

Class of 1961 Historian's Address

By Joann Mendicino

The Spirit of God had prophesied that, "They will come from everywhere to be taught the Word of God"—October 25, 1958 twenty-eight students from different sections of the country and different walks of life enrolled for the initial year of the Free Gospel Bible Institute.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 –To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A TIME TO BE BORN:

When the classroom doors opened on November 1, 1958, many new-born experiences entered the lives of the students, faculty, and workers. Brother Waring became the active, God-appointed leader of the Bible Institute –a newborn experience in his life. For some of the students this was their first time to live away from their homes. We saw and experienced; new-born emotions, joys, sorrows, loves, knowledge and the ever-waiting "unexpected." This was the birth of the school; a people, a God-given labor, a hope, a cross, a lighthouse, a refuge, and a new-born glory.

There were many events that were born during this first year. We had the first Jubilee Service at Thanksgiving time; there were special services on New Year's Day; we had a Christmas Party at the school that year; and we began the monthly birthday parties. On January 10, 1959, the first radio broadcast of "Bible School Echoes" was heard over radio station WAVL, Apollo, Pennsylvania.

Our meals were eaten in the kitchen of the old dining hall when school began. The food was all sent in by people concerned about the work of God and that were willing to sacrifice to see the need met. All the students stepped out on faith –into a work of faith. Each student had left the world of comfort behind and was living now by the faith of God.

A TIME TO PRAY:

Sometimes we had water making mud; other times we had water flooding the basement floor—but when we wanted water in the wells and in the storage tank—water we did not have. So we met at Brother Waring's request and prayed one evening before lights out –early the next morning in the wells and storage tank we had water! This was truly a miracle of God!

A TIME TO WORK:

Brooms in hand, wrenches in hip pockets, building blocks, screwdrivers, thread and needle, irons, water bucket bridges, dusting cloths, shovels –and late to bed and early to rise.

How many times did the fellows spend the night in the cold on the roof keeping the water lines from freezing? How many hours did Sister Casley spend before the sewing machine? How many floors did the girls scrub?

Tests! Tests! Our labor in the classroom coupled with our labor around the school building meant we had to rise many times before the sun to study for tests. It was nothing to see the students studying at 5:00 o'clock in the morning.

A TIME TO FEAST:

The first banquet at the Free Gospel Bible Institute adopted its theme, "A Spring Garden". Fellowship in the Lord was joyful. All were blessed and enriched by the speakers.

A TIME TO GO FORTH INTO THE FIELDS:

Summertime was not to be vacation time. It was time to use what we had received. Home the class went, not for rest, but for service.

A TIME TO GATHER:

Not all that went out came back. The second year began with twenty students. Two of the Bible School family went to be with the Lord. Sister Waring, the Dean of Women, had passed away, and Brother Crouch had been killed during the summer.

Classes began the second year on October 1, 1959. Twelve new students were added to the school register.

A TIME TO BE TESTED:

Finances, emotions, courage, patience, grace, love, etc. –This was our Calvary Road experiences. Each and all of us were tried in the fire during the second year. Many were the times students sacrificed as lead by the Spirit to meet the economic and spiritual needs of the Bible School.

A TIME TO HARVEST:

The class began laboring in the vineyards for the Master through the "Harvest Programs" and the "Yearbook Rallies". Ministering in churches, the students endeavored in prayer, song, testimony, and preaching, to "lift Him up."

The last great event of the second year was the banquet, and shortly thereafter we returned to our summer labor.

A TIME TO BE REFRESHED:

Our last year began with a wonderful presence of God in all services and classes. We were refreshed in our souls, and the testing fires were cooled.

A TIME TO PUBLISH:

“Type this!” –“Cut that section out!” –“Go wake up the editor!” –“How do you spell ‘Infaticly’?” “Where are those pictures?” –“Where is the class history?” – And the “Vindicta” went to press!

A TIME TO GRADUATE:

Commencement speakers were: Rev. David Beam, Rev. Samuel Caughy, and Rev. Arnold F. Waring. Fifteen students received their diplomas and embarked to “Attempt great things for God, and expect great things from God.”

A TIME TO REMEMBER:

“Thou’rt gone! The abyss of heaven
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,
Hath swallowed up thy form: yet in my heart
And shall not soon depart”

–William Cullen Bryant