



# A CONFESSION AND A CONVICTION

by President Matt Proctor



This is a fundraising campaign brochure, but can I be confessional?

A word I have used too often is the word *tomorrow*. As in, “I’ll do that tomorrow.” An opportunity arises, but I put it off. “Another time,” I think. Did you know that, if you take a few letters out of *procrastinator*, you get the word *Proctor*?

That’s not good.

Too often I have said *tomorrow*. But two poets and a Scripture convict me.

## TWO CONVICTING QUOTES

The first is Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar*: “There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat. And we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures.”

Rousing words! But I grew up listening to country music with my grandpa, so the second poet is cowboy Cody Johnson in his song ‘*Til You Can’t*:

- You can tell your old man you’ll do some largemouth fishing an-
- other time
- You just got too much on your plate to bait and cast a line.
- You can always put a rain check in his hand...’til you can’t.
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- There’s a box of greasy parts sitting in the trunk of that ’65,
- Still waiting on you and your granddad to bring it back to life.
- You can always get around to fixing up that Pontiac...’til you can’t.
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- If you got a chance, take it. Take it while you got a chance.
- If you got a dream, chase it, ‘cause a dream won’t chase you back.
- If you’re gonna love somebody, hold ‘em as long as you can...’til
- you can’t.

You hear the poets’ message: *now is the time!*

Life is filled with irrecoverable moments, so do not wait. Do not procrastinate. When the tide of opportunity is running at the flood, seize the moment. I must strike *tomorrow* from my lips.

Now is the time.

## THE WORD THE BIBLE DOES NOT KNOW

And the Scripture which convicts me? It's 2 Corinthians 6:2. As he preaches the gospel, Paul pleads with his hearers: "Behold, now is the favorable time! Behold, now is the day of salvation!"

Do not procrastinate, urges Paul. Make the most of this opportunity.

As one preacher put it, "*Tomorrow* is the word the Bible does not know. If you can find me any place in Scripture where the Holy Spirit says *tomorrow*, I will step down from this pulpit and never preach again. The Holy Spirit's word is *today*. 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart.'" (Heb 3:15)

This is my conviction: when gospel opportunity arises, I will not say *tomorrow*. "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow," said Shakespeare, "lights for fools the way to dusty death."

Today is the day I will serve Christ.

## A GREAT OPPORTUNITY BEFORE US

Which brings me to this fundraising brochure.

I grew up among the independent Christian churches, and we long enjoyed a multitude of Bible colleges and seminaries. For decades, we were flush with



faithful schools training preachers and church planters and missionaries. Perhaps we thought it would always be so. Brochures like this would land in our hand, and perhaps we thought, "Tomorrow. They do good work, but I can give another time."

You can always get around to supporting such schools... 'til you can't.

Sadly, many of those ministries have now closed—Bible colleges with doors now locked, seminaries with halls now silent.

But as you'll see in the pages ahead: Ozark Christian College and Lincoln Seminary still see great opportunity before us. Hundreds of students each year still come to train for Christian service. "On such a full sea are we now afloat," and we do not want to "lose our ventures."

Now is the moment of great need.

Now is the moment of great possibility.

Now is the time to raise up more gospel leaders, and we need your help.

So would you read on and pray about this opportunity...today?

# THE NOW MORE THAN EVER CAMPAIGN

What makes this moment a “high tide” opportunity? Two factors: a shrinking ministry pipeline and a flourishing ministry school.

## A SHRINKING MINISTRY PIPELINE

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.” (Matt 9:37) Jesus’ words are true now more than ever. More lost souls surround us than ever, but the ministry leadership pipeline is shrinking:

**Our current ministry force is aging into retirement.** In a recent *Christian Standard* survey, almost one-third of our lead ministers are 60 years old or older.

**Our future ministry recruits are fewer in number.** In 2013, our colleges graduated 940 ministry majors. In 2023, they sent out 505—an almost 50% drop in ten years.

God’s kingdom strategies have always started with leaders. God chose Abraham to begin his people, Joseph to preserve them, Moses to rescue them, David to establish them, Esther to protect them, Nehemiah to rebuild them, and apostles to expand them. Where will we find leaders to preach the Word?



## A FLOURISHING MINISTRY SCHOOL

In May 2025, we sent out the largest graduating class in our history! As they walked across stage, I heard each graduate’s plans read aloud: preachers, youth ministers, missionaries, campus ministers, worship ministers, a homeless shelter director, women’s ministers, church planters, and a prison minister.

I heard all the places they’d go: Africa, Alaska, Arkansas, Australia, Eastern Europe, England, Florida, Georgia, Greece, Haiti, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ireland, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah.

And I praised the Lord!

Since 1942, that’s been OCC’s mission: preparing gospel leaders for the global task. Financially, we’re healthy: in our 15th year debt free. Numerically, we’re growing: 39% enrollment increase in 8 years. Missionally, we’re on target: graduates taking the gospel to all 50 states and over 100 countries.

OCC is now the largest Bible college in our fellowship, and Lincoln the largest seminary. By God’s grace, we’re flourishing, but now is not the time to maintain status quo. Now is not the time to shrink back, slow down or stand still.

Now is the time to move forward. Ozark Christian College and Lincoln Seminary are needed *now more than ever*, and this campaign funds three initiatives to move us ahead: a seminary building, dorm renovations, and the Lifelong Leaders initiative.



## SEMINARY BUILDING: \$3.2 MILLION



### A GROWING SEMINARY

In 2024, when Lincoln Christian University closed, Lincoln's seminary transferred to Ozark Christian College.

As an OCC and Lincoln Christian Seminary alum, I'm honored to carry on Lincoln's legacy of training kingdom leaders at the graduate level.

Lincoln Seminary, one of only two accredited seminaries in our fellowship, is thriving, and OCC's graduate enrollment jumped 35% with the addition.

### A NEW BUILDING

The growth, however, creates classroom challenges.

During the seminary's weeklong intensives, over twenty undergraduate classes must relocate (into every campus crevice and cranny) to accommodate seminary classes. The seminary needs its own permanent home.

**The NOW MORE THAN EVER campaign will fund a new Lincoln Seminary building**—in the field south of the Seth Wilson Library. It will house classrooms, offices, a Lincoln history display, and the 125-seat Wayne Shaw Chapel. The garden area outside the entrance will feature benches, *The Divine Servant* statue, and a patio of Lincoln alumni bricks.

The new building prepares the seminary to welcome kingdom-leaders-in-training for decades to come.

The cost for the new seminary building: \$3.2 million.

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"I've never been a brick-and-mortar guy, but my love for OCC and Lincoln Seminary—and the great need for biblical graduate education—trumps that. This cause has my heart, and the new building will be a great blessing."

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**The cost  
for the new  
seminary  
building:  
\$3.2 million**



**DR. J.K. JONES (LCC 1980)**

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, *LINCOLN SEMINARY AT OCC*  
BLOOMINGTON, IL



## DORM RENOVATIONS: \$4.0 MILLION

### SIX TIRED SERVANTS

For sixty years, OCC's six dorms—three men's, three women's—have faithfully housed our students, providing a place to study, sleep, play, pray, and build lifelong friendships.

But after six decades, the dorms were showing their age. In 2018, we began the process of refreshing these six “tired servants.”

Generous partners have helped us renovate four of the six dorms already, and student response has been overwhelmingly excited and grateful.

### TWO DORMS LEFT TO GO

**The NOW MORE THAN EVER campaign will fund the renovation of the final two dorms**—Strong Hall for men and Goodman Hall for women.

The renovations include remodeled bathrooms, plumbing and electrical upgrades, HVAC units, windows, carpet, paint, a dorm kitchenette, and room furniture (beds, desks, dressers).

Refreshed dorms prepare the college to welcome undergraduate kingdom-leaders-in-training for decades to come.

The cost for the two dorm renovations: \$4.0 million.



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“In the years I lived in newly-renovated Alumni Hall, I was shaped by my RA's, roommate and friends, and God used mundane kitchenette conversations as much as exegetical papers to prepare me for service.”

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**JOY HALEEM MARZANO (OCC 2024)**

EMCEE, *CHRIST IN YOUTH*  
JOPLIN, MO

**The cost for  
the two dorm  
renovations:  
\$4.0 million**



## LIFELONG LEADERS: \$0.6 MILLION

### A LEAK IN THE PIPELINE

Preacher Bob Russell recently shared, “A study by the Center for Church Leadership found that seven out of ten ministers leave the ministry within their first ten years.”

One reason the ministry pipeline is shrinking: there’s a leak in the pipe.

Surveys show that isolation and lack of mentoring contribute to ministry burnout, especially for young ministers. At Ozark Christian College and Lincoln Seminary, we don’t want our relationship to end when a graduate receives a diploma. We want to provide ongoing support.

### CULTIVATING LIFELONG LEADERS

**The NOW MORE THAN EVER campaign will fund the college’s new Lifelong Leaders initiative—** a cohort-based support system for new ministers.

Lifelong Leaders places new graduates in a “first ministry cohort” of 6-8 other new ministers, led by a seasoned ministry veteran. The cohort can meet online or in person, and the ministry coach provides regular encouragement and training the next two years.

The prayer: that the coach and the cohort experience can cultivate young ministers—in the critical season of their first full-time ministry—into lifelong kingdom leaders.

The cost to launch Lifelong Leaders: \$0.6 million.

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“A great blessing of my ministry has been a cohort of younger ministers, led by a longtime preacher and OCC trustee. Encouragement, laughter, support, accountability—I can’t imagine the ups and downs of ministry without this group.”

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**BRYCE HOTCHKISS (OCC BA 2012 & MA 2024)**

LEAD MINISTER, *SOUTHLAKE CHRISTIAN CHURCH*  
GROVELAND, FL



The cost  
to launch  
Lifelong  
Leaders:  
**\$0.6 million**





## CAMPAIGN TOTAL \$7.8 MILLION



**SEMINARY  
BUILDING:**  
\$3.2 million



**DORM  
RENOVATIONS:**  
\$4.0 million



**LIFELONG  
LEADERS:**  
\$0.6 million

### THE WORLD NEEDS GOSPEL LEADERS

Why undertake this large campaign? Because a lost world needs Jesus. “How can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?” (Rom 10:14-15)

In a ministry leadership shortage, Ozark Christian College and Lincoln Seminary are preparing more gospel leaders than ever before, but our conviction: now is the time to move further forward.

These three initiatives prepare us to train even more kingdom leaders in the years ahead...and, as a result, to see even more people find salvation in Christ.

Would you partner with us?

### WE NEED YOUR PARTNERSHIP

“Each one is to put something aside, in proportion to his prosperity.” (1 Cor 16:2) Rather than uniform gifts, Paul asked for proportionate gifts—in keeping with the extent God has blessed each one.

This giving pyramid shows one such path to our \$7.8 million goal.

***Would you prayerfully consider a generous commitment—above your regular giving—over the next three years to the NOW MORE THAN EVER campaign?***

We firmly believe: “Now is the favorable time! Now is the day of salvation!” So thank you for considering this opportunity, and may God bless you as you serve him...today.



### GIVING PYRAMID

#### Gifts Needed

(1) \$2,000,000+

(2) \$1,000,000+

(2) \$500,000+

(2) \$250,000+

(10) \$100,000+

(10) \$50,000+

Many gifts under \$50,000