

SACRED MOMENTS





Throughout the course of our Christian walk, there are those times when we stop the busyness of life and in stillness and reflection remember our Lord. These periods of spiritual reflection are known as sacred moments.

While sacred moments can happen anywhere and can occur at any time, it has long been the practice of Christians throughout the ages to have established times and events to turn our collective attention to the Lord. We see this in the feasts and festivals of the Old Testament, and we see this in the Sunday gatherings of the New Testament. The Early Church continued to meet in this fashion, and over time, the Church established dates for particular reflection, such as Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost. At DBU, we have also established various sacred events that are near and dear to the heart of the DBU family.

Perhaps one of the most notable moments takes place three days a week in the Patty and Bo Pilgrim Chapel. At 10:00 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the sanctuary is filled with students, singing praises to the Lord and hearing messages of grace and hope from the pulpit.

However, the sacred moments on campus do not stop when the chapel service ends. Student Bible studies take place throughout the week on campus; individuals gather for moments of corporate prayer; faculty and staff members encourage each other through testimony chapels and *Experiencing God* studies; senior adults arrive on campus to sing the great hymns of the faith; and both incoming and graduating students participate in special Candlelighting ceremonies. These events reflect a desire on the part of DBU to intentionally include Christian spiritual formation throughout the life of the University.

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But seek ye first the Kingdom of God,
and His righteousness;
and all these things
shall be added unto you.”

MATTHEW 6:33



STUDENT CANDLELIGHTING

One of the most precious and meaningful experiences on campus comes through the Freshman Candlelighting and the Graduation Candlelighting.

In the fall of 1988, Dr. Gary Cook, who had just begun his tenure as president of DBU, decided that the school needed to have a spiritual emphasis as a part of their student orientation program, which eventually became known as SWAT (Student Welcome And Transition) Week. The week is filled with information about the University, classes, and how to prepare for college life, yet at the heart of the program is a focus on the need for students to become servant leaders.

At the conclusion of the week, students gather in their family groups in front of the Mahler Student Center. The upperclassman leaders then begin a footwashing ceremony for all of the incoming students, spending a special time in prayer and reflection. Following this moving ceremony, the students enter the Great Hall for their Freshman Candlelighting. Dr. Cook presides over the service and shares with them the core values of DBU and how the administration, faculty, and staff pray that their time on University Hill will prepare them for a life of service to Christ that will transform the world. He then lights a single candle as a symbol of the light of Jesus, and that flame is spread throughout the room as candles are lit and raised up.

As students near graduation, a similar Candlelighting Service is held the day before Commencement. Gathering in the same room that many of them gathered four years earlier, the students again hear from Dr. Cook as he shares about the need for servant leaders in the world. Reading from the well-known



short story, “Three Letters from Teddy,” he explains how lives can be transformed through simple acts of kindness, kindness that should characterize every action of a Christian servant. Once again, a candle is lit, symbolizing again the light of Christ, and the flame is passed throughout the room as students are challenged to take the light they have been given and go into a dark world, proclaiming Christ as the Savior of the world.

NORVELL SLATER SENIOR ADULT HYMN SING

In the spring of 1989, Dr. Gary Cook began an annual hymn sing for senior adults across the Metroplex. Named in honor of the late Norvell Slater, whose Sunday morning radio program entitled “Hymns We Love,” lasted for more than 40 years, the Norvell Slater Senior Adult Hymn Sing draws in nearly 1,000 individuals each spring to sing the wonderful hymns of the faith. In addition to the congregational singing, ensembles and choirs from churches in the area provide special music.



“write them on the doorframes of your house”



LET THE BELLS RING

Walking the campus, you will hear many bells. There is the Victory Bell, which is located in the Strickland Plaza and comes from DBU's predecessor, Decatur Baptist College. There is also a replica of the Liberty Bell, which is located in the Mahler Student Center. Enscribed atop the bell is a reference to Leviticus 25:10, which reads "proclaim liberty throughout the land." And coming from the Student Center bell tower carillon, one can hear bells ringing familiar hymns and praise choruses every hour and every half hour. The campus is literally filled with song.



CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

The Christmas season at DBU is a special time. The campus is filled with lights, and offices are decorated for the holiday, as members of the DBU family rush to complete their semester, all while attending events, exchanging gifts, and celebrating. However, the true meaning of Christmas is not forgotten. Various events take place during this time, including the gathering of shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child and a special Christmas festival presented by the DBU College of Fine Arts.



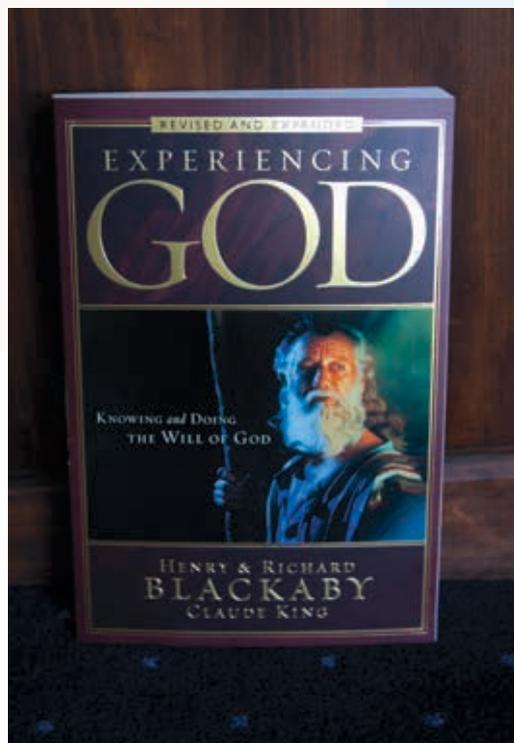
Dr. Norman Blackaby leads an Experiencing God session on the DBU campus. Dr. Blackaby is the one of the sons of Dr. and Mrs. Henry Blackaby and is an associate professor of biblical studies at DBU.

EXPERIENCING GOD

Dr. Henry Blackaby is a well-known author and Baptist leader. In 1990, he produced a Bible study entitled *Experiencing God*, which has to date sold millions of copies and has been translated into more than 40 languages.

In recognition of Dr. Blackaby's ministry, DBU named a building in his honor, Blackaby Hall.

Dr. Gary Cook studied *Experiencing God* when it came out, and it was life-changing for him. Because of the impact that this book has had on his life and the lives of so many others, Dr. Cook has set up a series of *Experiencing God* studies in which members of the University may choose to participate.



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