

REV. JASPER BACON AWARDED HONORARY DOCTORATE AT COMMENCEMENT



(Left to Right) Dr. Bradford Smith (Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs), Rev. Jasper Bacon (Executive Director of In His Steps Ministries), and Dr. Roger Parrott (President of Belhaven University)

Ephesians 3:20 states "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." The Lord's glory is made evident through his miracles. Rev. Bacon was invited by Belhaven University President, Dr. Roger Parrott to serve as commencement speaker and receive an honorary doctorate degree. Rev. Bacon delivered commencement speeches at the two graduation services on December 11, 2021, and received an honorary Doctorate in Christian Ministries.

Rev. Bacon has been involved with Belhaven University over the past 25 years. He served on faculty as an adjunct professor for over 24 years teaching a number of New Testament and Bible-related courses. He has also served as a chapel speaker. IHS has provided internship and volunteering opportunities for Belhaven students. Throughout his time involved with Belhaven, Rev. Bacon has cultivated a long-lasting friendship with Belhaven's president, Dr. Roger Parrott. **At commencement, Dr. Parrott applauded Rev. Bacon when he said, "It is remarkable the influence a leader can garner when they stay in one place for a very long**

time. And Rev. Bacon's reach has extended into thousands and thousands of families where he has taught on racial reconciliation, marriage, family, parenting skills, evangelism, and discipleship."

The message emphasized to the graduates was twofold. First, it reminded graduates that we are living in perilous times. Where truth nor justice is no longer esteemed and where everything is seen as relative and situational. Secondly, Rev. Bacon called graduates attention to Ephesians 5:15-18 where the believer is exhorted to walk circumspectly/carefully in light of their God-given identity and calling. In order to live circumspect, the believer is required to **know God's will, to redeem the time, and operate under the power of the Holy Spirit.** Ultimately, the message for graduates was to represent Jesus Christ well in their various positions and callings.

Rev. Bacon is grateful for this privilege and honor of receiving an honorary doctorate from the university. He sees it as a chance to expand his platform to share the wonderful news of what God is doing in Canton, Mississippi. Over the last 26 years, all the developments that have been taking

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place in Canton through IHS have been a direct result of the Lord's faithfulness. Many students and individuals have come to Christ and been discipled for Christ through IHS. Upon receiving his honorary Doctorate, Rev. Bacon expressed that he is very humbled by this experience. He also stated, "I never imagined that I would be receiving an honorary doctorate from Belhaven University. I know that God has a reason for this." Rev. Bacon expressed the fact that, "Having my family with me to share in this was heartwarming because my wife has been so faithful and most supportive of me over the years."

Dr. Parrott said, "Just like that image from the book of Jeremiah, Rev. Bacon became a tree with deep roots. As the scripture says, such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by months of drought, their leaves stay green and they never stop producing fruit." Rev. Bacon is thankful for receiving this award and looks forward to continuing the IHS ministry for the glory of God. One of his favorite verses is Psalm 37:5, which states, "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass."

*"Bless the Lord oh my soul
and all that is within me,
bless His holy name. The
Lord has done great things.
May His plans be fulfilled
and to Him be the glory
both now and forever. I am
eternally grateful for this
wonderful honor that has
been bestowed on me."*

Rev. Bacon



IHS Compassion Store volunteers and recipients

IHS COMPASSION STORE

Founded in 2016, the Compassion Store is held each year in December. The purpose of the Compassion Store is to demonstrate Biblical compassion to others. It began as a way to help individual families then it evolved into what it is today. **What makes the Compassion Store so unique is that families are able to provide wish lists to IHS and purchase gifts at a 75% decreased rate with their own earnings and celebrate Christmas with their families.** All of the gifts and toys are donated by various churches and sponsors. The compassion store is a way for parents to acquire gifts for their children and be able to receive parenting classes. The subjects we cover are need-based. **We believe in helping families with a hand up, not a hand out.** Families

and single parents may struggle financially, especially during Christmastime, so the compassion store serves as a way to meet their needs and maintain their dignity. Our desire is to build families up and help them be self-supporting (Lev. 19:9-10).

At our 2021 Compassion Store, we were able to serve 52 children and 21 families total. This year three churches and several individuals donated gifts and toys.

Also, our volunteers are able to help with this very important ministry. IHS friend and supporter, Elizabeth Pace, shared with us "The fact that IHS works with each family as a whole enriching all areas of their lives is something we could really get behind. Seeing the sheer joy of the families coming to make their purchases

in the compassion store was one of my most cherished holiday memories." Long-time IHS supporters and friends Debbie and Melvin Bolden assisted with the 2021 Compassion Store. The Boldens expressed that they have seen firsthand what the ministry does to help the community out and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Boldens stated, "We're looking forward to being a part of it next year" Mr. Bolden shared,

"it's something that's needed for the community and we're glad to be a part of it again." We are grateful to everyone who volunteered and participated to make the 2021 Compassion Store happen.

We praise the Lord for his constant faithfulness as we reach local parents and families. Community outreach is the pivotal part of IHS ministries to spiritual and physical needs of families. We look forward to seeing what the Lord will do next! If you or your organization would be interested in participating, please contact Carolyn Bacon (cbacon@inhissteps.org).

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." Matt. 9:36

CAMPSITE DEVELOPMENT

A meeting was held on January 6, with Ken Primos and Ron McMasters engineering firm to discuss master plan and the renovations of the pond. Pray that God will guide the whole process.

MEN FOR CHRIST OUTREACH

Plans are being made to launch a ministry to young adult men in the Canton area. The main purpose is to encourage men to receive Christ and embrace their God-given roles. Pray for the growth and development of this very necessary ministry.

IHS TRAINING CENTER

The vision for the training center is to offer workshops and curriculum covering areas of marriage, family, parenting, and race relation issues. Pray for this important initiative.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)

SPECIAL PRAYER REQUESTS

- ◆ Thank God for an outstanding year-end giving and for the increase number of IHS donors. Praise God!
- ◆ Thank God for a \$50,000 pledge toward the campground/pond renovation.
- ◆ Thank God for the many opportunities to evangelize and serve this community.
- ◆ Pray for continued spiritual growth and provision for D. Lewis, M. Smith, S. Brown, and their families.
- ◆ Pray for special needs of Porter, Parker, Nussbaum, Bass, and Sisco families and the needs of J. Taylor, K. Sheppard, F. McDaniel.
- ◆ Pray for the planning and implementation of IHS ministries.
- ◆ Pray for salvation and that Christ will rule and reign in the life of many in Canton, MS. Especially pray for our youth and young adults as violent crimes and gang activities are rising.
- ◆ Pray for growth and development

for our S.P.A.S.E. Program students .

- ◆ Pray for God's continued protection and provisions for the IHS staff (Jasper, Carolyn, Christin, Annie, Dorothy, Luther, Jasmine, Rosemary, Charles, and Louis).
- ◆ Pray for God's continued wisdom and direction for Christin Howard.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY DATES

March 14 and 26

April 2 and 9

Time: 8:00 am—12:00 noon

IHS needs assistance with preparation at the IHS campsite and main campus, including garden prep, ball fields, and general spring clean-up. If interested, please contact Carolyn Bacon at 601-859-5708 or cbacon@inhissteps.org.