

# GOD'S REVIVALIST

December 2024

*and Bible Advocate*



MERRY  
CHRISTMAS

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



# thinking out loud

## NEEDS AND WANTS

*“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 4:19*

Every Christian holds this promise close during all kinds of deprivation—whether poverty, misery, or any other hardship of life. Need food for sustenance? God says your need will be met. We have access to God’s plenteous resources when we are truly in need. The same holds true whether funds are needed for critical and necessary expenditures; strength is needed during a time of struggle; a special physical touch is needed during illness; or support and comfort are needed during spiritual assaults.

This does not guarantee that our needs will be met IMMEDIATELY. While He is aware of the problematic immediacy of our situation, God operates on His perfect schedule. As the former president of GBS, Elmer G. Marsh, often said: “God’s clock keeps perfect time.”

This also does not guarantee that our need will be met in THE WAY WE THINK it should. In fact, it often is not. We might think we need a certain amount of money to repair the transmission on our car in order to get to our workplace. Instead of receiving the money, the transmission might suddenly begin working properly, a friend might fix it for nothing, a new carpooling option or convenient bus route might become available, or we might even receive a new car from an unexpected source. God has many options He can use to meet our needs.

Also, while God does promise to meet our needs, He doesn’t promise to fulfill ALL OUR WANTS. Many like to quote Psalm 37:4: “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” But the rationale here is that IF we delight ourselves in the Lord—as we find His peace and fulfillment—many of our old “wants” will begin to lose importance and fall away. We will be less inclined to desire things for selfish reasons and begin to long for what God desires. Yes, as we delight in the Lord, our desires—and even our wants—will be more closely aligned with His.

However, there are also times that God DOES give us things we want that aren’t absolutely necessary. May we always be grateful to our Heavenly Father for both supplying our needs and blessing us with many additional gifts! —KF ■

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COVER: Photo of a group of current GBS college students by Isaac England. Composite/design by Kevin Moser.

# the president's page



## FAMILY SECRETS

*by Dr. Rodney S. Loper, President*

**D**oes your family have a family secret? You know...that story or event that is only shared in hushed tones or in close family settings? Sometimes they are silly little happenings that are embarrassing to those involved. Other times they are deeply painful events that are left unmentioned, often in hopes that if you ignore them long enough, they will simply go away. Family secrets can shape our identities, influence our relationships, and even affect our future. They can be a source of shame or a point of connection, depending on how they are handled.

### Biblical Examples

When you flip your Bible open to the first chapter of the New Testament, you see many family secrets—or at least family history that isn't at all glamorous. The genealogy of Jesus, found at the beginning of Matthew, is filled with names and stories that reveal a rich tapestry of human experience, including both triumphs and failures.

Take Rahab, for instance. She is a woman whose story doesn't begin very well. We don't know much about her early days or even how she found herself in harlotry, but that is where we find her. Despite her questionable profession, she played a crucial role in the Israelite conquest of Jericho and is celebrated for her faith. Her inclusion in the lineage of Jesus serves as a powerful reminder that our past does not disqualify us from being part of God's plan.

Then there's the story of Ruth. She and her mother-in-law chose to walk away from Ruth's homeland, family, and friends in search of hope. To be sure, this would have been a scandal in that day. The headlines of the newspaper might have

read, “Young widow abandons country, faith, family, and friends in pursuit of personal happiness.” Yet, Ruth’s loyalty and commitment to her mother-in-law Naomi ultimately led her to become the great-grandmother of King David, showcasing how God can redeem anyone!

King David himself is another figure with a complicated family history. He should have been at the battle, leading his men, but he had risen to such a high level of self-importance that he failed his nation at a crucial time. His affair with Bathsheba and the subsequent cover-up through murder are dark chapters in his life. Yet, despite these grave sins, David is included in the genealogy of Jesus. This inclusion serves as a testament to the grace of God who can use flawed and sinful individuals for His divine purposes when they repent and allow God’s grace to transform their lives.

### **Jesus’ Experience**

Jesus’ troubles with His family tree don’t end in the dusty pages of His genealogy. Think with me about the situation into which He was born. His mother, Mary, was unmarried at the time of His conception, a scandalous circumstance in first-century Judea. Joseph, her betrothed, considered divorcing her quietly to spare her public disgrace. Throughout His ministry, Jesus was referred to as illegitimate, a label that would have carried significant stigma. But these things didn’t define Him! He continued going about doing good!

In Scripture, we read a description of Jesus that we often apply to the last week of His life: “a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.” This phrase resonates deeply when we consider the weight of His family history and the challenges He faced. Jesus understands what it means to bear the burdens of a complicated family legacy.

### **Lessons Learned**

So, what can we glean from all of this? First, note with me that your past—your family tree—doesn’t need to define your future. The message of Christmas is that Jesus came into an earthly family tree filled with blight, but He did not come to leave the status quo unchanged. By His grace, He transforms our world. Scriptural phrases of contrast capture this transformation: darkness becomes light; old becomes new; dead is made alive; lost is found; separated is reconciled. These descriptions prove that your past doesn’t need to dictate your future.

The second item of note is that your present has the ability to affect the future. This can be both positive and negative. We started this article by highlighting family

secrets. The unfortunate reality is that these kinds of things can affect a person for years into the future. We must never forget that the consequences of sin (and foolishness) can last for years. I still bear the scars of a sinful life. However, the reverse is also true. People who make a decision to follow Christ can see firsthand the difference it makes in their life, as well as the direct impact it has on their family and friends.

Consider the ripple effect of positive choices. When one person in a family decides to embrace faith in Christ and live a life of integrity, it can inspire others to do the same. Generational curses can be broken, lives can be completely changed, and new legacies can be established. Don’t use your past as an excuse to avoid making a difference in your life and the lives of those around you. Instead, let it be a catalyst for change. Live for Jesus in this dark world!

Finally, this knowledge shows us that Jesus sympathizes with us—He understands. In many conflict management courses, you are coached to say, “I understand what you are saying.” This isn’t agreeing with them, but rather acknowledging that you comprehend the information they are sharing. Jesus has walked where we walk. He has dealt with similar struggles to those we are facing today. He cried; He had hopes that were dashed; He experienced betrayal and loss. He understands humanity! However, Jesus doesn’t just lend a listening ear—He came to earth and put on flesh to identify with humanity and to pay sin’s ultimate price so that, instead of being left to muddle around in our dysfunction, we can be transformed by His grace!

### **Conclusion**

While family secrets can be a source of shame, pain, or even humor, they do not have to define us. The stories of individuals like Rahab, Ruth, and King David remind us that God can use anyone, regardless of their past, to fulfill His purposes. Jesus’ own family history illustrates that He understands our struggles and sympathizes with our pain. But more important than that, He came to make a difference! He came not to leave us alone, but to transform our world!

As we reflect on our own family secrets, let us remember that our past does not dictate our future. We have the power through His Spirit to make choices that can positively impact not only our lives, but also the lives of those around us. By embracing the transformative message of Christ, we can break free from the chains of our past and step into a future filled with hope, healing, and purpose. This Christmas season, let us celebrate the gift of grace that allows God to rewrite our stories, and let us embrace the new beginnings that await us! ■

# The GREAT PAINTING

by Stephen Gibson



A man called his friend and said, “I bought a great painting by a famous artist. It will be the most important thing in my dining room, but I’m having trouble deciding where to put it. When I put it on the north wall, it doesn’t go well with the other paintings there. When I put it on the east wall, it doesn’t go well with the furniture nearby. I don’t know where to put it to look the best.”

His friend asked, “Will it really be the most important thing in the room?”

The collector emphatically said, “Yes.”

The friend said, “First take everything else out of the room. Then put the painting where it looks best. Then arrange the other things where they look good with the painting. And you may see that some things do not belong in the room anymore.”

Sometimes people want to have God in their lives for the benefits He brings. They try to add Him to their lives, making a place for Him. God does not want you to find a place for Him among your other priorities. God is the

most important. Put Him in the most important place, then arrange your life around Him. Put everything where it belongs in relationship with Him. And some things will not belong in a life that is dedicated to God. ■

*Dr. Stephen Gibson adapted this from earlier readings. He is president of Evangelistic Faith Missions and Holiness Pilgrim Mission. He has taught at several Bible colleges, served on mission fields, pastored a diverse inner-city church, and written courses for Shepherds Global Classroom. He and his wife Stephanie live in Williams, IN, and are the parents of six children.*

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ministry inside and outside his university classroom. Dr. McCain also reported experiencing many challenges in missionary service but reminded the campus family that, despite and through such challenges, God still works.

During four workshop sessions on Monday and Tuesday, missionaries and missions leaders shared many stories from their “fronts” of service. These engaging workshops included the following:

Brennan and Ivon Muir—*Navigating Challenges in Southern Mexico*; Daniel Melton—*Stories from the Front in Honduras*; Harold Martin and Benjamin Smith—*Sent for the Sake of the Nations*; Jacob Litchfield—*Tales from Thailand*; Jeremy and Esther Hopkins—*Lessons from a First-Term Missionary: Blunders and God’s Blessings*; José Cancio—*Blessed to be a Blessing: My Story of Re-*



Guest workshop speaker José Cancio and his granddaughter, Madalyn Cancio, a current GBS student

## MISSIONARY CONVENTION

From October 20 to 22, GBS welcomed visiting missionaries, missions organization leaders, and aspiring missionaries to its biennial missionary convention. Highlighting God’s work around the world to make His name known and bring people into relationship with Him, “Stories from the Front” also invited students, staff, and faculty to join together in this mission.

Dr. Danny McCain, plenary speaker with Global Scholars in Nigeria, shared powerful accounts of



José Cancio shared his exciting life story.

# REVIVALIST FAMILY

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

## BIRTH

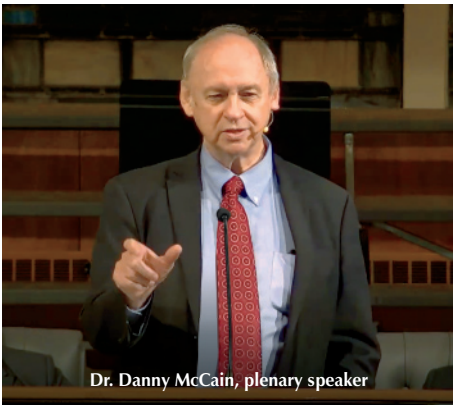


To **Rose (James) and Jerome Koke**, a daughter, **Shalom Lisa**, born October 11, 2024, at U.C. Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH. Both parents are current God’s Bible School students from Papua New Guinea. Jerome is studying Bible and theology and Rose is majoring in secondary education. Jerome works as a security guard at GBS where the Kokes live in campus housing.

## DEATHS



**Carol Ann Landrum**, 76, of Hamilton, OH, formerly of Falmouth, KY, passed away at Glen Meadows Nursing Home, November 4, 2024. She was born in Covington, KY, on September 26, 1948, to Carl Edward and Bertha Anna Mae (Parker) McKenny. Carol worked as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at River Valley Nursing Home and Carmel Manor. She also was a teacher at Paragould Elementary School in Arkansas, as well as a self-employed caregiver and a pastor for the Church of the Nazarene before she retired. Carol was a GBS alumna (BA '95).



Dr. Danny McCain, plenary speaker

demption; Keith Lavery—*The Journey from Meth, Mafia, and Murder to Victory in Christ*; Matt and Dorcas Hallam—*The Streets Speak: Lessons from the Frontlines of Urban Ministry*; Dr. R.G. Hutchison—*Frontline Stories of Indigenous Training and Church Planting in the Philippines*; Stephanie Martinez—*Redemptive Relationships*; Dr. Steve Gibson—*Unexpected Heroes I Know*; Tonweya Sherman—*Does the Owl Really Call Your Name? Challenges and Victories Among*

*Native American Tribes*; Zack Roberts—*Return to the Frontlines: A Story of God's Grace*.

Other highlights of the convention included inspiring, worshipful music selections from our international students, a missionary appreciation meal for our guests, and an after-service gathering featuring international snacks curated by our international students. The campus family is grateful for this biennial opportunity to connect with visiting ➡



An after-service gathering featured ethnic snacks prepared by our international students.



Survivors include her sons Stephen and James; daughters Carol Sue Landrum (BA '94) and Elizabeth Marie Landrum; sister Linda Sue Larrison; 15 grandchildren; and 3 great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at Peoples Funeral Home, Butler, KY.



**Alma Jean (Heer) Wright**, 79, of Gardner, KS, died in an automobile accident, October 12, 2024. Alma Jean was born February 7, 1945, in Marion, IN, to Leo Andrew and Alma Mae (Allison) Heer. As her father was a minister, the family lived in several locations throughout Alma Jean's childhood. After graduating from high school in Eskridge, KS, she attended Kansas City College and Bible School for a year. Her jobs included telephone operator at Southwestern Bell, cook in the

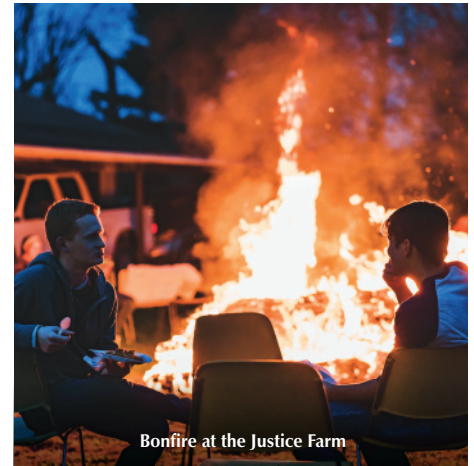
KCCBS cafeteria, and clerk in the KCCBS business office. In 1963, Alma Jean moved to Kansas City and lived with some other young ladies—Kathy Wright among them. Alma Jean was introduced to Kathy's younger brother Gary Wright. They dated and were married in 1968. They lived in Overland Park, KS, and had three children: Sharmen Sue, Michael Jay, and Jonathan Lee. Although Alma Jean did not work outside the home while raising her children, she was rarely idle. She was active in Women Alive, 60+, vacation Bible school, and teaching Sunday school for more than 40 years. She blessed many with calls, texts, personal visits, and monthly newsletters. She sent letters to college students, missionaries, prisoners, and shut-ins. Alma Jean's big heart had her and Gary visiting many hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons. ➡

➡ missionaries and to be inspired by others who've partnered together in the mission of God. —*Dr. Lyle Witt, Chair, Division of Professional Studies*

### FRIEND AND SIBLING DAYS

October 22-24 on the Hilltop was a great time for friends, siblings, and students alike to enjoy each other's company and share what life at GBS is like. We were honored to host around 50 potential students along with their families for the event. Guests participated in a number of activities on

Tuesday evening, including volleyball, basketball, 9 Square, pickleball, spike ball, and a sing-along around a fire. Everyone enjoyed pizza and specialty sodas. The following day, the students enjoyed drinks from the new 1810 Coffee Shop, joined in some classes, and participated in a mini-golf campus tour. Wednesday ended with the annual harvest party at the Bill and Janet Justice Farm hosted by GBS Student Government. The GBS family was happy to give prospective students a taste of college life at GBS in the great city of Cincinnati!



Bonfire at the Justice Farm



Friends and siblings worship God together in the Adcock Chapel.



Friends and siblings leave campus for the Harvest Party.

# REVIVALIST FAMILY

continued

➡ Alma Jean Wright was preceded in death by her son Michael, and her son-in-law Rob McCollum (see next obituary). She is survived by her husband Gary; daughter Sharmen McCollum; son Jonathan (Darla) Wright; daughter-in-law Shawna Wright; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and a host of family and friends. Funeral services were held at the Overland Park Church of God (Holiness), Overland Park, KS. Interment followed at Memory Gardens of Bourbon County, Fort Scott, KS.

Alma Jean and her husband Gary have been GBS donors and subscribers to *God's Revivalist*. Two of their children attended GBS: Michael Wright (1988-1990) and Sharmen (Wright) McCollum (BA '92); and two of

their grandchildren did as well: Esther (Wright) Replogle (2019-21) and Julianna Wright (2023-present).



### **Robert Merrill McCollum, 72, of**

Gardner, KS, died in an automobile accident, October 12, 2024 (see previous obituary). Rob was born January 22, 1952, in Topeka, KS, to Walter Leroy and Nela Mae (Rodgers) McCollum. He graduated from Shawnee Heights High School in 1970 and married Lora Jane Lewis in 1972. They had been married for 43 years when Lora preceded him in death in 2015. Later in life, Rob married Sharmen Sue Wright on May 4, 2019. They shared a home outside Gardner, KS, and liked traveling, gardening, and spending time with family.



## HOMECOMING

The theme for Homecoming 2024 was “Stronger Together.” In the runup to these exciting two days (October 11-12), the campus bustled as we prepared to welcome home our special visitors—individuals who have been students, staff, or both at GBS, especially focusing on those who graduated in 1974 and 1999.

**Open House.** The Administration Building, Music Hall, and Library were open on Friday afternoon and after the evening service so that alumni could walk through them and relive old memories.

**Friday Night Supper.** Alumni arrived to a cafeteria beautifully decorated by Joy Barnett (BA '00). GBS music from the digital archives was played throughout supper. Everyone who attended was entered into a drawing and GBS-branded items were given away.

**Pre-service and Opening.** To accommodate families, a “Future-Alumni Service” (for young children) took place in the level below the chapel auditorium at the same time as the main event. Korin Harms organized and led the service and made it such a fun and meaningful time for the kids, creating a space where they could feel included!

Pre-service music began with the Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble (SWSE) directed by Michael DeStefano. They played: “Come Thou Fount,” “Above All,” “I’d Rather Have Jesus,” and “My Savior’s Love.” These were interspersed by songs from two of the new public relations groups: Adoration Trio (Chris Castle, Sa-

mantha Castle, Kristin Ryan) sang “One More Opportunity,” and Covenant Trio (Royal Grubbs, Jaelynn Hatfield, Bradley Thomas, and Eliana Wilson [pianist]) sang “Praise the Lord.”

At 7:00 PM, Public Relations Director Duane Quesenberry (BRE '94) welcomed alumni and friends. After opening prayer by Board Chairman Robert England Jr. (HS '88, BA '93), Tim Crater (BA '89) led the congregation in singing “To God Be the Glory” and “All Because of God’s Amazing Grace” with Matt (HS '89, 1989-99) and Joy Barnett (BA '00) assisting and singing a duet on some verses.

**Recognitions.** Duane gave special thanks to Jack Hooker (BRE '74), chair of the Alumni Relations Committee of the Board of Trustees, for all his work in making this Homecoming special; and Dr. Matt Hallam (BA '06), Vice President for Enrollment Services, and his crew who played a critical role in the planning and execution of all aspects of Homecoming. The campus was beautifully decorated by Joy Barnett and those who worked with her.



Homecoming—Friday night supper

Rob worked for Cities Service Gas Company (now Southern Star) for 38 years, retiring in 2011. For over 30 years, Rob also had an upholstery business. He was a member of New Life Community Church in Gardner, where he served as a deacon and was an important member of the men’s Bible study group.

Surviving Rob are his wife, Sharmen (Wright) McCollum, GBS alumna (BA '92), donor, and *God’s Revivalist* subscriber; two sons Brandon (Karen) and Jeffrey (Stacy); eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; brothers Rodger (Tina) and Rodney; and several nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at the New Life Community Church, Gardner, KS. Interment followed in Memorial Park Cemetery, Topeka, KS. 📌



Rev Duane Quesenberry welcomes alumni and friends,



Alumnus Buddy Lyles sings "How Great Thou Art."



Joe and Jenny Emert named "Alumni of the Year"



Alumni Quartet

**Special Guest Soloist.** Duane introduced alumnus Buddy Lyles (HS '60), who met his wife Esther Boser (BA '63) at GBS. Buddy sang for various professional gospel music groups, including bass for the Florida Boys for 25 years.

**Honored Classes.** Duane introduced the class of 1974 (50-year graduates) as well as the class of 1999 (25-year graduates). Those present from those classes stood and were recognized with a round of applause. The 25- and 50-year grads were all invited to return on Saturday morning to a special breakfast with President Loper in the Martin Dining Room.

**Alumni of the Year Award.** A video narrated by Jack Hooker was shown, honoring alumni members Joe (BRE '74) and Jenny (Ogg) Emert (1970-72), this year's recipients of the Alumni of the Year Award. Joe served as GBS Director of Broadcasting (1972-75), producing the school's weekly radio program heard on numerous radio stations across the U.S. Jenny served as assistant secretary to the president (1972-73) and as assistant dean of women (1973-74). Since graduating from GBS, the Emerts have spent over 50 years in radio ministry, broadcasting the gospel of Jesus Christ around the world.

President Loper called the Emerts to the platform and read the following from their plaque: "In recognition of their distinguished lives of service, their steadfast loyalty, faithful support, and earnest prayers for God's Bible School and College, the Alumni Executive Council of God's Bible School and College presents the Distinguished Alumni Award to Joe and Jenny Emert on this day, October 11, 2024." In addition to the plaque, Jenny was presented a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

Joe took the podium for brief remarks and ended with the quote, "God blesses where His reputation is safe." The Emerts had been listening to the radio program "Family Talk" on the drive to campus and heard Jentesen Franklin, a pastor from Georgia, make that statement. Joe applied it to his alma mater, saying, "Thank you, God's Bible School!"

The congregation gave Joe and Jenny a rousing ovation. The full description of this award with accompanying pictures may be viewed in the "Alumni News" (pp. 22-23) in the November 2024 issue.

**Guest Alumni Quartet.** Duane introduced Assurance, the PR group from 1999, consisting of Keith Waggoner Jr. (BA '99), Darrell Stetler II (BA '03), Dr. Nick Pop (two BAs, AA '00; current faculty), and Seth Weth-

erald (BA '05). They gave a few reminiscences and sang two songs, "What a Lovely Name" and "No Other Word for Grace But Amazing."

**Campus Update.** President Loper gave a campus update, which briefly follows.

"The answer to what most excites me about GBS is sitting in this room and participating in the service tonight—our alumni. When God planted the vision for this place in the head and heart of Martin Wells Knapp, it was his passion to see men and women take their place in the whitened, harvest field: pastors, teachers, musicians, missionaries, and laypeople stamped with the desire to make a difference for God. When I look around the chapel tonight, I see a very tiny tip of the gospel spear that is making a difference for God and Good in our world.

"Last semester we had the largest graduating class in years—over 50 college graduates, including the largest ever graduating class of master's degrees. Many of those recent graduates are pastoring churches tonight; teaching in classrooms this semester; and using their honed musical abilities and gifts.

"Mentoring remains an important part of a GBS education. To in-

crease opportunities for meaningful mentoring, we've launched two new projects. One is weekly 'Student Hours' for employees. This is for faculty and staff to spend work time in the library or in The Commons where it is easy for students to find them, whether for help with assignments or just for conversations. Secondly, we have launched two pilot online discipleship groups. These meet weekly to talk about a passage of Scripture and to pray together.

"Campus itself is challenging. With buildings well over 100 years old, there are always pipes to solder, walls to paint, bricks to tuckpoint, and foundations to repair. We are blessed with over 40 houses (most of which have been divided into apartments) and seven major buildings. Growing from our humble beginnings in the current Administration Building to what we have as a campus footprint today is truly remarkable. Because of the dedication of a great group of faculty and staff we have a product (students) and a place (campus) that we can rightly be proud of—to the Glory of God!"

President Loper closed with a short video highlighting what is being accomplished here on campus and around the world.

**Offering.** President Loper presented an opportunity for the congregation to partner with GBS in a small, unglamorous task—underwriting the cost (over \$15,000) of painting the exterior of the Administration Building. The good news is that we had matching funds to cover half of this! That means every dollar given has been doubled.

The Director of Donor Relations, Michael Yancey, performed "Down From His Glory" on his saxophone, giving the congregation a few moments to consider how to respond to the financial need. During the offering, the Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble played a stirring rendition of "Crown Him with Many Crowns."

**Employee of the Year Award.** President Loper called Melissa Gre-



25-year graduates: Stephanie (Thompson) Ryan, Rob Ryan, and Keith Waggoner II



50-year graduates, L-R: Richard Miles, Joe Emert, Ralph Ferree, Daniel Downing, Glenn Black, Joy (Vess) Beaver, Gordon Kincaid, Rhonda (Vess) Whisner, Harold Carpenter, Keith Waggoner I, Walter Hedstrom, Jack Hooker

sham, Aldersgate Christian Academy instructor, to the platform to receive the Employee of the Year Award. (More details are featured in the "Alumni News" section, pp.22-23).

**College and Alumni Choirs.**

The College Choir, under the direction of Timothy Crater, sang "This is the Time I Must Sing," a short acapella version of "Bless the Lord, O My Soul," and "Alpha and Omega" which featured soloist Christopher Castle.

Then all those who had ever sung in either the college or high school music groups were invited to the platform for the closing number directed by Music Division Chair



Melissa Gresham named "Employee of the Year"

Emeritus Garen Wolf I, who had directed the College Choir from 1976 to 2010. The platform filled as alumni joined the current choir members in singing a medley of songs beginning with "I Shall See Him" and ending with "Until Then."

**Service Conclusion.** President Loper concluded the service with announcements and prayer. (Please note that the Welcome Home Service may be viewed on our Facebook page, posted on October 11, 2024).

**Afterglow.** Following the service, numerous activities happened around campus. At the intersection of Young and Channing Streets, people gathered around a fire pit and awaited turns for a ride around the neighborhood in their choice of a horse-drawn buggy, a hay wagon, or an old-time police car. Guests on main campus sat at patio tables and enjoyed "Music, Memories, and Worship" organized by Dr. Matt Hallam and his enrollment team. This involved a variety of alumni, students, faculty, and staff.

In tents on main campus, guests participated in a silent auction. Thanks to the generosity of local donors, guests had the chance to bid on over 80 different items, including

Perfect North Slopes ski tickets, Cincinnati Reds tickets, zoo and museum passes, and much more. In the Administration Building, Music Hall, and Library, guests went on self-guided tours. The Library had a special display of campus artifacts including items such as Nettie Peabody's typewriter and china that belonged to the Standleys.


A special "Kids Zone" was located on the patio and snack bar area where kids were able to joust, jump in a bounce house, run a real lemonade stand, and join in playing mini-basketball, table tennis, football or 9 Square. A highlight was a machine blowing soap bubbles.

In the gym, alumni and students engaged in pickup games of basketball and volleyball. At various locations, snacks and drinks were available for a donation. GBS students served pizza, nachos and buffalo chicken dip, sputniks, and specialty sodas. The new 1810 Coffee Shop served drinks in The Commons.

**Saturday Breakfast.** Alumni from the honored classes met in the Martin Dining Room for breakfast. President Loper welcomed the participants and opened the floor for questions. Director of Development



Getting ready for the Homecoming auction



# 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.

Thanks for recognizing Tim Crater for his 25 years of service at GBS. It was a great article! I have known Tim all my life and he is a wonderful Christian man—a great choir director and musician.

RUTH LOFTIN (BA '83 Music)  
email

I wish to thank President Loper for explaining in a very clear and understanding way how someone is called to ministry [Oct. GR]. I am 69 years old...but I see myself being called with “burning heart” and “burning hands.” His explanation helped me recognize when God had called me to do certain tasks for Him. With a renewed understanding of being called, I will continue to look for those opportunities that the Lord brings to me to do for Him. I look forward to each issue of *God's Revivalist* to gain new truths for my walk.

ANN CRISSINGER  
Howard, PA

A year or so ago, I was given a complimentary subscription to *God's Revivalist*. I am now 71 years old. I'm pretty much by myself now and get lonesome a lot. But *God's Revivalist* seems to be keeping me in touch with my friends and acquaintances, and even helps me to know some of them better—a “connection” of a sort!

CHARLES PENNINGTON  
Ashland, KY

We especially loved the editor's recounting of his salvation story in the November edition. And the October story of the blue-eyed gang was mesmerizing! I loved how the pictures of their descendants who attended GBS were included.

DAVE AND BROOK GUMM  
Facebook

Mike Yancey gave an overview of ways the alumni could support the school.

**Alumni vs. Students Basketball and Volleyball Games.** On Saturday morning, alumni and students competed in basketball and volleyball. The crowd was full of energy as they cheered on the teams. A basketball game started things off, with students putting up a good fight; but in the end, the alumni took the win. After a break, the teams faced off in volleyball. Once again, the alumni played with skill and teamwork, winning the game. It was a fun and spirited event, bringing everyone together and building excitement for next year's games.

**Fun Fest.** Young Street between Channing and Ringgold was closed to automobiles in order to accommodate Fun Fest. The campus family and guests mingled while visiting various attractions along the street and on the main campus. Many goods and services were available for a monetary donation of any amount. Children and teens especially enjoyed a bounce house, jousting, miniputt, etc. Winners received tickets to redeem for prizes at the prize booth.

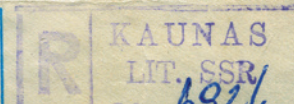
For a donation of any amount, people received a Chick-fil-A styled lunch of chicken sandwiches, tenders, and chips. Funnel cakes and popcorn were also available. Several student groups raised support for their divisions by selling cider slushies, tacos, iced coffee, donuts, and baked goods.

**Benefit Auction.** At 1:00 p.m. Saturday afternoon, GBS hosted its third Homecoming Benefit Auction. Director of Development Mike Yancey reports that an offering from the Board of Trustees underwrote all the auctioneers' actual cost of the items sold, with some money left over and contributed to the auction profit. With the assistance of professional auctioneers, this year's auction raised \$24,769.80 in net profit for the school.

We are exploring new strategies to boost these numbers and create an even greater impact. The potential benefits of the auction go beyond just the funds raised. We had the privilege of seeing several new businessmen and community leaders in attendance this year. This network is growing, and the opportunities for collaboration and support are expanding.

We would like to express our gratitude to Matthew, Becky, and Stephen LaRiviere and their families for their sacrifice in selling us their merchandise at their cost for the auction and traveling from Galax, VA, to host the auction. Matthews Auctioneers is an auction firm that serves southwest Virginia and western North Carolina. They are professionals and a key part in the success we have seen for the last three years. If you would like to support them, they can be found on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/mauctioneers](https://www.facebook.com/mauctioneers). ■

DECEMBER 2024



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# CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS



We are thankful that God has blessed us with a beautiful, historic campus. We are also thankful for our facilities team of dedicated employees who understand that maintaining this campus is God's work. Because of their skills and careful effort, we have been able to complete a number of improvements over the past year. Some of them are highlighted here.

## Concrete Work

Concrete is a major part of many areas of our campus. This summer and fall, the facilities team poured nearly 60 yards of concrete! This may not sound like a lot for our friends who are in the concrete business, but, for a small crew whose specialties lie in different areas, this is significant.

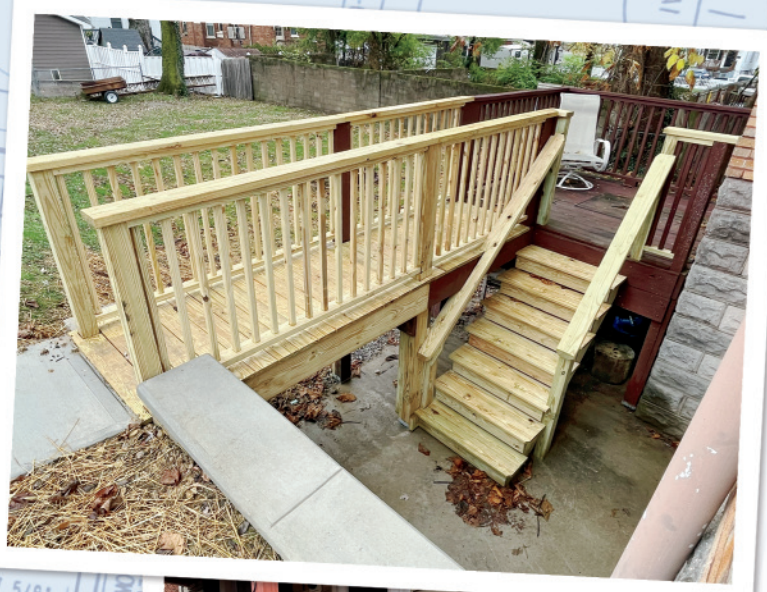
## Tuck-pointing

We are blessed with a facilities person who is an expert mason. He has used that expertise in repairing walls and tuck-pointing brick on many of our buildings. As you might imagine, there is much more to be done, but we are thankful for the progress we have been making in this area.

## Carpeting

We were able to put new carpet in five of our residences and apartment halls this year. We also replaced the carpet in the cafeteria, the 20-year-old carpet in the high-school levels of Aldersgate Christian Academy, and two halls in the Ladies Residence Hall. We spent well over \$50,000 on these projects but are thankful that God provided the funding for each one of these areas!





## Decks/Porches

Many of the porches of our residences needed to be repaired or replaced. The following houses had deck restorations this year.

**Tiffany House.** The retaining wall under the deck had begun to give way. We removed the deck, repaired the wall, and replaced the deck.

**532 Ringgold.** The old wooden porch at this residence was failing. We removed all the old rotten wood and replaced everything with new.

**1844 Josephine.** The outside stairs from the second floor of this residence were crumbling. These stairs were replaced and new decking was installed.



## HVAC Updates

The heating units were failing at the campus residence of 1800 Josephine Street apartment 2. After inspection we realized that the units were well over 30 years old. We were able to replace these units with much more efficient ones.

The rest of this type of work in our campus residences involved AC units. We installed a new AC unit in 1844 Josephine Street after the existing one had failed. We also installed a mini-split unit in 1807 Young Street.

In our campus properties, we updated the AC units in the Student Center and replaced two outdated AC units in the Administration Building.





### Renovation of 512 Carmalt Street

Several years ago, we were able to purchase this property on Carmalt Street. We used the property as a rental unit. Recently the renters moved out and we are now in the process of doing a complete renovation.

### Installation of 1810 Coffee Shop

For many years we wanted to have a full-service functioning coffee shop in our student commons. This summer we remodeled an office area to house the new coffee shop. This required extensive wiring, plumbing, and designing. Our students love the finished product.

### Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

We live on a historic campus. Most of the main buildings are nearly 100 years old, and the "new" buildings are 40-50 years old. Because of this, many of our facilities are limited for those who need ADA access. This summer we were able to remodel an area to house an ADA compliant restroom, and we installed an ADA ramp at the rear of the McNeil Music Hall.

### Cameras

We are excited to have added a comprehensive indoor camera system around campus and to have upgraded the quality of our external cameras at the same time. We have a full-time staff person who monitors these cameras, providing better security and safety for our campus family.







## South Lawn Project

The crowning jewel of our projects this year was done by Dr. Steve Oliver, one of our faculty. For years, the “south lawn” (area surrounding the patio adjacent to the Student Center) was a blight on campus. The old scraggly shrubs and red-lava rocks had long since served their purpose. This summer we removed all those from the section west of the steps and put in amphitheater-style seating. That area has become a favorite spot on campus! We hope to complete the east side of this area with a waterfall feature in 2025. 🏗️



Thank you for your faithful support over the last year! We have been able to accomplish so much because many of you have faithfully given to GBS. As we close out this year, we ask you once again to stand alongside us with both prayer and financial support.

We need help to train the next generation for the cause of Christ. Our world is dark. Sin seems to run unabated; things that would have made previous generations blush are now done in full view. While the temptation is to run and hide—to pull back and huddle with those closest to us—we have a mandate. The message of the risen Christ in John 20 to the frightened disciples still rings true today: “As the father has sent Me, so send I you.” This mandate was in the heart of our founder, Martin Wells Knapp. This mandate motivates the staff, faculty, and students of God’s Bible School and College to make a difference for Christ!

In these tight financial times, gifts of any size will help us tremendously! Whether \$25, \$50, \$100, or \$500—any gift will help lift the load.

To make a donation by check, send it to 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202. To donate by credit card or give online, visit [www.gbs.edu/givenow](http://www.gbs.edu/givenow); or you may call the school at 1-513-721-7944 and ask for the Advancement Office.

Thank you for standing with us!

Dr. Rodney S. Loper

## Dear Phil

### STRONG'S NUMBERS IN BIBLICAL LANGUAGE STUDY

*How do I make proper use of Strong's numbers for studying the original languages? —Chris*

Dear Chris,

I honor the impulse behind this question. Would to God more people wanted to study the original languages of the Bible! As Martin Luther famously said, “[The original] languages are the sheath which hides the Sword of the Spirit; they are the casket which contains the priceless jewels of antique thought; they are the vessel that holds the wine; and as the gospel says, they are the baskets in which the loaves and fishes are kept to feed the multitude....Where the languages are studied, the proclamation will be fresh and powerful, the Scriptures will be searched, and a faith will be constantly rediscovered through ever new words and deeds.” Amen and amen!

Just so you know, there are much better tools available today than *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* (e.g., Logos, Accordance, STEP Bible, e-Sword, Olive Tree, etc.). But if *Strong's* is all you have, here's how to use it properly.

Here's what an entry looks like:

4341. προσκαλέομαι  
prōskalēōmai, pros-kal-eh'-om-  
ahee; mid. from 4314 and 2564;  
to call toward oneself, i.e. sum-  
mon, invite:—call (for, to, unto).

There are seven parts to this entry:

- (1) 4341—this number always represents this Greek word.
- (2) προσκαλέομαι—the Greek word in Greek letters
- (3) prōskalēōmai—the Greek word spelled in English letters with phonetic markings
- (4) pros-kal-eh'-om-ahee—a pronunciation guide for pronouncing the word in English
- (5) mid. from 4314 and 2564—Strong's suggestion regarding the root word(s) used to make this word, i.e., its etymology.
- (6) to call toward oneself, i.e. summon, invite—the basic meaning(s) of the word (“to call toward oneself”) along with suggested single-word English equivalents (summon, invite). Strong called these “applied significations of the word, justly but tersely analyzed and expressed.”
- (7) :—call (for, to, unto)—after the colon and em-dash, Strong listed the primary ways the King James Version translated this word. In this case, the KJV always used a form of “call” sometimes (indicated by the parentheses) followed by various prepositions.

There are three errors you should avoid when reading these entries:

1. Don't confuse the basic meaning of the word (6) with the ways the KJV translated the word (7). Everything after the “:—” symbols is a list of the terms the KJV translators used. Also, the list is not always exhaustive.

2. Don't connect the meaning of the root word (5) to the basic meaning of the word (6). This is called the “root fallacy.” The meaning of words is determined by their use in context, not by the meaning of their roots. Often, there is no connection between a word's root meaning and its current meaning. For example, the root of “silly” meant “blessed” or “happy”; later it meant “helpless, defenseless”; now it can mean “foolish, empty-headed” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Even if you could imagine a way to connect “blessed” to “foolish,” there is no value in such a connection. When silly means “foolish,” it has nothing to do with “blessed.” What Strong says about the root of 4352 προσκυνέω is a good example of root word data that is irrelevant.

3. Don't think that the basic meaning(s) of the word (6) should be applied to every occurrence of the word. For example, Strong's basic meaning for 1657 ἐλευθερώω is “to liberate, i.e. (fig.) to exempt (from moral, ceremonial or mortal liability).” This is the meaning in a text like Galatians 5:1. In John 8:32, 36 it does not mean to “exempt from liability” for sin. It means to be set free from sin's controlling power. Further, don't think that all the meanings of a word are listed. I found one Hebrew entry in *Strong's* that listed only three of the more than 10 meanings of the Hebrew word!

Blessings,  
Phillip 📖

*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)



## BIBLE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Several states have recent mandates relative to the Ten Commandments in public schools. Jeff Landry, governor of Louisiana, signed legislation requiring the display of the Ten Commandments in every public-school classroom. This was quickly challenged in court. The next week, Ryan Walters, the state superintendent of Oklahoma directed all public schools to teach the Bible, including the Ten Commandments. He described the Bible as an “indispensable historical and cultural touchstone” and suggested that it be part of the school curriculum. This will likely provoke a legal battle as well. This is seen as a growing national movement by religious conservatives who oppose liberal school curriculums that promote abortion, transgender rights, etc.

## CHURCH INVITATIONS

A Lifeway Research survey found that 60% of over 1,000 Protestant churchgoers surveyed in September 2023 said they extended at least one invitation in the last six months for someone to attend their church. Of the respondents, 19% reported making one invitation, 21% reported making two invitations, and 20% reported making three or more invitations. Meanwhile, 33% said they had not made any invitations in the past six months, while 7% said that they were unsure.

## COLLEGES MAY BE “TOO RELIGIOUS” TO GET FINANCIAL AID

Officials in the state of Georgia have been determining that some colleges are “too religious” and have moved to ban their students from a statewide financial aid plan. Although the state allows private and religious colleges to participate in such programs, it excludes schools that state officials consider a “school or college of theology or divinity.” The Christian law firm Alliance Defending Freedom has gone to court with a civil rights complaint challenging the practice, since the U.S. Supreme Court has found such religious discrimination to be unconstitutional.

## NO BENEFIT FROM PUBERTY BLOCKERS FOR CHILDREN

A researcher who received \$9.7 million from the National Institutes of Health, is refusing to publish her results. She began her study in 2015 as part of a broader federal project on transgender health. However, when the research found that the mental health of the subjects (95 adolescents with an average age of 11) who received puberty blockers was largely unchanged after two years, she has refused to release those results because she fears they could be “weaponized” to oppose gender-transition drugs for minors. One of her critics says, “A real scientist accepts what the data shows and has an allegiance to the truth.”



## student focus

**EMMA WILSON** is the oldest of eight children. She was born in Ohio, reared in Indiana, and is currently living in Kentucky. Emma first gave her life to Christ when she was seven, but her relationship with God has been on and off throughout the years. Coming to GBS has helped her “grapple with the concept of God’s love and forgiveness and the role faith plays in my walk with Him.”

Emma was homeschooled, likes reading, and loves art and drawing. She also enjoys writing stories and poetry. Both of her parents are GBS alumni, but it wasn’t until after attending two youth camps that she realized “GBS was the place for me.” She now says, “It is helping me build a solid foundation for future ministry.”

Emma plans to graduate with an AA in General Studies in 2025. Although unsure of what she will do next, she says, “I will see where I am when that day comes and find out where God takes me from there.”

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

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

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



# Doctor Google, Influencer Moms, and the Local Church

by Tim Challies

A family member was recently paying a visit to a doctor who provided his diagnosis of the condition and suggested a course of treatment. My family member listened patiently but then said, “I was wondering if we could actually try another treatment instead.” The doctor playfully rolled his eyes and said, “I see you’ve been consulting with Dr. Google.” Guilty as charged.

I suppose every doctor must be familiar with this phenomenon by now—familiar with patients who, the moment they are told of their condition, jump on the Internet and quickly read every relevant page on WebMD, scour specialized forums, and probably check what people are saying on Reddit as well. By the time they show up for their follow-up, they have armed themselves with plenty of knowledge and their best assessment of the path forward. As much as they appreciate the doctor’s ideas, they would prefer to follow their own.

We live in an age of information—an age in which there is more information available to us than we can possibly ever read, absorb, understand, or master. And in this age, we have grown accustomed to looking beyond those who are near to us to seek the wisdom of those who are afar. And this isn’t only the case when it comes to medical issues. It also overlaps spiritual concerns, marriage, parenting, and a host of other issues. We have become so accustomed to Googling everything, relying on the expertise of digital experts, and experiencing community online that we may fail to make use of the resources God has given to us.

In this cultural milieu, perhaps it is fitting to remind ourselves of the resources we have close at hand—resources God has deliberately put in close proximity to each of us. He has put people in our lives who have wisdom where we are ignorant and who

have answers where we have questions. They are as near to us as the local church. We can see them, know them, and have confidence that their lives actually do display the beauty and benefits of Christian living, character, and convictions. It honors them when we seek their wisdom, and it honors God who has given them this wisdom.

Your church has many older women who have successfully raised mature and God-fearing children. A number of them have probably wondered: Why don't the young women come to us when they have questions about raising their little ones? Why aren't they interested in learning from us? The answer is as close as Instagram. Why seek the advice of an older mom who raised her children in a previous generation when today's influencers are flaunting more recent successes and supplying more updated answers?

Your church has couples who have been married for decades. Along the way they have endured many trials, come to peace through many conflicts, and weathered many storms. Yet the younger couples in the church rarely approach them to ask, "How can our marriage be as good as yours?" Why not? Because it is far easier to read a book by a stranger or watch a video by a self-styled expert. I recently saw some Christian influencers offer a course on marriage, though they had been married for less than two years. They had paltry experience and undoubtedly little wisdom, but they did have a big platform. And many were eager to learn from them.

Your church has many seasoned saints who have spent their whole lives following the Lord and whose godliness is on display each and every time the church gathers. Ask them

to teach you! Your church has men and women who have never been married and who have joyfully served God in the special ways that singleness permits. Ask them to mentor you! It has women who have endured years or decades of widowhood. Ask them to guide you! God has carefully constructed his Church so that, as much as we may benefit from those who are far off, we are likely to find the greatest and most credible help nearby.

We are only just learning how to live in this new world and how to reconcile information with expertise. And as much as it expands our horizons and widens our access to information, let's make sure we never forget that God has called us to the local church and that many of our most important relationships—opportunities to teach and be taught, to mentor and be mentored, to disciple and be disciplined—are before us and around us each and every Sunday. The only question is whether or not we will reach out and take hold of what God has so kindly offered to us. ■

*Tim Challies is an elder at Grace Fellowship Church, Toronto, Ontario. He is a prolific blogger and the author of several books. This article was posted online at [www.challies.com](http://www.challies.com) and is used here with permission.*





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

## MELISSA GRESHAM: EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

GBS Alumna Melissa Gresham received the Employee of the Year Award at the Homecoming keynote service on October 11, during which President Loper read the following remarks.

Melissa Gresham graduated from GBS in 1997 with a BA degree in Christian School Music Education. Since 2008, she has not only used that training in music classrooms, but also in a range of classes at Aldersgate Christian Academy. She has taught combined first and second grades, second grade, and middle school language arts. She has also championed a pro-life club and started a middle-school drama program. In her years of service at ACA,



she has influenced hundreds of students, pushing them to achieve academically and to know Christ.

At the same time, Melissa has lived a “double” life. That’s not as bad as it sounds, though, because her double life has included two ministries. Her husband, Steve (BA ’97), whom she met at GBS, pastors the Auburn Bible Methodist Church, Hamilton, Ohio. So not only has Melissa ministered in the classroom, but she has also served the church alongside Steve. And beyond the local congregation, Melissa has volunteered to help with denomina-



tional church camps as well. She is a familiar figure keeping things going at Heartland Bible Methodist events.

Realistically, we could actually say Melissa has had a third life—that of a mother. She has raised three children: Abby, Joel, and Ryan. All have graduated from ACA, and all took some college work at GBS: Abbie (2018-19 and Spring 2024), Joel (2019-21, as “dual enrollment” while in high school), and Ryan (2023-present). Two of Melissa’s roles—mother and teacher—have merged loudly at ACA volleyball and basketball games. She has often been heard cheering on her kids and their teammates...and if you couldn’t quite pick out her voice, you certainly could hear the noisemakers she always seemed to have on hand!

Behind the public ministry that most people see, Melissa has been one of those “glue” people. She’s been an active part of ACA’s development over the years, an engaged colleague, and an enthusiastic event planner and participant. We thank Melissa for her years of service and recognize her as the GBS Employee of the Year! 📌

BOTTOM LEFT: Melissa and daughter Abby at a pro-life rally in Washington, D.C.

BELOW: The Gresham Family.





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## EXCITING NEWS FOR OUR ESTEEMED INVESTORS!

Dear Fellow Investors in the Heavenly Kingdom,

We are thrilled to introduce our new giving website: [giving.gbs.edu](http://giving.gbs.edu)!

Our new platform is designed to be visually appealing and user-friendly, providing quick and pertinent information on our current projects. Whether you wish to become a business sponsor for a tax write-off or prefer to give as an individual, we have made the process easy and straightforward.

While you can still send in a check or call us with your information, our new online giving option offers convenience and efficiency. The system will automatically generate an immediate receipt for your gift, ensuring you have proof of your donation right away. Additionally, it will create a personal account for you, allowing you to print an annual giving report for tax purposes at the end of the year.

If you see a campaign on the landing page that you would like to support, simply click on it, and you will be taken directly to the giving option.

Thank you for your continued generosity and support.

Happy Giving!

Michael Yancey, Jr.  
Director of Donor Development



by Sonja Vernon

### GOD'S REPUTATION

*"Then I proclaimed a fast...to seek from [God] a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, 'The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him.'" —Ezra 8:21-22 ESV*

It was time for Ezra and some of his fellow exiles to return to Jerusalem from Babylon. In preparation for the trip, God had granted him favor with the king who sent Ezra with silver, gold, animals, and other offerings to Israel's God. I can only imagine Ezra's concern as he thought about the treacherous journey and the added danger of traveling with copious wealth. However, Ezra refused to ask the king for protection because he had also told the king about God's power and care for His people. God's reputation was at stake. Ezra refused to let his fear harm God's name.

At this time of year, we celebrate another dangerous journey—one that involved the Creator becoming the created, that threatened the reputations of its participants, and that changed the course of history forever. The unfolding of the gospel involves great cost and great risk, but it ends with ultimate triumph. It is the Good News to every person, and God's Name is great because of it. This Christmas season, let us purpose to never let fear keep us from trusting the God who gave all. As we walk forward with confidence in Him, His name will be magnified in our lives! ■

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

*Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year*  
From the GBS Family



the Loper Family



Academic Committee