

GOD'S REVIVALIST

Winter 2014

and Bible Advocate





about this issue

RESOLUTIONS

MORNING PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*Our heavenly Father, help me to live this day quietly, easily;
To lean upon Thy strength trustfully, restfully;
To wait for the unfolding of Thy will patiently, serenely;
To meet others peacefully, joyously;
To face tomorrow confidently, courageously.*

What a great prayer for every morning of 2014!

Forty-five percent of Americans set New Year's resolutions but only 18 percent report success. However, those who explicitly make resolutions are 10 times more likely to attain their goals. So, for 2014, why not resolve to have a more vibrant devotional life – utilizing Bible reading, prayer, and even journaling?

To increase your success rate, make sure you set very specific goals. As such, your resolutions should be:

- **Thoughtfully Selected.** Be realistic about what you can accomplish. Understand your limitations and aspects of situations that you may have little control over.
- **Properly Stated.** Be very specific in how you word your goals. Make sure you have measurable outcomes. This will lay the foundation for determining success.
- **Carefully Implemented.** Adopt realistic timeframes for your expectations. Enlist appropriate support structures and empower them to give you the feedback and support that you will need.
- **Conscientiously Evaluated.** Periodically access how well the process is working and don't be afraid to tweak the process or your expectations.

Have a blessed 2014! —KF

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

God's Bible School and College does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national or ethnic origin, or against otherwise qualified handicapped persons in its admission of students or employment of its faculty and staff.

Contact us by telephone at (513) 721-7944 (Revivalist Press, ext. 1351); by fax at (513) 763-6649; by email at revivalist@gbs.edu or gbs4u@gbs.edu. Visit us online at www.gbs.edu or www.godsrevivalist.com.

COVER PHOTO: Sharree Pouzar, Meagan Cravens, Phoebe Slavens, and Caslyn Rice.

CONTENTS

WINTER 2014
Volume 126 No. 1

FEATURES

Resolutions	5
by Glenn D. Black	
John Wesley On Bible Reading	7
by John Wesley	
Poll: Many Own A Bible, But Not Many Read It	8
by Matthew Brown	
Reading The Bible Online	9
by Ken Farmer	
Supplemental Devotional Materials	10
by Ken Farmer	
How To Pray For One Hour	11
by Mark Eckart	
Benefits Of Journaling	12
by Michael Hyatt	
Navigating 2014: Strong Resolutions Are Not Enough	22
by Daniel Steele	

DEPARTMENTS

The President's Page	3
Letters To The Editor	4
News From The Hilltop	14
Revivalist Family	14
Dear Phil	16
World Pulse	17
Student Focus	17
Revivalist Pulpit	19
The World To Win	21
Thoughts For The Quiet Hour	23

STAFF

Ken Farmer, *managing editor*

Kevin Moser, *art director, assistant editor*

Shane Muir, *assistant graphic designer*

Jon Plank, *assistant graphic designer, webmaster*

Larry Smith, *editor*

God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate (ISSN 0745-0788) is published monthly except for combined issues in January-February and June-July-August for **\$12.00 per year (\$28.00, Canada; \$45.00, other countries)** by the Revivalist Press of God's Bible School, College and Missionary Training Home, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. Periodical postage paid at Cincinnati, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER: send address changes to God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.**

God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate, the official organ of God's Bible School, is a magazine founded by Martin Wells Knapp in July of 1888. We seek to proclaim the good news of salvation; to stir a revival spirit among Christians; to stimulate Christian growth and responsible Christian living; to present the happenings and interests of God's Bible School.

Please obtain permission before reprinting any articles from God's Revivalist and Bible Advocate. **Unsolicited manuscripts are welcomed, but not returned.**

the president's page



HINDSIGHT THEOLOGY: A RESOLUTION ON REFLECTION

by Michael R. Avery, President

For years the Psalms were a mystery to me. There was something untidy and elusive about them that I just couldn't wrap my head around. There were exceptions of course – Psalm 23, 34, 100, etc. Nevertheless, I primarily saw the Psalms as a “spiritual espresso” that one used when one needed a bit of a lift! It was Phil Yancey who first provided some interpretive light for my “psalm blindness” in his book, *The Bible Jesus Read*. He pointed out that the Psalms are primarily personal letters to God and one must read them as an “over-the-shoulder” reader since the intended audience was not other people but God. In more recent years, my understanding of the Psalms has grown appreciably by reading Dennis Kinlaw's book, *Lectures in Old Testament Theology*. This remarkable book helped me to see the Psalms as a treasure trove of profound theological insight into the person and nature of God.

Today, I read the Psalms and thoroughly enjoy the no-holds-barred look into every aspect of David's life – identifying with many of his emotions and struggles. However, it is the practical and theological insight that flows out of these experiences that I find most helpful. David was a master at taking life's experiences and turning them into a form of Hebrew poetry that is filled with both wisdom and deep insight into the character of God. Obviously, David wrote most of his Psalms *after* he had experienced the particular trial or difficulty he is writing about. This allows him to write from “hindsight,” and it is out of that reflective “look back” that he offers some practical advice for every spiritual traveler as well as some of the most remarkable insights into the character of God. I like to call this “Hindsight Theology.”

An example of this is found in Psalm 40 (read it now). David is journaling about a time of inward disquiet, deep anxiety, or trouble. What valuable truth comes out of David's reflections?

As I face this new year, I am resolved to do a better job of reflecting on the “ups and downs” of life with the intent of seeing God's loving hand at work in molding me into the image of His dear Son.

Patience is a key ingredient in navigating difficult times.

David says he “waited patiently for Yahweh.” The Hebrew implies that he waited and waited and waited. David learned that, God will “avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bears long with them.” (Luke 18:7). The key in coming through the trials of life successfully is patience.

Patience finds its footing in the knowledge of a faithful God.

David says, “He turned to me” – “He heard my cry” – “He lifted me out” – “He set my feet on a rock” – “He gave me a firm place to stand.” Verse 11 says, “thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.” David is testifying to the truth that God will always respond as He does because that is the kind of God that He is.

Personal transformation is the silver lining behind every dark cloud.

“He put a new song in my mouth, even praise to God.”

Horatio G. Spafford, a successful Chicago attorney, Presbyterian Church elder, and dedicated Christian, is a sterling example of this truth. Within a three year period, Spafford lost his only son to scarlet fever, his vast real estate holdings in the Chicago Fire, and his four remaining daughters in an accident at sea. Out of the tragedy, Spafford penned the words to the famous hymn, “It is Well with My Soul.” It is believed that Horatio took the words “It is well” from the words of the Shunammite woman whose only son had died but was later raised from the dead by Elisha (2 Kings 4:26).

Difficult times are not just about us. God can use them to exalt His name and extend His kingdom.

“Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.”

As I face this new year, I am resolved to do a better job of reflecting on the “ups and downs” of life with the intent of seeing God’s loving hand at work in molding me into the image of His dear Son. ■



Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

I read the article “Ain’t Anybody Gonna Cry” with great interest and a broken heart. I got saved 47 year ago and a holy, loving, and merciful God let me know that He wanted me to tell all those that I meet about Him. And I have. I have been to the mission field 13 times, worked in prisons for over 22 years, and held services in nursing homes doing my best for my blessed Savior. I am 81 now. Yes, I’ve had to slow down a little, but I love to share the Word, hand out tracts, and tell the people about the Lord. Christians cannot be silent.

DAVID GREENWOOD
Hanover, PA

I’ve read the *God’s Revivalist* since my early teens. The September issue on sexual sin was...the most practical edition of the *Revivalist* I’ve read. Too many religious periodicals are answering questions nobody is asking. Your constructive, hope-filled response to sexual sin has been a resource to which I’ve had the opportunity to refer struggling people in recent months.

KEITH WAGGONER II
Email

I work in a youth camp every summer and work closely with a number of young men every year. I have been approached on numerous occasions with questions about the topics of porn, lust, sexual behavior, and bad thoughts. This is a topic that is prevalent in our world today and is becoming even more prevalent in the church world as well. I believe that the September issue on pornography has addressed these issues very well and will be a blessing to a large amount of readers. Materials like this are needed in our churches now more than ever. So I write to declare my adamant support of what I believe to be the best issue I have read to date.

JONATHAN GIBSON
Email

The *Revivalist* has been coming to the Hood family for almost 100 years. First to G.W. Hood, then Ezra Hood, and now to me. I am almost 95.

ORVILLE W. HOOD
Overland Park, KS



RESOLUTIONS

By Glenn D. Black

A fresh start motivates many of us to enjoy a renewed determination to improve ourselves. Each day we live offers us a fresh beginning. Each new week affords us an opportunity to achieve new goals. Each new month can contribute to accomplishing certain tasks. A new year allows us to look back and look ahead, assessing where we have been and where we want to go.

Many Christians make resolutions to pray more, to read the Bible every day, or to be more generous in their giving habits at church. These are fantastic goals. However, these resolutions may fail just as often as the non-spiritual resolutions, because there is no automatic power in a simple resolution. Resolving to start or stop doing a certain activity has no value unless you have the proper motivation for stopping or starting that activity. For example, why do you want to read the Bible every day? Is it to honor God and grow spiritually, or is it mainly because someone has challenged you to read

the Bible completely through in one year? Why do you want to lose weight? Is it to honor God with your body, or is it for vanity, to honor yourself?

So why do we make resolutions?

One reason is the allure of starting from scratch. For example, the beginning of a new year offers a fresh start and a clean slate. Certain events in our lives may propel us to set new goals, to resolve to seek to be a better person or to be a more Christlike person. We seek a new beginning and therefore make resolutions to improve.

The emotional atmosphere at a marriage retreat may motivate us to covenant with our spouse to be a more loving and considerate partner. Accordingly, we agree to a plan of action and mutually resolve to fulfill promises to each other.

Revival or camp meeting services have the potential of creating within us a passion to draw closer to God. So we begin to establish certain habits of holy living. This is a form of making resolutions.

The idea of bettering ourselves is at the core of why we make resolutions. Most of us have a natural bent toward self-improvement. Someone has said, "Shoot for the stars even if you only get over the first potato hump. At least you made some progress."

Does the Bible have anything to say about personal resolutions?

The English word "resolution" is the noun form of the verb "resolve." When you resolve to do something, you have made a resolution. The word "resolve" can also be a noun. A person who makes firm resolutions and keeps them is a person who possesses a good deal of resolve. The adjective form of the word is "resolute." A person who has resolve – one who makes and keeps firm resolutions – is a "resolute" person.

Job spoke of personal resolve when he said he had made a covenant with his eyes so that he would not look lustfully at a young woman (cf. Job 31:1).

Psalms 119 is literally filled with personal resolutions. Numerous times the psalmist notes these personal commitments with statements like the ones found in verses 15-16: "I will meditate in thy precepts...I will not forget thy word." This whole psalm, in fact, is an expression of love for God's Word and of personal resolve to make it the very center of the psalmist's life.

In the New Testament, even though the language of resolution is conspicuously rare, the concept is prevalent. In 2 Corinthians 5:9, Paul writes, "Wherefore we labour [or make it our aim], whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him [to be well pleasing to Him]." The words, "we make it our aim," are certainly meant to convey the idea of personal resolve. Though Peter failed in his resolve never to deny Christ, his impending death later caused him to resolve that his readers would be well taught even after he was gone (cf. 2 Pet. 1:12-15).

God helps those who help themselves!

From a Christian standpoint though, resolutions are simply recognition of the fact that there may be things or issues in our lives that need changing. For example, if we don't properly take care of our bodies, then we should resolve to eat better foods and exercise more. If we have failed to properly take care of our finances, then we should resolve to spend less and save more. If we are neglecting to pray or read our Bibles regularly, then we need to resolve to prioritize our time better.

Making resolutions (plans) is a Biblical concept. They also can nudge us toward a new beginning if we truly desire to grow in Christ. Resolutions have the potential of improving us. Resolutions can serve as markers or events to assist us to attain certain goals in life.

God does work in the spontaneous moments, but He also works in the important practice of setting goals, plans, and resolutions. When God works in the spontaneity, it has often first been grounded through proper planning. ■

Glenn D. Black is a GBS alumnus (HS '69, BRE '74), former editor of God's Revivalist (1976-1985), and District Superintendent in the Kentucky District of The Wesleyan Church for 22 years. Glenn has authored several books and many articles, and he resides in Westport, IN.

GOD'S REVIVALIST and BIBLE ADVOCATE

"Good resolutions are like babies crying in church. They should be carried out immediately."

—Charles M. Sheldon,
minister and author
(In His Steps)

I RESOLVE...

**DR. HENRY SMITH (HS '69, BRE '73),
Chancellor, Indiana Wesleyan
University**

"I resolve to read the entire Bible through each year for the rest of my life. Although I grew up in a parsonage where my parents modeled reading through the Bible through multiple times each year, I confess that I had never read it—cover to cover—until a few years ago when I challenged Indiana Wesleyan University students to join me in this discipline. Personally, what works for me is the daily portion of the Old and New Testaments, Psalms, and Proverbs, that is structured in the *One Year Bible*. I urge Christians everywhere, who have not been doing this, to join me in this resolution."

**G. CLAIR SAMS (BA '05), Heartland
Conference President, Bible Methodist
Connection of Churches**

"Because of the season of life and ministry which I am now enjoying, I see the future differently than I would have just ten years ago. I realize that stability, integrity, and influence are of great importance. As the Lord helps, I resolve to live reflecting the richness of His strength. My desire is to encourage those who follow to be leaders who will, with courage and confidence, glorify God."

**DR. A. WINGROVE TAYLOR (BA Mus '52, BA '52, ThB '52), GBS board member,
denominational leader**

"I am resolved to be, in Christ, a faithful son of God and His fruitful servant. I am also resolved to belong wholly to God, and only through Him to belong to others and myself."

**E.R. TROUTEN (HS '58, ThB '61), Minister,
former GBS staff and faculty**

"I am resolved not to allow hurts and disappointments to mar my spirit and my relationship with God; and I am further resolved to maintain a clear channel between me and my God. I want to let the peace of God rule (be the umpire) in my heart (Col. 3:15)."



John Wesley on Bible Reading

I want to know one thing – the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach me the way. For this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! ...Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of Lights: – “Lord, is it not Thy word, ‘if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God?’ Thou gives liberally, and upbraidest not. Thou hast said, ‘if any be willing to do Thy will, he shall know.’ I am willing to do, let me know Thy will.” I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, “comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God: and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.

—from preface to *Sermons* ■

In the preface to the *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*, Wesley suggests a process for reading the Bible most effectively. The purpose should be to know the whole will of God, and have a fixed determination to do that will. Of course prayer is vitally important:

[S]erious and earnest prayer should be made before approaching the oracles of God, seeing that “Scripture can only be understood through the same Spirit whereby it was given.” Prayer should be offered at the close in order that what is read might be written upon the heart.

Wesley further noted that there should be periods of self-examination during the reading “with both heart and life being scrutinized. And whatever light is given “should be used to the uttermost, and that immediately. Let there be no delay.”

He concludes with this admonishment: “Whatever you resolve, begin to execute the first moment you can. So shall you find this word to be indeed the power of God unto present and eternal salvation.” ■



Poll: Many Own a Bible, But Not Many Read It

by Matthew Brown

Americans have a high interest and awareness of the Bible, but a majority believe the scripture has too little influence on a society some of them say is in moral decline, according to a recent poll conducted for the American Bible Society. It also found that not many read the scriptures regularly, and one-third say that's the reason society's morals are in decline.

The survey conducted by the Barna Group found 88% of Americans own a Bible, and those same people own an average of 4.4 copies of the Book. And while it might not be surprising that religiously devoted Christians own Bibles, the study finds that 59% of Americans who "have no faith or who identify as atheists own a Bible," researchers said. "Despite many aspects of society that are secularizing, penetration of scripture remains high in 2013." The survey noted that 20 years ago, 92% of Americans said they owned a Bible.

But few of those who own a Bible read it regularly, according to the 2013 survey. While 61% said they wish they read the Bible more, just 13% said they read the Bible daily.

Barna found that 32% of those surveyed said a lack of reading the Bible is the main reason for what they see is a decline in the morals and values of America. Another 29% blame the negative influence of media and 25% blame corporate greed for the decline in morals and values.

Although 49% believe the Bible doesn't have much impact on American youth, it is the 18-28-year-old age group that showed more interest than older adults in what the Bible had to say on certain issues – 40% of millennials (aged 18 to 28) say they are interested in the Bible's wisdom on dealing with illness and death, compared with 28% of all adults who say the same," Barna researchers wrote. And 35% of that same group (millennials) are interested in the Bible's perspective on dating and relationships, while 42% want to know what scripture says about parenting – both of those percentages are much higher than the norms."

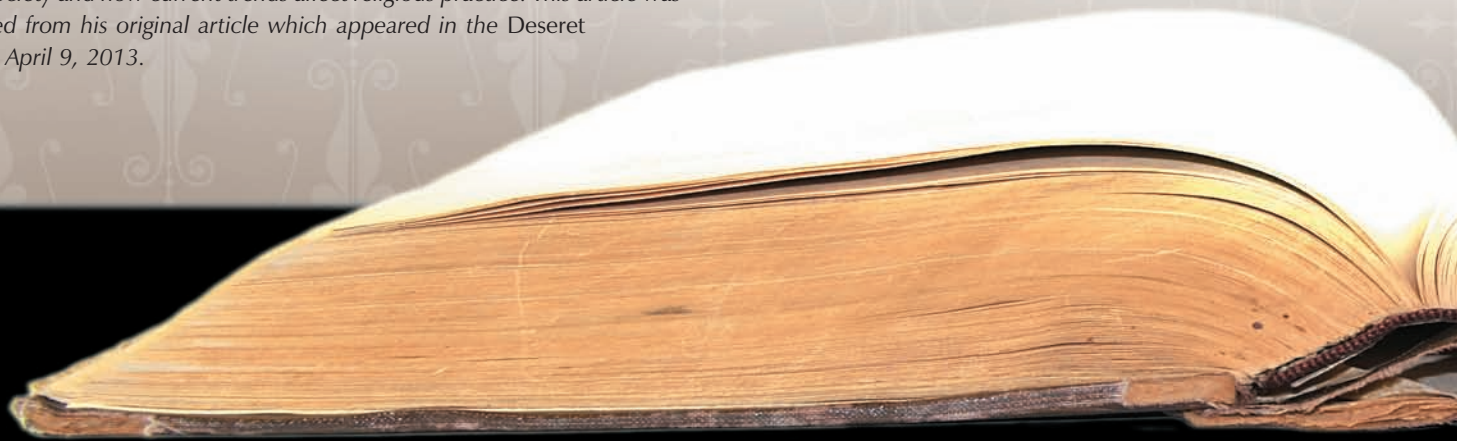
A detailed analysis of all the questions in the ABA/Barna Group survey can be found at www.barna.org. ■

Matthew Brown is a reporter who focuses on writing about how faith intersects with society and how current trends affect religious practice. This article was adapted from his original article which appeared in the Deseret News, April 9, 2013.

FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY:

- 88% own a Bible.
 - 4.4 Bibles can be found in the average Bible-owner's home.
 - 59% of those with no faith or who call themselves atheists own a Bible.
 - 56% say the Bible has too little influence on American society.
 - 13% think the Bible has too much influence on American society.
- | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | |
|------|------|------|---|
| 86% | 82% | 80% | say the Bible is sacred literature. |
| 67% | 60% | 61% | wish they read the Bible more. |
| 75% | 69% | 66% | believe the Bible contains everything a person needs to live a meaningful life. |

- The percentage of those who read the Bible regularly and believe it to be inspired has remained at about 20% from 2011 to 2013.
- The percent of those who believe the Bible to be inspired but who don't read it often has dropped from 45% to 39% from 2011 to 2013.
- The percentage of those who are antagonistic toward the Bible and rarely read it increased from 10% in 2011 to 17% in 2013.



Reading the Bible Online

by Ken Farmer

There are many free online applications that will allow you to select specific versions and specific reading plans. Some will even read passages to you as you follow along.

There are also many apps available for digital devices (both Apple and Android) that will do the same. Simply go online to your appropriate apps store. Again, many of these are free.

I personally like the English Standard Version which may be accessed at www.esvbible.org. Here you can check out the various Bible resources and set up an ESV Bible Account allowing you to personalize the site to reflect your preferences.

Under the "Plans" icon, you can select from a number of different choices; for example, chronological or daily (selections from each of the Old Testament, New Testament, and Psalms). After selecting the appropriate passage you can select the "Listen" icon to listen to your selection as you read along.


Another popular online resource which allows you to choose a reading plan and Bible version is Bible Gateway (www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans). Here, too, you can listen to Bible portions being read, but these are not currently connected to a daily reading schedule.

As the online resources are always evolving, you may be able to find something which fits your needs better. Just explore!

About Kindle readers and reader apps...

Two of us in the Revivalist Office own Kindle readers which allow us to download material directly to our devices. The more recent Kindles (e.g., Fire HD and HDX) offer more flexibility in utilizing Bibles and Bible apps, not only from Amazon.com but also from other Internet sites.

Even if you do not own a Kindle you can download the free Kindle reading app (Mac or PC) that allows you to read materials on your computer or phone. 📖



"New Year's resolutions are great, if they point us to our absolute dependence on God's grace to change."

—Lynn Roush, guest blogger,
ChristianityToday.com

I RESOLVE...

BRENDA HERRING (BA '05), GBS board member, independent photographer

"I resolve this New Year to grow closer to Christ. I intend to be more intentional about my priorities, making sure my tasks are in the proper order with God always being first."

RODNEY LOPER (BA '01), Pastor, Hobe Sound, FL

"I want to climb up in God's lap, so-to-speak, in order to be close enough to hear and feel His heartbeat for my life. I want to live with His purpose and plan in view so that His smile of approval is constant."

DR. CONNIE PALM (BA '60), Christian educator and missionary

"I resolve to give thanks for the colors with which God will paint my sunset."

DR. BILL URY, pastor, adjunct professor for GBS and Wesley Biblical Seminary

"I resolve never to hinder the glory of God in my life by: learning and growing, living by my convictions, living for others, and falling more deeply in love with the Triune God."

VIOLA DURR (BA '78), former GBS faculty and current board member

"I resolve not to be ineffective and unproductive in my knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ by making every effort to add to my faith goodness, to goodness knowledge and to knowledge self-control and to self-control perseverance and to perseverance godliness and to godliness mutual affection and to mutual affection love. 2 Peter 1: 5-8 (NIV)"



SUPPLEMENTAL DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS

Some people augment their Bible reading with additional devotional materials – hymnals, books of prayer, and, more commonly, daily devotional books.

Below is a list of the top 10 devotional books. Although there are various versions of the lists, the scores on this one (www.goodreads.com) are based on the ranking of each book on associated lists and the number of people who voted for it. A book's "score" is the total and it ranged from 4.95 to 1.69 for the top ten. Chambers is 4.89 and Cowman is 4.00 followed by a precipitous drop to 2.97. However, looking at how many people actually rated the books, Chambers was here listed as being rated by 29,606 people, or three times as many as the second most rated (*Jesus is Calling*).

It is worth noting that *My Utmost for His Highest* and *Streams in the Desert* were written by people closely associated with GBS: Oswald Chambers (faculty and camp meeting speaker) and Lettie Cowman (member of first student body).

1. *Morning and Evening* by Charles H. Spurgeon
2. *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers
3. *Streams in the Desert: 366 Daily Devotional Readings* by Lettie B. Cowman
4. *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions* edited by Arthur Bennett
5. *A Year with C.S. Lewis: Daily Readings from His Classic Works*
6. *Jesus Calling: Enjoying Peace in His Presence* by Sarah Young
7. *Grace for the Moment: Inspirational Thoughts for Each Day of the Year* by Max Lucado
8. *The Pursuit of Holiness* by Jerry Bridges
9. *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer
10. *The Cross-Centered Life: Keeping the Gospel the Main Thing* by C.J. Mahaney ■

"Resolutions are most often empty promises for those who have an abundance of dreams but refuse to wake up and live them."

—Steve Maraboli, behavioral scientist,
author, speaker

I RESOLVE...

SONJA VERNON, Dean of Women, God's Bible School and College

"I am resolved with the help of the Holy Spirit to pursue an authentic life, to flesh out what it means practically to live as a true Christ-follower in this present day."

KEITH WAGGONER II (BA '99), Pastor, Nampa, ID

"I am resolved to be humbly submitted to the authority of God and His Word while responding to the sanctifying conviction of the Holy Spirit. I am also resolved to live as an authentic Christian, passionate about pointing people to Jesus Christ."

RENEE LANGWORTHY, GBS college senior, student government president

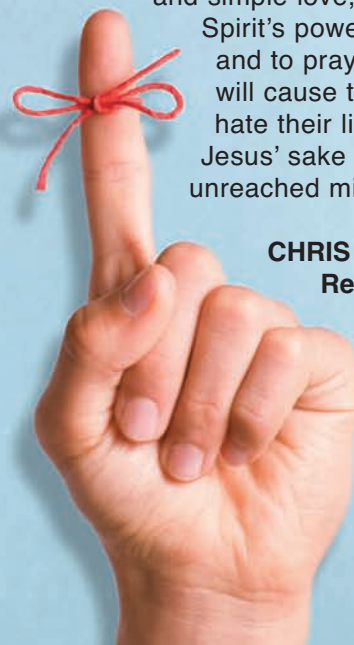
"I resolve to continue learning – learning to love like Christ, put others before myself, discern the voice of His Spirit, be content and joyful in His will, give thanks in everything and for everything, serve and uplift my (future) husband, discipline my mind and body, be a wise steward, and make perfect tiramisu. I resolve to continue filling my mind with truth – letting it transform me into the image of Christ. I resolve to be a student forever! (Eph.1:17)"

TIMOTHY KEEP, SR., General Missions Secretary, Bible Methodist Connection

"I resolve to be watchful in these midway years, to return to an earnest, uncluttered and simple love, to receive the Spirit's power in my weakness, and to pray for a revival that will cause this generation to hate their lives in this world for Jesus' sake and that of the unreached millions."

CHRIS LAMBETH, GBS Registrar

"I resolve to spend more quality time with my lovely wife and great kids. They bring out the best in me!"



How to Pray for One Hour by Mark Eckart

First let me say that we want to shy away from legalism anytime we talk about spiritual formation topics. It is so easy to fall in the trap that if I just do these ten things or follow this specific regimen, then I will certainly be in God's favor. On the other hand, some Christians are so lackadaisical that they never make any effort to seek God earnestly. It is interesting the interaction Jesus had with His disciples about this topic: "Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?'"

Could you not watch one hour?

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:37-38).

Here is a good way to spend some time with God, whether it is for an hour or not. However, it does work well to spend 15 minutes on each section.

PRaise

About 140 times in Scripture it talks about how we should give worship and praise to God. The book of Psalms itself is full of this admonition to praise God. For example, "He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen" (Deut. 10:21). This verse alone should get us blessed. Think of scores of other admonitions throughout the Bible encouraging us to praise God! You could take a whole hour just on this point.

REpent

As Wesleyan-Arminians, we don't believe you have to practice sin as a Christian. When you get saved and sanctified, it changes you and your desires so you don't want to sin and hurt your relationship with God. However, this does not mean that there is not room for confession in the life of a believer. With all of the strengths of the holiness movement, this has been one of our weaknesses. That is, to believe that once you are saved that you never need to confess anything to God or others. The practice of confession is stated clearly in James 5:16: "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another...."

ASK

Often by this point in your prayer time you will be feeling great. You

have spent time giving God the praise He deserves and have confessed any sin or fault that He brings to your attention. Too many of us just plop on our knees with our "wish list" to tell God all that we need and never take the time to cover these two very important before-mentioned steps.

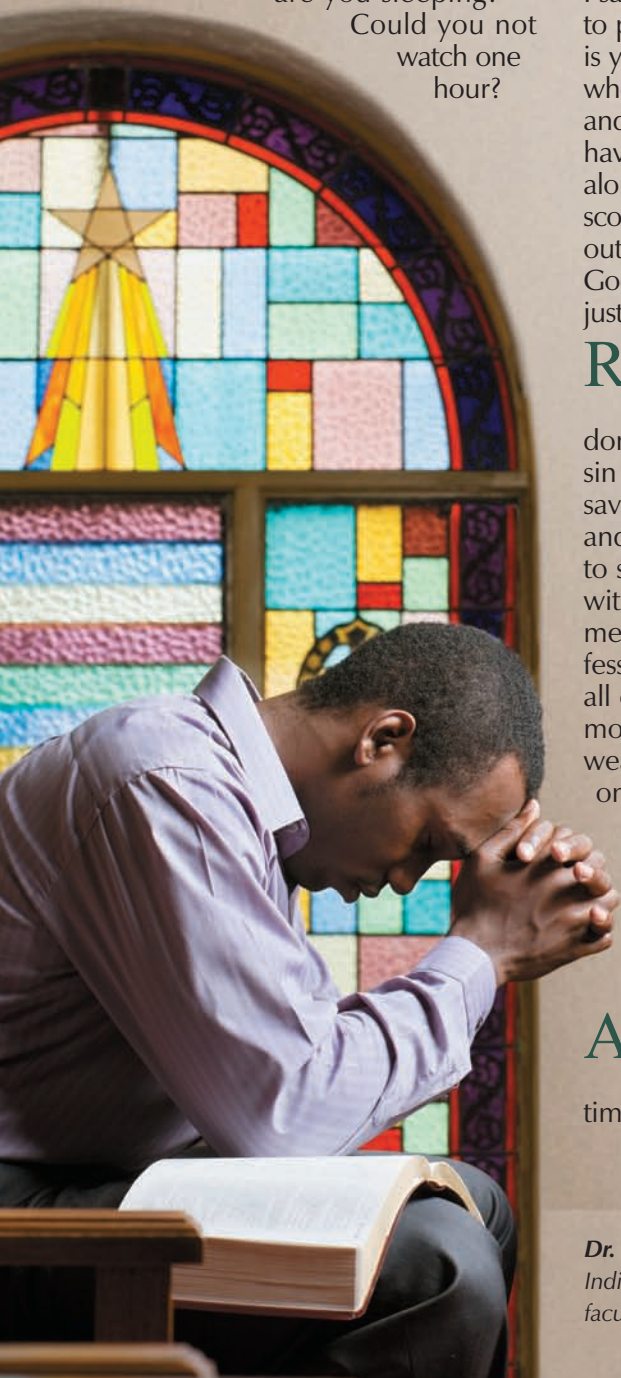
The good news is that God wants us to ask Him for our needs and even our wants. Repeatedly in Scripture we are invited to come to God and are told that He cares about our needs and situations. A favorite reference to illustrate this is found in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matt. 7:7-11).

Yield

Don't make the mistake of believing that the sanctified no longer have anything to yield to Christ. Even though consecration is a major part of that work of grace in the life of a believer, the reality is there are things that come into all lives continually that we still need to be yielding to Christ. What a beautiful thing it is to finish your prayer time by just reminding God that you totally belong to Him. Even though none of us deserve it, ask God to make you a conduit of His grace for that day to those who are hurting and need a hand. You will yield your time, treasures, and talent to Him once again.

The other day I was leaving a restaurant with my wife. There was a sign in the window that said, "Prayer is the world's greatest wireless connection!" I agree, so I invite you to P.R.A.Y. ■

**All verses are taken from the NKJV.*



Dr. Mark S.F. Eckart (GBS BRE '83), District Superintendent of the Indiana South District of The Wesleyan Church, formerly served as a faculty member and Dean of Students at God's Bible School.

WINTER 2014



Evernote

Evernote is an easy-to-use, free app that helps you remember everything across all of the devices you use, stay organized, save your ideas, and improve productivity. Evernote lets you take notes, capture photos, create to-do lists, record voice reminders – and makes these notes completely searchable, whether you are at home, at work, or on the go.

It is one of the New York Times “Top 10 Must-Have Apps” and the winner of several awards. In fact, some users tried paid, dedicated apps, but settled on Evernote because:

- Evernote keeps all notes/entries in one place.
- Evernote is more flexible (photos, audio, text of any type can be added).
- Evernote syncs on all devices (computers, tablets, phones).

You can search your journal notes for words or phrases to see when you may have commented on them and what area of the Bible you were studying at the time. You can share notes with friends and colleagues via Facebook and Twitter.

Evernote is available at www.evernote.com.

Benefits of Journaling

by Michael Hyatt

I have never been a consistent journaler. I tried. I had friends who swore by it. It just never worked for me, until recently. On our vacation last summer, my wife challenged me to give it another try. I reluctantly agreed and fell in love with it. I have now journaled daily for more than six months.

If I had to sum it up, I would say journaling has afforded me seven benefits:

- Process previous events
- Clarify my thinking
- Understand the context
- Notice my feelings
- Connect with my heart
- Record significant lessons
- Ask important questions.

When I started journaling, I did it the old-fashioned way. I kept my journal in a physical notebook. However, I am not the best at writing lots of text by hand. The legibility of my writing deteriorates quickly. On day three of my journaling experience, I stumbled upon a software program called DayOne. However, about a month ago, I started using Evernote for my journaling. Several people had suggested this from the beginning, and I finally saw the wisdom of it. It makes all my journal entries readily available when I search for a topic, making my notes available for blog posts, speeches, books, etc.

Regardless, there are a thousand different ways to keep a journal. Don't get hung up on the method or the software. The most important thing to do is just to start. ■

Michael Hyatt worked in publishing for most of his career and has written eight books, two of which landed on the New York Times Best Sellers list. Since 2012 he has run his own company, Intentional Leadership. This article from his blog (<http://michaelhyatt.com>) has been adapted and used by permission.



YouVersion

YouVersion is a simple, ad-free Bible that brings God's Word into your daily life. There have been more than 125 million downloads of this app so far on Apple and Android (smart phones), tablets, and computers.

Read the Bible. Take your choice from hundreds of Bible versions and languages. Compare two versions side by side. You can even choose your font and display size.

Study the Bible. Highlight and bookmark your favorite Bible verses, and make notes about what you're learning.

Subscribe to Bible Plans. Cover the whole Bible, focus on a topic, or read a devotional from a gifted teacher. Choose your plan and each day you'll find a Bible selection waiting for you.

Take the Bible With You. You can download the YouVersion Bible app on any mobile device, and your notes, bookmarks, highlights, plans, and more will be automatically synced across all of your devices.

YouVersion is available at www.bible.com.

GIVE TO MINISTRY AND SUPPLEMENT YOUR RETIREMENT INCOME

God's Bible School and College Gift Annuity

by the numbers

0

the number of times
GBSC has missed a
gift annuity payment

114

the number of years GBSC has
been educating Christian leaders
and managing charitable resources

5.1%

the single-life gift
annuity rate for a
70-year-old donor

100%

the amount of annuity
held in reserve to
assure funding

GBSC ALUMNI have highly impacted the Church. **Denominations** within the holiness tradition: 100% have or have had GBSC alumni as pastors, 67% have or have had GBSC alumni as denominational leaders, 46% have or have had GBSC alumni as missionaries, 75% have or have had GBSC alumni as educators. **Missions organizations:** 100% have or have had GBSC alumni as missionaries, 56% have or have had GBSC alumni as directors. **Postsecondary schools:** 100% have or have had GBSC alumni as faculty members, 73% have or have had GBSC alumni as presidents, 73% have or have had GBSC alumni as administrators. **Secondary schools:** 55% have or have had GBSC alumni as faculty members and 53% have or have had GBSC alumni as administrators.

What's a gift annuity? You give a gift to God's Bible School and College, and the college makes annual payments to you for life. Setting up a charitable gift annuity can result in tax savings, provide income for your future, and be a part of wise estate planning. You'll be supporting an institution that has produced Christian leaders for 114 years. Contact Faith Avery at (513) 721-7944 x1221 to request your free, no-obligation, customized, gift-annuity illustration.

WWW.GBS.EDU/ADVANCEMENT ADVANCEMENT@GBS.EDU (513) 721-7944

**GOD'S BIBLE SCHOOL
& COLLEGE**

NEWS

from the Hilltop

GLICK TRIP TO ISRAEL SPAWNS NEW CLASS

Dr. Dan Glick and his wife Martha spent a month (Sept. 23–Oct. 23) this past fall in Israel where they studied its history and culture and visited many biblical sites. Much of the time, the Glicks lived with an Orthodox Jewish family in Safed, a mountainous town north of the Sea of Galilee. They visited 75 places throughout Israel, meeting lots of people, including Jews, Muslims,

Christians, Palestinians, and Jewish immigrants from Ukraine. One highlight of the trip was Dr. Glick's walk on the Jesus Trail from Nazareth to Capernaum. This was an approximate 30-mile hike, retracing the path that Jesus walked when he left Nazareth to begin His ministry around the Sea of Galilee.

Another highlight was a trip to Samaria (the West Bank).



Dan Glick on the Jesus Trail

As a result of Dr. Glick's travels, he will be offering the students of GBS a three-week study seminar in Israel in May and June. This will be a four-hour college course that will have a pre-trip study component on the campus, followed by three weeks in Israel after graduation exercises in May.

DR. BIRD PRESENTS AT ETS

On November 19, 2013, Dr. Mark Bird presented a scholarly paper at the Evangelical Theological Society meeting held this year in Baltimore, Maryland. The title of the paper was "Inerrancy: Qualifications and the Test of Truth." The paper addressed a tendency among evangelicals to question the accuracy of minor historical details in the Gospels, while still claiming to believe in inerrancy. Bird made the case that verbal plenary inspiration entails that the Bible writers never made a claim that was contrary 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.

BIRTHS



To **Jessica (Stroup) (BA '07) and David (BA '07) Hartkopf**, a daughter, **Emmalene ("Emma") Grace**, born November 22 in Cincinnati. David teaches music at GBS and directs the Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble.



To **Morgan (Litchfield) (GBS 2008-09) and Andrew (BA '05) Street**, a son, **Josiah Andrew**, born November 12 in Allahabad, India, where the Streets are currently enrolled as Hindi language students. Josiah joins his brothers, Amos and Justice.

MARRIAGES

Evalyn Rose Nielsen to Melvin L. Schaper, October 26, 2013, at the Calvary Bible Fellowship Church in Oklahoma City with Albert Schaper officiating and Jerry Schenck assisting. Melvin has strong GBS ties: a student 1941-43, a faculty member 1986-91, and a board member since 1998. He says that God knew Evelyn wanted a husband and knew he needed a wife; so He put them together. They are residing in Ochelata, Oklahoma.



DEATHS

Paul Bramble, 69, of Thousandsticks, Kentucky, passed away September 8, 2013. Paul was the son of the



Mark Bird presents his paper at ETS.



Pres. Avery presents Josh Cravens with the keys to a Buick Century.

tunity to honor this distinguished and valued colleague for his ministry and influence on our students. God's Bible School and College awarded the Dr. H.C. Emmert Scholarship in the amount of \$500 to David Walker, a sophomore studying in the Division of Ministerial Education at GBS. If you would like to donate to our scholarship fund, contact the Advancement Office (513.721-7944 x1221; favery@gbs.edu).

reality; thus, reasonable attempts at harmonizing biblical accounts is legitimate. One attendee, a PhD student who plans to refer to the paper in his dissertation, described it as "clear, straightforward, and helpful." It is available to read at wesleyantheology.com.

STUDENTS HELPED BY VEHICLE DONATION AND SCHOLARSHIP

Charles and Ruth Smith, long-time friends of GBS, no longer had

a need for their 2002 Buick Century. The car was in excellent condition and they wanted to see it go to a worthy young person preparing for ministry. Josh Cravens, shown above, was delighted to receive the car. If you have a car you would like to donate to GBS, please contact the Advancement Office today!

While the GBS campus was recently saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. H.C. Emmert (see obituary below) it is also an oppor-



David Walker is awarded the Emmert Scholarship.



late Willie and Mamie Carroll Bramble. He attended GBS earning an BA in Social Studies in 1967 and furthered his education with a graduate degree from Xavier University. He enjoyed all kinds of sports and spending time with his loved ones. He had been a coach, a teacher for 31 years, and a principal. Paul is survived by his loving wife of 26 years, Sophia (Osborne); son Luke; four daughters, Elizabeth, Rebecca, Michelle, and Paula; brother Bill; sister Marilyn; eight grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at the Thousandsticks United Methodist Church, officiated by Rev. Robert Amundsen and Rev. Roger D. Wolfe with interment in the Sherman Osborne Cemetery.

Elizabeth Ann Coker, 80, of Oklahoma City, died October 18, 2013. She was born to Hugh and Virginia (Vetter) Mitchell. She married Kenneth Coker who passed away earlier in 2013. She was the mother of



Nancy (deceased), Kenneth, Daniel, and LyNan. She enjoyed a distinguished career as an Immigration Consultant and served on the Board of Immigration Appeals. She did missionary work in El Salvador (4 years), Guatemala (5 years), and among the Navajo Indians in New Mexico (5 years). She did legal work in the area of immigration and gave assistance to GBS on several occasions. Services to honor Elizabeth were held at Trinity Church of the Nazarene in Oklahoma City with interment following in Heritage Burial Park at South Lakes.



Dr. H.C. Emmert, 91, of Bethany, Oklahoma, passed away December 1, 2013. Henry Clay was born in Texas and spent his early years growing up in Nazarene parsonages in Oklahoma. He married Alva June Wilson in (p18)➡



Dear Phil

Expositional commentaries focus on explaining the meaning of the text in English. Comments on the original languages are put in footnotes or endnotes. Such commentaries can serve as valuable guides to the meaning of the text. I recommend the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Rev. Ed., the *New American Commentary*, the Tyndale OT/NT Commentary, *NIV Application Commentary*, and the new Zondervan Exegetical Commentary series. Any commentary written by Derek Kidner is worth reading.

Devotional commentaries focus on applying the text to the modern audience. Examples include William Barclay's commentaries (beware some of his theology) and Matthew Henry (an English Puritan whose devotional comments are helpful, though he occasionally mishandles difficult passages).

Use the different commentaries according to their purpose: *technical* for detailed information about the original languages; *expositional* for interpretations of each verse or section of the passage; *devotional* for practical and personal applications; volumes of sermons (Alexander, MacArthur) for examples of how the passage can be developed into a sermon.

After studying context, comparing translations, and checking commentaries, my final recommendation is to **read the whole Bible regularly**. Nothing else will provide you with the same broad knowledge of God's word. Seeing the sweep of God's design in human history, uncovering the OT roots of nearly everything NT, appreciating the essential continuity of God's self-revelation in Christ running through both testaments – regularly reading the whole Bible yields all of these fruits and more.

Philip ■

A. Philip Brown II is a member of the faculty in the Division of Ministerial Education at God's Bible School and College.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF BIBLE STUDY – Part 2

My last column gave examples of the first two reasons for differences between English translations: (1) alternate or more precise ways to express the original in English, and (2) disagreement about how to interpret the original Greek/Hebrew text. The third reason for such differences is disagreement regarding the original wording in Greek/Hebrew. Luke 2:14 contains a well-known example of this.

Luke 2:14b reads, "...peace, good will toward men" (KJV, NKJV) or "...peace among men with whom He is pleased" (NASB, ESV, NIV, NET). This significant difference in meaning is the result of just one letter in Greek: *eudokia* vs. *eudokias*. The loss/addition, whichever is the case, of that last "s" is what creates the difference. Translator's notes in the NKJV, ESV, NET and other versions alert the reader that this difference arises from a difference in the Greek manuscripts. Determining the correct reading would require a vast knowledge of Greek, Latin, Greek scripts, manuscripts, the habits of particular copyists, NT transmission history, etc. and shouldn't be an English reader's focus. What is important is to (1) be aware of the difference, (2) think through the implications of the options, (3) avoid taking a dogmatic position on the meaning of the disputed text, and

(4) not base a doctrinal position, which cannot be supported elsewhere in Scripture, on a disputed text.

After studying context and comparing translations, the third step is **check commentaries**. A few words about commentaries in general may be helpful. First, all commentaries are not equally valuable. Bestcommentaries.com provides a helpful starting point. Second, some commentaries are written by unbelievers. Third, an author's theological perspective colors his comments but does not necessarily skew his perspective. Fourth, commentaries are often valuable resources for understanding the historical and cultural background for a text. Ignore them at your own loss.

Commentaries fall into three primary categories: technical, expositional, and devotional. *Technical commentaries* focus on explaining the significance of the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of the original language for the original audience. These commentaries are often the most valuable for understanding what a text means. Examples of recommended technical commentaries include Adam Clarke, Keil & Delitzsch (OT), the *New International Commentary on the Old/New Testament*, and the *Baker Exegetical Commentary* series. I would turn to these commentaries for help with understanding the passage discussed earlier.



CHRISTIAN BUSINESSES UNDER PRESSURE

New Mexico's Supreme Court ruled that two Christian photographers who declined to photograph a same-sex union violated the state's Human Rights Act. One justice said the photographers were "compelled by law to compromise the very religious beliefs that inspire their lives."

Denver baker Jack Phillips is facing possible jail time for refusing to bake a cake for a gay wedding. The Colorado Attorney General's office filed a formal complaint against Phillips, the owner of Masterpiece Cake Shop and a hearing was scheduled before the state's civil rights commission.

In Indianapolis, a family-owned cookie shop faced a discrimination investigation after they refused to make rainbow cookies for National Coming Out Day.

A T-shirt company in Lexington, KY, found itself at the center of a Human Rights Commission investigation after they refused to make T-shirts for a local gay rights organization.

In Gresham, OR, a family-owned Christian bakery, under investigation for refusing to bake a wedding cake for a lesbian couple, was forced to shut down. The owner received calls threatening to kill his family and saying they hoped his children would die. The protestors then turned on other wedding vendors around the com-

munity. They threatened to boycott any florists, wedding planners or other vendors that did business with the bakery. That is what tipped the scales. Owner Aaron Klein said that they have nothing against homosexuals – but because of their religious faith, the family simply cannot take part in gay wedding events. He commented: "It's a sad day for Christian business owners and it's a sad day for the First Amendment. The LGBT attacks are the reason we are shutting down the shop. They have killed our business through mob tactics."

Klein said the closing of their retail store was a small price to pay for standing up for their religious beliefs and that what's happened to his bakery should be a warning to other Christians across the nation. Klein said it's becoming clear that Christians do not have the "right to believe what we believe." In other words, gay rights trump religious rights.

"As a man of faith, I am in good spirits," Klein said. "I'm happy to be serving the Lord and standing up for what's right.... Hopefully, the church will wake up and understand that we are under attack right now."

The plight of the Klein family exposes the true nature of the left. Those who preach tolerance and diversity are the least tolerant and the least diverse of all. ■

Adapted with permission from "Todd's Daily Dispatch" by Todd Starnes on FoxNews.com.



student focus

Born in Alaska as the fifth child of seven, **PHOEBE SLAVENS** hails from a family she describes as, "amazing, wonderful, and somewhat big." From Alaska, she moved with her parents to Canada and then to Papua New Guinea where they served as medical missionaries – her father a doctor and her mother a former nurse. Growing up on the mission field gave Phoebe a satchel of mission field stories, but also allowed her to watch her family reach others in need – in the spirit of love. Missionary life opened doors of opportunity, afforded experiences, and transferred to her a heart for missions.

Now living stateside, as Phoebe watches her dad leave on disaster relief medical mission trips for other countries, she longs to help others in a similar way one day. In the meantime, she strives to gain a stronger and deeper foundation in the Bible and a closer relationship with Christ while studying at GBS. ■

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

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

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

➡(p15) 1939. He entered the ministry in 1943 and preached his last sermon earlier last year, completing a full 70 years of ministry. Having earned a BA, MA, and DMin, H.C. also taught Bible and theology in four holiness Bible colleges including GBS (2003-04). His writings and teachings are currently being used in several Bible college curriculums and are being translated into Spanish. Dr. Emmert is survived by his wife June; son Clay; three daughters, Margaret, Linda, Judy; sister Allie; brother Sam; 12 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren; 3 great-great-grandchildren; plus a host of friends and relatives. Funeral service was held at the Calvary Bible Fellowship Church in Oklahoma City with interment in Bethany.



Rev. Amos E. Hann, Jr., 79, of Columbia, SC, died October 28, 2013. He was a son of the late Amos Hann, Sr., and Velma Mae Crumrine Hann. He spent his life in the service of his Lord as pastor and evangelist for 57 years, mainly with the Church of the Bible Covenant, serving as Regional Presiding Officer of the North Lake Central Region from 1967-76, and as President of Covenant Foundation College in Greenfield, IN, from 1983-86. He also served on the boards of the Inter-Church Holiness Convention and the Hobe Sound Evangelistic Association. Survivors include his loving wife of 59 years, Elisabeth Hann; two daughters, Martha and Mary; two sons, Nathan and David; 14 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and sisters, Naomi and Marietta. The funeral service was held at the Covenant Community Fellowship, Rev. Dr. William Sillings officiating, with interment at Ebenezer Holiness Baptist Church Cemetery.



Leah Doris (Wiegman) Kessen, 87, of Aurora, Indiana, passed away October 23, 2013. She was the daughter of Jenny (Howell) and Wesley Wiegman. She attended GBS from 1947-51. Doris married Melvin Kessen (ThB '54) on June 6, 1953, and together they lived on campus for the next 17 years while Melvin served as "Supervisor of Engine Room." They then moved to Aurora and raised their family. Doris was a member of the Wilmington Hills Wesleyan Church and she was involved in the Mission Society. Surviving Doris are her husband, Melvin Kessen; three sons, Phil, Mark, and Jim; daughter, Becky; 12 grandchildren (Crystal and Hollie are current GBS students); and 9 great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held at the Wilmington Hills Wesleyan Church on November 3.



James Alva Orcutt, 79, of Demossville, Kentucky, passed away on November 6, 2013. He worked as a truck driver, for Advance Transportation, and was a member of Burlington Bible Methodist Church. The Orcutt family has strong GBS connections – James met his wife while she was a student at GBS. All seven of their children attended GBS and three graduated from its high school. James is survived by his wife of 55 years, Bonnie (King) Orcutt; five sons, James, Robert, Daniel, Thomas, and Timothy; two daughters, Sheila, Melissa; brother David;

sister Esther; 15 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. The funeral service was held at the Burlington Bible Methodist Church, officiated by Darrell Stetler and Dewey King with interment at Peach Grove Cemetery.

HITHER AND THITHER

Brennan (BA '10) and Ivone (Garcia) (BA '11) Muir are currently taking the 10-month intensive language training at Rio Grande Bible Institute and Language School in south Texas. After completion in May 2014, they will take their assignment in San Gabriel, Mexico.

Christian Workers Needed in Pacific Northwest. Julie (Fulton) Phillips (BRE '79) and her husband moved to Washington in 2007 and found themselves 60 miles from a Holiness church, so they opened up their home to start a church in Marysville. In that little congregation were some who had been coming from a distance; now these are starting their own groups in their home towns. There are seven congregations of Holiness people, of varying denominations, who need pastors. Some of the churches are established and have a parsonage, etc., and some are just groups of people who have been meeting together. A couple of the churches have facilities for a Christian Day School, but there are no teachers. Pray about this need for pastors and workers in the Pacific Northwest. The harvest field is great. For more information contact the Philips at (360) 657-5655 (church) or (425) 512-3640 (cell phone). 📌





VOWS AND RESOLUTIONS — IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

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

Scriptures: Deuteronomy 23:21-23: *“If you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.”*

Philippians 3:14: *“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

2 Peter 3:18: *“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

It is good for a Christian to desire to improve. “Improvement” changes one’s habits and attitudes for the better and is part of the process of sanctification which the Holy Spirit desires to help us to achieve. Ask yourself, “Where does the desire for improvement come from?” Scripture indicates that realizing the need and desiring to improve is the result of God’s grace working in our life (Phil. 2:12-13). I understand Romans 3:10-18 to teach that without the grace of God working in everyone’s life (often called “common grace”), no one would seek God, and “no one would do good, no not even one” (Rom. 3:12).

I. Resolutions and Goal Setting

To desire to be a better Christian, to be more disciplined in one’s daily thoughts and habits of life, is a

good thing. Without such a desire, Christians would not be motivated to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” as Peter commands (2 Pet. 3:18). Paul instructs Christians to think positive thoughts (Phil. 4:6-8) and to have positive goals. He wrote that he had set a goal: “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

However, the enemy frequently takes a good thing, like promising yourself that you will do things differently in the New Year (or whenever you feel a desire for change and self-improvement), and he then pushes you to set for yourself unreasonable goals. For example, if a person has had difficulty in establishing a daily time of prayer, or finds that after praying for five minutes, he runs out of things to say, to set the goal of praying a substantially longer period of time each day is most likely an unreasonable goal and is setting oneself up for failure.

Goal setting, which I understand to be synonymous with making a “resolution,” is good if it is done with wisdom. Such resolutions should be realistic, incremental, short-term, and measurable. Further, you should not be afraid to make mid-course corrections and/or reduce your goals if you find you are failing to accomplish them. However, do your best to stop being an “all-or-nothing” type of person. Such persons set lofty goals that are way beyond anything they have every consistently achieved, and when they fail to attain such goals, they give up and quit trying. Far too many of us have experienced such failure and know the disappointment and negative “self-talk” that often results.

II. A Vow Is Not a Resolution

As I read what Scripture says about vows, I conclude that a vow is different from a resolution. A resolution is a desire or promise made to oneself and is to be performed, or not, at the risk of one’s own satisfaction or displeasure. A vow is a solemn promise made to God or to others. A vow is more than the intent to “do better.” It is more than simply saying, “As God being my helper, I plan to stop saying or doing X and purpose to start doing Y.” To say that with God’s help you are going to do something different than you have in the past, does not qualify your resolution as a vow.

A vow should not be made quickly or lightly. The author of Ecclesiastes writes, “Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you are on earth;

therefore let your words be few" (5:2). If, however, we do decide to make a vow, he cautions us not to be late in paying our vows, for God takes no delight in fools who fail to pay their vows. It is better, he counsels, not to vow at all, than to vow and fail to pay (5:5). This agrees with Deuteronomy 23:22 which tells us "if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin."

I think that if a person intends a desire for change to become a vow, he should deliberately use the term "vow" in his commitment. This would help clarify the difference between a resolution and a vow. For example, when Christians marry, they exchange vows during their ceremony. They pledge before God and before human witnesses that they will do or not do specific things. These promises are vows; they are not resolutions or simply the verbal expressions of a desire to improve.

Vows are regulated by Scripture, are acceptable to God, and are voluntary, not mandatory. But if a vow is made, it must be kept. Breaking a vow is sin (Deut. 23:21; Eccl. 5:5-6; Num. 30:15), and to break a vow brings God's punishment. However, God will forgive vow-breakers (Num. 30:6-9, 13), though He warns there may be severe consequences for failing to keep a vow (Eccl. 5:6). Solomon warns, "Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger, 'It was a mistake.' Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?" (Eccl. 5:6). In other words, God punishes those who break their vows. Claiming that you made a mistake and shouldn't have vowed or didn't really mean what you vowed arouses God's anger against you. Thus, Solomon concludes, "Fear God" (Eccl. 5:7).

The seriousness of vows is further underscored in Numbers 30 where God identifies which vows are automatically binding and which may be nullified. God distinguishes the vows made by adult males, widows, and divorced women from those made by female children and wives. In the case of adult males

(30:2), widows, and divorced women (30:9), they must fulfill any vow they make. In the case of female children (30:3-5) and wives (30:6-8;10-15), if their father or husband nullifies their vow on the day that he hears it, then they are absolved of their vow (30:5, 8, 12). However, if the father or husband does not nullify their vow, then their vow stands. They are responsible to fulfill it. If the father or husband does not say anything the first time he hears it but decides to nullify it at a later time, then he will "bear the iniquity" of the broken vow (30:15).

Conclusion

Vows are solemn promises made to God or others and should be entered into carefully, prayerfully, and under direction of the Holy Spirit after seeking wise, godly counsel. Resolutions, as distinct from vows, are useful tools to help us focus on areas in our lives that need improvement (we all have them), and serve as motivation for progress in that direction.

I suggest that, rather than use resolutions as the primary tool for improvement, Christians should simply "walk in the light" (1 John 1:7). Being led of the Spirit in our day-to-day lives (Rom. 8:14) helps us to seek the will of God for each day and strive to please Him in everything we do. Walking in the light makes us sensitive to what the Spirit of God is saying through His Word. While personal "resolve" has its place, the real power for improvement, especially for spiritual things, is the power of Christ and His gospel working in us as we walk in the Spirit!

If we do have a "resolution" to make, why not let it be to renew daily our commitment to Christ, His Word, and our attention to the Holy Spirit as He "speaks" to us in our daily walk. If we do this, we will find it much easier to witness for Him, live peaceably with others, and excel in whatever work God has put before us.

Resolutions are good things; walking in the light of God's Word is better! ■

Breaking a vow is sin, and to break a vow brings God's punishment. However, God will forgive vow-breakers, though He warns there may be severe consequences for failing to keep a vow.

Following are brief "field reports" from missionaries around the world who are invited to send us their newsletters and other information about their activities. GBS alumni are especially urged to respond, but we also wish to include others who uphold our vision and commitment.

BOLIVIA. Felix and Antonia Yujra report that the major renovation/construction on the church in Corioco is progressing well. They also report that about 350 youth attended a recent retreat for young people. They are very encouraged by how the Lord is working in Bolivia.



GUATEMALA. Lee and Shari Rickenbach request prayer for additional staff next year for the Hope Evangelical Bilingual Academy in Jalapa. Two monitors and two native English-speaking teachers are needed. Pray with them as they trust God to send the right students next year and the necessary funds for classroom space.



HAITI. Brian and Jamie Rauschenberger of New Life International are happy to report that their daughter and son-in-law – Jessica and Jonathan Barthelemy – are now assisting them in Haiti. Jessica is an LPN and will be holding mobile clinics along with helping with the kids' clubs and get-togethers. Jonathan is taking online courses at GBS and will be helping with the training of the national leaders. He also will be heading up the kids' clubs and helping in all the other areas there. The elder Rauschenbergers are very appreciative of their help and happy to be close to their little granddaughter, Jaliyah.



MALAWI. Sarel and Lintie Pretorius, Bible Methodist missionaries, are finding several opened doors for training pastors in "bush Bible schools" in both Malawi and Mozambique, completing a month-long tour of teaching in at least three locations in these two countries. They fell in love with the college students, giving them devotionals at breakfast before teaching classes. Graduates from the Bible college in Malawi are sent out to start new works – both churches and new Bible schools, even in other countries – Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, and Tanzania.



MYANMAR. For a number of years the World Missions Department of the Church of God (Holiness) has had a partnership with the Shiloh Bible College in Myanmar. Graduates of that institution have been very active. While evangelization is difficult due to the strong Buddhist

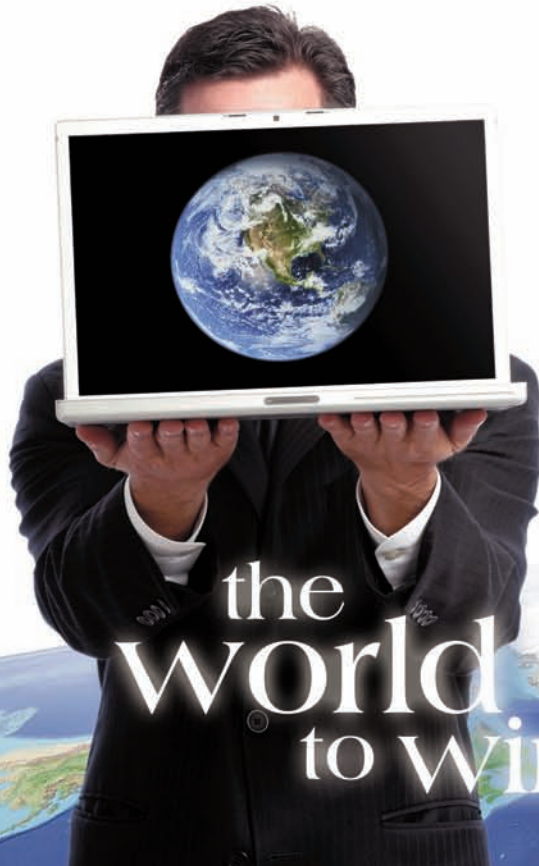


beliefs of the people, God is blessing their efforts. In just a short time recently, Abraham ('06) has shared the salvation message with neighbors and evangelized in neighboring villages by using pamphlets and gospel films. John ('04) shared the salvation message with 27 non-Christians in one week. He made friends with them by playing the guitar for them and playing games with them. Sarah ('04) witnessed to 12 non-Christians and all accepted Christ.

ROMANIA. HIM missionary Sally Sebo reports that they held their very first youth camp this summer. She credits the assistance of a team from her home church led by the youth pastor, Matt Maloyed. The team worked hard and showed wonderful attitudes throughout their whole time in Romania. God's presence was there and a number of the youth repented and gave their hearts to the Lord. Sally wishes to thank all who prayed and gave towards this endeavor.



SOUTH AFRICA. Peter and Hester Marias, HIM missionaries to South Africa, took a ministry trip to Zambia and Namibia where they distributed 7,500 Bibles to Christians in places where Bibles are very much needed. They also gave more than 22,000 tracts to the people in the street and to the evangelists for their outreaches. They also took many DVDs with good messages and gave them to the pastors. Neels Bezuidenhout from Eyewear Distributors not only brought a lot of good Christian books, but also provided reading glasses to help older people to read again. ■



the world to win

Navigating 2014

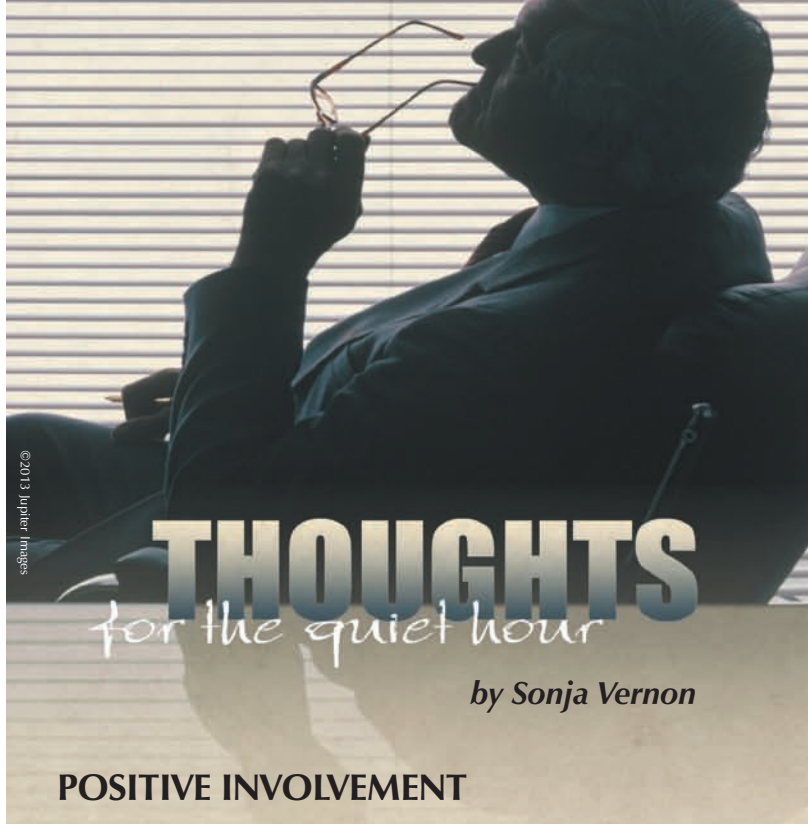
Strong Resolutions Are Not Enough

by Daniel Steele

We are as ignorant of our individual future as was Noah ignorant of his course and destination when he climbed up the side of the ark and the Lord shut him in.

There is a mistake which is so common as to be almost universal. It is that you are to be kept from yielding to sin by your strong resolutions, fixing your will as a flint against that temptation. This seems to be very reasonable. All the moral philosophies will approve your course, for this is their favorite method of conquering sin. All who know nothing of divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit teach salvation by good resolutions. Many have trusted this keeping power, and have made a wretched failure. The gospel scheme of keeping men from sinning is so peculiar that it never was conceived or dreamed of by mere human reformers. It is to commit the keeping of your soul wholly to another, even Christ. The attitude of the watchful soul is to be that of Peter's eyes when he first stepped from the ship upon the waters of the sea – LOOKING UNTO JESUS. Philosophy says, "Eye well your deadly foes;" the Gospel says, "Eye Jesus only." Philosophy says, "Dispose of your enemies first, and look to Jesus afterward;" the Gospel says, "Look to Jesus first and last, and He will dispose of your foes." Weakness, not strength, comes from a constant survey of the hosts in battle array against you. Power comes into the palsied arm when the eye turns wholly toward the Angel of Jehovah, who encampeth around about the believer. Philosophy says, "Grow strong by a downright grapple with the threatening foe;" but the Gospel of the Old Testament, as well as that of the New, says, "THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH."

The power of Jesus to keep from sin is fitly illustrated by the superintending Providence which guided and protected Noah in the ark. Did you ever notice, in the minute description of that ship, which was built to make a voyage from the old world to the new, bearing the seeds of all precious things with which the new world was to be sown, there is no mention of the rudder? Our modern ship carpenters would laugh at the idea of launching a rudderless ship, just as unbelief



©2013 Jupiter Images

THOUGHTS

for the quiet hour

by Sonja Vernon

POSITIVE INVOLVEMENT

“Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.” —Jer. 29:7 NASB

Petitions, phone calls, blog posts, ballot boxes, and the list goes on – all ways in which we make our voices heard in our increasingly post-Christian nation. By every means possible we cry out against what we believe is wrong with our country. But in the middle of the outcry my mind turns to the letter that Jeremiah wrote to those who had been exiled to Babylon, a people who had been transported to a nation of different gods, customs, and norms. In it God very clearly told them to pray for the cities into which they had been taken captive. Indeed, they were to seek their welfare. My point? We too are exiles in a world ruled by the Prince of Darkness. The decisions we decry simply reflect the worldview of those who make them. Should we stop making our voices heard? Of course not. But I would ask what we are doing to positively pursue the welfare of our own cities? Do we know the names of our city council, mayors, chamber members, sheriffs, representatives, and senators? Are we praying for them? Have we ever called their offices to tell them so when we weren't angry or had a specific agenda? Do we ever involve ourselves in positive activities that affect our communities? In this New Year what if we resolved to start truly seeking the welfare of the cities in which God has placed us? How would it change our nation – and us? ■

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

sneers at committing one's ways unto the Lord instead of a so-called manly, self-reliant self-guidance. A good type of the fully trusting Christian is good old Noah, sitting serene and unconcerned in his ark, as it floats over the drowned world, confiding in the skill of his invisible Pilot to keep his craft from the rocks, and to land it in safety on some appropriate spot.

How could a man who had been “moved with fear” to build his ark, sail in it, month after month, with no chart, nor compass, nor rudder, and be kept from distressing fears on that long and perilous voyage? There is but one answer – his perfect trust in Him who had commanded the building of the ark. During this voyage of one hundred and fifty days the faith of Noah was more severely tested than it was during the one hundred and twenty years in which the ark was being prepared. It requires a higher style of faith to be passively borne along under the guidance of our heavenly Father than it does to be active in fulfilling the divine command. Obedience is the soil out of which such faith grows. If Noah had not obeyed Jehovah in building the ark and embarking in it, he could not have trusted Him so unwaveringly.

The Christian's ark is already prepared. All he is required to do is to put all on board, and to keep himself there. If he should be so unwise as to extemporize a rudder, he has no chart by which to lay his course, for each individual life is mapped out only in the mind of the great Pilot. We are as ignorant of our individual future as was Noah ignorant of his course and destination when he climbed up the side of the ark and the Lord shut him in. If Noah had unwisely taken the guiding of the ark into his own hands, he would probably have wrecked it and lost its inestimable cargo. Thus thousands, in their distrust of God, lay their own hand upon the helm, and ship a crew of fears to torment them in their whole voyage, and run their vessel upon some uncharted reef, and lose all at last, or save themselves with great difficulty, when, through “the rest of faith,” they might have had a joyful voyage and an abundant entrance into the haven of eternal life. How many, through unbelief, miss the power of Christ to keep them, and the ineffable peace which it brings.

*If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all sunshine,
In the sweetness of our Lord.*

The very simplicity of the keeping which Christ exerts over all who “know the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe” renders it impossible to describe it. Blessed, indeed, are they whose grasp upon the divine promises makes their lives a perpetual twenty-third Psalm: “The Lord is my Shepherd.” ■

Daniel Steele (1824-1914) was a college professor, Methodist Episcopal clergyman, and leader in the 19th century Holiness Movement. This article, adapted by the editor, is an excerpt from Milestone Papers.

WINTER 2014

COLLEGE CHOIR LATE-WINTER TOUR

February 20, Thursday, 7:30 PM
Pell City Area GBS Choir Rally
Alvin Hodge Auditorium
Bible Methodist Campgrounds
1355 Chula Vista Dr., Pell City, AL
Mr. Wayne Fleming (205) 956-2857

February 21, Friday, 7:00 PM
South/Central Alabama GBS Choir Rally
Bibb County Board of Education Auditorium
721 Walnut, Centreville, AL
Rally Coordinator: Rev. Steve Vernon
(334) 624-4298

February 22, Saturday, 7:00 PM
Oak Ridge Wesleyan Church
11000 110th Ave. North, Largo, FL
Dr. Phillip Gray, pastor (727) 393-9182

February 23, Sunday, 10:00 AM
Light and Life
5730 Deeson Rd., Lakeland, FL
Dr. Eldred Kelley, pastor (863) 858-6361

February 23, Sunday, 2:30 PM
Lakeland Holiness Camp
Florida Holiness Campground
3335 South Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL
Rev. Glen Allison, president
(863) 646-5152 (office)

February 23, Sunday, 6:00 PM
First Church of the Nazarene
1875 Nursery Road, Clearwater, FL
Rev. Pat Glenn, Pastor (727) 536-1498

February 24, Monday, 7:00 PM
Avon Park Camp Association
1001 W. Lake Isis Avenue, Avon Park, FL
(Interdenominational Conference Grounds,
1200 block of US Hwy 27 North)
(863) 453-6831 (office)

February 25, Tuesday, 7:30 PM
Easley Bible Methodist Church
855 Gentry Memorial Hwy., Easley, SC
Rev. Terry Going, pastor (864) 855-3892

February 26, Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Parkway House of Prayer
3230 King St., Roanoke, VA
Rev. Dave Keep, pastor (540) 982-0115

February 27, Thursday, 7:00 PM
T. Austin Finch Auditorium
406 Unity Street, Thomasville, NC
Information: GBS PR Office (513) 763-6510

February 28, Friday, 7:00 PM
South-Central Ohio GBS Choir Rally
Locust Grove Wesleyan Tabernacle
State Route 41, Locust Grove, OH
Rev. Richard Williams, pastor (937) 587-6275

March 1, Saturday, 6:00 AM
South/Central Indiana GBS Choir Rally
Faith Mission Church
1817 26th St., Bedford, IN
Rev. David Crosley, pastor (812) 675-1549

March 2, Sunday, 10:30 AM
Independent Nazarene Church
5152 Hornet Ave., Beech Grove, IN
Dr. Gene Hood, pastor (317) 787-9770

March 2, Sunday, 6:00 PM
Franklin Bible Methodist Church
6000 S. Dixie Hwy., Franklin, OH
Rev. Jack Hooker, pastor (937) 746-8281

COLLEGE CHOIR



God's Bible School & College
Cincinnati, OH