

## A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

September 17, 2020

My dear Friends:

Today marks the 100th anniversary of my paternal grandmother's birth. Alice Alura Callaway Lucas was born on September 17, 1920, and she died on March 17, 2003, which happened to be my grandfather's (her husband's) birthday. The last time I saw Granny (as we called her) was at my ordination service as a Presbyterian pastor a couple months before her death—which means that it has been over seventeen years since she passed away. Hard to believe it has been that long.

Granny was my favorite grandparent because she was the one who made the biggest deal about me. When I went to her house, there were always Coca-Colas in glass bottles, ice cream sandwiches, and stories about people that I never met or knew. Granny also had cable TV (which we didn't have growing up), so her house was the only place I could watch ESPN in its early days. She taught me how to play Gin Rummy and how to dance (Granny and Pop were disco champions!). I remember going to church with her at First Baptist Church, Radford, Virginia, and sitting in her pew, hearing her sing the old-time hymns from the Baptist Hymnal, greeting the pastor at the door with her, and listening to her proudly show me and my sister off.

Of course, since she passed away and as I've gotten older, I've pieced together other parts of her life and her family's life—the larger story of my people who belong to the hills of Appalachia, to Giles County, Virginia, and Mercer County, West Virginia. Yet I'm mindful of the generational legacy with all of its blessings and challenges that have come to me from my great-grandparents (one of whom I remember), grandparents, and parents and will extend through me to my children and, Lord willing, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Many of us stand in this stream of six generations—holding the memories of those who were born in the midst of Reconstruction in the nineteenth century and passing those memories on to those who will see the twenty-second century.

What do we hold and what do we hope to pass along? “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom...Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days” (Psalm 90:12, 14). Perhaps we hold and pass these truths: Each day, you are involved in a Gospel legacy. This moment counts forever. Jesus alone satisfies because his love alone never fails. Joy is found in him and in each other as we live out our days. Thanks be to God.

In the grip of God's grace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean".