



Berkshire Institute for Christian Studies

Report to the
Eastern Region
Annual Convention
OCTOBER 2024



Greetings from BICS! It's a privilege to report to you and share the work that God is continuing to do through the Berkshire Institute for Christian Studies.

Celebrating the Class of 2024

On Saturday, May 11, we celebrated the BICS Class of 2024 at our 34th commencement. More than 200 family members, friends, and supporters attended this wonderful celebration of their accomplishments and meaningful service of worship. Like the 400 students who have gone before them over the past 35 years, these 11 students chose to invest a year of their lives in their spiritual growth and development. They prioritized the acquisition of a biblical worldview and

sought to establish themselves fully on the truth of God's Word. They committed to *Christian Discipleship in a Caring Community*.

For this, they are to be commended. These students could have chosen to pursue plenty of other opportunities at this point in their lives, but they chose BICS. They chose to dig deep into the Scriptures – asking and answering difficult questions about life and faith; they chose to live in an intimate community with a group of diverse strangers and all the challenges associated with it; and they embraced this unique and intensive program that is designed not just to expand their minds, but to challenge their hearts. But this investment – we believe – is most certainly worth it and will pay Kingdom dividends for years to come.

Each student has had great success according to the metric that matters the most: growth in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. They each have made a credible profession of faith in the Lord and evinced the fruit of the Spirit's ongoing sanctifying work in their lives. We're excited to see how God will use them in the years ahead!



The Class of 2024 pictured on Commencement Day

Welcoming the Class of 2025

We're very eagerly moving forward in our mission with the Class of 2025. These seven students have settled in to the dorms and classrooms and have begun their journey of discipleship with us. We count it a great privilege to walk with them in this pivotal season of their lives.



The Class of 2025 on the first full day of Orientation: (front row, from left) Grace Dubs, Brittany Corey, Jack Tate; (back row, from left) Bryn Hasty, Martha Goebel, Eli Logsdon, and Isaiah Shaw

The theme we've chosen for this year is "Our Hope Forever," based on Hebrews 10:23 which says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."

In a world that often feels unstable and unpredictable, this year's theme reminds us that our hope is anchored in God, who is forever faithful. Throughout the year, we'll be encouraged to hold firmly to the hope we profess, knowing that God's promises are unchanging and trustworthy. No matter what challenges or uncertainties we face, we can find increasing confidence in Him as we embrace the enduring hope that is ours in Christ Jesus. We're praying the Lord will use this year to that end for our students and that it will be one of the most transformative years of their lives.

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The Berkshire Institute for Christian Studies

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Touring the Lands of the Bible

The study of the lands of the Bible continues to be an integral component in our program. Last March, our students and staff enjoyed a two-week Bible Lands tour following the footsteps of Paul in Turkey and Greece. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing conflict and unrest in the Middle East, we were unable to travel to Israel and the same will be true this coming spring. However, we have put together an alternative trip for our students that is no less informative and



17 students and staff pose in front of the famed Celsus Library at ancient Ephesus. This is one of many New Testament cities our students visited on their two-week tour of Turkey and Greece.

meaningful. We follow Paul from the Mediterranean to Ephesus in Turkey all the way to Philippi, Thessalonica, and Athens in Greece - with many stops in between. We also visit all seven churches of Revelation 2-3. Though not our ideal destination, this unique tour of Turkey and Greece still provides an amazing opportunity to explore the lands of the Bible firsthand.

For our students, this experience is fully funded above and beyond their tuition through the *Wesley A. Ross Bible Lands Scholarship*, which is made possible by the generosity of our network of supporters. If you or people you know have interest in joining us on a future trip, you can find out more on our website.

Celebrating Our Alumni

Now in our 36th year, we have more than 400 men and women who have experienced the BICS program, many of whom are now

serving in our churches as pastors, leaders, youth pastors, and teachers. Several of our graduates are ministering in international missions venues – in medical environments, translation teams, and churches.

More importantly, the vast majority of our graduates – whether serving in vocational ministry or not – are serving Christ and are deeply committed to His Church. They are raising families, teaching Sunday School classes, serving as board members, directing camps, running businesses, and fulfilling the call of Colossians 3:23 – “*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord...*” (ESV). We thank the Lord that He has seen fit to use the Institute in their development and that, in this way, He is using us to bless the Advent Christian Church and beyond.

Moving Forward on Mission

We are convinced of the need, perhaps more than ever before, for a place where young men and women can be grounded in the Word of God and equipped to serve the local church wherever and however God leads them. Though at times our efforts seem meager and the challenges before us are many, we are continuing to engage emerging adults in the adventure of Christian growth in the context of a Christ-centered community.

Our commitment to this mission is proven through the *Founders Tuition Scholarship*. Thanks to the generosity of many individuals, churches, and organizations, each student continues to receive a \$10,000 institutional scholarship. We are seeking to ensure that our program is accessible to future students who desire to prioritize their spiritual development and build their lives on the foundation of God’s Word. If you know of upper high school or recently graduated students who you think may be interested in our program, please do not hesitate to put us in touch with them. You can find out more information on our website (<https://www.berkshireinstitute.org>) or get in touch with us via email at info@berkshireinstitute.org.

Partnering with the Eastern Region

We remain profoundly grateful for our relationship with the people and churches of the Eastern Regional Association. Your consistent prayers and financial support are a great encouragement to us. Wherever we travel in the Eastern Region, we find alumni and family of alumni who testify to the impact of BICS. To God be the glory!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy".

Andy Rice
President