

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

# 205

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be "good news" about the Grundy Mountain Mission. It was founded by an orphan named Sam Hurley in 1921. In 1888, when he was only 10 years old, little Sam slept in a cave and covered himself with leaves to stay warm. During the night he heard a mountain lion scream and feared for his life. On that dark night that precious little boy promised God that if he would spare his life he would build a place for homeless boys and girls so they wouldn't have to sleep in the woods.

Sam never attended school and didn't learn to read or write until he got married. He was 22 at the time. His wife, Jane, was his teacher. Sam and Jane had 7 children of their own and had taken in 9 others, but still hadn't built the mission he dreamed about. When another orphan asked for a place to stay, there wasn't room. The little boy's tears, however, reminded him of the promise he made to God those many years before.

Thus Sam founded his mission in 1921. It was originally called the Grundy Academy, then the Mountain Industrial Institute, and finally the Mountain Mission School. I mention this story because this obscure mountain mission recently received a gift of \$56.6 million from the American Legends Golf Tournament. This is the new largest single-day charitable gift in PGA Tour history. It significantly exceeded the previous record of \$15 million set in 2010. This recent tournament featured such celebrities as Nicklaus, Player, Lee Trevino, Lorena Ochoa, Tim Finchem, Lanny Wadkins and Betsy King. NFL icons such as Peyton Manning and Dan Marino also joined in. So also did NBA star Jerry West. Arnold Palmer was even honored as the event fell on what would have been his 89th birthday.

Grundy is the county seat of [Buchanan County, Virginia](#). In the 2010 census, however, it only had a population of 1,021. Clarence Greenleaf said the town was so small that when the train came, it had to back up to get out of town;. Greenleaf began preaching there during the Summer of 1936. He preached during the summers for several years but moved with his wife to Grundy in 1940. The church budget at the time was only \$50 per month or \$600 for the whole year. Clarence and his wife had to borrow \$300 that first year to keep from starving. They wound up living in a small garage apartment with an orange crate for a table. They even had to borrow chairs from the church building during the week to have something to sit on. Sadly, their little church building burned to the ground in Feb. 1941. Sam Hurley's sister gave Clarence \$2 and told him to "build her back". This reminded Clarence of the widow who gave two small coins . With the help of God those \$2 grew and a new brick building was completed by Feb. 1942.

If you are interested, you can hear Clarence tell the story in his own words. Go to [www.boycemouton.com](http://www.boycemouton.com) and click on "Ventures in Faith". I think Clarences's testimony is # 18 in the series. At the time we did the interview Clarence had been with the church in Grundy for 40 years.

At the time their Bible School had grown from 37 to an Easter Sunday record of 1,265. They didn't feel that God wanted them to build a "mega church", however, but rather dreamed of having a congregation within walking distance of everyone in the mountains. Clarence said they already had 4 new congregations within 5 miles of the mother church, and 22 congregations within 25 miles. Each congregation, of course, was completely independent and autonomous.

Of the many admirable things done by the church there is the Grundy Bible Institute. The emphasis of this school is not to just train preachers and missionaries, but to train everyone. No one is turned away for lack of a high school diploma. As long as you want to serve God and study the Bible you are welcome.

The Grundy church has also sponsored a National Prayer Clinic. The tenth such clinic happened on the highest mountain in Buchanan County. It featured 54 hours of intense prayer and praise and some 50 different speakers. The focus, of course, was on prayer and sometimes their prayer meetings lasted until 2 in the morning. Remember! The disciples never did say “teach us to preach”, but they did say: “teach us to pray” (Lk. 11:1).

Clarence felt that God was calling him to preach without owning anything. While he did not bind this on others, this was the way he felt God was calling him to live. The church owned the house where he lived, and even the car which he drove. Clarence believed that if he would seek first the kingdom of God, all his earthly need would be supplied. They were! It is particularly interesting that the \$56.6 million was given to a ministry that was not greedy for money.

The Scriptures teach **“the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chron. 16:9)**. May this Good News about the Mountain Mission School inspire you to dream a dream and realize that nothing is too hard for God. This Good News will not only confirm the faith of the brethren in Grundy, but perhaps will also inspire and encourage other servants of God like you and me.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce