



## ***A Long History of Making a Difference in the World***

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Last week our friends at the University of Findlay held a Founder's Day celebration. I was invited to share some remarks about the history of the Churches of God, General Conference and our collaborative work with the university. In preparing my remarks below, I discovered so much about our rich history together, particularly in relationship to our work in global missions.

I'd like to offer one disclaimer: due to my limited time, I focused upon a few missionary stories, but there were many, many more names and stories that could have been told. What follows below is a partial list of folks whose path to the mission field traveled through Findlay. Many more names could have been listed.

Secondly, I'd like to encourage you to join me in asking our Father to graciously move through the lives of students who currently attend Findlay in a way in which recaptures some of that early missionary zeal. The work of Campus Ministries is thriving and I can't help but anticipate that God is raising up hundreds of men and women who will be compelled by His love to carry the Gospel message to the far reaches of the globe.

### **Author**

The weekly eNews is provided by CGGC Executive Director Lance Finley



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In **1882** the City of Findlay and the Churches of God recognized a need for a place where individuals could discover their calling in life through scholarship, faith, service and the sharing of ideas. As a result of this partnership initiated 136 years ago, the University of Findlay has faithfully served the church and larger community in carrying out its mission.

It's a worthy mission: equipping students for meaningful lives and productive careers. It recognizes the value and importance of work and productivity. The idea of work and productivity is rooted deeply in the Story of God. The book of Genesis demonstrates that before sin entered the world and distorted things, before death and brokenness were known as we know them today, God gave us the idea of work and productivity. God's design and intentions for humanity included work and productivity. There's something inherently good about using our skills, abilities and talents in a way that produces something that benefits the greater society as a whole. The University of Findlay is right to prepare students for productive careers.

But there's more to life than just work. What you do to earn a living is important, but your career is not, or should not be, the totality of who you are as a person. There's more to life than just what you can produce. That's why I love the University of Findlay's mission: we care about meaningful lives as well as productive careers.

What makes a life meaningful? Probably more than we can deal with here, but here are some clues: deep friendship and shared experiences with others, exposure to diverse cultures, viewpoints and people, the ability to recognize and appreciate beauty and goodness, the opportunity to experience play, the importance of personal and communal expressions of faith and the evidence that the best in human experience often results from our willingness to offer our lives in sacrificial service to others. Again, I believe you'll find this idea of meaningful life rooted deeply in God's story. Jesus came offering His followers the "full and abundant life" while challenging them that the path to true greatness is only found through service to others.

For the past 136 years, the University of Findlay has been equipping students for meaningful lives and productive careers and the Churches of God, General Conference has been immensely blessed because of this relationship. The results of your good and faithful work have reached around the globe.

In **1898** the Churches of God began their first mission work in India, and later expanded into what is now Bangladesh. This work consists of a large network of churches, as well as a medical hospital and eye clinic along with a special focus on education – often offering education to some of the poorest of the poor. This work was started by a young woman from Iowa named Clara Landes, who began her studies at Findlay College in **1889**.

Viola Hershey Cover was another one of our early missionaries who was instrumental to our work in Bangladesh. She was a student at Findlay College for two years in preparation to serve on the mission field when she received a letter from Clara Landes requesting that she consider coming to India as a missionary. Dr. Manchester, President of Findlay College had urged her to continue her studies, but Viola contended that she felt such a strong conviction from the Holy Spirit that "I must go now". Dr. Manchester recognized the urgency of her call and told her to follow the leading of the Spirit. Viola Hershey Cover served faithfully in India/Bangladesh for 45 years.

Betty Helwig Biswas, served in India for 51 years and was instrumental to our educational work there. She was a 1951 graduate of Findlay College.

The Churches of God have been involved in Haiti for 51 years. The work involves a medical clinic and hospital, over 30 schools and 40 churches as well as several vocational training efforts. This work began in 1967, thanks to the vision and faithful work of Pastor James Wallace, who attended Findlay College in the early 1950's.

In 1977, a medical clinic was established in Pierre Payen, Haiti by Dr. Vic Binkley, 1961 graduate of Findlay College. Today the medical clinic and hospital, both founded by Dr. Binkley serve thousands of patients each year and Dr. Binkley gave over 30 years of service to our work in Haiti before his death in 2010.

These are just a brief, but significant sample of the innumerable ways in which our histories are beautifully interwoven with one another. Countless lives have been impacted – the sick receiving vital medical care and compassion, the most vulnerable being equipped through life-changing education, the hopeless finding a new identity and purpose in the reality of a God who loves them beyond their capacity to fully grasp or understand. All of this has been accomplished, in part, because of the important work that The University of Findlay has carried out in equipping students for meaningful lives and productive careers. In faraway places like Bogra, Uluberia, Borel and Pierre Payen – thousands upon thousands of lives have been impacted though the work that started here in **1882**.

The exciting news is that we're not done yet. There are more stories to be written and told. The students being educated today have even greater opportunities to utilize all their God-given talents, resources and potential in ways that will continue to change lives around the globe. There are individuals being educated at the University of Findlay today and in the years to come who will have their stories told 20 years from now, 50 years from now, 100 years from now or maybe even 136 years from now as result of what's being done today to equip students for meaningful lives and productive careers.