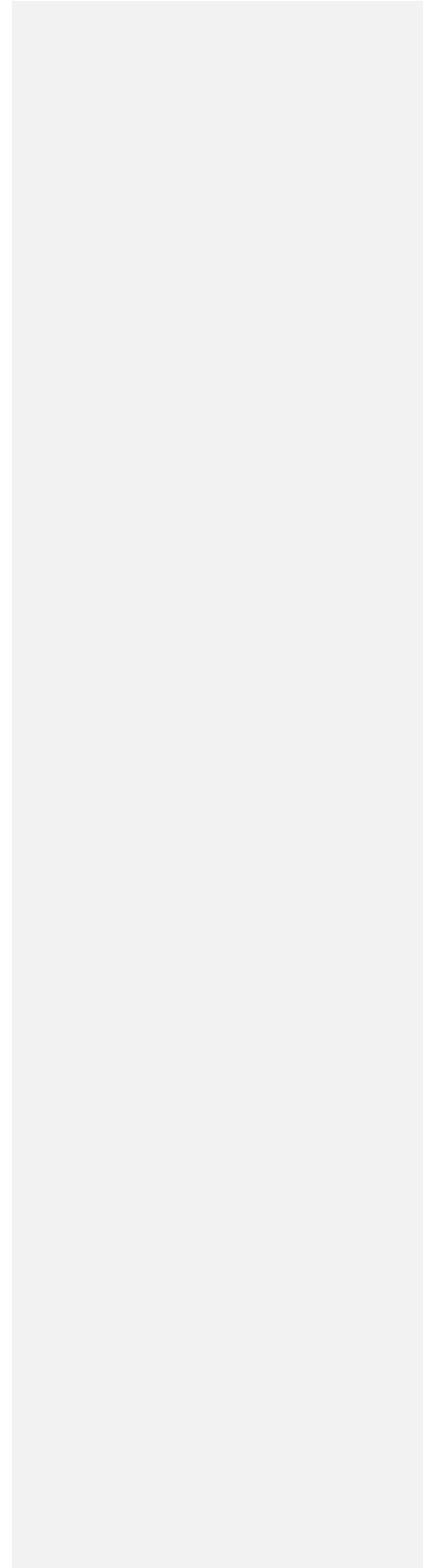


Cover:

~~From This Mountain~~ **Mountain of Trust**
The History of Ben Lippen School

By Summer Jeffcoat
Foreword by Bob Weeber



Inside Cover – book jacket flap:

“Mountain Memories”

A Foreword by Bob Weeber

God works in wonderful ways to accomplish His purposes. The history of Ben Lippen School reflects in many ways how God uniquely works to accomplish His work in the world. Little did Robert C. McQuilkin and those visionaries who joined him know in 1928 when they purchased that beautiful mountaintop in western North Carolina that the Lord’s plan included not only a Bible Conference Center but also a Christian boarding school that would eventually have a worldwide influence for Him.

Yet in September of 1940 after much prayer and planning and the support of parents and friends, Ben Lippen Boys School opened at the conference center facilities with 16 boys and, despite the name, one girl. The miracle had begun.

Central in the founders’ vision was a desire that the students come to understand and experience the reality of the “Lordship of Christ” in their daily living, and see it worked out in the areas of campus activities: academic, social spiritual, athletic, and dorm life. Over the years, graduates have shared how coming to know the reality of the Lordship of Christ was the turning point in their Christian lives.

Through it all in the years that followed – the school’s “shocking” enrollment of girls; the miraculous supply of buildings, salaries, and tuition; a devastating fire’s destroying the trademark building; a brief and exciting association with Billy Graham; and finally ~~a~~ **controversial** an opportunity to move to Columbia with its dramatic increase of enrollment, addition of elementary students, Asian students, and parents in close proximity – the Lordship of Christ has remained central.

“The Lord hath done great things for us, and we are filled with joy!” says Psalm 126:3.

We are aware that a presentation of history by photos, graphics, and script can convey in only a small way what the Lord has done and is doing for the lives of our **2,529** graduates who are scattered throughout the States and the world. As you view these pages, we trust you will be encouraged by what the Lord is doing for His own glory. We welcome your prayer help in asking the Lord to continue blessing and directing the school, its faculty, staff, supporters, and graduates who will go into all the world *from this mountain*.

Title page:

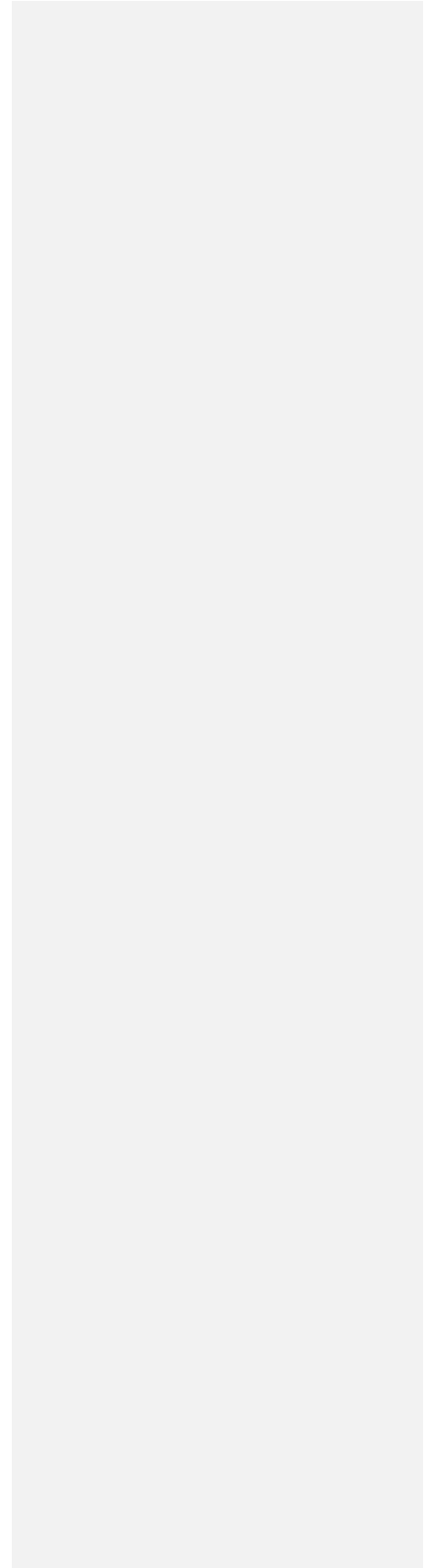
| ~~From This Mountain~~[Mountain of Trust](#)

The History of Ben Lippen School

By Summer Jeffcoat

Copyright info

Publishing info



Credits Spread:

CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The history of Ben Lippen begins long before those first seventeen students set foot on an Asheville mountain in 1940. Before the school, a Bible conference lived on the mountain each summer, and before that Bible conference, a small Bible school trained mill workers in Columbia. But even before that Bible school, God called a young man named Robert C. McQuilkin into a dynamic personal relationship with Him. That man's spiritual birthday in 1911 is the beginning of Ben Lippen story, and can be called Ben Lippen's spiritual birthday as well. So this historical account covers almost 100 years of time – 1911 to 2004, from the spiritual breakthrough of one man to the current thriving ministry in Columbia.

This book is for all alumni– from both Asheville and Columbia; we hope it will unite the two groups and bring a sense of understanding of God's "big picture" plan for Ben Lippen, a plan that includes in a special way both the historic boarding program and the relatively new day program. May you enjoy reminiscing through these pages and sharing your history with your family and friends.

This book is for current and future students, parents, and families([I would include "future" students, parents & families](#)); we hope it will give you a firm grasp on the heart of Ben Lippen: our vision, our values, our mission, our purpose, our roots. May you realize that Ben Lippen is more than a school, it is an environment where God captures hearts. May you be captivated by His exciting works here and fall in love with the Lord of Ben Lippen.

This book is for faculty and staff members, old and new. Unfortunately we could not include the individual stories of every teacher who has made a difference in students' lives at Ben Lippen. History will show, however, that these teachers worked for little recognition (and even littler pay) and most likely won't complain at the absence of their tribute. May you feel rewarded by the testimonies of the students in these pages, and may you remember that your best reward waits for you in Heaven.

SOURCES...

The CIU and Ben Lippen board minutes and the Ben Lippen yearbooks have been the primary sources of information for this history, with personal interviews filling in the blanks and providing some of the anecdotes. Supplemental information, especially for the early history, has been taken from the following books, all of which can be found in the CIU library: *This Is The Victory* by Alleene Spivey Hehl, *Towers Pointing Upwards* by Arthur Matthews; *Always in Triumph* by Marguerite McQuilkin Cartee.

Cover photo is a stock photo provided by [I assume this will be added?](#) All other photos are originals, some from the archives of Columbia International University and some

from the personal collections of former faculty and students. They have been left in their original state and sometimes used for superior content despite inferior quality.

SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE AUTHOR...

To the following for their invaluable input:

Marguerite M. Cartee	Cliff Barrows	John Shober Williams	John Blanchard
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Jack Layman	Cliff White	Dick Lindsey	Elaine Lindsey
Roy King	Keith Marion	Les Lehman	Bob Kallgren
Don Jones	Judy LaCount	Dave Edgren	Joyce Hack
Don Kauffman	Delaine Blackwell		

To all the alumni who contributed their memories and stories, many of whom are featured in this book – for giving the history a much-needed personal feel.

To designer Carl Miller of CMCO Graphic Design, a Ben Lippen parent who quickly caught the fire and became passionate about the school's history – for bringing the story alive with graphics and for creating a product that truly inspires.

~~*Summer, this is clearly important, may not be appropriate in a historical document.
Maybe it could go at the end.*~~
Summer Bethea

Dedication Page:

Dedication:

Asheville alumni, you experienced something on the mountain that cannot be recreated, and you laid the foundation upon which we now can build. In an alumni publication over fifty years ago, the first enrolled student John Shober Williams ('44) defined a "Lippenite":

... one who was at one time a student at the good old School on the Hilltop, and who cherishes the memory of happy times spent there.

This book is dedicated to Lippenites old and new.

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Page One:

Ben Lippen—Mountain of Trust
By Robert C. McQuilkin

Mountain of trust in the living Lord,
Built on His faithful, infallible Word—
Changeless, eternal, impregnable Rock,
Filled with the riches of grace for His flock:

This is Ben Lippen—Mountain of Trust.

Resting securely from sin's dreadful guilt,
Safe through God's blood upon Calvary spilt,
Looking alone to our lifted-up Lord,
On this Rock of ages we stand in accord

At Ben Lippen—Mountain of Trust.

Victory, power, and joy, full and free
Rivers that flow from the Rock cleft for me:
Drink of His Spirit these glad living springs
Given by Jesus who works wondrous things

At Ben Lippen—Mountain of Trust.

Mountain of vision, and passion to serve,
Sending His Gospel to ends of the earth:
Lord of the Harvest and soon coming King,
Send us to preach Thee – till Advent shall ring—

From Ben Lippen – Mountain of Trust.

I. The Mountain's Foundation *Before Ben Lippen (1911-1930)*

"Ben Lippen means mountain of faith. This does not refer to men of great faith, but weak men leaning heavily upon a mighty God." – Tony Fortosis, Headmaster, 1965

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Who is Ben Lippen? The question has been asked for more than seven decades and has been answered each time with a knowing grin: "Ben Lippen is not a man at all; the words are a Scottish phrase meaning 'mountain of trust.'"

Not a founding father or any other man, Ben Lippen is a mountain, a movement, a ministry that grew from small seeds of faith planted in a few young people. Ben Lippen's legacy is one of not just a few but many young people who trusted Jesus Christ at an early age and allowed Him to use them to fulfill His purposes in the world.

*"Faith, mighty faith, the
promise sees, and looks to
God alone..." –hymn*

Out of the belief that young people firmly rooted in Jesus Christ can be powerful forces in accomplishing God's plans, a group called Christian Endeavor Society formed in the late 19th century. Its mission to train young people in Christian living and service succeeded, impacting thousands of lives; and by the early 1900s, young people's societies were thriving in churches all across America and even around the world.

It is in a Christian Endeavor Society in a Pennsylvania church that the Ben Lippen story begins...

A. Spiritual Birthday

“A blessing? No! I have received **The** blessing I have been hungering for **60** years.” – Robert C. McQuilkin, Ben Lippen founder [This quote is correct as written](#)

Young Robert Crawford McQuilkin, known simply as “Bob” or “Rob”, faithfully attended the meetings of his church’s Christian Endeavor Society as a member. Weekly in the North United Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, he would stand up, quivering, to recite prayers or read Scriptures. Every member had to commit to such participation through a signed pledge. Eventually, Bob became good at speaking. So good at it, in fact, that his church asked him to teach a mission study class at a conference for Presbyterian young people in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania.

He arrived at that conference in 1911, a 25-year-old knowing much about the God of the Bible, about Christian doctrine, about church. But he came to the conference still searching. Why did he still feel that something was missing? Why did he feel such drastic ups and downs in his spiritual life? Why could he not conquer certain sins? Were Christians really supposed to worry so much about everything? Why did he lack the kind of dynamic spiritual power that could change men’s lives? These questions plagued him, even as he walked down the aisle to sit on the front row under the

THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR PLEDGE*

Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise Him that I will strive to do whatever He would have me to do.

I will make it the rule of my life to:

- Pray every day.
- Read the Bible every day.
- Support the work and worship of my church.
- Seek to bring others to Christ.
- Give as I can for the spread of the Gospel.
- Fellowship with Christ's people.
- Promote Christian Principles among men.

As an active member of the Christian Endeavor Fellowship, I will:

- Be true to all my duties.
- Be present and take part in each Christian Endeavor meeting and other activities of the group, unless hindered by some reason which I can conscientiously give to my Lord.

In all these things, I will seek the Savior's guidance.

Signature _____ Date _____

In addition to the general pledge, the following individual pledges could be made as the young person grew in faith:

- **Full Surrender** – to purpose to do the will of the Lord in all of the affairs of one's life.
- **Soul Winner** – I will endeavor to present Jesus Christ to all those I come in contact with.
- **Life Purpose** – to purposely choose a Christian vocation, to focus all efforts to the discovery of what that work would be-

* Source: christianendeavor.org

conference's keynote speaker, the Rev. Charles Trumbull.

Rev. Trumbull shared his testimony and spoke of the same struggles that Bob had been feeling. Then he spoke of the solution.

"There is victory," Rev. Trumbull concluded his talk, with Bob hanging on every word. "The resources of the Christian life, my friends are just—Jesus Christ!

"There are two simple conditions for experiencing this victory and union with Christ," he continued. "First, surrender absolutely and unconditionally to Christ as Master of all you are and all that you have, telling God you are ready to have His whole will done in your life, no matter what the cost.

"Second, believe that God has set you wholly free from the law of sin, not that God *will* do this, but that He *has* done it. Upon this second step, the quiet act of faith, all now depends."

Bob, eager for such victory, didn't fully grasp the truth he was hearing, but he did know one thing. "God is no respecter of persons!" he thought. "What he has done for that man, He desires to do for me!"

He approached Mr. Trumbull to talk and pray afterwards, but two days later still felt unsatisfied. He met Mr. Trumbull in a hallway, and the man suggested they go to a prayer room and pray together. Bob thought, "I am going into that room, and I do not want to come out before this matter is settled and I have taken Christ as my Victory for daily living as well as my Savior."

They knelt together. Mr. Trumbull prayed. Then Bob prayed. He later described the event: "It was a different prayer from any I recall praying before. It was to be an expression of a definite transaction that would make things completely different in my life. I began definitely to do the two things I was supposed to do. First, I was to surrender, then to believe.

"From one standpoint, I would have been counted a surrendered Christian. I had offered my life to go as a missionary. Had anyone asked whether I wanted the whole will of God in my life, I should without hesitation have answered, yes; but on that day it was on my heart to make the matter a definite thing."

He surrendered all his sins, all the doubtful things in his life, his life plans including plans for the mission field, his doubts about certain parts of God's Word. He surrendered his loved ones, including his dearly loved fiancée. He surrendered the past and the future, putting away all the questions that entered his mind. In my prayer I expressed surrender in a logical way. First, I told the Lord I surrendered all my sins. Second, I told the Lord I wanted to surrender the doubtful things in my life. There were some things that I did not call sins. If I called them sins, they must be given up. Now I wanted to give God the benefit of the doubt, and yielded those things to Him...

“After surrendering the doubtful things, I surrendered the things that I counted good things, along with my life plans. I was looking forward to going to the mission field, and I yielded this to the Lord in case it should be His will for me to remain at home. I yielded to the Lord my doubts concerning this and that part of the Old Testament. I recognized what a flimsy basis such doubts had as over against the overwhelming testimony to the Bible as the Word of God.

“Then I told the Lord I surrendered my loved ones to Him. His most precious gift to me at that time was the love of a young woman to whom I was engaged. It was a real transaction when I faced the question and I told the Lord I would bow to His will in case He should want her love taken out of my life...

“When I had reached this point in my prayer, a question came into my mind that seemed almost like an audible voice. ‘Now wait a moment. Do you think that with all those past failures in your life, with all the neglected opportunities, you can in just a moment enter into this joy and peace and victory that you have seen in other lives?’ Another voice seemed to say, ‘You are making a surrender. Had you not better surrender the past to the Lord?’

“There was no emotion about this prayer, as I recall it. It all seemed like a definite business transaction. But there was a quiet sense of reality in the definite surrender of the past that I made to the Lord. I realized anew that because Christ had died and put away my sins, I could turn all the past sins and failures over to Him.

“Almost immediately there came another question, as though from an outside person: ‘Now do not get excited. You are here in this missionary conference. Everyone is interested in spiritual things. It is one thing to make a surrender like this now. But wait until you get back to your home. (We had tremendous problems in our home.) Wait until you get back to that church. Wait until you get back to that business office. You better wait and see how this works out before making any definite decisions to thank Christ for victory before you have tried it out to see whether the thing will work.’

“There came the answer: ‘You are making a surrender. Had you not better surrender the future to the Lord?’

“There came a quiet assurance as I did surrender the future to the Lord...

“It took but a few moments to pray this prayer of surrender. When I finished... that part of the prayer, I had no special emotion, and I saw no vision. But it did seem to me, for the first time consciously in my life, there were just two persons in the universe—my Lord and I, and nothing else mattered except the will of that other Person... For the first time it seemed that there was nothing between my Lord and I” (do you need to close quotes here if quotes are used to start the next par.?) no, since the quote continues, you do not close the quote, however the rule is to open the quote in the next paragraph to remind readers that you’re still quoting someone.

“However, I had in mind that this was just the first part of what I was to do. Since I was yielded to Christ, and He had accepted me, my part now was to thank Him that He was living in my heart, and that He was now meeting all my need. Not, He would meet every need, but He *was* meeting every need. Again, I saw no vision, and I had no special emotion. But it seemed to me that I was standing on the shore looking out on a measureless ocean that represented the boundless grace of God. There was a boat. I had one foot in the boat. The question was, would I put both feet in the boat? That is, would I thank God apart from all feelings, and upon the basis of His Word, that His grace is sufficient, that Christ is actually living in my heart, and that He is meeting all these needs? I took God at His Word and thanked Him. I put both feet into the boat. When we rose, I went out from that room with no special emotion, but with a clear conviction that there was a new attitude in my life. Something had happened. I had made a decision.”

Near the end of that missionary conference, the conference chairman approached Bob and asked if he had received a blessing.

“A blessing? No! I have received *The* blessing I have been hungering for **for** years.”
[Quote correct as written](#)

So Bob McQuilkin claimed August 15, 1911 as his spiritual birthday. Although many years would pass before Ben Lippen would even be a glimmer of an idea to anyone, the victorious life that was born in McQuilkin that day would prove to be the foundation of every ministry in which he took part. And even though on the day of his awakening McQuilkin had no idea that the work of Ben Lippen was in his future, August 15, 1911, can be considered Ben Lippen’s spiritual birthday as well.

[Summer: This “testimony” is too long and needs to be tightened up some. Done. ☺](#)

B. Victorious Life Conferences

“This invitation is for all denominations—the conference is planned for Christians whatever their sub-title may be.” – Victorious Life conference folder

Along with Bob, five other young people at that New Wilmington conference came to understand what their salvation in Christ really meant. It was true in the present, it was real, and it was worth living like you believed it. But their joy was in the person of Jesus, as Bob wrote: “We joy in Thee our beloved Master in Thine own self more than in any belief about Thee or in the Bible or in the church or our service or anything in life. Be Thou our all and in all.”

The young people longed for others to hear the message. Their group of six began meeting weekly to pray that a conference could be formed as a platform to tell others of all denominations the message of victory with its focus on missions.

Their prayers were answered the next year in 1912, when now newlywed Bob, his wife Marguerite (one of the praying six from the conference), and the others started the Oxford Conference in Oxford, Pennsylvania.

Bob had landed a job at a leading Christian newspaper, the *Sunday School Times*, with his friend Charles Trumbull, the speaker whose message had changed his life and who was also the editor of the paper. In the next few years, the McQuilkins helped organize and lead the conferences every summer.

The Oxford Conference moved to Princeton, New Jersey, and at the Princeton Conference in 1915 during a message by S.D. Gordon, Bob felt inspired to go to Africa as a missionary.

In 1919 they moved the conference to Stony Brook, Long Island, and in 1923, the permanent home for the Victorious Life Testimony was established at Keswick, New Jersey, where a home for alcoholics had been established years before. Keswick had long offered hope to those struggling with defeat, and now its ministry would be strengthened by the message of the Victorious Life.

C. A Mill Town

“What do you think the Lord wants in Columbia?” – Miss Emily Dick, [Sunday School teacher](#)

Far south was the cotton mill town of Columbia, South Carolina, which, like other mill towns, was full of blue-collar families stricken with poverty and all the social sins that came with it—alcoholism, domestic violence, gambling, and the like.

In the upper middle class area of town, lived another young member of the Christian Endeavor Society. Teenaged Gwyn Dick went out to the Rose Hill Mission every Sunday with other young people from First Presbyterian Church as part of her Christian service. There, she taught a Sunday School class for the mill workers’ children. One particular Sunday afternoon in 1913, she didn’t feel up to walking all the way over to Rose Hill, so she asked her older sister Emily to go in her place. “Just this once,” was her sister’s reply. Emily didn’t want Gwyn to become accustomed to skipping out on her duties.

That seemingly trivial day, just another Sunday afternoon in the South, something in those children touched Emily’s heart to the core. Their neediness, their lostness, their poverty of spirit immediately struck Emily with a deep burden to share God’s love with them. She wanted the children and their families to know Jesus and the power He had to forgive, to heal, to restore hope. She was determined to find a way to introduce them to Him.

And find a way, she did. A charismatic promoter by nature, Emily recruited other women to help her teach Bible, sewing, cooking, and other classes to attract mill people to hear about Christ and His offer of salvation. It worked. The mill people began to find Jesus, and as a result they began to change. The change was drastic enough that on one of his visits to the Columbia mill, H.C. Dresser, vice president of the entire mill chain, asked the superintendent why his mill was different from the other mills. Why did his workers show up on time? Why were there fewer brawls? Why did the employees seem more diligent and more content? The superintendent, a Christian, answered: “Miss Emily Dick.”

Mr. Dresser had to meet this woman. So he invited her to lunch in the swank Jefferson Hotel in downtown Columbia and interviewed her about her Bible teaching programs. After hearing her ideas and seeing her enthusiasm, he offered her a job.

“Emily, I’d like to hire you to start your program in all of our east coast mills,” he told her.

“Mr. Dresser, I’m a Southerner, and I only know how to deal with Southerners,” she responded. “Just give me the mills in the South.”

For her task, Emily needed two things: training and workers. For both, she and her sister Gwyn made the long trip to Chicago to Moody Bible Institute in 1918, where she took a six-week summer course in teaching and began recruiting others to teach in the mills.

That fall, Emily became restless at the thought of wasting time traveling to Chicago every time she needed more workers. And the mill people who desired more Bible training couldn't afford to go to Moody either. One night she awakened suddenly at three a.m. with a thought she knew was from God: "A Bible School in COLUMBIA, that's what we need!" She asked God that evening before going back to sleep to give Columbia a Bible school like Moody. The next morning, she bounded down the stairs to tell her family. "What do you think God wants us to pray for?" she asked.

"A Bible school in Columbia," young Gwyn answered to the shock of her older sister. "I had a dream about it, but I didn't tell a soul."

So that settled it. They called a few girlfriends and began meeting regularly to pray for a Bible school in the mill town. Their prayer group included: Margaret Childs, Pamela Moore, Elizabeth Tarrant, Pearl Stone, and Emily Dick and her mother Mrs. Dick.

D. A Sunken Ship

“God has made it clear I am not to take my family for settled missionary work in Africa.”
– Robert C. McQuilkin

While the ladies were praying that fall, Bob McQuilkin was preparing his family for their sea voyage to the African mission field. World War I had ended just a couple of weeks previously when, in late November 1918, Bob checked their luggage onto a ship named *City of Lahore*, which would leave from New York on the 30th. He visited the state room his family would occupy on their journey and returned that evening in time for a church service in Philadelphia. There he testified about the wonderful things God had done to ready him and his family for missionary service.

The next morning as he crossed town in a streetcar he glanced at the newspaper of a seatmate and saw the headline: “*City of Lahore* sinks in harbor!” Their ship had caught fire in the night, and had been sunk in the harbor to avoid burning the other ships.

No other boat would be leaving for Africa for quite a while, but the McQuilkins were determined to persevere with their call to Africa.

For two years they waited, ready to leave as soon as a ship became available. Yet the war had just ended and traveling was not easy. Other missionaries were backlogged waiting to be sent to their fields. Various circumstances kept the McQuilkins from getting to Africa.

Meanwhile, Bob began answering calls from churches around the country requesting the Victorious Life Testimony. The conference was expanding beyond the bounds of a summer conference. Year-round and in various locations, Bob delivered the message of victory.

“Thus began the extension work of the Victorious Life Conference,” he later wrote, “and the response was so overwhelming, the results so remarkable, and the need for the messages so crying, that I began to believe my friends were right, who insisted that the Lord had given me a special call for this message and this conference work that I should not leave. I told the Lord that if this were the case, the decision not to go to Africa for permanent work must come from the Mission and not from myself. At the time this conclusion was reached, a letter came from the director of the Mission advising that Mrs. McQuilkin and the children should not attempt to come as they could not stand the conditions on the field, and that the greatest contribution Mr. McQuilkin could make would be to spend a year in Africa getting acquainted with the field and return to America for deputation and conference work.”

Unknown to the McQuilkins, the prayers of a small group of women in Columbia were beginning to be answered.

E. North Meets South

All the other sections (A,B,C,D) have lead in quotes or scriptures.

This needs to be consistent on all the sub headings)

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.” – Psalm 37:23a

A year later, news about the Victorious Life Conferences spread to the Dick home. Emily wanted her Bible teachers to hear these messages, and she wanted them to hear them from the best teacher she knew, although she hadn't met him. She and her prayer partners prayed that Rev. Charles Trumbull would come to visit them. Emily sent him a formal invitation.

A letter from Charles Trumbull regretfully declined. His schedule would not permit a trip to Columbia, but he would be glad to send his extension speaker. The women looked disappointedly at a name they'd never heard: Robert McQuilkin. He was no Charles Trumbull, but they had prayed that God would send the right man. They had to accept this McQuilkin fellow.

Thus, in February of 1920, the paths of the McQuilkins and the praying women crossed, as people flocked to the first series of Victorious Christian Life conferences in Columbia's downtown YMCA building.

Here was a Northerner with a vision for spreading the victorious Christian life message and a vision for a Bible school to teach it. And here was a group of Southern women praying for a Bible school and a man to lead it. And here in Columbia that cold winter, God had orchestrated their first meeting.

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F. The Bible School

“We had little idea about starting a school except to rent a building.” – Elizabeth Tarrant, Bible College Advisory Board member

“In the spring of 1921 we felt it was time to do something,” Mrs. Elizabeth Tarrant, one of Columbia’s praying ladies, said later. “We had little idea about starting a school except to rent a building.” The ladies rented a home downtown for eighty-five dollars a month, rented the upstairs to a couple, and in two large downstairs room, they held their first classes in the fall of 1921: Child Study, Personal Evangelism, and Book Studies of the Bible.

The president of Moody Bible Institute, Dr. James M. Gray, had advised the small group of women that the first thing they needed was a man to lead the work. So the ladies began praying for a man.

In November 1921, Mr. McQuilkin again traveled to Columbia, this time with his speaking partner, Dr. Ramsey. Mr. McQuilkin had stepped down from the Victorious Life Testimony board several months earlier, when doctrinal difficulties surfaced over the fervor with which he believed Christians could have victory over sin. Some had believed Mr. McQuilkin was advocating a message of sinless perfection. These conflicts were the very thing God used to make him available when the women approached him with a request.

But first they asked Dr. Ramsey, half-jokingly, if he would head up the Bible school. It was mentioned as the two speakers met in the Dick home for prayer during their conference visit.

When he declined, they asked Mr. McQuilkin, “Why don’t you come and head up this work?”

With a mischievous smile, he replied, “Because I haven’t been asked.” The next morning they officially asked him to consider it.

He had for many years had a three-fold vision to spread the message that had changed his life. He envisioned a publication, a conference, and a school centered on the message of victorious Christian living. The *Sunday School Times* had been the publication, the Victorious Life Testimony had been the conference, and now this fledgling work in Columbia might just be the school.

Bible College Advisory Board:

Mr. H. T. Patterson
Mrs. Elizabeth Tarrant
Miss Pamela Moore
Miss Emily Dick
Miss Margaret Childs
Mrs. I.T. Stone

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G. Asheville Bible Conference

“Beautiful Asheville, among the North Carolina mountains, is called ‘The Land of the Sky.’ But at the Christian Life Conference, just west of Asheville, is something better. There we enjoy the blessing of God, in heavenly places from beyond Skyland.” – A missionary [visiting](#) from Africa

In March of 1922, Mr. McQuilkin sent his letter of acceptance, noting, “For some time to come it would seem best to give much of my time to conferences, which would fit in admirably with the Bible school work.”

Robert McQuilkin believed whole-heartedly that God worked at conferences. His life had been drastically changed at one when he had surrendered everything to Jesus, and he had seen many more lives changed likewise at conferences since. By continuing to speak at conferences around the States, he could spread the victory message and promote the new Bible school. But that wasn’t enough. He suggested to the small Columbia Bible School advisory board that the Bible School host a summer conference of their own.

They readily agreed with their new leader. However, Columbia offered only scorching summers, so they would have to find a better location for their conference, and Miss Emily proposed she knew just the place. Again her work with the mills played a vital role, as she spoke of a mill village near Asheville, North Carolina, where she had met the owner of an old-fashioned campground. Mr. Lucius Compton, a Christian, had founded Eliada Orphanage with its adjoining campground, which sat on a mountain with a beautiful view. What better place for the Bible School’s new conference than Asheville, “The Land of the Sky.”

A letter from Mr. Compton came to Mr. McQuilkin on April 19, 1923: “My Brother, [Eliada] is here as the Lord’s property and if everything can be arranged satisfactorily I would be happy to have you use it.”

Mr. Compton provided a list of 600 names to whom the Board mailed announcements about the very first “Asheville Bible Conference,” as they had decided to call it.

The first conference met the summer of 1923, before Columbia Bible School opened its first class. Up north that same summer, the Victorious Life Testimony had moved to Keswick, and although McQuilkin was no longer on the board, the seeds he had helped to plant were beginning to bloom there.

During the first conference in Asheville, spiritual hunger brought people from near and far, despite the poor camp living conditions. The campground was just that—a campground, and the conference visitors lived in buildings with cubicles portioning “private” rooms and others lived in tents during their stay. But the message was worth it—victory over sin, the power of the indwelling Christ! Regulars came back each year to see conference friends and to revive themselves with the Truth.

H. The Life-Changing Message

“It was nearer to being a gateway of heaven than any place I have ever been.” – A Christian leader among laymen

What was so special about this message? Why did the crowds flock? In it, there was hope and truth and life. How could one receive this hope? Mr. McQuilkin published “Paul’s Secret to Triumphant Living” in the Bible School’s *Messages and News*. He quoted the book of Philippians, in which the Apostle Paul explains the keys to the normal Christian life:

It is a life of joy: “Rejoice in the Lord always.”

It is a life of peace: “In nothing be anxious; ... the peace of God that passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.”

It is a life of suffering and conflict: “to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf.”

It is a life of heroic and ceaseless service: “for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life” ... “Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.”

It is a life with a passion for souls: “the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel...Christ is proclaimed...with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel.”

It is a life of power: “I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me.” “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.”

It is a life of prayer. “in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

It is a life that witnesses to unbelievers: “blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world.”

It is a life of sacrificial giving of money: “The things that came from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.”

It is a life with all material needs met: “my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

It is a life of certain future glory: “to die is gain.” “We wait for a Savior...who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation.”

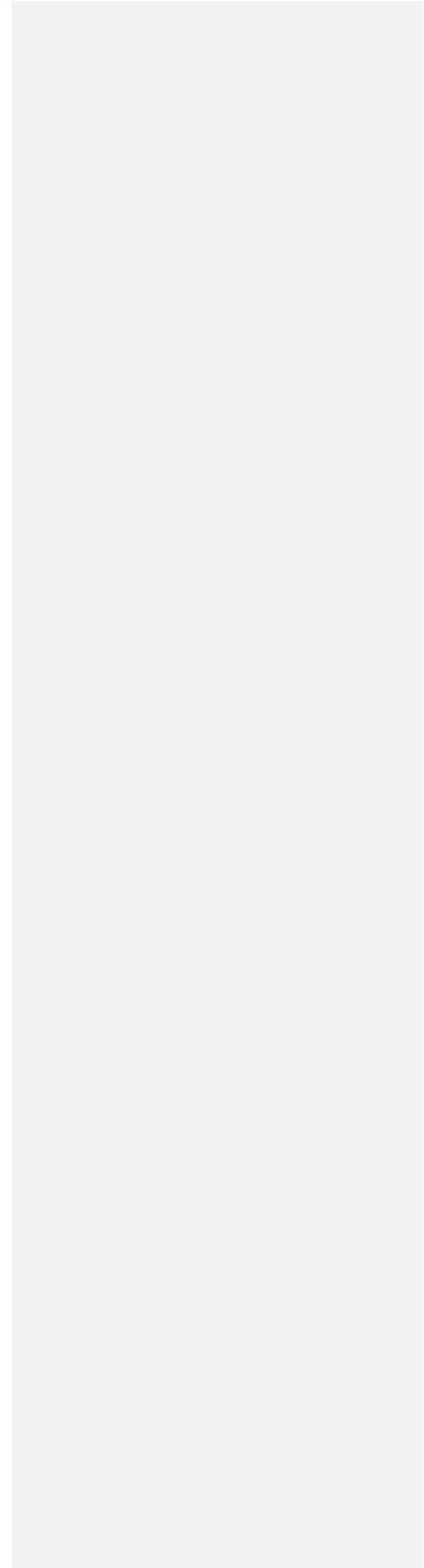
It is a fully surrendered life: “I count all things to be loss...that I may gain Christ.”

It is a life lived by Grace: “be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own...but that which is through faith in Christ.”

“The life is lived by supernatural power,” Mr. McQuilkin wrote. “That is made plain in what is revealed in Philippians. We cannot be Christ-like by imitating Christ or striving to be like Him without being born from above. ‘Christ liveth in me,’ was Paul’s secret of having manifested in his life the things of Christ.

“As there is a supernatural side, so there is the human responsibility. Our part is surrender and faith. When I say, ‘To me to live is Christ,’ it means both a complete surrender, a counting all else but loss and dross, and it means a complete faith in Him who now has charge of the life.

“Choose ye this day between: ‘To me to live is self,’ and ‘To me to live is Christ.’”



I. Blackberry Patch Prayer Meeting

“I have begun to give...begin to possess.” – Deuteronomy 2:31

The crowds at the Asheville conference were growing each summer, yet the conditions were cramped and primitive. In 1926, they began considering the need for permanent conference grounds.

A search committee was appointed composed of Mr. Charles G. Houston, Miss Emily Dick, and Mrs. Frizelle Hill. They placed an ad in the *Asheville Citizen Times* newspaper requesting conference property, and several responses came that didn't seem quite ideal.

Then one afternoon, probably the summer of 1928, Miss Dick and Mrs. Hill noticed a mountain across from Eliada as they returned from grocery shopping. As soon as they could unpack their groceries, the two ladies hurried back to the fork in the road to investigate the adjoining mountain.

What a delightful scene it must have been: two Christian ladies leaving their car at the foot of the mountain, hiking up their skirts, scaling a rail fence, and trekking through rows of corn. A “No Trespassing” sign welcomed them atop the hill. Excitedly, they wrote down the owner's name and address.

And then they prayed, “Lord, give us this property for a conference grounds, if it be Thy will.”

They soon found that the owners were asking \$9,000 for 75 acres on what was called Dryman Mountain.

Soon after Emily and Frizzie had prayed over their newfound property, a group went back to the mountain and gathered in a blackberry patch for prayer. Few in number yet great in expectation, their voices rang from the mountain, singing:

“Faith, mighty Faith, the Promise sees,
And looks to God alone;
Laughs at Impossibilities, and cries
It shall be done.”

Among the group at the Blackberry Patch Prayer Meeting was Dr. Thomas Lambie, Mrs. McQuilkin's brother. A well-known missionary doctor to Ethiopia, he presented them with a promise and command from Scripture: “I have begun to give...begin to possess.”

Dryman Mountain was named for the Dryman Family of Buncombe County. The first Dryman to live in the county was John Henry Dryman, an immigrant from the Netherlands who came to the States as a teenager and worked five years as an indentured servant in Pennsylvania. He started a family and lived in a number of states before moving to North Carolina around 1804.

Altitude: 2500 ft.

Source: *Our Dryman Family website*, www.geocities.com/heartland/prairie/6370/dryman.html, 8/20/2003

And begin to possess, they soon did. At a board meeting on September 11, 1928, it was moved, seconded and carried, "That the Board approve the action of Miss Dick, Mr. Houston, and Mr. McQuilkin in taking an option on conference grounds near Asheville."

J. Financing By Faith

“When we have real faith, the result will infallibly come...” – Robert C. McQuilkin, Bible School president

In September 1929, Columbia Bible School opened the fall term of its seventh year with a new name and a new privilege. The South Carolina Legislature and the State Board of Education had authorized the school to grant a four-year degree, a bachelor of arts degree in biblical education. The school would henceforth be known as Columbia Bible College or abbreviated as CBC.

The Bible College, in addition to its own financial needs, now needed \$3,000 for the conference grounds. The October 15 deadline, a month away, caused them to rely on prayer and faith that God would provide through friends of the school. When on October 13, they were short \$196, they asked board member Mr. Charles Houston for a loan, still planning to count toward the \$3,000 any gifts that came in by October 15.

A week after the deadline, Mr. McQuilkin testified: “We have cause for great thanksgiving for the Lord’s wonderful answer to prayer in connection with the conference grounds. Counting the gifts that were mailed on or before October 15, and including one promise of \$50 to be paid in November, the \$196 was exactly made up, to the dollar.”

A pattern had been set. First a need, then prayer, then a letter to friends making the need known, then more prayer as the gifts started coming. Through the generosity of His people, God would provide, often within pennies of the specified amount needed. But often the board had no time to exhale before another need surfaced, as in the case of the conference grounds.

Yes, God had provided the necessary \$3,000 by October 15, but now another \$1,000 was needed by early January. To heaven went the prayers—prayers for provision and prayers for guidance about sending a letter to the prayer list concerning the need. And by January 7, 1929, the board had prayed in the \$1,000, which they remitted to C.W. Brown, the property owner.

Later that month, the board directed Mr. Patterson and Secretary Childs to sign a note for the remaining balance of \$5,000 to secure the property. The \$5,000 would be due by September 1. When August came and the \$5,000 was far from available, the earnest Christians applied to their business decisions the principles they had trusted with their lives: “My God shall supply every need.” They scheduled a Friday night prayer meeting, then a Monday night prayer meeting; they sent a letter to 450 praying friends and proclaimed Tuesday, September 17, as the official day of prayer for conference grounds funds.

Even after the day of prayer, the board was able to send only \$4,000 to apply to the balance, leaving a \$1,000 debt and prompting President McQuilkin to issue a written

statement of the Bible College's financial plan, which included two apparent but excusable violations to the school's no-debt principle:

“One [violation] is incurring of obligations in advance of having the money. For example, we order printed matter before the funds are in hand; we order the roof to be fixed before we actually have the money. This, if it is done in faith, is not a violation of the principle. The test of the plan is that the money will come because we believe we should go forward with these necessary things. If, in any case, the money does not come in, we are then face to face with the necessity of appearing before God and not letting Him go until this need is cleared up. If He shows us that we have made a mistake, then we confess the sin and ask His guidance in the emergency.”

The second violation was the loans and mortgage on the Bible College Building, which he explained: “The mortgage on the Bible College Building is a form of financing a commercial institution, the income from which pays all expenses. We are not looking to money from the Lord's people to cover this obligation, but are securing in a commercial way the rents from the rooms to cover the obligation. We have proof that we are doing a sound and safe business along this line.

“When, however, we are paying 8% interest on money borrowed to purchase grounds, we are definitely going into debt. This does not mean that we were out of the will of the Lord in getting an option on the property. It does mean that the test of being in the will of the Lord is whether the money actually comes, and we do not have to carry a debt.

“It would seem, therefore, that the \$1,000 still owed on the Conference Grounds is a challenge to our faith, for if we consent to let this obligation stand on the same basis that we let the loans on the Bible College Building stand, we are departing entirely from the principle of incurring no debt.

“One plan of financing a Conference Grounds would be to borrow money to put up buildings on the basis that we could use the buildings while they were being paid for. This would seem a clear violation of our principle. When we have real faith, the result will infallibly come, but since we are not infallible, we need to look humbly to the Lord to find His will.”

The result infallibly did come, and on October 28, 1929, a month behind schedule, President McQuilkin reported that the deed of trust for the conference grounds was on hand, the grounds paid in full.

The very next day went down in history as “Black Tuesday,” the day the stock market crashed, the worst drop in Wall Street that America had ever seen, the beginning of the nation's Great Depression. Yet the Bible College had great news for rejoicing! They now officially owned a mountain.

II. Mountain of Trust Ben Lippen Conference and Camps (1930-1940)

A. A New Conference Center

“It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the majority of foreign missionaries now on the field received their call, or gained the spiritual vision for the mission field, either directly or indirectly through a Bible or missionary conference.” – Promotional brochure, July 1930

Bible... Christian Life... Missionary Challenge... Soul-winning... Recreation... Fellowship... Listed in the publicity brochure for the new conference were these aims of the ideal Bible conference. Now with a mountain purchased, the Bible College Board could focus on publicizing and planning for the new conference center.

The conference still met at Eliada in 1930, the summer after the grounds were purchased, but the growth in popularity deemed it necessary to hold two separate conferences to accommodate the crowd. Fortunately, this would be their last year on these borrowed grounds.

Meanwhile, they set to the work of clearing roads on their new property and planning the buildings. A main building would be needed to accommodate the guests, and they envisioned a large Conference Inn with guest and dining rooms. As of July 1930, only two gifts had come designated for the Inn: a gift of \$5, and the promise of flooring. The cost of completing the central section alone was estimated at \$35,000. They eagerly hoped that the building could be completed by the next summer, but recognized that some large gifts would be needed to reach the goal so quickly.

Already on the mountain, several small buildings had been completed and were being used for Camp Tappuah, Miss Emily Dick’s camp for boys and girls from the mill villages, which had met at Eliada for two years previously. Although independent in ownership and management from the Conference, Camp Tappuah shared the same spiritual goals, believing that “boys and girls are hungry to know God when they are approached in the right way.” Hence, the Bible College had allowed Miss Emily to take ten acres of the mountain and use it for her camp. The buildings on a spot of land known as Missionary Ridge included a boys’ dormitory, a girls’ dormitory, and a main meeting facility named after a beloved Bible College professor, Frances Sells Hall.

In 1931 with the summer quickly approaching and the Conference Inn still not complete, the Board made their plans to meet at Camp Tappuah on Missionary Ridge. They would house the overflow at Eliada and other nearby places as necessary.

In March, the Christian contractor, Mr. Bordner, reported that for approximately \$200 a makeshift pavilion seating about 200 people could be erected as a place to hold the meetings. A well could be dug for \$1,000, and the road could be prepared for \$200. By

May a friend had provided a 5-horse motor and pump at cost to supply water to the grounds, and the Southern Railroad had donated cinders to use on the roads. Mr. Houston suggested that the Board borrow \$1,600 on the conference grounds to finish the work, hoping that visitors would be led to support the work when they arrived and saw the progress.

With things moving forward, only a water challenge stood in their way. Well diggers had gone 240 feet without finding an adequate water supply. They dug further, going more than 300 feet. No water. They tried a second hole. Dry. Then a third hole found still nothing. The conference's advertised dates were quickly drawing near.

They considered several alternatives should the water situation not be resolved at Tappuah. Eliada would be their second choice, Columbia their third. Canceling the conferences was the absolute last resort.

“Three weeks before the conference a glad shout of triumph went up from the small group that were on the camp ground, when announcement was made that an abundant supply of water had been reached,” the story was later told in the *Sunday School Times*. “There was just time to run the long pipe line in the reservoir, and provide the water on the opening day of the conference.”

Appropriately, the first conference on the new mountain began with a message on the Scripture: “With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

Now the stage was set for the Living Water to flow into the hearts of the many visitors who would dig in at the new conference center on the mountain.

B. The Name

“And why don’t you ‘lippen’ Jesus Christ?” – Dr. Thomas Chalmers, Scottish missionary doctor

“What is the Scottish for Mountain of Trust?” someone casually asked the song leader, Scotsman Jimmy Patterson, at the dinner table one night during the 1931 summer conference. They were discussing potential names for the new conference center. Jimmy’s prompt answer: “Ben Lippen.”

Later that evening at outdoor vespers, perhaps their ears perked and their hearts stirred as Scottish missionary Dr. J. Alexander Clarke told this story about his famous friend Dr. Thomas Chalmers, a Scottish missionary doctor.

“There was a good woman in Scotland, well on in years, who had never confessed Christ as her Savior. Dr. Chalmers went to visit her in the little cottage on the other side of the creek, or ‘burn.’ Putting his foot on the improvised bridge, the portly doctor drew back, doubting whether it would be safe to commit himself to those shaky logs.

“Once or twice he tried it, and, while hesitating, he suddenly heard a shrill voice calling from the cottage on the other side of the creek: ‘Lippen it, Doctor, lippen it!’

“Without further hesitation, Dr. Chalmers walked safely across the bridge, arriving on the other side with a thrill in his heart as he realized that the Spirit had provided a message for the hesitating sister. ‘And why don’t you ‘lippen’ Jesus Christ?’

“Like a flash she saw it, peace and joy came into her face, and she stepped upon the solid Rock, as she realized the rich and full meaning of this Scottish expression meaning, ‘to put complete trust in, to rely fully upon.’”

And so that night, several in the audience became convinced that the conference center should be named Ben Lippen. Still the Board wavered between a couple of choices, as can be seen in January 20, 1932, notes from Robert C. McQuilkin:

“The Board voted in one meeting [January 11, 1932] to agree on the name ‘Ben Lippen’ with the suggestion that some such words as ‘Mountain of Faith’ should be included in the literature to explain the meaning of the name, and with the further provision that it should be adopted only if the absent board members approved.

“At least one board member strongly disapproved and preferred ‘Faithmont,’ the only other name to gain wide favor. The Board voted that should there be a unanimous agreement on ‘Faithmont’ that the president would have authority to fix upon this name.

Suggested Names *February 17, 1932 Board Minutes*

Ben Lippen
Faithmont
~~Gracemont~~
~~Carolina Ridge~~
Hiland
~~Elhiland~~
Southwood
~~Cedar Ridge~~
~~Pine Crest~~
~~Southern Springs~~
~~Fairmount~~
Elyor

“The objection urged against ‘Faithmont’ is that many would consider the name as a sort of boast, holding ourselves up as people of faith. The word ‘faith’ truly points directly away from man and exalts God only. Still, the impression that may be given is important. Another objection raised is the possible sanctimonious sound the name may have.

“It has been suggested that some name that will take its meaning from the conferences themselves might be better, for example, such names as other conferences have taken: Montreat, Bon Clarcken, Blue Ridge, Keswick, Northfield, etc. Please be in earnest prayer on this question that it be settled right, let us say, by the time of the Winter Conference. If any of you have suggestions, please send them to me.”

The Board decided on February 18 to leave the naming of the grounds up to the Conference Director, Mr. McQuilkin, but advised each member to write him a letter explaining his or her choice of the two most popular names “Faithmont” and “Ben Lippen.” After receiving four letters for Ben Lippen, and one for another name, Mr. McQuilkin asked the board to take official action on the name rather than leave the decision to him.

So after much ado, on February 22, 1932, the Board voted that the new conference center be known as Ben Lippen, “Mountain of Trust.”

C. The Conference Inn

“Standing out in bold relief, a house set upon a hill, the Inn presents to the world the visible manifestation of His fulfillment in the Mountain of Trust.” – Mrs. Frizzelle Hill, conference field secretary

The U.S. government had built a new post office in Asheville, and had given the old post office building and the ground to the City of Asheville on the stipulation that the city remove the building promptly. On the whole, this news probably went unnoticed by the Bible College board members as they made plans for a main building at their fledgling conference center. They envisioned a magnificent Conference Inn.

The news struck a chord in their contractor, Mr. Bordner, who recognized that the post office materials might be perfect for the Conference Inn. Couldn't the Bible College work out an agreement with the City to have the post office building removed in order to use the materials? Bordner did his homework and presented the proposal to the Board. If demolished at their expense (about \$3,000), the post office could furnish at least \$10,000 in materials.

The board was favorable to the idea, so Mr. McQuilkin sent a prayer letter to friends of the conference work, asking them to unite on a specific day to ask the Lord to provide the finances to demolish the post office and secure its materials.

Mr. Houston and Mr. McQuilkin called the city manager and offered to remove the building if the City of Asheville would give at least \$1,000 toward the expense of wrecking. But the City of Asheville would not consider helping with the expense.

When the business manager Mr. Hehl estimated the cost of materials to build the central section of the Inn would be \$8,000, and that the post office would provide \$10,000 worth of materials, the board members decided to offer to remove the post office without any financial help from the City. It seemed well worth the cost to have all the materials to complete the central section of their Inn.

An additional blessing came just five days before Christmas. Mr. Bordner saw the city manager and found out that the man had changed his mind about the City putting forth any funds. The city manager agreed to give the Bible College \$500 to remove the building, and gifts from friends of the cause also were being put in the bank.

Surely their faith was flying! God had provided a way to build the Inn. But, as Arthur Matthews later wrote about what happened next, “Faith is rarely allowed to get by without being tested.”

Our leaders' test came from the brutal hands of the Great Depression. In an urgent prayer letter on January 2, 1932, Mr. McQuilkin reported devastating news:

“Word has just come this morning,” he wrote, “that the bank in which all the Bible College funds are deposited has closed. The deposits included almost \$1,600 recently

received for the Conference Inn...” The Bible College’s total loss amounted to almost \$6,000.

“Please pray for the many affected by this bank failure, as the bank is one of a chain of forty banks in South Carolina,” Mr. McQuilkin’s letter continued. “A high state official said this morning that it was the worst disaster that had come to South Carolina since the Civil War.”

He closed his letter with the words of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:12, “O our God...we have no might...neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.”

The People’s State Bank of South Carolina was one of the nation’s 2,293 banks that had to suspend operations in 1931.
(www.amatecon.com/gd/gdtimeline)

Mr. Houston called Asheville’s City Manager to tell him of the bank failure and to ask for an extension.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Houston,” the city manager answered, “but we need your decision within the next two days. Others are ready to take the contract if you can’t.”

That night, the board, forced to start from scratch and not knowing what to do, opened their first meeting of 1932 with earnest prayer. “Were we mistaken about the post office building?” they wondered. They prayed for the need and for God’s guidance on whether to accept or decline the post office building in light of the current circumstances. Trusting God’s sovereignty and goodness even in time of uncertainty, one member is rumored to have prayed, “Lord, we thank Thee for this bank failure.”

After prayer they decided that unless the Lord provided in those next two days (by noon Thursday) the \$1,500 they had lost, they would notify the City of Asheville their decision about the post office: “It is impossible for us to comply.”

A businessman heard about the bank failure and casually told a friend of the Bible College, “Well, I hear the Bible College has lost \$7,000 or \$8,000, and they are on the rocks.”

“No,” the friend replied quietly and deliberately. “They are not on the rocks. They are on the Rock. And they will come through.”

Meanwhile, another friend of the conference, who had previously given \$1,000 toward the post office demolition, heard the news of the bank failure while on a trip to Florida. His prayer letter was sitting in his post office box back home in New York, but providentially his friends in Florida also had received the mailing. After praying together for the Bible College’s need, Mr. X remembered a stock worth \$1,500 that had recently matured. Realizing the urgency of the conference need, he wired Mr. McQuilkin on Wednesday that \$1,500 was on the way.

Again the impossible had proved no match for the All-Powerful. Mr. McQuilkin called it “a wholly unexpected and truly remarkable thing.”

Other friends, hearing the news, immediately rushed funds to the Bible College, and within a week of the bank failure all of their bills were paid.

“Wonderful as the financial provision has been and will be,” he wrote to the supporters, “we cannot but feel that the greatest outpouring of blessing has been the volume of prayer that has gone up from hearts that are more closely knit to us in our work here than we had dared to hope. Tears came at the reading of dozens of letters and messages from those who themselves have lost everything and are finding their Lord more precious, for in Him they have ‘everything’ in a new way.”

By March, the post office demolition was more than half complete. Mr. Bordner reported that for \$15,000 the Conference Inn building could be erected “in the rough,” and for \$5,000 more it could be usable by summertime. At least one hundred guests would be accommodated in the new structure, which also would house a dining room, kitchen, offices, and a large living room.

The Board invited friends to donate \$100 to finish and furnish one of the 48 bedrooms in the Inn, and in return have the honor of naming the rooms for significant, deceased missionaries. Soon rooms were named for Hudson Taylor, Bishop Hannington, Adoniram Judson, Robert Morrison, David Livingston, Mary Slessor, David Brainerd, Raymond Lull, Robert Moffat, William Carey, Bishop Heber, William C. Burns, Dr. and Mrs. Jonathan Goforth, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph C. Norton, Arthur F. Tylee, John and Betty Stam, and more.

Mrs. Frizzie Hill, one of the first two women to set foot on the mountain, served as field secretary for the conference work, visiting friends and holding parlor meetings to tell them of the ways they could support the conference. Frizzie described the Conference Inn: “As one approaches Ben Lippen conference grounds he sees the evidence of things hoped for such a short time ago. Standing out in bold relief, a house set upon a hill, the Inn presents to the world the visible manifestation of His fulfillment in the Mountain of Trust.”

D. Student Foreign Missions Fellowship

“*Christian missions have ever been a minority movement...breaking out in unexpected places.*” – Mission Tomorrow magazine, 1936

In 1936, one of the unexpected places for the founding of the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship was Ben Lippen Conference, where a “minority” of 53 students agreed that the current Student Volunteer Movement had become too liberal after forty years of sending young people into missions. The world needed a new organization of students committed to the Gospel, they decided.

Some of them had caught a passion for missions earlier that year during a week of chapel messages at Wheaton College. They had been challenged by Walter Wilson, founder of the Kamas City Bible College, and Don Hillis, a missionary volunteer to India. Columbia Bible College’s beloved Dr. McQuilkin had recovered from the flu just in time to finish the series with a challenging call to missions.

“At the end of the week of meetings, scores of students stood in holy silence before God as they publicly committed themselves to missionary ministry,” said Will Norton, one of the students whose life changed as a result of the Wheaton messages and Dr. McQuilkin. The *Christian Beacon* called it “one of the greatest revivals in the history of Wheaton College.”

The *Wheaton Daily Journal* commented, “Robert C. McQuilkin concluded the Wheaton College...revival at Pierce Chapel last night. It was a glorious climax...! Doves of young Wheaton students stood in the packed auditorium and testified to spiritual awakening of one kind and another.” At the revival, Dr. McQuilkin took the opportunity to announce that Columbia Bible College would open a graduate school the next fall.

The Wheaton students and CBC’s student missions leaders would lean on Dr. McQuilkin for mentoring as they brainstormed about starting a new student missions movement.

By June, the revival fires still hadn’t died when the students met on the mountain in Asheville. There, Will Norton committed to serve the Lord in Africa, and the group drew up a proposed constitution for a new movement. And ten days later when they met at another conference in Keswick, New Jersey, they voted to begin the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship, electing Joe McCullough as acting general manager. Other leaders included Elizabeth Walker and Jimmy Belote.

Several influential students, including Will Norton, Ken Hood, and Joe McCullough, enrolled at the Columbia Bible College’s Graduate School its opening fall semester. The students questioned how they could promote their new movement, and their visits to other colleges found a predominant lack of interest. The movement’s motto was “to stir the church to the pressing obligation of making Jesus Christ known,” but how could they stir the church when they couldn’t stir the college community?

The avenue, most likely recommended by Dr. McQuilkin, was Bible conferences. The new SFMF group appointed five representatives to travel together to Bible conferences throughout the United States and confront the believers there with the need for missions involvement. In May of 1938, Dr. McQuilkin voiced his confidence in the students by writing, "This should become a great movement toward the speedy evangelization of the world."

The Urbana missions conference, which presents the missionary call to thousands of college students every four years, can be traced back to meetings at Ben Lippen Conference.

The team set out in the summer of 1938 in a 1930 Model A Ford bought with donated funds for the cause. They had six weeks to stir the church and only six locations booked so far. But by the end of the six weeks, the group had only spent one free night without a meeting, had received offerings to pay all their expenses, and had covered 3,000 miles. The success they credited to prayer and faith.

The SFMF later merged with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in November 1945, and Will Norton became interim director. Norton helped his successor, J. Christy Wilson, organize the "first Urbana" missions conference December 27, 1946 through January 1, 1947, which actually took place at the University of Toronto. President McQuilkin was one of the distinguished speakers who spoke to 575 delegates from 151 colleges, universities, seminaries, and Bible institutes.

The SFMF, which can be traced back to the Wheaton revival meetings where Dr. McQuilkin spoke and the Bible conferences at Keswick and Ben Lippen, has been credited with helping to return the Bible to the center of student world missions.

The SFMF Founders

A great majority of the student founders of the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship went into career missions, including the first six secretaries of the movement:

- Joe McCullough:** missionary to Bolivia, then director of the Andes Evangelical Mission
Will Norton: missionary to the Belgian Congo with the Evangelical Free Church
Ken Hood: missionary to Costa Rica with the Latin America Mission
Neil Hawkings: missionary to Brazil with the Unevangelized Fields Mission
Peter Stamm III: missionary to the eastern Belgian Congo with the Africa Inland Mission
Herbert Anderson: anticipated missions to China but was called to war in the Pacific

E. Huston Hall

“Pray that hundreds of young people may go forth to the ends of the earth from Huston Hall.” – Robert C. McQuilkin

“As in most cases where men have been greatly used for God’s glory, the mother has been a great factor in the training and in the salvation of the man,” Dr. McQuilkin said at the new auditorium’s dedication service. The man who had made possible the construction of Huston Hall credited his godly Christian mother with any spiritual achievement he had made, and it was in her honor that Huston Hall was named.

When the Conference Inn had just been built, conference attendants met in its living room for lack of a more appropriate meeting place. One day they began praying for a much needed auditorium, and that afternoon Dr. McQuilkin had the opportunity to ask Mr. Bordner, the contractor, about the possibility of obtaining trusses to build an auditorium without columns obstructing the scenic view. Providentially, earlier that very day, Mr. Bordner had been offered five new trusses from a warehouse that had been burned down. The trusses would cost \$300. The next day as a little group of women at the conference prayed about the need, one of them was led to offer \$300 out of her life savings to purchase the trusses.

It wasn’t until two years later, however, on February 11, 1935, that the ground was cleared and 7,500 yards of dirt was moved from the mountainside. Several thousand dollars would be needed to finish the construction, and a close friend of the Bible College sent a generous gift to enable the start of construction. Although that friend had never even attended a conference at Ben Lippen and wasn’t even able to attend the dedication of the

Poem of Dedication for Huston Hall **By Ada E. Brown, Bible College staff member**

Serene and stately on the mountain’s crest
Stands Huston Hall, each rock-hewn pillar rears
This tribute to the one whose name it bears—
In memory of a mother who has blest
Thro’ all the years, from childhood’s earliest days
To full-orbed manhood, him who would enshrine
True mother-love for aye, God-given, divine,
And gratefully this love-gift would upraise.

Today we would unite our hearts with his
To honor her whose faith showed him the way
To God, who taught his lips to pray
And love the great eternal verities.

But we would honor most his mother’s God,
Whose grace and strength alone could make her great.
And to His glory we would dedicate
This temple, and His matchless name would laud
For hallowed hours upon this mountain height,
When God stooped down our waiting souls to bless,
And kindled with His love and tenderness
Cold, lifeless hearts—to blinded eyes gave sight.

We would give thanks for those in youth’s first glow,
Who heard His call, and full surrender made,
Their sins, their hopes, their all, upon the altar laid,
Content if He shall bid them stay or go.

Bless Thou this place whene’er Thy children meet—
This holy place, attuned to praise and prayer.
Where weary ones find rest in lieu of care,
And burdens are laid down at His dear feet.

And from this mount of vision, send Thine own
With hearts aflame, Thy witnesses to be
In every land—Ambassadors for thee,
One sacred purpose theirs, To Make Thee Known.

auditorium, he had supported the work previously. In fact, he had been the one who, through remarkable leading by the Holy Spirit, had sent the critical gift enabling the purchase of the post office building for the Inn after the bank failure. His name: Frank B. Huston.

Mr. Huston, known as a fearless soul-winner, hadn't always been such a faithful Christian; rather, he had neglected spiritual things and the Lord for years. The prayers of his mother Anna E. Huston, though, had followed him and eventually impacted him to make a sold-out commitment to the Lord. She claimed as one of her life verses the very same verse that Ben Lippen had been built upon—John 15:7, which says, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” Surely this verse had been claimed for her son's salvation many times, and had proven true when the man eventually gave his heart and life to the Lord.

At the dedication of Huston Hall, Mr. Ernest L. Chase, a businessman who had been greatly influenced by Mr. Huston, shared several testimonies about the man's life. They had met 10 years earlier when Mr. Huston had walked into Mr. Chase's office in Florida, “not because of the bonds I was selling, but to find out whether I knew the Lord Jesus.” Mr. Chase said Frank asked him three questions: Was he a Christian? Did he have a copy of the Word of God with him? And did he ever go witnessing for His Lord? Although he was a Christian, the second two things had never before occurred to Mr. Chase. “That simple little man of God asking me those three questions soon left town, but within a few days I went out to plan to distribute tracts and to get into the hospitals and boats.”

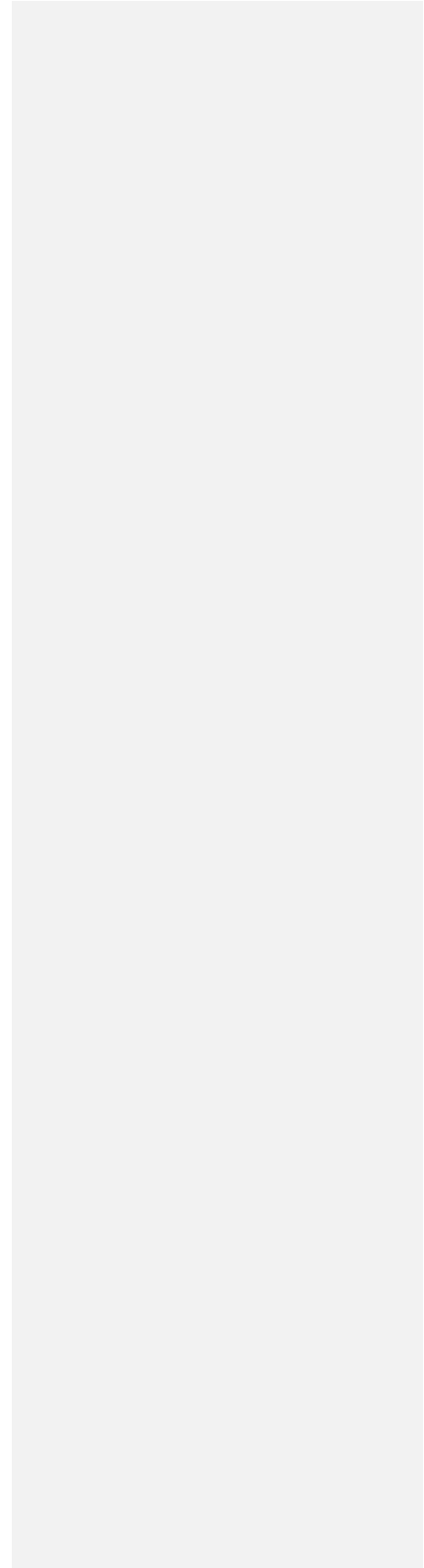
Mr. Chase gave an example of Mr. Huston's level of dedication by recounting a time when the two went to the circus together for the sole purpose of passing out Gospel tracts and pocket Bibles to the police captain, show people, giants and dwarfs. Mr. Huston often went fishing, not because he loved the sport necessarily, but because it put him in contact with people in order to tell them about the Lord. This gave new meaning to “fishing” for souls, Mr. Chase pointed out.

“The inspiration to soul-winning that Brother Huston gave me, and the example of his life in soul-winning, helped to fit me for the job the Lord gave me after that in the New Jersey State Prison. I want to credit Frank Huston under the Lord for over two thousand men who have accepted the Lord there. God bless the brother who showed me that witnessing for my Lord was a vital thing.”

The crowd then sang, “I will make you fishers of men.”

By the time of the dedication, nearly a thousand meetings already had been held in Huston Hall in its unfinished condition during three summer sessions. The first meeting was a Young People's Conference. “Many hundreds have yielded their lives to Christ. Many have found Christ as Savior for the first time, and several hundred young people have circled the auditorium in various conferences offering their lives to go as foreign missionaries,” Dr. McQuilkin said.

Now with the building complete, 80 feet wide and about 115 long, with beautiful rock columns made of rock quarried from Ben Lippen's mountainside, and with the capacity to seat 1,500 people, Dr. McQuilkin encouraged the crowd, "Pray that hundreds of young people may go forth to the ends of the earth from Huston Hall."



F. Lippen Lodge

“The Christian fellowship, I think, could only be exceeded by that of the saints in heaven.” – A student from Anderson College

Richard Chadwick Gartrelle was in middle school the summer of 1934 when he dedicated his life for foreign mission service at the Ben Lippen Conference. His godly parents must have been thrilled at his decision! Five months later, though, they were devastated when their precious son died at age twelve.

His family decided that Richard’s life savings of \$500, a meager sum perhaps, should go toward the Lord’s work. They wanted even Richard’s death to prove his love for the Lord, so they gave his savings toward a new ministry for college men at Ben Lippen.

Lippen Lodge was to be a camp at Ben Lippen specifically for college men. The students would pay \$15 a month for the summer, do all their own cooking and chores, and have the opportunity to attend six weeks of summer school for Bible credit in addition to the regularly scheduled Bible conferences. They would have opportunity for Christian service on the weekends, and for fellowship and recreation with other young men from various colleges.

The Lodge experience would deepen the Christian lives of these young men, it would introduce them to the message of victory in Christ that encompassed the conference ministry, and it would prepare them to return to their campus as leaders carrying that message. But perhaps most importantly, Lippen Lodge would introduce college men to a vision for lost people all around the world and would inspire them to take the Gospel “to the uttermost parts of the earth.”

With the help of young Richard’s savings, work began on Lippen Lodge in May 1937, and the board, hopeful it would be ready by Summer School, was thrilled to have it completed in time to open June 19-August 22.

Thirty-two young men came that first summer, from 15 states and 14 different colleges and seminaries: Furman, Wheaton, Wofford, Duke, Dallas Theological, Northwestern Bible, and of course CBC. About 75% voiced plans of going into full-time Christian work, and 12 of them envisioned service on the foreign mission field.

That summer they took part in more than a hundred evangelistic meetings in the surrounding country including visits to convict camps, poor farms, boys’ reformatory, and orphanages.

One student from the University of Tennessee later wrote of his experience, “The fear of standing apart from the crowds and witnessing for Christ was dispelled from my life while I was at the Lodge. I left with a greater desire to study the Word and make Jesus known to my fellow men when I came down from that Mount of Trust.”

That summer and every summer that would follow, Ben Lippen introduced Richard Gartrelle's vision for missions to college men like Sam Moffatt and Archie Fletcher, who would go on to become influential missionaries. In later years, Lippen Lodge became the Missionary Training Camp used by Paul Culley to teach missionaries primitive skills needed for the field.

For many years, the memorial to young Richard inscribed in the building's chimney gave testimony to a heart for the Lord and missions. Long after the building had been demolished, its memorial chimney remained, standing strong in the forest.

III. Boys on the Mountain

Ben Lippen Boys School (1940-1952)

A. A Winter Venture

“Private venture in education means risk, danger and adventure while sailing uncharted seas, breaking new ground, and making new paths.” – Jonathan Williams, first headmaster

The great adventure of opening a boys’ school at Ben Lippen began with a very practical, almost mundane question: What should we do with the conference grounds during the winter? It seemed a pity and a waste to the industrious Bible College Board to have the grounds sit empty for nine months of the year.

Earliest thoughts and discussions of a boys school occurred in 1932, when the Conference Committee met with the headmaster of a well-reputed boys school. J.P. McCallie, headmaster of McCallie School in Tennessee, informed them that starting a boys school was no small feat, and gave valuable suggestions with regard to almost certain problems: the need for athletic grounds, classroom space and laboratory equipment, and the difficulty of handling different socio-economic classes of boys.

After their meeting, the committee decided that if a school were to be opened, it would not be wise for the Columbia Bible College Board to operate it. The president suggested an investigation committee look into the possibility of a boys’ school and make a proposal to the Bible College board for the use of the building.

Boarding Schools: The first American boarding schools were established in the late 1500s by early missionaries to America, particularly the Jesuits, who removed Native American children from their tribes in order to educate them and assimilate them into western civilization.

B. A Lady Benefactor

“To Mrs. Sidney F. Andrews in gratitude for her vision of the school’s future and for her affectionate, prayerful interest in its students.” – The Challenge yearbook dedication from the class of 1943

The dream of a boys’ school, like the conference grounds in winter months, lay mostly dormant for the next seven years. In 1939 it was brought to life again by a lady benefactor from Washington, D.C. Mrs. Sidney F. Andrews, an elderly woman who must have been considerably wealthy since she lived in an expensive Northern hotel, was a dear friend of the conference work.

Believing in the mission of a boys’ school, Mrs. Andrews decided to make it financially possible for the conference to open their proposed school. She entered into an annuity contract with the Board to give \$15,000 in installments over a one-year period, the money designated to complete the Inn and install heating in anticipation of opening a high school for boys.

The Board voted to authorize the securing of plans and specifications from Mr. Cudger, a local architect from Asheville, and to ask Mr. Houston to report his recommendation as to the architectural supervision of the work.

The Inn had operated for many summers during the conference with only sub-flooring complete, and several of the “praying ladies” would roll out brown paper to give the guests privacy. School would open with only sub-flooring as well, and one faculty member’s wife later remarked that she enjoyed sweeping the floors because a dustpan wasn’t required – the dirt just fell through the cracks!

C. The Officials

“I will direct their work in truth...” – Isaiah 61:8 (You site the scripture verses here, and in some other places as well. However, the scripture reference is left off on many. Consider including in all for consistency)

On May 13, 1940, in Mr. H.T. Patterson’s home on Bull Street in downtown Columbia, the board met. Present were Patterson, McQuilkin, Houston, Tarrant, Moore, Childs, and Dibble. They opened their meeting with customary prayer and a Scripture reading from Isaiah 61 and 62, perhaps being inspired by certain key verses as promises from the Lord:

“I will direct their work in truth, and will make with them an everlasting covenant. Their descendents shall be known among the Gentiles and their offspring among the people. All who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the posterity whom the Lord has blessed... You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.” Is. 61:8-9, 62:2-3

After prayer and the reading, they voted to establish a Christian school for boys at Ben Lippen.

They also voted to appoint a Board of Trustees to serve for one year, and they gave the new Board full authority over the Boys School, including the responsibility of electing a board president, a school principal or headmaster, and a faculty. The Board would also be responsible for financial management of the school. The Bible College corporation would hold ownership of the School, and would have to confirm the election of the School’s president and headmaster; in addition, a plan of procedure with financial matters would be worked out with the Bible College Board.

A committee from the Bible College Board, including Mr. McQuilkin, Mr. Houston, and Mrs. Tarrant, and a committee from the Boys School Board would work together to prepare a constitution and by-laws for the new school, which would be submitted for the approval of both boards.

The First Ben Lippen Board:

Robert C. McQuilkin
CBC President

H. T. Patterson
Charles G. Houston
John C. Cowell, Jr.
Vernon Patterson
W. G. Haymaker
Charles J. Woodbridge,
Allen Rogers

Jonathan Williams, ex officio
Ben Lippen Headmaster

Allen L. Rogers became one of the first to accept the invitation to the board of the school, writing a letter to Mr. McQuilkin: “I believe there are great possibilities in the establishment of an institution of this kind in this section, and since it will be a Christ-centered institution, I am sure it will be greatly blessed of the Lord. The wonderful influence that has gone out from Frank Gabelein’s Boys School at Stony Brook is an

indication of the wonderful possibilities in a school of that kind in this section of the country.”

Frank Gabelein had an influence out of proportion from that of an average school headmaster. Not only was his school in Stony Brook, New York, the most successful boys boarding school of the day, he wrote many respected Bible commentaries and served as one of the editors of the Scofield Bible.

Mr. McQuilkin would not attempt to be headmaster of Ben Lippen’s school. He would, however, add to his duties of president of the Bible College, the new role of president of the Boys School’s board of trustees. The executive management of the school would fall into the hands of a headmaster. So the search for a headmaster began.

D. The First Headmaster: Jonathan Williams (1940-1947)

“There will, of course, be much preparation if we are to open the school in 1940. We have had years of prayer about it and I know that the Lord has His own man for the work.” – Dr. Robert C. McQuilkin in a 1939 letter

Some time before serious discussions about the boys school began, a Quaker missionary to Belgium had brought his family of six back to America. Jonathan Williams had been on the field for fourteen years; but now the founders of the Belgian Gospel Mission with whom he served had died, and his eldest daughter had developed tuberculosis. He saw this as an opportunity to further his Bible education in the States, and soon enrolled in the graduate program at Columbia Bible College.

As Jonathan finished his master’s degree in 1940, his inspiring Bible teacher, Dr.

McQuilkin, approached him with the proposition to help start a boys boarding school in the fall. Jonathan’s grandfather had been headmaster at Westtown Boarding School near Philadelphia, where Jonathan had attended as a young man. He knew the boarding school life, the homesickness. He knew missions, which

Headmaster: “The typical independent school is presided over by an administrative head, called the Headmaster, Principal, Director, or some other title implying headship. His position is approximately similar to that of the principal of a public school; but, because he has no superior officer, it involves much that would be the concern of the superintendent of a public school system, as well... The administrative head is usually responsible to a board of trustees, directors or overseers, which officially controls the school.” (*Chamberlain, Ernest B., Our Independent Schools. New York: American Book Company, 1944. 212 pp. pp 84-128*)

was at the heart of this new endeavor. He had even worked at camps as a young man, so he knew the primitive life. Believing the opportunity to be the Lord’s leading, Jonathan accepted and soon plunged into the ocean of work that would be necessary to open the school in three months. He had no students, no faculty, no curriculum, no books, no money; and it was a mystery of faith how he would get any of them.

His first task was to visit McCallie School, a well-reputed boys school in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to ask its founder and headmaster, James Park McCallie, how to go about starting a boys school. “Well,” Dr. McCallie answered, “you have to have boys.”

E. The First Students

“From Massachusetts to Georgia sixteen boys have come to form the beginning of Ben Lippen Boys School.” – Jonathan Williams, Ben Lippen headmaster

A month before the first Ben Lippen classes began, Mr. Williams had a large list of prospective students but only seven boys who were definitely planning on enrolling. He hoped that a \$200 scholarship would attract even more students by helping offset the hefty \$435 tuition.

Dr. McCallie, the expert headmaster of McCallie School, had estimated that Ben Lippen might get twenty students the first year; Mr. Williams had made his estimations for equipment and budget based on twenty-five; but everyone was praying for thirty. Mr. McQuilkin reminded the board that people had estimated it would take at least two years to start a school like this one, but they had been sure they must open in 1940. A goal of thirty students was very possible with God.

“It is a great joy to be associated with all of you in this venture of faith,” wrote Mr. McQuilkin to the new board members. “It is glorious to see the Lord work when everything seems against human possibility. Let us continue to pray for thirty if it is the Lord’s will. Perhaps He will give you the prayer of faith for this.” He then put together Psalm 100:4 and verse 27 as their claim: “But I give myself unto prayer...that they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, Lord, hast done it.”

Arrangements were made for the Williams’ two oldest children to attend the boys school as well. Son Johnny, the first student to be enrolled, had to skip the eighth grade in order to qualify for admittance as a freshman. Daughter Maryanna faced another obstacle – being a girl in a boys’ school, of course! – but she would face the challenge for one year before the family made other arrangements. CBC board member Elizabeth Tarrant’s son Billy was admitted soon after the Williams’ children. That fall, school opened in the Inn with seventeen students—sixteen boys and one girl—and many people continued to pray for thirty. The first year offered ninth and tenth grade classes only.

Letter from Mr. Williams November 1940

“From Massachusetts to Georgia sixteen boys have come to form the beginning of Ben Lippen Boys School, although the decision to start the school was made only in the spring of this year. For some time after that there was no faculty, aside from the principal, neither were there students nor funds. You have heard how wonderfully God answered prayer for the faculty; some equipment has been purchased, school books have been bought, current expenses have been met, including the payment in full of the allowance to faculty and staff for September.

The boys have been in good health and are happy with their new surroundings. A few gifted pupils are setting high scholastic standards for the others. The spiritual exercises of the school have been profitable, and changes have been noticed in the lives of some of the students. One spontaneously confessed openly that he had found Christ as his Saviour since the beginning of the term. He said he dreaded coming, but he found that he had had a mistaken idea and now has much joy. His changed life bears out his profession.

These are only a few of many indications that the founding of Ben Lippen Boys School at this time was God’s plan, and that He will continue to sustain the school and cause it to progress and be used to train and to form boys to become men whom He can use, in vocations of his own choosing.”

In the 1940-1941 school year, approximately 3,000,000 students in the United States attended a private elementary or secondary school, which amounted to ten percent of the nation’s total school-aged population.

F. School Verse & Colors

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” – John 10:10

“For some time we have been thinking of a school verse and school colors,” Mr. Williams wrote to the board just a few months after school started. “We propose to take as the school verse, a part of John 10:10, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.’”

These were the words of Jesus and described the life of victory that Columbia Bible College and its Ben Lippen Conference had been founded upon. It was only fitting that the new Ben Lippen Boys School make this message part of its core as well.

The last part of the verse, Mr. Williams wrote, “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly,” is translated in the Latin Vulgate as follows: *Vitam et abundantius habeant*. The Greek word translated into Latin *abundantius*, Mr. Williams explained, is used as an adverb, “which is the force of the Latin equivalent and also the translation of the Authorized Version,” he explained astutely. He proposed, in light of this translation, that the words *Vitam et abundantius* appear on the school seal.

For school colors, the faculty had proposed green and gold, and the students had sent in their votes as well. Of the 11 who voted, five of them chose green and gold. These colors would have a spiritual meaning.

“In the first place,” Mr. Williams explained to the board, “the buildings of the school are surrounded by trees, which provides a green setting or background. Then green, in nature, indicates life and growth and suggests fruit bearing. Gold is associated in the Scriptures with the glory of God. These colors then would illustrate the school verse so that they would mean: The more abundant life for the glory of Jesus Christ.”

And so, the school verse and colors were set to promote the abundant life in Christ that would be taught at Ben Lippen.

G. War Years

“People are thinking today in terms of military preparedness. It is the program of Ben Lippen Boys School to prepare boys intellectually, physically and spiritually for the problems and opportunities which will be theirs in the near future.” – Headmaster Williams in a November 1940 letter

In one of the Inn’s third-floor bedrooms, Billy Tarrant and Harold Germann were enjoying their Sunday afternoon downtime when shocking news came through the radio: “The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor!”

It was December 7, 1941. The next day, as the boys at Ben Lippen began another school week, America and Britain declared war on Japan.

Ben Lippen, only open for a year at that time and already struggling financially, now would face even greater challenges as the government began to ration food.

The students, undaunted and with strong boyish spirit, conceived a plan to help with the war efforts. The student leaders formed two “Victory Corps,” and every boy joined one of the groups. The first group trekked over the mountain looking for scrap metal to help the government make weapons and for salvage board and lumber to burn for fuel. They also sold war stamps and bonds.

The other corps took care of Ben Lippen’s Victory Gardens, soon clearing the land for a full acre of potato plants. A definite success, the gardens produced more green vegetables than could be eaten. They formed a livestock program, which turned the campus into quite a farm, complete with goats, chickens, cows, and hogs.

Faculty member Henry Schum, known to the boys as “Uncle Hank,” oversaw the Victory Gardens and the livestock program. A rustic and fearless man, he would stay out all night hunting bears on a nearby mountain, arriving back to campus just in time for school. The boys and Uncle Hank made a hog pen out of logs about a third of the way down the hill toward the ball field, and at its eventful dedication President McQuilkin and the entire Board showed up to hear a trumpet concert and see a skit of “The Three Pigs.” The “brick house” that withstood the wolf’s blowing was the new hog pen.

One of the boys’ efforts made it into Mr. William’s proud prayer letter: “The boys have fattened two five-week-old pigs with almost no cash outlay. This has yielded about 390 pounds of dressed pork (worth about 2,000 ration points!) for the table.” Believing that every part of a hog could and should be eaten, the cooks served boiled hog ears for supper one night. The bravery and

Bye, Bye, Bessy

by Ted Eckman ('43)

On one occasion, a Mr. Bass, a farmer living down the mountain a mile or so, gave a cow to the school. A live, mooing cow. Mr. Schum and I got the school’s old WWII Army stake truck, got the critter in the back of the truck, tied a taut rope around its hind quarters and parked the truck, with Bessy standing in the back, under a tree behind the lodge. We tied the other end to a low tree limb. I shot the thing between the eyes, Schum drove the truck out from under the cow leaving it swinging in the breeze. Schum jumped out and slit its neck, draining its blood out. We dressed it and the next day, it was on the table in the dining hall. And, a few days thereafter.

machismo that led the boys to slaughter the animals suddenly left them, and no one touched their dinner that night!

The excellent school band began a series of concerts known as “Marching to Victory” programs. Under the leadership of Director Lewis Pund, a former circus bandleader who far surpassed the boys with his trumpet ability, they visited several Asheville schools and performed marches, trumpet trio numbers, and other pieces. At the closing, the band’s chaplain would give a 10-minute Gospel message and students would share testimonies. “Please join us in prayer,” Mr. Williams wrote, “that these programs may not only contribute to the war effort but help boys and girls to know experientially Christ’s victory over sin on Calvary.”

The war ended on May 8, 1945, henceforth known as Victory in Europe Day, yet victory in Jesus at Ben Lippen was just beginning.

H. The First Graduation

*“It was at Ben Lippen that I began to find out what the ‘abundant life’ was all about.” –
A member of the first graduating class*

The first Ben Lippen commencement exercises began on Sunday, May 23, 1943 at the Asheville Gospel Tabernacle with a baccalaureate sermon preached by Rev. Harold Kattmann of Spartanburg. The graduation ceremony itself was held on campus a week later on Saturday, May 29, and Dr. McQuilkin spoke. Eight young men graduated, and one would receive his diploma later in the summer.

“Eight of this year’s graduating class took the A-12 Army test and the V-12 Navy test. Four of them passed, which is a very high proportion. These men are qualified to receive college training to become officers at government expense. Other students will enter colleges in the fall of 1943.”

Soon Mr. Williams began hearing from graduates. One wrote from a Naval training station, “Before I came into the service I thought that the hardest thing in the world to do would be to kneel down beside my bunk and pray. I had it all turned around. Every night I read my Bible and pray, and you will probably be surprised when I say that not one boy has said one dirty remark about it. More than one has admitted they would be better off if they were doing it too.”

Mr. Williams wrote to Ben Lippen supporters, “The school is happy indeed to have these eighteen-year-old ‘missionaries’ in the camps which have been called the greatest mission field today.”

Another letter from one of the first graduates came with a \$30 gift: “Enclosed is a fraction of what I owe to Ben Lippen Boys School. If this meager sum were a thousand times its total I would still owe a great debt to you folks... It was here that the Lord began to fill my request of learning how to serve Him. These lessons came in bitter doses at times because it seemed to be the only way the Lord could drive anything through my head. Slowly it seeped through that a person could glorify God in his studies, in sports, in parties, in work, and all those other times and places that we like to forget about Him for a while. Yes, truly it was here that I began to find out what the ‘abundant life’ was all about.”

I. Accreditation

“Although we seek the Lord’s approval first of all, it is gratifying that the State has officially recognized the School.” – Headmaster Jonathan Williams

Even without official state accreditation, four of the first graduates met the high Army and Navy scholastic requirements, one of the first graduates was admitted to a college of high standing the fall following graduation, and the University of North Carolina expressed a desire to receive Ben Lippen graduates because of the reputation the school had earned. Even still, Mr. Williams believed the school needed state accreditation as soon as possible.

One necessary component in receiving accreditation was for Mr. Williams to receive a master’s degree in education. The state of North Carolina didn’t value his first master’s degree because it was in Bible. Thus, Mr. Williams dedicated his summer breaks to Ben Lippen by taking courses at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, while simultaneously working hard to meet all the other criteria necessary to secure accreditation by the North Carolina State Department of Education.

By May of 1943, he had completed his degree, and the school’s accreditation depended only on receiving three history wall maps at a cost of \$145. The school could not afford this expense. Yet soon after the need was published, a single gift for \$150 came in designated “wall maps,” the important gift that would make accreditation possible.

It wasn’t until April 1944, however, almost a year after the requirements had been met and the first class had been graduated, that the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction informed Mr. Williams with the news: the state had put Ben Lippen on their list of accredited high schools.

With Mr. Williams satisfied that the school was now on its feet, he agreed to his wife’s growing desire for a home of their own. The Inn filled with boys, Mrs. Williams felt, was a very unnatural environment for rearing their three little girls. So they approached the government housing authority about building a home. During wartime rationing, the authorities would only allow them to build the house if they could do it for \$500 or less. Although they had to pay boys to help them do the work and live in a framework for a while when walls couldn’t be afforded, the modest house was soon completed, and the headmaster finally had a very much deserved home of his own – a well-deserved reward for all of his work and sacrifices in securing Ben Lippen’s accreditation.

J. A Boy's Life

"No accidents – no colds." – Headmaster Jonathan Williams in a prayer and praise newsletter

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Although the boys kept a tight schedule that could be likened to a military school, they found time for boyish things completely unrelated to school – boxing, climbing, joking, running, and shooting baskets in Huston Hall (which meant chasing balls when they sneaked through the auditorium's open walls and escaped down the mountainside).

In a school full of rambunctious high school boys, accidents were bound to happen. On one occasion, a teacher opened his door to see two boys having a good-natured time together. One came at the other playfully, as the other backed up to get away. To the teacher's horror, the boy backed up right out of the third-floor window and fell to the parking lot below. Miraculously he received not a scratch!

The boys also entertained themselves with mischief: dropping paper "water bombs" out of third floor windows onto unsuspecting passers-by below, building crystal radio sets and climbing on the roof to set up their antennas in order to receive the latest jazz music (strictly forbidden on campus), and many other infractions unbeknownst to faculty members.

When a faculty member did catch a boy doing wrong, creative punishments would follow. For every demerit a boy received, he had to work one hour for the school. Most of the demerits during these early years were worked off moving dirt on the ball field to enlarge it. During the rainy season, boys worked off demerits in the basement of the Inn where they had to carry heavy logs on their shoulders for the stated time of their punishment.

The faculty planned activities to keep the boys active and occupied, including overnight hikes through the mountains. "During the first overnight hike, the boys slept out of doors at the foot of Mt. Pisgah and climbed to its summit, 5,749 feet above sea level, and down again the next day making 18 miles on foot round trip. The splendid view from the top, the vivid autumn colors, the sustained physical effort required, the games and other diversions and the sense of the presence of God made this day one which contributed to the character and personality of the students as well as providing an outing which they will not soon forget," reported Headmaster Williams in a letter, adding the praise report, "No accidents—no colds."

The Boys' Schedule 1945-1946

6:45	Rising Bell
7-7:15	Morning Watch (A personal time of prayer and Bible study)
7:15	Breakfast
7:50-8:25	Domestic "Work and Infirmary" Period
8:30-9:15	First Period
9:20-10:05	Second Period
10:10-10:55	Third Period – Chapel and Assembly
11 – 11:45	Fourth Period
11:50 – 12:35	Fifth Period
12:50	Lunch
1:50-2:35	Sixth Period
2:40-3:25	Seventh Period
3:40-4:10	Physical Fitness
4:10-5:20	Athletics and Recreation
6:00	Dinner
7:15-8:55	Evening Study Hall
9:00-9:30	Detention Period and Voluntary Study Hall
10:00	Lights out.

The Hiking Club was just one of the extracurricular activities afforded to the boys. Others included the Rifle Club, Stamp Club, *Lippenlite* school newspaper, *The Challenge* yearbook, and Student Foreign Missions Fellowship. Sports available included softball, basketball, and football.

One young man excelled in almost all the activities, although he only spent one year at Ben Lippen. Robertson McQuilkin, son of Ben Lippen founder Robert McQuilkin, came to the mountain his senior year in 1943. Even though the McQuilkin family wanted to show their support for the new school, his mother hadn't been ready to let Robertson leave home the year the school opened.

The president's son moved in with the headmaster's son, Johnny Williams, and the two roommates became the best of friends. The students elected Johnny student body president, but his father called for a new election mid-year when Johnny showed signs of rebelliousness. (Johnny wanted to play jazz on his hot trumpet; Mr. Williams forbid it.) The student re-vote deemed that Robertson would be the new student body president, and Johnny stepped down to vice president. Sophomore Bob Hathaway was elected sergeant-at-arms.

As student president, Robertson, a natural leader with a good rapport, had a genuine concern for the spiritual life of the other boys, some of whom were problem kids being sent to Ben Lippen to be reformed. His first formal preaching experience came at the encouragement of "Uncle Hank" Schum, the school's Bible, Spanish, and English teacher, who asked Robertson to deliver a Wednesday night sermon at his church. And so, Robertson McQuilkin preached his first sermon at age sixteen at the Methodist Church on Mills River Road.

He graduated as valedictorian of his five-member class in 1944, and went on to Wheaton Summer School to study physics, planning on joining the Navy.

A Hiking Surprise

By E. Benson Geartrant ('46)

The Hiking Club with Mr. Henry Schum, our leader, camped at the base of Mt. Mitchell but Leon Gitlin, Rucker, and I went up the face of the cliffs in the moonlight. We wanted to be first up and to surprise everyone the next day. We obviously made it, but the next day "Henry" took us aside away from the others, and gave us "what to" for scaring everyone, also pointing out how foolish we were to scramble at night without telling anyone where we were going. We didn't know the forest ranger and workers had trucked to the base the night before (about 12 a.m.) to ease the club sponsor.

K. A Billy Graham Meeting at Ben Lippen

“A young man’s going to be preaching. You might have heard of him...” – Family friend of Cliff Barrows

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Cliff and his new wife Billie were musicians, honeymooning near the mountains of Asheville in the summer of 1945. A family friend named Mr. Brown, an older gospel singer with a rich bass voice, had invited them to stay in his family’s home for the weekend. When the newlyweds arrived, Mr. Brown told 22-year-old Cliff, “There’s a youth meeting over at Ben Lippen Conference tomorrow night, and a young man’s going to be preaching. You might have heard of him...”

In fact, Cliff had heard the young man speak at a Youth for Christ rally in Minneapolis and had been impressed with his forceful, dynamic preaching. But due to the large crowd at the Minneapolis event, he hadn’t been able to meet the up-and-coming evangelist. Now was his chance.

“We’d love to go.”

The next evening they arrived at the conference grounds, and Cliff admired the breathtaking view of heaven with mountains surrounding. As they pulled in near the rock auditorium, Dr. Robert McQuilkin and his featured guest stood out front talking.

When Dr. McQuilkin saw his good friend Mr. Brown, he said, “Mr. Brown, we have a problem tonight, and maybe you’re just the one to help us out. Our song leader had to go home, and we don’t know what we’re going to do without one. Why don’t you lead us tonight?”

Mr. Brown lit up like a Christmas tree and said, “Oh no, you don’t want an old fellow like me to lead these youth. You want Cliff here. His wife plays the piano, and he leads singing.”

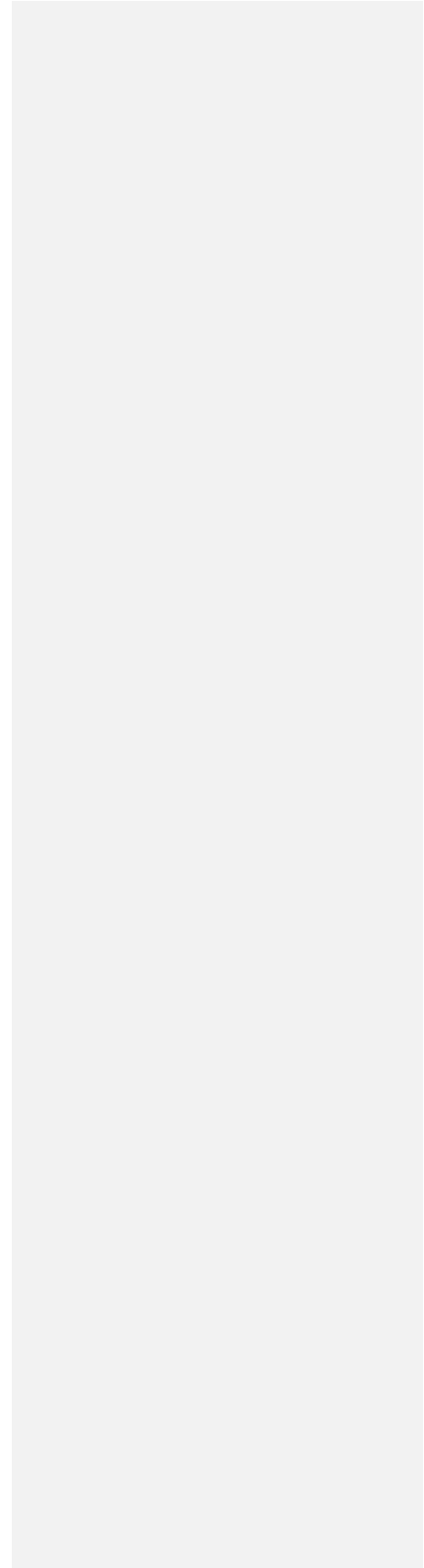
Before Dr. McQuilkin could respond, the young guest speaker leaned over, grabbed Cliff’s arm, and said, “Come on, Cliff, we won’t be choosy. Let’s go.” Cliff happened to have a trombone in the trunk of the car, and off the two went to prepare for the meeting.

It was a wonderful meeting, with Cliff playing trombone and singing, and his wife Billie on the piano. They even sang a duet before the sermon.

The young guest preacher admonished the young people from the book of Timothy: “Retreat, hold the line, and advance! Retreat by fleeing youthful lusts! Hold the line by standing firm in your convictions! And advance by going into the world and preaching the Gospel!”

Both Cliff and the youth in the audience were captivated by this new preacher’s style and message. And it wouldn’t be long before people all over the world would be captivated as well. In its early stages that summer night at Ben Lippen was the far-reaching work of

the Reverend Billy Graham; and in Mr. Cliff Barrows that night Billy had just found a song-leading partner who would be an important part of his ministry for many years to come.



L. Little Deacons and the Pine Bowl

“The boys have moved tons of earth.” – Headmaster Jonathan Williams

At the foot of the mountain near the school’s entrance was a small athletic field, which faculty member Ralph McConnell had called “only a small flat spot between two hills.” It lacked the space to host official games, so home games had to be played in the nearby town of Emma. Most of the land on the school’s ball field had been cleared by boys working off demerits. They would dig dirt out of the upper end of the field with a picking shovel, then wheelbarrow it to the other end and dump it. Clearing land this way didn’t go quickly, but the school couldn’t afford large earth moving equipment.

Headmaster Williams had reported to the board that the boys had extended the field to measure approximately 38 by 68 yards, noting with resolve, “The boys have moved tons of earth and we shall keep on until it is regulation size, that is, 50 by 100 yards.”

In December 1945, a few of the men at Ben Lippen became concerned that a school for boys needed a decent place for boys to play sports. So they scraped together some money to begin expanding the tiny ball field into regulation size.

The boys, of course, were thrilled with the idea, and pledged money of their own. The six seniors promised at least \$150 toward the project. One boy who had saved \$35 for a bicycle decided to give his money to the ball field instead. Hearing this, a boy with two bicycles promised to give the other boy one of them. Friends of the school gave money as well, and a grading firm was contracted to create a regulation size football field with a track around it a fifth of a mile long.

What an impressive setting, with its upper side at the foot of a wooded mountain and a grove of pine trees sloping down to it on the other side. The boys, seeing its resemblance to a bowl, dubbed the field “The Pine Bowl.”

“This will add \$5,000 to the value of your property,” a man with the grading firm said.

More important, now the boys could play regular or tackle football, run track, and even host opponents at home football and softball games. “Its construction means the answer to prayers we have been waiting for four years to see,” Mr. Williams wrote.

Two years later, in 1947, the boys’ team name would become the Little Deacons, the first official mascot of Ben Lippen.

M. The Seventh Year

The seventh year, which began the fall of 1946, would be a remarkable forward step in the school's history to date, with the student attendance more than doubling to a total of 68 boys for the school year. The faculty and staff increased in number and quality. The school obtained more equipment, including a bus, school apartments, a dishwasher, office equipment, and athletic equipment. The athletic field was paid for, and the athletic program expanded to include tackle football, baseball, soccer, and midget teams. School spirit improved. The chapel was finished and opened for worship. The school's relationship with the summer conference improved. A formal Bible course was taught in each grade level.

Mr. Williams had been doing the work of principal, dean, business manager, and field representative to achieve such success. That seventh year he requested to be relieved of some of the duties of principal and that the board establish a new head with the title of headmaster to serve as the executive leader of the school and to hire and manage faculty and staff. He proposed that another new position also be created, a dean to organize and lead a guidance program as a means to counsel students regarding vocations, courses of study, college, and spiritual and social concerns. The dean would also share in student discipline, help create the curriculum, and teach classes. Mr. Williams felt qualified to take on the role of dean, so the Board invited Mr. Samuel Bell to become the headmaster.

Upon his decline, they asked Mr. Williams to continue another year as principal in the current organizational structure. He agreed, but with two stipulations. First, that the school have an equal voice with the conference in decisions about building construction and how to use the Inn's rooms in the summer and winter. The conference committee took seriously their stewardship responsibility, even to the point of counting all the silverware when summer came around (to make sure that the school hadn't lost anything!).

Mr. Williams' second stipulation was that the board commit to a program of meeting the standards of the State Board of Education and of the Southern Association of Secondary Schools as soon as possible, which meant important changes and improvements in teaching force, furnishings, equipment and possibly even buildings.

The board voted to endorse fully these proposals, and Mr. Williams' salary allowance was set at \$250 per month.

After his year of commitment, Mr. Williams felt a calling away from Ben Lippen and submitted his resignation, along with some parting visions for the school. In his final meeting with the Board, he stressed the need for a five- or ten-year building plan including the needs of the conference, the school, and the camp. Without expansion in the near future, he believed it would be impossible to attract and hold the quality of faculty the school needed. A classroom building with an auditorium and school offices, and a gymnasium were the most pressing building needs.

Not wanting to leave the school without a leader, he recommended Mr. John Blanchard, a teacher at Ben Lippen who had come forward as a potential principal the year before. On March 15, 1947, the Board accepted Mr. Williams' resignation and worked out a plan for Mr. Williams to help Mr. Blanchard transition into the role of headmaster, which would be effective at Mr. Williams' official resignation on June 10.

Mr. Williams accepted the Board's invitation to take a position on the school board, which would allow him to remain close to the work he had pioneered. His last major act of business was to recommend a name change for the school. Virtually all the boys schools in the country, he said, omitted the word "boys" in their official name. The Boards unanimously took Mr. Williams suggestion and renamed the school Ben Lippen School. Still only boys would be admitted.

N. Headmaster John Blanchard (1947-1949)

“Mr. John Blanchard was very encouraging, insightful, and diplomatic.” – Wm. Neale Williams, class of 1949

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With a bachelor’s degree from Wheaton in political science and a graduate degree from Harvard in administration, Mr. John Blanchard had been employed at an Indiana steel mill as a personnel interviewer when he decided that he wanted to invest his life in boys ages eight through eighteen. A friend told him that meant he was interested in secondary education, and another friend happened to be employed at a college that managed a boys high school in the mountains. CBC professor Harold Lindsell had been John’s best man at his wedding, and the two remained close friends.

So through the recommendation of Professor Lindsell, Mr. Blanchard interviewed for a position at Ben Lippen and arrived at the school with his wife and baby daughter in 1946 to teach history and English. In his mid-thirties, he was older than most of the teachers, which, along with his Harvard degree in administration, made him a prime candidate for Mr. Williams’ replacement.

He had learned from Williams the Quaker way of conducting meetings, the belief that “the sense of the meeting” had to be arrived upon before a decision was made. Never calling for a vote, Mr. Williams had believed that full unity was necessary before taking action. Since he knew this caused the faculty members to move to the middle on issues in order to come to agreements, Mr. Blanchard would use this method in his administration as well.

He now faced a unified but diverse faculty, and he needed a soccer coach. In the faculty meeting was Dwight Chapin, a Yale grad and track star; Pat Patterson, an aggressive football coach; Arnold Scoza, a science teacher who often sang his way across campus; and Elsie Latham, a jolly English teacher. But no one with soccer experience. And although he didn’t have experience either, the sense of that meeting was that he would be the new coach. Fortunately the soccer players, including strong and steady senior Bob Hathaway who had returned from war to finish his diploma, were self-motivated and knew enough about soccer to be competent without much direction.

Mr. Blanchard, an insightful man, knew the meaning of a truly Christian education, even though Christian schools weren’t in vogue in those days. Mr. Blanchard believed Christians were asleep and didn’t know what was being done to the minds of their

Shaving My Whiskers

By Wm. Neale Williams (’49)

Our Headmaster, Mr. John Blanchard, was very encouraging, insightful, and diplomatic. I was surprised when one day he asked if I would baby-sit for him and his wife, and I was glad when it went well and that he trusted me with that responsibility. Later when I was privileged to serve as the student body president, I guess I was feeling my oats and decided to grow a beard. He called me into his office and told me that the chin whiskers were looking pretty good but would I please shave them off to set a good example for the younger students who might try to test the limits. I appreciated his confidence and got a close shave that night!

children in the schools of their country. He had seen the public school philosophy first hand while visiting a public high school principal in Charlotte. Upon learning that Ben Lippen was a Christian school, the principal had told him, "Well, we're Christian too." He pointed to a room on the second floor and continued, "We have a Bible class there every day." Underneath that Bible classroom, however, Mr. Blanchard knew there was a biology classroom in which they were teaching evolution every day. How could the two be combined?

Although Christian activities like Bible reading and prayer were normal occurrences in public schools, the educational philosophy was John Dewey humanism, a pagan world view. In reality, science couldn't be separated from the Bible, and neither could literature or any other subject. The Lord had taught Mr. Blanchard that every thought must be brought into the captivity of the obedience of Christ. All subjects had to be studied for the glory of God. That's why he had been convinced to make a career in Christian education, and that's what he would emphasize as a leader at Ben Lippen.

O. A New Gym

“The greatest physical handicap in caring for the boys at present is the lack of a gymnasium.” –Dr. Robert C. McQuilkin

After being open seven years, the school still didn't have a gymnasium. Hopes and plans had begun early in the life of the school, but by the fall of 1947 only the steel and sub-flooring actually had been completed. Headmaster Blanchard was disturbed at the thought of how the boys' faith would be affected should the gym stand untouched and unfinished for any length of time.

When in 1948 two large gifts amounting to \$20,000 came designated for the gym, Mr. Blanchard rallied the Ben Lippen family with fresh energy and hope that the Lord would complete the project. He asked for 100% giving participation from the faculty, staff, board members, and students. The boys, eager to help, organized their own campaign and wrote their parents requesting money. Parents sent in \$1,000, enough to pay for putting down the floor and glassing the windows. Because to Ben Lippen faculty “after hours” didn't exist, teachers worked hard after classes pounding in nails and surfacing the flooring.

By the end of 1948, the school needed about \$15,000 more to finish the gym, for a total cost of \$45,000. A family foundation promised a \$7,500 gift, if and when the school could match that amount, which meant the school had only \$7,500 more to raise for the gym's completion.

The first home basketball game was set for January 14, 1949, before the gym was actually paid off or its finishing touches were completed. They would play Asheville School, a leading team and Ben Lippen's biggest rival.

On the day of the event, the two teams bounded onto the gleaming new floor, and the crowd hushed as the Little Deacons knelt for prayer in the middle of the floor. As expected, Asheville badly beat the “midget team” of younger boys. But the varsity team still had a chance. In a short dedication between the games, Mr. Blanchard and Dr. McQuilkin spoke, then board member Dr. Nelson Bell offered a prayer of dedication. His son, Clayton, was one of the players on the varsity team. As the varsity game began, no one could predict the outcome. Asheville's team had four times as many players, most of whom had been hand-selected from all around the country with athletic scholarships.

“I was not the only one who feared Asheville School would come out on top,” Dr. McQuilkin later said.

But the Ben Lippen team, inspired by their new floor and new team captain Tucker Graham (just elected that day), beat Asheville with a final score of 40 to 27, christening their new gymnasium with their first win over Asheville School.

Don Hoke, of the Ben Lippen Board, wrote an article for the *Sunday School Times*, promoting the school and telling the story of the new gym. He said, "Some might have thought that the prayer before the game was something special that had to do with the new gym. Others might have the same idea that the coach of a rival school had when he asked if the Ben Lippen boys were trying to work some 'hocus-pocus' on them by having prayer on the floor before the athletic event. But this was no special thing. The Ben Lippen teams pray before every game, whether it's on the football gridiron, tennis court, baseball diamond, or basketball court. For over 10 years now, Ben Lippen has been one of the few schools in the country actively putting Christ in the center of its academic, athletic, and social program every minute of the week."

In the gymnasium, the boys would have a new place to put Christ in the center.

P. Billy Graham Revival

“By the end of the campaign everybody in town will know my position, my love and my feelings toward CBC and the things for which it stands.” – Rev. Billy Graham, evangelist

Five years after Billy Graham met his song leader at Ben Lippen Conference, he planned an evangelistic crusade in Columbia. He wrote to Dr. McQuilkin saying, “I do not think I have ever been so burdened for an evangelistic effort as I am concerning this contemplated mission in your city.”

He expressed a respect for Dr. McQuilkin, saying, “I believe in one sense this campaign will be a tremendous vindication of your long stand and ministry in Columbia. The people are going to hear the type of preaching, the same doctrine and the same emphasis that you have given for so long in the city.

“During the early days of the campaign I shall mention the CBC only sparingly, but by the end of the campaign everybody in town will know my position, my love and my feelings toward the CBC and the things for which it stands.”

Graham continued, “The burden and responsibility of praying this campaign through to a mighty and overwhelming victory is going to be almost entirely upon the shoulders of the Columbia Bible College. I shall deeply appreciate it if every student and faculty member will feel tremendously the burden for a spiritual awakening and revival in Columbia. I shall deeply appreciate it if the Columbia students and faculty are there night after night as a mighty spiritual nucleus. You have no idea how this will strengthen my hand and encourage my soul. Rest assured that you have my love, respect and appreciation for your comradeship in this venture.”

Services were scheduled for February 19 through March 12, 1950, at Columbia’s Township Auditorium. There hadn’t been a city-wide revival since Billy Sunday had been there with record conversions in 1923, which, incidentally, had been the year the Bible College officially opened as well.

Dr. McQuilkin had already seen the hints of revival and had written to Graham’s campaign director, “I do believe that there has been the beginning of a great world-wide revival.”

The Columbia campaign brought many souls to the Lord, and the Bible College offered support with parking help, volunteers, and prayers. Ben Lippen students traveled down to Columbia to sing during the campaign as well.

In the days after the campaign, Dr. McQuilkin and Rev. Graham corresponded in letters. Several times the elder Dr. McQuilkin provided counsel on theological matters, advising the younger preacher to “go slow about committing yourself to Ezekiel 38 and 39” as prophecies about Russia, and also pointing out potential issues with his teaching on the size of heaven and the description of hell as a literal “lake of fire.”

As time passed that year, Rev. Graham's campaigns grew in success and power. He sent news to Dr. McQuilkin of 25,000 in attendance at one Atlanta meeting and asked him to pray for "what could be the greatest revival in modern history." Dr. McQuilkin advised Graham to push President Truman for a national day of prayer.

Revivals in Greensboro, North Carolina, in mid-November became so intense that a telegram was sent to Dr. McQuilkin: "God wonderfully answering your prayers, impossible to close meeting here, continuing into sixth week, powerful spirit of revival sweeping entire area, 30,000 in three services Friday night, 800 decisions for Christ, reliving the days of Finney, conversions on streets, in stores and offices, business leaders and civic officials giving public testimonies, keep praying."

Then another telegram two days later: "Revival continuing as 2,800 accept Christ in past four days. Continue to pray. All churches reporting largest attendance in history. This could be what we have all been praying for."

Q. Headmaster David Falconer (1949-1952) and a Crisis Year

“How good it is to know in all of these uncertainties that the Lord Jesus Himself knows what He is going to do.” – Robert C. McQuilkin

While the world experienced great revival through mass evangelistic campaigns of Billy Graham and others, Ben Lippen experienced some of the greatest challenges the school had seen. Mr. Blanchard had taken a leave of absence to pursue graduate work in education at Harvard, and had left Mr. David Falconer in his place as acting headmaster for the 1949-1950 school year. After that year, however, Mr. Blanchard realized that his education was going to take longer than planned, and he wrote to Dr. McQuilkin to request that his status be changed from “leave of absence” to “resignation.” A letter from Dr. McQuilkin crossed his in the mail, stating that the school’s needs had changed and making the same request.

The school had begun struggling with discipline problems and faculty disunity, and it needed definite leadership. By the 1951-1952 year, the situation could be called a crisis. That year brought a substantial drop in enrollment with only 44 students, nine of whom were day students and eight from Eliada Children’s Home on the adjacent mountain. This meant that only 27 students from outside the Asheville area were enrolled in the school. But enrollment was the least of the problems.

A lot of problem boys had been “shipped” home—nineteen total the year prior. Most often, they were asked to pack their belongings in the night, and were gone before the other students had the chance to say goodbye. Behaviors that required “shipping” included being caught going to the movies or drinking just a week after evangelistic meetings. Two of the boys were suspended for stealing baseball mitts from a store in Asheville. Headmaster Falconer was absolutely shocked at the conduct of some of them at the Graham crusade in Columbia, and he was greatly disheartened that a lot of the problems were being caused by missionaries’ sons. Local Asheville churches were complaining about the behavior of Ben Lippen boys.

“This and many other things have brought reproach on the school and raised considerable questioning in the minds of friends of BL regarding the continuance of the school. It will take years to overrule the reputation of Ben Lippen School, but the right person under the Lord can do it,” said a letter from Mr. Strauss to Don Hoke, the vice president of the Ben Lippen Board.

~~Overshadowing all student problems was a strong lack of unity among the faculty. “There has not been a spirit of working together,” Mr. Falconer wrote, acknowledging that one of his greatest weaknesses was handling the faculty, and that some of them didn’t believe he was right for his position. Faculty members differed on discipline—some felt the others were too strict, others felt those were too loose. Some had offered to resign. The majority did agree on one thing: The Board was not giving enough time or attention to the problems at Ben Lippen.~~

While the boys struggled with their behavior, the faculty members struggled to agree on disciplinary procedures, and Mr. Falconer struggled in his role to unite them. Overcome with inadequacy and feeling that perhaps the administration wished to replace him, Mr. Falconer presented a letter resigning his position as headmaster. The leadership declined, telling him, “The combined board of the Bible College and Ben Lippen voted to have you continue as headmaster this year. The board also voted appreciation for your services and your fine Christian spirit of forbearance and love in connection with the problems that have arisen this year. We believe it would be a great mistake to change leadership at this point.”

Dr. McQuilkin recognized Mr. Falconer’s spirit as “a very beautiful one and a humble one,” but he also realized that the drastic problems at Ben Lippen might call for a drastic change in leadership.

The stress from leading the Bible College and handling the Ben Lippen crisis was affecting Dr. McQuilkin’s health. He wrote to a friend requesting prayer for the problems and casually mentioned a doctor’s appointment in Durham. He added, “Dr. Culley just took my blood pressure a few minutes ago, and it was 120/76. Really, I don’t need to go to Durham for a re-check, do I?”

R. Purpose and Policies

“The chief purpose of Ben Lippen School is to train young people in Christian character.” – Robert C. McQuilkin

During the crisis year of 1951-1952, the Board of Trustees closely examined the purpose and policies of the school, and Dr. McQuilkin summarized their conclusions in an informal statement:

1. **The chief purpose of Ben Lippen School is to train young people in Christian character**, with the aim of leading many of them into full-time Christian service, and giving them a preparation on the high school level for that life and service.
2. **Ben Lippen School, therefore, is in no sense a school for “problem students,”** for abnormal students, nor for students who are too low in their intellectual ability.
3. **Ben Lippen School is not a school for Christian young people only.** It is a Christian school for young people. The aim is to win the students to Christ if they are not already Christians. Although a young person may not be a Christian, he or she comes to Ben Lippen School clearly understanding what the policies and standards are, and expressing willingness to conform to them.
4. **The question is often raised as to why there is need of a school like Ben Lippen.** There are many reasons in the present situation in America that give such a school a wide field of service. For one thing, there is the atmosphere of sin and of wrong teaching in many high schools, so that Christian parents want to take their children away from them. Again, there is the tremendous need of a Christ-centered training program instead of submitting children to the deadly secularism of many of the public schools.
5. **It is the purpose to have the curriculum and the teaching conform to the Christian philosophy of education**, which has been ably set forth by Dr. Mark Fakkema, the director of the National Association of Christian Schools. We believe that the scientific way to teach all subjects is to have them centered in the truth of God.
6. **The aim from the beginning is to have high academic standards.** Under Mr. Jonathan Williams’ leadership, the North Carolina State Department of Education accredited the school. Our next aim should be to reach the standards of the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. Apart from this outward recognition, we should have high standards both in the matter of the best curriculum, and in the matter of training the young people in each course. One of the special features is the individual attention to each student in training how to study. Ben Lippen graduates should thus become young people very much desired by other institutions.
7. **Having a scientific and Christ-centered curriculum, the Bible is to have a fundamental place.** All the students are to have Bible class through all their four years. This should be so arranged that the students will understand that it is the most important of all their studies; the desire is that it should be considered by them to be among the most popular of all their courses.

8. **It is recognized that students should have a full, rich, wholesome life with a well-rounded program of athletics, recreation, social life, Christian activity and service as well as studies.** Our point of view is that Christ may be central in the lives of adolescents. We have no thought of having them act as middle-aged adults or older Christians. However, our view is that we take too readily to the prevailing secular view of life for these young people without recognizing that when they say “to me to live is Christ,” they may have a rounded full life.
9. **The standards of separation from worldly things and particularly from attendance at movies does present a difficult problem.** We should have more definite and constant instruction as to the basis for these standards so that they may accept them as their own standards. Also, it is necessary for us to work more diligently on amusements and recreations that will be a substitute for what they would find in movies and other things that they are not allowed to do.
10. **The athletic program has always been a full and wholesome part of the activities of Ben Lippen.** The splendid gymnasium that the Lord has provided is, of course, a wonderful asset. Last year the problem was that with the reduced enrollment the football team lost all of their games except one. This is bad on the morale. Some have gotten the impression that athletics have been overdone and that, under the circumstances, it might be better to omit football. Most of us have felt, however, that the real solution is to train the students to be Christians in all of their sports and to have the highest ideal of sportsmanship.
11. **It is a rather general impression that we cannot expect adolescents to be especially interested in Christian service. This is a mistake,** and contrary to everything in the New Testament. Young people must be active, and they must have goals and incentives. We believe that one of the greatest fields for the use of their energy and for a challenge to their ability is in the field of helping people, and winning souls, and taking part in Christian activities of various kinds. One of the vital contributions of the school should be toward its own community.
12. **The policy of the school has been to instruct the students in their responsibility of church attendance and participation in a local church.** They are to be trained in the reverent and proper conduct at church. Our relationship to the evangelical ministers and churches should be such that they will have a high regard for Ben Lippen School as an educational institution, and not think of the school as being peculiar in any way, theologically or religiously. It is true that the standards of some of the churches may be such that they will consider Ben Lippen standards to be a criticism of them.
13. **The missionary aspect of Ben Lippen School is an important feature.** One of the chief designs we have had in mind is to serve the children of missionaries. Another missionary aspect of the school is the desire to train the Christian boys and girls in their responsibility to the Great Commission. We should be turning out many missionary volunteers.
14. **In the matter of applying discipline,** we believe that three things are important. The faculty should be an absolute unit in agreeing on the principles and the application of the principles of discipline. The second point is that there should be no compromise on the principles set forth before the students. They should know clearly what is required of them. There should be the standard that other

schools have successfully inculcated, that of “no griping.” The third and perhaps most important point is that there should be the love and wisdom of Christ in dealing with each student individually. Although we have stated that we take no “problem students,” in another sense every student may be a problem. The challenge to us, and the promised grace of the Lord to us, is to win these students and overcome their faults. This requires great patience and constant training.

15. **The relationship of Ben Lippen School to Columbia Bible College:**

- a) The Bible College corporation owns all of the property at Ben Lippen.
- b) The conduct of Ben Lippen School is entirely under its own board and faculty. The Bible College Board must confirm the appointment of headmaster and of president. These appointments and all others are made by the Ben Lippen School Board.
- c) The aim is that Ben Lippen School should be independent in its development, in its financing, and in its control. The vital relation to the Bible College is that the same biblical and spiritual standards are held by the Bible College Board and the Ben Lippen Board. Several are members of both boards.
- d) While Ben Lippen School is not primarily designed to be a preparation for entrance into Columbia Bible College, it is hoped that quite a number of young people from Ben Lippen School will be led to take the Bible College training, preparing for foreign missionary service or other Christian service.

16. **Financial Policy.** The hope has been that we would reach the enrollment that will make the school self-supporting so far as the current running expenses are concerned. The new construction work, the improvements on the property, and such capital items, would need to come from gifts. However, for several years we have needed an average of about \$1,000 a month in gifts to care for teacher salary allowances. In the past year, and especially in the past semester, because of a reduced enrollment, the need has been for about \$1,500 per month in gifts.

Thus the crisis brought about a clarification in the aims of the school and its future.

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S. Headmaster Robertson McQuilkin (1952-1955)

“The hand of the Lord is very evident upon the school at this critical juncture.” – Robert C. McQuilkin

Strong cases had been offered to convince the board to close Ben Lippen, but Dr. McQuilkin wasn't ready to give up yet on what seemed by some to be one of his favorite projects. But then, Dr. McQuilkin showed passion about all of his endeavors. When one critic suggested the school should close, Dr. McQuilkin offered a simple rebuttal with a peaceful smile: “The Lord finishes what He starts.”

Perhaps a younger man was needed to bond with the boys and improve morale. Dr. McQuilkin solicited as a potential headmaster his son Robertson, who had graduated from Ben Lippen eight years prior and had been teaching at the Bible College. Although Robertson had the long-term goal of serving on the mission field, he agreed to spare a few years for the challenge at Ben Lippen should the Board approve of him.

Knowing that Robertson's first task would be to build a strong new faculty, he and his father sought out four graduating students from the Graduate School at CBC to serve as new faculty members and help revive the struggling ministry.

Anthony Fortosis, a business executive with a bachelor's degree from Lehigh and a master's from Columbia University, would soon be receiving his master's in biblical education from CBC's Graduate School. Highly educated and experienced, Fortosis offered skills in advertising, publicity, and business management to Ben Lippen, and he could also teach history.

Robert Weeber, a Wheaton grad, was admired for his athletic ability in basketball, football, and baseball, and already had coaching experience that could contribute to the athletic program at Ben Lippen.

Wayne Doll came with a background in agriculture, cabinet making, and mechanics. He had already been working for CBC's business manager, John Hehl, as a maintenance worker, and not only could he provide maintenance help at Ben Lippen, he could teach a shop class and possibly even start an agriculture program.

Finally, Marlin Bolar offered training in science and had already been teaching the subject in the Bible College as he worked to complete his graduate work at CBC.

Thus the new team emerged: a businessman, a coach, a maintenance worker, and a science teacher. “They are four of the finest young men in the graduate school in their spiritual life and in their ability,” the younger Mr. McQuilkin reported to the board.

Robertson McQuilkin, himself, had been teaching courses at the Bible College and was well-liked. Seeming confident in the new administrative plans that would recreate the

administration at Ben Lippen, the board voted, with no dissenting vote, to elect J. Robertson McQuilkin as headmaster. He was twenty-four years old.

Just before the end of the 1952 school year, Dr. McQuilkin and his son visited Ben Lippen together to make the announcement and to meet the students.

Later, former Headmaster Dave Falconer wrote to Robertson, "I don't know if I have told you this, but the day you were presented as the new headmaster, I read the verse your father quoted so often, 'This is the finger of God.'"

T. Girls at Ben Lippen?!

“It seems to me that it would be a grand idea to make Ben Lippen co-educational.” – Dr. Charles Woodbridge, advisory board member

For some time, perhaps even the school’s beginning, the question of opening the doors to female students had been proposed. In 1949, the director of the National Christian School Association, Dr. Mark Fakkema, visited Ben Lippen and presented a strong argument for having girls and boys educated together. “Why doesn’t Ben Lippen have a co-educational school?” he asked.

A faculty member doubted the idea, “You can’t build a wall high enough to keep [the boys and girls] apart!”

Dr. McQuilkin presented the idea to the board and asked them to pray about the matter, but to keep it strictly confidential so that people wouldn’t assume the school had made a definite decision. The Board was decidedly split over the idea, as could be seen in their letters to Dr. McQuilkin.

“It seems to me that it would be a grand idea to make BL co-educational. Looked at from any angle, the idea seems to be sound.”

“If the Lord wanted Ben Lippen to be a co-educational school, He would have led us to start one from the beginning.”

“I don’t want to see us follow what other schools are doing. High school boys and girls are better off in separate schools.” (Montrose School for Girls in New Jersey had recently made the decision to accept boys as day students and eventually as boarding students, and students and parents preferred the co-ed program.)

Missionary parents wanted their children, both sons and daughters, in the same school. “And if we are led to admit girls of missionaries, why not others?” a board member reasoned.

“Our young people—boys and girls—are going to get together socially somewhere some of the time,” another board member wrote. “In promiscuous gatherings they are a law unto themselves. Too often they get clear out of home control. But if parents can send their daughters and sons to a Christian co-ed school they learn to mingle socially in a

wholesome atmosphere and under Spirit-guided supervision. Social relations are taught and practiced according to the standards of the Word of God. Thus it seems to me that Ben Lippen School, as a co-ed institution, would be attractive to parents of girls (as well as boys), even to parents who might not be strong Christians themselves.”

Dr. McQuilkin suggested that the program might begin small by praying that the Lord would send applications from some girls who desired to come.

By the crisis year of 1951-1952, the question was still on the table, but the majority felt that the school shouldn't attempt co-education until it had solved the problems associated with a school for boys and had put the school on solid ground. A poll of the faculty showed that most of them favored endorsing co-education at some future date, but that the facilities were not adequate to undertake the move at the present time.

The minority side included Dr. McQuilkin and Headmaster Falconer, who thought that making the school co-ed might help some of the problems, depending on the kind of girls that would enter. Dr. McQuilkin also thought the Lord might be presenting the challenges to the school to lead them toward taking the seemingly drastic step. He said, “Speaking of my personal opinion, I wonder if the Lord is not showing us by our small enrollments that He wants us to take this move. I have thought that if we would make this move we might make a serious approach to securing day students from Asheville. When we get in the neighborhood of 70 students we are faced with a problem of classroom space, but these are the type of problems we like to deal with. To be a first-class school, we do need adequate classroom space.”

In the midst of the crisis and the pending decision, Dr. McQuilkin kept a positive attitude of faith, “There is, I believe, almost unanimous agreement on the part of faculty and staff that God has a great place for BLS and that it should go forward.” He mentioned a definite need for “radical changes” and encouraged the faculty and board to be open should the Lord lead them to admit girls, even as quickly as the next year.

“My own thought,” Dr. McQuilkin continued, “is that if we decide that we would admit girls, we should let it be known and see what the Lord would indicate to us. If a dozen or so girls of good families and good Christian character would want to come, this might be an indication.”

By the end of the 1952 school year, they had received inquiries from at least ten prospective girl students. They also had appointed a new headmaster, Mr. Robertson McQuilkin, who believed it to be a weakness to postpone the decision because of lack of enrollments. “If it is in the Lord's will,” he believed, “the natural time to begin is now.”

The opinions of the board and faculty members had been changing in favor of accepting girls, and Dr. McQuilkin wrote to an opponent of the co-ed idea, “Recently they have been rather unanimous in believing that it would be a good plan, provided the Lord puts His seal upon it.”

A chapel announcement in late spring 1952 shocked the boys: “Ben Lippen is opening its doors to girls next year.” Afterward, the macho male students huddled all over campus to conspire together about the future. Just before school let out that year, at a track meet at Asheville School, they were still murmuring about the situation. One senior boldly proclaimed, “That decision has just ruined Ben Lippen.”

After many years and much debate, at the board meeting on June 10, 1952, the board took a step of faith and voted to revise the policy of co-education, accepting girls in 7th-12th grades for the following school year. A few months later they would decide to accept women on the Ben Lippen Board as well, electing Mrs. Robert C. McQuilkin as the first woman on the board.

Four days after the official decision to become co-educational, Dr. McQuilkin wrote, “We are facing a new era, I believe, in Ben Lippen School.”

U. President McQuilkin's Homegoing

"Young people, get out and write a faith chapter of your own!" – Dr. Robert C. McQuilkin, in his final chapel message to the CBC Senior Class, 1951

For about a year, Dr. McQuilkin had been losing strength, even as he fervently plunged forward in the work of the Bible College and Ben Lippen. He had spent four months in the fall of 1951 at Duke Clinic, under intensive diet restrictions and treatment, and had returned to his work afterward with a fresh vitality.

In June of 1952, he had complained about his heart while speaking at a young people's conference in Pennsylvania, but an examination and heart X-ray showed a healthy heart.

It had been a year of changes, especially at Ben Lippen School, with the board just electing J. Robertson McQuilkin as headmaster and making the decision to open the school to girls.

The summer conference on the mountain would provide a chance for rest and fellowship for the busy president.

Tuesday morning [<specific date>](#), he spoke with a Bible College official about plans for the fall, he played with his two grandchildren, then returned to his cottage. [<Full story from *Always in Triumph* to come.>](#)

The funeral service on July 17, 1952, in the Bible College's auditorium in downtown Columbia brought hundreds of friends from around the world, faculty members, and students still in town for the summer. Floral arrangements crowded the front of the auditorium, the crowd overflowed into the lawn, and hundreds who had been impacted by his life sent their regards through telegrams and letters. The *Sunday School Times* described the occasion: "His life ended on the note of triumph that always characterized Robert C. McQuilkin. Even the local newspaper headlined his funeral 'Song of Victory, Evangelistic Appeal Mark McQuilkin Rites.' It was all as he would have liked it."

Less than a month later, on August 2, the board announced that Dr. G. Allen Fleece, a long-time associate of Dr. McQuilkin and a new faculty member at the Bible College, would become acting president. Eight months later, seeing "the evident blessing upon Dr. Fleece's leadership," the board elected him the permanent president and Dr. McQuilkin's successor as the second leader of Columbia Bible College and Ben Lippen School.

A new era truly was beginning, just as Dr. McQuilkin had predicted just a couple of months before.

IV. Mountain Growth

Ben Lippen School (1952 – 1980)

A. Discipline

“Christian discipline is the teaching of self-control and the enforcing of obedience, in accord with the Scriptures, from the motive of Christian love...” – Hank Schum, faculty member

When Mr. McQuilkin took the position of headmaster, he came into a difficult situation where student discipline had grown out of control; he called it “the major problem at Ben Lippen” in his report to the board at the end of the 1952 fall semester. With his new faculty, though, he hoped to evaluate and solve some of the discipline problems in order to correct the negative reputation that the boys had earned for Ben Lippen.

“I feel that the way to do away with most major discipline problems (we have about three such boys at present) is an effective program of screening applicants,” Mr. McQuilkin reported. “Mr. Falconer and I discussed this matter when he was here. We did little on it, except rejecting all who were obviously not desirable. A brilliant young man who contributed a week’s service to the work spent part of his time analyzing the application records of boys who had been problems in times past to determine what we could have learned from the materials at hand and how we could have secured more information. This should be a start. I am thoroughly convinced that we should grow slowly in enrollment, rather than risk questionable students.”

Several respected teachers wrote with perspective on the philosophy of discipline. Mr. Chapin wrote, “Our philosophy of discipline is that young people need training in Christian character by ‘doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness,’ and that if a student fails to respond to such training after months of trial, and becomes a menace to the morale of the school, he or she must be withdrawn from the school by the parents, or be suspended. However, we do all in our power by prayer and exhortation and personal example and influence to win such students to correct attitudes and habits.”

“Uncle Hank” Schum wrote, “Christian discipline is the teaching of self-control and the enforcing of obedience, in accord with the Scriptures, from the motive of Christian love, for the best interests of the student and his associates, to the glory of God.”

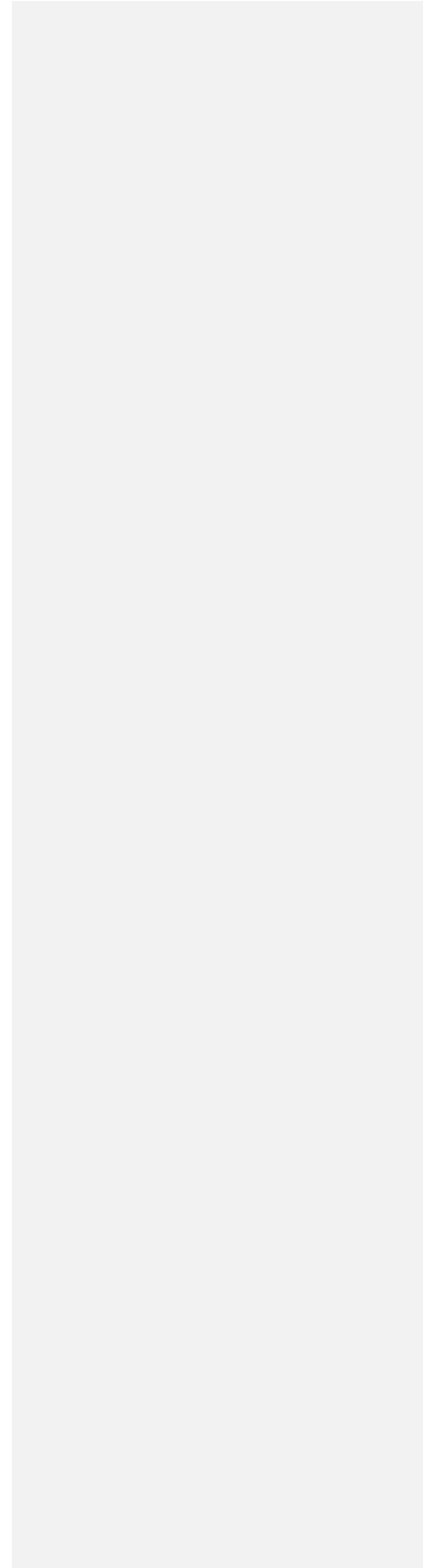
By 1955, they had established as policy that no questionable student would be admitted, and for the first time in recent years, the school’s returning students outnumbered the new

Mr. Bolar’s Impact

“Mr. Marlin Bolar was our science teacher and class advisor. I always admired his gentle spirit, sense of humor, dedication to the Lord, and his caring attitude to the students.” – Betsy Gould Bauman (’56)

“Mr. Bolar was the class Bible teacher, and I went to church where he preached. He showed the mercy and grace of Jesus during and after our senior trip to Washington, D.C.”
– Dick Weston (’56)

students by more than half. Almost all of the new students were in eighth or ninth grade, and the school was still “family size” with 84 in the student body. There were twice as many boys as girls, the seniors made up the largest class, and about 1/3 of the student body were missionary children.



An MK's Metamorphosis

By Benjamin Pent ('53), pastor, adjunct Bible professor

My twin brother and I were born to missionary parents in 1935 in Peru, where we became an instant oddity in the primitive Amazon tribe they worked among. Natives of that region killed twins because of an ancient superstition that one of them was the devil. Since they didn't know which one, they would kill them both. We survived, though not without the daily gazes of curious onlookers.

During the 13 years I lived in Peru, my life became a maze of twisted hopes and unfulfilled dreams. My parents saw to it that I went to church every time the doors were opened. But superficially I mouthed a Christianity void of credibility. My passion was soccer, where I vented my anger and frustration while searching for identity and freedom.

Unlike today, where missionary children are offered modern educational facilities, my home-study courses, shared in a small jungle home with five other siblings, became a hit-and-miss education. So my dad arranged for my twin brother and me to leave Peru for the States and Ben Lippen. It was there that my battle for self-identity began. Not only did I struggle scholastically, but my distorted self-image was a barrier to authentic growth.

But the winds of change began to transform my life following my 16th birthday, where I faced the first crisis of my life: *the crisis of salvation*. Understanding my total depravity under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, I received Christ as my Lord and Savior. With this newfound Joy, I began sharing my faith unashamedly. A number of fellow students would meet in the slum districts of Asheville each Saturday night where we would sing, play musical instruments and preach until we were too hoarse to go on. It was on one of those streets I led my first soul to Christ.

But spiritual growth is a process, and change comes only through surrender of one's will. This struggle was no small challenge as I faced a second important life crisis: *giving up my rights*. The courage to move from bondage to freedom is a metamorphic miracle.

One of my strongholds was an uncontrollable temper that led to a temporary expulsion from school. That, along with a lack of self-worth, poor scholastic background and self-confidence, kept me bound. Daily chapel and godly counsel from caring teachers became an invitation for dialogue. But the greatest impact came from our faculty advisor, Robertson McQuilkin, whose compassion, sensitivity, and transparency gave me a desire to change. There was an apparent balance between belief and behavior that created a desire within me to soar.

It is now over 50 years since those formative days at Ben Lippen. I look back at my years there as the turning point of my life and future ministry. Like a caterpillar spinning its cocoon and later winging its flight upward, I crawled up the "Mountain of Trust" and there learned that from the entombment of my 'self' with Christ I could begin to fly with the wings of His spirit.

B. The Reality of Co-education

“Girls have finally come into their own at Ben Lippen.” - Robertson McQuilkin, headmaster

With girls on the mountain for the first time, a careful screening policy was especially imperative. Not just any girl could be admitted.

“We praise God for the five He sent this year (plus two more second semester) and that only they came,” Mr. McQuilkin wrote. “I feel this is a year for establishing the coeducational program and surely God is setting His seal on the plan.”

Even with only five girls on the mountain that first co-educational year, the faculty struggled with the challenges of having boys and girls living in such close proximity. Teachers became quite strict in enforcing the rules of separation, and one young male student is reported to have received a severe reprimand for simply looking at a girl! The faculty members felt the parental burden of keeping the boys and girls at a safe distance from each other, and they knew that, should pregnancies or cases of immorality occur, the parents would hold them responsible for their children. Thus the boundaries were set.

The First Girl: Anna Ruth Cully ('53)

Dr. Paul Culley taught at Columbia Bible College, lived on the street of faculty homes on campus affectionately known as “Faculty Row,” and sat on the board of Ben Lippen School. He had encouraged the idea of a co-educational school, so when the board finally made the decision to move in that direction, his daughter became one of the first “test candidates.” For senior Anna Ruth, switching schools was no new thing. As a rising junior, she had already been at three high schools for various reasons. But moving from Columbia to Asheville and living among a bunch of boys was a different matter altogether. She did not want to go.

Her senior year, she felt totally scrutinized, and spent many evenings in the lounge locked in the phone booth crying to her parents, while they encouraged her to stick it out. She was one of only five girls in a school of over 60 boys, and the only senior girl.

All of the faculty members were nervous with girls around, not knowing what to expect, and always fearing that something would happen between the boys and the girls. So, of course, when Anna Ruth held Merle Dye’s hand walking back to the bus after an away football game, she immediately was caught and all of her extracurricular privileges were taken away. They still let her be a cheerleader, however, because only three girls were on the squad.

In her senior “will and testament,” Anna Ruth willed her position as best-looking girl in the senior class to Alice Lathrop, the best-looking girl (the only girl) in the junior class.

Anna Ruth went on to settle in Atlanta and work with the Department of Corrections for over 18 years, perhaps having learned her toughness from her year at Ben Lippen

Another “co-educational problem” was the issue of modest dress. In the early years of co-educational life, sleeveless dresses and makeup were forbidden, and girls were required to wear culottes on athletic occasions.

One year before at the Ben Lippen Conference, the matter of females wearing slacks presented a stiff debate among the leadership. Some argued that the Deuteronomy 22:6 command that “A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man,” clearly indicated that women should not wear slacks. Others argued that in the days of Deuteronomy men wore skirts, and in modern times slacks were a distinct part of women’s fashion. Some argued that slacks were clearly immodest, while others argued that dresses for sports activities were more immodest than slacks. A joint meeting of the CBC Board and Conference Committee had to be called on the matter.

One faculty member at the Bible College remarked, “If an unbeliever heard this discussion, he would then know that Christians are absolutely crazy.”

Don Hoke reported this comment to Dr. McQuilkin, and agreeing, said, “It is possible within the walls of the Bible College here, out of touch with the majority of life outside, to fail to realize that many of these questions are not basically moral or scriptural, but one of custom and prejudice. The obvious implication of slacks is that they are much more modest than short loose skirts; anything brought against this unless it is directly scriptural falls in that realm of tradition and opinion.”

Mr. Vernon Patterson, an early member of the CBC Board, wrote, “I believe our responsibility is to teach the great *principles* of the gospel and of righteous living according to the Scriptures. But we should be very cautious about making regulations in the fields of style, cosmetics, and fashions. For while principles never change, these spheres are as variable as the season—almost as the weather.”

At Ben Lippen School, they concluded that female students would wear dresses for social and educational activities and culottes (long, loose shorts) for athletic activities.

Co-educational life also brought understandable distractions for the students. Headmaster McQuilkin reported in the spring of 1953, “Every girl seems to feel unsuccessful unless attached to a particular boy. This often has unhappy complications, but I sometimes wonder if our efforts to avert this tendency is not seeking to dam Niagara, at least in our day and age. The effects so far have been limited to a marked listlessness on the part of some and a lowering of grades (although half of the ‘couples’ are on the Honor Roll) and an increase in ‘free-time’ visits—nothing too serious in other words.”

According to a 1953 survey, 72% of the student body believed that “going steady” was unwise.

The kinks associated with a mountain full of male and female teenagers living together would continue to be worked out as time passed, and they would have to be: The number of female students was quickly rising with 18 girls the second co-ed year.

By 1954, accepting girls had nearly doubled the enrollment, and many felt that the school was expanding too rapidly. In a student body of 92 students, 30 were missionary kids and 32 were girls.

Mrs. Sidney Andrews, the benefactor whose 1939 donation had enabled the boys school to open, would now provide a valuable contribution for the girls at Ben Lippen. She passed away little more than a year after girls were admitted to the school and left in her bequest almost \$66,000 to Ben Lippen, \$50,000 of which would be put toward building a new girls dormitory.

The simple structure, built of concrete block with brick facing, would accommodate 48 girls and three supervisors. Through a Christian architectural firm, the plans were completed at cost, and a well-reputed local builder provided a building worth more than \$100,000 for only \$90,000.

It was a great cause for thanksgiving, and with timing and warm weather only God could have provided, the girls moved in the day before Thanksgiving, 1954. Miss Marguerite McQuilkin served as the dean of girls.

Her brother, Mr. McQuilkin, wrote, "Girls have finally come into their own at Ben Lippen."

C. The '50s:

"I believe they are the finest group of young people I have ever known." – Headmaster Robertson McQuilkin, referring to the Class of 1954.

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Each year opened with a Student Conference, in which special speakers would give evangelistic meetings. Fifty of the ninety-five students in 1954 were new, and Mr. McQuilkin described them as "typical American youngsters with almost no concept of what real Christian living means." He continued, "During that first week of school we often felt like cowboys trying to corral fifteen or twenty untamed colts." During the invitation that year given by evangelist Clifford Lewis with no music, no pleading, and no fanfare, thirty students went forward to get their lives right with the Lord.

Bible classes met in faculty homes, and a favorite event was refreshments after church on Sunday night. Many times the snacks were as simple as cookies and Kool-Aid, but they were greatly anticipated.

Manners were a must. At every meal, a faculty member would grade each table and on Friday night at supper, the table with the best manners received a cake as reward. Dinner required the boys to wear ties and coats, even if they had just finished football practice.

Academics were challenging. Time was allotted for study halls, and faculty members were always around to help with schoolwork. In the spring of 1954, Ben Lippen students participated in their very first achievement testing program as a member of The Educational Records Bureau, and the average score was well above the national public school average.

In 1955, the school ranked even higher with averages approaching the private school

Roommates

By Hugh Starnes ('53)

Three good years of my life were spent at Ben Lippen School. At the time I was not aware the school was having such an impact on my life. Looking back over fifty years, I see my life was greatly affected by those three years "on the hill."

Most of us roomed in the Administrating Building. Over a period of the three years we had lots of different roommates. Glenn Farring came to Ben Lippen from Florida. Glenn was a good student and a good athlete. We played football, basketball, and baseball together. When graduation came, Glenn received most of the honors. Following graduation we traveled across America to work in the logging camps of northern California. We were also "tent makers," which was a Southern Baptist program that helped start churches. Then we attended college together at a small Baptist college in Plainview, Texas.

Glenn and I became as close as brothers, and for fifty years we have kept a close relationship. Once a year we try to take a vacation together.

Truly our lives were shaped during the years we spent at Ben Lippen, and I am a better man because of my days there.

1955 Tuition: \$690 per year includes room, board, tuition, and student fees.

averages. "We do not desire to surpass this, of course," Mr. McQuilkin wrote, "because our whole purpose would be betrayed if we became as academically restrictive as the average private preparatory school."

Still academic excellence prevailed. In the 1959 National Merit Scholarship Competition, two seniors earned positions as semifinalists in the nationwide contest. One ranked 22nd and the other 148th among 14,013 scholars who competed from North Carolina.

Spiritual growth remained the number one goal of the school, and God was part of daily life, even in the hymns the students sang on busses to away games. Students were heavily involved in outreach programs, including Saturday night street evangelism. "Picture, if you will, boys ranging from 13 to 18 meeting the leisurely Saturday night crowds with a friendly smile, an engaging word of greeting, and leading many to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ," Mr. McQuilkin wrote to parents.

In Sunday School classes, young people's programs, a jail service, a quartet deputation, a child evangelism class, a visitation program, a street meeting, and many others, Dr. Chapin felt that students were reaching out more than ever before in the history of Ben Lippen School.

The Class of 1954 By Merle Dye ('54)

It was at Ben Lippen that I came to know Christ personally. It happened during youth conference week the summer of '53 of the summer conference season, so my first two years were just a good show, but no reality of Christ in my heart. The Lord used Robertson McQuilkin, our class advisor and Bible teacher, as the channel of God's drawing and wooing in my heart. He was not only our teacher, and headmaster, but also a friend who, with his wife, Muriel, took us as a class into their hearts, homes and lives. At that summer conference meeting I responded to God's question, "Who is going to run your life...Me or you?" It was the example, prayers, teaching and love from Mr. McQuilkin that enabled me to say, "enough of myself" and surrender my all to Christ.

It was on the mountain that same summer shortly after that decision that I surrendered my life to missions. I didn't know anything of the future at that time, but God knew that included in that wonderful plan was four years of training at Columbia Bible College where I met June, God's choice of a life partner, marrying her in Huston Hall, returning to Ben Lippen on staff for two years, then joining SIM mission board and serving seventeen years in Ethiopia, five in Sudan, and twenty-two years and counting as SIM reps in the southeast.

It all started at Ben Lippen ... is it any wonder that BL means so much to me??

There were all of ten of us in the Class of '54...eight boys and two girls. Mr. McQuilkin wrote of us after graduation, "I believe they are the finest group of young people I have ever known. This is remarkable in that only a year before most of them were completely unpromising so far as spiritual progress is concerned."

Every one is very special to me, and through the two years of godly example, teaching, love and prayers by Mr. McQuilkin, nine of us have been full time in missions, the pastorate, and Child Evangelism, and the other has faithfully served the Lord in his church.

D. Missionary Kids

“Ben Lippen is a missionary school.” – Headmaster Robertson McQuilkin

“We feel that perhaps we miss our boys more than they will miss us,” a missionary parent wrote. “We miss them so much, and four years is a long time. Last night I was in bed thinking and saying, ‘Four years is a long time, four years is a long time,’ and the words came to me, ‘I left my home in Glory, separated from my Father and it was 33 years before I returned to my Father again.’ Four years is short compared to thirty-three years. We are just pilgrims here; this is not our home. We count it a joy and privilege to go to [a foreign country] for our lovely Lord Jesus. It is hard to leave our boys, but He has said, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee’ and He never fails.”

Even though Ben Lippen had been founded with the intention of educating boys from missionary families, early students had come from primarily the United States. It wasn’t until the 50s that the vision began to be fulfilled on a larger scale, and by 1956, 47 of the 97 students were missionary kids, with parents representing the Sudan Interior Mission, Latin American Mission, Central American Mission, Gospel Missionary Union, and Wycliffe Bible Translators (to name a few). This diversity among the student body contributed a unique flavor for the mountain. The students had lived all around the world, and each brought a unique perspective to the school and the other students.

Missionary kids, many from South America, brought fine skills in soccer to the school, and in 1954, modest Ben Lippen won the Blue Ridge Conference soccer championship with an undefeated season. Not only did Ben Lippen beat the public schools, but also the two traditional prep schools, leaving everyone wondering about this little mountain school.

One can only imagine the struggles missionary parents must have faced when leaving their children in the hands of teachers and staff. It was one of many sacrifices that missionaries would make for their Lord. Mr. McQuilkin explained, “As a gift to the

Not the Mainstream Student

By Carol Kretzler Cannon ('54)

I arrived on the Mountain of Trust in the fall of 1953. My mother had been married four times and was an alcoholic. Back in the 50s, most of the young people at Ben Lippen School were from strong Christian families, preachers’ kids and MKs. Needless to say this little gal from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, wasn’t the mainstream student.

How I praise God for getting me there. For the first time in my life I began to understand God’s love for me and His purpose for me. Through the classes led by godly teachers, and interaction with some great Christian friends, I began to grow spiritually. That was over 50 years ago.

My husband and I have been missionaries in Irian Jaya; pastored two churches, and for the last twenty-six years ministered in a Christian school home for teenagers from problem backgrounds. How I thank God for my senior year at Ben Lippen that was the foundation of a fruitful Christian life.

Lord, missionaries have given up American comforts and American incomes. They have also given over their own children in a very real sense.”

Many of the missionary families could not afford to send their children back to the States, despite a hunger to have them educated in a Christian setting. To help them, a gift fund was established for children of missionaries.

Ben Lippen had always been a place that emphasized missions and where many had received a call to the mission field. Educating children of missionaries and giving them a heart for missions achieved a strategic result in world evangelization, as was explained by one missionary parent, who wrote, “You are training second generation missionaries, and second generation missionaries have as much advantage over first generation missionaries as do national workers. I often think that [a certain missionary leader’s] greatest gift to Latin America was two second generation missionaries. I remember hearing [a national] say, ‘You know we love all the missionaries, but if they would take them all away and just leave [two missionary children from Ben Lippen] we would be satisfied.’ The one invaluable thing that they have that the rest of us don’t is that by birth they belong. So if you send back fifty Spirit-filled second generation missionaries to their fields, you would have made an incalculable contribution to the evangelization of the world.”

E. Mr. McQuilkin Leaves for Japan

▲ *“Believing prayer rests just as quietly before the answer as it does following the answer.” – Headmaster Robertson McQuilkin*

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Robertson had expressed a desire to go to Japan as a missionary, and had been planning the move for some time, knowing that the position as headmaster would be only a few years. He had come to believe the time had come. In December 1954, he reported to the board that he and his wife had applied to the Evangelical Alliance Mission in November. This was, he reported, “following several days of special prayer during which time the Lord gave about a dozen definite tokens and sealed the plan to make application with His Own peace.”

During this time, the school family faced an uncanny number of tragedies in the student body. David Lapham’s father was killed in an automobile accident on his way to Ben Lippen, Ted Lathrop drowned in a boating accident near his home in Mexico over the summer, Bob and Ed Lewis’ father died instantly of a heart attack, two of the boys got in a nasty sled accident with brain concussions, fractured skulls, and lost consciousness (thankfully both were fully restored), and Ted Jarnagin died in a plane crash.

Amidst these tragedies and his pending decision to leave for the mission field, Mr. McQuilkin made an important observation about the prayer of faith. “Believing prayer rests just as quietly before the answer as it does following the answer. I have been greatly impressed in recent months that a great deal of our praying is actually repeating wishes under the form of prayer. Believing prayer—the prayer of faith—is a million miles removed from this wishing out loud.”

At the end of the 1955 semester, the McQuilkins would take the step of faith and leave for Japan. Anthony C. Fortosis, who had been serving as assistant headmaster, presented the most natural candidate for the position of headmaster. He had experience as a teacher and business administrator, including as an instructor at Lehigh University, a graduate assistant at Columbia, and a merchandising counselor at United Fruit Company.

The Fortosis’s also had hopes for foreign missionary service but felt the Lord’s calling to this work at this time.

F. Headmaster Tony Fortosis (1955 – 1970)

With his large frame, dark Greek features, and serious temperament, Anthony “Tony” Fortosis tended to be quite intimidating to the students, many of whom never got to see his lighter side. Stepping into Robertson McQuilkin’s shoes to become headmaster put a heavy burden upon him. He felt tremendous pressure to uphold the work, which had struggled and almost closed not too many years prior. With no experience in secondary education, and this being his first experience in Christian work, he struggled with inferiority and fear of failure. He was, after all, the Board’s third choice for headmaster.

His first year as a teacher, Headmaster McQuilkin had approached him with the need to “learn to treat students with more gentleness.” He knew the evaluation was accurate and determined to change his harsh, legalistic tendencies. This would be a journey for him into his role as headmaster.

In the midst of his tenure as headmaster, he visited with Francis Schaeffer in Switzerland, an experience which greatly changed his perspective. “We cannot legislate spirituality with rules, discipline, threats or any other means, as proper as rules and discipline may be,” he wrote. “Francis Schaeffer said it well: ‘We cannot build walls high enough around our schools to keep out the world, the flesh, or the devil. We must build the person of Christ in their lives in the Spirit. Building Christ in our lives is the only antidote to the world, the flesh, and the devil.’”

“Dr. Fortosis was a great influence on my life in every way – especially spiritually. He was always kind, encouraging, and caring.”

- Ralph N. Parker ('57)

“The genuine care Dr. Fortosis showed for each student in the school and in his classes endeared him to us and made Senior Bible and Social Studies meaningful.” -Debby Storms Bohl ('69)

G. Classroom Building

“We do not want a building to glorify the creature or to add to the physical beauty of the campus. We need these facilities to enable us to train more young people in knowing Christ and exalting Him in life and service.” – Headmaster Tony Fortosis

By the mid-fifties, enrollment had almost reached capacity and the school desperately needed a new classroom building. Not only was a classroom building the missing ingredient in receiving accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, without the building Ben Lippen would have to turn away numerous students.

Mr. Fortosis had claimed Isaiah 54:2 as a word from the Lord, “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”

The Board voted in January 1957, to set as a prayer project the sum of \$60,000 (one half the total cost of building, which was Mrs. McQuilkin’s suggestion of a seal from the Lord) for the construction of the classroom building. June 3, Commencement Day, was set as the “goal line”.

Hearts sailed when they prayed for a large gift as a token of encouragement, and in the mail the next day came a check for \$1,000! Yet by Commencement, the goal had not been reached. “The Lord delayed His answer,” Mr. Fortosis wrote. “We shall know why in His time. His delays are not denials.”

Later that year a Christian architect and builder came forward and helped reduce the estimated cost of the building to \$100,000, setting the halfway mark at \$50,000. By October 1957, they still needed \$27,000 before construction could begin.

One faculty member and Mr. Fortosis prayed together, two gathering in Jesus’ name, and said, “God if you are smiling upon this new venture, please send \$1,000 earmarked for the building by the end of two weeks from today.” Within the time frame, they saw their prayers answered: two gifts of \$500 came designated for the building. No more, no less. Mr. Fortosis ran across campus shouting praises at the top of his lungs.

A Poor Risk

By Norman Kapp ('58)

My one year at Ben Lippen was very significant in God’s working in my life. As an MK, I had been to three high schools in three years and really was not interested in attending a fourth one! My junior year in New Jersey was one of rebellion against God and my parents, so I was a very poor risk for Ben Lippen and failed all the “rules for admission.” Normally they did not admit someone for his senior year only, and certainly not someone who stated on the application form that he did not want to go to Ben Lippen.

But God intervened and allowed me to go, and furthermore, He worked in my heart during the first few weeks of school. The movie on the life of Martin Luther spoke powerfully to my heart’s need and brought me back to the Lord. I am very grateful to God for allowing me that one year at Ben Lippen.

In August 1958, the Board unanimously agreed that the time had come to break ground on the new building, and they set August 26 as the start date. A few hours after the decision was reached, they received a \$1,000 gift from a prayer partner as a memorial to her son who had died at the age of fifteen.

They broke ground with \$30,000 on hand, half the amount needed to complete the ground floor. A month later, over \$11,000 more in contributions had been received.

The classroom building would have six classrooms, a library-assembly room, a science lab, and administrative offices, and would be named in honor of the school's founder "Robert C. McQuilkin Hall."

Except for painting the walls and equipping the science lab, the building was completed by June 1959 and ready for use when school opened that fall.

Still, it was \$24,000 from being paid off. They set a series of prayer goals and astounded the bank's vice president each time the goals were met, finally paying off the note in November 1960. God Himself consistently had provided to "enlarge the place of thy tent," as Mr. Fortosis had begun praying almost four years earlier.

The same year (1960), under CBC's President G. Allen Fleece, the Bible College moved from its beloved historic campus in the downtown Colonia Hotel to a new campus on Monticello Road.

In the midst of the building projects Mr. Fortosis wrote, "There is another building going on at Ben Lippen—of incalculable proportions and importance. Jesus Christ is building His Church, and these young people are an important part."

Praying for Tuition

By Alleene Petty Kracht ('64)

As I think of my Ben Lippen experience, I would have to say in all honesty and sincerity, it was an incredible experience for me! My parents, who were on the faculty of Columbia Bible College, couldn't afford for me to go, but they told me if I saw God provide my need, I could go. Whew! At age 14, did I ever pray, and I did see God provide all my financial need before I even applied. I spent three happy years on the mountain. What a great foundation for me to see God meet my financial need and to learn to trust Him. Now I am a 32-year missionary veteran, and He continues to meet my needs (not just financial).

H. The Christian School Movement

“Here is motivation, power, and a perfectly workable philosophy of life.” – Headmaster Tony Fortosis

The Supreme Court decided in 1962 to ban public schools from requiring recited prayers, and soon after they forbade students from uttering voluntary prayers. Around the same time, the state of Maryland removed Bible reading from its public schools, and other states began to follow suit. Without prayer and the Bible in public schools, many Christians withdrew their children from the public school system and started schools of their own. Thus began the modern Christian school movement.

Mr. Fortosis observed the stark differences between the secular and Christian school philosophies at two educational conferences he attended in 1962, both of which presented concerns facing modern-day youth. At the secular conference, Mr. Fortosis later wrote, “theories, humanistic jargon, radical liberalism, and world federation were expounded but no answers.”

The Christian conference set a different tone. “Here was the ANSWER in the soul-releasing power of Calvary,” is how Mr. Fortosis described it. “Here is motivation, power, and a perfectly workable philosophy of life. Here was Christian education, potentially the flaming spearhead to lead the way out of the gloom. Here was the spearhead to prod the home back to the family altar and to stir the churches to a dynamic aggressiveness so badly needed.”

With America’s participation in the Vietnam Conflict escalating and homeland rebellion growing through protests, emerging Christian schools, along with firmly established Ben Lippen, offered Christ as the solution for education and as the power for life.

Ben Lippen celebrated its 25th year in 1965, welcoming 132 students, over half of whom were missionary kids from nearly every continent. The school’s success in training students in the “abundant life in Christ Jesus” could be measured by its 400 alumni, almost two-thirds of whom were either in full-time Christian service in America and abroad or in training toward that end.

This commitment to serve the Lord with their lives was radical proof that Christ Jesus had provided these former students radical life in Him – a tribute to the success of Christian schooling.

An Elementary School Plant

Naturally, Mr. Fortosis and his staff felt strongly about Christian education and didn’t want to send their own young children to public school, even though the kids were not yet old enough to attend Ben Lippen.

Thus Mr. Fortosis and Mr. Bob Weeber founded Asheville Christian Day School in 1958, to provide elementary training for faculty children and others.

The school first met at First Alliance Church and opened with four students, including a youngster from each of the Fortosis and Weeber families. Wilma Anderson was their teacher. Although the Ben Lippen School Board did not officially endorse or operate the new elementary school, because of its founders’ ties with Ben Lippen, Asheville Christian Day School can be considered Ben Lippen’s first elementary school.

Asheville Christian would eventually grow to educate hundreds of young children and even expand to a middle school and high school, which would serve alongside Ben Lippen’s Christian boarding school ministry as a Christian day school.

I. The '60s

"I got within ten feet of Jackie Kennedy with my movie camera!" – Greg Dobbins, class of 1961, remembering his senior trip.

Even though girls had been at Ben Lippen since the early 50s, until this point they were only allowed to participate in cheerleading and intramural sports. In 1967, Miss Verna Birkey, the dean of girls, submitted a proposal to the Board of Trustees for the girls' athletic department, asking them to consider the possibility of allowing the girls to compete athletically with other schools, specifically in the sports of softball and basketball.

Mr. Merle Dye, a board member, missionary, and former faculty member, had been a Ben Lippen student the year girls were introduced to the school. That radical concept had succeeded, and perhaps memories of that first co-educational year entered his mind at the March 8, 1967, board meeting when he made the motion to authorize competitive sports for girls.

A running track would be completed by fall of 1970, making it possible for interschool competition.

During the 1969-1970 year, a record number of students filled the mountain school to capacity with 164 total students, which included 96 boys and 68 girls, of whom 80 were

McDonald's, Jackie Kennedy, and the Rich Fool

By Greg Dobbins ('61)

One Friday evening in the fall of my junior year, several faculty members were getting up a group to go see a football game at Western Carolina University. They said they we could stop by a new hamburger place on the way and pick up supper. The new place was quite different, sort of white with some red on the outside and a big yellow arch on each side of the little store. As I recall the hamburger was something like 19 cents! That was my first experience with McDonalds!

The senior trip was a high point. We all loaded up one morning in an old greyhound and just took off. Of course, no one questioned where we were going – Washington, D.C., our nation's capitol, where the seniors went every year. Everyone was excited. We stayed in very nice quarters in the Georgetown section of Washington at the homes of people who were somehow friends of BL or connected to it. We visited Senator Sam Ervin of N.C., went to the Smithsonian, and I got within ten feet of Jackie Kennedy with my movie camera. If I ever find that movie it might be valuable!

My favorite Christian service organizations at Ben Lippen were Foreign Missions Fellowship (FMF), work at the Rescue Mission in Asheville and Child Evangelism Fellowship. I enjoyed the Friday night fellowship of the FMF and it was always interesting to hear from missionaries who were often speakers there. Once at the Rescue Mission I was the speaker. For some reason, my topic was "The Rich Fool." I think I did not want them to feel bad about being poor. At the end of the message, I gave the invitation and almost everyone came forward. An older person in the audience said, "That young man's place is in the pulpit!" The same thing happened in my Child Evangelism group of kids in West Asheville. Maybe I should have been a preacher!

Despite all the people saved in my ministry at Ben Lippen, I did not become a minister. I taught math for eleven years at Christian colleges and have supported missionaries including some who were my friends at Ben Lippen. Ben Lippen instilled in me the importance of doing something that counts.

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missionaries' children. A year previously, the school had expanded by building a boys dormitory mirroring the girls dorm in architecture. More space was needed in the classroom building especially for the science classroom, a new music room, library storage, and an administration cluster.

The Board discussed the optimum size of enrollment, listening to Headmaster Fortosis' idea that the purpose of the school was to disciple young people as effective followers of Jesus Christ and, therefore, a more intensive rather than extensive ministry was involved. The Board agreed and voted on a statement that Ben Lippen would be primarily a discipling ministry and that the size was not expected to increase much beyond the present size.

Yet interest in the school continued to grow, and one year later, more applicants had to be turned away. Headmaster Fortosis reviewed the rapid increase in student applicants in the recent years and suggested a possibility that had been foreign to the Board just a year before: perhaps God was indicating an expansion of Ben Lippen in some form. A committee began the task of studying the alternatives and possibilities for expansion.

Washing the Clean Dishes

By Joy Hatcher Hildebrandt ('67)

My senior year I was one of the hall monitors in the girls' dorm. My favorite part of that 'not always fun' position was the monitors' meetings in Miss Birkey's room after lights out. It was a treat to stay up after lights out, an encouragement to be able to share our hearts and pray together, and we all enjoyed the treats Miss Birkey had for us. One night while washing up our snack dishes in Miss Birkey's tiny kitchen, we found a way to delay our bedtime further by putting the clean, dried dishes back on the dirty side to be rewashed! Eventually Miss Birkey discovered our prank and laughingly sent us on to bed.

A Rebellious Pianist

By Ray Smith ('67)

The decade of the sixties was, I think, a hard time for Ben Lippen, as it was for our nation. The Vietnam War was escalating, social mores were being challenged, or discarded outright, the Cold War was intense, there was widespread social unrest...and on the upside, the space program was flourishing as we drew closer to the moon. How do you conduct effective Christian education in such times? Mistakes were made at the school under the best intentions by some of the worthiest people on the planet.

One Sunday afternoon, filled with a spirit of teenage rebellion, I was sitting up in a practice room playing music on the piano which was a bit jazzy – not to be played on campus in those days. I was probably a sophomore at the time. Mr. Weeber overheard this and determined to surprise this guilty youth. With great stealth, he made his way quietly to the door of the practice room. I was oblivious, pounding out whatever rhythms I had chosen for the moment. He grabbed the doorknob and pulled with all his might, intending to shock me with surprise. He only partly succeeded. Alas, he pulled instead of pushed, the door closed heavily, and it jammed shut. Yes, I was surprised. Yes, I stopped playing immediately. But the door was stuck! Try as he would, he could not get it to open. He called to me to stop playing that music. I confessed that I was wrong and would not repeat the error. With the help of others, the door was pried open and I was released from my temporary prison.

The big lesson from Ben Lippen came from the faculty. Bob Weeber, Paul Morrison, Ace McWilliams, and Tony Fortosis (my counselors at Ben Lippen) taught me about spending time with the Master, about a life of abiding with and absolute surrender to God.

J. A New President

“Faith speaks now in joyful anticipation of all the good and great things God has in store for CBC in the days ahead.” – Robertson McQuilkin, newly appointed CBC president

Forty-five years after the first McQuilkin left his Northern home to start a Bible school down South, a second McQuilkin was called to leave his beloved Japanese mission field to continue the work his father had started. President Fleece had resigned to pursue other ministry, and the Bible College needed a new president; a worldwide day of prayer in November 1967 united alumni and friends in praying for God’s divinely appointed leader.

“I remember being challenged so often through chapels and special events to walk closely with God. I have always felt that it was at Ben Lippen that my faith really took roots and became my own and not just that of my parents.”
- Suzanne McFall ('68)

In mid-February 1968, Chairman of the Board Paul R. Van Gorder announced Ben Lippen alumnus and former headmaster John Robertson McQuilkin as the unanimous vote and appointee for president of Columbia Bible College.

“‘We walk by faith, not by sight.’ Nor by feelings,” McQuilkin wrote in his first presidential prayer letter, explaining that the verse had come to him in the night hours before the board meeting that would decide his fate.

“‘Sight’ spoke of the impossibility of following Dr. G. Allen Fleece, that peerless Bible teacher and gracious Christian whom God has used to guide CBC to its present position of worldwide influence and to raise up this magnificent new campus. ‘Feeling’ spoke of the impossibility of leaving our beloved Japan,” he said.

“But faith,” he continued, “reviewed the supernatural way in which God has guided and sealed with His own mark of approval each step toward our return to the Bible College. And faith speaks now in joyful anticipation of all the good and great things God has in store for CBC in the days ahead.”

They had learned in Japan that 72% of the 1968 graduates of CBC were pointing toward foreign missionary service. “In a day when missionary recruitment is said to be sluggish and many a school is hard put to graduate more than one or two per cent into foreign service, this is especially exciting,” he wrote.

The day after he arrived in Columbia in the summer of 1968, he traveled up to Ben Lippen Conference, where he spent a week with old and new friends, and called his time “a delightful entry into the CBC fellowship.”

K. Mrs. Fortosis' Illness

"Mrs. Fortosis was one of the most beautiful people I've ever known." – Ben Lippen alumnus

The year Steve Fortosis entered high school at Ben Lippen, his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Thus began a whirlwind of traveling to clinics, pursuing potential treatments, and requesting prayer for healing. With Anne Fortosis ill, the Ben Lippen Board voted to allow Headmaster Fortosis to hire a housekeeper to assist in his home at the school's expense. Understandably, concern for his wife kept Mr. Fortosis distracted and tense. His discipline became even more rigid, and one year several students were expelled, including President McQuilkin's daughter! (She applied the next year and successfully rebuilt her reputation.)

After a three-year battle, Mrs. Fortosis passed away in 1969. Alumni and students mourned the loss and sent their condolences and fond memories of her, one saying, "Mrs. Fortosis was one of the most beautiful people I've ever known. Her love for Christ shone from her face. At times when I felt every faculty member was 'down on me', she was loving, it gave me an uplift. She had a knack for making us feel we were something special."

Tragically two other Ben Lippen ladies—Mrs. Potts and Miss Florence Lovelady—also died, all within a three-month period. Mr. Fortosis later wrote, "The consequent upheaval to individuals and the school in general was obvious. Why this trial by fire? Perhaps one purpose was to shock an apathetic student body to awakenedness. Some students were shocked awake. Another possible purpose was to demonstrate His grace before all. Faculty unity greatly strengthened as one byproduct. The openness felt in our faculty meetings in fellowship has been most blessed. The senior class demonstrated unusual spiritual change. They entered the senior year as a needy group and came to Commencement with many evidences of His grace."

A Huge Part in My Life

By Faith Hopkins Braswell ('71)

Probably the best thing that happened to me at Ben Lippen, aside from what I learned about the Lord and my walk with Him, was that I met my husband of now 26 years there. We did not date while there; in fact, we didn't get married until 1978, but that is where we met and kept off-and-on contact after leaving, eventually falling in love.

In addition to that very huge part of my life, I especially was impacted by Bob Weeber's often-repeated phrase of learning "constant conscious communion" with Christ. I have never forgotten that and have sought to develop that in my own years of walking with the Lord. Ben Lippen played a huge part in steering me in the right direction in my life, even though I didn't always like the rules.

And how can I ever really measure the value of the impact that Dr. Fortosis (Doc) had on my life in those days, especially as I watched him face the death of his dear Anne. Little did I know that my own parents would come and teach at Ben Lippen only a few years later and that my own mother would get sick with cancer while living on the mountaintop and go to be with the Lord as Anne did.

After Mrs. Fortosis' death, Mr. Fortosis couldn't bear to live on the mountain with almost twenty years of memories. "Everything around me at Ben Lippen reminds me of her... our walks through the beautiful mountain paths, watching the radiant sunsets, the happy days, the painful moments, the laughter and the tears," he later wrote. Feeling the Lord leading him away from the ministry at Ben Lippen, he presented his resignation to the board. They accepted it reluctantly but with thanks to God for what He had done through Mr. Fortosis and with deep appreciation to the Lord for this investment of life. The resignation was effective May 31, 1970, and after a year, Mr. Fortosis was appointed dean of faculty at CBC. Thus McQuilkin and Fortosis, the former Ben Lippen headmaster and assistant headmaster, would again partner to lead Columbia Bible College as president and dean.

Mr. A.C. McWilliams would be Ben Lippen's acting headmaster until God's will for a permanent appointment could be determined.

L. Headmaster Jack Layman (1971-1983)

“At least pray about it.” – Mr. Buck Hatch, Bible College professor

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On the mission field in Nairobi, Kenya, former Ben Lippen teacher Jack Layman received an invitation: Would he consider a position as headmaster at Ben Lippen? He quickly declined with a flat no. He and his wife were doing what God wanted them to do—working among Hindus and Muslims in Africa. Yes, he had graduated from CBC and taught at Ben Lippen for a couple of years in the ‘50s, his first baby had even been born at Ben Lippen, but his heart was in missions. Then again, maybe that was why they were asking him.

Jack’s father was dying, and on a visit back to the States, he took time to meet with an old mentor from his college days at CBC, Mr. Buck Hatch. “At least pray about it,” Mr. Hatch nudged him.

In an interview with President Robertson McQuilkin, Layman said, “I have no calling to this.” But they pushed him: He knew Ben Lippen, he had teaching credentials, he knew missions, and he knew the Columbia message. He did pray about it and eventually accepted the call.

One major factor in Layman’s decision, perhaps, was the fact that the East Indians among whom he had been working were being forced out of Kenya at a very rapid rate. As Mr. McQuilkin observed, “You might say his mission field was leaving him. Yet, what greater mission field could there be than Ben Lippen—not only in training children of missionaries but in preparing all of our young people for partnership in God’s purposes throughout the world.” And so, Mr. Layman, his wife Liz, and their four daughters arrived at Ben Lippen in 1971.

Having a headmaster who fell far short of the State Department of Education position requirements presented a great possibility for difficulties. To help the situation, Mr. A.C. McWilliams and Mr. Bob Weeber obtained Principle’s Certificates. In answer to prayer, the state renewed the school’s accreditation without a question. To adjust for this potential problem in the future, the titles of Mr. Layman and Mr. Weeber were adjusted to meet state requirements. Mr. Layman was designated superintendent, and Mr. Weeber was named academic administrative coordinator.

Thus Mr. Layman joined the ranks of “unworthy” Ben Lippen headmasters: Mr. McQuilkin had been too young, Mr. Fortosis had been too strict, and now Mr. Layman would start his academic leadership career being too under-qualified. In this way, the Lord of Ben Lippen continued to use weak vessels to accomplish His purposes, with the intention of molding them into leaders who would bring Him much glory.

A Letter Home

By Andy Maples ('73)

My first two years on the Mountain of Trust were confusing, to say the least. I was on my own for the first time in my life, and I really wanted to fit in. I found that I could be popular through being mischievous, not so bad as to get kicked out of school, but just enough to get someone's attention.

Unfortunately, the person whose attention I got was Mr. Layman. He caught me skipping out on study hall and suspended me from the JV basketball team for one game. Once I realized that Mr. Layman was on to some of my little games, I tried to do better, but was often finding myself in more and more trouble.

During the summer before my senior year, Mr. Layman wrote me and my dad a letter. In the letter, he explained that it might be in my best interest not to return to Ben Lippen because of my bad attitude and study ethic. It really hurt my dad to read those things, and it hurt more when I confessed that everything that Mr. Layman had said in the letter was true. I really wanted to return to the school for my senior year, so I made a contract with my dad concerning grades and attitude.

I arrived for my senior year with great expectations, but had no idea how to turn my life around. Two things happened early on that year that made a huge impact on my life. First, Mr. Layman taught a class on how to study and prepare for exams. That was a huge help to me.

Secondly, I realized that even though I was attending a Christian school, I really did not have a strong relationship with the Lord. I had tried off and on having a morning devotion time, but it just never seemed to work for me. When I got my schedule for classes my senior year, I noticed that I had two study halls. I decided that I would use one of the study halls to have a Bible study and prayer time in my room, and that I would spend the other study hall time in the library. I was amazed how well this worked for me.

Every day, I would come back to my room around 10:30 a.m., and read from a Living Bible that my parents had given me. I could not believe how much I began to love reading God's Word. I developed a little prayer outline that I followed also. I worked harder than ever before in my studies in order to keep the privilege of having the study hall time in my room.

For the entire year, at 10:30 in the morning, Monday through Friday, you would find me on my knees, bent over my bunk, reading and praying through the Word of God. I learned to love the Word of God at Ben Lippen. It helped me see myself for who I am, and it helped me see the vision of what God wanted me to become. The Word of God has been the main constant in my life these past thirty years.

Thanks, Mr. Layman, your letter helped God get a hold of my heart.

M. The '70s

"We had so many good times that it's hard to single out any particular event." – David Eager, class of 1972.

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In a world where the Beatles and Elvis bellowed from every radio, at Ben Lippen rock music was considered sinful. With growing reservations about the way the school set their standards, Mr. Layman had to not only forbid the music but build a case against it.

Like every other era in Ben Lippen history, problems with rebellious students surfaced and resulted in heartbreaking expulsions. In 1975, for the first time, marijuana was found on campus. An even greater disappointment came when a number of seniors ordered wine and other alcoholic drinks with their meals during the annual senior trip to Washington.

"Both of these serious efforts by Satan to break down our standards and hurt our students sapped much energy and drove us to the Lord," Mr. Layman wrote. With the students questioning rules, Mr. Layman advocated a "swimming pool fence" philosophy for setting standards. One wouldn't build a swimming pool fence 40 feet tall, he believed, comparing this to setting a standard too high. But one wouldn't cut down an oak tree just for the fence – or bend the rules to match the situation. He said many times, "This rule's not 'Thus saith the Lord;' it's 'Thus saith Ben Lippen.' "

Even still, Ben Lippen was considered by some to be one of the most "liberal" Christian schools of that day. Part of the basis for this conclusion was the fact that boys were allowed to wear mustaches. One school wouldn't even compete with Ben Lippen because of their "low" standards: the cheerleaders' skirts, worn just above the knees, were believed to be too short.

In difficult times when students questioned and usually bucked every rule, Mr. Layman led the faculty to make decisions on a consensus basis. "Let every voice be heard," was his motto, and each teacher guardian had the chance to

Field Days

By David Eager ('72)

We had so many good times at Ben Lippen in the late '60s and early '70s that it's hard to single out any particular event. To me, probably the best of the good times were field days. I remember we never had a cloudy field day. It was always a crisp, beautiful day, and in the mountains, that's pretty special.

We packed up everything we would need for the day and drove in our buses for a couple of hours into the mountains. The mountains are beautiful anyway, but the camp we went to was especially beautiful.

We basically left our studies, chores, and worries behind and just had a good time all day. We played games, swam, went for walks and just relaxed. In the evening we had a time for sharing and testimonies. Those were really unforgettable times we all enjoyed.

Ben Lippen was a great experience for me. Those were some of the best years of my life.

1975-1976 Tuition:

\$1,890 per year included tuition, room, and board.

express his or her views on parenting, standards, and students.

Wardrobes had to be checked at the beginning of every school year, and the women counselors would check the girls' clothing. By April or May, the students would have grown, and the faculty would be a bit more liberal with the rules. A church in Hendersonville had a clothing fund, and if the kids outgrew their clothes, the teachers would have to take them shopping.

Missionary kids remained in the majority in the student body, and ~~at one point during Mr. Layman's tenure, he counted students from 32 countries and 26 states.~~ By the end of 1971, only 25% of the students had parents in non-ministry-related work. Through missionary speakers, missions banquets, and other efforts, the school made deliberate attempts to help explain to the students the important role of their missionary parents, in order to give them a sense of excitement about missions.

Mr. Layman, along with teacher Ron Whipple, did a study of MKs, and found that overwhelmingly, the kids appreciated their parents being missionaries, which was not the norm at other boarding schools, where kids hated what their parents were doing and why they had to be separated from them.

The campus continued to be quite diverse, with Mr. Layman counting at one point during his tenure students from 32 countries and 26 states. Students of various ethnic backgrounds had been attending for some time, including African students from countries like Nigeria and Kenya, but the school worked hard to attract African American students as well. This posed a challenge, as integration was still relatively new and the small black community in Asheville wasn't ready to send their children away to a boarding school. In addition, Ben Lippen had historically drawn from a predominantly white constituency, such as missionaries. After quite a few years of inviting and attempting to recruit African American students, in 1974 the school accepted freshman Sylvia Gladden, the first black American Ben Lippen student, who went on to graduate from BL in 1978. By the mid-70s, Ben Lippen would be one of the most integrated private schools in the South, and possibly the nation.

Student athletic achievement excelled in the seventies with undefeated streaks in track and baseball, and conference championships in cross-country and soccer (which in 1977 after a several-year tenure as state soccer champs earned Coach Bob Hathaway North Carolina's "Coach of the Year" award and made the public high schools decide they wanted a state

My Christian Life

By Bob Prentice ('75)

The real basis for my Christian life was formed at Ben Lippen. I believe that when I began at BL in 1971 that I had a "head agreement" with the Gospel, but I did not have a heart trust in and devotion to Christ.

After an evangelistic meeting on a Friday night my tenth-grade year, I was under deep conviction of sin. I was convinced that if I died I would not be in heaven. Early Saturday morning I went up to the top of the mountain determined to be right with God before returning down to my dorm room.

I pleaded God's forgiveness for my sins and put my trust in God alone as my only hope for salvation. My life changed, my attitudes changed. I was working for God in anything I participated in – not self. I had a deep desire to please God for what He had done for me!

I began to trust Him in "small" and "large" trials: praying my way through chemistry and physics, and onto varsity baseball as a sophomore! God was building my trust in Him – teaching me to trust Him in all areas, small and large.

I remember Mr. Layman's senior Bible class studies of Isaiah and Colossians – the "key" to the Christian life was explained in the Colossians study: "As ye received Christ (by faith and repentance and ongoing trust), so walk ye in Him." What a great help throughout my Christian life!

tournament without independent schools). The girls' athletic program expanded to include field hockey, basketball, and track. A new boys' tennis team quickly gained acclaim with undefeated streaks.

For Thanksgiving 1973, CBC celebrated its 50-year Jubilee with an outreach at Columbia's Township Auditorium, where Stephen Olford and G. Allen Fleece spoke at three meetings to more than 6,000 attendants, many of whom made fresh commitments to Christ. "This is what we wanted," President McQuilkin wrote. "Not a meeting for self-congratulations for 50 successful years, but a celebration of God's faithfulness and an outreach to the city of Columbia."

Thursday Morning Coffecake

A Recipe by Mrs. Hathaway

<To come>

Keith said he did not feel this section was pertinent to the overall context of the history of the school and should be omitted. I contacted Dr. Jack Layman, headmaster during these times, for his input on the validity of including the topic of integration, and he mentioned that it was definitely worth mentioning that BL worked hard in the 70s to integrate the school, although it probably wasn't worth an entire chapter. Thus I included a brief mention in the previous section, based directly on Dr. Layman's comments.

N. Integration

“With all the good will in the world, enrolling black students in Christian schools was not an easy proposition.”—Jack Layman, headmaster

In 1974, Ben Lippen admitted its first black student, freshman Sylvia Gladden. Twenty years earlier public school segregation had been banned by the Supreme Court in the ground-breaking 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling. Then the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had enforced the rule.

Because the Christian school movement had rapidly grown during the same time as the controversial civil rights movement and subsequent public school integration, many Christian schools were accused of opening in order to provide white-only environments for their students. Some schools, unfortunately, had opened for this racially motivated purpose, which gave a bad reputation to others that had opened with more pure intentions: To protect their children from the moral decline of the '60s—“drugs, sex, and rock n roll”—that was seeping into the public school system during the same time as the civil rights battle.

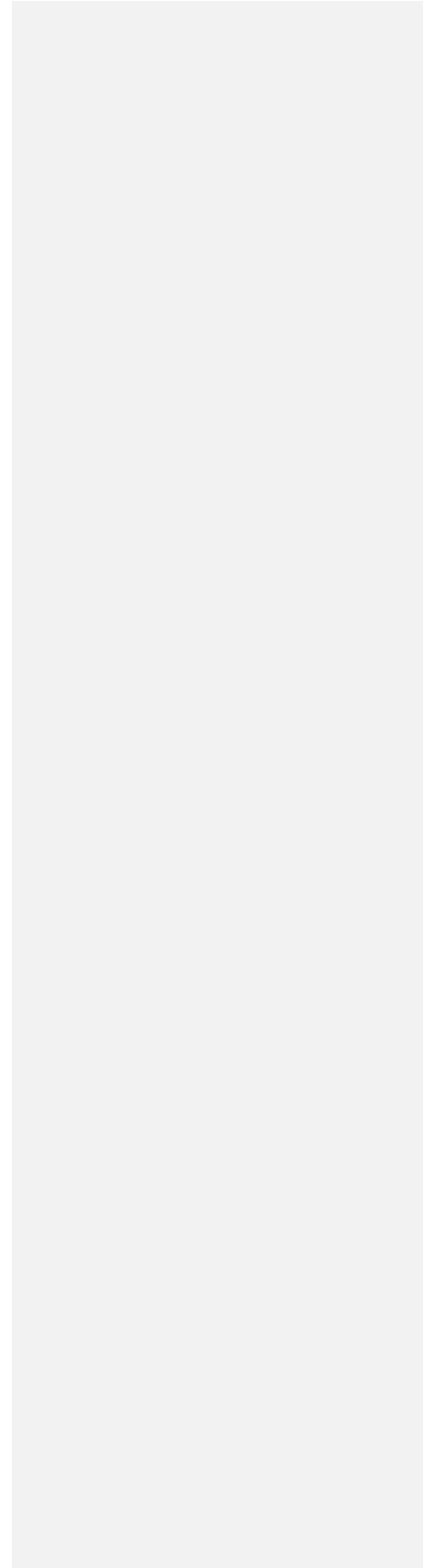
The Civil Rights Act to enforce integration and the Supreme Court's ban on recited prayers in schools had occurred just two years apart, and although unrelated, confused the issue of why Christian schools were opening. On the whole, Christian schools were not racially motivated; and Ben Lippen, having been established in 1940, long before school integration was even an issue, clearly had not been founded with racist purposes. Its opening was also not a reactive move to escape public school decay, as a large number of Christian school openings were. Ben Lippen had been established for the proactive purpose of providing a truly Christian atmosphere for education—with Christ Himself at the center. In a school board devotional, Mr. Layman highlighted the definition of true Christian education by playing part of a tape by Myron Augsberger, which said, “Christian education is teaching the lifestyle of a disciple of Christ.”

Despite this clear purpose and with no intentionally racist policies, Ben Lippen still had trouble attracting black students even after the Board in 1969 voted to make it absolutely clear that the school did not restrict admission on the basis of race. The difficulty in enrolling black students resulted from several complicated factors. When the civil rights movement began to succeed, black families wanted to show their support for the newly integrated public schools. Even black private schools lost numbers to these new public schools—making it all the more difficult for white private schools like Ben Lippen to attract them. In addition, the American Church still segregated itself into white and black sectors, with different worship and preaching styles, different issues and concerns, and

~~separate Christian social circles. Ben Lippen's historic support base of white churches naturally lent white students.~~

~~So with the great diversity that had been on the mountain since the 1950s from its global mix of missionary students, a new type of diversity slowly entered the scene in the mid-'70s with the admission of the first black student, Sylvia Gladden, who spent four years at Ben Lippen and graduated in 1978.~~

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O. The Inn Renovation Project

“Renovation of the Inn daily keeps us aware of our dependence on the Lord. It is a great mountain!” – Headmaster Jack Layman

By the time Mr. Layman arrived at Ben Lippen, the Inn, at almost forty years old and without much consistent renovation, needed a facelift.

As discussions began to grow serious regarding the Inn’s renovation, the Board invited Mr. Frank Merry, a building consultant in contracting, to join them in 1974. They solicited Dave DeJong of Missionary Services, Inc., in Houston, Texas, to be the construction supervisor, and John Langston to serve as architect. These men worked faithfully together to lead the project, which would be in three phases and include tearing down the oldest wing, now severely dilapidated, electrical rehabilitation, and complete renovations of the dining room, guest rooms, and basement of the Inn.

The renovation would provide for a 15% expansion for the school and summer conference ministries. A master plan to create more classroom space would enable the school to accommodate 250 students. Philosophically the Board had no disagreements with this increase in the student body, but they were still unsure whether they wanted to pursue the increase from a practical standpoint. Discussions about consolidating the conference, camp, and school into one ministry also found unsure footing.

When the project officially began in September 1975, over 200 volunteers swarmed the campus to help with the work, staying anywhere from a day to months. Students and faculty members pitched in where possible. With the volunteers halfway into the project in 1977, almost \$600,000 worth of labor had been done for only \$200,000. The success of volunteer manpower on the Ben Lippen Inn Project led construction supervisor Dave DeJong to start the missionary organization Helps International Ministries (HIM), a ministry to help Christian organizations with their building projects. The Ben Lippen Inn was HIM’s first project.

By the spring of 1979, the project was 90% finished with a completion date set for June 15. In four years, \$377,000 had been spent for well over \$700,000 worth of work, due to the generous labor of volunteers, and over half of the funds spent were provided by donors. At Commencement, 1979, Dave DeJong and his new organization HIM were honored for their valuable contribution to the project.

Asheville City Limits:

The Board began to consider the possibility of annexing the Ben Lippen property into the city limits in the mid-’60s.

A staff member at neighboring Eliada Children’s Home reported their satisfaction with being annexed, saying that the city had installed a water line to solve a water problem they had, picked up trash twice a week, and provided fire department protection that caused their fire insurance rates to go down.

When the city bypassed annexing the Ben Lippen property, the board voted to spend \$5,000 on a well system to aid with the school’s water supply. By 1974 Asheville had canceled all plans to annex Ben Lippen into the city limits.

A parent suggested to a local furniture storeowner that he should donate furniture to help the school. As a result, he provided the Inn's finishing touches by furnishing the whole building.

Mr. Layman closed a letter encouraging supporters to trust God for great things at Ben Lippen through the Inn project. He quoted the words of Jesus, "According to your faith be it unto you."

P. SACS Accreditation

“I believe BLS may have had SACS accreditation before CBC.” – Headmaster Jack Layman

A 1978 court case in North Carolina, which was later dropped, brought into the limelight the relationship of Christian schools and the state, and created a very negative climate between the two. Because of the current controversies, Ben Lippen’s board did not want the school’s accreditation resting solely with the state and decided to pursue accreditation with the regional organization SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools).

In order to receive the new accreditation, Mr. Layman and his staff conducted a full self-study in addition to hosting an external team of about ten members, who would report on the worthiness of the school to receive accreditation.

One of the visitors was the principal of T.C. Roberson High School, one of the best public schools in the area. Arriving on the mountain, he told Mr. Layman that this was his first visit to a Christian school and that he resented having parents withdraw their children from his school in order to send them to Christian schools. By the end of his visit, the principal gave Ben Lippen the strongest commendations and told Mr. Layman that he envied the opportunities that Ben Lippen faculty members had to do so much for their students.

Ben Lippen would be granted its SACS accreditation at a conference in New Orleans in December 1980. Mr. Layman traveled to Louisiana to accept. While there, he received an urgent phone call from Ron Whipple, the assistant headmaster, whom he had left in charge of the school.

“Jack, I have bad news for you,” he said, “The Inn’s on fire.”

Mr. Layman boarded a plane for North Carolina as fast as he could, and arriving at the airport in Asheville he could see smoke in the distance.

ACSI Leaders

In 1978 the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) was founded through a merger of three associations: The National Christian School Education Association (NCSEA); The Ohio Association of Christian Schools (OACS); and the Western Association of Christian Schools. At one time, three Ben Lippen headmasters served together on the ACSI board: John Blanchard, headmaster from 1947-49, A.C. Fortosis, headmaster from 1955-1971, and Jack Layman, headmaster from 1971 –1983.

Q. The Fire

“On the mountain of trust at Ben Lippen our past went up in smoke.” – Robertson McQuilkin, Ben Lippen alumnus and former headmaster, Bible College president

Senior Bill Barrows, son of Billy Graham’s song leader Cliff Barrows, had helped Mr. Layman cut wood on many occasions, but this day was a very important event – tonight the students would celebrate together at the annual Christmas banquet in the Inn. Bill cut the wood and set a roaring fire in the Inn’s fireplace to create a warm atmosphere for the students and faculty.

The evening ended, the lights went out, and the fire died—or so everyone thought. But through the night, heat crept through gaps in the chimney’s mortar, heating nearby wooden support beams dangerously close to the kindling temperature, the point at which heat becomes fire. Everyone slept soundly that night, unaware.

Early the next afternoon, music teacher Melinda McClung and her daughter Karma walked toward the Inn for lunch.

“Mom, do you see the smoke coming from the roof?” Karma asked.

“Probably just a little exhaust from a kitchen fan or the heating system,” Mrs. McClung answered.

The tables in the dining room were set, but before students could get settled for lunch, the fire alarm went off. The students quickly evacuated, and within several minutes volunteer fire fighters from West Buncombe Fire & Rescue arrived on the scene.

Several men lugged their equipment to the third floor, the freshmen girls’ dormitory,

Room in the Inn

By Glen A. McClung ('55)

When I think of Ben Lippen, the first image to pop into my mind is the Inn. I remember my first glimpse of it looming above us as we rode up the hill onto campus – a towering “all-in-one” building housing offices, classrooms, dining hall, and attached dormitory.

There may have been no room for Jesus in the inn in Bethlehem, but there was room for Him in the Inn at Ben Lippen. In fact, there was room for little else. It all had to do with Him: “To Know Him and to Make Him Known,” from the first morning bell to the last. To me, the Inn symbolizes all that.

So, I will never forget the first time I saw it ... or the last. I had moved to Asheville as a pastor with my wife Melinda, and our two children Karma and John. Melinda had joined the music faculty at Ben Lippen and our daughter was a student there in 1980 when the Inn caught fire.

In fact, the fire started right by Karma’s room, and she lost all of her personal belongings. All students were evacuated, but since we lived in Asheville, we picked Karma up and returned to the campus to pick up Melinda’s vehicle.

We arrived just in time to see the flames at their height and the Inn crumbling bit by bit. Principal Ron Whipple happened to see us there with Karma and suggested that it might be emotionally upsetting for her to be there. I told Karma what he had said, to which she responded, “Daddy, do I look upset? That just shows us where our values are.” Amen; so be it! Not here, but there! Not I, but Christ!

to investigate. They poked at panels in the double drop ceiling – the first panel, then the second – and found a small fire. The fire, hungry for oxygen, sucked in this newfound air and exploded violently in a powerful flashover. The firemen dropped everything and ran to call for support. No longer just a little fire and quickly growing out of control, it would fight nineteen of the twenty-two volunteer departments in Buncombe County. They brought their dump tanks to provide a water supply, since the mountain’s water lines were far too weak to provide enough water. The Asheville Fire Department came with their ladder truck and shot water down from above, which only pushed the fire down through the building.

Back in Columbia, a close friend of President McQuilkin answered his phone. “The Inn’s burning, and it doesn’t look good,” Robertson said.

“You might say you wish your school would burn down,” one student said, “but when it actually happens it’s not too fun.”

Yet the Asheville community rallied around Ben Lippen. McDonalds and Burger King sent bags of food for the firemen, two local bowling alleys hosted the students and let them bowl while waiting for places to stay, the school’s biggest rival, Asheville School, provided dinner for the students that evening, local churches provided host homes in the Asheville area, a large department store invited students who had lost their belongings to come for needed items at the store’s expense.

All around Asheville, people saw the plumes of smoke and smelled a landmark becoming ashes. It burned for three days.

R. The Smoke Settles

“What is the Lord saying to us?” – Robertson McQuilkin, Bible College president

“Hey Dick, come here; you’ve gotta see this!” called a voice from down the Inn’s freshly charred hallway.

Dick Lindsey, one of the volunteer firefighters performing a dangerous walkthrough examination of the Inn’s third floor, answered the call of his co-worker and rushed to the former bedroom of a freshman girl.

Nothing was left of the room’s contents. Everything had been destroyed and was now covered in ashes – everything except a small circle on a top bunk’s mattress where the fireman was pointing. That part of the mattress was soaking wet, unburned, and keeping safe a precious treasure: a Holy Bible – the only thing in the room that had been untouched by the fire. It appeared to be a symbolic message from Heaven that God remained in control, as if He were saying, *“Only what I allow will burn.”*

During their Christmas “vacation,” Mr. Layman, Mr. Whipple, and the rest of the staff worked like never before to plan for the winter quarter, which miraculously began on schedule. The girls who had been housed in the Inn were placed with other girls in the girls dormitory, making several three-girl rooms. Two meals a day were catered by Morrison’s and served in the chapel, which had been temporarily converted into a dining area. Plans were made to build a new chalet-type building to serve as a dining room facility.

Mr. Layman interviewed with TV and radio media, and wrote letters to Ben Lippen friends telling them the news and requesting prayer and financial support, and gifts came pouring in. In the months that followed the fire, more than \$250,000 came designated for the Inn’s replacement building, \$31,000 came for fire relief, and \$90,000 came as undesignated gift income.

The faculty worked diligently to clean and compile detailed lists of what had been lost in the building. In addition to a great deal of personal items, the school had lost its freshmen girls’ dormitory, dining hall, workshop, kitchen, guest rooms, and music department. The insurance policy settlement would be worth \$2.9 million.

Even still, President McQuilkin wrote in a president’s letter in mid-spring, “Since I last wrote we have felt a special kinship with Job!” He listed the recent Bible College woes: a board member’s death, an alumnus missionary being taken hostage by terrorists, a bomb threat, two student homes burning, and of course the fire at the Ben Lippen Inn. “What is the Enemy up to?” he continued. “It’s encouraging that he’s interested in us. And what is the Lord saying to us? For one thing, we are learning anew that Christian ministry is real, a hot war, not a vacation cruise to Glory.”

Before the students returned for school, the Inn was razed and received a proper burial, its brick remains laid to rest in the side of the mountain.

V. The Mountain and The Cove

Ben Lippen and The Cove Ministries (1981-1987)

A. Porter's Cove

"The gift has inspired us with a model of Christian unity and generosity, and has challenged us to new and extraordinary steps of faith." - Columbia Bible College Board

Evangelist Billy Graham was home in Montreat, North Carolina (just outside of Asheville), for the holidays, resting from crusade work and spending time with his family. From his house, he could see the smoke, and on the television news he heard the details of the Ben Lippen Inn's burning. He had a fond place in his heart for Ben Lippen and Columbia Bible College. He remembered speaking at the summer conference as a young preacher in the '40s, meeting his long-time song leader Cliff Barrows there, and receiving prayer support from Dr. Robert C. McQuilkin during his early crusades. Promptly he saw to it that his Billy Graham Evangelistic Association sent a gift to Ben Lippen, and the \$10,000 check arrived at the mountain before the Inn stopped burning.

Still Rev. Graham wondered what the school would do without their main facility. He phoned CBC President Robertson McQuilkin with a proposal. "I'd like to give some new property to the Bible College," he offered. The Graham ministry owned the last undeveloped piece of watershed property connected to Asheville. Protected by water on three sides, the land called Porter's Cove was approximately 1,500 acres of prime real estate on the other side of the city.

Rev. Graham had a dream for a layman's training center. Too many of the people converted to Christ at his crusades went home with no way of receiving deeper training. Many of his converts never had the resources to grow as Christians. Who better to offer training at a layman's facility than a Bible college? And now, with the Inn gone, Columbia Bible College would need to consider the future of Ben Lippen School, as well as the Ben Lippen conference and camp ministry.

The Bible College Board met with President McQuilkin on February 20, 1981, to discuss the property offer. Together they agreed in principle to accept the title of the Cove property, the responsibility for funding all development of it, and the mission of training Christian men and women there. The next step would be to invite the Ben Lippen School and Summer Conference to relocate at Porter's Cove.

The move to the Cove presented benefits for each ministry. Because each ministry—the school, the camp, and the conference—would have its own space and facilities on the Cove property, each ministry would be able to expand to year-round programs. Furthermore, the ministries would be associated with the Billy Graham name.

Eight days later, the combined Board of Ben Lippen School and Ben Lippen Summer Ministries met at Ben Lippen to make a decision regarding the future of their ministries. The School Board unanimously agreed to move Ben Lippen School to Porter's Cove, then the Summer Ministries Board unanimously agreed to do the same.

The Bible College and all of its ministries would now team with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to create a Great Commission Training Program at the Cove for young people and adults encompassing Ben Lippen School, the Camps, the Summer Conference, and a brand new layman's training center. Funding would be provided by project-specific fundraising, selling the present Ben Lippen property, insurance money from the Inn's loss, and transitional funds if necessary from CBC & BLS. Although still uncertain as to when, it was settled that Ben Lippen would be making a move.

The two ministry boards enthusiastically sang a familiar old chorus: "Faith, mighty Faith, the promise sees and looks to God alone, laughs at impossibilities and cries it shall be done." On that same mountain fifty-three years earlier, a smaller group had met in what then was only a blackberry patch to sing the same tune. The first meeting had been to claim the mountain; the current meeting was to claim the Cove.

At a historic meeting in a Holiday Inn overlooking Interstate-40 in Asheville, a group of key leaders celebrated with Cliff Barrows and George Beverly Shea leading songs as Billy Graham handed the keys to the Cove over to Robertson McQuilkin.

By June, CBC had the deed to the property, and President McQuilkin (elected the temporary chairman of the new Cove Board until a permanent leader could be appointed) wrote, "On the mountain of trust at Ben Lippen our past went up in smoke [when the Inn burned], the efforts of hundreds of God's people in restoring that beautiful building seemingly a burnt offering. But from the ashes, new life—the magnificent Cove property bringing with it the challenge for ministry on a scale none of us had dreamed about."

B. The Chalet

“He will give beauty for ashes...” – Isaiah 61:3

With Ben Lippen’s identifying building gone, Mr. Layman moved forward with a new signature building to replace it. He met with parent Tom Gregory, who was an architect and had also been involved in the Inn Renovation project. On napkins, they drafted plans for a magnificent mountain chalet, which would become the school’s new kitchen and dining facility, music building, and office space. The building, which had the Board’s approval to cost \$476,000, was completed for a much higher expense of \$728,206.

Despite the excess in spending, the Chalet was a blessed answer to the campus’s needs, and it miraculously was completed in time to open for the summer conference in 1981, only half a year after the fire! So, quickly, the Chalet rose up as beauty from ashes.

The First Choir Tour By Melinda McClung (faculty)

Since the music department (in the Inn) was destroyed, we music teachers found ourselves teaching in various corners on campus. Eventually the Chalet was built, and new instruments, teachers, music, and supplies were secured for the new music department that would be located in it.

Roger Coleman planned the first choir tour for March of 1982, and his wife Jeanette helped me get everything organized. This was my “first” tour, although we had had some local concerts. The choir members were uneasy the first concert, but before our second concert, the choir presented me with roses and a note: “Mrs. McClung, you ‘rose’ to the occasion of your first concert on tour! We love you, choir.” I knew then we would make it.

The Ben Lippen choir over the years was committed to honoring the Lord and sharing Him with others. Members were courageous and sacrificial. In my five years as director, we sang for approximately 10,000 people: in schools, colleges, rest homes, churches, etc. Once we gave a concert over the local WMIT/WFGW radio station.

It is a thrill for me to see BLS grads going on in their walks with the Lord. The seeds planted at BLS continue to grow and flourish. Praise the Lord!

C. Welcoming Day Students

“We are going to be busier people this year...” – Headmaster Jack Layman

The elementary school that Ben Lippen Headmaster Tony Fortosis had founded for faculty children in the 1960s was now a thriving local day school and had expanded to include up to high school grade levels. Now being led by Headmaster Gordon Brown, Asheville Christian Academy (ACA) had a very successful elementary program but struggled in its high school program.

Learning of the Inn’s fire, the ACA Board sent a proposal to Ben Lippen in February, in which the day school requested that the historic boarding school open its doors to day students so that ACA could phase out its 9th - 12th grade program. ACA noted that they were only considering ending their program if Ben Lippen could respond affirmatively and take their high school students. The ACA administration believed the agreement would ensure better stewardship for both schools and provide a higher quality of Christian secondary education in the Asheville area.

The Ben Lippen leaders discussed the pros and cons of accepting day students, and voted to accept them for the fall of September 1981.

The agreement to accept day students had several stipulations. The number of day students accepted would be a maximum of twenty percent of the total student body, to protect the school’s boarding emphasis. Only tenth through twelfth graders would be accepted to encourage a certain maturity level from day students. Only Asheville Christian Academy students would be accepted as day students, and these ACA students living with their parents off campus would have to live by the same rules and schedule as the boarding students. This meant attending not only the regular classes, but also the required athletic

One of the First Day Students By Wendy Mullinax Arnim ('83)

It was December 12, 1980. Afternoon. It must have been our Asheville Christian Academy bus driver who explained to us that the smoke we had spotted off in the distance was coming from a Christian boarding school that was on fire. Little did I know how significant that school would become in my life.

A couple of months later, Ben Lippen invited the ACA high school students to spend a day on the BL campus. ACA was not continuing its high school, and Ben Lippen had agreed to open its doors to a limited number of day students the next school year. That fall, 1981, I would be privileged to be among those 31 day students entering BL for the first time.

Although we would each be living with our parents off campus, we would still be assigned to a dorm room so that we could become part of the total BL experience. As often as not, I was on campus well into the afternoon or evening participating in sports or being involved in Student Council meetings.

I am forever grateful that I had the privilege to spend two wonderful years on the “Mountain of Trust” and will forever carry memories of her in my heart.

activities and evening study halls. The day students stayed on campus many nights until nine o'clock.

Accepting day students would present brand new possibilities and challenges. Now the faculty would not be the sole parents, disciplinarians, and caregivers of all the students. Local parents, with many differing views, would become closely involved in the education of their students and in the work at Ben Lippen. Headmaster Layman started a parent-teacher prayer group, but refrained from creating a Parent-Teacher organization in order to keep the local parents' voices and opinions from overshadowing the voices of the missionary parents scattered around the world who didn't have a convenient way to make their opinions known.

The 1981-82 school year opened with a record enrollment of 205 students, 31 of them day students from ACA. Despite the loss of the Inn dormitory, the on-campus enrollment of 174 was the second highest ever.

"We are pleased with the start of the day students' program," Mr. Layman wrote in his report to the board. "A lot of hard work has gone into the change in terms of planning, a cautious admission policy, reviewing the campus guidebook, and producing a parent handbook, but there have been very few actual changes in daily routine or our way of life. We are particularly pleased with how well most of the day students have blended into the student body."

The year's theme was "New Beginnings."

D. The Cove Master Plan

“Let us start rebuilding!” – President Robertson McQuilkin, quoting Nehemiah

Two years had passed since the Bible College had accepted the Cove property, and still no visible progress had been made.

Nothing was being done on the current Ben Lippen campus either, and Headmaster Layman expressed a concern that skimping on current Ben Lippen facilities and maintenance could hurt the school's future strength if a move to the Cove was delayed. He also expressed apprehension about the new Cove Board that would take over leadership, specifically “the thought of a governing board with sixty to seventy percent new members, some of whom may have little interest in the school, and no longer being responsible directly to the Board but to an administrator/leader who may have little interest in or understanding of the school.”

Although Ben Lippen School and Summer Ministries would keep their historic name, a new name for the expanded ministry was settled: simply The Cove, as everyone already had been informally calling the property. The Cove Ministry would be three-fold: Ben Lippen School, Ben Lippen Camp, and the Billy Graham Training Center for adults (which would incorporate the Ben Lippen Conference).

Behind the scenes, the new Cove Board, chaired by long-time friend of Ben Lippen and board member Pastor John Oliver, had been recruiting a top-flight leadership team: Jerry Miller, a former Texaco executive, as executive vice president; Keith Marion, Harry Dent, former political strategist, as director of adult ministries; Roy King, Ben Lippen faculty member and conference staff member, as Dent's assistant director; and Howard Deardorff, a professional from Johnson, Johnson, and Roy architectural firm, as property developer. This team had been planning a program before starting the construction, so that the facilities could be built to best suit the programming needs.

Those eager to see buildings erected grew more and more impatient. “When are you going to get on with it?” an interested party asked President McQuilkin.

Finally, in the summer of 1983, when the leadership team was in place and the master plan was completed, McQuilkin responded in a prayer letter, “At last I can answer ‘NOW!’ ” He reported that the Board had just authorized a great leap of faith and the immediate beginning of construction at the Cove.

Robertson spent the day following the Board's momentous decision on a new lookout tower on the Cove property, one of the highest peaks in Buncombe County. “The view is breathtaking,” McQuilkin later wrote in a prayer letter. “At my feet, 1500 acres of pristine forest and streams, rocks and waterfalls, but the grandeur of that panorama from the ‘top of the world’ is but symbolic of the breathtaking mission that is ours.”

He thought of the experience of Nehemiah, who had wept when Jerusalem was broken down and burned and could no longer bring glory to God. “How we have grieved over

the loss in *our* fire,” he wrote, “and then how we were startled with the new, brighter hope God unfolded.”

As Nehemiah had prayed for favor in the sight of the king, so President McQuilkin had prayed over the Cove for favor in the sight of supporters. “The King granted Nehemiah’s request,” McQuilkin continued, “just as many Ben Lippen friends will grant this request. And many new friends who are excited by the vision of a great lay movement will join, replying as did Nehemiah’s people, ‘Let us start rebuilding!’ ”

Rebuilding began with road work and utilities, including the expensive endeavor of pulling water lines under railroad tracks and Interstate 40 to reach the property, ~~which the City of Asheville caused to be a very expensive endeavor by requiring the ministry to be on city water, thus requiring them to pay for water lines to be run under railroad tracks and Interstate 40.~~ The first buildings would be a two-story welcome center at the entrance to serve as administrative offices, and camp buildings. Three miles of road were cleared back to the piece of the property designated for the Cove camp, which was ready for use by the summer of 1984, but still in a very primitive condition. The roads were so incomplete that parents had to drop their children off at the entrance, then watch the kids be bussed by utility vehicles back to the camp property.

The initial building program required miracle provision, about \$500,000 the ‘83-‘84 year. President McQuilkin was confident as he closed his letter with an admonition from Nehemiah: “The God of heaven will give us success...and the glory of the latter house will be greater than the former!”

E. Headmaster Ron Whipple (1983-1987)

“What about Ben Lippen?” – Headmaster Tony Fortosis

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The same summer the Cove Board authorized construction to begin on the property, Headmaster Layman’s growing concerns about the organizational structure and developments led him to submit his resignation. He would soon move to Columbia to join the CBC faculty.

Mr. Layman recommended his assistant, Mr. Ron Whipple, to the Board as a natural and capable replacement. Whipple and his wife Mary Jean had been on the Ben Lippen staff for 11 years, 10 of which he had co-labored with Mr. Layman as assistant headmaster. They had made a great team – with Layman’s visionary leadership and excellent communication skills and Whipple’s organizational ability and attention to detail.

Not knowing how he would even begin to fill Layman’s shoes as headmaster, Mr. Whipple nevertheless accepted the challenge and immediately transitioned into the role the summer of 1983.

Both Ron and his wife had been missionary kids themselves, he from Vietnam and Laos, she from West Africa. They had been boarding students at Hampton-Dubois Academy (the school Gwyn Dick and her husband Pierre Dubois had founded), had graduated and gone to Nyack Missionary College with the intent of going back to Vietnam to work with missionary kids. They never made it to the overseas mission field; however, because Hampton-Dubois needed them on staff. As a boarding student and staff member, Ron spent over 16 years of his life at the Academy, which was then one of the nation’s leading Christian boarding schools.

When he resigned, he applied for a position at CBC under former BL headmaster Tony Fortosis, who had become the college’s academic dean. When Whipple decided CBC wasn’t the place God had for his family, Dr. Fortosis asked, “What about Ben Lippen?” The Whipples flew in to investigate the school in the spring of 1972 and immediately felt at home. They came that summer to work the Bible conference and in the fall Mr. Whipple began teaching math, social studies, Jr. Bible, and algebra, as well as coaching soccer.

Now his experience in boarding education and missions would be more valuable than ever, as he entered into the official role as headmaster during a groundbreaking era in the history of Ben Lippen School.

F. The '80s

Dorm Life

By Susan Gordon Williams ('82)

Dorm life was an experience to remember: Lying on the grass outside of the dorms on Sunday afternoons writing our letters home and enjoying friends, making popcorn and drinking hot chocolate on cold snowy days, making muffins on Saturday morning, or running to the senior supply box to buy Pop Tarts during linen exchange on Wednesday nights! My favorite teacher was Sherri Long. She was my freshman year dorm counselor, and she was always there to talk no matter how late it was. The friends I made at BL were some of the most special people to me then and many remain so today. We have a real "tie that binds us together," and that is ultimately our love for Christ and our years as a family on that mountain in Asheville.

Not a 4.0

By Warren Andy Ouzts ('85)

Somehow being up on that mountain in the "Christian" atmosphere made my academic career more bearable. I never was a "smart" fellow – B+ was the best I could do. High school was a struggle, especially junior and senior years. There were days when I didn't think I would graduate. I never made the honor roll and study hall was my constant friend. I think what made the biggest difference between Ben Lippen and other schools is that the teachers really cared if I made it or not. Mrs. Lindsey of senior chemistry and Ms. Long of junior biology both made difficult subjects learnable and passable. It's a real gift to have a teacher who can motivate others to go on when they want to give up. Jesus came to give us life. Ben Lippen gives us the tools to attain that life. It has given me nearly fifteen years in my Air Force career and helped me to appreciate the little things in raising my children to love Jesus. No, I'm not a 4.0 student, but God has greatly blessed me and my family through Ben Lippen.

A Basketball Coach's Impact

By Philip A. Mullins, IV ('84)

A favorite memory? Going down to the gym and playing basketball nearly all night and then sleeping down there with some of my best friends. Talking about dreams for our lives until sunrise. Don Blanton, the varsity basketball coach and biology teacher, was tough but sought to help us grow as men after God's own heart. I really messed up twice at Ben Lippen (got suspended my sophomore year and nearly expelled my junior year). Don Blanton talked with me for hours, crying that he didn't want me to forget or leave the Lord. Don's earnestness helped me to realize I needed God. It changed my life for now and for eternity!

A Play for Miss Harden

By Ronald G. Whitley, Jr. ('90)

My tenth grade year, I was the lead in a play, "The Thread that Runs So True," dedicated to Nell Harden upon her retiring in 1988. I enjoyed drama and gave that play my all. Phil Krause was a great roommate and helped with the play. Julia Grey and Sarah Nettles were close to me. We really became great friends, and the friendship continued when Ben Lippen moved to S.C.

G. Giving Back the Property

“A door of opportunity and vision has been forcibly closed, but I am convinced that God has a sovereign purpose for good.” – President Robertson McQuilkin

As plans moved forward on The Cove property, it soon became apparent that BLS/CBC and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association had different visions for the ministry.

The Bible College was unable to move forward at the pace the larger BGEA ministry had been accustomed to, and other differences escalated tension between parties involved.

Both sides, desiring an outcome that would glorify God, resolved in February 1987 – six years after the property gift had been accepted and four years after development had begun – that Columbia would return the Cove property to the BGEA and the BGEA would reimburse the Bible College for funds spent thus far, a total of three and a half million dollars.

Although Columbia would no longer be leading his lay training organization, Dr. Graham publicly expressed his commendation for the school, saying, “Columbia Bible College & Seminary is one of the great evangelical institutions in America today. We are grateful for the key role it has played in establishing the foundations of this layman’s ministry. We will be looking to Columbia for expertise and advice in helping us develop our curriculum.”

After years of anticipation, Ben Lippen School would no longer be moving to The Cove. However, God had used first the fire then The Cove to put in motion His bigger plan for the next phase of Ben Lippen – a phase very few expected.

A Mountain Retreat Ann Giselle Dayrit ('89)

God “found” me in one of the Bible retreats we had in North Carolina. I remember Mr. White telling us to be open in having Christ in our hearts. He told us to meditate by ourselves and just “talk” to God. I thought it was corny – but if I was going to be “open” it might as well be when I was by myself. And lo and behold I felt God’s presence on August 13th, 1987, in the middle of nowhere in the mountains of North Carolina.

The Billy Graham organization went on to develop the Cove property into a fine conference facility, still known as The Cove.

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VI. Mountain in the Midlands

Ben Lippen Columbia (1988-2005)

A. The Great Debate

“The debate boiled down to two options: closing all Asheville operations or moving to Columbia.” – President Robertson McQuilkin

In a mountain retreat cabin sat Robertson McQuilkin, the leader alone, seeking God for the future of the ministry. His eyes lifted to one of the walls where a beautiful motto caught his attention and whispered hope: “When God closes a door, he opens a window.” So many doors had been shut, forcefully shut by the Lord’s sovereign hand – first the fire at the Inn, then the loss of the Cove. “What is God saying to us through this megaphone of adversity?” he wondered.

The answer depended on whom you asked. Everyone had an opinion about what should happen to Ben Lippen now that it was not to be associated with the Cove. The facilities were in great need of repair. Some thought the \$3.5 million Cove settlement should be used to renovate the property. Then what? Some thought the school should go on with business as usual, remaining a Christian boarding school primarily for missionary children. Some thought it should become a special boarding school for troubled children. Some thought it should become a day school. Others favored selling the property; but of that group some suggested moving the school to Columbia, others opted for closing the school altogether.

After extensive research, the school’s future lay in the hands of the Columbia Bible College Board, who were responsible for it when The Cove Board dissolved.

~~Committees deadlocked over the issue. Repeatedly.~~

~~Faculty members prayed, one of them begging, “Oh, God, don’t let them take us from the mountain!” Naturally, the possibility of such bold change brought fear and hesitation into hearts who were passionately dedicated to the work as it had existed for almost forty-seven years.~~

NOTE: Don’t you think it’s neat to see how God changed the minds and hearts of men so dramatically? Without the previous two paragraphs, we don’t get as clear a picture of that. Those comments came from Robertson McQuilkin (first para.) and Bob Weeber (second para.) incidentally. Can we keep them? ☺ See my additions to try to clarify the point about God changing minds...

President McQuilkin entered the May 1987 board meeting with trepidation. “I did not participate in the debate,” he later wrote, “but as it continued on and on I despaired even of a clear-cut majority vote on one side of the issue. Of course, the lines were drawn more and more clearly between those who wanted to move and those who wanted to go out of business with school and conference.” Those who wanted to move favored re-opening a new Ben Lippen day school associated more closely with the Bible College

and located on its Columbia campus. Those who wanted to go out of business favored funneling the profits back into the Bible College's ministry.

Faculty members kept praying, [and they began to open themselves to the dramatic idea that God could be ordaining a move. Still they wanted to be absolutely certain:](#) "Oh, God, let us be sure this is your will, and we'll go. If the votes were unanimous, it would be a sign to us..."

After several hours of discussion among the board members, the Chairman finally called for a secret ballot. President McQuilkin had no way of knowing which way the votes would fall.

With growing suspense, everyone listened to the outcome: a unanimous ballot with one abstention! "Imagine the sense of divine direction!" McQuilkin wrote. God had clearly answered their prayers for direction by giving them supernatural unity! The request for the "sign" of a unanimous vote had been granted. The school's leaders were all in favor of moving to Columbia.

B. The Great Rebuttal

"How do you feel about the Big Move?" Robertson McQuilkin, president

The popular response to the Board's decision rang throughout the mountains: Noooooooooooooooooooooo! Ben Lippen couldn't leave. It shouldn't leave. And if the Asheville parents and majority of the alumni had their way, it wouldn't leave. ~~The responses ranged from mild to severe: protests, angry letters, threats of legal action.~~ Awww, you guys are deleting all the interesting stuff! What about the following revision: "The responses ranged from polite protests to angry letters to hints at legal action – all of course stemming from the deepest love for the school."

Although the Board had narrowed Ben Lippen's options to two clear alternatives: moving to Columbia or completely closing operations, some loyal Lippenites continued to lobby for staying in Asheville.

My motive for the following paragraphs is to offer a rebuttal to the arguments/questions against moving, many arguments which still exist today. This is a good opportunity/place to try to do some convincing... The title of this section is "The Great Rebuttal" Can you comment on your reasons for wanting to see them go?

Thus the rebuttal began...

~~Why not renovate the Asheville campus? The end result would not provide for long term use or for expansion. We would be locked into aging facilities and a pattern of ever-increasing tuition. In addition, the current site isn't suitable for a contemporary conference center or camp, and the Billy Graham Association could build a far larger conference and camp than Ben Lippen could ever hope to build, and competing with a sister organization would be foolish and wasteful.~~

~~Why a day school? We will keep our historic boarding school element, but adapt it for more modern use by building small houses for the residents. The traditional boarding school trend is weakening. With all the missionary schools available on the foreign fields and home schooling gaining favor, few missionaries will continue to send their children away for schooling. And~~

A New Generation of Praying Ladies

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In the same Holiday Inn where Dr. Billy Graham had handed The Cove property key over to President Robertson McQuilkin, a woman from a mill town knelt to pray six years later. Although Delaine Blackwell had been praying for some time with her friend Becky Moss for a Christian middle and high school in Columbia for their children, Delaine didn't know anything about Ben Lippen School until Becky and her husband Charlie invited Delaine and her husband Mike to a conference in Asheville the summer of 1987.

After visiting the Ben Lippen School property and sensing the Spirit of the Lord there, the two women and their husbands prayed fervently in their hotel room most of the afternoon for a school like Ben Lippen to come to Columbia.

They had no idea that the decision had already been made just a few weeks earlier – not just to open a school like Ben Lippen in Columbia but to move Ben Lippen *itself* to town!

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All of the Blackwell and Moss children would go on to graduate from Ben Lippen Columbia, and Delaine would host the very first Moms-In-Touch prayer group in her home and continue upholding the school and students in prayer with other moms throughout her sons' school tenure.

~~with the rise in the Christian school movement, Christian day schools now are located all across America. Why would parents send their children away when Christian schooling is conveniently close to home? We must be willing to explore new territory by opening our doors as a day school to students in Columbia, where there is no large Christian school.~~

~~What about Asheville students? Asheville students are welcome to come to Columbia as boarding students.~~

~~Won't the heart of the ministry change? The commitment to quality Christian schooling will remain the same; the pursuit of spiritual, academic, and athletic excellence will remain. "And people, after all, are the heart of an institution," insisted the key public figure, President McQuilkin.~~

~~But it's hot in Columbia. And flat! School is out of session in the hottest summer months, and the new location is actually the highest point in Columbia.~~

The decision had been made – after researching other boarding schools and finding dramatic enrollment declines, after debating with all the logic that could be mustered, after praying with fervor for God's will to be done, and after voting with a miraculously unanimous outcome. Despite the reactions and sense of loss expressed by so many in the family, Ben Lippen was moving to Columbia.

C. Headmasters Les Lehman & Keith Marion (1987-1992)

“The thing Ben Lippen means to me is a great faculty that sincerely cares for my walk with the Lord.” – Student quoted in Ben Lippen Times, March 1989

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Although not totally in favor of the move, Headmaster Ron Whipple agreed to support the school through the transition for a year. [Did he though?? Or did he leave before that year was up?](#)

It was decided that the school needed familiar leadership. Right on the mountain home front, teacher Les Lehman had been one to rally the faculty and staff troops when times had been shaky and had been a good source of morale. He would now become acting headmaster in Asheville for the rest of the 1987-1988 school year.

Meanwhile, someone was needed to lead the developments in Columbia – overseeing building constructions, recruiting students, and all the other tasks associated with opening a new school. Former Cove leader Keith Marion would move back to Columbia and provide the leadership ability and the familiarity that was needed. When school opened, Marion would become Headmaster, and Mr. Lehman would move into the role of high school principal. The two men would lead the school together until things became more stable and a permanent headmaster could be found.

D. The Move

“Surely it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a city like Columbia to have a full-grown, proven, and critically needed institution move to town!” – President Robertson McQuilkin

The complete body of Asheville faculty and staff members boarded a charter bus and headed to Columbia to see the new site of their old school, newly purchased property adjacent to Columbia Bible College & Seminary’s 400-acre campus off of Monticello Road. They explored what was only a thicket of pine trees, and Keith Marion pointed out wooden stakes where the corners of the building would be. Which of these teachers would catch the Columbia vision?

“For years we have dreamed of a ‘model Christian school,’ kindergarten through twelfth grade, in Columbia, as part of a program for teacher-training and continuing education for Christian school teachers and administrators,” President McQuilkin wrote.

The faculty members had another major decision before them: If they moved, they would have to purchase homes, many of them for the first time. Housing had been provided on the old campus, but it would not be available on the new. Would the increase in pay be enough to cover these new life expenses? Were the teachers willing to take out mortgages or have their spouses work to have ends meet?

Was the Columbia vision worth the new sacrifices that would have to be made? McQuilkin continued to spell out the new school’s goals: “We have wanted to contribute to the Christian school movement three elements often lacking: The message of the victorious Christian life, missions, and top-quality education. This is what the church needs, and God is calling us to get on with it!”

“Getting on with it” meant opening the Columbia school in the fall of 1988, a little more than a year after the Board made the decision to move.

“For the transition to work, we knew we must occupy the buildings in the fall of 1988,” wrote John Davidson, CBC vice president. “All plans focus on this date; there is no turning back.”

And so the grand re-opening of Ben Lippen in Columbia would have just a bit more time than its first opening in Asheville 48 years earlier. An Advisory Council in Columbia was formed to oversee the operations, and by the time of its first meeting in early January, 1988, they already had 18 applicants for the new school, one more student than the Asheville school had started with in 1940. Construction began in February.

With the Bible College’s ministry expanding, the

January	18
March	27
Early April	45 (14 boarding, 29 day)
Late April	110 (53 Asheville, 57 new)
May	121 (55 Asheville, 66 new)
July	177 (64 Asheville, 133 new <27 new boarding, 86 new day> 91 total boarding, 86 total day)
September	243 (112 boarding, 131 day)

leaders created a new organizational structure and placed all of its outreach ministries – radio station, conference and camp ministry, audio and video ministry, and Ben Lippen Schools – under it, calling the division Columbia Outreach. Director of Columbia Outreach would be Keith Marion, who would also continue serving as acting headmaster.

A new Ben Lippen Advisory Council included Marion; John Davidson, CBCS vice president; Terry Hulbert, CBCS provost; Jack Matthews, former CBCS dean of men, and several other members who would be charged with the responsibility of overseeing the facilities construction, faculty hiring, and student recruitment for the new school. Buildings, teachers, and students – three things a school required. The Council’s first meeting in January, Terry Hulbert noted, would be “a very historic meeting as it is the beginning of a new era for Ben Lippen School.”

Building plans included a classroom building, a gymnasium, and a cluster of nine resident student houses – amounting to a \$4.5 million dollar project, only \$2.9 of which would be covered by The Cove ~~settlement~~[investment resolution](#). Fundraising plans began.

~~By June, three months before school would start, twenty-two teachers and staff members – about half – had decided to relocate with Ben Lippen to Columbia: Mr. and Mrs. Bob Weeber, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hathaway, Mr. and Mrs. Les Lehman, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Lindsey, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Schreck, Mr. Cliff White, Miss Sherry Long, Mr. and Mrs. Skip Midkiff, Mr. Ronnie Wilson, Mrs. Winnie Grimm, Mr. Nelson Haynes, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Hathaway, Ms. Sarah Woodring, Mrs. Joy Reyes, and Mr. Bill Fulbright. Many of them made the difficult decision simply for the sake of the students, who would need familiar faces and support through the transition.~~

[Curious about your reason for deleting previous paragraph?? I think it’s neat to know who were the “old-schoolers” who transitioned to the new campus.](#)

By mid-summer, about 64 students from Asheville were on the roster as “returning” students, although they would be returning to a completely new campus. Efforts to recruit day students were successful, and the administration was nearing its goal of 100 day students. Boarding and day students were evenly split in July with 91 boarding students and 86 day students.

Amidst the questions and uncertainties that had surrounded the move, a vast new community of families in Columbia would only see a major blessing: quality Christian education had moved to town.

E. Borrowing by Faith

“When the Board decided to move Ben Lippen, it did so by faith... Since the anticipated miracle has not been granted yet, we have no choice but to borrow the funds.” – President Robertson McQuilkin

Ben Lippen had a long history of miracles when it moved to Columbia, and now the leaders began praying for a fresh one. The Cove settlement of \$2.9 million would sufficiently cover the new classroom building, but the gymnasium and resident houses brought the total project costs up to an overwhelming \$4.7 million.

Despite the cost, the school couldn't afford not to move forward with student housing, because to hesitate or delay building residences would give the appearance that they weren't continuing with the historic boarding program and would present a housing problem for the boarding students. Housing the high school students in the dorms with the Bible college students was an option, but a very unfavorable one – especially to the students from both age groups who wanted their own space and identity.

The gymnasium plans could not be modified or delayed at this point either, because the administration had negotiated a deal for building the classroom building and gymnasium together and the price per square foot would increase dramatically if the gym project was delayed.

“The conclusion of the administration is that we really do need all of the basic elements which have been projected, though if the cost had been known in advance, we would have had second thoughts,” Robertson McQuilkin had written in January 1988. “I don't want to blame God for our ineptitude (or is it merely finitude?), but is this His way of getting us into the project we might otherwise have hesitated to pursue?”

~~There could be no turning back by this point, so the administration was left with a \$1.8 million fundraising project. The CBC Board agreed to raise half of the money for the gym—\$800,000—from the Bible College's donor base, since the gym would be a shared asset and a vital addition for their students. However, the college, having just finished a gigantic campaign for its new Ridderhof Media Center, had exhausted its support resources and was able to raise very little toward the gym. The miracle did not come, and as a result, the school went to the bank for a \$300,000 loan using the Asheville property (which still had not sold) as collateral to pay the builder. It would be forced to take another loan if the rest of the money did not come through donors.~~

[When fundraising efforts came up short, the school went to the bank for a \\$300,000 loan using the Asheville property as collateral to pay the builder.](#)

“But what are we doing going into debt?” President McQuilkin wrote, asking the question on everyone's minds. “Simply put, when the Board decided to move Ben Lippen, it did so by faith—faith that the move was of God and that He would provide. The school had to open by this fall if we were to continue the ministry, and once decided, there was no turning back. There is no way, in this project, to stop halfway through, as

we have done in the past. You either have a school or you don't. Since the anticipated miracle has not been granted yet and we cannot default on the payments due the builder, we have no choice but to borrow the funds."

"Our position has never been that it is wrong to borrow against one's resources to secure the loan," McQuilkin explained. "In line with this conviction, BLS (like CBCS until recently) has never had a no-debt policy, though we have not often borrowed and are loathe to do so."

The gym's construction moved forward, and ~~still a miracle did not come.~~ The Bible College found the means to pay for it solution in a generous charitable trust gift that had been given to the college. In a charitable trust, a donor gives a substantial gift; the recipient organization invests the gift then pays the donor a set "salary" from the gift's earnings each year until the donor passes away.

With the permission of the donor, the Bible College used the \$1.5 million from the trust to give an internal loan to Ben Lippen, agreeing to pay the donors' yearly income from the college's own funds since the gift would no longer be earning investment profits. ~~The Bible College released Ben Lippen from the obligation of paying back the \$1.5 million loan, and thus completely forfeited the gift that originally was intended to benefit the college. After several years and as Ben Lippen became more financially self-sufficient, the Bible College required the school to gradually take over the annual trust income payments from its own budget.~~

~~However, after paying the yearly trust income of well over \$100,000 from its budget for quite a few years, the Bible College required Ben Lippen gradually to take over the payments. As a result, the gymnasium cost not only the \$1.5 million trust but also more than \$2 million of trust payments over the years. Deleting this sentence makes things confusing, in my opinion. What about: As a result of these necessary measures, the gymnasium cost not only the \$1.5 million trust but also more than \$2 million in trust payments over the years.~~

"This is actually a case of good stewardship," according to John Davidson, vice president of business operations at the time of the decision. "Had we chosen to borrow [from a lending institution] it would have had the same associated cost or more, while this arrangement allowed us to take care of the shortfall internally."

In every situation, borrowing costs more than raising the funds in full, and as a result, Ben Lippen leans heavily on the generosity of donors to empower the school to move in the direction of God's leading. When the donations fall short, difficult decisions must be made through much prayer for God's will and faith for His provision, whatever the means.

F. The First Year

“The potential is great and the problems that face us in the transition, challenging.” – President Robertson McQuilkin

The school opened just a week later than usual on September 6, 1988, with a convocation and grand opening ceremony in the new Ben Lippen gymnasium. A total of 243 students in grades seven through twelve (112 boarding students and 131 day students –surpassing the goal of 100 day students) were ready to begin a historic year. Columbia’s opening year broke all enrollment records with a 60% increase from the previous year, bringing the new facilities to virtual capacity the very first year.

Even with a week delay for preparations, school started incompletely in some ways. The teachers’ desks hadn’t arrived, and the grass hadn’t been set, so mud covered everything when it rained. The resident houses weren’t finished, and the 112 boarding students had to be housed in a hotel up the interstate for several weeks. Transporting, feeding, and supervising them proved to be a logistical nightmare, which fortunately came to a resolution when the residences were complete.

Immediately in the Columbia school, the student body dynamics changed, as students came from more affluent homes and from families not necessarily involved in full-time ministry. Students had cars at school – and they were actually allowed to drive them!

The physical relocation and repositioning of the school posed significant transitional opportunities for teachers and students (and their respective families). Rules that were necessary on the mountain with parents many miles away (and an obvious need for consistency in bedtime, study habits, and standards) had to be reconsidered. Now, with reason, parents wanted to have much closer involvement than before, and gradually more and more responsibility for the conduct of the day students would be placed upon the parents.

A Parent-Teacher Organization was established for the first time to provide an organized channel for input, volunteering, fundraising, and to give a sense of overall connection to the school. Three subgroups were organized: Mom’s Club (to help with day-to-day school needs such as teacher aides, class moms, day nurse, etc.), Athletic Club (to assist the athletic department, raising funds for athletic equipment and supplies), and Music & Art Club (to assist in the number of co-curricular activities like choir, drama, debate, etc.)

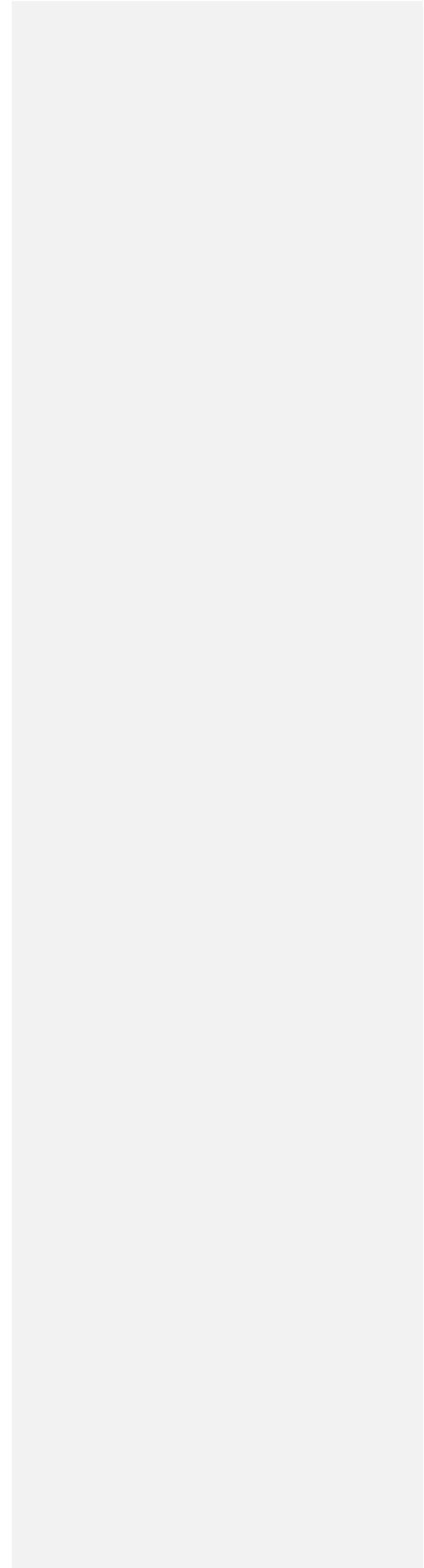
Hotel Swimming and a Wall Plaque

Kristi McCullough Kruff
(’90)

We had to live for a couple weeks in a hotel because the Columbia campus dorms weren’t ready yet! We would swim in the hotel pool every day after school. I can only speak for myself, and I haven’t done anything great by earthly means, but I dedicated my life to Christ at Ben Lippen and I’ve never been the same since! God is awesome and doing awesome things in my life, and I connect that with my days at Ben Lippen. I’ll never forget what it said on the wall: “To Know Him and to Make Him Known.”

Parent prayer groups would be initiated as well, and many families would find joy and support from each other in the spiritual atmosphere of Ben Lippen as they faced the challenges of rearing children together.

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G. Relations with the Bible College

“What merger of significance doesn’t have problems growing pains?” Bob Kallgren, vice president for corporate planning and research

NOTE: I do not think this section needs to be included. I have tried several ways to restate the situation in an objective light, but concluded it would be best to just omit in its entirety. I contacted Bob Kallgren for his advice, and rewrote accordingly. What do you think?

Implanting a rowdy bunch of over 200 teenagers onto a dignified campus of higher learning naturally had its complexities. These cultural differences, uncertain expectations, and little details like hundreds more cars on campus brought new challenges to both Ben Lippen and Columbia’s Higher Education.

Some compared it to having new neighbors next door, and various opinions existed as to how the neighbors should best interact. A “good neighbors have fences” philosophy created boundaries between the two ministries in order to allow effective autonomous coexistence, and a “fences have gates” philosophy encouraged openness for sharing and building positive relationships. Both ministries wanted to be certain that their mission had effective resources and attention of the administration.

Although Ben Lippen and Higher Education in Columbia had always been related, the merger onto one location necessitated proactive means of uniting the two. The administration created “buddy relationships” between the Higher Education and Ben Lippen faculty members to help make the transition easier, but time would prove to be the most effective factor in creating a sense of partnership and morale.

Having CBCS faculty members enroll their own children in Ben Lippen also helped bridge the gap, and many campus leaders like Bryan Beyer, Ralph Enlow, Keith Marion, Don Howell, Bob Kallgren, Don Jones, and other staff members became great supporters of Ben Lippen as they saw the positive effects in their children’s lives.

Columbia is Richer

By Don Jones, CIU employee and BL parent

Next to salvation, Ben Lippen is the best thing that has happened to our kids. Their relationships with the teachers have made all the difference. Our son Robby always wanted his teacher, Mr. White, to come on family vacations with us, and he did! One evening when I needed to sleep in our son’s room, I accidentally knocked his pillow onto the floor and out came tumbling all these pieces of paper. I hesitated to look, because with teenage boys you never know what you’ll find, but I found Bible verses and spiritual goals that my son had set with Mr. White. What a blessing! Not many parents can say that! Columbia is richer, and our family is richer for having Ben Lippen here. CIU is richer too, even though she doesn’t always know it.

The Columbia Board’s vision for a “model school” began to be realized even in the first year, as Bible College students began to teach Bible in the high school for their student teaching requirements. Graduate students were hired as house-parents in the resident houses, and paid in room, board, and education credits.

The challenges of merging a middle and high school onto a college and seminary campus – and easing tensions between the joining two very different worlds – would last evolve

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throughout the next decade, and the atmosphere would greatly improve as parties from both Ben Lippen and Columbia saw more and more their single calling – to know Him and make Him known.

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H. Middle School

“You’re treating us like babies!” the new sixth-graders continuously complained to their teacher, Mrs. Fleming, their first year on the new campus. Ben Lippen opened its doors to sixth-graders in 1989, with one self-contained class of 24 students. The youngest students at Ben Lippen felt isolated. Their classroom was downstairs with the seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms, but they didn’t change classes like all of the older students. The bell would ring, and they were expected to stay in their seats and continue with a completely different schedule of their own. Meeting in a high school building made them feel as if they should be treated like high schoolers, but at least for that first year, they still felt like elementary students.

By the second year, the sixth grade had grown to two classes with two teachers, and the students switched between the two classrooms for different subjects. Still, the need for the middle school students (including sixth, seventh, and eighth grades) to be separated from the high school students became apparent for several reasons. First, the new high school in Columbia had a rapidly growing number of students on its waiting list, but was already filled to capacity in its first few years. In order to make space for the interested students, the administration would have to move the middle schoolers to a place of their own. The second reason was to make the transition from elementary to high school more smooth. Sharing a building with the high school students made the transition difficult emotionally for the middle schoolers, who couldn’t understand why they didn’t get the same privileges and treatment as the older students and who weren’t quite mature enough to fit in with the older kids.

In 1995, buildings behind the main high school building were quickly built, and by the fall of 1995 the middle school students had a campus of their own. Being located in the buildings did a lot to give the middle schoolers their own identity, to clarify their unique position between elementary and high school, and to give them a secure place to be themselves without some of the emotional pressures of being in a high school.

I. “Little Ben” Elementary

Twenty five-year-olds and 11 four-year-olds would make history in 1990 as the youngest students ever to attend Ben Lippen. Keith Marion’s only daughter, Amy, entered kindergarten with this group at a new satellite elementary school in the facilities of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. (Amy would continue through twelfth grade and be one of five students from that first kindergarten class to graduate with a complete Ben Lippen education in 2003.)

St. Andrews Presbyterian, intending to open an elementary school, had contacted Ben Lippen about the possibility of operating it in the church’s facilities. The satellite elementary system – maintaining locations in addition to the main Monticello Road campus – brought with it the opportunity to be in a number of areas of influence in the community, to build a broader constituency, and to create a model for other cities.

When the opportunity arose, Keith Marion was taking a graduate education class at the Bible College. One of his classmates was Judy LaCount, an experienced educator from Korea who had come back to the states for graduate training. He considered her an ideal candidate to principal a new elementary school. One day he invited her to his office and asked her, “How would you like to help Ben Lippen start an elementary school?”

Although she had not wanted to stay in the United States beyond her graduate training, Judy prayed and believed the invitation to be the Lord’s call, and in an act of obedience she agreed. Almost immediately, she began working on a curriculum for grades 1-5 and soon was immersed in the work of principal. The school started with 31 K-4 and K-5 students with plans to add an additional grade level each year.

For the 1991-1992 school year, the enrollment had drastically increased from 31 to 78 students – 8 K-4, 30 K-5, and 19 first-graders; second grade was added in 1992-1993, and in the fourth year in operation (1993-1994) grades 3 through 5 were added.

McQuilkin Retires; CIU is Named

In March 1990, just a year and a half after the Ben Lippen move to Columbia and the same year an elementary program would begin, President Robertson McQuilkin retired from his position in order to stay home full time and take care of his wife Muriel, who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

“There are other people in the world who can successfully lead CBCS,” he said. “There is only one who can successfully care for Muriel at this point.”

After a brief interim in which Mr. John Davidson served as acting president, a pastor from Pennsylvania, Dr. Johnny Miller, was voted into the Bible College’s presidential position the following year. Under his leadership, in 1994, the name of the college was changed to Columbia International University.

In the fall of 1993, the administration began meeting with pastors who had churches located on the northeast side of Columbia, exploring the possibility of opening another elementary school satellite there. The question was tabled for a couple of years, while the leaders determined whether they had adequate resources (time, energy, and money) to pursue another school. In March 1996, Spears Creek Baptist Church came forward and would allow the school to operate there rent-free for the first year. A feasibility study found enough student interest, and the Board voted in April to begin the satellite with K-5 through third grade that fall.

J. Headmaster Dave Edgren (1992-2000)

“I have an overpowering feeling that Dave Edgren should be here.” – Barbara Cross, CBC alumna

At Shanxi University in China, David Edgren was teaching English – he couldn’t call himself a missionary since missionaries weren’t permitted in China. However, under the auspices of the Christian Missionary Alliance, Dave was a “tentmaker,” which meant he held a secular job while building relationships with locals in order to reach them with the Gospel.

He had no real affiliation with CIU or Ben Lippen, but he had met alumni David and Barbara Cross while speaking in their church to raise awareness of God’s work in China. When the Crosses came back to CIU for a visit in 1991, Barbara received a clear but unusual impression – she became so convinced that Dave should be a part of the CIU ministry, she approached the president with the idea. “I have an overpowering feeling that Dave Edgren should be here,” she told Dr. Johnny Miller and explained Dave’s credentials.

A native of Pennsylvania, Dave held a Ph.D. and M.Ed. from Penn State and also had experience as headmaster and principal of Eden Christian Academy in Pennsylvania. He had public relations experience with the Navigators ministry and over 25 years of military experience. His extensive education qualifications combined with his missions heart made him a prime candidate for a Ben Lippen headmaster.

When Dr. Miller called and asked Dave to interview for the Ben Lippen headmaster position, the Edgrens were already planning to move back to the States, so Dave accepted the invitation. In Columbia, he quickly became impressed with the leadership, and officially signed on as headmaster the summer of 1992.

When he spoke to the seniors at that fall’s opening retreat, he was “touched and motivated by the spiritual fervor of many of them,” he later wrote.

His goals for the near future included tightening the budget, increasing teacher salaries, and increasing resident student enrollment.

K. The '90s

▲ *“Although it has been over 10 years since I have graduated, I will never forget my Ben Lippen experience.” – Karen Sursavage Dunn, class of 1993*

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Mr. Fulbright, Mr. Midkiff, and Mr. White

By Karen Sursavage Dunn ('93)

I loved my teachers at Ben Lippen. One of my favorites was Mr. Bill Fulbright. I had him for AP U.S. History. He was a very intelligent man and really knew his history. He is part of the reason I am a high school history teacher today. He made history fun to learn. There were only five of us in the class: Gideon Moore, Carmen Coleman, Jonathan Romaine, Scott Hulstrand, and me. We played Jeopardy to review for tests, and Mr. Fulbright would sing to us, like the Eire Canal and Presidents song. Gideon was always knowledgeable about politics and said he would run for president one day. We also had lively debates. We had a lot of fun together! I never really enjoyed U.S. History before, but after having Mr. Fulbright I liked it much more! I teach a college U.S. History and AP World History class today.

Another great teacher I had was Skip Midkiff, who I had for English my junior year. He knew his subject well, but he was also very funny. We probably spent more time laughing than concentrating on English.

The teachers and staff showed their faith every day through their actions. Mr. White and other teachers were great examples of faith. They were always willing to give of their time and effort to help the students. I always felt comfortable going to them for help with a school issue or personal issue.

So many high school students want to rush their experience so they can go on to college. I would tell Ben Lippen students not to take for granted the time they have at BL, but to savor it and enjoy the close fellowship they have with each other and their teachers. Although it has been over 10 years since I have graduated, I will never forget my Ben Lippen experience.

A Debt to Ben Lippen

By Gideon Moore ('93)

Strangely, the most valuable aspect of my Ben Lippen experience was to follow my departure. I graduated with an \$18,000 debt and an agreement with the school to pay the debt before receiving my diploma. Deferring college, I attempted to apply for jobs but quickly found that in the "real world," job options for 17-year-old high school graduates are limited at best. It was a difficult situation, but I had given my word and was determined to pay for my education.

In late June 1993, I found a temporary job working in the Duke University mailroom for \$6.78 per hour with opportunity for overtime. I went to work at 4 a.m. on Saturdays, took minimal lunch breaks, worked for co-workers, and cut my expenses to \$10 a week plus gas. Thus in under a year, I was able to reduce my debt by \$14,000!

In May 1994, Ben Lippen released my transcripts to help me begin summer school at UNC Chapel Hill. I continued to work two part-time jobs while in school to pay off my debt. In August 1995, I returned to Ben Lippen, where the Board forgave the remaining \$1,400 and presented me with the diploma that had been withheld two years before. Finally I was free of a burden that had weighed very heavily upon my shoulders.

In hindsight, I have come to see that the debt produced the best educational experience I could ask for... When faced with adversity, I now know that I can persevere and overcome. This lesson permeates my life.

The Henry Guo Tragedy

It was the day after school let out for the summer and a group of international students went over to a fellow students' lake house for an end-of-school celebration, accompanied by two Chinese houseparents as chaperones. Among the students was Henry Guo, a precious young man and everyone's favorite, but unfortunately unable to swim. At some point during the students' adventures, he took off his life jacket, and suddenly disappeared from the group. John Edgren, the headmaster's son, found him and pulled him out of the water. Efforts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful, and an ambulance rushed him to the hospital.

Headmaster Dave Edgren, who received a frantic call from a student, and Johnny Miller, who happened to be riding his bike by the Edgren home shortly after the call, beat the ambulance to the hospital. Unfortunately, the doctors could do nothing; Henry passed away.

Henry was believed to have come to know the Lord at Ben Lippen, and hundreds came to his viewing in CIU's Hoke Auditorium. His parents flew over from China and ignored lawyers' advice to press charges against the school. It was a time of immense sadness for all involved, but the next year Henry's father honored his son's memory by speaking at the candlelight service.

L. The New Resident Program

“My roommate was Japanese, and she was the coolest, sweetest, and most fun person I have ever met.” – Amanda Mills, class of 2000

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Asheville’s boarding program had been a way of life. The students, teachers, and staff members lived together, worked together, studied, worshiped and played together. A sense of family bonded everyone together, as teachers took on the important parental role in the lives of students whose real parents were scattered all around the world. Even the relationships between teachers became exceptionally bonded as they shared the task of rearing the young people not just academically, but socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Could that be re-created in a day school environment, where teachers and students lived separately? Could the overall family bond from the mountain be achieved in a school with two distinct student groups: residents and day students? And could the new resident program ever hope to create the sense of belonging that existed in Asheville?

The new resident program would be distinctly different from the old Asheville system, particularly in its setup. Instead of dorms, six resident houses built on a beautiful lake behind the school would each house about 16 resident students, who would be supervised by married houseparents. The houseparents were not teachers; the houseparent role was entirely separate from the teacher role. The houseparents’ sole responsibility would be to create a home-like environment for the students and to oversee the young people’s growth; while the teacher’s responsibility would be to teach.

Not So Different After All By Amanda Mills ('00)

Being a resident student, I really got to know people from different countries and cultures. It was so fun getting to know them. My roommate was Japanese, and she was the coolest, sweetest, and most fun person I have ever met. Our cultures were different, and we learned from each other. I wish that every new student would talk to and get to know the foreign students. I am sure that they will experience the same thing I did: That we are all the same as people, and they are not so different and foreign after all.

Teachers who had experienced the Asheville way of life felt uncomfortable and disconnected with the students under this new arrangement. “The heart of Asheville was time spent with students, and the classroom was only a part,” explained science teacher Sherry Long in a report on the differences between the old and new schools. “The bigger part was being with them in all the other areas—sharing lives together. One of my present griefs is that I feel like I’m mostly a perpetrator of knowledge to their brains.”

In Asheville, the students’ rooms had been in close proximity to their classes, and they had been permitted to go to their rooms between classes, which gave the school a home-like environment all day; in the new resident system, however, the resident homes were too far from the main classroom building for students to drop by their rooms during the

day, and a new rule restricted them from doing so since it wasn't fair for some students to have rooms available on campus while others – the day students – didn't.

Recruiting resident students soon proved to be a problem, since now the school had to recruit for two distinct groups. Columbia students were easier to recruit, as the word about the new Christian school spread through town. However, more creative means were needed to recruit international and out-of-state resident students. “We were literally shopping the world for students,” according to Keith Marion, headmaster during the transition to Columbia.

When a resident student's parent working in Saudi Arabia suggested that other American parents working there also might have an interest in sending their students to Ben Lippen, Marion took a recruiting trip to Saudi, visited a number of Aramco and International Schools, and earned for the 1990 school year 21 American boarding students whose parents were working in the Middle East.

When Dave Edgren came on the scene as headmaster, he too planned recruiting visits – first to his familiar China, where he had been an international educator, as well as to Japan and Hong Kong. In 1994 he started early arrangements for a potential sister school relationship with South Ocean International School in China.

A summer program at Ben Lippen teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) was created and used as a key entry point for internationals.

Yet by 1998, the resident program had drastically declined in students, and efforts to attract interest through national ads in *Christianity Today* magazine had been unsuccessful. Dr. Edgren attempted to identify the reasons for the decline, and came up with many factors: limited budgeting for advertising, shift in missionary perception about sending children to boarding schools, diminished communication between teachers and houseparents, doubling of resident tuition (it had ballooned from \$6,450 the first year in Columbia to \$15,500 for the 1998-1999 year), decrease in teacher involvement in lives of resident students, irritation from resident students about following stricter rules than day students, and the dramatic increase in day students, causing resident students to feel like their identity was lost.

The school was down to using only two resident houses when an aggressive three-year plan to revive the program was set in motion. Dr. Edgren took a world recruiting tour, including cities in Europe, Asia, and Africa, with the advice to limit the number of students accepted from any given country to 20 students in order to keep an atmosphere of diversity. Recruiting and keeping resident students in this modern age would prove to be an ongoing challenge.

(What is the status today of the Resident program?)

“I thought God put me at Ben Lippen to learn English, but now I see He put me here to know Him and to make Him known.” -*Joseph Lee ('03), resident student from South Korea*

The residence program today is comprised of nearly 50 students of varying nationalities. The resident student population in school year 2005-2006 comes from Cameroon, China, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Ukraine, USA and Vietnam. Houseparents also represent the countries of China, Cuba, Japan and the USA.

God has historically graced Ben Lippen School with an international mosaic of peoples. His creative handiwork expressed through varied nationalities is a continued reflection of His heart in Ben Lippen School. We are blessed to witness His redemptive work in the lives of our international students and envision an expanding ministry to the world through such contacts. We desire to be a “safe haven” for Christian youth of the world to live and study as they prepare to fulfill God’s will for their lives.

M. Athletics

"It is far more important to build Christian character than to win trophies." – Student handbook

When the school moved to Columbia, Ben Lippen student athletes continued to compete in the Blue Ridge Conference and travel to Asheville to play their old rivals Asheville School and Christ School. Bill and Katie Currier arrived for Ben Lippen's second year in Columbia, and Bill began serving as the athletic director, replacing Mike Hathaway. Under his leadership, the school joined the new Palmetto Athletic Conference started by large, private schools in South Carolina, including Hilton Head Prep, Porter Gaud, Hammond, and Heathwood. When the traveling distances became too difficult for teams, the conference folded after only four years.

Ben Lippen had been a soccer school for decades, with a long history of undefeated seasons and conference championships. In Columbia, however, many students began expressing a desire for a new spectator sport: football! Some of these students, with Coach Currier's support, started a flag football league in 1991 and began playing intra-school games against each other. By the next year, Coach Currier used his connections at nearby Carolina Children's Home and worked out an arrangement for Ben Lippen boys to play on the Home's team. With these modest beginnings, the Ben Lippen football team began, playing home games at Seven Oaks Park and using all of the Children's Home equipment. By mid-season most of the Children's Home's players had dropped off the team, and it soon became clear that they wouldn't have a team the next year. Ben Lippen purchased all of the Home's equipment and uniforms, and the next year, in 1993, they played Ben Lippen's first regular season game on an independent schedule.

About the same time, the Palmetto Athletic Conference folded, and Ben Lippen joined the public high school league as a Class A school in all sports. Playing against challenging schools like Louisville and Indian River produced many losses, particularly in the larger sports of basketball and football. In 1998, Ben Lippen joined the South Carolina Independent School Association (SCISA), where they would compete with a greater opportunity for success.

In the mid-'90s, alumni pledged to raise the funds for an athletic complex including baseball, soccer, and football fields, and a running track. The alumni exceeded their \$30,000 goal and had raised \$33,000 by June of 1996, perhaps because the complex would honor two of their most loved coaches: Bob Weeber and Bob Hathaway, both of whom served on staff for forty years. For these men, the Hathaway-Weeber Athletic Complex was named.

In 2004, Ben Lippen had 36 athletic teams, a large number for a school of its size. About three-fourths of the coaches were unpaid volunteers, who work for the love of their sport and their students.

Parent involvement has been crucial for the Columbia athletic program. In the mid-'90s, the Booster Club was started to give parents an official way to support Falcon athletics. Booster Club members staff the gates at home games, work concessions, and use proceeds of fundraising and club membership dues for special projects. A great achievement of the Booster Club was the addition of the 595-seat stadium and press box to the Hathaway-Weeber Athletic Complex in 2001-2002.

A large number of Ben Lippen's teams have been coached by parents and other volunteers, which has enabled the school to have a large number of teams for its size. Many parents have also generously contributed athletic uniforms and other needed equipment, since the athletic department's modest budget has not provided for many of these items.

~~Parents have been pleasantly surprised to see that the a number of students who go have gone on to play college sports, are few, due to the greater level of competition. However, a handful~~ Although it is not the norm for the average high school athlete to successfully pursue college athletics, several Ben Lippen graduates have made accomplishments in that realm, including Sam Gado who played as a starting running back on the Liberty University football team; Papus Keita, who played soccer at The Citadel; Wes Sweeten who played football at Clemson; Maria Hadinger, who played soccer at Wingate University; Alli Currier, who played basketball at the U.S. Naval Academy; Jackson Whiting, who played as a kicker for the Air Force Academy; and Brady Bryant, who went on to play professional soccer. Because the odds of receiving an athletic scholarship and playing college sports are against the average high school student, every Ben Lippen athlete is encouraged to measure his or her success by the lessons they've learned and the growth they've experienced, and let personal growth and love for the sport be their motivation for playing.

Note: Bill Currier wanted to emphasize that parents should not expect to have their children go on to college athletics and especially to receive athletic scholarships, because the competition is very tight and the chances are slim for a high school athlete. (Basically he didn't want to get parents hopes up, as many already have the false expectation of college athletic success.)

Photos: Volleyball championship, 1995.

Cross Country, 9 consecutive state champs, George Johnson, coach.

Hathaway-Weeber Athletic Complex, funded by the Booster Club

N. Headmaster Don Kauffman (2000-2005)

“As the principal, so is the school.” – Jonathan Williams, first headmaster and principal

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In the middle of the spring 2000 semester, Headmaster Edgren elected to take an extended Sabbatical, fully intending to return in three months. He appointed Mr. Don Kauffman, the director of secondary education, to serve as acting headmaster in his absence. Mr. Kauffman had served with Ben Lippen since 1996, first as middle school principal, then as director of student affairs, then as director of secondary education.

Kauffman’s background was in the pastorate and college administration in Canada, but in 1990 an extended period of fasting and prayer had led him to believe his future was in secondary education. At the same time, a door opened for him to lead a Christian day school in Manchester, Connecticut, as headmaster. He began pursuing education credentials each summer at the International Institute for Christian Educators, and in 1994 he moved to Columbia (the new host site for the Institute) to work full-time on finishing his degree.

He moved his family from Connecticut to join him in Columbia when a local Nazarene church asked him to lead a new school they intended to start in their facilities. The school never opened, and after a year on staff with the church, Don needed another opening. That opportunity came at the offer of Dave Edgren, whom Don had met while taking classes at CIU, to become Ben Lippen’s middle school principal.

Don excitedly accepted this invitation to join the school that shared a campus with the Association of Christian Schools International’s Institute, which was at the very center of influence in Christian education.

When it became clear that Dave Edgren would not return, Don was the natural candidate for appointment to full headmaster status, and he moved into the role in the summer of 2000. Other administrative changes happened about the same time. A few months earlier in January 2000, Dr. George Murray, a former missionary to Italy and mission board leader, had replaced Johnny Miller as president of CIU, after Miller resigned to return to the pastorate. And just a year later, Miss Beverly Bandy became the new elementary principal, [replacing Steve Reel, who would move into the associate headmaster position. \(Who did Miss Bandy replace?\)](#)

Rebuilding After a Fire

In the spring of 2002, the Ben Lippen High School student council led a service project that raised \$5,600 to help sister school Eagles Nest Christian Academy in Franklin, Tennessee, rebuild following a fire. Twelve years had passed since a former devastating fire had taken the Ben Lippen Inn in Asheville.

O. One Campus?

“We must have the vision to see, the faith to believe, and the courage to act.” – Capital campaign brochure

With the new millennium, came plans to expand, and in May 2000, the Board approved official plans including a \$6 million K-5 elementary campus on the Monticello Road site, a \$1 million secondary media center, a \$120,000 art room expansion, and \$1.2 million of athletic facility improvements. The CIU Board stipulated that a professional feasibility study be conducted first to determine the fundraising capacity of the current Ben Lippen constituency.

A capital campaign to raise funds for the first phase – the elementary building – officially began on September 1, 2001, just ten days prior to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, which would send many non-profit organizations including CIU and Ben Lippen into a financial crisis.

While moving forward toward a centralized elementary school model that would unite its satellites onto one campus, Ben Lippen was offered a third satellite location. Another local Christian elementary school, St. Andrews Christian Academy (SACA), was closing due to financial shortfalls, and its administration requested that Ben Lippen consider taking over their assets and facilities in Calvary Christian Church as a new BL satellite location.

Although more elementary satellites were not in the expansion plan, Ben Lippen nevertheless accepted the offer in 2002, paying SACA \$35,000 for the board to use as needed and gaining a new campus on Ashland Road, about 45 SACA students, and six teachers and staff members. Ben Lippen Ashland Road opened in July 2002.

Having three satellite elementary locations in three borrowed church facilities with three sets of teachers, office staff, equipment, and bills seemed to be a weakness to the elementary program. The consensus among many was that one campus would save resources, create a stronger program, build stronger ties with the CIU education program, unite the staff, and provide a host of other benefits. Groups of parents met with teachers and administrators to voice concerns, opinions, and even protests about the shift in focus to a “one campus” approach.

By late 2003, Headmaster Kauffman and the other leaders declared January 12, 2004, as the “Decision Day” to determine whether or not to proceed with the capital campaign. If \$1.2 million had been received by that date, they would take it as the Lord’s leading to proceed with fundraising to merge the three elementary campuses into one new centralized location. If the certain amount of funds had not been received, the capital campaign would be called off and a new elementary campus on Monticello Road would not be built.

January 12 came and went, but the funds did not come. In a specially called meeting of board members and administrators, the capital campaign officially ended. The decision

would shift the elementary focus back to a community satellite vision, with modifications.

Because the three current locations, all of which had been considered “temporary” from the beginning, were all insufficient for growth, the administration set a new goal in 2004 aligned with the satellite vision: To open new community-based elementary schools on each side of the Broad River in facilities that are owned by Ben Lippen in order to be a light to the communities, a feeder to the middle school, and a lab for CIU’s education program.

P. Advancements

“The wave of the future is advancement.” – Headmaster Don Kauffman

Although the campus expansion plans would not proceed as had been intended, advancements would be made nevertheless. Technological advancements would be at the forefront. In the six years between 1999 and 2004, the middle and high school computer labs would be updated with new computers twice, each classroom would be networked and have Internet access, and wireless Internet would be added to the resident houses.

“Technology is like a rushing river,” Don Kauffman said. “The only way to get downstream is to jump in. By 2004, the headmaster would declare the school to be “ahead of the game” compared with other schools, yet cautiously add that they would have to work each year to stay current.

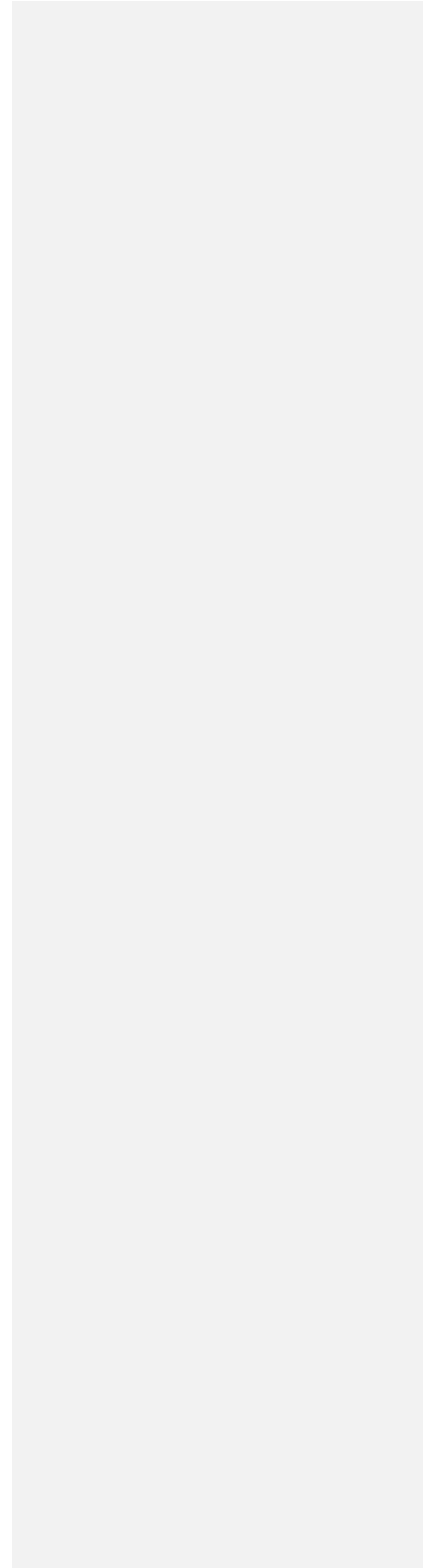
Another advancement would be the addition of an Annual Fund in the fall of 1999, to which donors could give to support the school’s yearly causes: “Families, Faculty, and Fundamentals.” In just five years, Ben Lippen staff, parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends would give over one million dollars for families through student aid, for faculty through professional development and bonuses, and for fundamentals such as educational tools and classroom enhancements. The school would truly be blessed by the enthusiastic and generous support of a broad community, and a new sense of school spirit for the day school environment. Make the point: The enthusiastic and generous support of the Annual Fund is evidence of the new school spirit and support for the day school environment.

Don Kauffman requested the following info be included... (should we check with him before deleting?)

Another way Ben Lippen would move forward into the twenty first century would be through administrative restructuring, particularly focusing on Institutional Advancement and how the school is presented. Creating an Institutional Advancement area, would bring more attention to the areas of recruitment, marketing, fundraising, and alumni relations. Polly Shoemaker, director of development, would lead these efforts, Jeff Boyce, in the newly created position of chief operations officer, would oversee financials and liaison with CIU for food services, physical plant, office staffing, IT issues, accounting, and other operating issues.

New VP Introduced

| [Q. Center of Influence](#)



QR. Senior Year

"These have been the happiest years of my life!" – A graduating student giving a Candlelight testimony, 1955

From 1955 to 2005, the Ben Lippen senior year hasn't changed much. Many of the same activities still take place, including senior retreat, Student Mission Fellowship retreats, service projects, the Spiritual Life Conference, the junior/senior banquet, senior trip to Washington, D.C., and graduation week activities including Candlelight baccalaureate, senior recital, and the graduation ceremony itself.

Some have said that the senior year at Ben Lippen is worth all the other years combined. Surely it is the culmination of all the lessons – academic, personal, and spiritual – gleaned from a Christian education, and, therefore, should be filled with occasions to remember and extraordinary events. The senior year is the only thing separating high school students from the rest of their lives.

<Photos of senior year activities>

From 1940-2005, over **2,529** [updated #?](#) students have shared the special experience of being a Ben Lippen senior.

A Candlelight Poem

By Tony Pericelli ('93)

My journey was not yet complete in the least,
For the valley still lay unexplored,
But the notion of passing on toward this land
Was nothing that could be ignored.

So resting on what I had gained from my walk,
I marched right out into the dust,
But I took a moment to look back and smile
On that hon'orable Mountain of Trust.

RS. The Heart of Ben Lippen

“The heart of Ben Lippen is relationships.” – Cliff White, long-term math teacher

The Class of '54 returns for its fiftieth reunion. The ten of them have been around the world, as missionaries, Bible professors, teachers, and Christian workers. Oddly, they're returning to a different campus—no mountain views, no familiar buildings. The numbers have multiplied drastically. An even number of girls and boys and a host of tiny children pour across the football field, parents cheering in the stands. Inside, things begin to sound a bit more familiar, as they hear a testimony of an Asian resident student who has begun a relationship with the Lord Jesus at Ben Lippen.

Relationships – the heart of the old Ben Lippen and the new, the past and the future. As long as men and women have been working behind the scenes of the ministry, making plans, moving forward, the Lord has been working in the hearts of young people – transforming them, finding them, and calling them to fulfill His purposes throughout the world. He has done this through relationships with their classmates, their roommates, their teachers, and their coaches. In every class, every extracurricular activity, and every endeavor, Ben Lippen emphasizes the student's most important relationship of all – with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The key to keeping the heart of Ben Lippen, according to long-term math teacher and mentor Cliff White is in hiring the right people – teachers, coaches, administrators, staff, and house-parents. These people must have two qualifications, above their academic credentials, White says, “1.) A passionate love for Jesus...people who don't take the love of Jesus for granted but continue to stand amazed at it day after day after day, and 2.) Compassion for people, especially students, and a desire to lay down their lives for students in whatever way is necessary, to love them in spite of rough edges, to believe in them and see their God-given potential.”

Hundreds of students have come to Ben Lippen, and most of them have come with rough edges of all sorts – academic struggles, behavioral problems, emotional weaknesses, family troubles, spiritual battles, or other shortcomings. Such is the nature of adolescence, the nature of humanity.

Yet at Ben Lippen, how many students have had their futures greatly impacted by the ministry of caring teachers who looked beyond those rough edges? How many students have heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and made personal commitments to Him at the “mountain of trust”? And how many have graduated and gone on to impact their world – in missions, ministry, business, education, and many other fields – for His cause?

Thus Ben Lippen remains, as founder Robert C. McQuilkin described in a poem in the early 1930s: A “mountain of vision and passion to serve, sending His Gospel to ends of the earth.” And thus, the Heavenly Father continues to answer McQuilkin's prayer: “Lord of the Harvest and soon coming King, send us to preach Thee – till Advent shall ring— from Ben Lippen – Mountain of Trust.”

The Alma Mater

On the crest of old Ben Lippen,
Garbed in green and gold,
Stands our noble alma mater,
Stands she grandly bold.

Like a watchman on the mountain
Reared against the sky;
Gives she gladly to her dear sons
Wisdom from on high.

To Him that gives new life to sinners,
Give we now our all;
Bringing life that's more abundant,
Keep us lest we fall.

Following the blessed Master,
We can never fail;
Onward, onward to the conflict
Through our foes we sail.

Going forth to tell of Jesus
To souls who've never heard;
Bringing light to those in darkness
Through His glorious Word.

Refrain:

***Let the glad news break the echoes,
Joyfully we cry,
“Hail to Thee, Lord of Ben Lippen.
Hail to Thee on high.”***

A Closing Note from Donald P. Kauffman, Headmaster

It is humbling for me to serve as headmaster of Ben Lippen School. Having served in pastoral positions and in Christian college administration, my wife and I never imagined serving in the Christian school ministry. However, God called, and He took hold of our hearts in a new way for the ministry of Christian schools and for the influence that they can have on the Christian family and on the world. Serving at Ben Lippen School, an integral part of the worldwide ministry of Columbia International University (CIU), gives my wife and me wonderment that God would choose to use us in this way. How happy we are that we responded to His call!

[If you asked a dozen people, "What is the heart of Ben Lippen?," I'm sure you'd receive a dozen varying answers, all of them true on different levels and from different perspectives. As headmaster, I have come to appreciate the fact that THE HEART OF BEN LIPPEN IS THE WORLD, and that is my answer to the question based on the mission of our parent organization Columbia International University, our goal as well: ...inspiring, developing and equipping people for lifelong pursuit of God and servant leadership in His global cause.](#)

Fulfilling the Great Commission is at the heart of all that we are about. Academics, social life, athletics and fine arts programs and activities have significant meaning when viewed from this context. The WORLD has need of the message of Ben Lippen. The WORLD is at the heart of Ben Lippen. God loves and wants to redeem fallen mankind. Ben Lippen was established to be part of this process.

Missionary families have historically enrolled their children in Ben Lippen. In fulfillment of the Great Commission, CIU has prepared "ministers" to take the gospel to the whole world. God's act of redeeming mankind from sin is at the core of our existence.

In recent years since moving to Columbia, an increasing number of international students have enrolled in our boarding program. Students from around the world have found Christ in their pursuit of an education in America, and lives and families have been changed.

Yes, THE HEART OF BEN LIPPEN IS THE WORLD. My prayer is that the influence of Christian schooling through Ben Lippen begun sixty-five years ago may continue to influence the world for Christ and His church.

Epilogue – The Asheville Property

“I have to admit I’ve fallen in love with the land.” – Reese Lasher, Crest Mountain developer

What became of the school’s historic property in Asheville?

The first sale of the Asheville property fell through in 1988 when the buyer – the Roy Comfort Evangelistic Association – couldn’t fund it. The second sale – to Blanton’s Junior College – fell through after almost a year of delays in mortgage funding, a successfully closed contract in November 1991, then Blanton’s bankruptcy just four months later. The property was returned to Ben Lippen and would be re-listed, but would need more than \$20,000 of clean-up and more than \$70,000 of sewer work before it could be sold.

The third sale – to the Western North Carolina Church of God – went through in December, 1993, for \$1.65 million. The Church of God renamed the Chalet the Crest Conference Center, and used the property for denominational conferences, continuing its heritage of conference ministry.

In 1999, Merriman Christian School, a 22-year-old day school that had been operating in the facilities of a local Baptist church, began renting the property during the school year, and the mountain once again became home to a school – this time with the mascot “Screaming Eagles” instead of Falcons.

The school operated there for three years before it closed, and the property was sold in 2003 to Crest Mountain Communities and its developer Reese Lasher, an Asheville businessman. David Payne, a Ben Lippen alumnus, would be Lasher’s lawyer, and David’s father, Jerry Payne, would be the contractor.

Lasher and his staff envisioned an elite residential community and meeting facility, and worked to renovate the property, renovating its most remarkable buildings – the Chalet, Huston Hall, the chapel, and the boys’ dorm. The Chalet became the Crest Center, a high-tech meeting place and attractive banquet facility. Huston Hall became a special events hall for weddings and other celebrations, and the chapel became the Rock House, with restrooms, changing rooms, and a few smaller meeting rooms. The boys’ dorm was converted to office space for the Crest staff.

The Crest staff has voiced a commitment to the heritage that Ben Lippen instilled on the mountain. To demonstrate this commitment, the developers kept the Lippen Lodge chimney as a memorial to the school, and have welcomed alumni to host events and reunions in the Crest facilities.

Because of the life-changing experiences and friendships the Asheville alumni remember from the mountain, many still consider it to be their own. In this way, what is now called

Crest Mountain will always belong to the Ben Lippen alumni, [who will always be “in love with the land” and the Mountain of Trust.](#)

Photos of Crest Mountain developments

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A Complete Ben Lippen Timeline

Leaders & Events			
YEAR	LEADER	EVENT	
1911	Robert C. McQuilkin	Robert C. McQuilkin surrenders his life to Jesus Christ at the New Wilmington Missionary Conference in Delaware, and begins experiencing the victorious Christian life.	
1913	Emily Dick	Miss Emily Dick, a Sunday School teacher in Columbia, SC, becomes concerned for the spiritual condition of the mill people of her town.	
1918	The Praying Ladies	A small group of Columbia women begin meeting to pray seriously for a Bible School to be established in Columbia.	
1919			
1920			
1921		The Southern Bible Institute, founded by the "praying ladies" officially opens with evening classes.	
1922		Robert C. McQuilkin accepts the invitation to become head of the school; at his recommendation the name is changed to Columbia Bible School	
YEAR	PRESIDENT	EVENT	
1923	Robert C. McQuilkin	First summer Bible conference meets at Eliada Camp Grounds in Asheville	
1924		Columbia Bible School opens in the downtown Colonia Hotel. <i>(is this the "Colonia" Hotel or the Colonia? COLONIA)</i>	
1925			
1926			
1927			
1928			
1929		The Board purchases conference grounds on Dryman Mountain, near Asheville, NC. Columbia Bible School changes its name to Columbia Bible College and begins offering four-year degrees.	
1930			
1931		Asheville Post Office is razed and moved piece by piece to the top of the mountain to be rebuilt as the Conference Inn.	
1932		Conference is named "Ben Lippen," which is Scottish for "Mountain of Trust."	
1933			
1934			
1935		Huston Hall construction begins.	
1936			
1937		Huston Hall is completed and dedicated. Lippen Lodge for college men opens.	
1938			
1939			
YEAR	PRESIDENT	HEADMASTER	EVENT
1940	Robert C. McQuilkin	Jonathan Williams	A new wing is added to the Inn and Ben Lippen School for Boys opens.
1941			
1942			
1943			
1944			Accreditation is recognized by the NC State Dept. of Education
1945			
1946			
1947		Jonathan Blanchard	Ben Lippen School for Boys changes its name to Ben Lippen School.
1948			

Field Code Changed

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1949		David Falconer	Ben Lippen gymnasium completed.
1950			
1951			
1952	G. Allen Fleece	Robertson McQuilkin	Ben Lippen becomes co-educational.
1953			
1954			Andrews Memorial Girls Dorm completed
1955		Anthony Fortosis	
1956			
1957			
1958			Tony Fortosis and Bob Weeber start the Asheville Christian Day School for elementary students
1959			
1960			Columbia Bible College moves from its downtown location to a new campus on Monticello Road BL's Robert C. McQuilkin Administration Building completed
1961			
1962			
1963			
1964			
1965			
1966			
1967			
1968	Robertson McQuilkin		
1969			
1970		A.C. McWilliams, interim	
1971		Jack Layman	
1972			
1973			50 th Anniversary Year of Jubilee for Ben Lippen Conference and CBC
1974			
1975			Inn Renovation Project begins
1976			
1977			Inn Renovation Project completed
1978			
1979			
1980			Ben Lippen receives SACS accreditation Fire destroys Ben Lippen Inn
1981			ACA high school closes; makes agreement with BL, whereby BL begins to accept day students. BGEA donates The Cove property. The Ben Lippen Chalet opens.
1982			
1983		Ron Whipple	Building construction at The Cove begins.
1984			
1985			
1986			
1987		Keith Marion	CBC returns The Cove property to BGEA.
1988			First Ben Lippen Conference at Blue Ridge Assembly Ben Lippen School opens in Columbia as a boarding and day school.
1989			
1990			Ben Lippen Irmo elementary school opens in the facilities of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
1991	Johnny Miller		Asheville property sold to Blantons College.
1992		David Edgren	Asheville property returned to CBCS upon default of purchaser.
1993			Asheville property sold to Western North Carolina Church of God.

1994			Columbia Bible College changes its corporate name to Columbia International University.
1995			
1996			Ben Lippen Northeast elementary school opens in the facilities of Spears Creek Baptist Church.
1997			
1998			
1999			Ben Lippen's Music/Large Group Instruction Building completed.
2000	George W. Murray	Donald Kauffman	
2001			
2002			Ben Lippen—Ashland Road, the third elementary satellite, opens, after BL acquires the assets of St. Andrews Christian Academy
2003			
2004			
2005			