

Some of Howard Hoskins' thoughts on his years at Northwest College

Brother Butterfield was a man of prayer. He waited on God's direction before he moved. His love for God and the students was known and understood by all. He was protective of the students in that he didn't want people with differing philosophy, theology or opinions speaking to the students. He spoke every Wed. (that he was in town) to the students—many times sharing what God was saying to him currently. One vivid example: Approximately Fall of 1995 on a Wed. morning he took the pulpit in chapel and he was deeply troubled in his spirit and demeanor. He asked the students to pray for him as he gave them what he thought was a direct burden and message from God.

He said he had been troubled deeply for the last 2 or 3 weeks and that God was telling him to pray for Cambodia. God was telling him that there was a tremendous spiritual battle going on in the heavens over the control of Cambodia and that the people were in great danger. He didn't know what the danger was but we had to pray, pray, pray for the people of Cambodia. He led us in prayer saying I don't know what the reason is but we must pray.

It was not until months and years later that the world learned of the genocide, the killing of millions of innocent people. He knew in his spirit that God was asking him and the students to stand in the gap for the innocent. If only we could have sensed the gravity of what was to happen under the Pol Pot regime.

Many times Brother Butterfield heard from God for the benefit of others—oh if only we could hear God as Brother Butterfield heard. Brother Butterfield practiced intercessory prayer to the point of sometimes being misunderstood and sometimes thought to be eccentric.

Most all the years of Bro. Butterfield's administration were caricaturized by living on the edge financially. On several, yes many, occasions he would come to the students and faculty and present a need for large sums of money that were needed before Monday to meet payroll or make a mortgage payment. He would make the appeal for prayer and God would lay an individual on his mind over in eastern Washington or Montana and he would immediately leave or ask Bro. Crowder to go and they would find the person of their prayer vision and that person would already have a check or were ready to give the amount needed "to the penny" and that sometimes with only minutes to spare. God seemed to always meet the need just in time.

It is surprising the ways that many of the students ended up at NC. In the sales business world there is a selling gambit called the "assumptive close." My mother along with many parents had a way of programming or influencing children to make the right decision without the child knowing it was so important to their parents. I never knew a time that I wasn't going to go to Northwest. My parents programmed it into me. Staying in school was another matter however.

I was not prepared for college but God had professors and staff at NC that were able to instill a vision, a motivation to want to succeed in getting an education at NC. I can still vividly recall a couple of those defining moments—moments when God used teachers to challenge and help me. One such time was in Freshman English class being taught by Gordon Fee. At the end of the first week of English grammar Brother Fee knew that I had no clue as to what he was trying to teach me. At the end of class session he asked

me to stay after class. After all other students were out of the room Bro. Fee said "Howard, you don't understand do you? I want to help." After a long sober pause he said, "let's ask God to help you grasp this subject." And through tears, his tears, he prayed an impassioned prayer for me that God would give me the desire and ability to grasp the subject. I don't remember anything else about the class other than Brother Gordon Fee and God wanted me to learn English and I did. Bro. Fee inspired me to want to master the subject.

Another professor in a similar way inspired me to want to know God. I don't remember the class subject but it was a big class full of mostly freshmen students who were particularly full of life one sunny day. We all entered the class energetically, noisily and without observable interest in the subject matter to be learned. Miss Maxine Williams got our attention and said, "we all need help so let's pray." When the room was quiet she, with much passion turned her head up and said, "Oh God!" paused a long time and said it again. "Oh God" Another long pause then with all the emotion you could imagine "Oh God we need your help". I don't remember any more of the prayer but in her impassioned, emotional appeal to God in our behalf something was burned in me to want to "know God."

Oh for leaders who can touch God, minds and hearts for Jesus' sake. Teachers who can do more than communicate the facts of the subject but can inspire people to want to learn and to know God's plan for their lives.

I graduated from NC determined to want to serve God and influence others for "Good, God and the Right." I recognized early in my adult life that the experiences at NC were worthwhile, positive and enabling. Five years after leaving NC, my first child was born and as most parents I wanted to impact his life as well as his sister's for Jesus eternally. My job was such that I could live where I choose in the greater Seattle area so we, Ann (formerly Ann Gunnarson) and I decided that the influence on our lives while at NC was great and if we could live close to NC maybe some of that God-honoring atmosphere would rub off on our children. So we built a home 3 doors south of the NC chapel, had students over to our home often and walked the campus often with our growing children. I got permission from President Hurst to go to the chapel early in the mornings, before the start of my day, to pray. Pray for the students, faculty and staff and all of my concerns. On many occasions I took my children, Steven and Christine to the chapel early in the morning with me to pray. Thank God they learned to enjoy communing with God and learned the importance of praying for others.

I have never shaken the imperative of the Great Commission. God put within my heart a never to be quenched desire to influence people for Jesus. God in His grace has multiplied the effort and time that I have made available to serve Him. His grace and faithfulness has kept me focused on "His priority." My prayer year by year has been "Father let me see my life from your perspective then give me the courage and strength to respond to your leading. Make me a blessing to you and your Kingdom."

The inspiration caught at NC and the prayers of professors and my mother have given me a focused goal that was born in the heart of God.

Howard W. Hoskins
NC student 1961-66