



NorthWord

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Seldovia pastor caught in the current of God's love

by Jonathan M. Hoard

It is quickly approaching two decades since I graduated from ABC. Looking back over those years brings me memories filled with great joy, wonder, and a sense of pride. Most of all, I marvel at the hand of God that has led me through these years down many different paths to the place where God has for my family and myself now. When I left Glennallen in 1993 I had many plans and desires. The Lord had gotten ahold of my heart several years earlier, and I was determined to go wherever and do whatever the Lord wanted me to do. The problem was, I had no idea what that meant for me in reality. Nonetheless, I set out into life with a great fervor. I will be honest, in all of my dreaming I never could have pictured how the Lord would lead me to Pennsylvania, bless me with a family and ministry and then lead me back to Alaska, and to Seldovia Bible Chapel.

I was never much of a student, and college life was often a tough fit for me, but God used things from every aspect of my time at ABC to prepare me for the days ahead. There was no gymnasium back then, which led to many creative forms of entertainment. I will refrain from details for fear that my diploma could still be withdrawn. There were more than a few times when I questioned my ability



Jonathan Hoard ('93) and his family make their home in Seldovia, Alaska, a small fishing town on the southern end of the Kenai Peninsula, across Kachemak Bay from Homer.

to make it through some tough financial times and the always-trying academic requirements. The Lord always brought me through. I was blessed by anonymous benefactors and constantly reminded that even though I couldn't see the end clearly, God was preparing me for His purpose.

My memories of my time at ABC are filled with tons of laughter. Whether it was watching Scott and Ben leg wrestling or

our impromptu and creative use of fireworks, there were always pranks, jokes and the occasional hilarious "No Talent Night." My senior year was spent in a cabin at the bottom of the hill with a couple of great guys. Every night in the "House of Mirth" brought a new level of craziness. Cross-cultural friendships were even forged, in spite of the language barrier, with my Canadian roommate. All of those moments were essential in buoying me through a transitional time in my life.

One of the things you don't necessarily expect when you plunge into college is the relationships you will build

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Meet the ABC Class of 2012



(Above, left to right) Faculty members: Hal Givens, Bob Bates, Gary Willford, Gary Ridley, Bob Wendt, Nick Ringger
Bachelor of Arts graduates: Eric Major, Jeremy Mudd
Bible certificate graduates: Mark Venhaus, Susan Voyles, Aspen Hall, Mary Pat Mills, Duane Shaffer, Christy Millek



JEREMY MUDD

*Bachelor of Arts Degree
Cum Laude*

Jeremy came to ABC to pursue a degree, but more importantly, to open himself up to God's direction in his life.

At ABC, Jeremy says he developed "a better understanding of the Bible,

and a better understanding of how to live the Christian life and how God's will works."

During his four years in Glennallen, Jeremy has sought out numerous ministry opportunities. He served at KCAM as a board operator, working his way up to broadcasting newscasts. He spent multiple summers on missions trips with Big World Ventures. He is spending this summer in Kodiak, Alaska, working for relatives, and looks forward to a future in ministry wherever the Lord leads.



ERIC MAJOR

Bachelor of Arts Degree

After moving to Glennallen from Michigan, Eric dove into ministry during his four years at ABC. Serving at Glennallen Community Chapel, he completed a pastoral internship there, worked as junior high youth pastor, and played drums for the worship team on Sunday mornings. He

was elected to the student government at ABC as well.

Having graduated with his B.A. in Biblical Studies with a second major in Christian Ministries, Eric and his wife, Heather, are currently seeking a youth or assistant pastor position and look forward to seeing where the Lord leads them.

I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

— Philippians 3:8



Bob Bates leads the benediction.



Pastor Nate Weimer gives the commencement address.



Mark Venhaus reads farewell messages left by faculty, staff, and friends.



Linda Bates poses with Aspen Hall.



Carol Neeley congratulates Christy Millek.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Beckie Joy Music Scholarship

Mary Pat Mills

Christian Ministry Award

Garion Erway

Delta Epsilon Chi Honor Honorary

Wayne Foil

PEP Scholarship

Travis Butler

Phil A. Wall Memorial Scholarship

Elena Bodfish

Vincent Joy Scholarship

Jasen Hansen



Susan Voyles is surrounded by her family after graduation.



Albert Wall ('94) is returning to ABC as the Vice President of Institutional Advancement. Since graduating from ABC, he has served as an Active Duty U.S. Army Chaplain; worked for New Horizons Incorporated and has twenty years

of experience as a pastor, chaplain, and counselor. He is currently the Alaska National Guard Joint Forces Chaplain at Fort Richardson, Alaska. Albert and his wife, **Wendy ('94)**, recently celebrated twenty-one years of marriage and have three children: Onnalee, Megan, and Philip.

"What a tremendous blessing to fulfill a lifelong dream of returning to Alaska Bible College to serve!" Al said. "God has been gracious to the College and to my family, and Wendy and I are overjoyed to come home, see all of our friends again, and put our energy into the exciting things that are happening on campus. I am convinced that God has guided and strengthened ABC in the past and am equally convinced that He has great plans for the future!"

Sarajoy Van Boven ('93-'94) lives with her husband, Huckleberry Palmer, and their kids Blue, 11, and Coyote, 7, on a small organic farm near Spokane, Wash. Sarajoy is a writer and storyteller.

Weddings

Tom Johnson ('11) married **Vanessa Johnson** on May 19, 2012, in Salcha. The couple lives in Glennallen, and Tom is employed at Copper Valley Electric Association.

After receiving their one-year Bible

certificates at ABC in May, **Duane ('12) Shaffer** and **Mary Pat Mills ('12)** wed on June 16, 2012, in Kenai, Alaska.

Josh Heffner ('11) and **Dana Helmer ('11)**, were married May 19, 2012, in Palmer, Alaska. Gary Willford officiated. ABC alumni Jonathan Flamm and Jared Palmer were groomsmen. Many friends and family from Dana's hometown of Eagle, Alaska, attended, as well as Josh's family from Pennsylvania. After graduation in 2011, Josh took a position on staff of Palmer Church of God.



Mr. & Mrs. Josh Heffner

Kariann Mudd ('11) married Luke Ringger on June 30, 2012, in Union, Ore. They will return to Glennallen where Luke will attend ABC.



Mr. & Mrs. Luke Ringger

Ryck and Felicia Roland were married on June 16, 2012. They will return to ABC this fall.

Births

Jared ('07) and **Nikki Palmer ('07)**, welcomed their first child, Emma Grace Palmer on October 13, 2011. Both Jared and Nikki are on staff at ABC; Jared is in the business office and Nikki in admissions/recruiting.



Jared, Nikki, and Emma Palmer

Please keep in touch

We would like to keep in contact with our alumni. Please send your news to meastty@akbible.edu so we can add you to our upcoming alumni news! If you'd like to spread the word about ABC and want brochures to hand out, please let us know. We invite you to join us on Facebook and keep in touch.

Alaska Bible College admits qualified students of any race, sex, color, and ethnic origin.

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A life transformed, a faith strengthened

by Rebekah Osborn



“Why would you want to go to Alaska?” Before moving to Alaska to attend Bible College, I was asked this question more times than I can count. Some people just cannot wrap their heads around why I would move 4,000 miles away to learn about the Bible when I could stay at home and attend a college locally. Others were excited for me and said they would love to move to Alaska and experience the

beauty of it. Through these various reactions from others, I learned something about myself and my decision to attend ABC. Although I was glad that so many were in support of my decision and I was humored by the fact that some did not understand it, I found that neither reaction contributed at all to my resolve. My decision to move to Alaska was between me and the Lord and I was confident in His plan for my life.

Let me back up a little bit. My name is Rebekah Osborn and I am from Newnan, Georgia. I love Georgia, and I planned on having a very comfortable little life there. However, a little over a year ago all of my plans fell apart and I found myself in a state of desperation. I realized that I had not been following Christ so I began to make some changes. I started going to church on Sunday, I attended Sunday school and Bible Studies and met regularly with a mentor. All of this was not enough for me though, as I wanted to make a further commitment to the Lord, and I wanted to learn more about Him. When my dad suggested that I attend a Christian college, I doubt that he had any idea where that idea was going to take me. I began looking at different universities on the Internet and even visited one in Florida. I would have been happy to attend any one of these schools, but I just could not make a commitment to one. I had this nagging feeling that I needed to search longer for the right school. I did an Internet search for Christian colleges and saw an ad for Alaska Bible College on a website. It had been a dream of mine to live in Alaska but I never thought I could make it happen. I was right - I could not make it happen but *God* could.

At first, it seemed so impossible that I was convinced something was going to fall through. But every time I had doubts or fears or any kind of faltering in my faith, the Lord reassured me and I doubled my efforts to get to Alaska. There were many factors that contributed to my decision to attend ABC: the small, secluded campus; quality academics; and the unique ministry opportunities

were among them. But the thing that mattered to me the most was the family atmosphere. I wanted to be a part of the ABC family and experience close fellowship with the other students. Knowing that I would experience that at ABC gave me the confidence I needed to move to Alaska. It was about five months from the time I found the college to when I left the Atlanta airport for Anchorage. In that time the Lord strengthened my faith so much that I had absolutely no doubts that He was going to carry me through this experience and accomplish great things in my life through it. Boy, was that an understatement!

I have already grown so much in my walk with the Lord during my short time at ABC and I have high hopes for what He will do in my life in the coming months as well. I have learned that I can have complete joy in Christ and I can always go to Him for comfort. I have learned discernment, patience, and have grown to love others more. I also have found true contentment in my current circumstances. I believe that I could have grown in all of these ways in Georgia but I doubt that it would have happened so quickly and been so evident to me there. The atmosphere of Alaska Bible College encourages growth and I thrive in it. The best thing about ABC is that more than just my mind is being nourished, my whole soul is involved. Every lesson, reading assignment, research paper, and project is designed to create a transformation in the lives of each student here. But even though this is great, this also makes ABC a challenging school to attend. Everything I learn is reinforced in either another class, in chapel, in a meeting with my mentor, or in the church service on Sunday. I cannot get away from God's truth here, and I have no problem with that.

“Every lesson, reading assignment, research paper, and project is designed to create a transformation in the lives of each student here.”

Since I arrived at ABC I have also been amazed at how much the students and teachers love the Lord and want to serve Him. This willingness to serve has encouraged me to serve as well. I was interested in radio before coming to Alaska Bible College so when I heard of a need for help at KCAM, I jumped on it. I started doing computer work there once a week and after a while began doing on-air work as well. Not only do

I enjoy the time I spend at the station but my time there has renewed my interest in radio work. An opportunity opened up for me to serve as an intern at KCAM for the summer, providing me with more training and direction for my future. The Lord is using an interest that I have to open up a door for me to serve long term in radio ministry. I never could have imagined such a wonderful outcome. I came to Alaska because I love the Lord with all my heart and I desire to learn better how to serve Him. He has ignited in me a passion for Him and a longing need to devote my life to His service. ABC has fostered that passion. The Lord has given me new life and through ABC He has given me new hope for my future.

Rebekah came to ABC in the fall of 2011. She is pursuing an Associate of Arts degree in Bible.

in those very important years. I am very proud of my time at ABC not because of any achievement of mine but because I was able to get to know some great guys and grow up with them. It was a small group of guys back in the early 90's. Those of us in Homiletics referred to the task of preaching to a room full of empty chairs as preaching to the "wood brothers." But I am so proud to know guys who are now serving all over this world in so many different ministries. The longer I serve in the ministry the more I see men who have no idea what it means to be a servant for the Lord, men who are destroying churches rather than building them up. I am so grateful that ABC has remained faithful to the task of training men and women to love God, His Word, and His people. There was a current of love and desire to please the Lord that existed at ABC. Not only was I caught in that current but it changed me. Making a milkshake at the Caribou Restaurant last for hours while we talked about all of our far-flung dreams may not be listed in the ABC catalog but it was an integral part of my education. A couple of guys in a dorm room pouring out their hearts to God might not fulfill any academic requirements, but those times are still foundational for me today. Those intangibles are only a few of many things that made my time at ABC so valuable.

I have had many people ask me how I feel my education prepared me for the pastorate. My answer is that nothing prepared me for the challenges that each new day brings.



The Hoard children: Abigail (10), Noel (5), and Levi (8).



Melanie and Jonathan Hoard

I don't believe there is an "answer book" for pastors. After 17 years in the pastorate I am still learning every day. I am still growing in my love for God, His Word, and His people. In all those many hours listening to Mr. Willford run down a bunny trail or Mr. Gilmore growl at us over his massive Bible, I never was taught how to stand next to the casket of a child. I never took down any notes on how to handle criticism from within the body of Christ. There were no overheads about sitting next to the hospital bed of a young father of four who was dying of cancer.

What I *was* given was a passion for God's Word and a desire to invest it and see it grow in the lives of others. Every day in ministry brings new challenges. There is no way to preemptively solve these problems ahead of time. What is required is that godly men and women enter into these days with the Word of God as their only guide, with an unwavering faith in a God of the impossible, and with a love for the people the Lord gives them to serve. I was given that foundation at ABC and every day I depend on that foundation for the wisdom needed for each new challenge. The greatest compliment I can give is what I shared with Dr. Ridley as my graduation neared. I told him that the school had taught me to learn. Meaning, I was taught how to learn, and to continue learning. The great fervor the professors had for the Word was contagious.

The Lord has blessed my life far beyond measure. He has provided me with my beautiful partner, Melanie, and three perfect children. (At least,

their grandparents keep telling us they're perfect!) We were blessed with the opportunity to serve at a small Bible church in Pennsylvania for 10½ years. The believers there were gracious and patient with this young pastor as I grew a little bit every day. Now the Lord has us in Seldovia, Alaska, where I have been serving as pastor of Seldovia Bible Chapel for nearly seven years. Ministry in a village in Alaska is nearly 180 degrees different than ministry in rural Pennsylvania. Yet God is faithful to bless His Word.

We would appreciate your prayers as we continue to seek to grow and be used in the ministry here. When anyone asks me how they can pray for our ministry here I always answer that our young people (teens and children) need your prayers. Certainly children everywhere face the challenges of our

"There was a current of love and desire to please the Lord that existed at ABC. Not only was I caught in that current, but it changed me."

declining society and it is no different here. It is, however, concentrated in a village setting. Drugs, alcohol, abuse, premarital sex, fatherlessness and an ever-increasing secular society have left our young people with a bleak landscape in which to walk. We are confident however, that the light of God's love can drive out the darkness.

I am thankful for the young people at ABC who are even now finding crazy ways to stave off cabin fever, who are trying their best to digest all the pearls of wisdom being passed to them, and who are dreaming anxiously about how God might use them in those unknown days that lie ahead. I am also thankful to the staff at ABC who were patient with me while the Lord was working in me. They were, and continue to be, faithful to Paul's exhortation: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." (II Timothy 2:2)

Ferches join faculty



John Ferch is the new Vice President of Academic Affairs & Distance Education. He will be developing distance education curriculum so that people in rural communities will not have to leave their villages for four years to get a Bible education. He'll also teach some courses in Glennallen.

John and his wife, Katie, attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Their passion in missions is to help train pastors and church planters to serve the local church.

They have one son, Elijah, who is almost three years old, and they will welcome a daughter in October.

Some of their favorite activities include exploring the outdoors, barbecuing, and watching football (Go Packers!). Katie enjoys painting and drawing, and John likes to tinker with anything electronic or mechanical.

Multiplying worldwide ministries

by Dr. Gary Ridley

When my wife and I came to Alaska Bible College in 1978 we knew that our ministry would be to a small number of students. We also knew that our ministry would multiply through the ministries of our students when they graduate and go into the world for Jesus' sake. Our focus has not been on our ministry of preparing them but on their future ministries. The numerical potential is greater by multiplication than by addition. We choose to focus on our students' ministries rather than on our own.

Now 34 years later we are still here and still focusing on developing men and women for ministry. We can look at the ministries of our graduates and see the multiplication of ministry principle. Whenever I hear or read of a ministry opportunity in the world, I want to go. But I cannot go everywhere. God has placed us here with the task of preparing others to go. We have seen our graduates plant churches, pastor churches, and serve as laymen in churches.



The small part we have played has multiplied into many ministries around the world.

Equipping and discipling our students to go into the world for Jesus' sake are what keep my wife and me here at Alaska Bible College. Our focus is on our students' ministries for which God is preparing them. Our ministry is but a small part in multiplying theirs.

Dr. Ridley teaches Missions and Biblical Studies.

Palmer campus open house draws a crowd during Colony Days



ABC's Palmer extension site was hopping during the Palmer Colony Days open house on June 9, 2012. ABC staff and board members served more than 600 cookies to people who came by to check out the college site. Classes will be offered Tuesdays-Fridays this Fall. More information is online at www.akbible.edu/palmer.



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