

Hope College

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### The Spiritual Faith Journey of Hope College

Reed Hanson  
*Hope College*

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# Hope College

## The Faith History of Hope College

Reed Hanson with Mentor Trygve Johnson  
*Hope College, Holland, Michigan*



### Abstract

Over 150 years ago, Hope College was founded with a vision to become a “school of the prophets,” an institution that would equip men and women to carry the Gospel to the nations. From 1866-1990 Hope endured seismic structural and spiritual changes that caused it to wander away from its original Christian commitment, but a revival in the 1990s resurrected the school from the shackles of spiritual decay as a college to equip “world Christians in the soil of Hope.” In 2019, Reed Hanson and Trygve Johnson collaborated, with funding from the History Department, to research the Faith History of Hope College and to bring its storied spiritual past to life through quotes, interviews, and personal testimonies that make Hope an institution like no other.

### Inception to 1930

“May the Lord graciously accept our work and cause Hope College to promote His glory upon earth.” - Albertus Van Raalte, letter to Philip Phelps, November 22, 1869.

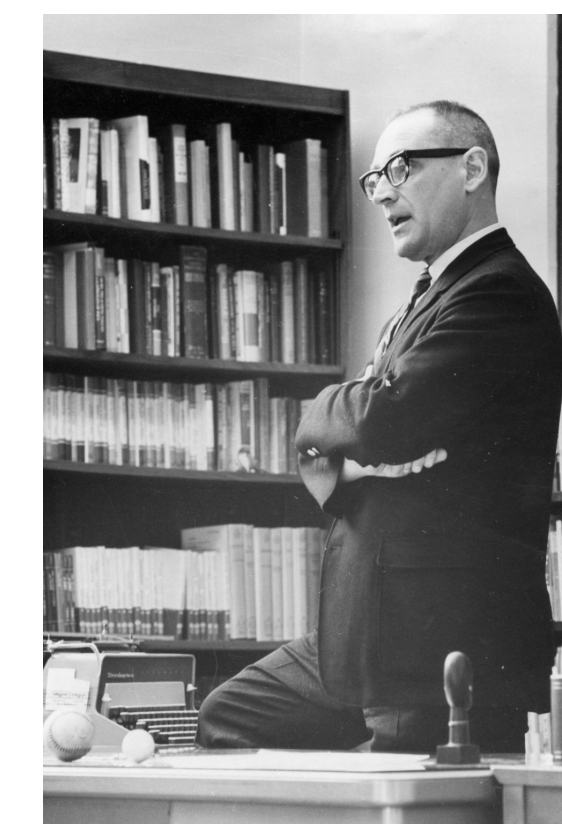


“What the world needs always is men, manly men; and women, womanly women... who will lead the forces of good and of God in the great battle against selfishness and greed, against oppression and injustice, against political chicanery and wickedness in high places.” - President Rev. Aame Vennema’s Inaugural Address, 1913.

### Floating Adrift

“A couple of students were sitting in the front row. The choir had just sung a beautiful anthem and these students had rattled newspapers all during the time the anthem was being sung; so as soon as the thing was over...I jumped off the chapel platform and grabbed those two people and literally bounced them out which suggests that I was at the end of my tether, that I just couldn’t see people taking God’s name in vain that way, making a mockery out of something that was intended to be beautiful and meaningful.”

- William C. ‘Wild Bill’ Hillegonds, former Hope College Lead Chaplain. Interview, July 10, 1978.



**“It was tough for a visiting minister or a faculty person to see the last ten rows of the chapel jammed with people while in the rest of the chapel there weren’t enough people to hit with buckshot.”**

- Hillegonds



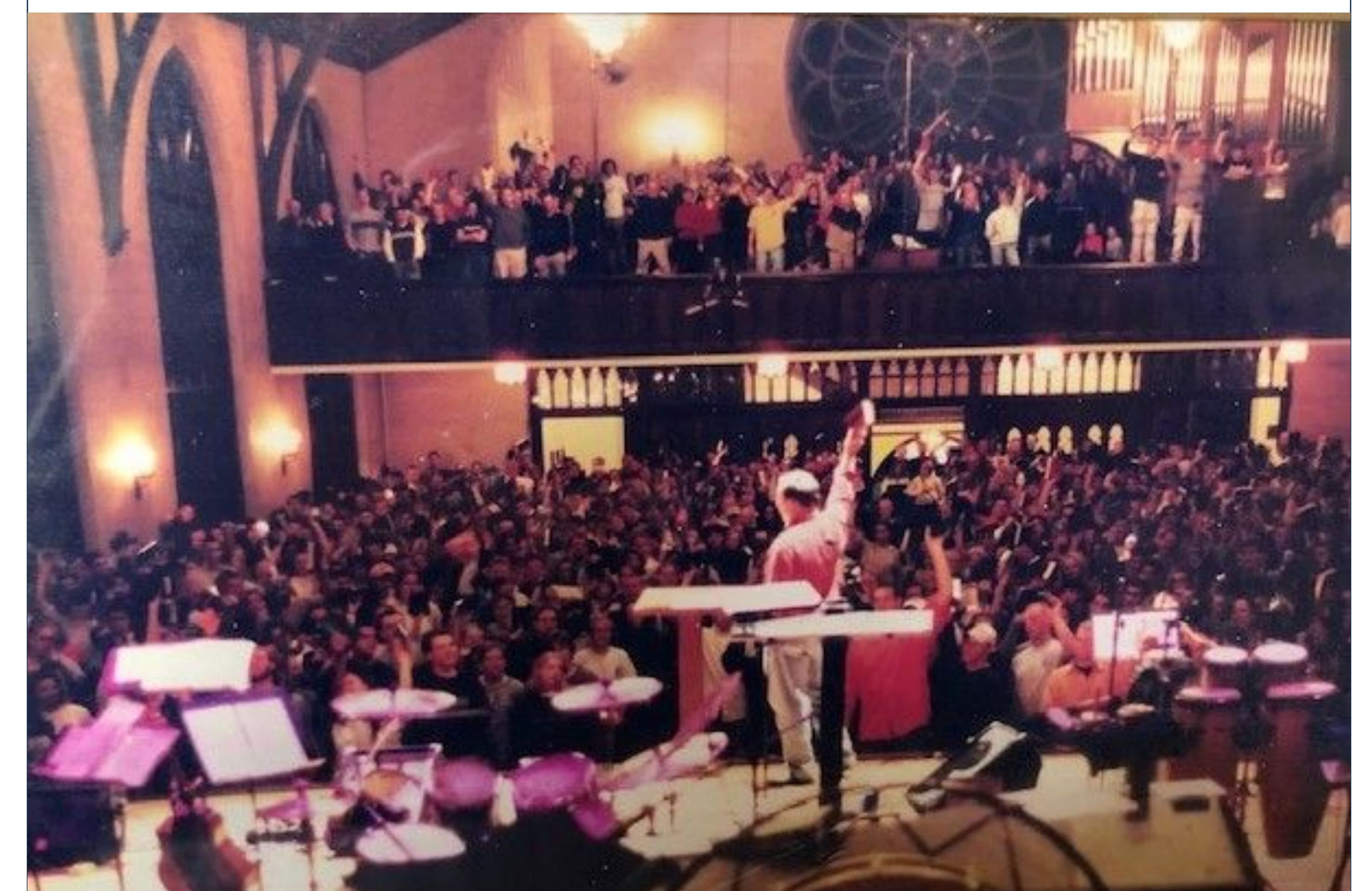
“Only 25-40 students/staff attended chapel services on a campus of 3,000 people.” - Hope College Campus Ministries Manual, 1999.

### April 9, 1995

“Revival began the Gathering. Three students had come to testify about a recent revival [on their campus]. Hope College students responded immediately after the presentation by lining up at the microphone to confess sins and share personal burdens publicly...This outpouring began at 9:00 PM and lasted until 2:00 AM...After each student spoke, he/she would then be surrounded by peers-hugging, praying, encouraging and assuring them of their support and forgiveness...The darkness was brought out into the light.” - Campus Ministries Manual, 1999.

**“The body of Christ acted like the body of Christ, bearing one another’s burdens. The hunger for community, confession, forgiveness and healing was being satisfied on a deeper level.”**

- Campus Ministries Manual, 1999



“Chapel services went from 40 to 600 in [1994-95]. Two years later, service rose to 1,000 people.”

“Meet the chaplain: Trygve shares his story.” - *The Anchor*, January 26, 2005.