



BERKSHIRE CHRISTIAN

September 2023

Dear friends in the Eastern Region,

Thirty-six years have passed since the final commencement for Berkshire Christian College was held in Lenox, Massachusetts. Over the ensuing decades the effects of Berkshire's suspension of campus operations and subsequent sale of the Lenox complex are felt in increasing measure. In spite of many obstacles, from unimaginable indebtedness to deep relational fractures, this institution's efforts to equip those called by God to local church ministry have earnestly continued through its various programs and partnerships.

Berkshire's partnership with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary is a vital and fruitful relationship. Through Berkshire, Advent Christian students can receive up to 50% tuition reduction in the pursuit of graduate certificates and graduate/postgraduate degrees through online or in person study. Over this thirty-two year relationship dozens upon dozens of individuals have been more thoroughly equipped for ministry at the seminary, with many serving in local church pastorates or other leadership positions. Dr. Gordon Isaac continues to serve as the Berkshire Professor of Church History and Advent Christian Studies, a position he has held for more than 26 years. This spring two Advent Christian students received Masters' degrees following successful completion of their studies.



Daniel Karl earned his MATS (Master of Arts in Theological Studies) from Gordon-Conwell's Charlotte, NC campus. Daniel, son of Eastern Region President George Karl and his wife Laura, is on the pastoral staff at Northside Community Church in Knightdale, N.C. He, along with Northside leadership, will plant a semi-autonomous daughter church next year. Daniel and his wife Danielle have two children and make their home in the Raleigh, NC area.

Laura Pitcher earned a Masters of Arts in Counseling from Gordon-Conwell's South Hamilton, MA campus. Laura is a member of the Stroudwater Church in Portland, Maine and plans to use her studies to provide mental health counseling and Christian counseling to individuals inside and outside of the church. Laura says, "Attending Gordon-Conwell has given me the academic tools to equip me on my journey, as well as an increased faith and knowledge of the Lord who has called me to this ministry."



Berkshire's partnership with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary is supported through your prayers and faithful giving. Please see the Berkshire website (berkshire.edu) for more information on this and other educational opportunities, as well as finding the latest news from Berkshire!



In August, board chair Hazel Blackstone and I represented Berkshire at the ACGC Triennial Convention held at Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina. Many from the Eastern Region were in attendance at this event. It was my privilege to bring a report from Berkshire Christian during one of the business sessions and serve as one of four keynote speakers for the convention attended by more than two hundred fifty delegates and guests. Following this time, Berkshire's 125th Anniversary celebration took place at the same facility. After a year-long delay due to lingering Coronavirus concerns, 120 alumni and friends celebrated God's faithfulness over twelve decades of ministry. Wonderful worship, moving testimonies, and extended times of fellowship were shared and God was glorified through this celebration of BCC's legacy, which will be remembered for many years to come! Alumni from every decade

present—from the early 1960’s to the mid-1980’s—gave praise to God for the special people that made BCC a place like no other. From faculty to

staff to students, event attendees named individuals who impacted their lives over their lifetime, speaking of them even more fondly all these years later. Two such individuals—Gene and Sandy Peters—were honored guests and participants at this gathering. Through the generosity of numerous Berkshire alumni and friends, a large cash gift was collected and presented to them with heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to God for their faithful service to Christ at BCC and beyond. Coach and Sandy shared familiar songs from their BCC days and many joined them in this time of singing praise to the Lord. Coach also shared a devotional message and pointed everyone to Jesus through his passionate and heartfelt manner. As a fitting conclusion to his remarks, Coach reminded everyone about the glorious reunion one day soon when Jesus returns.



Before the close of the celebration the focus shifted to Berkshire’s future. While there is much to celebrate over the past 126 years, the future is something the Berkshire Christian Board of Trustees have been prayerfully seeking since my tenure began over six years ago. It appeared that God was guiding this institution to step into a new role through the creation and oversight of the Ministry Training Institute (MTI), a collaborative partnership with the Advent Christian General Conference. This three-year partnership was designed to address leadership needs and resulted in the development of a dynamic program with the potential of meeting the need for pastors for Advent Christian churches for years to come. Because of this recognition and its commitment to equipping leaders for local church ministry, the Berkshire Christian Trustees embraced this partnership, suspending its own training program and devoting resources to MTI’s advancement and promotion.

For various reasons Berkshire Christian is no longer directly involved with the MTI program and the partnership with ACGC formally ended on June 30th. Many thought that Berkshire Christian was overseeing or would assume greater responsibility for the Ministry Training Institute in the future. While this was the expressed intent of the partnership agreement, Berkshire Christian’s Board of Trustees believes the Lord closed this door and they are actively pursuing the Lord and his direction for the future of this ministry. One step taken by Berkshire Christian’s board is acknowledgement of its participation in the disunity that exists between certain educational ministries in the Advent Christian Church and among ACGC leadership. For that reason the Board of Trustees is organizing a summit for the purpose of reconciliation and unity among these entities. Please pray that the Lord will direct this effort, that it may be well-pleasing to Him for the accomplishment of His will.

This summer, after much prayer and careful consideration of various options including the possibility of dissolution, the Berkshire Board of Trustees has taken steps to pursue relocation of its base of operations. The Berkshire board remains committed to the pursuit of the Lord’s leading for Berkshire Christian’s future and earnestly desires to see this institution have a prominent role in the equipping of pastors and leaders for local Advent Christian churches. This preliminary action was taken with the conviction that the Lord desires to use this institution to prepare individuals for gospel ministry. As more information regarding legal concerns and location details is collected and discussed, your prayer support is greatly appreciated. More details on Berkshire’s future will be shared whenever possible.

Actions taken by Advent Christians in the late 1890’s to have a training school “in the East” for Gospel workers continue to bear fruit today. Throughout its 126 year history, Berkshire has been sustained by the faithfulness of God evidenced in the generous and sacrificial giving of His people. While many higher education institutions struggle and others consider closure, the individuals, churches, and conferences who

remain committed to leadership training in the Advent Christian Church through gifts to Berkshire are truly a blessing. The work of this ministry—past, present, and future—would not be possible without your prayers and financial gifts. Thank you for your partnership with us in equipping men and women for gospel ministry in and through the local church.

In the Name of the Soon-Coming Savior!

Dr. Glenn M. Rice, President