In a sense, it's a long story, because it begins when I was 10 years old. The fall and winter of that year, four life-shaping things happened to me. First, I gave my life to our Lord Christ. Next, I recognized my call to the ministry. Third, I began reading my Bible through from beginning to end. And fourth, I learned all that really matters to me about financial investment.

I had a Sunday school teacher named Hulda Weintz. I dedicated a book to her several years ago, even though she had been dead for 50 years before the book came out. I owed her that book, and a great deal more. I owed it for several reasons, but especially because, shortly after I was saved, she taught me to tithe. She said that as a Christian I must give at least a tenth of my income to God. My heart was young and tender; I needed no more convincing than her earnest instruction.

Years later I took Economics 101 at the University of Wisconsin, and I sometimes read business publications, but as far as I’m concerned Miss Weintz gave me the most important financial counsel I have ever received. As a result of her advice, I now have investments—eternal investments— in churches, schools, hospitals, homes for the aging and a variety of publishing and evangelistic enterprises all over the world.

But one thing Miss Weintz didn’t tell me: where it would be best to make these investments. Mind you, it wasn’t a big issue at the time. I recall vividly my first contribution from my tithes; it was 17 cents, and I was many weeks in accumulating this tenth of my income, so that I could proudly drop it in the offering plate one Sunday.

As the years went by, however, I leaned that there was an issue not simply of giving to the work of God, but deciding where that giving should be directed. Obviously, one’s local church should get a consistent share, because that’s the place where our souls are related to the faith. And missions; how can one claim to be Christian without sending money to missions? And homes for the aging, of course, and the needs of the poor; the Bible makes clear that God has a prejudice in favor of the poor.

Which is to say, there is almost no limit to the places where one can invest for God. And each of us has to decide where that investment will be.
Mind you, it is an investment. It's an eternal investment. This is the only chance you and I have to put our money someplace where it will be worth anything after they bury us. It's nice to know you and I can do something eternal with something as transient as money.

Janet and I choose to give a good piece of our eternal investment to this college, because we believe that the greatest power entrusted to us humans is the power of the mind. Say anything you will about the powers and forces that exist in our world; they begin in the human mind. Military power? It begins in the mind. Movies, television, books, newspapers? They begin in the mind. Business and science? They begin in the mind. The mind is the most powerful force God has entrusted to us human beings.

But the mind is neither good nor bad. Adam and Eve demonstrated as much in Eden. The tempter appealed to their minds, and with their minds they chose to do evil. So it is that we humans can use our minds in terrifying, destructive ways, or in ways that are wonderfully redemptive.

So someone, somewhere, has to work for the redemption of the mind. It isn’t enough that our souls are saved; we need to be sure that the mind is turned toward God and God’s will. No wonder, then, that John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, working with extremely limited resources, chose to put some of those scarce resources into establishing a school. And no wonder that our ancestors felt, as they moved into America’s frontiers, that they must have Christian schools. They knew they must redeem the mind. They didn’t want, on the one hand, for the mind to be poor intellectual mush, or on the other, to become arrogant and self-centered, to the destruction of others and of itself.

The redemption of our world depends so much on the redemption of the human mind. We need redeemed minds, to get redeemed politics, redeemed business, redeemed entertainment and redeemed family life. And it starts with the mind, the human mind.

That’s why we believe in Asbury College. We know that it is operated by people with redeemed minds, and that its professors want nothing more than that they should send out graduates whose minds have been transformed—both in the classroom and in the continuing, redemptive power of Jesus Christ in daily living. We know of no college that does this better than Asbury College.

That’s why Janet and I give faithfully and significantly to Asbury College. We think it is a prime investment in God’s purposes and in eternity.