

## Report of Berkshire Christian College

Dear delegates and friends of the Eastern Regional Association,

It is my privilege to present to you the report of Berkshire Christian College. For the past 120 years Berkshire has been preparing and providing servant leaders for local church ministry in the churches of the Eastern Region and beyond. From its early days during the winter of 1896-97 when twelve students were enrolled in regular classes and more than forty others were studying by correspondence in what was known as the Boston Bible School and Ransom Bible Institute, our mission of “preparing people for gospel work” has been faithfully carried out. To this day Berkshire Christian College is an integral part of our denomination’s leadership needs.

While many remember with tremendous sadness the closing of the Lenox campus in 1987, the past thirty years have been fruitful in other ways, to the glory of God. A partnership established with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA has been especially fruitful. No fewer than a dozen men attending Gordon-Conwell are currently serving in Eastern Region churches. For the past twenty years Dr. Gordon Isaac has served as the Berkshire Professor of Advent Christian Studies. He has played a vital role with Advent Christian students. There are currently three AC students studying at the South Hamilton campus, and several others attend either the Charlotte or Jacksonville campuses.

Distance education, a significant part of our early history, is once again a central component of our educational platform. Through *eBerkshire*, our online learning program, students can study in the convenience of their local setting. Over the past thirty years, close to two hundred students have received training from qualified instructors through our college-caliber courses. Two programs of study are currently offered – Certificates in Leadership Development and in Pastoral Studies – and eight students are currently pursuing these certificates. (Students do not need to enroll in a certificate program to take *eBerkshire* courses.) Courses include *Biblical Concepts in Leadership*, *Great Doctrines*, *The Sweep of God’s Story (Old and New Testament Introduction)*, and *Urban Social Issues*. New courses are being developed and new adjunct faculty members are in process of approval. For a limited time we are offering one fully-scholarshipped *eBerkshire* course to people serving in a local Advent Christian Church as a pastor, assistant pastor, youth minister or music minister. More details on this offer will be shared during the meeting.

In the changing educational atmosphere of today’s world, Berkshire Christian remains a viable option through its intentional partnerships and use of technology to help us fulfill our mission of training the next generation of gospel workers. The current pastoral leadership crisis in the Advent Christian denomination, created by an aging corps of pastors and loss of a campus-based ministry, has created both a challenge and an opportunity to see the next generation of leaders trained for gospel ministry. My vision is to unite Advent Christians in the pursuit of a collaborative educational effort that will address local church leadership needs for the next decade and well beyond. In addition, the pursuit of accreditation and the possibility of obtaining a seminary degree for those without an undergraduate degree are matters of ongoing dialogue for the Board of Trustees. This broad vision cannot be accomplished without the support of many individuals and churches in this region.

Over 120 years ago the ministry of Berkshire Christian was birthed by the Spirit of God, and twelve decades later the ministry is still being directed by the Spirit of the Living God. Every believer knows that time is growing short and history is coming to its appointed end. There is coming a Day when the faithfulness of individuals and institutions alike will be laid bare before a Supreme Judge who will determine by His Righteous decree any commendation deserved. We cannot rest on the faithfulness or the laurels of past generations. Our attitudes and actions alone will be the determining factor of our reward, with our efforts weighed against God's revealed will to us. It is time for us to move forward as a people.

The ministry of Berkshire Christian continues today under the capable leadership of its Board of Trustees, chaired by Mrs. Pam Gardner. She brings administrative expertise and passion for this ministry to this assignment along with her untiring commitment to the college's mission. Pam works with a dedicated corps of men and women, including Rev. Steve Spearing (Vice-Chairperson), Rev. Dr. Tracy Ainsworth (Secretary); Rev. Matt Larkin (Treasurer), Mrs. Julie Karnes Morse (Assistant Treasurer), Rev. John Guess, Rev. Dr. Bob Hughes, Rev. Dr. Kris Teshera, and Rev. Steve Lawson (ex officio). Two new members of the board come from this region. Mrs. Cathy Latimore of Torrington, CT and Rev. Mike Alix of Waterville, ME were voted onto the board last April and will meet for the first time in November.

By God's grace, Berkshire Christian is ready to follow the Lord's leading in the months and years to come. It is an honor to partner with the people of the Eastern Region in the work of gospel transformation. Berkshire Christian is currently the only Advent Christian institution primarily preparing individuals for service in this region's churches and we are extremely grateful for the faithful support of many individuals, churches and conferences of this region helping us fulfill the role God has given to us. We would not exist today and cannot continue in the coming days without your prayers and financial gifts. God bless you and thank you again for your partnership in the training of individuals for service in God's Kingdom work through the Advent Christian Church.

Soli Deo gloria!

Rev. Dr. Glenn M. Rice, President  
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