

# Rio Grande

ISSUE 55 SPRING 2024

## MAGAZINE



**MUSIC**

A BIG PART OF  
THE MINISTRY AT  
BIBLEVILLE



4



6



8



10

SPRING 2024

# IN THIS ISSUE

4

## LET'S RETIRE AT BIBLEVILLE

*Dr. Greg Huffman encourages "older folks" to find purpose in retirement.*

6

## THE JOYS OF AN ACTIVE LIFE AT BIBLEVILLE

*Doug Mosier explains some of the many ways to serve God at Bibleville.*

8

## FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

*Chaplain Dwight LePine shares the blessings of bringing God and people together.*

10

## FINDING THE BIBLE AT BIBLEVILLE

*The Etchers provide more information for those who may consider coming to Bibleville.*

14

## PASSING TRUTH TO THE NEW GENERATION

*A challenge to believers to teach biblical truth to today's youth.*

## also in this issue

### 3 PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### 12 HONOR AND MEMORIAL GIFTS

### 13 CAMPUS NEWS

#### TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS PUBLICATION:

**Rio Grande Bible Ministries** or **Rio Grande** = organizational name  
**Seminario Bíblico Río Grande** or **SBRG** = Bible College  
**MLS** = Missionary Language School (1955-2017)  
**ICS** = InterCultural Studies (2017-)  
**Year** = Graduated or last attended

## on the cover

Bibleville has been a part of Rio Grande Bible Ministries since 1993. This winter home for retirees enables them to continue to have a ministry to others. Their concerts and conferences reach people with the Gospel locally, but they also have a heart for missions which enables them to labor together with the other ministries of Rio Grande.

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**PURPOSE** To make God's people aware of the needs of the Hispanic World and the role that Rio Grande Bible Institute serves to provide godly Christian leadership.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

## Give-up-itis

"They died for no reason!" the doctors asserted. During the Korean war some POWs (prisoners-of-war) developed extreme apathy, gave up hope, relinquished the will to live, and simply died, despite no obvious organic cause. Medical officers documented that these soldiers retreated further into themselves, refused to get any exercise, and eventually lay down as if waiting to die. This 'fatal withdrawal' was not a result of physical causes. The formal term 'give-up-itis' (GUI) was originally applied during the Korean war (1950–1953). 'Give-up-itis' was carried forward to describe the same behavior occurring in POW camps in Vietnam as well. The phenomenon has also been observed by shipwreck survivors where trauma victims in life-rafts are reported to have given up and died from despair.

Give-up-itis is not limited to soldiers or severe trauma victims, it is also prevalent particularly in post-retirement populations. Time magazine notes that when elderly men lose a spouse, they are 70% more likely to pass away within a year, while data from the National Council on Aging reduces the timeframe to about 90 days. Corresponding aspects are noted in retirees who move from productive careers into the relative ease of retirement. They often have a "bucket list" of things to do when they retire, but that list is soon achieved and the listlessness of living a life without purpose or identifiable goals takes its toll. Lack of exercise leads relatively soon to physical atrophy and loss of physical strength and dexterity. Loss of goals and purpose lead to cognitive decline.

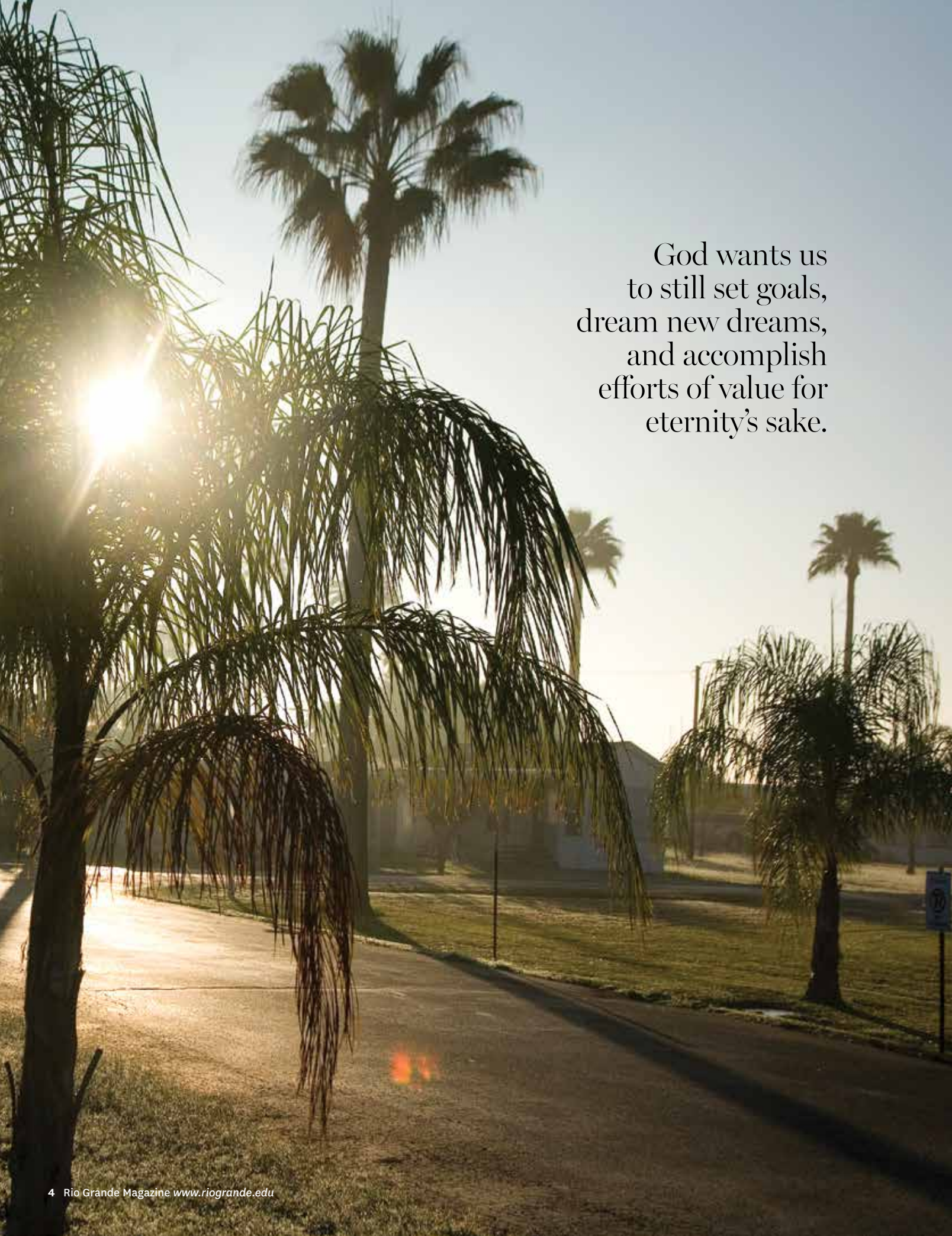


Bibleville is a great solution to retirement doldrums! Bible-believing Christians can develop deep friendships with fellow believers and make a significant contribution to the ongoing program of God in their retirement years. This ministry is designed to provide ministerial purpose for those who want to make a difference for God in retirement. Opportunities to put physical abilities, skilled experience, and spiritual passion to work for eternal purposes abound in this place! Come and take a look at this little slice of heaven-with-a-purpose called Bibleville!



*Lawrence B. Winkle*

▲  
BIBLEVILLE  
IS DESIGNED  
TO PROVIDE  
MINISTERIAL  
PURPOSE  
FOR THOSE  
WHO WANT  
TO MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE  
FOR GOD IN  
RETIREMENT.



God wants us  
to still set goals,  
dream new dreams,  
and accomplish  
efforts of value for  
eternity's sake.

# LET'S RETIRE *at* BIBLEVILLE

**D**o you remember the biblical account about Caleb, one of the two spies who believed the Israelites could take the Promised Land when ten of the others didn't? When they finally came to conquer the land, Caleb, at the age of eighty-five, exclaimed, "I want that mountain for my inheritance!" This is the mindset the Lord wants us to maintain when we reach what has been called the age of retirement.

God wants us to still set goals, dream new dreams, and accomplish efforts of value for eternity's sake. That's why your retirement years could be spent at Bibleville, making a difference in your most influential years yet. So many retirees quit their occupations, rest on their laurels, and become depressed because the Lord meant us to have an abundant life until we die. It's been said, "If you have a pulse, you have a purpose," and purpose is what gives you zest and strength to finish strong.

Some of the Bibleville opportunities may relate to skills and talents you have developed earlier in life. Construction and maintenance projects at Rio Grande Bible College or Bibleville offer great opportunities for service. And the fellowship during these projects is amazing. You can also help the residents,

especially widows, with home projects. Residents are offered the opportunity to usher in the auditorium or serve in the sound booth during the many services. If you play a musical instrument, the Glory Band is a perfect place to use that talent.

Many ladies become involved in the quilting ministry or volunteering in the Bibleville office. Gospel tracts are

located not far to Bibleville, you could adopt a student or two during the winter months to be a source of encouragement and financial help. And prayer support for both Bibleville and the Bible College is always blessed by God. If you have been a pastor, from time to time, opportunities become available in nearby churches to fill their pulpits.

**"If you have a pulse, you have a purpose," and purpose is what gives you zest and strength to finish strong.**

distributed regularly at the local flea market. The library is a great place to volunteer as well. Supplying meals for visiting pastors during the Bible Conference season each year is an important ministry. Another ministry that is greatly appreciated is sending notes of prayer and encouragement to prospective preachers who are coming to Bibleville, as well as notes of appreciation after their visit. Get Well cards are also a welcomed treat to the residents from time to time. Also, when it comes to encouragement, a widow-to-widow ministry is so valuable all the time.

Since the Bible College is

Every Saturday before the biweekly Bible Conferences, a music concert open to the public takes place. That offers a great opportunity to reach out to the community for evangelism and fellowship. Now, when you think of all of these benefits of Bibleville, it's obvious that financial support for such valuable ministries is always needed. It's been said, "Do your giving while you're living, so you're knowing where it's going." I've often said, "If you're not dead, you're not done!" So, why not retire at Bibleville, and make your final years really count for Christ!

*Dr. Greg Huffman*

# THE JOYS OF AN ACTIVE LIFE AT BIBLEVILLE

*Doug Mosier*

On a cold and dreary winter day throughout most of the United States and Canada, a person might ask, "Why would I want to go to Bibleville?" They hear on the news that Texas is also experiencing cold weather and storms. Well, Dallas and Fort Worth are the big cities that usually have bad weather like that. And they are about 500 miles north of Bibleville, where our short winter season is more like fall. The next question one often hears is, "What is there to do there?" The short answer is, "Many of the same things as are done at parks in Arizona and Florida." But the big difference is that Bibleville is distinctly Biblically oriented. This orientation and the opportunity to serve through music are what drew my wife and me to Bibleville.

From November first through March thirty-first, there are worship services every Sunday morning and evening. Throughout the entire year, there are worship services on Thursday evenings and a prayer meeting with a Bible lesson on Tuesday mornings. From January to early March, there are week-long Bible Conferences every other week. Each session follows basically the same format as a worship service. So if you have musical skills like conducting, playing instruments, singing solos, trios, quartets, choirs,

Doug and Linda Mosier find fulfillment in many aspects of Bibleville.

An enjoyable hobby...



... becomes an inspiration for others.

etcetera, there are opportunities to glorify God and edify the body with those skills.

For instrumentalists and singers, there are musical jams on Tuesday evenings, unless there is a conference that week. There are generally about twenty musicians and an audience of 50-250 that gather to celebrate God through Christian music. For musicians who would like to play that old guitar, banjo, ukulele, trombone, or band/orchestra instrument, they can join the Glory Band. This is a musical ensemble to revive those old skills from junior or senior high school and play roughly fifty-five pieces of Christian music in the winter season. If all you desire is to be part of the audience, there are gospel concerts with invited artists every Saturday afternoon and evening through January and February.

There are groups who travel to destinations out of the park for everything from tours of local attractions to participation in sports like hunting, fishing, golfing, bowling, bird watching, Christmas light displays, and shopping. We have an active outreach ministry where Bibleville residents hand out Bible tracts at the local flea market, tutor at local schools, or help students at Rio Grande Bible College practice English conversation. And of course, there are many who join with friends and go out to eat. Yummm.

If you prefer staying closer to home, there are groups of people who do quilting, prepare VBS craft kits, serve others through hospitality, or repair broken items in homes. Other activities are: pickle ball, shuffleboard, fitness classes, walking, bike riding, assembling scripture booklets with John and Romans, stained glass projects, and Friday evening card and board games. A layette ministry prepares gifts of clothing and supplies for new babies born to couples studying at the Bible College. A fancy tea event for women is held during each conference. Community dinners are a regular event. There are special events for veterans, like an annual breakfast and a flag retirement. Overall, this is a Christian community that cares for

and serves others. (If I have missed your favorite activity, I apologize.)

Acts 2:42 pretty much sums up what goes on every day at Bibleville, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayer." Acts 2:42 NKJV

At the end of the day, we must all stand before God and answer the question, "What did you do to serve and glorify God?" II Corinthians 14:12 tells us that spiritual gifts are to be used to edify the saints. It doesn't matter what your activity is. What matters is that you use your gifts to edify or build up the saints.

Enjoying  
God's abundant  
supply



Singing for  
the Lord

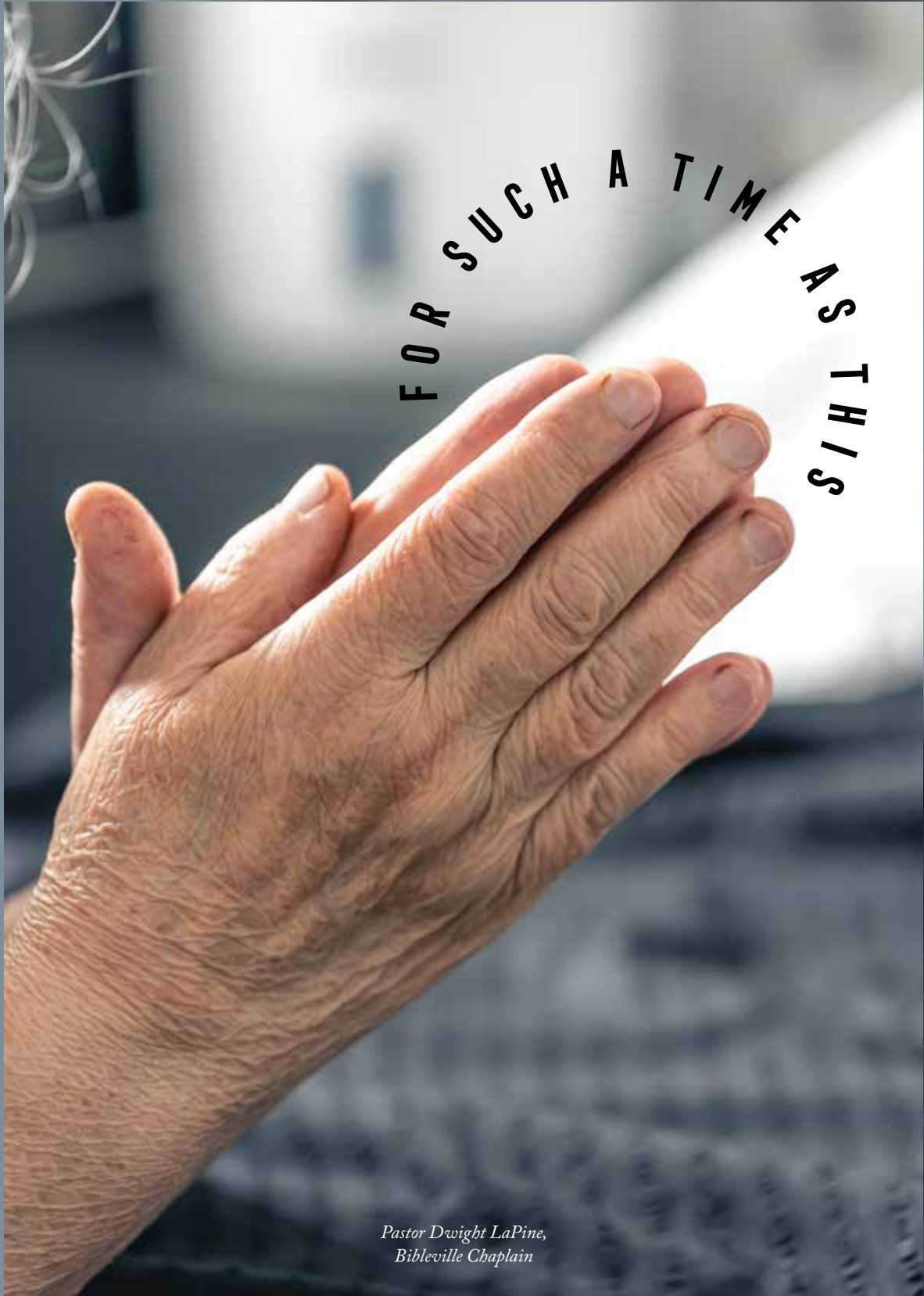


Instrumental  
ensembles are  
always welcome.



Sharing God's  
Word at  
the flea market





*Pastor Dwight LaPine,  
Bibleville Chaplain*

PHOTO: FREEPIK.COM/PVPRODUCTIONS



▶ Ron and Esther Heath have been coming to Bibleville for a while. A number of years ago when we were still in Rochester, Minnesota, they invited us to visit them here. We had a great time and enjoyed the ministry. Then, two years ago, Dave Lightner called and asked if we would come to Bibleville to see the ministry and consider whether God would have us work as chaplain. So, last year we spent November and December getting to know the ministry and the people.

Bibleville has an incredible opportunity. Dr. Larry Windle has a heart for Spanish-speaking people. But he also has a heart for missions throughout the world. The students at Rio Grande Bible College are being trained to reach people from other cultures. We are witnesses to God's workings with ministry teams being sent out through Rio Grande Bible Ministries.

Peggy and I spent an afternoon with Dr. Windle, and we left having caught some of his excitement for God's work in those students. Our first ministry at Bibleville is to encourage and support that great work. We are to be vessels of prayer for the faculty and for the students. We know that we are on the edge of seeing miracles take place through them in reaching

## GOD WILL BLESS HIS WORD.

I believe that there are only two eternal things in this world: The Word of God and people. Our purpose is summed up in saying that God desires us to get those two things together!

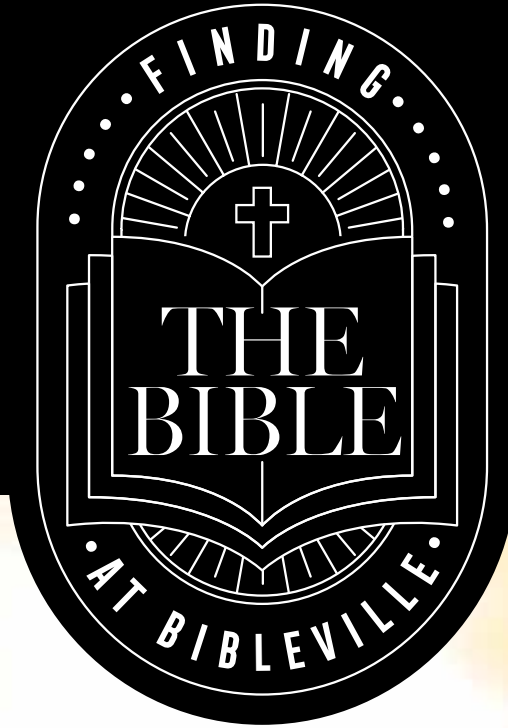
people around the world. Our ministry included helping that school and those students financially and to get to know them personally and to be a part of their lives with carefulness and purposefulness.

Secondly, we have over a million Spanish-speaking people throughout the Rio Grande Valley. The numbers are growing. We are so thankful for the radio ministries that are broadcasting the good news of Jesus Christ to people in Mexico and Texas. God loves them, and so must we. I was really impressed with the heart of some who attend the flea market every week and pass out tracks. It is a great outreach because of the incredible amount of people who attend there each week.

God will bless His Word. I believe that there are only two eternal things in this world: The Word of God and people. Our purpose is summed up in saying that God desires us to get those two things together! He wants us to get His Word to these people. God is working in the lives of those who hear His Word. I appreciated the outreach of the school to neighbors in having a rummage sale inside the gate of Bibleville. The Mexicans who have come to this country as a group are very polite. They are respectful of the elderly and we are elderly. They have needs, and their greatest need is to know the Lord.

Thirdly, we can't do as much as we once did. We may not have a lot to give, but the people in Bibleville give of themselves. They give time to put Bibles together. They give time to work on Vacation Bible School crafts. Peggy and I had a great time in fellowshiping with those doing these "small tasks." But I am convinced that there

is no such thing as a small task with the Lord. He took a young boy's "small lunch" and multiplied it to meet the physical needs of 5,000 men, not counting women and children who were also there. We don't know how that impacted the multitude, but in a few weeks after the ascension of Jesus, 3,000 were saved on the day of Pentecost, and a short time after that, 5,000 men (not counting women and children) were saved. There may have been as many as 10,000 people saved in less than a month, perhaps less than a week. Why? It wasn't just because of the preaching of Peter. It was because of the faith of 120 who were praying. It was because a crippled man was healed. It was because the Lord had met needs (some small needs) of people for three years. I am impressed with the people of Bibleville. I am really impressed with the students at Rio Grande. I know that God has brought us together "for such a time as this."



THERE ARE  
NEARLY 130  
MOBILE HOMES  
AND 70 RV  
HOOK-UP  
SITES ON THE  
GROUNDS

*Don and Barbara Etcher*



Bibleville is a division of Rio Grande Bible Ministries and is a support group of the ministry of Rio Grande Bible College, upholding the same doctrinal statement. Even though we are a “fifty-five-plus” community, the available ministries are vast and varied, with evangelism and spiritual growth being the two priority areas. More than fifty people live here as full-time Texas residents, and usually from November through April each year, another 300 migrate to our warm winter climate as “Winter Texans.” Since we are an all-volunteer group, no one at Bibleville receives a salary. We are kept busy with the groundskeeping and overall maintenance and upkeep of our forty acres, where nearly 130 mobile homes and 70 RV hook-up sites are located.

With the arrival of thousands of Winter Texans here in the Rio Grande Valley, many of our retired pastors and missionaries are invited to other mobile parks to lead Bible studies and services. Bibleville earns its reputation as a conference center because we have five Bible conferences (Sundays through Fridays) with outstanding speakers, which many people throughout the Valley attend. Our large auditorium, with the capacity of 750 people, works well for our Bible conferences and to accommodate the very popular Saturday music concerts in January and February. In addition, regular Sunday services, Tuesday morning Bible

Studies, and Thursday night prayer meetings are held from November through March.

We came to Bibleville in 2010, with our aching and aging joints, to escape the frigid North in exchange for sunny South Texas. Like many of our residents, we heard from a friend about the advantages and possibilities available here. We soon found that, in addition to the great climate, we were immediately impressed by the friendship and family atmosphere in this Christian community and its many opportunities for retirees to be involved in the Lord’s work.

Since Rio Grande Bible College is only six miles away, there are many opportunities to minister there and to have personal contact with Bible College students from more than twenty countries. Some residents enjoy giving campus tours to new Bibleville arrivals, tutoring students, or participating in joint venture projects with students, faculty, and winter volunteers. Even though work opportunities abound, we still manage to take time for the one-hour trip to the beach at Padre Island, in the Gulf of Mexico, or a boat trip on the Rio Grande River thirty minutes away. Others enjoy bird watching (this is a main Corridor for North American migratory fowl), a trip to Space X, as well as organized day trips to points of interest in this diverse multicultural area.

# 300

NUMBER . . .  
OF PEOPLE WHO  
MIGRATE TO  
BIBLEVILLE IN  
THE WINTER

## MORE INFO

Purchase of a mobile home in this gated community requires references and a personal testimony. Those who bring their own RVs and use Bibleville hookups must provide references and be approved before arriving. A few rental properties are available on a “first-come, first-served” basis, so that new people may become familiar with our group and facilities. Because we are all volunteers, the prices are very affordable. With green grass, citrus trees, and palm trees lining our streets, we have a beautiful setting for our wintertime location.

*For a list of our current season’s speakers, concert performers, specific questions, or an application form, please contact us at:*  
Bibleville Conference Grounds 1346 N. Cesar Chavez Road Alamo, Texas 78516-6895 Phone: 956-787-2024 Email: bibleville@riogrande.edu

JULY 31, 2023 - NOVEMBER 30, 2023

# HONOR & MEMORIAL GIFTS

## IN HONOR OF

**OUR MAINTENANCE CREW**  
Dr. & Mrs. Antonio Lim, Jr.

## IN MEMORY OF

**T.N. "BUD" & LUCILLE BLACKWELL**  
Mr. & Mrs. Ken Tharp

**PHILIP BLYCKER**  
Sally Gildner  
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Williams

## RUTH BUCHHOLZ

Sally Gildner  
Mr. & Mrs. Donald John  
Mavis Knoepfle  
Helen Robinson

## GERARD DELOOF

Mavis Knoepfle

## ISAAC FRIESEN

Judy Anderson  
Cynthia Ann Bishop  
Russell Borchers

Adelle W. Bottom  
Gary & Connie Clark  
David Coldwell  
Ken & Yvonne Demoskoff  
Debra Kay Dunstone  
Mr. & Mrs. Vernon Friesen  
David & Barbara Geiger  
Dennis & Gay Hedstrom  
Lynette Hinton  
Billy Jean Holcomb  
Cheryl Hostetler  
Geneva & DeWayne Householter  
Mr. & Mrs. Pete Jackson  
Maureen Juarez  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Keck  
Mr. & Mrs. Barry Laing  
Dr. & Mrs. Frederick MacDowell  
Lowell & Joyce Martens  
Merry Terveen McKean  
Mrs. Penny Miller  
Dorothy Nordby  
Richard & Nancy Olen  
Rich & Ruth Opsata  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Owen  
Mr. & Mrs. Kendal Pliner

Marilyn Rice  
Mr. & Mrs. Armand Rouleau  
Jane Shriver  
Mr. & Mrs. Don H. Smith  
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Carol Tolley  
Jesus & Hermelinda Trevino  
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## MELVIN RAY POPE

Jerome & Leanne Maart

## ARNE J. & AGNES VIKEN

Mr. & Mrs. Ken Tharp

## HAL WYCHOPEN

Dr. & Mrs. Marty Von

RIO GRANDE BIBLE MINISTRIES  
**CAMPUS NEWS**



▲ **DECEMBER GRADUATES** Please pray for our final semester students who will be graduating May 14 and heading home to family or to their final destination in service to the Lord. Their lives will definitely change and your prayer support will mean so much to them!

**NEW APARTMENTS** ▶

Our new apartments have been approved for occupancy and student families are enjoying them this semester. Please pray for the families, many of whom are first semester students here, that they would be shaped by God for His service. Many of our families have babies and small children. Please pray for their adjustments as well.



**APPROVAL FOR MASTER'S PROGRAM**

In November, 2023, the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) notified RGBI that we are approved to offer the Master of Arts in Biblical Studies program. This is very exciting news. Be on the watch for future updates on this, and let friends who may be interested know as well.



▲ **IKE FRIESEN MEMORIAL TRIBUTE**

A Celebration of Life for former staff member Ike Friesen was held November 11 on campus. Many current and former staff members, as well as people from the valley who knew Ike well, were in attendance. Ike was a staff member from 1952-2023 and was loved by many for his sense of humor, his passion for prayer, and for his love for the Rio Grande students.

FINISHING WELL SERIES

# PASSING TRUTH *to the* NEW GENERATION

*Dr. Lawrence Windle, President*



## “GRANDPA, LOOK!

I got a robot for my birthday!” As I look at the animated toys and electrical gadgets my grandkids play with, I think back to the handmade slingshots, the balsa wood gliders I used to make, the roads I would build in the dirt for my Matchbox cars, and the tree houses we assembled. I wonder if today’s kids will embrace the biblical values I hold so dear and declare them to their generation. I echo the psalmist’s prayer in Psalm 71:17 and 18: “O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.”<sup>i</sup>

I find myself humming the song that Dave Fenley sings:

*Grandpa, tell me  
'bout the good old days.*

*Sometimes it feels like this  
world's gone crazy.*

*And, Grandpa, take  
me back to yesterday,*

*When the line between  
right and wrong didn't  
seem so hazy.*

Barna estimates that roughly 70% of high school students who enter college as professing Christians will leave with little to no faith. These students usually don’t return to their faith. 80% of those reared

in the church will be “disengaged” by age 29.<sup>ii</sup>

Principally, studies indicate that Christians who “lose their faith” frequently never had much confidence in it to begin with. The current data show that those who jettison Christianity have already begun to fade earlier but only admitted it at a later time. We likely lost them while they were still in church under our watch.<sup>iii</sup>

God intends for us to pass on our faith to the next generation—not just knowledge of it, but faith itself.

### AUTHORITY SOURCES

We’ve always had two generations interacting with each other, but now we have distinct cultures between the generations and little interaction taking place. Traditionally, when the events of life occurred, the individual processed the event with family, classmates, colleagues, or church members...the de facto support groups or processing centers. Today people have begun instantly processing life’s events in this electronic world with a selected group of “friends” or by “google searching” and accepting the results as truth. This has effectively replaced the traditional center of truth and values.

These same groups and digital influences now dictate the meaning of words and methods

of expression. Many no longer find the need to communicate with older generations because they can process life exclusively with those of similar interests...or struggles...or doubts. Words take on new meaning, and communication is not developed to include other social groups. This effectively isolates the social groups from one another.

Patterns of thinking were predicated on the foundation of a Creator God and a reasonably common moral standard, but the paradigm has effectively shifted to assume that humans exist by chance and must determine their own value systems.

This disconnect has birthed a humanistic foundation for society. The first notable re-definition is tolerance. All values, beliefs, lifestyles, and claims to truth are equal. Removing the Divine reference point, the argument arises that no individual can claim, “Your thoughts aren’t as good as mine; your beliefs are less than mine.” Essentially everyone has the right to claim an individual system of truth, and there is no objective standard revealed by God.

Another newly defined word is **multiculturalism**. This applies the tenet of tolerance to culture. All cultures with their values, beliefs, and lifestyles are equally valid, even if they include immoral or oppressive aspects.

A third reformulation is **diversity**. Different values,

beliefs, lifestyles, and claims to truth—all are equal. Thus, no individual is entitled to his or her own opinion. One must embrace all perspectives as though they were equally true, no matter how absurd or offensive they may be.

Sociologists refer to our day as a quantum shift in culture. How can we transmit the truth and make Jesus-followers of all nations?

We begin by reaffirming that God’s answers to life apply to every generation, even this one.

The Scriptures have been divinely communicated and are the objective standard for every generation. *Read, teach, and explain the Bible in everyday life.*

The Gospel remains the same for every generation. Salvation is only by grace through faith in the person and completed redemptive sacrifice of Jesus, the God-man. *Declare the message of reconciliation with God and fellowship with others.*

The Throne of Grace is the means for divine intervention in our lives and ministerial efforts. *Pray regularly for this world, your children and grandchildren.*

The Church remains God’s tool of choice to meet the deepest need of every generation in this age. *Go, participate, and take those you influence with you.*

Hope is as bright as the faithfulness of God.

The baton is in your hand. What will you do with it?



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#### **PARTNERS FOR THE GOSPEL**

What an honor to have the support and prayers of people who have faithfully followed the Lord throughout their lives. God has designed a great partnership among Bibleville residents, Radio Esperanza, our staff, Winter Volunteers, and students. To become part of this team, sharing your time, resources, talents, or prayers, please contact us at the information below.

**"THY FAITHFULNESS IS UNTO ALL GENERATIONS: THOU HAST ESTABLISHED  
THE EARTH, AND IT ABIDETH." PSALM 119:90 (ASV)**



► FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT BOB ALLEN, VP, MINISTERIAL ADVANCEMENT, 956-380-8125, [BALLEN@RIOGRANDE.EDU](mailto:BALLEN@RIOGRANDE.EDU)