

THE OLD MAN ASSOCIATION

INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR THE OLD MEN OF THE WHEATON COLLEGE GLEE CLUB. A STUDENT-LED PUBLICATION.



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

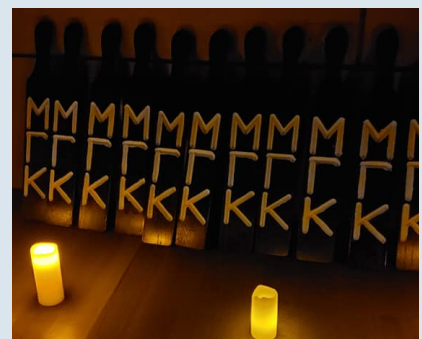
Matthew Reisky '21

When I joined glee club my freshman year, I could never have expected it to pan out in this way. I remember being woken up in the middle of the night and being told “DON’T BE LATE” by a group of well-dressed men, and finding myself in China on tour. This trip was all a blur, but I will never forget it. I will never forget eating Peking duck. I will never forget our ever-changing schedule or the Pakistani boys choir. But most of all, I will never forget singing the words, “I will rejoice and sing praises forever! I will rejoice and sing praises to God!” That baritone line will always ring in my mind and heart when I think back to my time in the Wheaton College Men’s Glee Club.

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Just three short years later, I found myself embarking on a year that the Men's Glee Club had never faced before, one with Covid-19. I had to continually remind myself that the Men's Glee Club made it through the great depression, two world wars, and many other struggles through the ages, and that this pandemic was just another obstacle that God would walk us through. Not only that, but He would teach us through this disaster.

To this day, I don't know where it came from, but when I first called my mom after hearing the news about the cancellation of in-person courses at Wheaton, she asked me how I was feeling about everything. I responded with, "There is beauty in the uncertainty." Like I said, I don't know why I said that or if I was just trying to be overly philosophical in that moment, but this ended up being something that God continued to show me through the year. There is beauty in trusting God when we don't know what is coming next. There is beauty in singing amidst uncertainty. There is beauty in ever-changing plans and schedules. The past year may have been hard for the Men's Glee Club, but it has been worth it, 100% worth it. Although small, the influx of New Men last fall gave us hope for our future. And the return of so many loyal Old Men rooted us in our shared history and past. The Old Man Association has also continued to support us in many ways that we are incredibly grateful for.

Despite a lot of things being taken away or changed, there are still many blessings to reflect on as we look back over the past year. We have been blessed beyond measure. We were able to come back to campus. We got to sing together! We were able to listen to devotional speakers from all over the world. We spent time with one another and prayed for each other. We were able to circle up and sing the doxology with way too many harmonies. We recorded and produced a virtual concert. We were able to experience the truth of Christ, live with integrity, and have meaningful experiences together as brothers.

Matt Reiskytl

Men's Glee Club 214th President, 2021



A YEAR IN QUARANTINE

Joshua Adams '21

March 11, 2020 is a day that I will not soon forget. We were on a bus in Florida for our spring tour just one hour before a concert when Dr. Hopper broke through the revelry with the news that we would not be returning to campus for classes. After a lot of emotion and itinerary changes, we were on an airplane returning to campus a day early. These moments were the beginning of a year that none of us could have predicted.

The fall semester began small, with a limited number of cabinet members present for orientation, and an equally limited crop of new freshman. We had our first rehearsal outside, and we were only allowed to sing if we stood ten feet apart, wore masks, and spent no more than thirty minutes in a single place. We could only sing all together if we were outside. But the Lord was faithful, as singing together in any capacity is more than many university choirs had this year. Dr. Hopper quickly established a rhythm of outdoor rehearsals, devotionals, and indoor sectionals. We all had to learn to be flexible, as schedules were often announced on the day. As the weather began to change, so, too, did our rehearsals, moving indoors and spending more time in sectionals. But the Lord remained faithful, as we were able to record a few pieces to share with friends and family. However, once we began to get accustomed to the bespoke rehearsal schedules, Wheaton announced that the spring semester would not resume in-person classes until February.

The Lord, however, continued to be faithful and unchanging. When classes began in January, we continued rehearsals online, muting our mics and singing along to Joel, our accompanist. These rehearsals allowed us to restart with momentum in February, still limited in rehearsal space, but fresh on our music. By God's grace, the infection rate continued to drop to the point where Wheaton allowed us to meet together indoors, and we sang together properly for the first time all year. As the tones of *A Mighty Fortress* rang through the new concert hall, I thought to myself that it had never sounded so beautiful.

While we could not go on tour this year, the cabinet still wanted to preserve the traditions and the fraternity that come with tour. Our solution was to squeeze a week-long tour into 4 hours and 15 minutes on a Saturday afternoon. But even in that limited time, we all had incredibly meaningful experiences bonding as a group and inducting the New Men into the Club as official Old Men.

In the next month, we finished recording the Spring Concert, and were able to watch it together in Edman. While watching a recording of a concert at the end of the year is much different from being onstage, that concert and time to gather with the Old Men afterward was still a powerful symbol of the way that the Lord sustained us this year. The Lord, as He always does, remained faithful.



Florida, March 2020



Wheaton, February 2021



THE CLAYTON HALVORSEN CHORAL REHEARSAL ROOM

David Gieser '71

Professor Halvorsen was the conductor of the Men's Glee Club from 1957-1988. He had a remarkable impact upon the lives of hundreds of men, including me, as he shaped and sharpened us for Kingdom work. Yes, it was very much about singing, but included so much more. For me, he manifested what it meant to be a Christian gentleman. In addition, there was an abiding principle that undergirded all that we did: *You earn the right to speak by your excellence. To what end? For the glory of God.*

The giving from the scores of men of the Club across the decades has made possible the naming the choral rehearsal room in honor of Clayton. This is the first time in the history of the College that we have a dedicated room for choral rehearsal. It is a beautiful space with expansive windows overlooking the fountain and the quad. We have invested mightily in this room so that it is acoustically pristine, which will empower our choral ensembles in the pursuit of excellence. Gentlemen, thank you.

David K. Gieser, M.D.
Chairman Emeritus
Board of Trustees



OLD MAN UPDATES

From Archnemesis Man to Covert Ops: Creative Access Church Missions George [Omitted] '06

I wish I could tell you that the Glee Club trips to Russia and Europe stirred my heart for missions, but more than likely, they just stirred Dr. Hopper's heart to pray for me. I never received awards for vocal quality, but I did receive awards like Snake and Tree.

I got a nudge towards missions when I joined the World Christian Fellowship cabinet after losing the election for MGC president my senior year. A Bible smuggler visited WCF and regaled us with stories of Bibles hidden in the door panels of conversion vans. When the Russian police drilled holes in the van doors and paper came out, they knew they were busted; the smugglers' only recourse was to preach the gospel to the police. I had never received a personal calling, but that Bible smuggler told me that if I wanted to be a missionary, I didn't need to wait for one. The Great Commission was enough.

So, I became a missionary. After a couple of years of serving in Mexico, I did receive a personal call through the prophesy of a woman that I had never met before. She told me, "you are intelligent, creative, and God wants you to invent things... You are good with computers, and you are going to use information systems to spread the Gospel." This prophecy hit home and touched my heart in a very personal way.

So now I do exactly that. I serve on a team of techies who build technology for Bible smugglers. We have helped Bible smugglers replace mules and shipping containers with safer ways of delivering scripture to people in closed countries. We also see people come to faith in Jesus after receiving a digital Bible and reaching out to our partners. Over the last 5 years, we believe we have helped 3 million people access scripture, and about 1000 people come to faith in Jesus. Not everything we do can be shared, but if you're interested in hearing more stories, feel free to email me at MGC@hehas.faith.

I do believe that the opportunity to worship the Lord in the MGC and thrive in our close-knit community of men played a permanent role in shaping who I am today. Thank you for your part in that.

From Cornfields to the Mission Field: How the MGC Opened My Eyes to the World Scott Johnson '88

It's amazing how things happen that don't make sense in the moment but over time become increasingly clear. I grew up in a small farming community surrounded by miles and miles of cornfields. I graduated high school and the following Autumn found myself at Wheaton College with hardly a clue for how and why I ended up there. All I knew was that while visiting my brother on a trip to Chicago, he suggested that we pass by Wheaton's campus and check it out. We walked around campus and I picked up some catalogs at the Admissions Desk. To my surprise a counselor invited me to sit for an interview. The irony of it all was that I knew nothing about Wheaton College and had just sat for an interview earlier that morning at another college my heart was set on. With nothing to lose I did the interview. I eventually went through the full application process and was accepted.

Continued...

When I arrived for freshman orientation, I had little to no intention of joining the Glee Club. But, after some prodding and encouragement from my roommate, Craig Curry '88, I showed up to the audition and made it in. That first afternoon of rehearsal I wondered what it was exactly that I had gotten myself into, especially during the new man's "sightreading" test. But in hindsight I can see that God had his purpose in mind, because it would be the Glee Club that God would use to bring a group of brothers and opportunities into my life that would eventually begin opening my eyes to the mission field that lay ahead.

During each of my four years at Wheaton, my roommates were fellow Old Men. My senior year I shared an apartment with Sam Fiore '89, Vic Holbert '89 and Scott Shuler '88. Through Sam I got to know his sister Nina (Schaafsma) '90 and Sam's parents who are church planters in Milan, Italy. The only missionaries I had ever met prior to meeting Sam's family were ones who visited our small country church – they were old, serious, and the "holy" kind of missionaries. But Sam's family came across as completely "normal" – they were down to earth, approachable, and even fun! Spending time with Sam's family in Milan following the Europe Tour '88 gave me a chance to see mission workers in action. I recall Sam's mom praying Isaiah 52:7 over me after one of the church services, a prayer that I would be an instrument for bringing God's message of love to the world. That prayer didn't carry a lot of significance to me then, but it has a special significance to me now.

Europe Tour '88 and subsequent international trips with fellow Old Men contributed to my worldview and gave me a heart for the world. In 1990 I took part in a Youth for Christ Gospel Music Festival and Outreach in Estonia. Craig Curry and Rick Whitmer '91 were part of our small team that year. The Soviet Union was nearing its collapse and there were suddenly new opportunities to carry the message of God's love into that region of the world. Over the next 5 years I made more trips to Estonia, participating in outreaches and leading a few teams as well. It was on one of those trips while sitting in the back of the bus with a group of loud, energetic, Estonian young people that I knew youth ministry was the calling and vocation of my future. For the past 31 years I've been serving full-time with Youth for Christ International in the United States, Lebanon, and now in Thailand. I am grateful to God that his purposes and plans never fail and for the friendships and experiences I gained through the Glee Club that continue to impact my life today.

Soli Deo gloria.



Is That Enough? Young Min '16

Is that enough? I felt haunted by this question.

After graduating from the Conservatory in 2016, I moved to Michigan with my wife, Chantelle, where we began to pursue full-time careers as musicians. It took us a little time to settle into that new role, but with my passion for entrepreneurship, I picked up momentum quickly. In the span of 3 years I had been featured by groups like for King & Country and Bethel Music, a few of my music videos had gone viral, and I even created and released my first album as an independent artist.

Things were great. My business was growing, Chantelle and I purchased our very first home, and I was finally able to quit my freelance gigs and focus 100% on my YouTube channel and online business. I felt like I had officially made it as a musician. But instead of building on the amazing momentum I had going, I was stopped dead in my tracks. In my effort to “make it”, I had been averaging 14 hours of work a day without any time off. I totally overworked my hands and was diagnosed with a hand and wrist injury that left me wondering if I would ever be able to play piano again.

I felt like I had been sucker punched. Since high school, I had only made money as a musician playing piano. If I couldn't do that anymore, what would I do? I wrestled a lot with God over this. My entire life, I felt like He was leading me to this. Was He really going to just take it all away now? And in a moment of frustration and anger, God answered me with a question, “You are a child of God. Is that enough?” Woah. Another blow to the stomach.

If I have to clean homes for the rest of my life, but I'm a child of God, Is that enough? If I start a new career that I hate, but I'm a child of God, Is that enough? If I can never play piano again, but I'm a child of God, Is that enough?

Mark 8:36 says, “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?” In my quest to make it, I had unknowingly focused on collecting the world's trophies. I lost sight of the most important title I could ever hold: Child of God. I knew now that kingdoms (and businesses) could rise and fall, and that skills and talents could be taken away in a moment. But being God's precious child? That alone makes life worth living.

I'm happy to report that God did bring me healing and that I've been able to continue my career online as a pianist. God has even been gracious enough to pour out his blessings on my work allowing me to become a Top 10 Billboard Charting Artist, giving me the opportunity to be interviewed by Google, and allowing me to teach over 2,000 students through my online piano course.

I'm incredibly thankful for each of these blessings and I praise God for them! But I'm most thankful for the summer of 2019 when I was forced to ask myself time and time again, “Is that enough?”. Because now I can confidently answer: Yes! And as a Child of God, the greatest thing I can ever do in my business is bring others to know God's love, joy, and peace, help them see that they, too, are a Child of God, and help them live the abundant life God calls them to.

That will always be enough.



NOT CONNECTED?

Know a former Glee Clubber who doesn't receive these newsletters?
Help them out!

Send their email to or put them in contact with alumni@wheaton.edu to assist them in reconnecting with their MGC roots.



**WHEATON
COLLEGE**
CONSERVATORY of MUSIC
For Christ & His Kingdom

YOUR FACEBOOK FEED NEEDS MORE MEN'S GLEE CLUB

Want a simple way to connect to the broader community of Old Men? Join the Old Man Association group on Facebook!

Enter "Wheaton College Men's Glee Club Old Man Association" in the Facebook search box, click on the group and then select the "join group" button.

