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God's Providence and Cedarville's Future

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GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND CEDARVILLE'S FUTURE

In the mid-1960s, a group of students on the campus of Cedarville College formed a Red Cross Disaster Team, the first of its kind on a college campus. They converted an old station wagon into an ambulance and put it to good use during the four days following a 1969 tornado in Kettering, Ohio. In 1971, the American Red Cross replaced the old station wagon with a new Ford van and trailer.

With this van, the Disaster Team was providentially prepared to help during the aftermath of the infamous Xenia tornado, which struck April 3, 1974. Just a few miles from Cedarville, Xenia lost 32 residents and 1,000 homes. Hundreds of Cedarville students helped the Red Cross search for missing persons, apply first aid, and supply food. Cedarville students had the chance to share the love and Good News of Christ with hundreds during one of the most desperate times of their lives.

Just as the Lord prepared Cedarville's students for 1974, He prepared the University for the COVID-19 pandemic. Guided by wisdom from the Holy Spirit, University Medical Services purchased a stockpile of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and was ready during the early days of the pandemic. The University was also able to share this stockpile with local healthcare providers when PPE was in short supply.

God prepared Cedarville for the pandemic in the academic realm too. For years, Cedarville had used Moodle, an open source, online learning management system (LMS). In the 2018–19 academic year, the Center for Teaching and Learning and

Information Technology began a review process of various LMS options. With increased online course options at the undergraduate level and some graduate programs offered completely online, Cedarville was ready for a superior LMS.

After a year of reviewing different options, Cedarville moved to Canvas during the summer of 2019. Because of the cost and the many benefits to students and the University in using the system, the decision was made to require use by all faculty. After a semester of getting acquainted with Canvas, the spring semester of 2020 brought an unexpected move to 100% remote learning. By then, every faculty member had experience with Canvas and transitioned their courses to fully online within four days. It was an amazing feat, made possible by the providence of God.

Proverbs 27:1 reminds us, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring." No one knew at the start of the last academic year that students would be sent home in March. But God knew, and He had been preparing Cedarville for that moment for quite some time. As He has faithfully done for more than 130 years, God has providentially prepared Cedarville to face the challenges of an uncertain tomorrow. May Cedarville continue to stand for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ, confident in God's providence.

Thomas Mach '88 is Vice President for Academics, Chief Academic Officer, and Professor of History at Cedarville University. He earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of Akron.

