

# Lifeline

*Keeping the Sunset family connected*



# *This we can only do if we have people to teach.*

**W** if someone were to ask me, "What's the number one thing, in essence, that you left behind?..." it was the teaching of others, so that they could take my work and take it further" is a quote credited to Vidal Sassoon (noted Hair Stylist, entrepreneur and philanthropist). True biblical discipleship is taking what we have learned and put into practice and sharing it with others who will faithfully receive it and do likewise (2 Tim. 2:2; Matt. 28:19-20).

While our expectation is not that our students will improve or change the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16), it is our expectation that those who receive it from us will explain it better to this generation and tell it to more people than we even dreamed possible. Some of Jesus' parting words to his disciples on the night he was betrayed were, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I

have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (John 14:12, NIV). It was the intent of our Lord that His followers would always be reaching forward in faith, striving to do more and more in His name and with the full assurance that He is in the Father.

Every director of the school, every dean, every instructor, every staff member is continually working to pass along what we know and do so that others can take it further. This we do with all our faith and with all our might. **This we can only do if we have people to teach.** I want to implore you to seek out from among you certain men who are full of the Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3) who can be set apart to train for a couple of years so as to make an eternal difference. That seems like a good exchange, doesn't it? A couple of years of spiritual discipline for the eternal sake of the countless many? If you need them, we'll send them back to you when they are finished here so that you can send someone else.

Imagine how much farther the work of Christ could go if all the congregations of the Lord's church participated in this cycle? Imagine the difference it might make in heaven!



*Tim Burrow*

## IN-DEPTH BIBLE STUDY HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER

Finding a balance between work, family, and other personal obligations while obtaining a degree can be difficult. Sunset International Bible Institute recognizes this challenge and is pleased to provide three different styles of course offerings to accommodate busy schedules and distance learning. Earning a degree has never been more accessible. *What are you waiting for?*



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Students meet with the instructor at regularly scheduled times in a classroom at Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas. Students in face-to-face courses will be expected to be physically present for class days and times.



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## *Lifeline*

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**SUNSET**  
International Bible Institute

# Prison Bars

# Can't Stop

# the Gospel

## I MET LARRY ROBERTS IN PRISON.

**D**r. Henry Petree invited me to meet Larry at Jess Dunn Correctional Center in Taft, Oklahoma. Dr. Petree is the administrator of the Sunset Satellite School in Jess Dunn Correctional Center and has been involved in prison ministry since about 1999. I traveled to Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, and met Dr. Petree and his wife, Cheryl. Cheryl Petree administers a prison ministry for women at Eddie Warrior Correctional Center in Taft, Oklahoma. Dr. Petree has been involved with the prison ministry at Jess Dunn Correctional Center for about 16 years. He wanted me to experience firsthand the effectiveness of God's Word communicated through Sunset Satellite School and the harvest it brought, which is Larry's new life in Christ.

Larry, who has since been released, shared how God's Word is alive and well in the prison. I sat down with Larry for a phone interview in February of this year, participating in a raw conversation about how God moved him to study His Word and be rebaptized. Now he is a free man—both physically and spiritually—and he couldn't be more joyful!

SIBI's purpose and mission has always been "to train whole *persons* to take the whole *Gospel* to the whole *world*, wholly to please *God*."

When I started working with SIBI on January 1, 2022, I never envisioned that I would be helping a congregation with its prison ministry using SIBI materials, let alone a possible three or four prison ministries. God has truly blessed the men and women who work in prison ministry and has allowed me to catch a glimpse of what the work is all about.

Larry impressed me from the moment I met him. I was a little shocked at how happy and joy-filled he was even though he was a prisoner. He was very involved with the SIBI classes that Dr. Henry Petree was facilitating; he was even doing very well on the tests. On one test in particular he scored a 98. I don't recall anyone in our residential class at SIBI making a 98 on Richard Rogers' tests...especially in Old Testament History 1! SIBI's curriculum has been adapted and proven effective all over the world and now brings God's light into the darkest and scariest place that I can think of—prison!

**The apostle Paul knew what  
it was like to be a prisoner  
(Acts 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:9).  
He also knew what it was like  
to be content in any circumstances  
(Phil. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 9:22-23).**



The following is from the phone interview I had with Larry. I asked him to tell me “his story” from childhood up to the present after his release from prison.

Larry said, “My mother was a dedicated member of the Lord's church. My mother has passed on, but she was a faithful member until her passing in 2007, and she was a big part in bringing me to the Lord. She would ‘stay on me,’ trying to get me to walk a straight path. She would tell me, ‘You need to wake up; you know better!’ I was able to reflect on things a lot in prison, especially hearing my mother's words telling me that I needed to get right with God.”

Though Larry was raised in the church, he confesses he was the leader of the wrong crowd. Larry admits, “I thought the world had the answers....I went on to college and graduated with a degree in Safety, had a child, and was married for three years. The marriage ended in divorce. I then married again and had two more children. By age 29 I had been married and divorced twice and had a total of three children. I had many back surgeries and became addicted to pain pills and alcohol....These decisions eventually led me to prison. I didn't want to be there, but it was an eye-opening experience. I was able to connect with the Lord again in the darkest place I have ever been.”

## Tell me what it is like in prison.

I had never been in major trouble, but prison is like walking into the devil's living room. You can feel the evil as soon as you walk in. Even though it is full of people, you feel alone. It is a frightening and scary place. The inside is ten times worse than the outside. You feel helpless and hopeless in prison. It is a world inside a world. It has its own life—a life that you don't want to be a part of. It is the closest thing on this earth to being in hell.

## Tell me about your conversion in prison. How did that come about?

Ron Hass, who was with the Owasso Church of Christ prison ministry, would come in and hold the Church of Christ services at Jess Dunn prison. He also rebaptized me. Later, Ron Hass retired and Bill Dilks took over. Bill was more hands-on and had more of a classroom setting. He asked us what we would like to study, and then he would do an in-depth study on that topic. He gave me a deeper understanding of the Bible. I remember a time when we were locked down and no one could come in. I was doing short lessons and handing them out to people in my unit. In 2020, I asked Henry [Petree] for some material, and he brought me lessons on Philippians and Ephesians. I started studying on my own, and when I finished, I went back to him and asked him for more material. He gave me Bible History 1 and 2, which are also Sunset material. Every day I would work on a lesson until I finally finished Bible History 1 and 2, and that is when the Sunset classes were introduced to me through Henry Petree. ...Sunset still influences me today.

## Who was the most influential person?

Jesus Christ. He has always been there waiting on me. He was patient....I wouldn't have known about Jesus if it wasn't for my mother. She gave me an example, day in and day out, of what it means to be a Christian.

## What are your plans now?

I just want to be faithful because he has given me a full life. If you don't have God, you do not have a full life. I want others to experience what I have experienced—of course, without a prison sentence. I am not sure what my future holds, but whatever He has me doing I will be doing it with the Lord in the lead.

## What would you like to say to someone who is in prison now?

Remember that God loves you. Galatians 2:20; John 3:16 — God gave his son for us. Search the scriptures for the truth. It is only God's Word that will set you free — John 8:32. There is no one out there that cares for you more than Jesus. You don't have to be without hope — 1 Peter 1:3-6. I would also like to say to anyone reading this, especially prisoners, that there is life after prison—because I am living it today.

Larry currently preaches for the Lone Grove Church of Christ in Lone Grove, Oklahoma, a small congregation of 25–30 members. During his eight-and-a-half-year stay in the Jess Dunn Correctional Center, Larry was moved to be rebaptized through effective Bible studies using Sunset Satellite School materials. The elders at Fort Gibson Church of Christ were “the hands and feet of Jesus” as they evangelized using the SIBI material as their teaching tool.

Larry doesn't want any glory because of anything that he has said or done; his only purpose is to glorify Jesus and spread the good news of the Kingdom to those who are willing to listen. Larry has a heart for God and wants all people to come to a knowledge of the truth! He is a true servant in God's kingdom. God not only redeemed Larry from sin, He also redeemed him from a terrible life behind bars. Larry's mission is to release all the “spiritual prisoners” from their “chains.”

Larry, Dr. Petree, and I will be attending the National Prison Ministry Workshop in Corpus Christi, Texas, June 12–14, 2024. Dr. Petree will be one of the speakers at the workshop.

SIBI remains committed to its original purpose of taking the Gospel to the lost by training preachers and sending them out into the world to stateside and foreign mission fields. I believe the prison system is a mission field of its own—one that is receptive to God's Word.

It is interesting how God puts people in the exact place and situation He wants them. These are often places we didn't expect to find ourselves, but God knows what He wants us to do. So when circumstances in life work out the way they do, we have to trust God that it is for our overall benefit but also for His glory!

*Britton Pruitt, Director of Church Development*



*Larry preaches occasionally for the Fort Gibson Church of Christ*

# A Letter for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church

A systematic study of the book of Colossians by Matt Glawe

The book of Colossians is one of the most profound writings in all of scripture. In this short epistle, Paul presents Christ's preeminence and sovereignty over all created things as superior to a mixture of philosophies and false religious practices that were finding their way into the Lycus Valley churches. This same overarching problem threatens the Lord's church today, which makes Colossians as relevant now as it was when it was penned and delivered. It contains some of the highest Christology in all of scripture. Christ is presented as the sovereign creator, the controller of all things, the redeemer from sin, and the protector from evil spirits and powers. These elements, among others, make Colossians one of the most profound studies for the serious Bible student and for the church today. In preparation for writing this introduction, I read the entire epistle several times and was amazed at how marvelous this short work really is. The purpose of this introduction is to provide a foundational background of Colossians with regard to the recipients, themes, and difficult passages so that the reader can make proper application for the church in the twenty-first century.

## Recipients of the Epistle to the Colossians

The establishment of the church at Colossae is somewhat of a mystery. Unlike churches in other cities, such as Ephesus and Corinth, the book of Acts does not specifically mention its beginning. There

is no biblical account of Paul's visiting this city or establishing this church. It has been suggested that Paul could have visited the Lycus Valley cities during his third mission journey on his way to Ephesus,<sup>1</sup> although the text does not specifically state that such a visit took place. If Paul did actually make these stops, it is possible that he founded churches there. However, internal evidence strongly indicates otherwise. It seems to indicate that Paul had never been there (Col. 2:1). The beginning of the letter states that Epaphras taught the Colossians the Gospel, which strongly indicates that he founded this congregation (Col. 1:6–7). Epaphras was from Colossae and had become one of Paul's coworkers (Col. 4:12). At one point, he was with Paul in prison in Rome and could have been the source of Paul's information that led him to pen the letter.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to notice that this letter was not just for the church at Colossae, but also for its sister cities, Hierapolis and Laodicea—especially Laodicea (Col. 4:12–16). Given the wide array of false religions in this region, coupled with the fact that these three cities made up a metroplex and each had congregations of their own, this makes sense. These churches certainly would have faced

similar struggles and no doubt all needed this message.

## Themes in Colossians

Several themes emerge from a study of Colossians. In order to accurately understand and apply them, we need to attempt to understand the heresy that caused Paul to write this epistle in the first place. The Lycus Valley was a hotbed for idolatry, cults, mysticism, and countless other pagan practices. Based on what Paul teaches in the epistle, it is apparent that a mixture of pagan religions was greatly influencing the churches. This is evident throughout the epistle as a whole. Because of the structure of the letter, two major thematic segments emerge—a theological section dealing with the preeminence of Christ and a practical section that deals with proper Christian living.

## The Colossian Heresy

The heresy that led Paul to write this letter is the subject of much debate and speculation. James R. McConnell, in his well-researched article about the background and context of Colossians, wrote the following about the conflict at Colossae: "Scholars debate the identity of the 'opponents' in the letter to the Colossians. Although they are never explicitly named as such, the author in Col. 2:8–19 seems clearly to be warning the Colossians to avoid the behavior of a specific group of people. Who these people are has been the source of a great deal

<sup>1</sup> Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), 3; Acts 18:23, 19:1.

<sup>2</sup> Edward C. Wharton, *Christ and the Church: The Fulfillment of Purpose and Prophecy* (Lubbock, TX: Sunset Institute Press, 2003), 39; Philemon 1:23.

of speculation.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding this debate, careful study can provide some insight.

Although the specifics of the Colossian problem may be unknown, some characteristics of it can be identified from within the text. For example, consider Colossians 2:8: “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Several things are listed that speak to the problem Paul is addressing. In two places, Paul speaks of “rulers and authorities,” or “principalities and powers” (Col. 1:16; 2:15).<sup>4</sup> Other things mentioned that speak of this problem are: circumcision and Jewish festivals (Col. 2:11–17); asceticism, the worship of angels, visions, and “the elementary principles of the world” (Col. 2:18–23). Because this list is so exhaustive, some scholars have even alleged that Paul was simply warning these churches about the society around them and wasn’t speaking of a specific issue.<sup>5</sup> However, it would seem that Paul was addressing a problem that had infiltrated the churches in the Lycus Valley. Wharton sums it up best by saying, “Paul does not detail the problem explicitly; it is inferred from his statements in opposition to the false teaching. The heresy was syncretistic in nature; there was a hybrid of religious and philosophical influences and teachings from Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures that Paul exposes as heretical.”<sup>6</sup> From Paul’s refutation of this hybrid of influences, some important themes emerge that are essential for the church today.

## The Preeminence of Christ

Colossians 1:15–20 is the centerpiece of the doctrinal section of the letter and establishes the theme relating to the supremacy and preeminence of Christ. This text is widely believed to be an early Christian hymn,<sup>7</sup> which I will address later.

3 James R. McConnell, “Colossians: Background and Contexts,” *Review & Expositor* 116, no. 4 (November 2019): 404. doi:10.1177/0034637319878476.

4 In the NASB, this phrase is translated “rulers and authorities”; KJV and ASV translate this phrase, “principalities and powers.”

5 Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 565.

6 Wharton, *Christ and the Church*, 40–41.

7 Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 27.

Gerald Paden notes that in this text “Christ is presented as having ‘preeminence’ in several distinct arenas, with each intrinsically related to the process of ‘redemption.’”<sup>8</sup> Paden continues with this concise summary of the text in the verses that follow: “He is ‘preeminent’ in relation to God (vs. 15), to creation (vs. 15), to powers and authorities (vs. 16), to sustaining world order (vs. 17), to the church (vs. 18), to the resurrection (vs. 18), to the cosmic order of things (vs. 19–20), to the presentation of the church of God (vs. 22) and to the mystery (vs. 27).”<sup>9</sup>

Paul applies the teaching of preeminence in two places in chapter two: “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority” (Col. 2:9–10 NASB); “When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him” (Col. 2:15 NASB). In these statements, Paul obliterates every form of heresy that may have infiltrated these churches by simply saying, “Christ is superior to all of it; He is all you need.”

## The Christian Life

Because of the syncretism that had crept into the lives of these Christians, Paul also needed to address some basic concepts of Christ-like living. This begins in the first two verses of chapter three: “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth” (Col. 3:1–2 NASB). From this point forward, another major theme emerges from Colossians.

In this “ethical” section of the letter, nothing is specifically stated about the heresy being addressed in the letter; however, what Paul teaches is no doubt designed to strengthen them against it.<sup>10</sup> Patzia provides a concise summary of Colossians 3:1–4:6 by saying: “Paul discusses the believer’s ethical life in a series of relationships that include Christ (3:1–8); the local church (3:9–17); the family (3:18–21); one’s vocation (3:22–4:1); and society in

8 Gerald Paden, *Colossians, The All-Sufficient Christ* (Lubbock, TX: Sunset Institute Press, 2014), 26.

9 Ibid.

10 Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 69.

general (4:2–6).”<sup>11</sup> The overriding theme throughout this section is that for those who exalt Christ in their lives as Lord and Savior, deliverance from sin, death, despair, and corruption will be the result.<sup>12</sup> Christians can have confidence, courage, and purpose in this life knowing they serve the supreme ruler of the universe.

## Unique Literary Elements

There are typically some unique literary components to each of Paul’s epistles. Colossians is no exception. The two that will be addressed here come from Colossians 1:15–20 and 2:15. The first of these is widely believed to be an early Christian hymn; the second one uses the picture of a Roman triumphal procession.

## The Hymn to Christ

While Colossians 1:15–20 is commonly thought to be a hymn, not much is known about its origin, meaning, structure, or purpose.<sup>13</sup> Origin and authorship are considered uncertain because the language and phraseology are different from any of Paul’s other writings.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, it wasn’t out of the ordinary for Paul to utilize previously written material

*Continued on page 19*

11 Ibid.

12 Wharton, *Christ and the Church*, 75.

13 Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 27.

14 Ibid., 28.



# RAISE THE BANNER

# BANNER

SHOUT HOSANNA

SUNSET  
VISION  
WORKSHOP  
VISION





Every year SIBI hosts the Vision Workshop as part of our commitment to provide encouragement to the body of Christ. We work every year to make sure the keynotes and lessons are relevant and applicable so that attendees are built up and ready to return to their congregations with an excitement and energy that can only come from being a part of a fellowship of believers.

This year the theme was Raise the Banner, Shout Hosanna. The theme was inspired by a song composed by Alton Howard in 1969 that was dedicated to the "Sunset Church World Evangelism Forum," the predecessor of the SIBI Vision Workshop. For many years that song stood as the anthem for the Forum where many were inspired to have a vision for the world. Unfortunately, the song was not reprinted in many song books in the 1990s, so it was no longer sung. Thankfully, Dan Goodyear, the Dean of Ministry Training for West Africa, alerted us to the existence of the song and our connection with it. With the help of Levi Sisemore ('06), who specializes in hymnology, slides were prepared and the song was sung again during the SIBI Vision Workshop.

*"It is a rebirthing, recharging, refreshing, and renewal of a spiritual connection and spiritual growth with our Lord Jesus Christ and our spiritual family."—Debbie Smith*

One couple who continues to return every year is Charles and Debbie Smith from DeRidder, Louisiana. They attended the World Evangelism Forum in 1981 and have returned to Lubbock for the workshop more than 30 times since then. Through all of those years, they have watched the transitions in the workshop as well as the transitions in the needs of the church. They have watched the beginnings of the AIM program and its growth and witnessed the birth of ministries like SeniorAIM, of which they are now remote participants from their home in Louisiana. They have always enjoyed watching the young people who come with such enthusiasm, ready to give their beginning years of adulthood to serving God. They can still remember the first time they saw a flag presentation as they were challenged to think about all of the nations of the earth in need of the people willing to go and share the Gospel.

Regarding the workshop, Charles said that he appreciated the quality and access to so many tools for his own personal growth. "The workshop increases my appetite for... God's Word." To anyone who has never been to the workshop, Debbie Smith says, "It does not matter where you are in your spiritual walk with our Lord, you will be missing out on this side of life if you miss the Vision Workshop. It is a rebirthing, recharging, refreshing, and renewal of a spiritual connection and spiritual growth with our Lord Jesus Christ and our spiritual family."

The next SIBI Vision Workshop will be January 29–31, 2025. Save the date on your calendar now and be ready to be renewed by a special time of encouragement.

Jeff Rader



# Що я можу зробити?

**М**y nightmare became frighteningly real. When Russia attacked Ukraine they occupied my village of Kalanchak. Russian soldiers were everywhere and even started taking children, sending them to Russia for “re-education.” My husband was in the Ukrainian army fighting in another part of Ukraine, and I am the mother of five teenagers. **What should I do?**

I decided we should leave—we should escape to Poland.

On the morning of February 24, 2022, my children and I were awakened by explosions. We were in a panic. I gathered my five children, not even all the necessary things and documents, and went to Kherson. On the way, we could already see the Russian military and then our soldiers farther away. As soon as we passed, fighting immediately began on the Antonovsky Bridge in Kherson. We realized that we couldn't go back and drove into the unknown. The road was incredibly hard. All the shops and gas stations were closed. We were lucky that we had a full tank of fuel. But there was no food at all. The children were hungry for two days. In Vinnytsia we managed to rent a hostel for a lot of money. Finally, we were able to feed the children and wash and rest only a little, because at 4:00 a.m. we left Vinnytsia, taking with us a woman with two children. Despite the fact that we left early, there were huge traffic jams on the road. It took us a long time to get to the Polish border, but it was very disappointing when we saw a 50-km (31-mile) line. It was very cold; we decided not to stand in the traffic but to go to Lviv. There we found out that there was a shelter for refugees. We stayed there for two days. Then I found a group online where a man agreed to help take us to the Polish border. That's how we got to Poland. And in the refugee camp we were offered the chance to go

to Elblag. That's how we ended up in this small town, where we live to this day. And sometimes when I am alone, I'm not.

Then we were safe from the war and abduction of children but were in a foreign country where we didn't know the language or anyone else. My fears erupted. How will I support my children? Will they fall too far behind in school? Will we ever all be together again? Poland provided the basics of what we needed to live, but as the war went on the government began reducing the amount of help they would provide. What should I do?

It was then that I found the answer when I went to a church that offered a seminar on how to talk to my children about the trauma of war. There I found not only help but also a good place for me and my children and many other Ukrainians.

*Irena's five children in Elblag, Poland*



It was so simple yet so profound. Love was everywhere: in the way they respected us, provided food and other aid, cared for my children and provided not only necessities but hope as well. And they even took my children to a camp that was like the youth camps we were used to in Ukraine but held in Poland by American Christians who used to do this in Ukraine. My children loved it! God has been becoming real to me since we found this church. And my children and I try not to miss any of the church meetings, activities for the children, or any other events held by the church. It has become our home away from home.

And then, ***the most amazing thing happened!*** My husband was still in the military fighting in one of the most dangerous places. Every Sunday, for months, the whole church prayed for his safety and that we could be reunited. And our prayers were answered! He could come to us. We could all be together again. What joy we felt the day he arrived at the train station in Poland on our oldest daughter's 16th birthday!

We don't know yet what the future holds for us. All of us are wondering what we should do. But we know we have found something real at this church, something we don't ever want to be without. In fact, I am just one of the mothers here who told their husbands, "When your time in the army is over you are coming here because we are going to stay here with this church." This is what we think we should do.

*The previous account is translated from an interview with Irena.*

When the war broke out in 2022 more than 8,000,000 Ukrainians fled into other parts of Europe. More than 4,000,000 are still displaced. Most European countries welcomed Ukrainian refugees with open arms and support. Since the war has dragged on, these countries, even Poland, which took in the most refugees, have significantly reduced the amount and kind of aid they provide. Poland has even stopped providing food. This has provided a challenge but also a great opportunity to our humanitarian aid distribution and Kingdom expansion efforts among Ukrainian refugees in Europe.

One of the places where we have an outreach effort underway is in Elblag, Poland, which is a city of about 120,000 residents where there are over 7,000 Ukrainian refugees. Bogdan and Olga, who are alumni of Ukrainian Bible Institute (UBI), lead the aid distribution and outreach efforts there. And they planted a church there in 2023 whose attendance overflows its meeting place.

Irena, who has five teenagers, escaped Ukraine and went to Elblag. While there, she attended a seminar at the church and met Bogdan and Olga. Irena and her children are six of the hundreds of Ukrainian refugees that Sunset's Ukrainian relief effort is helping in Europe.

*Richard Baggett*



*Irena with her husband*



*The new congregation of Ukrainians worshipping in Elblag, Poland*

# AIM

ADVENTURES IN MISSIONS

# Class of 2024



*Matthew Cash*  
Mexico City, Mexico



*Trisha Gardner Cox*  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



*Tabitha Hyland*  
Arlington, Texas



*Jaelee Kerr*  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



*J Kinnaird*  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



*Caleb Odle*  
Arlington, Texas



*Abby Pauley*  
Tacoma, Washington



*Grayson Riggles*  
Apaxco, Mexico



*Kinley Scott*  
Apaxco, Mexico



*Emily Serrano*  
Wasilla, Alaska



*Isabella Snyder*  
Albuquerque, New Mexico



*Libby Tharp Turner*  
Arlington, Texas

*Dace Whaite*  
(died while serving in Crosbyton, Texas)  
A wonderful servant of the Lord whose  
life forever demonstrates to us the  
statement, "Woe to me if I do not preach  
the gospel!"

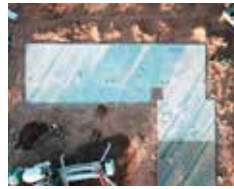


These young men and women began AIM in August 2021, completed eight months of training in Lubbock, completed their field time, and graduated from AIM on March 9, 2024. The class elected Matt Glawe, one of their instructors, to give them a charge at their graduation ceremony. He reminded them that their worth comes from simply being a child of God and to use their experience in AIM to continually remind them of his presence.

At the end of the ceremony, Cory Burns, the AIM director, took a special moment to recognize Dace Whaite, who died from an ongoing medical condition while serving in Crosbyton, Texas. His field coordinator, Matt James (AIM '00), presented Dace's family with his AIM diploma.

The next AIM class already has 27 students who have applied or been accepted. They will be the first AIM class to utilize the new AIM housing that we are praying will be ready in time for classes to begin in August.





**A**t the end of 2022, AIM faced a significant increase in housing costs for its students. After consulting with many different parties and after much prayer, SIBI decided to build permanent housing for the AIMers. God has been continually blessing AIM in this process with many amazing partners who have stepped in to make the idea of permanent housing a reality.



A location has been chosen one mile from the Sunset Church of Christ building, where the AIMers attend class. The initial funds were secured to purchase the land and begin the bidding process. The initial budget setup for the project was \$4.5 million. The existing housing situation put the administration in a place to step out in faith and appeal to the alumni and donors to help meet this immediate need. Some very generous donors helped begin the fundraising process by supplying a matching challenge of \$500,000 that was met within two months at the end of 2022. Since that time, other donors have stepped up to make significant gifts to the AIM housing project.



One of the most encouraging parts of the fundraising has been the overwhelming response from AIM Alumni and parents of present and past AIMers. Well over half of the donors for the AIM permanent housing have been individuals directly connected to AIM over the past 51 years.



Only God could have worked so mightily to move in the hearts of donors in such a way for us to completely fund the purchase of the property and the building costs. The remaining need to fully fund everything left for the project is now under \$350,000. God has blessed AIM to be able to make payments without incurring any debt. Praise God for his generosity and the generosity of so many who want to see more workers trained for the harvest. We look forward to seeing who God uses to help raise the remaining funds for this project.



YES, I/we will help. Enclosed is my one-time gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**You may also give online by clicking the “Donate” button at [www.sunset.bible](http://www.sunset.bible)**

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Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Type: Visa / Mastercard / Discover \_\_\_\_ CVV/CID: \_\_\_\_\_



# MEMORIAL & HONOR GIFTS

November 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

## In Honor of

**Adair, Truitt & Kay**  
**Alburtis, Rocky & Patti**  
**Bridges, David & Judy**  
**Dodd, Andrew, Mallory & family**  
**Drum, Kenny & Pam**  
**Garnett, Brian & Betty**  
**Huntley, Terry & Janet**  
**Jacques, Aaron & Rebekah & family**  
**Ledgerwood, Ron**  
**Montgomery, Roy**  
**Tindall, Don & Sue**  
**Vonada, George & Bobbie**

## Given by

Hoycille Valentine  
Bob & Jan Crockett  
Terry & Janet Huntley  
Gary Dodd  
Carolyn Rush & Family  
Alice Dennis  
Hoycille Valentine  
David & Judy Bridges  
Gary Dodd  
Bryan & Carolyn Teagle  
Joe & Jane Brock  
Gary & Brenda Bodine  
Markus & Valerie  
Thomerson

## In Memory of

**Agnew, Wanda**  
**Anderson, Carroll & Roselee**  
**Anderson, Gerald**  
**Anderson, Louise**  
**Anderson, Rubye**  
**Arnwine, Tommy**  
**Bills, Leslie**  
**Burrows, Fred**  
**Cantrell, Jerry**  
**Carley, Cleeta**  
**Casey, Naomi**  
**Cash, Gene & Marilee**  
**Cason, Julia**  
**Charlton, Maurice**  
**Coke, Mark & Catherine**  
**Cook, Bonnie**

## Given by

Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
The Mac Farrar Family  
Darla Fleece  
Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Rebecca Purser  
Mike & Dwayna Brown  
The Mac Farrar Family  
JC & Martha Fassino  
Bruce & Barbara Terry  
Truitt & Kay Adair  
The Mac Farrar Family  
Clarice Henderson  
Margaret Kearney  
Kay Koontz  
Carolyn Cason  
Vicki Zant  
Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper

## In Memory of

**Cook, Charles**  
**Copland, Cecil**  
**Cosper, Tom**  
**Cunningham, Joe**  
**Czeczotka, Murray**  
**Davis, Charlie**  
**Davis, Glen**  
**DeMoss, Ed**  
**Dennington, Kathy**  
**Dennis, Tucker**  
**Dominguez, Fred**  
**Edwards, Gayle**  
**Ellison, Victor**  
**Falbo, Nell**  
**Forehand, Bob**  
**Garrison, Emily**  
**Gilliam, Doyle**

## Given by

Bob & Jan Crockett  
Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Brenda Cosper  
Dot Cunningham  
Truitt & Kay Adair  
Steve & Linda McGaugh  
Truitt & Kay Adair  
Truitt & Kay Adair  
Roger Dennington  
Steve & Linda McGaugh  
Nyla Dominguez  
Donna Wallis  
Diane Schwartzter  
Al & Iris Sneed  
Bill & Shirley DeAtley  
Bob & Jan Crockett  
Carolyn Bell  
Chuck & Jamie Horton  
Cory & Toni Burns  
Dale & Laura White  
David & Becky Ribble  
Gwen Turner  
Hoycille Valentine  
Jeannie Jones  
Margaret Kearney  
Mary Prosser  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Ray, Janet & Luke Falbo  
Ron & Bev Bontrager  
Russell & Sue Beene  
Steve & Joy Plank  
The Mac Farrar Family  
Thomas & Gwen Wright  
Mike & Sharon Williams  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Diane Schwartzter

## In Memory of

**Gilliam, Doyle & Louise**  
**Goodyear, Gwen**  
**Greer, Kerri**  
**Grensberg, Bessie**  
**Hames, Pat**  
**Harper, Dee Ann**  
**Harris, Truman**  
**Hughes, Leah**  
**Hurst, Cecelia**  
**Isbell, Jessica**  
**Johnson, Charlie**  
**Johnston, Melburn**  
**Jones, Barbara**  
**Keesee, Dayton**  
**Kellogg, Lou Ann**  
**Koontz, Don**  
**Laird, Bill**  
**Langerock, Gordon**  
**Ledgerwood, Alpha**  
**LeeFleur-Kilmer, Norma**  
**Lincoln, Abe**  
**Low, Dr. Walter Wallace**  
**Lucas, Rocky**  
**Luera, Mary**

## Given by

Stephen & Judy Jones  
Dan Goodyear  
Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Butch & Linda Merritt  
Earl & Donita Behrends  
Gary Jackson  
Libbie Smith, Donna Edwards, Sandra Edwards,  
Lewis Edwards, Ben Edwards  
Donna Wallis  
Bob & Jan Crockett  
Carolyn Bell  
Gwen Turner  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Truitt & Kay Adair  
John & Pat Harper  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Karen Cook  
The Mac Farrar Family  
Carolyn Rush & Family  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Gary & Brenda Bodine  
Steve & Linda McGaugh  
Diane Schwartzter  
Kirby Kellogg  
Kay Koontz  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Mike Miller  
Lou Anne Langerock  
Bryan & Carolyn Teagle  
Steve & Linda McGaugh  
Diane Schwartzter  
Dot Cunningham  
The Mac Farrar Family  
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Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper

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We would like to give a gift to the Sunset International Bible Institute of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of (*Occasion*) \_\_\_\_\_

Print a Brick (\$100 minimum) or Missionary Stone (\$500 minimum) with this gift.

**This gift is from** (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

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**Send acknowledgements to** (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: **Sunset International Bible Institute • 3723 34th Street • Lubbock, TX 79410**

Gifts in honor  
of or in memory  
of provide an  
excellent way to  
follow the biblical  
principle of  
“honor to whom  
honor is due”  
while supporting  
fruitful and worthy  
ministries.

**In Memory of**  
Mabry, Doyle

Don & Phyllis Williams  
LaMoine Harrison  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Ron & Bev Bontrager  
Ruth McGaugh  
Mike & Dwayna Brown  
Trudy Moore  
Carolyn Bell  
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Brian & Joyce Allamon  
Carolyn Rush & Family  
Jeannie Jones  
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Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Carolyn Bell  
Don & Phyllis Williams  
Clifford Morris  
Diane Schwartz  
Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Carolyn Bell  
Charles & Joy Lowe  
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LaMoine Harrison  
Lawanna Smith  
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LaMoine Harrison  
Carolyn Bell  
Hoycille Valentine  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
W.R. & Mary Collier  
Mac Farrar

**Given by**

**In Memory of**  
Reimer, Paul

**Rieder, Andrew**  
**Robinson, June**  
**Robles, Juanita**  
Michael & Melissa Chamales & Beckie Holt  
**Rogers, Richard**  
**Rush, Guy**  
**Searsy, Don**  
**Shady, Jim**  
**Shuttlesworth, Joe**  
**Smith, Cleilda J**  
**Smith, Gertrude**  
**Sparks, John Richard**  
**Sprowls, Susan**  
**Stamatis, Jim**  
**Stewart, Ted**  
**Stone, Margaret**  
**Stovall, Sylvia**  
**Sturdivant, Butch**  
**Swinford, David**  
**Swinford, David & Joyce**  
**Tarter, James**  
**Thetford, Cary**  
**Thomason, Elvoy**

**Given by**

Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Robert & Cynthia Rieder  
Mike & Dwayna Brown  
Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Melissa Chamales & Beckie Holt  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Diane Schwartz  
The Guy Rush Family  
Carolyn Bell  
Gwen Turner  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Margaret Shady  
Hoycille Valentine  
Mary Prosser  
Brett & T'auna Ramsey &  
Karen Cook  
Joan Bowling  
Brett & T'auna Ramsey  
Karen Zant Cook  
Carolyn Rush  
LaMoine Harrison  
Mary Prosser  
Mike & Dwayna Brown  
Diane Schwartz  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Lawanna Smith  
Mike & Dwayna Brown  
Carolyn Sturdivant  
Diane Schwartz  
Mike & Dwayna Brown  
Carolyn Bell  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Scott & Bennie Raney  
Carolyn Rush & Family  
Carolyn Rush  
Jan Fariss  
Truitt & Kay Adair

**In Memory of**  
Turner, David

**Ulibarri, Sofia**  
**Valentine, Kay**  
**Vonada, George & Bobbie**  
**Warner, Jonelle**  
**Warpole, Ron**  
**Weese, Dean**  
**West, Aldean**  
**West, Drake**  
**Whaite, Dace**  
**Whitely, Mike**  
**Whitley, Al**  
**Wilburn, Wanda**  
**Williams, Lloyd**  
**Williams, Tex**  
**Wilson, Nancy**  
**Yasko, William**  
**Yocham, Virgil**  
**Zant, Cates & Juanita**  
**Zant, H.N. & Zona**

**Given by**

Truitt & Kay Adair  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
LaMoine Harrison  
Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Their children: Danny,  
Jule, Valerie, & Georgette  
Barbara Buckel  
Carole Bradford  
Carolyn Bell  
Charles & Cara Speer  
Doug & Beth Hays  
Hoycille Valentine  
Jeri Block & Bobby Schottenstein  
Joe & Jessie Langston  
John & Cheryl Zeiger  
Larry & Cindy Hilsheimer  
Mason Warner & Co. P.C.  
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Mike & Mary Wischkaemper  
Truitt & Kay Adair  
The Mac Farrar Family  
Steve & Linda McGaugh  
Darrel & Jessica Solonka  
Kimberly Cargill  
Carolyn Bell  
The Mac Farrar Family  
Gerald & Linda Burrow  
Bernice Jacobs  
Diane Schwartz  
Mark Thompson  
The Mac Farrar Family  
Diane Schwartz  
Diane Schwartz  
Vicki Zant  
Vicki Zant

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SUNSET  
VISION  
WORKSHOPS  
VISION

JANUARY  
29-31  
2025

# DEPARTURES

**Fred Burrows ('70)**, 80, of Parkersburg, West Virginia, passed away in November 2023. No further information is available.

**Lionel Cortez**, 86, of Collierville, Tennessee, passed away on December 12, 2023. Lionel's commitment to the Lord guided his path, as he dedicated himself to sharing the teachings of the Gospel as a missionary, preacher, teacher, and translator of biblical commentary. Lionel taught at Sunset School of Preaching from 1965 to 1974.



**Glen Davis**, 79, of Glendale, Arizona, passed away on Saturday, November 25, 2023. Glen was a member of the Sunset Council and the SIBI Foundation Board of Directors. Glen was devoted to God and his family.



**Celice "CA" Andrew Feenstra ('67)**, 91, of Dickson, Tennessee, passed away on Saturday, February 25, 2023, at Alive Hospice in Nashville. He and Jeanette were very active in the work of the Church of Christ for numerous years in both Iowa and Tennessee. They started a Bible correspondence work and sent out and graded tens of thousands of courses spreading the good news of Christ. C.A. authored *Calvinism in the Light of God's Word*, which is used in Bible schools around the world.



**Jackie "Jack" Lee Gordon ('85)**, 72, of Slaton, Texas, passed away on February 17, 2024. Jack's life was a testament to his unwavering faith and dedication to spreading the message of Christ's love. Jack embarked on a spiritual journey that would touch the lives of many throughout his nearly 40-year career as a minister of the gospel.



**Loren Hollingsworth ('73)**, 87, of Palmer, Alaska, passed away in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on April 7, 2024. Loren served in Thailand for over fifty years. Loren taught at the Bangkok Bible School. In 1987 he started a preaching school in Phuket, all the while preaching for congregations in villages around the country. He loved his life while serving God in Thailand, Burma, Laos, Vietnam, Korea, Nepal and Alaska.



**Ella Kathryn King**, 80, of Lubbock, Texas, passed away on March 21, 2024. She loved to read, sing, and participate in martial arts. She was a dog lover and taught dog agility classes. Kathryn was an active student with SeniorAIM.



**Gordon Langerock ('70)**, 86, of Independence, Missouri, passed away on Sunday, December 17, 2023. Upon graduation from Sunset School of Preaching, Gordon entered full-time ministry, preaching in Iowa and Missouri for over 13 years.



**Sally Leonard**, 80, of Moran, Texas, passed away on October 29, 2023. Sally was the wife of **Raymond Leonard ('76)**. Together they worked as missionaries in South Africa for forty years. While in South Africa Sally was a Bible school teacher, coordinator, fellowship organizer, and transport driver. She was a shoulder to lean on and a source of strength for many. Upon returning to the United States, Raymond & Sally worshipped with the brethren at the Cisco Church of Christ in Cisco, Texas, where Ray served as an elder.



**Pauline R. "Becky" Maxwell**, of Uniondale, New York, passed away on February 7, 2024. Pauline was the wife of **Walter Maxwell ('70)**. Pauline was a devoted wife to her husband of 65 years. She remained steadfast to support the vision God had given them as workers in the Lord's vineyard.



**Jeremy Payne ('97)**, 50, of San Antonio, Texas, passed away on December 11, 2022. Jeremy served as a youth minister for several years in various congregations after graduation from SIBI.



**John Perkins**, 80, of Ransom Canyon, Texas, passed away on November 21, 2023. John served as an elder at College Hill Church of Christ in North Richland Hills, Texas, for many years. Upon retiring, John and Rosemary moved to Lubbock to work at SIBI. John organized the beginning distributions of Solar Players and coordinated deliveries until 2018.



**Robert Towell, Sr.**, 93, of Rockwall, Texas, passed away on March 12, 2024. Upon his retirement Bob joined Jan in her work with the World English Institute. Jan, Bob, and their grandson, **Jonathan Towell (AIM '00)**, are responsible for developing the WEI website. Bob and Jan were regularly present at the World Evangelism Forum and the SIBI Vision Workshop to represent WEI. They were also generously involved in the Solar Mission.



**David Turner ('79)**, 68, of Reno, Nevada, passed away on December 28, 2023.



**Ron Warpole ('72)**, of Allen, Texas, passed away. No further information is available.



**Carla Weaver**, 83, of Abilene, Texas, passed away on December 16, 2023. Carla was the wife of **Buddy Weaver ('76)**. She had a deep, abiding faith in God and did nothing to be seen by others. She knew God had her in his hands, and she was not afraid.

**Dan Yarbro**, 59, of Etta, Mississippi, passed away in November 2023. No further information is available at this time.



# Fifty Years of Love & Diapers

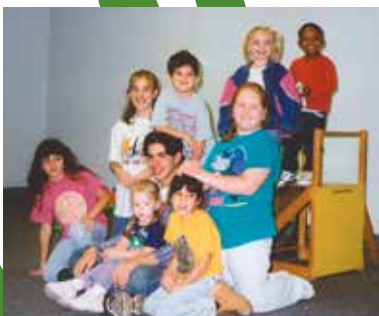
The SIBI nursery, which has been serving Sunset students and their children since 1972, stands as a testament to the vision of Bobbie Paden. Bobbie saw a need to provide child care so that husbands and wives could study God's Word and prepare for ministry together. Bobbie looked for the right person to take on this ministry, and in 1977 when Doyle and Louise Gilliam returned to Lubbock



from Africa, Bobbie entrusted Louise with this important job. The long-running success of the nursery speaks to the tireless efforts and unwavering dedication of the women who were willing to accept the challenge to provide this vital service.

Louise's role in the nursery began one summer day when Bobbie asked Louise this question:

*"Would you consider working here at the school in our child care program? It would be a job for nine months per year, eight to nine hours per day, no pay in the summer or for break weeks, no benefits, and a thirty-minute lunch break if you're lucky. You'll have to train dozens of helpers and deal with many children. There will be anxiety-ridden new mothers who do not think you know how to take care of their babies. You'll be burped on, you'll change thousands of diapers, and you'll soothe countless bumps and bruises. You will be responsible for washing and sterilizing toys and going to garage sales—because that is where those toys can be bought cheap."*



What Bobbie said and what Louise heard were two different things. Louise heard:

*"How would you like to enable countless young women to study God's Word alongside their husbands? They will be effective co-workers and servants, but only if they are taught God's Word. They can study if they know that their little ones are in capable hands. How would you like to have in your care the hearts and minds of babies to love as God directs?"*



In 1999, after 22 years of service, Louise handed the keys over to Debbie Board, the next director of the SIBI nursery. Louise spoke these words to Debbie:

*"I pray you will have many useful years of service with SIBI's most precious treasures. Many of us have prayed for the right person, and now our prayers have been answered. Debbie, you have many outstanding qualities, too many to name. When I think of you, the words **dependable**, **steadfast**, and **love** come to mind. Your concern for the nursery is evident; your love of children and their families is exemplified by your work for the Lord. What a great example of true Christian living you are."*

Debbie recently retired after dedicating 27 years (24 of these as the nursery director) to the children and families of SIBI. Louise's words of appreciation for Debbie's devotion could not have been more fitting. Unfortunately, with Debbie's retirement comes the end of an era. Although SIBI has many female students, there is no longer a need for a nursery. Instead, mothers can bring their newborn babies to class until they reach six months of age. After that time, the faculty of Just Kids Preschool, a ministry of the Sunset Church of Christ, will provide the same loving care that SIBI children have received for decades.

It's amazing how one idea or challenge put into action can have a significant impact on the lives of so many people. Thank you to the many loving arms who accepted this challenge.

Pearl Bible & Janet Brumfield



# NEW FACES AT SIBI

## STEFANIE BLACK

**S**tefanie Black is an '06 AIMER who served in East Kilbride, Scotland. She spent the next 14 years working as a professional nanny, specializing in the care of newborns, twins, and triplets! She recently returned from spending a year working with Ukrainian refugees and the Sopot Church of Christ in Sopot, Poland. In fall of 2023 she was approached by Jeff Smith about an opportunity to work with DiscipleTrips and is excited to now be working with this incredible ministry!



## KELLEN KETCHERSID

**K**ellen Ketchersid began working as the Director of Program Development for DiscipleTrips this past month. Prior to DiscipleTrips, Kellen served as the Director of Operations at a startup company. Kellen has been active in missions and ministry for all of his adult life and attends the 12th Street Church of Christ in Shallowater, Texas. Kellen met his wife, Kathryn (formerly Warder), while a student at Texas Tech. They have been married for 14 years and have three young children, Blake (10), Josie (8), and Hunter (5). Kellen is excited about this opportunity to serve at DiscipleTrips and SIBI and prays that our collective efforts will have a great impact in God's Kingdom!



## MIKE WILSON

**M**ike Wilson is an alumnus of AIM (1989) and SIBI (1995). Mike and his wife, Katya, have been married for 28 years and have two beautiful daughters, Katrina and Sonya. He has served as a minister for the Burnett County church in Webster, WI. The past 19 years he and his wife have been involved in childcare at the Children's Home of Lubbock. Mike joined SIBI in January to serve as the Dean of Online Studies.



## Short Courses in Practical Ministry

At SIBI we use short courses taught by experienced ministers to bless our students with practical ministry skills. In each course the students receive a practical tool that they can use to effectively bless and serve the church. This past school year was the first year for this new format. During the week following each term, students participated in these intensive seminar classes to help expose them to some of the practical aspects of ministry and to equip them with tools from those actively in ministry. The courses for the 2023-2024 school year have been:

**Discipleship with Monty Pettyjohn**  
**Evangelism 3 with Phil Sanders**

**Practical Ministry Skills with John Knox**  
**Using Small Groups Effectively for Ministry with Bill Tracy**

The courses scheduled for 2024-2025 are:

**October 7-11, 2024**

**Ministering Out of a Healthy Marriage with Trey & Lea Morgan, Bill Tracy, and Rodney Roberts**

*Students will receive principles for a healthy marriage and how to develop that in other couples. They will receive training and certification in the marriage enrichment tool Prepare and Enrich.*

**Using Podcasts to Expand the Kingdom with Wes McAdams.**  
*Wes will guide the students in the development and delivery of a podcast. By the end of the week the students will have recorded their first in a series of podcasts.*

**December 16-20, 2024**

**Advanced Apologetics with Dr. Kirt Martin**

**March 3-7, 2025**

**Leading with Emotional Intelligence with Bob Turner & Zane Perkins**

**March 24-28, 2025**

**Conflict Resolution in the Church with John Knox**

# SAD FAREWELLS

## JOHNNY EVANS

As we bid farewell to Johnny Evans, it's easy to reflect on the positive impact he has had on the SIBI alumni. For eight years he has faithfully served as the Residential Perpetual Connections Minister, encouraging graduates while they serve in their chosen ministries. His contagious smile and positive attitude have made him a beloved member of our team, and his presence will be missed. We are grateful for all that he has contributed to our organization.



## PAT FITCHETT

Pat Fitchett's dedication to serving the children and families at the SIBI nursery for eight years is unparalleled. She showed unwavering love and devotion to the children she cared for, and it was evident in the joy on their faces. We thank her for her many years of service and wish her all the best in her future endeavors.



## MARGE REEVES

After 17 years the Sunset Bookstore and External Studies said goodbye to Marge Reeves. She was such a valuable part of our ministry, serving as our bookstore manager and, for many, the "voice" they heard when they called the store. Marge was able to bring her unique skills and qualities to External Studies as she and husband Doug were Sunset graduates and longtime missionaries. Her interaction with our instructors and students to supply their classroom needs, as well as the many congregations and individuals who needed materials, was the hallmark of her service. Everyone in External Studies is so thankful for her and wishes her well in her retirement. May she now have time to enjoy her grandchildren and to travel with Doug in his ministry as the dean of Sunset's International Department.



## DEAN WHALEY

At the end of 2023 Sunset said goodbye to Dean Whaley. We want to thank him for his six years with the Advancement team and his continual support of the SIBI ministry. His networking in the Texas Panhandle with our donors and supporters was invaluable. Please pray for him in this time of transition.



Continued from page 6

in his writings.<sup>15</sup> Some have suggested that because numerous hymns were written to Zeus, whom some understood to be “the patron deity of Colossae,”<sup>16</sup> the Colossians would have been familiar with these hymns and related well to the hymn to Christ.<sup>17</sup> As far as structure is concerned, Patzia notes that some Greek reconstructions of the text break it into three strophes.<sup>18</sup> From a simple reading of the text itself, the meaning of the hymn seems clear: Christ is superior and has preeminence over all things.

## The Roman Triumphal Procession

Another unique literary feature found in Colossians is Paul’s language in chapter two verse fifteen where he utilizes the concept of triumphal procession related to a Roman military victory. Clinton Arnold describes this victory parade by stating the following:

*When a general defeated the opposing forces and won the battle, a “triumphal procession” would occur to celebrate the victory. The successful general would lead the procession, followed by his army singing hymns of victory and jubilantly reveling in their conquest. Also in the parade would be the defeated king along with all his surviving warriors. The disheartened and subdued enemies became a public spectacle for ridicule, with their subjugation paraded for all to see.*<sup>19</sup>

The triumphal procession provides a powerful illustration of what Christ did at the cross. The cross was indeed the most decisive victory in history and a very public display of Christ’s triumph. Not only was sin defeated at Calvary, but the “powers of darkness”<sup>20</sup> were as well. Hebrews 2:14 says that Christ “render[ed] powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” First John 3:8 states that Jesus’ very purpose for appearing was “to destroy the works of the devil.” Paul’s use of this illustration would have painted a vivid picture of the victorious Christ to the Christians who read this letter.

15 Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 28.

16 McConnell, “Colossians: Background and contexts,” 401.

17 Ibid.

18 Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 27.

19 Clinton E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities & Powers in Paul’s Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), chap. 7, loc. 1205 of 3011, Kindle.

20 Ibid.

## Difficult Passages

### Elemental Spirits of the World — 2:8, 20

One of the most challenging phrases to interpret from the Colossian epistle is found twice in Colossians chapter two—the phrase *stoicheia tou kosmou*.<sup>21</sup> It appears only here and in Galatians four. The wide-ranging definition of *stoicheia* makes it difficult to discern exactly what Paul means in using it. Morton describes this term as “an element of language, an element of the physical world such as fire or water, a mathematical principle, a fundamental principle, a celestial body such as a star, or a spirit associated with a celestial body.”<sup>22</sup>

Translators are not unified in their interpretation of this phrase. For example, the King James translators chose “rudiments of the world” in Colossians 2:8 and 20, as did the translators of the American Standard Version. The translators of the New American Standard Bible changed the word “rudiments” to “elementary principles.” The English Standard Version, instead of “elementary principles” or “rudiments,” has translated it “elemental spirits of the world.” The Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible both use the phrase “elemental spirits of the universe” in their translations.<sup>23</sup> This demonstrates clearly that translators are simply unsure of exactly what this phrase indicates. It is, however, evident that more recent translators interpret this, at least in part, as a reference to spirit beings of some sort.<sup>24</sup> Whatever this phrase means, it is evident that it was taking these Christians captive and drawing them away from Christ; therefore, Paul had to address it.

### Circumcision and Baptism — 2:11–12

Colossians 2:11–12 clearly identifies that Jewish syncretism was part of the Colossian heresy in that Paul discusses circumcision. Throughout the New Testament, this was a recurring theme among the churches.<sup>25</sup> The difficult issue that arises from this passage is the comparison between circumcision and baptism. Some scholars allege that baptism is the “circumcision made without hands” spoken of in Colossians 2:11. For example, Patzia’s view is clear in his commentary: “To experience the circumcision of Christ is nothing other than being buried and raised with him in baptism through faith.”<sup>26</sup> This

view, however, appears to be oversimplified and inaccurate.

Martin C. Salter has written a detailed article on this subject and believes that while “circumcision made without hands” takes place at baptism, it is not baptism itself.<sup>27</sup> In a discussion of several possible interpretations of Colossians 2:11–12 he further explains his conclusion:

*The first option [baptism=circumcision] seems difficult since the ‘circumcision’ is a stripping off whereas the baptism is a burial and resurrection.... Circumcision within the sphere of baptism is the most favourable option, particularly given the close link between Col. 2:11–12 and Rom. 6:3–6.... While there is a connection, therefore, between spiritual circumcision and baptism, they do not signify precisely the same realities.*<sup>28</sup>

Wharton agrees with Salter and notes that “Christian circumcision is not baptism, it is putting off sin. However, it is God who does the work of cutting off sin when one by faith in Christ is baptized. Baptism is when God circumcises. It is in baptism that one expresses his faith in Christ to cut off sin.”<sup>29</sup> These observations fit best with the text of Colossians two. When someone is buried in baptism, he or she has expressed faith in God to go to work at cutting away his or her sin, which is exactly what God does at the moment of baptism.

## The Message of Colossians for the Church in the 21st Century

Colossians is perhaps one of the most relevant epistles for the church today. With all of the confusion in the ever-increasing pagan influence on the world, the first half of Colossians should be the go-to book to teach the Christian how to navigate through it. As immorality runs rampant, Christians cannot help but be influenced. Colossians teaches believers how to behave and stay faithful in such an environment. Paul teaches us to remain in the truth, live sexually pure lives, live in peace with everyone around us, and put our trust in God—the one true and living God.<sup>30</sup> The church as a whole can benefit greatly from this epistle when it

27 Martin C. Salter, “Does Baptism Replace Circumcision?: An Examination of the Relationship between Circumcision and Baptism in Colossians 2:11–12,” *Themelios* 35, no. 1 (April 2010), 15–29.

28 Salter, “Does Baptism Replace Circumcision?,” 27.

29 Wharton, *Christ and the Church*, 67.

30 Paden, *Colossians*, 7.

21 Bruce Morton, *Renewed: Clothed with the Wealth of Jesus in a Tattered Land* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2014), 198.

22 Ibid., 197.

23 Ibid., 198.

24 Ibid., 197.

25 See Acts 15, Romans 4, and Galatians.

26 Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, 55.

comes to some specific issues that it faces today, especially regarding faithfulness to the authority of Christ and His Word. For the sake of brevity, I will address just two.

## Continue in the Faith

One of the key passages in Colossians that serves to apply much of its teaching is a phrase from Colossians 1:23: “if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel....” Prior to this statement, Paul has clearly established the supremacy of Christ over every created thing. After this statement, he urges the brethren to avoid being held captive by whoever or whatever was confusing the purity of their faith. “The faith” in this context is not the action of believing and trusting Christ and His Gospel; it is the object of the Colossians’ belief in that Gospel message as taught by Epaphras—referenced in Colossians 1:5–7.<sup>31</sup>

The lesson for the church of the twenty-first century is to simply hold fast and remain faithful to the pure and simple teachings of the New Testament. The world is full of false religions that are in blatant contrast with Christianity, and these must be avoided. But more deceiving to the church are denominational teachings that are similar enough to the real thing to mislead the casual observer. This is where the teaching of Colossians is so applicable. For Christians to avoid being taken “captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men” (Col. 2:8, NASB), they must “continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast” (Col. 1:23, ASV). That is accomplished by living in the Word of God and “seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1, NASB).

## Teaching in Song

Colossians addresses singing in the New Testament church in a unique way compared to other passages that deal with it. In Colossians 3:16 Paul writes, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” This passage stands apart from other passages that mention singing because it speaks of teaching with song. Discussions of church music today typically revolve around emotions and mechanics

rather than message.<sup>32</sup> Two main subjects tend to dominate these discussions—old songs versus new songs, and mechanical instruments in the assembly.

Through the divisive fog of church music discussions, Colossians serves to bring the importance of a song’s message to the forefront and charges the entire congregation to preach it.<sup>33</sup> Morton states that “The apostle is not allocating the task of teaching and preaching in song to a select group in the assembly—a choir or a praise team. Instead, he calls on the congregation as a whole to be involved in the work.”<sup>34</sup> Barry Joslin believes that this text has serious implications on the role of singing in Christian worship and that biblical worship should focus on content instead of style.<sup>35</sup> He has thoroughly explored the implications of teaching as it relates to Colossians 3:16 and concludes that God intended musical worship as a vital means of teaching one another.<sup>36</sup> I believe that he is correct in this observation.

Colossians 3:16 also speaks to the age-old problem of “worshiptainment,”<sup>37</sup> which is prevalent in many churches across the country today. Morton explores some of the background of Asian cult worship that would have been prevalent in the Lycus Valley during the existence of the congregations addressed in the epistle. Abundant evidence has been found indicating that worship of Dionysus consisted of a large traveling guild of performers who went from town to town and performed religious worship.<sup>38</sup> He notes that their ability to entertain was so great that the phrase “lights, action, ritual!”<sup>39</sup> best describes the “spirit” of this worship/entertainment performance.

Unfortunately, modern “Christian” worship bears more similarities to this historical picture of cult worship in the first century than to Colossians 3:16. Perhaps this is why Paul emphasized the teaching of the Gospel through worship in song. Joslin made this conclusion based on his study of the text and wisely stated, “The Colossian and Ephesian churches are to instruct one another by means of all manner of musical praise. This is to characterize their worship. It should also

characterize ours.”<sup>40</sup> Colossians 3:16 should challenge the church today to rethink singing and place the primary focus on teaching one another and offering “a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name” (Heb. 13:15, NASB).

The verse that follows Colossians 3:16 should not be overlooked in this discussion: “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father” (Col. 3:17, NASB). The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write a clear statement about teaching in song. Verse 17 makes it clear that the church has no authority to add to that statement or diminish from it. This applies to the message of the song and the means of delivering it.

## Conclusion

Paul’s epistle to the Colossians is as relevant today as it was the day it was penned and delivered. The pagan-influenced environment surrounding the churches in the Lycus Valley was not much different than what surrounds churches today. Christians need the message of the preeminence of Christ now more than ever. They must internalize the fact that Jesus is the supreme ruler of the universe; spending time in Colossians is the best way to achieve that. Finally, the call to continue in the faith of the Gospel must resound from pulpits everywhere. My prayer is that the Lord’s people will forever strive to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10).

Matt Glawe, SIBI Faculty

*This paper is representative of the biblical analysis taught to SIBI students in Hermeneutics.*

<sup>40</sup> Joslin, “Raising the Worship Standard,” 56.

<sup>32</sup> Morton, *Renewed*, 101.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Barry Clyde Joslin, “Raising the Worship Standard: The Translation and Meaning of Colossians 3:16 and Implications for Our Corporate Worship,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 17, no. 3 (2013), 50–59.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>37</sup> Morton, *Renewed*, 101.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>31</sup> Wharton, *Christ and the Church*, 53; Michael R. Weed, *The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon* (Austin, TX: R. B. Sweet Co. Inc., 1971), 57.





**WORLD  
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# WBS, SIBI Partner to Train More Preachers

## SUNSET International Bible Institute

In 1971 as the radiant California sun glimmered on the ocean waves, inside an office stuck in the '60s with its wooden desk and retro flair, an idea was about to spark a revolution. Here sat a young missionary, his eyes alight with ambition, across from an elder seasoned in the trenches of mission work. The room, a sanctuary during decades of church labor, brimmed with the energy of impending change. The elder, with a lifetime of stories etched into the lines on his face, leaned forward, igniting the air with four simple words: "I have an idea."

This idea, a brainchild of Jimmy Lovell, found its roots in Truitt Adair, who would later become the president and then chancellor of Sunset International Bible Institute.

Before Lovell had even coined the term "World Bible School" (which happened in 1973), he envisioned Nigerian newspaper ads as seeds of this grand vision to use a correspondence course to teach the Gospel. With the first ad, thousands of responses flooded in from Nigeria, heralding the birth of what we know today as the World Bible School.

These four words, "I have an idea," have since woven together two ministries, SIBI and WBS, into a tapestry of shared mission and purpose. Their collaboration has been a synergy that has propelled the Gospel into countless lives. The legacy of those initial Nigerian newspaper ads has blossomed, with many of WBS's students continuing their journey at Sunset schools, some of which are now helmed by those very converts from the 1970s.

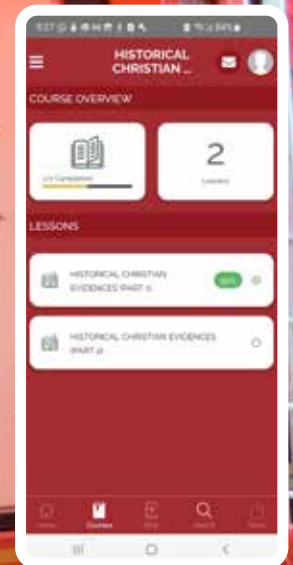
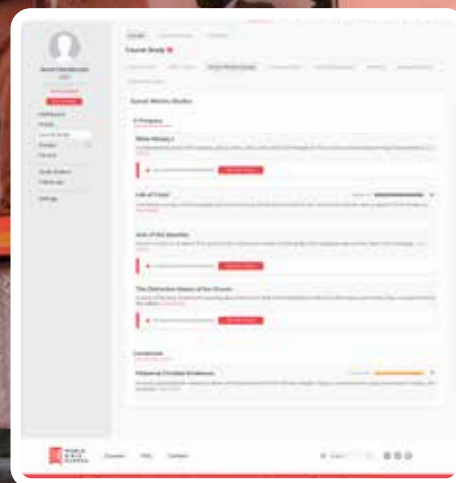
Innovation hasn't paused; WBS's new platforms and Sunset's distribution of over 17,000 Solar Players packed with WBS courses illustrate their evolving strategy to

spread the Word. Following this tradition of innovation, another pivotal "I have an idea" moment two years ago led to the launch of the *10,000 Voices* initiative, a groundbreaking project that recently materialized on the WBS Online Lessons platform to develop more preachers. Five Sunset courses are now available for any WBS student who has completed the Master Series. The purpose is to prepare them for further ministry in their local congregation and possibly help them become a candidate to attend a Sunset school in their region.

From a single idea more than 50 years ago, 40 million people have been touched. With a forward gaze and a commitment to unity, the hope is to embrace hundreds of millions more in the next 50 years. The journey from a quiet office overlooking the sea to a global movement has been a testament to the power of collaboration and faith where God receives the glory for His providential work.

*Tim Yaeger, World Bible School*

*Below are screenshots of SIBI Courses on the various platforms of World Bible School. The background picture is Speedy Hart preaching on the WBS Gospel Chariot in Africa*



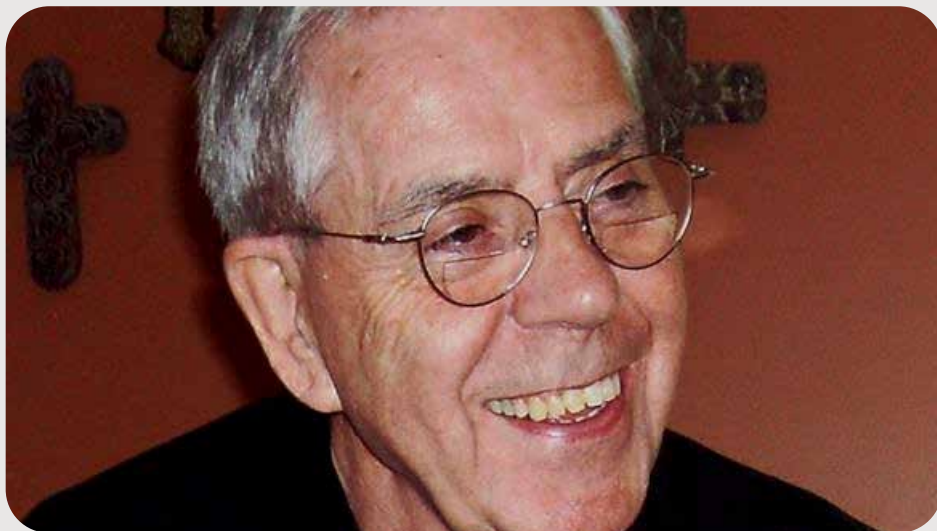
"The world has always needed a king. For the mass of us there is the absolute conviction that we aren't able to direct our own steps. Our lives are littered with broken vows, half-finished schemes, unwise ventures and vast periods of bewilderment. We're just as certain that those who exercise power in the world aren't able to direct our steps. What is true of individuals is true of world leaders and nations: There is none righteous, no not one! And our race longs, as we've always longed, for someone to take the reins of our world and our lives and create unity, purpose, honor and joy out of the shambles we've made of things."

"Along with thousands of others I have the settled conviction that God is now, has been and always will be King! Along with thousands of others I have the settled conviction that His Kingship will one day manifest itself fully and all the wrongs will be righted, justice will be done and all the questions due an answer will receive one. In the meantime, the Church - which is 'the sign of the kingdom' of God - is to hold forth hope for all the people in the person of Jesus Christ, the blessed Redeemer who is coming one day to make fully visible what has always been true: God reigns!"

- Jim McGuiggan

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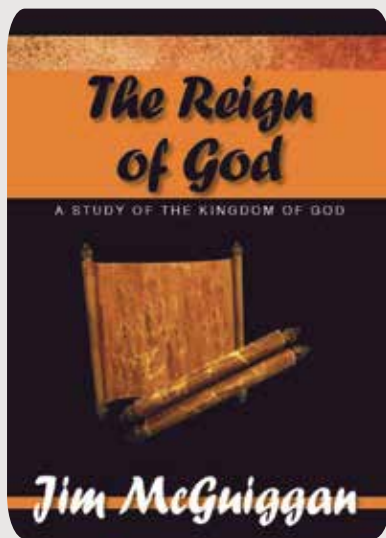


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