Wendell Glick gave the following commencement address at Faith Builders in May 2018. Wendell called students to live out their vocations with patience and humility, a call that extends to all Christians. Wendell, husband to Janelle and father of four, serves his church as youth pastor in Ontario, Canada. He invests time as a freelance composer, choir director, and itinerant music instructor.

**IMITATE THE EARTHWORM**

**TO BECOME LIKE JESUS MEANS TO JOIN HIM IN SIMPLE, INVISIBLE WORK**

WBTI Class of 2018, you have shared with me some of the things that have been and continue to be important to you as a class. They are these:

**Sharing each other’s suffering**

Some of us have experienced difficult times. We’ve been blessed by sharing in each other’s sorrows and having people to share with.

**Celebrating each other’s gifts**

We’ve been blessed over and over. How can we use our gifts and allow God to use us freely?

**Rejoicing together in the wonder of God**

We’ve seen God’s work in each other, and through each other we’ve seen His glory in the world around us. How can we continue to wonder at the majesty of God?

As you conclude this season of your life and begin the next, I will offer a simple instruction. But first, I ask another question—one that I usually like to ask children:

If you could be any animal, which animal would you choose, and why?

I have heard many responses to the first part: eagle, horse, dolphin, sheep, unicorn, dinosaur, and more. But there is one animal yet unmentioned—an animal often nearby, though we rarely acknowledge it. It is the earthworm.

In terms of biodiversity, earthworms have been ranked the number one most influential species in the history of the planet. They rank above dinosaurs, above dogs, even above humans.

“Biodiversity affects human well-being and represents an essential determinant of ecosystem stability. Earthworms represent the most important group of soil macrofauna. They play a crucial role in various biological processes in soil, and affect ecosystem services such as soil health and productivity, water regulation, restoration of degraded lands, and the balance of greenhouse gases. [Human activities] can lead to a rapid reduction or loss of earthworm diversity, and threaten ecosystem services as well as human well-being. Therefore, conservation of earthworm diversity should receive urgent attention.”

Ecologists consider earthworms a keystone species because of how much they influence the physical, chemical and biological properties of the soil. Earthworms fertilize and maintain the soil, and can even help repair damaged soil.

Do you want to share in each other’s sorrows? Do you want to use your gifts and allow God to use you freely? Will you continue to wonder at the majesty of God? Then imitate the earthworm.

1. **Through constant eating and excreting, earthworms play a crucial role in breaking down organic matter and fertilizing the soil. A worm cast is full of nutrients and bacteria beneficial for plants, and can contain up to five times the amount of key nutrients compared to surrounding soil. In Matthew 5:13, Jesus reminds us that we “are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?” Are you willing to be a fertilizer?**

2. **As earthworms move through the soil, they loosen and mix it up, helping to aerate and drain it. This brings nutrients to the surface, making the soil more fertile, and helps prevent flooding and erosion. In Matthew 13:33, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to leaven, “which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” Are you willing to maintain the soil, doing small tasks that make a big difference?**

3. **Earthworms can help repair damaged soil and may provide solutions to man-made problems. Research suggests that earthworms could help to clean up land contaminated with toxic heavy metals such as lead. This is the work of restoration.**

There is a deeper level of earthworm imitation. I hope that I am not misunderstood when I point out the ultimate model in earthworm imagery.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, … full of grace and truth (Jhn 1)."

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who … took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in..."
the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2)."

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people (Ps. 22)."

The etymology of the word “humility” can be traced to the Latin “humus,” a word also used in English to describe the organic component of soil formed by the decomposition of plant material by soil microorganisms. Humble, humility, humus, soil, dirt: Jesus Christ was the ultimate earthworm. (I use the past tense. He has been glorified. He has finished the work that was given him to do.) He was a worm, and no man, for the soil—for the dirt out of which we are formed! Imitate him!

If it seems incongruous to you to consider the person of Jesus Christ and compare Him to an earthworm, perhaps your perspective of Him has gone to your head, separated from the reality of life as a human being of and on humus, soil, dirt. Do you know Him?

I ask again: do you want to share in each other’s sorrows? Do you want to use your gifts? Will you continue to wonder at the majesty of God? Then learn this lesson:

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:1-4)."

Jesus became flesh as a child, not an adult. If we imitate the earthworm, we will heed our Lord’s instruction to participate in the Kingdom—to have a role in the contemporary Kingdom of heaven as it is revealed on earth today. We will do as Jesus did. We will become as a little child. What are the qualities of a child?

"A child is innocent. A child is trusting. A child believes without complication. A child has the faith to move mountains. A child is awed by majestic splendor."

How can we become as a little child?

"To go back to childhood means that we must get back true values instead of those that are based on materialism, public opinion, and snobbery, that we must regain simplicity and humility, that we must become makers and poets again, that we must regain the capacity to experience fully whatever we experience at all. Above all, we must regain the courage that is partly a boundless zest for living and partly an unquestioning trust in an all-powerful love. To become a child is to know with a child’s intuition, to see with a child’s vision. To see everything with the amazement of seeing for the first time and with the spontaneous giving of the whole heart that is the unique joy of first love. To see human suffering, not with an adult’s reasonable despair, but with a child’s immediate, unquestioning compassion, that admits no obstacle to its response."

Be human. Become as a little child. Embrace mystery. Seek to know, but not to destroy in the seeking. Like earthworms that can help repair damaged soil, humans are called to be ministers of reconciliation:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-19)."

That is your ministry, that is your work, that is the purpose toward which your gifts must bend. They will sometimes operate silently, sometimes under the ground, sometimes beginning as small as leaven. But your ministry and your work and your gifts must bend toward the ministry of reconciliation that was begun by Jesus Christ and has been extended to us.

Your work matters, yes. But don’t take yourself too seriously. Remember: graveyards are full of people the world could not do without. Lead more by doing than by speaking. Listen to Jesus: “Do not be anxious.” Too many are anxious, worried, and easily cowed by fear. Stop worrying about the future. Real life is lived out of a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7). Don’t trade this kind of life for anything!

Imitate the earthworm.

Wendell Glick

PERSONNEL NEEDS

BOOKSTORE MANAGER

Faith Builders operates a bookstore on campus called Christian Learning Resource. The bookstore provides textbooks to students, distributes books written by Faith Builders staff members, and markets Living History Threads. In this role, you will have opportunity to shape the long-term vision for the bookstore.

RESOURCE GROUP ASSISTANT

In this position, you will join the team working to produce Living History Weavings, a history curriculum for grades 5-6. You will also have the opportunity to join the team that coordinates other projects and events sponsored by FB.

For more information or an application, please contact Matthew Mast. matthewm@fbep.org (814) 789-4518, ext 226

VOLUNTEER AT FB

Volunteers serve a one-year term, beginning this summer. They participate in the mentoring program and take classes. Positions include:

- Maintenance | Building upkeep, janitorial, grounds, handyman work
- Kitchen | Food preparation and service
- Housekeeping | Cleaning, decorating, hospitality
- Bookstore | Customer care, shelf-stocking, and shipping

APPLICATION AVAILABLE

If you are interested, please contact our office at fbep@fbep.org.
APPLY FOR SUMMER TERM!
JUNE 24 - JULY 26, 2019
Good teachers are always learning and growing, increasing knowledge and skills while developing as persons.
Summer Term provides teachers an opportunity to invest in their capacity as teachers. Join us for five weeks of study, instruction, and fresh insights for your next school year!

COURSES INCLUDE:
- Homemaking: An Art for All Women - Cynthia Brubaker
- Science for the Non-Scientist - John Mark Kuhns
- Mathematics for Elementary Teachers - Lynell Nissley
- The Exceptional Learner - Lynell Nissley
- The Life of the Teacher - Jonas Sauder
- Child Development - Jonas Sauder
- Music Fundamentals - Lyle Stutzman
- Teaching Secondary Music - Lyle Stutzman
- Children’s Literature - Sharon Yoder
- Teaching Reading - Anna Zehr

REGISTER TO ATTEND
Find more information and register:
www.fbep.org/open-house

PLANNED GIVING
There are various ways to give from non-cash assets, both during and after one’s lifetime. With careful planning, non-cash gifts can benefit both Faith Builders and a donor’s estate.

For an introduction to the range of options, contact Matthew Mast.
matthewm@fbep.org
(814) 789-4518, ext 226

BE A STUDENT FOR A DAY!
APRIL 11 & 12
Would you like to experience student life with us for a day?
We welcome young people, parents, and their church leaders to our spring open house. Guests will attend classes, chat with students and instructors, and tour the school.

For a full list of courses, instructors, and schedule:
Visit fbep.org/st
Email fbep@fbep.org
Call (814) 789-4518, ext. 224

COLLEGE STUDENT WEEKEND
JULY 5-7
The College Student Weekend offers students a break from the pressures of college.
Speakers and mentors provide guidance, prayer, and a supportive presence in presentations and small groups. This weekend is designed to offer support to those who want to navigate college with prudence.

REGISTRATION OPENS IN APRIL
Register at fbep.org/cssr.

LEARN ABOUT FB AT HOME
Would you like to know more about Faith Builders?
We are scheduling one-hour overviews of our vision to nurture servants of the church. You can schedule a presentation on a weeknight or a Sunday evening.
To arrange a presentation, please email fbep@fbep.org.
APPLY FOR TWO YEARS OF STUDY!

We are grateful for a strong start to student applications. We still have openings in the Teacher Apprenticing Program. Please apply now if you are interested in preparing for a lifetime of service!

1) Complete the student application.
   The application is available at fbep.org/academics/semester.

2) Apply for scholarships.
   Browse options at fbep.org/admissions/scholarships.

3) Wait to be accepted.
   We review applications in May.

4) Arrive on August 17.
   Studies begin with a four week, hands-on term of apprenticing.