is Lead Pastor at Connect Church, Frisco, TX. He graduated from GBS in 2010 with a BA in ministerial education and an AA in music ministry. He is the son of David Gumbiner (author of previous article p.8). He and his wife Allyson have three children, Rhett (4), Sadie (3), Myles (1), and another one on the way.*



above: Nathan as a GBS student, running sound for the annual Christmas production.

OCTOBER 2024



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, pickle ball, and other activities near the river! By the week’s end, all necessary information had been dispensed, various surveys completed, and class schedules finalized. The 2024-25 academic year had begun!

**NEW SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS!**

Incoming freshmen arrived on Tuesday, August 13, 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 was an open-gym period followed by a guided tour of the campus.

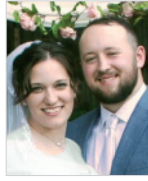
New Student Orientation started the next day. Students were able to



# REVIVALIST FAMILY

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

**WEDDINGS**



**Sadie Beilfuss to Derek Dersheid (AA '22)**, June 8, 2024, in Ludington, MI. The outdoor wedding was officiated by the bride’s father, Rev. Ryan Beilfuss. Derek is a direct care specialist at Pineview Homes (faith-based residential boys home) and

Sadie is an insurance agent for Taylor Insurance Agency, both in Ewart, MI. While a student at GBS, Derek worked as the school’s joint head of security for a year. He is also continuing his education, pursuing a degree in social work at Indiana Wesleyan University. The couple resides in Ewart, MI.



**Kaley Brooke Quesenberry (HS '22, AA '24) to Collin Laird Martin**, August 10, 2024, in the Adcock Chapel, God’s Bible School and College, Cincinnati, OH, with the Revs. Duane Quesenberry (father of the bride), and Harold Martin (father of the groom) officiating. The couple resides in Salem, IL, where Collin works for The Estate Planning Center and Kaley works for 6:10 Coffee Company. Parents of the bride are Valorie (Bender) Quesenberry (BSM '94), GBS Director of Financial Aid, and Duane A. Quesenberry (BRE '94), Director of GBS Public Relations.

**DEATHS**

**Vivian Cossett Whittle**, 88, of New Castle, IN, passed away April 14, 2024, at Glen Oaks Health Campus in New Castle. She was born on March 18,

**Enrollment.** Current fall semester enrollment is 416 undergraduate students, 23 graduate students, and 215 K-12 students in Aldersgate Christian Academy. We are grateful to God that so many young people 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.

**Sunday Morning.** In the opening convocation of the 125th school year, Mike Yancey, Director of Development, presented the Divisional and Endowed Scholarships, as well as the Wingrove Taylor Legacy Awards for the 2024-25 academic year (details on following pages).

After the presentation of scholarships, President Loper began his sermon by asking, "What do you do when it seems like God's Word is contradicting facts...or when God is asking you to do something that does not make sense?" We tend to focus on facts, logic, and sense. But God is able to do things that defy "facts."

When considering the Creation account in Genesis, it defies human logic for anything to be created from nothing. The parting of the Red Sea, the sun standing still, a donkey speaking, an axe head floating, feeding 5,000 with only five loaves and two fish, Peter walking on the water—all are impossible, right? But all became possible when God entered the equation. It is easy to read these Scriptures and marvel at what God did. But it is much harder to believe that God can do something like that in our personal lives.

What happens when God seems to be asking us to do something that is inconceivable? We normally review the data, evaluate it from every angle, and conclude that there is no way the dots connect. After all, we know our own abilities. We know the skill set we possess. And, if we respond affirmatively to what God is asking, family and friends may disapprove or doubt we are actually hearing from God. We can respond

by trusting only in what we humanly can see, do, understand, and personally work out; or we can take God at His word.

He closed with several examples of situations in which students might find themselves: "I am in Cincinnati, but I prefer the country. I am really afraid of my class schedule. I have never seen a syllabus before. I have no idea how I am going to pay my school bill. I don't make friends easily. My roommate is weird. I am not sure what God's plan is for me."

The good news is that God lives in Cincinnati, too. It is okay to be afraid, but trust God. The same God that provided money from the mouth of a fish knows how to pay your school bill. "Tribulation worketh patience," so that could be why you have the roommate you have. If you show yourself friendly, you will have friends. If you don't know God's plan, just focus on knowing God.

All around the world, people have taken their place in ➡

1936, to Leo Dillard and Fletie Mary (Piercy) Dishman. Vivian moved to New Castle in 1950 and attended New Castle Chrysler High School. She attended Knightstown Bethel Holiness Church and was a Sunday school teacher. A homemaker most of her life, rearing her children was her greatest joy. Vivian was also a foster grandparent for 16 years.



Vivian is survived by her children, Vincent (Jo) Whittle, Robert (Connie) Whittle, Gary (Laura) Whittle, Vanessa (James) Heppeard, Roger Whittle, Ronnie (Ingrid) Whittle, David (Wilma) Whittle; several grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews. Graveside services were held on Wednesday, April 17, at Green Hills Memory Gardens.

Vivian's daughter, Vanessa Heppeard (BRE '85), worked at God's Bible School in various capacities for

21 years, most notably as secretary/administrative assistant to the president for eleven years ending in 2002. Vanessa's husband, James (BA '95) worked at GBS for 13 years in various capacities, most notably in security (Director of Safety) until 2001.



**Blaine Edward Hartman**, 33, passed away July 2, 2024, as the result of a motorcycle accident. He was born on February 24, 1991, in Chadron, NE, the third of four children to Bob and Elayne Hartman. Shortly after, his family moved to Fairbanks, AK, where he grew up loving all things Alaska: snow machines, motorcycles, fishing, hunting, friends, and adventures. He graduated from high school at Far North Christian School before attending God's Bible School and College for five years, graduating with an AAS in 2014.

Blaine married Lizzie Calhoun on July 26, 2014, and their home was blessed with two sons, Anthony ➡

➡ Kingdom service despite their fears—people who have decided simply to say, “I am going to trust God above facts and appearances. I am going to do what He asked me to do. It may not make sense humanly speaking, but here I am.”

**Sunday evening.** In the evening service, Public Relations Director Duane Quesenberry spoke on “Living a Focused Life.” Noting the energy he felt among the students and understanding the ambitions they have for life, he cautioned them to savor the moment and be careful not to rush by the scenic vistas along the way as they hurry to the waterfall at the end of the trail. Learn to live at every stage of life and to savor the moment.

Youthful ambitions can cause impatience and hasty choices that may later be regretted. When the ambition of youth and the purpose

of God are aligned, a focused life emerges. It is important that these be aligned NOW to avoid a frustrated life.

Rev. Quesenberry used the life of Joseph as an illustration. Joseph had ambition, as was manifested in the dreams he had, and God had a purpose for his life. Against all the odds of a dysfunctional family, Joseph harnessed his dreams to the discipline of personal character, and he ended up right where God wanted him to be—the throne of Egypt.

When you feel insignificant—a face in a sea of faces, understand that God already knows you intimately. Any past dysfunction does not need to prevent the future dreams God has given to you. Against all the odds, you can align the ambition God plants in your heart with the purpose God has for your life. The choices made over the

next 10 years will greatly determine how you live the rest of your years.

### DIVISIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Michael Yancey, Director of Advancement, presented the scholarships for the 2024-25 academic year. He began by reminding the congregation that a scholarship is not just financial aid, but it is also recognition of one’s hard work and commitment towards education and ministry.

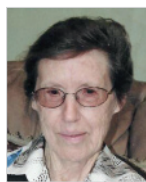
Divisional Scholarships, awarded by each division, are based on merit. These are the most competitive scholarships given by the college, covering either half or full tuition according to financial need. Recipients must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, consider their academic studies a sacred trust, receive a good evaluation of spiritual and social

# REVIVALIST FAMILY continued

➡ (7) and Oakley (3). Blaine received certification as a Surgical Technologist in 2020, and it was his joy to serve others and provide for his family as a surgical tech at Fairbanks Surgery Center. He was active in serving the Lord at Southside Community Fairbanks Native Chapel where, as a friend, mentor, and role model, he picked up van loads of children for the Wednesday kids program. He was a blessing in ministry to his father-in-law, Pastor Tim Calhoun. He had a strong passion for serving youth and wanted to point them to Jesus. He was always helping others, living out his servant heart to people of all ages.

Though Blaine’s death was a shock and tragedy to the many who loved him, he lived ready to meet His God whom he served faithfully. His memorial service was filled past capacity, with approximately 60 people left standing outside the church. Well loved by the community, he was laid to rest in a handmade coffin, hand-painted by his family and the Wednesday night kids, to await Resurrection Morning!

Blaine is survived by his wife, Lizzie; sons, Anthony and Oakley; parents, Bob and Elayne Hartman; brothers, Keith and Daron Hartman; grandparents, Neil and Esther Hartman; parents-in-law, Tim and Pam Calhoun; sister-in-law, Laura (Juan) Calderon; two nieces, one nephew, and many other extended relatives.



### Georgia Belle Prichard, 99, of

Grayson, KY, went to be with the Lord on Friday, July 12, 2024, at the Community Hospice Care Center in Ashland, KY. She was born January 20, 1925, in John’s Run, Carter County, KY, to Charles F. and Mae V. (Kitchen) Prichard.

Georgia obtained her teaching degree from Morehead State University and taught for 42 years at the elementary school in Hitchens, KY. She loved listening to gospel music, gardening, and reading. Georgia was a lifelong member of the Willard Wesleyan Church, Warfield, KY. She was a GBS donor, annuitant, and a *God’s Revivalist* subscriber.

relations, and remain in a bachelor's degree program. Josiah England was awarded the *Martin Wells Knapp Ministerial Scholarship* and Briana Epp was awarded the *R.E. McNeill Music Scholarship*.

### WINGROVE TAYLOR LEGACY AWARDS

*Wingrove Taylor Legacy Awards* are given to international students who require financial assistance. Recipients must be enrolled in a bachelor's degree program, maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher, consider their academic studies a sacred trust, and receive a good evaluation of spiritual and social relations. Additionally, they must have a call to Christian ministry and a commitment to return to their home country after completing

their degree and to serve in an area of ministry for at least two years. Those receiving the *Wingrove Taylor Legacy Awards* for this year are: David Acalco, Victoria Dupte, Mounica Gera, Daniel Joseph, Minha (David) Kim, Jerome Koke, Jason Liu, Immer Landero, Abigail Montero, Mahatma Alcala, and Christophilda Tum.

### ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

Endowed Scholarships are primarily awarded according to financial need and are made possible by the generosity of alumni and friends of God's Bible School and College. They are awarded by divisions. The Professional Studies Division includes missions, education, nursing, business, and all other general studies. Dr. Lyle Witt, who chairs this division, presented these scholarships.

Each year, Mission Helps gives a scholarship to assist and encourage missions students in their preparation to get to the foreign field. Mission Helps chose Abigail Montero to receive their scholarship.

Dr. Phil Brown presented the Ministerial Education Division scholarships and Dr. Jana Pop presented the Music Division endowed scholarships.

The *Charles and Deborah McWilliams Family Scholarship for Graduate Students* was awarded to Patrick Kinyanjui and Jacob Litchfield.

For a complete listing of the Endowed Scholarships, including those newly founded, please see the list on pages 20-21.

### NEW SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, we give special recognition to new scholarships being awarded for the first time. This ➡



Georgia is survived by two sisters, Carolyn L. Davis and Dorothy J. Abbott; four brothers, Allen (Donna), Harlan (Kathleen), James, and Herbert Prichard; and many nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at the Sparks Funeral Home, Grayson, KY, officiated by David Wilcox. Burial followed at the Kitchen Family Cemetery in Willard.



**Helen Juanita Schenck**, 98, of Lakeland, FL, passed away August 3, 2024. Helen was born May 19, 1926, in Greenfield, IN. As a sister before her had died at birth, Helen became the oldest of four children. Her father, Harry Shepherd, was a pastor who taught at Frankfort Pilgrim College, Frankfort, IN. Helen gave her heart to Jesus as a young child. After she graduated from high school, she went to Frankfort Pilgrim College and earned a Bachelor of Theology degree.

Helen was married to Melvin Lee Schenck for 64 years until he went to heaven in 2012. Together they

had five children. Helen was very involved in the churches she attended, playing the piano and organ, giving piano lessons to children, teaching Sunday school, and directing the women's missionary organization. She was also Outreach Director for the Florida District of The Wesleyan Church for many years.

Helen was survived by her children: Patricia (Dennis) Waymire; Juanita (Eduardo) Garcia; Sharon (Dalbert) Walker; Deborah (Dwayne) Winterberg; and Kenneth (Angela) Schenck. All the children are either married to ministers or are ministers. Sharon Walker worked at GBS as Housekeeping Supervisor from 1978 to 1979 and Work Department Supervisor from 1979 to 1981. Her husband, Dalbert, served on the faculty from 1978 to 1983.

Helen is also survived by 11 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at Aldersgate Free Methodist Church, Indianapolis, IN, followed by burial at Memorial Park Cemetery in Indianapolis. ➡

➡ year, we had the honor of presenting three new scholarships.

**The Rev. Charles and Nina Fowler Memorial Scholarship** was established by Mr. Keith Fowler in memory of his parents, Rev. Charles and Nina Fowler, who were passionate about old-time religion and the holiness way. They wanted to create a scholarship to promote holiness

through the younger generations, so that they can follow their passion and the calling that God has laid upon them in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Mr. Keith Fowler presented the first Rev. Charles and Nina Fowler Memorial Scholarship to Immer Landero.

**The Steve Stetler Memorial Missions Scholarship** was estab-

lished by the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches, who designated Beth Stetler to be the scholarship founder, in loving memory of Steve Stetler. The purpose of the Steve Stetler Memorial Missions Scholarship is to provide an annual scholarship to college students who are pursuing missions. Mrs. Beth Stetler presented the first Steve Stetler Memorial Missions Scholarship to Immer Landero.

**The Steven Smith Memorial Scholarship** was established to honor the life and ministry of Steven Smith, who, at the age of 38, went to be with Jesus on Sunday, January 14, 2024. Steven was a Christian public school teacher for 14 years. He was known as a champion for students and his impact



Keith and Roseanna Fowler pose with Immer Landero, recipient of the Fowler Memorial Scholarship.



Beth Stetler presents Immer Landero with the Steve Stetler Memorial Missions Scholarship.

# REVIVALIST FAMILY continued



**Stephen Buell Cary**, 72, departed for his heavenly home on August 3, 2024. He was born December 28, 1951, in Greenville, SC, to Gordon and Thelma (Buell) Cary. He was the second of four siblings. Most of Steve's growing-up years were spent in Hot Springs, SD, where his father pastored a Wesleyan Church and worked at Brainard Indian School as administrator and teacher. Steve had a true love for the Black Hills of South Dakota and returned numerous times over the years.

After graduating from Hot Springs High School in 1970, Steve attended Kansas City College and Bible School (now Kansas Christian College), Overland Park, KS, and received a Bachelor of Arts in missions. He went on to receive an MA in counseling and human services in 2000 from the University of Colorado. While attending KCCBS, Stephen met Grace Gates, and they were united in marriage, June 16, 1973. To their marriage were born three

children: one daughter, Stephanie Marie; and two sons, Stephenson Brooks, and Matthew Gordon. In June of last year, Stephen and Grace celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with a gathering of family and friends.

After graduating from college, Steve and his family moved to Mount Zion Bible School, Ava, MO, where Steve was a teacher, boys' softball coach, and sponsor for the school trio. In the summer of 1983, Steve began his first full-time pastorate at the Church of God (Holiness), Lowry City, MO. In June 1990, they moved to West Virginia where Steve pastored the Church of God (Holiness) in Ashford. In the fall of 1992, they moved to Colorado where they resided for the next twenty-eight years. During those years, Steve earned his masters degree and worked as a counselor in the Federal Penitentiary, Florence, CO, and for the Colorado Department of Corrections in Canon City, CO. For the last twelve years in Colorado, he served as pastor for the Mountain View Church of God (Holiness) in Loveland.





The family of Steven Smith presents a memorial scholarship to Breanna Crowl (center).

was deeply felt among students, colleagues, and his family. Steven's family desires to honor his memory and teaching legacy by awarding a

scholarship each academic year to a student going into teacher education. Dustin and Kendra (Smith) Muir, along with Kendra's sister,

Kari Smith, presented the first Steven Smith Memorial Scholarship to Breanna Crowl.

GBS is thankful for the many alumni and friends whose selflessness, generosity, and vision make these scholarships possible. Their loyal support, faithful partnership, and giving have enabled us to award a total of \$160,450 in scholarships this year. Congratulations to all our scholarship recipients. We are counting on them to be exemplary in their academic studies and to be role models of Christian character among their fellow students.

### FALL PICNIC

Around 9:30 a.m. Tuesday morning, August 27, the school bus pulled away from campus loaded with students headed for Miami Whitewater Forest, Harrison, OH. Others followed in ➡



In July 2020, Steve and Grace retired and moved to Fordland, MO, where they enjoyed living closer to their children, grandchildren, and other family and friends.

Steve is survived by his wife, Grace; daughter, Stephanie Marie (Loyal) Auterson; sons, Stephenson Brooks Cary and Matthew Gordon (Kara) Cary; five grandchildren; one brother, David Walter (Holley) Cary; one sister, Esther Laverne (Ron) Allred; and one sister-in-law, Margaret (Philip-deceased) Cary; and many nieces, nephews, and other extended family. Funeral services were held at the Lowry City Church of God (Holiness), and he was laid to rest in Lowry City Cemetery, Lowry City, MO. Steve was a *God's Revivalist* subscriber.



**Rev. Paul E. Pierpoint**, 90, of Hobe Sound, FL, transitioned to his heavenly home on the morning of August 6, 2024. He was born April 9, 1934, in a northern New York town only 23 miles from the Canadian border, to Rev. and Mrs. Milton

Pierpoint. He was born in a parsonage and lived in parsonages most of his life. His father was a pastor and leader in the New York District of the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Paul's first encounter with Christ was at the age of five when in a revival service in North Troy, NY, he surrendered his heart to Christ. The call of God to pastoral ministry was placed upon him as a teenager. Paul attended United Wesleyan College, Allentown, PA (formerly Allentown Bible College), receiving a Bachelor of Religious Education degree in 1957. He married Leila Price in July 1957. They remained partners in ministry for nearly 67 years.

Paul was ordained in July of 1959. He pastored in Maryland, Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania. In 1978, he was elected to the position of Missionary Secretary for the New York Pilgrim Conference. His administrative duties required him to travel to the countries of Brazil, Haiti, and Canada, where he also served on the board of the Society of Indian Missions. ➡



Students enjoy the sand volleyball court at Miami Whitewater Forest.

➔ their own vehicles. Disembarking after the 25-mile journey, students and staff participated in a number of fun activities, including volleyball, softball, football, spike ball, corn hole, soccer, disk golf, and fellowship. The grill was han-

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

**CHRISTMAS PROGRAM  
DECEMBER 6, 7, 8**

Written by music faculty member Mike DeStefano, *Good News* is an invitation to rejoice in the incarnation! In this year's program we meet Margot, a young professional who is directing a Christmas program at her local church, while juggling the sometimes chaotic demands of life at Christmastime—work, family, relationships—all the normal human things. We journey with her as she experiences the story of the Incar-

nation and realizes that God With Us redeems all of life—even the parts that don't always seem to make sense. *Good News* will be staged in two locations this year: the Adcock Chapel on Friday, December 6 (7:30 p.m.) and Sunday, December 8 (6:00 p.m.), and The Answers Center at the Ark Encounter on Saturday, December 7 (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, will include pre-performance photo booths, after-performance complimentary refreshments for on-campus performances, and festive

# REVIVALIST FAMILY

continued

In 1982, Paul became the Director of Public Relations for Hobe Sound Bible College, Hobe Sound, FL. As a former pastor, he found delight in working with and mentoring some of the young ministerial students with whom he traveled in vocal ensembles. In 1990, he returned to Florida as the Senior Pastor of Hobe Sound Bible Church, serving for 17 years. While Senior Pastor, he also served on the boards of Hobe Sound Bible College and FEA Ministries. For two years he assumed the Presidency of FEA Ministries. Following the conclusion of full-time pastoral ministry in 2007, Pastor Pierpoint continued to travel in itinerant ministry, assisting in churches which had a pastoral vacancy.

On June 12, Paul's wife of 66 years, Leila Price Pierpoint, preceded him in death. He is survived by his daughters Evangeline (Rodney) Addison and Paula Pierpoint; sisters, Marjorie Warner and Esther Marcy; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and many beloved nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at the Hobe Sound Bible Church, Hobe Sound, FL. Committal followed at the South Harlem Memorial Gardens, Harlem, Georgia.



**Alice Marie Weingard, 83**, left this earth from Miltonvale, KS, on August 23, 2024, to finish her birthday celebration in Heaven. She was born at home on August 23, 1941 in Guitonville, PA, a daughter of Allan Amos Whitton and Frances Rebekah (Bortzer) Whitton.

Alice was a 1959 graduate of East Forest High. She obtained a BA in elementary education from Clarion University, Clarion, PA. She went on to pursue a master's degree in elementary education with a minor in American history at Penn State University, University Park, PA. Alice began her career as a sixth grade teacher in the public school district of Warren, PA. She met the love of her life, Francis Weingard, through a mutual connection in the Free Methodist Conference. After their marriage on August 9, 1969, they moved to GBS (1969-71) where both were on faculty and Alice was also assistant librarian.

As children were added to the family, they moved to Guitonville, where she became a stay-at-home mom. Her life was filled with sewing, gardening, and preserv-



God's Bible School's combined choirs, orchestra, and cast perform their annual Christmas program in the auditorium of the Answers Center at the Ark Encounter.

lights following The Answers Center performance (ChristmasTime at Ark Encounter). You may want to con-

sider this in planning your arrival/leave time. For more information, consult our website at

[www.gbs.edu/christmas-program](http://www.gbs.edu/christmas-program). Additional information will also be in the next issue of *God's Revivalist*. ■



ing the harvest to feed her growing family. When her family's church (Marienville Church of the Bible Covenant) began a school, she sent her two oldest children on opening day. Alice joined the teaching staff two years later and continued teaching there until 1986.

In 1989, the family moved back to GBS where Alice taught history and elementary education classes and worked as the librarian. The following summer, she began a graduate degree in Library Science at Clarion University, Clarion, PA. She completed that degree and continued working at GBS until 1999 when she and her husband moved to Colorado, where she became a consultant for hundreds of homeschoolers through Vision Homeschool.

In 2007, Alice and Francis moved to Allegheny Wesleyan College, Salem, OH, where she worked as librarian and teacher and assisted with the school accreditation process. In 2008, while Francis was in Colorado taking care of the house and property they still owned there, he was seriously injured in an automobile accident. After months in the hospital, he succumbed to his injuries.

Alice moved to Bedford, IN, in 2017. She was 76 years old but refused just to sit around. Alice finished

her fifty-year teaching career in the 5th and 6th grade classroom at Stone City Christian Academy, Bedford.

Alice was preceded in death by her husband of 39 years, Francis LeRoy Weingard (BA '91). She is survived by her five daughters, Dixie Lee (BA '92) (Jeff) Epp; Holly Marie (1989-92) (Tim) Miller (BRE '92); Heidi JoAnn (BA '94) (Mike) Echols; Jodi Lynn (HS '92, BA '97) (James) Randel (2000-01); Lyndi Sue (HS '94, AA '98) (Matthew) Booth; 21 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren, with two on the way; four sisters, Elmira Elizabeth Whitton, Rose Mary Schill (BA '68), Sandra Singleton, and Susan Rebekah Whitton; and many nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at Community Methodist Church, Marienville, PA, with Rev. Nathan Bryant officiating. Burial followed at Guitonville Cemetery.

All of Alice's children, three of her sons-in-law, and several of her grandchildren are GBS alumni. One granddaughter, Brianna Epp, is a current student. In addition to Alice and Francis, two of their daughters also worked on staff at GBS: Heidi as high school faculty and assistant librarian (1988-99) and Jodi in housekeeping (1991-92) and as head cook (1997-2001). ■



# ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

God's Bible School & College  
2024-25 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**

Darin Baldwin, Seth Schott, Tiffany Smith

**Allan Clarence Strong Scholarship**

Tristan Austin, Konrad Clemens, Jerrel Collins, Josiah Hilling, Caden Janofski, Minha (David) Kim, Anson Shuey, Bryan Witt, Landon Witt

**Alvin and Gelene Hodge Scholarship**

Julianna Wright

**Betty L. Wallace Farmer Memorial Scholarship**

Abigail McHugh

**C. Helen Mooshian Scholarship**

Mounica Gera

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

Immer Landero

**Charles & Deborah McWilliams Family Scholarship**

Jacob Litchfield, Patrick Kinyanjui

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## Dear Phil

## USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN BIBLE STUDY

***I hear you've been using AI (artificial intelligence) to study Scripture and do research. What have you used it to do, and what are the dangers of AI you've encountered? —John R.***

Dear John,

I am excited about what I've discovered AI can do. Much of my work with AI has been on the scholarly side. But AI can be highly useful for non-specialists. Out of the many AI platforms, the two I use are Claude.ai and ChatGPT.com. I experimented first with these because they were recommended to me. I have been fairly satisfied (~90%) with the results I have gotten from them. I'll mention some AI weaknesses and the dangers I've discovered toward the end of my response.

Here are some ways AI has helped me study Scripture. (1) Generate translation comparisons of English versions. I asked Claude to identify the references where a list of English Bible translations use the word "integrity" and to assess what it found. (2) Compare Hebrew, Greek, and Latin translations of texts where the word "dragon" was used in the KJV. These examples help me understand nuances across different translations and languages. (3) Translate German, Latin, and French commentaries on Scripture. The 18th century scholar, Albrecht Bengel, composed treatises in both Latin and German that have yet to be translated to English. Claude handled translating his

work beautifully. This opens up access to valuable historical sources.

In all these uses, I have tools that allow me to double-check the results to verify them. I have found Claude to be generally more reliable than ChatGPT when it comes to working with original language questions. But I often cross-check the results. For example, I will take Claude's answer and ask ChatGPT to evaluate it for factual accuracy and conceptual breadth, or vice versa.

To help me with this column, I asked Claude, "What are the ways you can be used in Bible study?" Here's a summary of the list he provided: Verse lookup and cross-referencing / Explanations of difficult passages and theological concepts / Language analysis of Greek and Hebrew words / Comparative analysis of different translations / Thematic studies across the Bible / Answering questions about biblical events, characters, or teachings / Engaging in thoughtful dialogue about biblical topics / Creating study outlines / Providing cultural and historical context / Explaining various theological viewpoints and doctrines.

The quality of answers you get depends on the quality of questions you ask. That is certainly true in

working with AI. If you are interested in experimenting with AI for Bible study, I would encourage you to ask it these questions: "In what areas of Bible studies are you most likely to make mistakes or hallucinate?" and "How can the user frame queries that maximize your strengths and minimize or guard against your weaknesses?" The answers will help you ask better questions and use AI more effectively.

The first danger that any AI worth its salt will warn you about is that it can make mistakes. It is both fallible and finite. It won't ever be omniscient. AIs are most accurate when dealing with hard facts, e.g., where does the KJV use forms of the word "perfect?" AIs are most prone to error when asked to provide citations, quotes, or references to scholarly literature. These should always be double-checked.

I have most enjoyed using AI as a dialogue partner to critique or strengthen my ideas. It can offer alternate perspectives and help identify gaps in reasoning. I may ask it how John Wesley and John Calvin would likely respond to an interpretation of Scripture I have. Since the works of Wesley and Calvin are public domain, it can provide reasonable answers along with citations from their works to justify its answer.

Approach AI critically when using it for Bible study. Verify its claims and use it to enhance, not replace, your personal engagement with Scripture. My advice: Embrace the potential of AI to expand your biblical knowledge and understanding, but maintain a discerning approach. AI is a powerful tool, but it's no substitute for common sense, spiritual discernment, or the guidance of the Holy Spirit in understanding Scripture.

Blessings,  
Phil 📖

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

[pbrown@gbs.edu](mailto:pbrown@gbs.edu)



## student focus

### TEN COMMANDMENTS IN PUBLIC CLASSROOMS

On June 19, Louisiana became the first state to require the Ten Commandments to be displayed in “large, easily readable font” in public school classrooms. Those successfully promoting the bill’s passage argued that it is okay to display the Ten Commandments because as “foundational documents of our state and national government,” they have historical significance. The Civil Liberties Union said that it will sue the state over the measure.

### SUNDAY BEACH CLOSURE

One of the stops made by various GBS PR groups over the years on their summer tours has been Ocean Grove, 11 acres of New Jersey beachfront property owned by the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association. Since New Jersey granted its charter in 1870, they have set their own rules and have kept the beach closed before noon on Sundays.

Recently, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection ordered the association to stop blocking Sunday beach access or risk fines up to \$25,000 a day. While the association has appealed the order, they have agreed to give access to the beach on Sunday mornings to avoid the hefty fines while they continue to fight in the courts.

### GENDER-AFFIRMING SURGERY RESULTS IN INCREASED SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

The message often heard from news sources is that there is a growing acceptance of transgender individuals, and that transgender individuals have a higher rate of depression which leads to an increase in thoughts of suicide as well as actual suicide attempts. To lower these risks, we are told that “gender affirmation procedures” should be promoted for these individuals.

However, a recent study found that individuals who underwent gender-affirming surgery were 12 times more likely to attempt suicide than those who did not have surgery. Despite this, the American Academy of Pediatrics decided to “reaffirm” its stance on pushing child gender transition operations and ordered a “systematic review” amid a growing number of states outlawing the practice.

### U.K. CHRISTIANS HESITANT TO SHARE THEIR FAITH

A survey of 2,064 U.K. adults, commissioned by the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life, revealed that nearly 38% of British Christians agreed with the statement, “I prefer not to tell people about my faith or religious belief.” Experts suggest that this may be attributed to factors such as a rise in antisemitism as well as uncertainty about one’s religious identity. ■

**JACOB WILSON** hails from Crossville, TN, and has been going to church all of his life. In recent years, he has been working in instrument refurbishing and sales at the Musicians Pick, his grandfather’s music store. He decided to attend GBS because he wanted to deepen his relationship with God while pursuing a business degree. While he isn’t called into full-time ministry, he wants to minister through whatever he does. He recalls a statement from Dr. Dan Glick in one of his classes: “Make your ministry your business and your business your ministry.” His studies are preparing him to do just that. He says, “GBS is giving me a more grounded spiritual foundation which is preparing me for ministry in whatever capacity.”

Jacob is currently working on an AA in Business and intends to graduate in 2025. Afterward, he plans to help run his grandfather’s music store with his mom and younger brother Jonathan. ■

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

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*My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music.  
Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn.  
I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples.  
For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.  
—Psalm 57:7-10 NIV*



## *A Lingering Song*

*by Andrea Sanborn*

I roll over, open my eyes to a new day. My heart breathes thanks, and I notice it again: a lingering song.

I have awakened to a phrase or a chorus most days now for a number of years, seeping into my consciousness with morning's light. Frequently a line from Sunday's worship, sometimes from a time farther back, it welcomes me with the soft reminder to pray. To lift my heart to the One who created this new day; who offers new beginnings, peace and assurance. To the One who knows me best and loves me most.

I consider it a gift from the Spirit, wooing me into His presence as I stretch and open my eyes. Reminding me who and what I live for. A kindness to anoint my day with purpose as I rise.

I have done nothing to deserve this blessing. I don't listen to music often, and I don't seed my bedtime moments with Scripture. Instead, I end the day as I begin it; with a prayer of thanks for God's kindness and mercy toward me. And yet, when I wake, there it is—a soft melody teasing the edges of my growing awareness as darkness gives way to dawn's tender light.

Most mornings the tune whispers in the background of my morning preparations, sometimes so quietly that I barely perceive it. Others, like today, I wake to lyrics flooding my heart with gratitude for another day of life.

I realize that what sings me awake are echoes of worship; those lyrics and verses I offered to Him sometime earlier. And I consider that what we fill our minds with reflects back to us, for good or ill. "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing," Jesus said. "The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" (John 6:63 NIV). Are we filling our lives with His words?

All my life you have been faithful, today's song reminds me. Indeed. I remember the love that has led me from my youth to this day, the comfort I have known in its embrace, this manna that fed me in my wilderness wanderings.

And I marvel at His kindness in reminding me, morning by morning, that I never wake alone. ■

*Andrea Sanborn is an author and blogger who writes about the beauty of faith and the God who loves beyond reason. This post from her blog [andreasanborn.com](http://andreasanborn.com) is used with permission.*





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

## THE BLUE-EYED SIX

**An Alumnus Recounts the Amazing Connection between a Famous 19th Century Murder, His Family, and a Subscription to *God's Revivalist***

*by Larry Rhoad*

In early July 1878, Henry F. Wise, Josiah Hummel, Israel Brandt, and George Zechman met at Brandt's hotel at St. Joseph Springs, Indian-town Gap, Pennsylvania. This group of friends and unsavory business associates conspired to murder their neighbor, Joseph Raber, for an insurance pay-off. Raber was a reclusive 65-year-old man who lived in poverty with his housekeeper in an abandoned charcoal burner's hut in the Blue Mountain area of northern Lebanon County. Raber had no steady employment and depended mainly on the charity of his equally impoverished neighbors.

The conspirators agreed to insure Raber for a total of \$8,000 (the equivalent of nearly \$252,000 today). They told the insurance agent that they had agreed to take care of Raber for the rest of his life and wanted the policy to cover his eventual burial expenses. Amazingly, several assessment-type life insurance policies were sold on Joseph Raber, with his cooperation, with

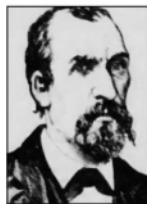
Wise, Hummel, Brandt, and Zechman named as the beneficiaries.

Later that year, the four conspirators enlisted two other men, Charles Drews and Frank Stichler, to drown Raber in Indiantown Creek. They did so, and, without any evidence to the contrary, the coroner ruled the death accidental. (See facsimile of original newspaper announcement, p.26.) Although the local citizenry suspected foul play, it wasn't until two months later, when Drews' son-in-law Joseph Peters reported to the constable that he was an eyewitness to the murder, that the six men were arrested and held for trial.

In a highly unusual move, the six were tried together. Due to this and, perhaps, the fanciful nickname that the conspirators were given by the newspapers (all had blue eyes and were referred to as the Blue-Eyed Six), the trial gained more than its

share of attention. Reporters from throughout the east coast descended on the city of Lebanon, the county seat of Lebanon County, and the story was carried worldwide. The trial began on April 18. The commonwealth's main witness was Drews' son-in-law, but he was only one of thirty-six witnesses called by the prosecution.

The defense called twenty-two witnesses. The witnesses on both sides were mainly friends, neighbors, and family members who contradicted each other at every turn. It became evident that there were many people who knew of, or suspected, the plot before and after Raber's death, but who did not come forward for fear of mortal retaliation. At 3:30 p.m. on April 24, 1879, the fate of the Blue-Eyed Six was left in the hands of the twelve men of the jury.



Israel Brandt



Josiah Hummel



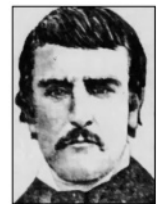
Henry Wise



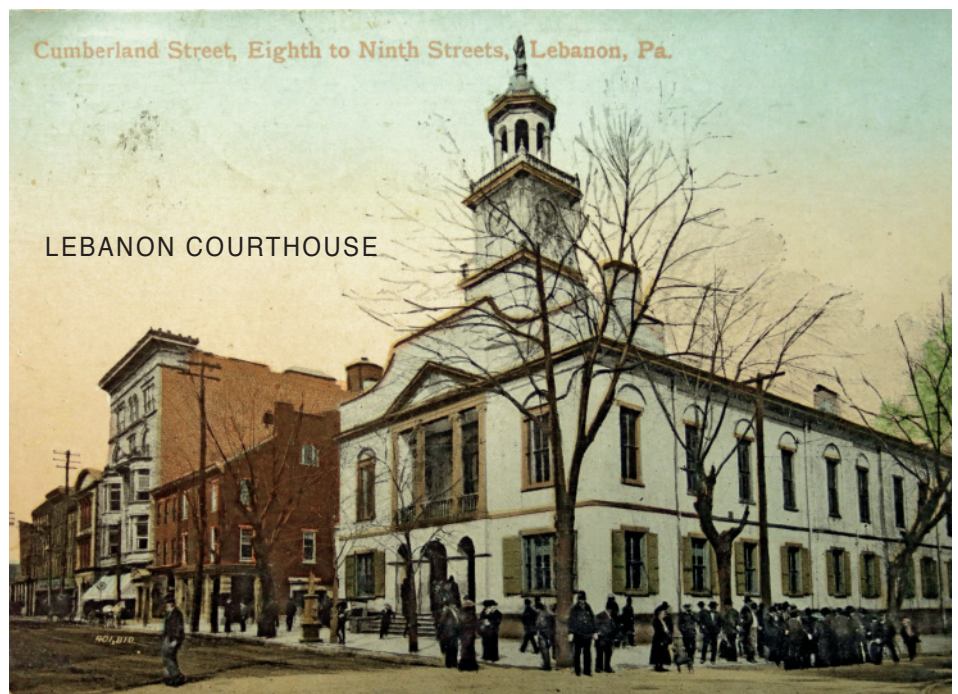
George Zechman



Charles Drews



Frank Stichler



The wait was not long. Five hours later the courthouse bell rang out, announcing that a decision had been made. The jury returned verdicts of “guilty of first-degree murder” for all six of the defendants. Defense requested that the jury be polled, and so the word “guilty” was uttered seventy-two times, once for each defendant from each juror.

The local newspaper noted that it was the first time in the recorded history of common law in the United States and England that six people were convicted of murder on a single indictment. On appeal, the judge awarded defendant George Zechman a new trial, based on the lack of direct evidence presented by the commonwealth against him personally. He was acquitted in his second trial on essentially the same evidence. The other five defendants were sentenced to death by hanging.

Drews and Stichler, who had committed the murder, were hanged first. After all other appeals were exhausted, accomplices Wise, Hummel, and Brandt were hanged the following year. The acquitted Zechman died of natural causes within the decade. Apart from the actual murder trial, the whole proceeding turned out to be an indictment of the murky business of assessment life insurance, which led to major changes in insurance law, particularly with regard to the practice of insuring people in whom one had no legal interest.

The Blue-Eyed Six are sometimes reported to have been hanged and buried in the cemetery at Moonshine United Zion Church near the village of Green Point at Indiantown Gap, near the site of the murder. (The church was named Moonshine because that is the name of the family who donated the land for the church and cemetery.) In actuality, the hangings all took place at the county prison in Lebanon. Although Joseph Raber, the victim, is buried at Moonshine Church, the six conspirators were all buried separately by their families elsewhere in the county.

Why discuss those events in 1878 and 1879? My answer will no doubt surprise you. My paternal grandparents, Warren and Elsie Rhoad, were each a great-grandchild of a member of the Blue-Eyed Six! (Israel Brandt and Charles Drews, respectively)

About a hundred years ago, Elsie Rhoad subscribed to *God’s Revivalist*. She had six children. One son, Chester, was married in February of 1948. Shortly thereafter, he and his wife Mabel, along with his sister Mildred, made their way to GBS to enroll in the Ten Weeks Course.

Mildred became the founding pastor of the God’s Missionary Church, Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

Her love of missions compelled her to support various missionaries and make numerous trips to an Indian mission in South Dakota.

Chester pastored 62 years (often more than one church at a time), built three church buildings and a Christian school (doing most of the work himself), served as a local hospital chaplain for over 40 years, and conducted/preached 1,300 funerals.

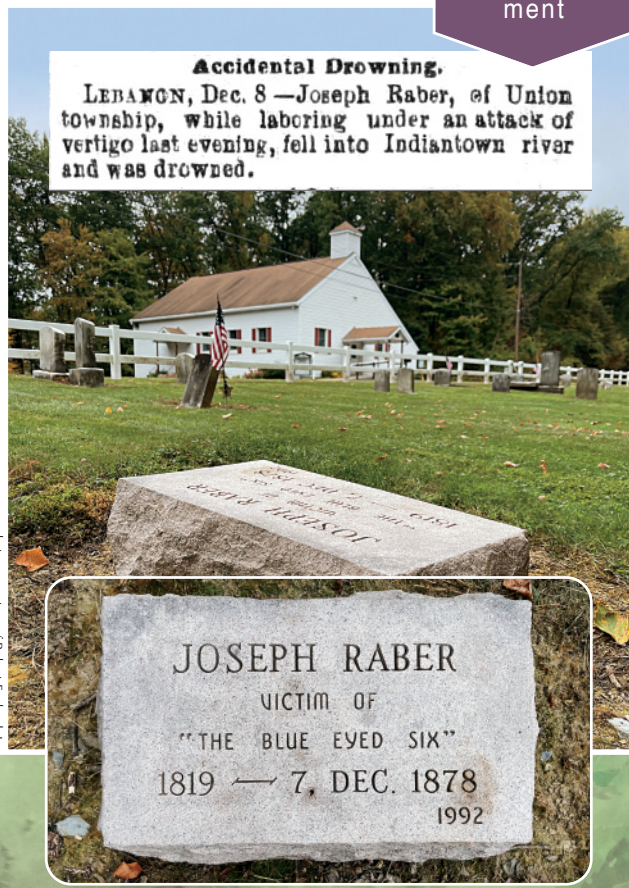
Three of Chester and Mabel’s children attended GBS: Betty (Hersman) (BA ’78), Robert (HS 1967-68), and Larry (BRE ’79). (Yes, I am that Larry!) Additionally, one granddaughter, Melinda (Hersman) Shirk (BA ’99), and four great-grandchildren also attended GBS: Bryanna Shirk (BA ’20), along with three who are currently enrolled—Daniel Shirk, Jacob Wilson (see “Student Focus” p.23), and Jonathan Wilson. Both Daniel and Jacob are GBS Student Government officers! (Daniel is president; Jacob is treasurer.)

Never doubt what God can do through one subscription to *God’s Revivalist*! 📖

**Larry Rhoad** (BRE ’79) pastored for many years, mostly in the Indiana South and Tennessee Districts of The Wesleyan Church. He also served on the Tennessee District Board of Administration, including 12 years as district treasurer. He is currently retired but serving as minister of music at his local church. Larry and his wife, Beverly (Hill) (HS 1969-70), live in Jamestown, TN.

This article includes information taken from “The Blue-Eyed Six” on [Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org).

original newspaper announcement



photos courtesy of Robert England, Jr.



Betty Rhoad Hersman



Robert Rhoad



Larry Rhoad



Beverly Hill Rhoad



Melinda Hersman Shirk



Bryanna Shirk



Daniel Shirk



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GBS YEAR-BOOK PHOTOS

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by Sonja Vernon

## THE FURNACE

*“Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them.” —Daniel 3:26c-27 ESV*

Most of us grew up with the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We can sing the song and recount the details by heart. We know the ending. We aren't worried when the king thunders to heat the furnace seven times hotter, binds the brave men, and throws them in. We know a Fourth Man will show up in that fire, and our three heroes will walk out without even the smell of smoke on their clothing.

But what happens when we face our own furnace? When the fire is hot and we're not sure of the outcome? Fire is powerful. It can do horrible damage. It's natural to be afraid. But as I read this account recently, I was reminded that the fire that killed bystanders had no power over the three young Hebrews. When we figure an all-powerful God into our impossible situation, it is often true that the thing that should destroy us actually becomes an instrument for His glory. We will likely come through the fire stronger than we've ever been. It could even be that the fire will burn away what is harmful, the ropes that hold us back, and leave us free to glorify God in a greater way. Can you trust the Fourth Man? He knows the heat of the furnace. The fire is nothing to fear in His hands. ■

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