

Sure Foundation High School Class of 2008

Charge to the Graduate, *Ian A. Burford*

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What do bugles, unicycles, hedgehogs, French Horns, Scouting adventures, church organs, oboes, soccer, photography, English horns, croqueting, pianos, physics, chickens, a Bow Flex, Rubik's cubes, freshly baked cookies, whistling, and the like all have in common? Ian Alexander Burford.

Ian has always been an inquisitive young man with a wide variety of interests and budding talents. He likes being active and having the opportunity to explore his surroundings. When Ian was a small child we often found him peering out from underneath a chair or table, or alternatively sitting in a box or drawer, with something on his head – perhaps a bowl or a box, or some other loose fitting hat of some kind.

When shopping with the family, Ian “the toddler” would often hide inside clothes racks with his fellow siblings, darting from one clump of clothes to another. Or he would wait quietly in the seclusion of hanging coats until you called his name for the umpteenth time. It could be quite alarming to not readily see your young son without a bit of a search. But alas, Ian would eventually show up with a big grin on his face after yet another successful venture into the wide expanse of a fully stocked department store.

As Ian grew, his venturing spirit took on added dimensions, from animal husbandry to riding around on a stick with a single wheel underneath it.

He was always pressing to be on the go. As an example, we had just landed on a remote island in the middle of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in northern Minnesota during a high adventure trek with other scouts and scouters. Upon stowing our canoes, the fourteen-year-old Ian set about energetically surveying the campsite and surrounding area – figuring out where best to place our crew's tents, where to hang the bear bag, and so forth. Ian took it all in, our surroundings – the majestic setting of our campsite, the whole adventure. While seeing Ian scurry about, checking out the area, it struck me that this was Ian, this was his nature, to explore, to try his hand at many things.

I would see this energy and zest for life many times over in our ventures together. Another occasion that readily comes to mind was seeing a fifteen-year-old Ian, with pack in tow, a way up a mountain trail as he and two seventeen year old scouts crested the summit of Baldy Peak on the Philmont Scout Ranch in northern New Mexico. The rest of our twelve-man crew was scattered back down the trail, moving a bit more slowly. But not Ian. He was in the forefront, pushing up the trail toward the top. Ian held his own out in the wilderness. It was a rewarding site to see him accomplish such a demanding goal.

In addition to his inquisitive and exploring nature, Ian has evidenced the great capacity to deliberate. Because of his broad sense of awareness and with so many choices before him, Ian

would often appear to be in a quandary over what choices to make. This has been particularly evident when ordering from a menu at a restaurant or fast food establishment. Invariably, out of our family of ten, Ian would be the last to place his order. Others of our children would be quick to order, knowing just exactly what they wanted to eat. Not Ian. He wanted to review his options. While others were somewhat predictable in their selection, Ian was predictable thorough in examining all the options before him before making his decision – not wanting to miss something, not necessarily wanting to be limited to one thing. Recently he seemed to solve this dilemma by ordering a sampler plate.

Yes, that is Ian. Deliberate, which comes from being interested in so many things at the same time.

Ian, as you venture out into the wide expanse of this world after graduation, I hope and trust you will enjoy its varied and almost limitless options and opportunities. But as you venture out, remember to include God in all your deliberations. Proverbs 3 reads:

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments; for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart; so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding...

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. My son, let not them depart from thine eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion; so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. (Proverbs 3:1-13,19-23)

Ian, offer unto the Lord your time and your talents, but most of all your hearing. Lend Him your ear in all things. If you will listen to His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, He will guide you through His vast creation unto untold treasures of His own keeping.

Remember, the Lord our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is the rich treasure of life Himself (cf. John 1:14-16 with I John 5:9-12). He is the joy of life and of living (cf. Philippians 3:8-14). Grow in your knowledge of Him in all your pursuits. Discover Him in the world into which you now go.

As the Apostle Paul told the inquisitors on Mars Hill, our Lord is not far from any one of us (Acts 17:27). So seek Him early and you will find Him...leading the way. He is the Good Shepherd and Bishop of your soul (cf. Hebrews 13:20,21 with I Peter 2:25).

My prayer, Ian, is that God will richly bless you through Christ Jesus as you seek Him in your pursuits in the days ahead.

God bless.