“God’s timing” is actually quite a weighty notion, and God’s people have different ways of dealing with it.

We love to be pleasantly surprised by God’s timing. Many shoestring-living students (and countless other believers) have had the happy experience of checking their mailbox to find an unexpected, eleventh-hour financial gift, “just in time” to save the day. When that happens, we rejoice in what is clearly “God’s perfect timing.”

In tragedy, however, such joy is harder to come by. A split-second sooner or later and there would have been no collision, no “accident” or mishap that often brings loss and grief. “What if . . .?” then becomes the question; and we have a way of letting our sovereign God off the hook by euphemizing “God’s timing” to the more palatable “the Lord allowed . . .

The calendar and clock of God apply also to the bigger picture, leaving us marveling as we reflect on how God orchestrates human history. God told Abraham that his Israelite progeny would be unhappy residents of Egypt, “enslaved and oppressed four hundred years” before their victorious exodus (Genesis 15:13). Four hundred years! Generations after generations of “chosen people” who would never know life outside of drudgery in captivity. Even when Moses arrived and made an initial stab at delivering his people (Acts 7:23-29), there was a forty-year delay before he actually got the job done, followed by another forty years of wilderness wandering. Eighty unpleasant years is a long time, but it was right on time, according to God.

Deliverance from Egypt, or “corporate salvation,” is a good thing to have happen (especially if ours is that most recent generation!). As with the Exodus, when God reveals His timetable, we appreciate knowing how long we may have to wait before we see His hand move again. He disclosed in advance a seventy-year Babylonian exile (Jeremiah 29:10), and a 483-year hiatus just prior to Messiah’s first advent (Daniel 9:25). Clearly, He is in control, working His plan.

For the most part, though, we do not get to see God’s calendar or His clock, either personally or for the “big picture.” We must adjust our perspective and, often, our calendar to accommodate what is clearly His agenda. We have to trust the Bible’s sovereign, wise and good God to be neither late nor early. We have to trust Him to do what He says He will do. We have to learn to “wait eagerly and actively” (Romans 8:25). We have to learn to “number our days” for the sake of gaining His wisdom (Psalm 90:12). We must remember (particularly at this time of year) that “when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son” (Galatians 4:4), in the most loving act imaginable for the eternal behalf of ill-deserving rebels. And, as we learn to rest contentedly in His timing for matters pleasant and unpleasant, to rejoice in the amazing truth of Romans 8:32: “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

Now, go check your mailbox . . .

- Jim Carlson, President
Montana Bible College hosted our annual Church Leaders Conference October 9-10, 2014. This year’s conference was entitled, “Our Return to Athens – Confidently Christian in a Postmodern World.” The conference centered on the topic of postmodernism, and the speakers did an excellent job of discussing the issue.

Jim Carlson, President of Montana Bible College, opened the conference by giving a history of events in America that have contributed to the development of postmodernism, showing that the American church has never been without challenges.

Our featured speaker was Michael Lawrence, Pastor of Hinson Baptist Church in Portland, Oregon, where he has served since 2010. Michael previously served as Associate Pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

During the main sessions, Michael spoke about the unchanging character and faithfulness of Jesus Christ, whose victory has overcome every obstacle the church has faced and will face – including postmodernism. His primary text was Paul’s letter to the Colossians.

Present with Pastor Lawrence was Todd Miles, Associate Professor of Theology at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. Todd hosted some of the breakout sessions, speaking on issues like sexuality and universalism in our postmodern world, and biblical responses to these issues.

MBC Academic Dean, Dr. Gale Hiede also spoke during the breakout sessions, as did several MBC students who discussed technology and the millennial generation in the church today.

The purpose of the Montana Bible College Church Leaders Conference is to train and equip local church leaders with solid theology and practical application for shepherding the people of God in a fallen world.

Head to our website at www.montanabiblecollege.edu to get access to the audio and video from this year’s conference. While you’re there, look at the information for next year’s conference. We hope to see you there!

On the following page you can read a firsthand account of a rural Montana pastor who attended the conference.
An MBC Conference Testimony

Pastor Kirby Jones

**I want to thank you for your ministry to small rural churches through the Leadership Conference.** Working in the trenches of rural ministry we often find ourselves isolated by many miles between communities; spiritually ‘root-bound’ by our own philosophies and traditions; and under-equipped for the various struggles encountered by our people in an ever-changing culture.

Louan and I especially appreciate the appropriate directness with which you approach difficult, yet necessary, issues within our churches. We have learned something from every conference. But there are two topics that come immediately to mind. First is this year with the discussion of our postmodern worldviews. The second was several years ago with the discussion of death and dying.

This year was extremely instructive as it helped us get our minds around the attitudes of our postmodern culture toward Christ and His Church. Although we live in an isolated, rural setting; we could easily see the relevance of this issue in our own churches. You helped us to see the problem and exactly where falsehood departs from truth. Then you took us to the scripture to overcome the false philosophies and attitudes.

I also appreciated Michael Lawrence pointing out the need for the church to reevaluate our own worldviews so we can be more effective in our communities. In our battle with the world, we often assume everything we do is good; but it isn’t.

Several years ago, I had no prophetic idea how many various funerals and counseling opportunities I was about to encounter. Some came from within our church but many from the outside. I still employ many of the ideas I gleaned from Jerry Bridges’ teaching about trusting God; and Jim Carlson’s wisdom on ministering to the lost in times of crisis.

Thanks again for your ministry to the leadership of our small rural communities.

Pastor Kirby Jones

Fort Shaw Bible Church
At Montana Bible College, all students hoping to complete the Bachelor of Arts program must complete an internship as part of their studies. MBC has some great connections with churches, organizations and other resources for setting up their students with valuable time spent learning "on the job." Here are a couple of those stories.

My name is James Peterson, and this past summer I completed my Pastoral Internship for my degree from Montana Bible College. My internship was a wonderful experience. I served in Idaho Falls, Idaho at Christ Community Church. I had the privilege to serve with men who loved the Lord, the church, and the lost. I was able to partake in different ministries within the church giving me many opportunities to learn about pastoral ministry. Throughout the summer I was continually reminded of the quality of education that I had received at MBC. The Bible College laid the foundation in the many classes that I took, and then the internship was the opportunity to practice what I was taught. I was able to see what we talked about in class played out before me. One of the biggest things I was reminded of was humility in the ministry. Ministry is not just about preaching flashy sermons or teaching amazing Bible Studies. Ministry is about people, and in order to think about others you must not think about yourself. I had the opportunity to see and practice humility during my internship. I love the fact the Montana Bible College requires internships to graduate. I believe that it gives students the opportunity to see what they want to do before they do it; they also gain valuable experience from people who are far wiser. There is something special about Montana Bible College from its faculty to its academics; MBC is a training ground for disciples of Christ.

James and Agatha Peterson
My name is Michelle Davis. On the suggestion of one of my learned professors, I sought to do my internship at Breakaway Youth Ranch. With no equine experience to offer BYR, it was a leap of faith on their part to have me! But they did, and they allowed me to do so much more than shovel horse manure!

I was given the opportunity to be a “mentor,” which means that I worked one-on-one with a child/youth (I will refer to them as the students) during the Monday and Wednesday sessions. Our activity schedule was as follows:

- Do a ranch chore for about 15-20 mins. (shoveling horse manure, gardening, watering, mulching, unloading and stacking hay, etc.).
- Mentor & student go together to select, halter, and lead horse to the grooming area.
- Mentor instructs the student on grooming the horse; but mentor usually does all the work!
- Saddle and lead the horse to the arena for lungeing.
- Bridle and mount the horse if the student wants to ride…occasionally students are fearful and choose not to. The students typically will have between 20-40 minutes to ride depending on their age, maturity level, and how fast they get through the grooming portion.

It is quite remarkable to watch the effect horses have on young people! No matter what problems a person may be struggling with, caring for a horse will make you forget them…at least for awhile! Horses demand your attention; and after a broken toe and broken rib I realized that even when you are paying attention, accidents happen quickly! Two other mentors (with experience) were thrown from their horses, but fortunately were not injured.

I’m so grateful to the girls for everything they patiently taught me. Had it not been for the requirement to do an internship, I can’t imagine what would compel me to volunteer at a horse ranch! But there is NO doubt that I received far more from BYR than they did from me. So if I can offer any advice to MBC students pondering how to satisfy the internship requirement; just be willing to consider work that is outside your skill set and comfort zone!

Breakaway Youth Ranch exists to mentor children, rescue and rehabilitate horses and provide a safe, nurturing environment for families to build deeper, positive relationships with each other. The Ranch will provide an atmosphere where Christ’s love is exemplified in staff and board members.
Outdoor Discipleship Update

The Outdoor Discipleship concentration continues to move steadily forward! Near the beginning of the fall semester, eight students participated in a two-day canoeing class that focused on honing core skills in order to make canoeing a viable option for building relationships and investing in the lives of others. The two days required for this class (which is required for students in the Outdoor Discipleship concentration and made available to students from other concentrations as a P.E. credit) were split between lake and river time in order to be the most beneficial to students.

Another of our new class offerings, Theology of Outdoor Discipleship, has also been underway this fall semester. It is intended that this class will form the foundation for our student's ministry involvement with others in an outdoor context and establish a biblical perspective that will sharpen their focus on their Creator.

- Dan Wielenga

Gail Horton Library Completed

The Gail Horton Library at Montana Bible College has undergone an amazing transformation, and is finally fully functional again.

The move from the previous space began in the spring of 2014, was complete in time for the fall semester this year. Through a generous donation, MBC was able to purchase the building now known as Providence Hall. The MJ Murdock Charitable Trust also donated funds for the renovation and completion of the library. The library features security cameras, a book security system, a new computer lab and study rooms, as well as more than 1,000 new books acquired through donation, making the total number of volumes more than 14,000. The new library also has double the floor space of the previous library.

“It’s been really amazing and exciting to see and be part of getting the new library up and running,” said Jessica Carlson, Gail Horton library director. “I think the library is more than adequate to meet the needs of our students here, and we’re very blessed to have it.”
IT’S HERE!

Online giving is finally up and running at Montana Bible College! You may schedule regular payments or give one-time gifts or both with a few clicks of the mouse. You will find the link on the home page of our website under the quick link ‘Give to this Kingdom Work.’ From there you just follow the instructions to complete the questionnaire, hit submit and you are done! We believe you will appreciate the ease and convenience of this method of giving to Montana Bible College.

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Donations represent about 20% of our budget, and the shortfall has a significant impact; especially in a year where we have also seen a drop in student enrollment. Please prayerfully consider MBC in your financial giving budget.

Benjamin Disraeli, a British statesman from the 1800s, said, “Change is inevitable. Change is constant.” And change has come once again to MBC’s Alumni Association. Brooke Harwood, 2005 graduate of MBC, has stepped down from her position as the Alumni Director. She faithfully served MBC over the years in multiple capacities including library assistant, office administration and alumni director. The MBC family is sad to see Brooke leave, but we are very excited for her family’s new adventure. Mike and Brooke have been accepted as career missionaries with Mission Aviation Fellowship. They are now in the middle of partnership development in preparation to head to the field. Please pray for Mike and Brooke as they pursue this new adventure. As Brooke has transitioned out of MBC, another alumnae has taken her place. Jenni O’Brian, a 2012 graduate, has accepted the position of Alumni Director. Jenni has enjoyed the transition from student to staff as she is able to give back to the school that has taught her so much. If you are on the MBC Alumni Facebook page, Jenni will be working to keep you updated on the latest MBC and alumni happenings. Whatever changes might be happening in your own lives, how exciting to rest in the good and sovereign God who guides all the changes that come our way.       - Jenni O’Brian

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Our Mission:

Montana Bible College is committed to glorifying God through biblical higher education by training men and women for a lifetime of dynamic Christian living and service.

CONTACT US: 406.586.3585 / www.montanabiblecollege.edu
Design/Photographer/Editor: Joel Carlson

STUDENTS SPEAK:

Finally Arrived
By Jolanda Songer, Netherlands native

I decided around age twelve that I did not believe in God and made many poor decisions over the years, but God did not turn His back to me. Instead, He revealed Himself to me, changed my heart, and in October, 2009, at the age of 37, I was baptized. My relationship with God grew stronger and so did my desire to help others and share God with them. In 2012, I enrolled in online Bible college classes and enjoyed learning about God, but I really wanted to sit in a classroom. When it was time to move to Montana I looked for Bible colleges and found MBC. We moved to Helena to be near family and job opportunities for my husband, so in order for me to attend MBC I have to commute. I am blessed with my drives in beautiful Montana and with teachings from the Bible by knowledgeable professors.