

NORTHSTAR CHRISTIAN ACADEMY HISTORY

Nancy and Duane Motley, founding members of First Bible Baptist Church (FBBC) had a grammar school age son who was attending public schools. Due to the changes that were rapidly taking place in public education, they recognized the need to put their child in Christian education. They approached Pastor Wayne Mullen about considering starting a Christian school. He personally was not for Christian education and believed that his three sons should be in public schools as a testimony for the Lord.

Pastor Mullen presented the Motley's request to start a Christian school to the deacons. All but one, Mike Mateyka, was against Christian education. After much prayer and soul searching, the Motleys informed Pastor Mullen that they were considering moving to the south, where Christian schools were in abundance. This prompted Pastor Mullen to reconsider the possibility. This was the first miracle that brought about the establishment of Northstar Christian Academy.

They learned of a man, Dr. Howard, who was starting a new program for small Christian schools, entitled Accelerated Christian Education (ACE). He was coming to a church in Williamson, NY to present his program. Pastor Mullen, Duane and Nancy Motley, and Bob and Sylvia Spamer went to the meeting.

Using ACE, each student had his own small study center, and studied packets of material in subjects for his/her grade level. The classroom had a teacher and one or two monitors to assist the students. This minimum staff requirement allowed a school getting started to afford the cost.

This program was presented to the deacons and all but Mike Mateyka was against it, but agreed that one could be started if the families of the church wanted it, and paid all expenses so that it cost the church nothing.

The meeting with Dr. Howard was in June 1972, and in September 1972 God and Country School opened with 40 students in grades two through 10, a Principal/teacher, Jim Cunningham, and two monitors. In its second year of operation, kindergarten, first grade, eleventh and twelfth grades were added with an enrollment of 115 students. Attendance remained about the same for the next two years, and then took a 50% increase. God and Country School had its first graduation class in 1975.

All students wore red, white and blue uniforms, and sat at individual study desks that were painted flag blue. Each student had to pay tuition, but it did not meet the cost as the school had to pay utilities and for janitor services. Twice a year, the Mateykas and Motleys paid the deficit that was owed the church.

The school continued to grow and the leaders recognized that ACE was no longer the best method for the students. In the fourth year of operation, the school reorganized and went to the traditional format. There was a teacher for kindergarten; a teacher for first and second grade; a teacher for third and fourth grade; a teacher for fifth and sixth grade; a teacher for seventh and eighth grade; and several teachers for high school. Along with this new program, the school got a new name, Northstar Christian Academy.

In 1973 Pastor Mullen left and the new Pastor, James Modlish, did not believe in Christian education. He and the deacons met on a Saturday night and decided to present, at a business meeting to be held the next week, the motion to close the school. Mike Mateyka phoned the Motley's around 11:00 PM, and informed them of the decision and ask them to pray with him for a miracle. Duane Motley told his wife to not cook for him; he would be fasting and praying.

The next day, Sunday, after the morning church service, Nancy Motley walked out on the front porch of the church and Pastor Modlish was standing there. She reminded him that he was going to speak against a Christian school and that he was not giving anyone who was for the school the opportunity to speak. He agreed and turned to her and said, "Okay, you tell Duane he will speak."

At the business meeting, Pastor Modlish informed attendees of the deacon's decision to close the school, and one of the deacons made the motion to close the school, and another seconded the motion. Pastor Modlish gave Duane Motley the floor to speak. As he began to speak, the Holy Spirit came into the room so strongly you could feel His presence. When Duane finished speaking, the vote was taken and everybody in the room, except one deacon, voted to keep the school.

Pastor Modlish was stunned. He asked the secretary to not take notes, and he said, "I don't know what happened here, but we are going to take this vote again, off the record. If this passes, I want you all to know that this church will be totally behind the school in every way. No more two families paying the short fall; we are totally in or totally out." He took the vote again and it was the same. Thank you Lord for the second miracle that kept Northstar Christian Academy in operation!

In 1975 Principal Jim Cunningham felt called of God to leave teaching and start a church. Millard Seaman was called to be the Principal of the school. He served for four years before moving back to the west. A public school principal, Nick Fabry, who the Lord had saved, was faithfully serving at First Bible Baptist Church. He left the public school and became the Principal in 1979 and served in that capacity for 21 years, retiring in 2000.

Nick improved the curriculum, increased the staff, and made Northstar Christian Academy a school that was sound academically and spiritually.

As the school grew to over 200 students, the facility at 1039 North Greece Rd was "bursting at the seams." While looking for a building to relocate the school, the Warren Harding School in Gates went up for sale at \$2 million; the church offered them \$400,000. The Gates School District would not accept this offer and after a year, they counter offered \$1 million, which FBBC was not willing to pay. They next day they accepted the original offer of \$400,000, and agreed on \$5000.00 for all the furniture. Duane Motley, FBBC's Business Manager, wrote a deposit check for \$10,000, sealing the deal. The Lord had provided another miracle for Northstar Christian Academy!

At the closing, Duane Motley and FBBC's attorney met with the attorney of the Gates School District. Papers were signed and Duane wrote and signed the check for \$390,000. As he passed the check to Gates District's attorney, he brought up the issue of the \$5000.00 for all furnishings as they set. The Gates Superintendent told the attorney by phone, that they could not let them go for such a small sum. Duane stated that this was all part of the agreement, but the Superintendent stated the amount would be \$10,000.

With what seemed like an impasse, Duane rose from his seat, took back the check, and said to the church attorney, "Let's go! When I make a deal, I expect that to be honored." They rose to leave and the Gates District's attorney began to curse at the Superintendent saying, "A man just handed me a check for \$390,000, and you are going to lose that over \$5000.00." He convinced the Gates Superintendent to honor the original agreement of \$5,000 for the furniture. Duane handed the check back, and FBBC owned Warren Harding School.

As Duane and the church lawyer were leaving, the lawyer stated, "Duane that was quite a scene in there. Would you really have left?" Duane assured him that he would have; he had given his word and he expected the school to honor their word. Another Miracle!

Over the next few years, the school was outfitted by items bought at auctions and different sales. Everything from books, desks, kitchen equipment, cafeteria tables, stage curtains and bleachers were purchased for low costs. Gradually new programs were brought in, computers were introduced, and Christ-centered education flourished within the walls of 332 Spencerport Rd. After only a few years in the new building, enrollment rose to 525 students.

After Nick Fabry's retirement in 2000, David Stein II, who had served at NCA for 37 years in various roles, became the school Administrator until 2007, before becoming the schools Chief Financial Officer. He served in this capacity until 2012.

In 2000, Christopher Boshnack became involved at NCA, serving as the Grade School Principal. He is presently the school Administrator.

An estimated 1000 total alumni have gone on to pursue careers in many fields, including medicine, military, engineering, education, and many more. Looking ahead to the future, Christopher Boshnack says the vision is to, "Stay true to our founding, Bible-based, Christ-centered education, first and foremost...A heart for God, A mind for learning. That is Northstar Christian Academy to me."

Another miracle of Northstar has reached across of America. In 1979, Northstar became part of three year litigation on religious freedoms. The litigation was over utility rates charged to religious schools. The utility company stated they would be charging Northstar commercial rates, instead of residential, since it was a school not a church. Churches pay the lower residential rate. FBBC's position is that Northstar is an inseparable ministry of FBBC. FBBC has Sunday school, Monday school, Tuesday school, etc. The utility company would not accept this. The pastor, Jim Modlish, called Duane Motley (Business Manager) into his office and directed him to sue New York State over this issue. As Duane was leaving the Pastor's office, Brother Modlish called to him, "You better win too!"

Working with David Gibbs, Jr of the Christian Law Association, Duane coordinated the lawsuit with other churches and attorneys. The case moved through all three levels of the New York State court system. In February 1982, FBBC won in a unanimous decision by the seven judges on the state Court of Appeals, the highest court in New York State. Another miracle for Northstar!

That case has become a national precedent setting case on religious freedoms. This means that churches in other states have been able to win similar victories based on Northstar's case.

If one knew all the miracles that have occurred at Northstar, they would fill a book. But the most important miracles are students led to the Lord, students grounded in the Word and students called to ministries around the world.

After learning the history of Northstar Christian Academy, one quickly realizes it was not a ministry orchestrated by man, but developed and orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. Using people in the church who had the vision, The Holy Spirit performed miracle after miracle so that families have a place where their children can be educated in a Christian environment, with emphasis on Spiritual things in all areas.

The present leadership of FBBC and Northstar Christian Academy must understand that the same God, who has orchestrated Northstar's history, is present to orchestrate its future. Step out by faith, look to Him for guidance and stand back as watch miracles happen.

Nancy Motley