

WILLING TO LEARN*K.B. Hoover reflects on almost a century-long journey of faith*

by DEVIN THOMAS

Ask Kenneth B. Hoover—or K.B., as he's known to his friends—what obedience is all about, and he'll tell you that "obedience means you must be willing to learn." After 95 years as a student, teacher, pastor, and church leader, K.B. certainly knows a little something about learning—and the blessings that come from a life of walking with God.

Growing up in the now-closed Bethel BIC Church in Kansas, K.B. had a thirst for knowledge. In 1930, he traveled across the country to attend Messiah Bible School in Grantham, Pa., where he completed a two-year program. From there he moved on to get his bachelor's and master's degrees. In the early 1940s, he reached a vocational crossroads: He was offered the presidency of Jabok Bible School in Custer County, Okla.; the position of pastor at his home church in Kansas; and the chance to teach science and math at Messiah. The irony of the situation was not lost on K.B.: "In the Depression days you couldn't get a job, and suddenly I had the pick of three!"

In the end, K.B. took the pastorate at Bethel. After spending a year there, however, he learned that he "was a better teacher than a preacher." He joined the Messiah College faculty in 1942. During his almost 40-year career



at Messiah, K.B. was named chairman of the math and science department and was instrumental in the addition of the school's Kline Hall of Science and greenhouse.

K.B. also assisted in the development of the Grantham BIC Church, from its earliest days as a small chapel in Messiah's Old Main building to its current location on the edge of the college campus. And he has been active within the wider church, serving on the Board for World Missions from 1966 until 1982.

K.B.'s obedience—his years of submission to God, his willingness to learn both in and out of the classroom—has provided him with rich

insights into the world. His journey, he knows, has led to many transformations along the way—transformations that have built him into the person that he is today.

And that ninety-five-year journey surely hasn't dulled K.B.'s razor-sharp sense of humor. When asked about his post-retirement accomplishments, he says—with perfect delivery—"Well, I'm the oldest member of the Grantham church. I suppose that's an accomplishment."



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