

REPORT OF BERKSHIRE CHRISTIAN

Greetings to the delegates and friends of the Eastern Regional Association Annual Convention!

For over 124 years, Berkshire Christian has been an educational resource for Advent Christian people and churches in the Eastern Region. Berkshire Christian partnerships and programs continue to be a vital resource for equipping men and women for local church ministry. Currently, over 50% of active pastors or pastors' spouses in the Eastern Region received their theological formation through Berkshire Christian. By God's grace this ministry of equipping servants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ continues today!

Close to forty students are currently enrolled in Berkshire's training programs. Thirty-three of these men and women are preparing to serve in local church ministry through the Ministry Training Institute, a collaborative partnership with the Advent Christian General Conference. At the present time five directors serve students in field offices from Maine to Massachusetts, and from North Carolina to Wisconsin. A cohort of international students from the Philippines are also pursuing ministry training and preparation in MTI.

The MTI program offers a unique educational experience. Students pursue training in their local setting, study independently online and have the benefit of being in a cohort with other students taking the same course. They have access to a digital library with over 600,000 books and 60 million journal articles at their fingertips. They benefit from working with a mentor and gaining ministry experience through apprenticeship. They are connected to Conference Ministerial Committees to help them secure credentials as desired. And they can graduate from the MTI program debt free!

Program expansion is being pursued in other regions of the country, including the northwest and the south. MTI Program Coordinator Matt Larkin works closely with the Berkshire Christian President in the development of this theological formation effort. New part-time staff have recently been added this year. These include Catherine Rybicki who serves as the Program Development Specialist, and David Richards who serves as the MTI Reference Librarian. (Both Catherine and David are Gordon-Conwell graduates through the Center for Advent Christian Studies!) New students continue to enroll in the MTI program. By the end of this calendar year, the first two-year students will complete their studies, earning a leadership endorsement. For more details on the MTI program, please visit the Berkshire Christian website, berkshire.edu.

Advent Christian pastors and people have enjoyed the benefit of graduate studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary for more than 30 years. In addition to receiving a 50% tuition reduction through the Berkshire Christian partnership, many have studied under an Advent Christian professor as well. Dr. Gordon Isaac has served as the Berkshire Professor at Gordon-Conwell for the past 25 years. Several students are currently studying at two of the seminary's four campuses. Earlier this year regional treasurer Rev. John Jones completed his studies and earned his master's degree. We congratulate John on his accomplishment.

Seminary education at Gordon-Conwell is now more accessible than ever with new online degree programs, as well as a new Graduate Certificate program, providing a simplified path to specific areas of study. This program offers five different areas of study to choose from, each featuring six focused courses. Programs are available in-person or 100% remote. For more information, please visit the Berkshire Christian website, berkshire.edu.

Next year marks a milestone in Berkshire Christian history. In 2022, this ministry will celebrate 125 years since our founding as a training school for Gospel workers in the east. Over many decades and with various names and locations, ministerial education has been and remains an enduring commitment for the needs of the Advent Christian people and churches. Stay tuned for more information on our 125th Anniversary celebration in the new year.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, please accept my sincere thanks for your faithful prayers and financial support of this ministry. Thank you for trusting Berkshire Christian for your educational needs. We value our relationship with individuals, churches, and conferences in the region that has been our home since our founding in 1897.

God bless you in your labors for Christ's Kingdom and the proclamation of the Gospel. We welcome your partnership with us in the task of equipping the men and women called by God to kingdom work. It is Berkshire Christian's honor to assist them and the churches they serve as they are trained and take their place in local church ministry, vocationally and voluntarily. To God be the glory!

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Glenn M. Rice
President