



The Journey

2021

COMMITTED TO OUR HISTORICAL VALUES
AND EXPANDING INTO THE FUTURE





From our President

WELCOME TO THIS YEAR'S EDITION OF THE GRACE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY JOURNEY MAGAZINE!

Does it seem to you like it has been a journey of more than one year since you received the last edition? It sure does to most of us! The last twelve months have aged us by about five years instead of one year (it's like we are living in "dog years") due to all the unrest, uncertainty, and having to navigate extenuating circumstances. Last spring, Grace had to send students home due to state mandated shutdowns and complete the semester by teaching exclusively online. We had to send almost all our employees home, and ask them to work from home.

We have updated and sterilized our campus thanks to Nate Johnson and his wonderful team as well as the excellent housekeeping staff. Faculty and staff have been welcomed back, and daily screening procedures have been put into place for our employees and students.

Students returned back to campus under these health precautions and screening processes which continue to be practiced daily. Last fall, we held chapel outside in the Quad for the first three months of the semester until it became too cold to do so. We moved into the Aldrich Athletic Center for chapel, and then on to Baker Chapel with only a limited number allowed in person and most others viewing online! Students were restricted from in-person attendance the last three weeks of the fall 2020 semester. As you read the good athletics article, you will see the sudden cancellation of the basketball season last year, and that COVID testing prevented the women's volleyball from competing at nationals this year.

In the midst of all of this crazy upheaval, we continue with the same mission - *Graduating Godly Individuals Prepared To Serve Christ In Church And Society*. Our mission did not change and it will not change, as it remains relevant and impactful throughout all these challenges. Grace Christian University is

committed to being "Bible-centered" in our curriculum, and in our actions and processes. The need to prepare a new generation to be effectively serving in an anxious world has never been more important! Also, the need to reach adults with our online classes who desire to be equipped to serve more effectively where they are is clearly also fulfilling our mission.

Please take some time to read a few articles and thank God for how He continues to sustain Grace Christian University (*your* institution) through the storms of time. This generation must take the challenge to educate and prepare the next generation to serve Christ! Please engage in this with us and be part of God's force for good and His saving voice to the lost (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) and needy.

Ken Bruce Kemper, PhD

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Simply Prayer

Join with us in Prayer

[GRACECHRISTIAN.EDU/
PRAYER](https://gracechristian.edu/prayer)

P RAYER HAS ALWAYS BEEN—and always will be—a vital part of the Grace Christian University community. We recognize that this ministry is God’s and as He bestows His grace, the work is blessed and effective to accomplish His desires. As the Body of Christ we are admonished to *“Come before the Throne of Grace to receive mercy and grace in our time of need”* (Hebrews 4:16).

Through the years, Grace has created specific prayer initiatives in order to encourage others to join us in prayer.

WEDNESDAY WARFARE Ongoing

Believing that God works through the prayers of His people, each Wednesday morning, faculty, staff, and administrators are involved in a focused time of prayer. This time of prayer occurs early in the morning, prior to the beginning of the workday. Through the years this has typically been a gathering together on campus, but has changed to a virtual mode throughout COVID-19.

PRAYER MOTHERS & PRAYER FATHERS Ongoing

Men and women around the world pray for individual students through our Prayer Parent program, spearheaded by Kathy Kemper.

“40 DAYS OF PRAYER” Fall 2018

This prayer event asked donors, students, alumni, and faculty and staff to pray ‘round the clock for Grace. During that year, as we were transitioning from a college to a university, we asked individuals to invest 30 minutes daily or weekly during the forty days, praying specifically for God’s direction and wisdom and for Grace to glorify God through our endeavors to impact our world for Christ. At the end of the forty days, this online group became known as Unity in Prayer, and continues to be utilized for communicating additional prayer events.

TUG (TAPPING UNLIMITED GRACE) Fall 2019

TUG followed the same format as the 40 Days of Prayer, without the designation of a specific time to pray. Daily selections of Scripture from the Pauline Epistles were sent via email and social media, allowing people to first focus on God’s Word, worship Him, and bring the requests before His Throne.

#19DAYSOFPRAYER Spring 2020

As COVID-19 began to infiltrate our world, we once more invited others to join us in prayer. Through social media, this connected people across America,

and extended to people in Canada, Belize, Malawi, Germany, South Korea, Dubai, and the Philippines. The clear and humble focus of fellow believers to express their heart’s desire for God to work in the lives of others, and guide and protect those serving in all kinds of capacities in society, was amazing!

VOICES IN PRAYER Fall 2020

Students can be involved in a physical prayer group, or participate in a private online prayer group. Prompts for specific requests are shared and prayed for by individuals and community prayer groups.

God’s work must be bathed in prayer or it is simply our best human effort. Grace Christian University is a work of God, needing His guidance and empowerment to accomplish its mission and bring honor to God. Please pray regularly for our students, faculty, staff, and the Board of the University and for God’s resources and wisdom to carry out this work of God.

Leaving a Legacy

A LASTING LEGACY REMAINS WHEN YOU HONOR A LOVED ONE OR FRIEND WITH A MEMORIAL GIFT. Your gift to Grace Christian University becomes a living tribute to their memory and it will powerfully impact the next generation as they are learning how to transform their world for Jesus Christ. We praise God for the lasting legacy provided by these donors during 2020:

Marilyn Caraway

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Student Spotlight

The journey of two students to discover Grace and grow in grace.



Justin McMaster

JUSTIN MCMASTER GRADUATED FROM BELDING HIGH SCHOOL and transferred to Grace Christian University in 2018, hoping to play basketball and study exercise science. His career goal was to become a physical therapist. But when a friend encouraged him to go on a mission trip to Puerto Rico in 2019, he had an experience that changed his life.

“The relationships I built there encouraged me to seek after the Lord.”

“One night at camp, I made my way out to the beach, and I asked God to reveal Himself to me. At that point, I had not yet considered myself a believer. A couple of weeks after the trip, I found myself still grappling with my beliefs. On the night of March 21, I felt a conviction that was too great to ignore. I accepted Christ into my life as my personal Savior.”

Since then, Justin has taken on leadership roles that have also impacted his life, looking for opportunities to serve others in the community and

abroad. One year after that mission trip to Puerto Rico, he returned with another group of students, serving as the trip leader. Justin says that trip equipped him with leadership skills he uses often. He has volunteered with a local rehab hospital, spending time socializing with and encouraging the residents. This year at Grace, Justin is serving as an Residence Advisor, is a member of Student Government and also works on the campus security team.

Justin has also changed his course of study. After prayer and contemplation, he made the decision to change his major to human services. “My experiences with missions and volunteering with people who struggle on a daily basis has transformed my



view on what my purpose is here on earth.” Now Justin plans to graduate with a BS in Human Services and will pursue a Master’s Degree in Human Services with a concentration in social and community services. While his occupational goals aren’t set in stone, he has a passion for both missions and community ministry. “I will let God take control and let Him open the doors for what my next steps are.”



Jennie Losinger

JENNIE LOSINGER INSISTS THAT HER MOM is a major part of how she ended up at Grace. It was her mom who suggested she check out Grace Christian University’s business program after doing some research. At first, Jennie wasn’t convinced, but when her mom told her she didn’t have to go to school that day if she checked out the University and attended the Grace All Access day, she agreed to go. “What high-schooler doesn’t want to take a day off school?” She stated,

“I think visiting Grace was one of the best decisions of my life. As soon as our tour was over, I was at ease and felt at home. I felt like I found where I belonged.”

Since coming to Grace, Jennie has found herself growing through campus activities and life in the community. “Just being at Grace has made me want to have a better relationship with the Lord. Student Government has helped me to grow tremendously and helped me come out of my shell.” Through Jennie’s experiences in Student Government, she overcame her fear of public speaking.

She has met friends who she has no doubt will be in her life for a very long time and has also grown in confidence in God’s plan for her. Jennie expresses, “Grace has shaped me so tremendously. It’s hard to explain because I’m not the same person I was when I first came here.”

Jennie has planned student-led worship nights as well. She saw a need in the community to create opportunities for students to worship together outside of required chapels. Every other Sunday night for most of the semester, fifty or more students have gathered for worship services she initiated, and these gatherings bring together students from across the campus community. “It’s a good blend of underclassmen and upperclassmen, athletes and non-athletes.” These gatherings are student-led, and give students new opportunities to lead. Some lead worship, others will share a testimony or a message God has put on their heart, and others will pray with students.

After graduation, Jennie plans to pursue opportunities in leadership and ministry. “I would really love to travel the world and share the love of Jesus Christ. That’s one thing I know for sure!”

Hope

STATIA SMITH

T O SOME THIS IS JUST A JAR WITH DIRTY WATER AND A WEED. It was to me for many weeks - well over a month, before it brought me to tears one recent afternoon.

This tiny, almost completely dead growth was brought home by my eight-year-old one day over a month ago, and placed gently on the counter. She climbed up high and got a jar. I asked why and she replied, "It's going to get roots, Mom. It will grow." She filled the jar and stuck the little, dry, barely green "weed" in it. It sat for days. It was like a sad stick in water. It floated and bobbed around, resisting any effort to absorb a single drop. My daughter continued coming in to check on it, and would give it a gentle whirl here and there, sometimes moving it to another place in the room. On occasion I would let her know that maybe it was time to toss it. Nope. "It will grow Mom, I know it will."

Some days later she came in defeated. "Mom, I think it hasn't grown." I agreed. "Hey, there will be other ones; it's okay, maybe this guy needed something we couldn't give it," I told her. She said we should give it a little more water but not change the water, cause it had already been through a lot (bless her sweet heart), and so we did. A few days later I almost tossed it but decided not to.



At the end of a hopeless day recently, I was standing in the kitchen feeling defeated and the corner of my eye caught sight of the jar: It was green, it had grown, and it was no longer sad. After I had a really big ugly cry, I was filled with excitement and could not wait to show her.

This is hope. She did not see what it was, she saw what it could be. She did not call it dead, she spoke it to life. She cared when it gave her nothing back. She was patient. It did not take anything from her. There was no force or motive. She willingly chose to believe in what she did not see and knew it could be more. Maybe this was her "mustard seed" moment.

In its progress she is not feeling success, but still the same hope for what it could

be. She still believes there is more. She is still patiently having faith in its future, however long it takes for it to be all that it can be.

It is amazing what we learn from children, how they bless us, how God speaks to our souls through them, and how much they help us grow. Like many, this year has brought her some significant challenges and heartache. She chooses hope. Every single time. She chooses to believe in what she knows is possible if it is what God wants. She held tightly onto a dry, dead weed that she wrapped in a paper towel until it arrived safely home, and it has brought her peace... and has reminded me of hope.



Chairman's Musings

DR. GRETCHEN JOHNSON

Chair, Grace Christian University Board of Directors

2020 WAS A YEAR THAT NO ONE WAS PREPARED FOR

nor was it a year that any of us could have imagined! As most years, I took time to reflect, plan, and set personal goals in early January 2020. Similarly, in early 2020 the Grace Board Excellence Committee continued our board governance training in Florida and set aggressive goals for the GCU Board. Energized and excited, we came back to Michigan only to experience a statewide shutdown that impacted many of us personally, professionally, as well as in our governing roles as Board Members of Grace Christian University.

How should believers respond when factors outside of our control present road blocks, even when we are doing God's work? I pondered this question one day, reflecting on 2020 as the year neared its end. I also reflected on the question, "How did I do this year with wild roadblocks and changes to plans?"

The Bible presents us with several examples that can guide our attitudes and behavior when things don't go as planned. In my own life through work, family, and serving on the Grace Board, the three lessons I learned were:

TRUST GOD, BE PATIENT, and
FOLLOW CHRIST.

TRUST GOD: In the past year, there have been many examples that fostered the lesson of learning to trust God. At the end of 2020, my dad, a faithful man of God, was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer. Even as I write this, we do not know what will happen. What I do know

is that God has proven Himself faithful over and over throughout Scripture and in my life. *I trust Him*, regardless of what the outcome will be for my family, because of His faithfulness. We find many examples of this throughout the Scriptures. One of my favorite examples is Zechariah and Elizabeth. Luke tells us the story of this older couple who longed for a child and had not seen this longing fulfilled (Luke 1:5-17). Zechariah and Elizabeth trusted God, continued to serve Him, and were described as righteous. Their godly example reminds us that we continue to serve, trust, and love God even when our desires are not met as we want them to be.

BE PATIENT: One of my dad's favorite sayings is, "Patience is a virtue and a little bit won't hurt you." So annoying when you are the youngest in the family waiting for your turn, but a valuable lesson long term! 2020 was "The Year Of Learning To Wait." We waited as part of our society shut down while other parts remained opened. We waited for work to resume... classes to resume... paychecks to arrive... hospital beds to open up... COVID tests to be scheduled... COVID results to come back... loved ones to get well... funerals to be scheduled... and soap/toilet paper/cleaner to be available. *Waiting.* If I am honest, I probably did not wait patiently in all circumstances.

In the Old Testament, many times the nation of Israel did not wait patiently for the Lord's leading. A few examples include gathering more manna than

they were supposed to (Exodus 16:11-20), creating a golden calf because Moses was gone for 40 days (Exodus 32: 1-6), and deciding they wanted a new leader because the Land of Canaan was filled with giants (Numbers 14:1-4). In retrospect, it is easy for us to wonder what was wrong with the Israelites in these situations. Why—when they had seen so many signs—were they taking matters into their own foolish hands instead of waiting for God? God gently reminds me, through these stories, to be patient while I wait on His leading.

FOLLOW CHRIST: Finally, 2020 was a year of *learning to follow* Christ, even when it's not easy. The example of Peter walking on water is a great illustration of this. Matthew 14 shares this compelling story of faith. We follow, we get scared, and take our eyes off Christ; we start to sink, and Christ saves us. Many of us learned to do things differently this year: virtual board meetings... Zoom family celebrations... church online... remote work... school at home. I even learned to do nasalpharyngeal swabs! We see it was more exciting for Peter to step out in the water in faith than to stay back in the boat in fear. Jesus asked Peter to do something weird and different, and he followed.

Regardless of what happens in 2021, we can take these lessons (trust God, be patient, and follow Christ) to get us through whatever comes next.

Alumni/Advancement News



HOMECOMING “FROM HOME”

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to gather on campus for Homecoming. We turned to social media, sharing alumni spotlights on our website ([GRACECHRISTIAN.EDU/ALUMNI](https://gracechristian.edu/alumni)). We also took a digital trip down memory lane on Facebook by sharing photos from the past... all the way back to the Milwaukee Bible Institute days. Although it's better to meet in person, it was so nice to be able to catch up with many alumni and interact with the photos and memories!

Join our Facebook Group

**ALUMNI OF GRACE CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY (GRACE BIBLE COLLEGE)**

THE THIRD ANNUAL MID-WINTER GALA

The third annual gala took place in February 2020 with approximately 400 guests, including 130 alumni present. Held at the Pinnacle Center, alumni and friends of Grace enjoyed a delicious meal and were treated to a special time of music presented by Selah. This event is held to raise scholarship funds for our students. Current students served as table hosts, engaging with the guests throughout the evening. At this event \$40,000 was raised for scholarships. In addition, several alumni, athletes, and faculty were honored.

Get in touch with other Alumni

GRACECHRISTIAN.EDU/ALUMNI

ALUMNI OF THE YEAR



Donald TenHoeve

Grace Ministries International, Director of Field Operations
Wyoming, Michigan

Don and his wife Sandy were missionaries in Bolivia for almost ten years. He served on the Grace Ministries International (GMI) Board until he became Director of Field Operations for GMI in 2006. Don is dedicated to serving God's people both locally and internationally, and his love for God's people is evident in all aspects of his life. He serves on the board and is involved in the AWANA program at his church (Rush Creek Bible Church). Additionally, he leads a student short-term mission trip each summer through GMI's EXITE program.

YOUNG ALUMNI OF THE YEAR



Cameron Townley

Lead Pastor, Rush Creek Bible Church
Byron Center, Michigan

Following his time at Grace, Cameron received his MDiv from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary in 2013. Cameron and his wife Lindsay have served in ministry at Rush Creek Bible Church for several years, with Cameron accepting the role as Lead Pastor in 2019. Cameron's heart for Rush Creek and the people in the Byron Center community is evident through his care and dedication.

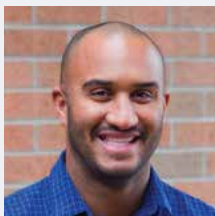
ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

Two stellar alumni athletes were inducted into the Grace Athletic Hall of Fame.



Joleana (Spooner) Warners

Volleyball - 2012



Brandon Herlein

Soccer and Basketball - 2010

FACULTY LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Faculty leadership awards were presented to Mat Loverin (1998) and Jeremy Herr (2004).



Mat Loverin

Since 2005, Mat has taught courses in Bible, theology, philosophy, and ethics at Grace. Mat and his wife Michelle (2004) live in Wyoming, Michigan, and are active in ministry at Grace Bible Fellowship in Jenison, Michigan. [Ephesians 2:1-10]



Jeremy Herr

Jeremy and his wife Laura have served in youth ministry for the past sixteen years at Eastport Bible Church, in Eastport, New York. He is passionate about loving and caring for students, pointing them toward a relationship with Jesus Christ. Jeremy has taught online for Grace since 2015, teaching theology, Bible and leadership courses. [2 Timothy 2:2]

Expanding Grace Update



AS YOU MAY RECALL IN 2019, Grace made significant upgrades and renovations to the Dining Room and Kitchen operations. These upgrades were made possible through the gifts generously given to the Expanding Grace Capital Campaign. We thank God that these improvements have allowed Grace to continue serving students through the COVID pandemic. The additional space in the Dining Room has allowed us to meet the requirements of the health department and safely provide food service to our students. Thank you!

Plans for construction of new student housing move forward. The image below shows a rendering of housing that, Lord willing, will open in August 2022. This housing project will provide students with an extremely comfortable place to live and build community while they pursue their degree at Grace. Construction will be in progress throughout the 2021-2022 academic year. When completed, this project will add new space for over 100 students. The design of the new student housing also brings an updated look to our neighborhood. As of the end of January 2021, gifts and pledges total over \$4.5 million! Thank you to the many donors who have contributed to the Expanding Grace Capital Campaign making new student housing a reality at Grace! If you would like to participate in this exciting campaign, please contact Stephen Gowdy in the Advancement Office.



HIGHLIGHTING NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Global Communication

As Christians, we know that God wants people from all cultures to know and love Him. The BS in Global Communication equips students to communicate effectively within their own culture and the global marketplace. With the advent of new communication technology, society has become increasingly more globalized. In this globalized environment, leaders from all sectors of the marketplace need to know how to navigate complex global issues. This degree equips students to communicate effectively and "Christianly" in the global environment as they develop critical skills of strong verbal, nonverbal, and written communication and are exposed to a diversity of cultural communication from a Christian perspective. As a Christian university, we are uniquely prepared to support students' passions and purposes through a degree in Global Communication.

Students pursuing a Global Communication degree will have the opportunity to develop the critical skills of strong verbal, nonverbal, and written





Academic News

the Educational Paraprofessional concentration. The program enables students to enter education and work in schools or continue their studies in education. The Educational Paraprofessional Concentration is another example of the flexibility and range of options available within Interdisciplinary Studies.

Another unique feature of the program is the ability to partner with other organizations such as the School of Mission Aviation and Technology, located in Ionia, Michigan. That relationship is what drew Grace Lessen to Interdisciplinary Studies. Grace noted, "After four years, I will not only have a bachelor's degree but also a pilot's license and an aviation mechanics license." Lessen appreciates the program's benefits that allow her the flexibility to reach her goal of working in aviation missions by equipping her with aviation skills while simultaneously continuing to grow in her biblical knowledge. Grace notes that without the Interdisciplinary Studies program, "I would not be able to pursue this area of study that I hope to be able to use to glorify God and advance his kingdom."

Interdisciplinary Studies - Meeting Needs

The Interdisciplinary Studies program seeks to attract students like Ryan and Grace, who are naturally curious individuals seeking to glorify God. Sometimes students might experience the anxiety of narrowing down their course of study to one area. The Interdisciplinary Studies Program helps minimize decision-making anxiety by giving students the flexibility and freedom to combine multiple areas of study.

communication. Skills needed to secure a position in a competitive job market - a job market that includes a global environment.

Interdisciplinary Studies

We live in a world with complex problems that will require people with different perspectives to provide out-of-the-box solutions. The BS in Interdisciplinary Studies offers a unique program allowing students to gain valuable knowledge and skills across multiple disciplines. The primary studies are in the biblical and theological fields and are designed to equip them with a solid Christian worldview. From there, students may choose from two additional concentrations to build their educational experience.

Grace has several students taking advantage of this unique degree program. When asked, "What has been most beneficial about the Interdisciplinary Studies program to you?" Ryan Rowe responded,

This freedom has helped Ryan to determine what he wants to do with his life. During his internship, he has been able to apply ministry and communication courses in real-life settings. Through these experiences, Ryan has set a trajectory toward possibly pursuing a master's degree in library science. This program has helped him develop a deeper level of knowledge and love for God because he is now able to "dig deeper into Scripture and think more deeply about spiritual formation."

Interdisciplinary Studies - Highlighting the Educational Paraprofessional Concentration

The Interdisciplinary Studies program allows students to build upon a biblical foundation and branch into two different fields of study. One new area of study includes the field of education. For students who want to work in education but are unsure of becoming a teacher, the Interdisciplinary Studies program offers the opportunity to explore

"It's really neat that I get to choose the classes that fit me the most."

CONTINUED >

The interdisciplinary degree at Grace Christian University purposefully provides students with the flexibility, creativity, and functionality to create their own unique path to graduation. With a strong foundation in biblical studies, along with working knowledge and skills in other fields, our interdisciplinary students will have what it takes to uniquely "serve Christ in church and society."

NEW FACULTY AT GRACE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

We are pleased to introduce two new faculty members serving at Grace!



Fallon McMurray serves as a full-time faculty member in the School of Business. Fallon has earned a BS in Interdisciplinary Health Services from Western Michigan University, and a MBA from Cornerstone University. With over ten years of marketing experience working for corporate and nonprofit organizations, she has led marketing strategies, introduced new marketing platforms, and assisted with establishing brand presence in new locations. Fallon brings this breadth of business experience into the classroom to teach students relevant concepts to prepare them for their future careers in business. Fallon and her husband, Parris, have two children, and live in the Grand Rapids area. With so much uncertainty in the world, she believes that joy is medicine to the soul. Being a new business professor at Grace Christian University, she knows that she has an opportunity

to spread joy to students, staff and faculty.



Kiuan Hearn serves in the role of adjunct professor of psychology. Kiuan earned a BS in Psychology from Grand Valley State University and his MA in Counselor Education Counseling Psychology from Western Michigan University. He currently serves as a Mediator/ Evaluator for Kent County Friend of the Court and assists families who are in disputes over custody, parenting time and/or child support. In this role, Kiuan serves as a third party, clarifies the issues of the dispute, and helps families create a mutually beneficial resolution. Much of his career has been spent as a therapist, working with at-risk youth as well as adults dealing with addiction and addictive personality disorders. Kiuan and his wife, Lisa have been married since 2019, and were blessed with their first child earlier this year.

Let's get to know Fallon and Kiuan a bit better, and learn a bit about their journey to Grace.

Q. How did you learn about Grace?

Fallon
I first learned about Grace through a current student, Gerard Oray. Our families are good friends and we attend the same church. My family would come to Grace's basketball games to watch Gerard play. My second introduction to Grace was through Professor Matt DeYoung as we were in the same MBA cohort. We kept in touch through social

media and I learned of his role at Grace. He shared more about the University and possible opportunities to teach. Now, here I am today!

Kiuan

I heard about Grace on two different occasions. The first time was through sports. While I was an undergrad, I met a young man while playing who was wearing a Grace Bible College jersey (that is in an indication of my age). We struck up a conversation, talked about Grace and what led him to go there, and it resonated with me. The second time I learned about Grace was after graduate school as I sought to begin my counseling career. I was seeking someone to help me acclimate to the profession in Grand Rapids. After reaching out to several people, I connected to Dr. Scott Shaw from Grace. Through him I learned not only about myself, but also about the University and its mission.

Q. What made you decide to serve at Grace?

Fallon

I have always made good connections with young adults. I love sharing any knowledge I have to help them grow as individuals. When I learned about the opportunity to serve at Grace, it was only fitting. The friendly people that I met at the basketball games and small tight-knit family community made me more interested in teaching and the Christian environment was also a plus: to be able to share the Word of God and openly pray in a meeting or class was so comforting. I knew I would love the environment.

Kiuan

Serving at Grace just felt like the next stage of my professional career. I had guest lectured for Dr. Shaw's classes, and

each time it felt like it was something I was destined to do. So when a position became available, I immediately jumped at the chance. I am excited to share many of my personal and professional experiences with students while also being able to fulfill my desire to continually serve Christ.

Q. What have you observed about our students and culture of Grace's campus?

Fallon

The students here at Grace have a desire to learn more about God, to live for Him, and to receive a quality education. I see this in how they worship during chapel and participate in group discussions. Many of them have expressed that they love the smaller community because it helps them to get to know each other better. I would agree with them. Grace's community feels like a second family that you didn't know that you needed.

Kiuan

Students at Grace are engaging and highly motivated. My biggest fear about teaching was that students would not find my class engaging or that they would not put forth any effort. To my surprise, the opposite has happened! The students are very involved, and that makes me excited to be there with them for each class. The students take their education seriously and have taught me as much as I have taught them. The culture at Grace is incredibly welcoming. From the first time I stepped onto the campus, I felt that I belonged there. The staff was friendly and often went out of their way to greet me and make sure I had everything I needed to be successful.



Community, Students, and Officers came together for the GRACE PROJECT

THE GRACE PROJECT

The Criminal Justice Program has a class called *Culture, Crime, Ethics and Justice*. One of the first topics we discussed involved the riots and other disturbances occurring due to police use of force. Students discussed the tensions occurring locally and nationally between police and the community. Based on their discussion, they decided to work on a class project to bring police and community members together to discuss these tensions and concerns. They named the project GRACE:

- G - Godly**
- R - Relationships**
- A - Assembled to**
- C - Connect**
- E - Enforcement members and the community**

The class decided to focus the event on community and law enforcement relationships and to include the Grace Community. The objective of the discussion was to have a conversation

on police/community relationships, and the use of force by police. The desire was to also share different perspectives in order to seek understanding and a stronger sense of community and support.

The students developed roles for the events and assignments were made, including developing a brochure for advertising, as well as preparing registration procedures, refreshments, setup, and funding for the event.

The event was scheduled in November, and the hope was that 20 to 30 people would attend. The class was very surprised when 74 attendees showed up and another 25 attended online! The students took part in the entire event from opening and closing with prayer to asking the panel questions. The panel included J.R. Pittman, and Grace Professors Sherita Jahaziel and Fallon McMurray. Wyoming and Grand Rapids Police Officers also attended.

While the majority of comments and discussion were positive and

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encouraging, there were some difficult and uncomfortable discussions about race and the impact on the fear of police. This opened up further dialogue and encouragement on how these issues could be resolved. The discussion between the police and the community was powerful. The discussions were difficult to hear, but the consensus was that conversation cannot stop, and further dialogue and encouragement is needed to resolve the issues. The overall conclusion was that officers should continue to be engaged in their communities, and both the communities and law enforcement officers can work together to accomplish common goals.

One student commented, “As a child I rarely got a chance to talk to law enforcement as real people. The only time I thought of them was in fear or in an emergency situation. I think during this time especially it is key for us to see law enforcement as real people, and not to generalize them. Each individual officer has their own family and life, they do not work the job 24/7. The GRACE Event gave officers a personalized voice which showed us that they’re not against us, but desire to come alongside the community in grace and truth. Overall, I recommend doing this event again in the future and hearing more about the community members and various issues like poverty and how Grace and its students could come alongside them to make their job easier.”

Our prayer is that God will continue to use Grace Christian University and the Grace students to be a means for peace and understanding as we work together to impact the world for Christ.



Online Education from a Biblical Perspective

MARK SOOY

THE COVID-19 CRISIS OF 2020 caused an upheaval in higher education when, on top of the personal and societal stress of the emergency, colleges and universities were suddenly forced to move face-to-face courses into an online delivery model. Traditional on-campus faculty and students suddenly found themselves in an unfamiliar online learning environment. There is no doubt that this “new reality” will change how higher education is delivered well into the future, and the efforts of administrators and faculty to refashion courses within weeks was a massive and impressive effort. The administrators and faculty at Grace have done exceptional work to provide quality education for traditional on-campus students during this uncertainty.

While the crisis raises challenges for traditional faculty and students who suddenly find themselves “online,” it is important to clarify that in this article “online” refers to the programs that were *already in a fully online format (modality) prior to the crisis*. At Grace, these online courses are five weeks in length and run throughout the year with minimal breaks. Courses are taught primarily by adjunct faculty who are dispersed throughout the country. Our student population is highly diverse and composed of many working adults from all walks of life and many areas of the country.

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I have the privilege of both teaching in our online courses and working with the men and women who are engaged in teaching and learning. Here, I will discuss the spiritual work that is being done in our online programs.

PROMOTING SPIRITUAL HEALTH IN ONLINE EDUCATION

Studies regarding online learning are often student-focused. After all, the point of higher education is to educate students. From the perspective of spiritual training in a Christian institution, the attention must begin with students, but also must analyze the underlying needs of how to *effectively* lead students in spiritual development. One of the underlying factors to be successful in this endeavor is the spiritual health of faculty members.

The spiritual health of teachers is noted throughout Scripture, and is a principle found in the Apostle Paul's writings and demonstrated in his mentoring of younger leaders. Paul summarizes in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (NASB). Paul identifies three levels of spiritual leadership and relationship, which includes four generations of leaders. He begins by explaining his own teaching of Timothy ("*the things which you have heard from me*"). From there, Timothy is to teach the same truth to others ("*these entrust to faithful men*"). After that, those being taught are to teach yet another generation of leaders ("*who will be able to teach others also*").

Paul's intent is that the transmission of Christian truth and a life of obedience to God is passed from one generation to the next in faithful, persistent teaching.

Online Christian Higher Education is an example of these spiritual leadership relationships. The online adjunct faculty member is in the middle of the process. Having been taught by others, he or she is entrusted with passing their knowledge to students who will one day teach others. At Grace, we seek faculty who demonstrate a strong commitment to Christ and a desire to teach others to help them grow spiritually. While we trust our interview process, we also work to enhance healthy relationships and teaching techniques through faculty development modules, faculty coaching, and ongoing reviews. We are seeking to truly have our online adjunct faculty feel that they are part of the Grace community and the team of people who are connected and supportive, striving to fulfill our mission: "*Graduating Godly Individuals Prepared To Serve Christ In Church And Society.*"

DEFINING COMMUNITY BIBLICALLY

Building a community of support for adjunct faculty which promotes spiritual health in online Christian higher education is important. For the purposes of this article, "community" will be defined using the Apostle Paul's ideas on developing Timothy as a leader of leaders. This definition can be encapsulated in three ways: a

community of knowing, of support, and of spiritual care.

Paul regularly referred to sound doctrine throughout his letters to Timothy. In so doing, he reminded his younger apprentice of the importance of clear, biblically sound understanding of doctrinal issues. Apparently, some leaders were mishandling God's Word, for Paul stated that Timothy should "instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines" (1 Timothy 1:3). From a positive approach, he also reminded him: "Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13). In other words, Christian teachers must know the truth and teach it, often defending the truth against erroneous teaching (also 2 Timothy 4:2).

Tozer (1978) provided a poignant insight regarding the importance of good doctrine: "The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us. A whole new philosophy of the Christian life has resulted from this one basic error in our religious thinking" (p. 6). It is clear that sound doctrine is not simply about knowing the right things about God, but concerns living a Christian life in a way that is consistent with biblical teaching. Based upon these exhortations, we seek to support the doctrinal integrity of online adjunct faculty in their work to prepare students to serve Christ.

Beyond knowing sound doctrine, Paul exhorted Timothy in his support and spiritual care for other teachers and leaders. "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:5). The motivation for both Paul and Timothy was that of freedom in

relationships built on loving respect, the fair treatment of others, and a mutual building up of a common faith. Support must take place on a personal level and is dependent upon knowing the other person, and this kind of spiritual care seeks to encourage a growing relationship with Christ for both our faculty and our students.

Building a community which supports knowing, support, and spiritual care is key to building up the next generation of leaders, and is important for online adjunct faculty. Sometimes the practical issues of getting courses up and running, assuring faculty are trained enough to manage online course work, and overseeing all the moving pieces for the five-week rotation can overwhelm our efforts to provide spiritual care. Nonetheless, we continue our efforts to pray and encourage our online adjunct faculty day by day.

THE PAULINE MODEL

Having defined a healthy community to support spiritual care for our faculty, returning to the Apostle Paul would be an appropriate conclusion to this article, as he proposed his own method for developing Christian leaders and teachers. As noted previously in his letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, “And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

Based on the context of this verse within the letters to Timothy and Titus, one can get a picture of what kind of training Paul intended for Christian leaders. At Grace, we seek the same kind of training and coaching for our online adjunct faculty.

First, Paul’s method included teaching *doctrine*. In other words, the content

of what is being taught is important and this content must be passed from one generation to another. The content includes both doctrine and biblical truth (2 Timothy 3:14-15). Our curriculum helps to establish that framework for our online courses, as each course is peer-reviewed for both content and quality. For the online adjunct faculty in Christian higher education, adhering to biblical and theological truth is an expectation which is standard for all faculty. Through consistent review of both curriculum and faculty, we seek to maintain biblical and doctrinal integrity.

Second, Paul’s method included *correction* of both doctrinal errors and lifestyle errors. It was not enough to present the truth, but he taught that the leader must also to identify false teachings (2 Timothy 4:1-4). Often, the false teaching led to aberrant lifestyle choices (1 Timothy 1:9-10). For those leading and teaching in online programs, this is not always easy. Our methods are virtual, and we seldom “see” someone living their lives on a daily basis. We must take clues from how they interact with others, and how they explain their doctrinal views and support them with Scripture. We seek to know them through their discussion posts as they reflect on Scripture, a topic for the course, or a current event. While it can be a challenge, we are intentional in building relationships in an online format.

Third, Paul promoted a *lifestyle* which was honorable and devoted to Christ. Not only did he point to errors of lifestyle as noted above, but he exhorted his young proteges to live in accordance with their gifts (1 Timothy 4:14-15), to serve above reproach (1 Timothy 4:12), to follow Paul’s example (2 Timothy 3:14-15), and to teach believers of all stations in life to be godly and Christ-honoring

(Titus 2:2-10). In our online courses, we build into the curriculum assignments that focus on these important factors of the Christian life. Our faculty guide our students in their learning and growth, often sharing personal stories of their own spiritual journeys.

CONCLUSION

As our world keeps changing and higher education adapts, Grace Christian University will continue to build upon the strengths in our programs. Our online programs are young – ten years old or less – yet we see hundreds of graduates who are now serving around the world because our faculty have cared enough to help them grow and mature in their relationship with Christ and their chosen field of study. We are grateful for our faculty, and the academic leaders for the online programs continue on our quest to support them in their efforts.

References

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Generations

This is an extraordinary story about spiritual leadership.

This story is a “spiritual genealogy,” a generational gift of mentoring. We will see the impact of one person investing in another. Rick Piliéci, Campus Pastor at Grace, shares with us those who were instrumental in his salvation, his education, and his ministry. This is his story.



LET'S GO BACK TO

JANUARY 1997 - Rick was in his late twenties, lived in New York, and worked for Entemann's Bakery as a delivery driver. He was invited to Eastport Bible Church (as he states, a “Bible-believing” Church) where his wife, Kim, was attending.

The pastor, Rob Renberg, met with Rick after he first visited church, and asked him *the question*: “If you were to die today, would you go to heaven? If so, why?” Rick gave the usual response: “I would go to heaven because I'm good enough.” Rob was wise enough to let his question(s) simmer a bit, and Rick and Kim continued to attend the church. By springtime, the Piliécis were going to Eastport every week. Rick listened intently to Rob's messages, and often felt like Rob was preaching directly to him (on occasion, Rick even asked Kim if she had talked to Rob about certain issues or problems he was dealing with - the sermons were hitting so close to home!).

About nine months after his initial meeting with Rob, Rick came to know Christ as his Savior on September 7,

1997. He was immediately “plugged in” to the ministry at Eastport and worked in the youth ministry with Charley Young. Charley became Rick's mentor. Rick says, “Charley walked with me, prayed with me; everything I did was laser focused.” Charley and Rick would even spend their day off together (usually doing ministry and attending an early morning prayer meeting)! Rick became involved in midweek home Bible studies, men's ministries, and retreats. Basically, he was involved in all activities at the church. Rick even took a vacation week to help during Vacation Bible School! He was given the title of “Junior High Youth Coordinator” by Charley. That group began with just four students but grew to over 40 students during Rick's tenure. Kim also became involved with the youth ministry. As an elementary school teacher, she saw some of the children she had taught become involved in the youth group as well.

God had placed Rick and Kim in a healthy, growing church, and Rick loved the students and wanted to be a spiritual leader for the teenagers. Over the years, Pastor Rob Renberg was called to another church and

Pastor Gary Spykerman began his time at Eastport. Charley continued to mentor Rick in youth ministry and family ministry.

In 2000, President Bruce Kemper and his wife, Judi, visited Eastport Bible Church. President Kemper spoke for the church service, and Rick and Kim were invited to join Bruce, Judi, and Pastor Gary's family for lunch that day. Rick believes that the Holy Spirit spoke to him through Bruce:

“I hear you are interested in ministry. Will you consider attending Grace Bible College?”

Rick was very encouraged and met a second time with Bruce and Judi to talk about what attending Grace could look like as an older student with a family. In August 2001, Rick and Kim moved to Wyoming, Michigan, and Rick began classes at Grace.

Rick and Kim moved in to 959 Aldon - on the campus of Grace - with two

young children, Nicholas and Jennie Sue (Timothy would also join the family in Michigan). Rick enjoyed campus life as an older student. He was received well by his classmates and began working in youth ministry immediately. Rick felt he was given the confirmation that he was where he should be when the very first week he was in Michigan, he was approached by Pastor Craig Apel who ministered at Berean Church in Muskegon, Michigan. (Pastor Craig was originally from Eastport, and was told that a new student was coming to Grace and was interested in youth ministry). After a brief conversation, Rick began as a youth minister right away, serving the junior and senior high school students on Friday nights as well as Sunday mornings. Additionally, Rick volunteered at Kentwood Community Church (KCC), serving senior high youth on Sunday evenings.

Since Rick did not grow up in a church, he had “no idea of how to do things,” and now he was working in two churches! His mentoring relationships became even more critical. He had to learn about leadership: how to build leaders within the youth group, and how to be a strong servant leader himself. Charley continued to mentor Rick through these years, and he received additional mentoring from Professor Mark Carroll at Grace and Jeff Eckart at KCC. These mentors helped shape his model of ministry and sustained him through troubled times as well as good times – teaching him to love, support, and encourage the students. Rick believes that *attitude is everything*, and he walked with others through some difficult issues such as suicide, abuse, and self-harm, within his ministry in Muskegon.



Pastor Charley Young and mentor John Gowdy

Along with the tough times were the great times he was able to experience with the youth. Rick loved discipleship, and had students involved in TAG (Time Alone With God), a weekly commitment. As his ministry developed, Sunday School included expository teaching, and Sunday evenings became thematic/topical so students could bring friends along to the group. There were plenty of activities throughout the year that were planned for recreation (like trips to Cedar Point). There were also events that combined recreational fun with the truth of Scripture (winter retreats, “Never the Same” Camp, etc.). Ministry missionary trips (Costa Rica, Camp Hope/Camp Joy in New York) were also scheduled through the years. Rick was discipling and mentoring young people, and there were many (over twenty) students who attended Grace because of Rick’s influence.

Just as Charley had mentored Rick, Rick mentored several of the young men from Berean. One of these young men, Jared Kusz, is now the pastor of Georgetown Bible Church in Hudsonville, Michigan. Chris Anton is the student ministries director at Calvary Church. Chris made the decision to attend Grace during his junior year of high school. Rick became involved in the lives of Jared and Chris and their families – and they saw he genuinely cared about them. Chris had the desire to do youth ministry and shadowed Rick, including spending

time doing ministry, and learning about spiritual things, the hard things, the natural things, and how to live a life of service. Rick allowed Chris to lead in the youth group, and Grace was naturally the perfect next step of life.

While at Grace, Chris was active on campus as a student leader, got a job in youth ministry, and met a young man named Sean. Chris spent time with Sean (who, incidentally, had no church background). Sean came to know Christ, felt the call to ministry, eventually became a student at Grace, and graduated in 2020. Chris continues to encourage his youth group students to attend Grace. And, walking alongside them, the cycle of mentorship continues.



Sean Murphy and mentor Chris Anton

It is exciting to read Rick’s story, but, we began in the “middle” of the story. What was not shared was the multitude of godly people at the “beginning” of the story [*Charley Young was mentored by John Gowdy. John was mentored by Wayne Webb and Dr. Charles Baker...and by now it is easy to see this legacy of spiritual mentoring and leadership goes back many generations*]. Also, we have to remember there are also those who will complete the “ending” of the story (which remains to be written, and will continue until we reach heaven). Isn’t it amazing how God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things for His glory!

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Catherine AnnaMarie Windle,
Arlington, WA
Tatton Edward Workman, *Middleville, MI*
Gabriel Jerome Zoromski, *Wausau, WI*

2020 GRADUATION

Award Recipients Honored

TR Huston Christian Service Award

Emily Rodriguez

HB Prince Preaching Award

Andrew McKay

CF Baker Theology Award

Andrew McKay

Vernon H. Stromberg Music Award

Leah VanderLaan

William L. Rigg Youth Ministry Award

Eric A. Boyd, Jr.

Richard A. Velting Business Award

Kylee Maat

Janice K. Schregardus - Human Services Award

Kimberly Buskirk

Samuel R. Vinton, Jr. Global Communication Award

Jess South



ALL ONE NEEDS TO DO IS LOOK ONLINE (or around your neighborhood) to find proof that 2020 held

significant challenges in many ways. While Grace was impacted by quarantines and isolation due to state and national mandates, the educational process of our students continued.

Because restrictions were still in effect when graduation was originally scheduled, Grace held a virtual commencement ceremony to celebrate and recognize its graduates. People around the world tuned in to watch the commencement addresses, and the presentation of the graduates names. Special award winners were honored, and those recipients are listed to the left (Award Recipients Honored).

Please enjoy the commencement speeches by Paul Klemme, Lilibate Luhanga, and Samaria Reedy. Through their words and testimony you will see why Grace exists, and why we praise God for the students He brings to us!



Paul Klemme

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME THE HONOR of delivering this commencement speech. Thank you, President Kemper and your team for navigating us through this chaotic time so well, and for creating a format in which the class of 2020 can be honored for its achievements. I would also like to thank my family, friends, and girlfriend for supporting me through this journey and creating in me the confidence to stand before you today. And of course, congratulations to the class of 2020! Even though this has been an unorthodox end to the semester, nevertheless we have completed it! For years to come, we will be remembered as one of the most “distinguished” of classes—and not just for our academic excellence.

So, what is my story—and how do I tell it? Those are the questions I asked myself when I sat down to write this speech. How can I be 100% honest? Where do I begin and where do I end? Do I modify it depending on the circumstance? Do I tell it completely or shorten it so that I don’t lose the attention of the listener? Each of us have lived our lives, with all of its nuances and subtleties, victories and failures, with the impression that we have a story to tell, but when we are asked about it, the task of communicating it becomes extremely complex.

When I think about my story, the first thing that comes to mind are my parents. My parents are not ordinary people because, by the supernatural grace of God, they were able to raise me, teach me what I needed to know about life and God, and left me with all of the tools I needed to succeed. Yet, the sad truth is, at least for a long time, I did not.

In high school, after getting into a toxic relationship and joining a metal band as the lead guitarist, and befriending the wrong crowd, I began to rebel. This took a significant toll on my academics and my GPA at that time was unspeakably low. I was never very proud of my grades or my ACT score. What was it that was holding me back? Addiction was—and this is the hole in my story.

The reason I think we have such a hard time communicating our stories is because they are not completely wholesome. We would

love to trace our life from beginning to end in a symmetrical and logical way, but when it comes down to it, there are holes all over the place—times in our lives that even to this day we cannot make sense of. The truth is, even after I became a Christian, my life continued to be attacked by the enemy of addiction. This confused me even more because as I grew up in the church, I heard so many testimonies about Jesus breaking the chains of addiction, but here I was, a son of God, not making any progress.

My parents saw what my problem was, and after four years of battling, while I was just about to enter my third year of college, they sent me away to a discipleship program that lasted a year. However, they didn’t really send me away; they sent me into something—and that something was community. The hole in my story began to be filled—and it was then that God had called me into the ministry to be a worship leader. After I completed the discipleship program, a simple college search on Google, and a meeting with Dr. Jason Werkema, who was absolutely instrumental (no pun intended) for my decision, I applied to Grace, and as I needed so badly,

“I found a safe place full of rich and intimate community.”

As we graduate today and are ushered off to a new beginning, we need to remember that Grace was not just where we gained an education; it is where we were given an opportunity to fill in the holes of our story. From the faculty to our classes, from our fellow students to each chapel that we participated in, we had the distinct chance to learn

CONTINUED >



> GRADUATION 2020

a little bit more about ourselves and God. That is what sets Grace apart from other universities I have been involved with: Grace prioritizes growth in Christ above everything else, and that is how it should be because that is what God values first and foremost, too. The reality is, however, that even after we leave and go out to start our new careers and jobs, there will still be some holes in our story left to fill, and we need to be careful not to fill them with the wrong things. Even a good thing, like education, can be misused in this way.

Several years ago, my favorite subject to study was philosophy.

I demonstrated such passion in this area I was asked to be a student tutor. During this time, however, my corrupt character never changed, and because of the shame I felt deep down, I started to use what I was studying and my education to reason away and cover up the inner struggle with addiction I faced. What Paul said in Colossians 2:8 applied to me directly: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ." Instead of using the subject of philosophy to benefit myself and help me grow, it began to take me captive and use me. So, instead of filling the holes in my life, I was merely putting a thin and useless bandage over them to cover them.

When I came to Grace, this kind of thinking was nowhere to be found. I was challenged that my studies and lifestyle

should be compatible. In fact, the whole point of learning was to become a godlier individual! I believe that we should take this ideology and use it for the rest of our lives. Our stories can only be redeemed and reconciled when we authentically address the problems and holes that they contain, not cover them up with "hollow and deceptive philosophy." While we are indeed leaving this university today, we ought not to leave behind the concepts, truths, and above all the godly foundation we gained here. Let us remember our time together, in community at Grace, which enabled us to fill some of the most significant holes in our lives. If we take what we so graciously received during our undergraduate career, we will not only get the applause of our mentors and peers—but one day, when we are completely whole, we look forward to receiving the approval of our Heavenly Father, the greatest achievement of all. In the end, it doesn't really matter what happens to us or where life takes us. If we are, as the writer of Hebrews once said, "Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2), we are also assured that "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). When somebody asks about our stories, we shouldn't be so focused on figuring out how to tell them; we only need to point them to the One who is authoring our stories on a daily basis—Jesus Christ. Centuries ago, while He hung on the cross, He fully knew what would happen to each one of us. He even knew that today we would be graduating from Grace Christian University. On the cross, His sacrifice for

us demonstrated His power to fill in the holes of our stories. All of us by faith are whole because of the holes in His hands which bore our incompleteness and shortcoming. Let us remember and live out our stories knowing He made each of those stories worth living and telling.



Lilibate Luhanga

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF GRACE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY is *Graduating Godly Individuals Prepared To Serve Christ In Church And Society.*

Grace produces authentic individuals.

Each online class starts with a devotional which carries us throughout the week. This unites us as students in the Word, prayer, and meditation. It helps us tackle our education with the grace of God. It carries us through the whole week, the whole semester, the whole year, until we get to a day of celebration like today. We make lasting relationships with our professors and our classmates.

Colossians 1:3 says, "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you." Paul thanked God for these new believers although he had not met them yet. For the online



students, we hold on to this message. We study from locations around the world but we are united in one Spirit.

Colossians shows us how to be authentic:

- Authentic individuals have a *heart of gratitude*
- Authentic individuals are marked by *faith in Christ*
- Authentic individuals are marked by *love*
- Authentic individuals are marked by the *hope of heaven*
- The authentic spirit comes from God
- Grace teaches us to be *thankful*
- Grace teaches us to have *faith in Christ*
- Grace teaches us to *love one another*
- Grace teaches us to have the *hope of heaven*

Graduating from GRACE becomes a double blessing - we are not just *godly individuals*, we are also *authentic individuals prepared to serve Christ in Church and Society*.



Samaria Reedy

AS LILI JUST REMINDED US, the mission statement of Grace Christian University is *Graduating Godly*

Individuals Prepared To Serve Christ In Church And Society. Today, I stand here as a manifestation of that statement. When God was leading me to further my education, I was nervous and fearful. I said that I would never go to school with children. However, I have learned that when you are walking with God, the word "never" should not be in your vocabulary! Like me, many of you overcame fear and insecurity and chose to walk in obedience to the will of God for your life. Because of your obedience to God's will, you are graduating today! During your time here at Grace, God has prepared you to continue walking in the work of His ministry for your life. No, this is not the ideal ceremony that we had in mind. However, we know that all things work together for the good of those that love Him and are called according to His purpose. God has been preparing us for such a time as this. During our journey at Grace, God has further equipped us to serve church and society effectively.

We serve a powerful and mighty God. He took this homemaker of four and fulfilled one of her heart's desires. God can do what seems impossible according to human standards and make it possible within your life. Remember that it was nobody but God that brought you through every obstacle and every trial to get you to where you are today. During my time here at Grace, as I was studying and completing assignments, I had no idea that God was working behind the scenes, preparing me. God has also prepared a place for you at the table. God reminds us in His Word that He has a future for our good and not for disaster. With that, please know that

God has amazing things in store for your life. Each course that you have taken has prepared you for what God has next in store for your life. As a Grace graduate, you are not only representing God and your families; you are now representing Grace Christian University. As you get ready to step out in the direction that God wants to take you in, walk boldly and in confidence knowing that God is with you, and He has equipped you through the education that you have received here at Grace Christian University.

God has prepared you, and He has deemed you qualified to fulfill what He has called for you to do for Him. I encourage you to always trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not lean on your understanding. Acknowledge God in all that you do, and He will continuously lead, guide, and direct you. Congratulations, class of 2020. Remain excited about the beautiful future that God as planned for your life. Even through the midst of the storm, you are not alone. You have a mighty and powerful Savior who is with you every step of the way. How do you know? He promised never to leave or forsake you.

Always remember that God can do the unthinkable in your life. He will take you places that you could never have imaged or dreamed of. I praise God that I am a reflection of that. God is great, and He will position you in high places in Him if you continue to trust, rely, and depend on Him.

Producing Perseverance: Trials & Triumphs

CORY JAMIESON



RACE ATHLETICS HAS CERTAINLY BEEN THROWN A LOT OF CURVEBALLS in

2020, but James 1:2-4 reminds us that significant growth and perseverance follows the trials. 2020 has been a year far from the absence of trials, but it has also produced a multitude of triumphs.

THE TRIALS

On March 12, 2020, the Grace women's and men's basketball teams were anxiously awaiting their games at the NCCAA DII National Tournament in Joplin, Missouri. The unfortunate news that COVID-19 would cause the tournament to come to a halt hit both teams like a brick wall, as the women's team had just recorded a big win in the Elite Eight, securing their spot in the final four, and the men's team carried high hopes and the #1 seed into the tournament after a spectacular regular season.

"When the National Tournament was cancelled, I was devastated," commented Grace senior (and now Grace graduate) Adam Kregel. "I loved my teammates, coaches, and time at Grace, so it was heartbreaking to have it end in such a surprising manner."

Kregel expanded on how the abrupt finish to his basketball career helped him with his perspective.

"This taught me the importance of looking back and appreciating each and every moment I had at Grace – both on and off the court. It showed me that the memories and relationships built at Grace will last as long as the championships and records. Overall, it helped me see that basketball is great, but my faith and relationships will always be most important."

On November 7, 2020, the Grace volleyball team pulled off an amazing upset of the #1 seeded Johnson University-Tennessee Royals in Knoxville, Tennessee, winning the Mideast Regional Championship. It was the team's first regional title since 1996, and after junior Ashley Hoek put down the final kill in the 3-1 victory, the Tigers were jubilant as they celebrated with the banner. Just a few short days later, as the team anticipated competing as the #4 seed at the NCCAA National Tournament in Greenville, South Carolina, the team's COVID contact results forced them to withdraw from the tournament.

"This was the last news I wanted to tell this season's team, we all have gotten so

"Consider it pure joy... whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

James 1:2-3

close and peaked when we needed to at the end of the season," commented Coach Kerri Shultz. "We were so grateful for all the opportunities this year. It was one special team, and I won't ever forget this season. I'm incredibly proud of the effort everyone put into the team on and off the court, and it showed with the first regional banner in twenty four years."

THE TRIUMPHS

In 2020, both the men's and women's basketball teams won the regional title for the second time in school history (2016 was the first).

Austin Jackson capped off his career for the men's basketball team by earning National Player of the Year honors in the NCCAA DII.

The volleyball team won their first regional title since 1996. The men's soccer squad won their region for the second year in a row, and advanced to the NCCAA DII National Tournament in Kissimmee, Florida, where they finished one goal away from a national title game appearance.

Jennie Sue Pilienci and Dylan DeVries were awarded the distinction of

Regional Soccer Player of the Year. This was the second straight season in which members of the Tigers have garnered that honor!

Joseph Craesmeyer was awarded the top honor given to an individual cross country runner in the NCCAA, the Wheeler Award.

Off the playing surface, despite limitations on group gatherings for a large portion of the year, the Tigers were able to record a combined 2,381 hours of community service.



The women's basketball team captured the Regional Championship for the second time in program history in 2020

Joseph Craesmeyer was awarded the Wheeler Award in the fall of 2020 - the highest honor given by the NCCAA in the sport of Cross Country



The men's soccer team brought home their second straight NCCAA Midwest Regional Championship banner in 2020

GRACE TIGERS



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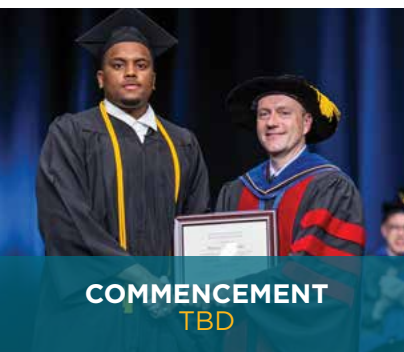




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NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
May 6



WHITECAPS EVENT
TBD



GOLF CLASSIC
August 23



CLAY SHOOTING EVENT
September 18



WOMENS CONNECTION BRUNCH
September 25



HOMECOMING
October 14 - 16



GALA WITH THE MARTINS
October 16



GLORIA
December 3

Upcoming Events

2021

Find out more

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