A Historic Calling

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN JOHNSON
African-American church pastor

PRAYING FOR GOD
By Dr. Thomas Keene

THE ROAD TO RESTORATION
By Dr. Guy Richard

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The Master of Arts in Counseling program at RTS prepares specialized servants both inside and outside the church.
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WHO WE ARE
Reformed Theological Seminary exists to glorify the Triune God and to serve His Church in all branches of evangelical Christianity, especially Presbyterian and Reformed churches, by providing Reformed graduate theological education that is globally accessible. RTS equips its students for ministry, primarily through pastoral preparation, to be servant leaders marked by “A Mind for Truth, A Heart for God.”

As such, Ministry & Leadership seeks to show how God is working through the ministries of RTS graduates, faculty members and students. Our goal is that readers will become partners with RTS through prayer, financial giving, educational experience and student referral, as well as providing placement opportunities.

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All Scripture references from the English Standard Version except where noted.
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It has been both a wonderful and poignant year at RTS. We are thankful for the rich blessings of the Lord, many of which have come to us in the form of people. There are our dear students and graduates, in ever-increasing number; our faithful supporters, who are God’s instruments to help us prepare them for ministry; and our extraordinary faculty and staff members and their families.

The Lord has brought us new leaders to RTS this year who are already making an enormous difference. I think of Phillip Holmes (who studied at RTS Jackson), our director of communications and marketing, who has really improved what we are doing institutionally with social media, branding and digital strategy. I have lost count of the congratulations I have received from other institutions and ministries about Phillip’s work, which, of course, makes me glad, but doesn’t surprise me at all.

Then there is Robert Arendale (an RTS Charlotte graduate), now executive director of RTS Houston (see page 6). Tim McKeown faithfully laid the foundation of this campus. Now Robert is building and expanding on it, and we have already seen a great response to our announcement that the RTS Master of Divinity is available in Houston.

In New York City, Steve Wallace and I have been looking for someone to lead our program there into the future, and the Lord brought us Dr. Jay Harvey (see page 8), a veteran campus minister and senior pastor who graduated from RTS Jackson and has served in the northeast U.S. Jay’s boundless energy, his flow of ideas, his pastoral experience and instincts, and his academic gifts and inclinations will all serve our students and constituents in New York extremely well.

Or I think of Mike Hillerman and his extraordinary work to help consolidate our professional counseling programs in Jackson and Orlando (see pages 24-26), while pursuing a Ph.D. and working with our counseling...
accreditors. Mike has worked closely with RTS Jackson President Dr. Guy Richardson, who is coordinating our efforts to create a program that will prepare distinctly Christian, conceptually and clinically competent professional counselors who can integrate their Christian faith and Reformed worldview with their knowledge of counseling, and offer counseling to both the churched and non-churched.

I could name many more, but the Lord has brought RTS truly gifted and consecrated people. I often say that “the secret sauce of RTS is our people” (and I say it because it is true!), and so I am keenly aware and deeply grateful when God in his kind providence continues to bring us unique, outstanding people.

But there is also a tinge of sadness as I think of some of our dear people who have finished their earthly pilgrimage (of course, I grieve not for them but for our loss of their present fellowship), and others facing losses and crosses. In particular, I’ve reflected on three giants in our seminary history who went home to be with the Lord over the last year.

Dr. Simon Kistemaker, who taught New Testament in both Jackson and Orlando, pioneered our international work in Brazil and Indonesia, completed a major New Testament commentary series, and was a treasure to our students, the church and the evangelical academy, died in September of last year. I had the privilege of participating in his funeral service.

Dr. R.C. Sproul, internationally known, longtime RTS theology professor in Jackson and Orlando, also came to the end of his earthly pilgrimage last December. I was able to attend his funeral service and sit with treasured friends as we thanked God for his life and ministry.

Dr. Morton H. Smith, one of our founding professors, also passed away last November (soon followed by his beloved wife, Lois). Sadly, I was halfway around the world in Indonesia and was unable to get back in time for his memorial service.

I knew each of these men over the course of many years, and their translation affected me profoundly and in different ways. I’ll write more about this in Reformed Faith and Practice, our online academic journal.

Meanwhile, the entire RTS family was stunned by the unexpected loss of Dr. Kevin Collins, director of enrollment management and assistant director of the Doctor of Ministry program (see page 12). Kevin, only in his 50s and in appearance of good health, died of a heart attack while in his car last May. Brent Harriman, his pastor, let us know immediately and provided good pastoral care in that hard situation. All of us have had our breath taken away — little do we know how close eternity is to all of us, and none of us knows our own time.

The outpouring of words of appreciation for Kevin I received in the wake of his death reminded me again of the quiet, powerful ways our RTS staff team serves our students, pastoral partners and larger family. Many beautiful testimonies were shared about Kevin’s personal ministry, and attentiveness to and service of our students and ministry partners.

Two of our own have been diagnosed with, and had surgery for, cancer. My dear friend and amazing chief institutional assessment officer, Polly McReynolds Stone, is well along in her fight against cancer, and even now Dr. Howard Griffith, professor of systematic theology and academic dean at RTS Washington, has begun treatment for this fearsome disease. Both are doing so with a trust and confidence in God that is a witness and testimony and encouragement to us all. We are praying earnestly for their healing. Ken McMullen, associate professor and library director at RTS Charlotte, lost his wife, Sherry, to cancer last December, and goes on faithfully serving in his duties and comforting others in their losses: “In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.”

I could go on. These are the people I have the joy and privilege of serving alongside. They have burdens and cares, like you, our faithful friends and partners. I want you to know that even in these valleys, together we continue to serve the Lord with gladness and delight together in our labors at RTS. Pray for us, and we’ll pray for you too.

“In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.”

[Signature]
Dr. James Anderson has been promoted to professor of theology and philosophy at RTS Charlotte effective June 1. Having earned a Ph.D. in philosophical theology (he also holds a Ph.D. in computer simulation), Dr. Anderson has a long-standing concern to bring the Reformed theological tradition into greater dialogue with contemporary analytic philosophy. "Not only is he one of the brightest minds in philosophical theology today and a gifted communicator," says Dr. Michael Kruger, RTS Charlotte president, "but he has the rare ability to distill complex information into a form that the average person in the pew can understand. The way he bridges the academy and the church is the ideal combination for a seminary professor."

Dr. Anderson will continue in his position as academic dean for both RTS Global Education and RTS New York City. He is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers, the British Society for the Philosophy of Religion, and the Evangelical Philosophical Society. In addition, Dr. Anderson is an ordained minister in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and previously served as an assistant pastor at the historic Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, Scotland.

More information about RTS Charlotte can be found at www.rts.edu/Charlotte.

Robert Arendale has been appointed the new executive director of RTS Houston. He succeeds Tim McKeown, who has retired after having led RTS Houston since 2011.

Before coming to RTS, Robert served as the planting pastor of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Houston for five and a half years. During his time at Cornerstone, the congregation grew fivefold.

Robert comes to RTS carrying a legacy with the seminary. His father was a good friend to RTS chancellor emeritus Dr. Ric Cannada from their days as fellow students at Vanderbilt University, and Robert himself is an RTS Charlotte alumnus. After graduating from RTS, Robert was associate pastor at Ballantyne Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, serving under senior pastor Dr. John Currid, longtime RTS Charlotte professor.

For more information about RTS Houston, visit www.rts.edu/houston
DR. IRWYN INCE HISTORIC PCA GENERAL ASSEMBLY MODERATOR

RTS Washington D.C. alumnus Dr. Irwyn Ince has made history in the PCA denomination by becoming the first African American to be elected moderator of the PCA General Assembly. He received the honor in June at the PCA’s annual General Assembly meeting.

Dr. Ince is a PCA teaching elder who serves as the executive director of the Institute for Cross-Cultural Mission (ICCM) for the GraceDC Network of churches.

More information about ICCM can be found at gracedc.institute.

DR. THOMAS KEENE NEW PROFESSOR / D.C.

Dr. Thomas Keene has been appointed associate professor of New Testament at RTS Washington D.C. Before coming to RTS, Dr. Keene served as associate pastor of family ministries at Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, and as a lecturer in New Testament at RTS.

“Tommy Keene represents everything we hope for our students,” says Dr. Scott Redd, RTS Washington president. “He has a commitment to rigorous theological scholarship matched by a passion for Christian ministry and service.”

“The Lord has sent just the right person to our learning community,” adds Dr. Howard Griffith, RTS Washington academic dean. “Dr. Keene is an excellent interpreter of Scripture, a fine theologian, and an experienced gospel minister. His classes as a visiting professor have been prized. Under his ministry, even more of our students will learn and communicate the New Testament message with confidence, joy and precision.”

Learn more about RTS Washington at www.rts.edu/washington, and read Dr. Keene’s article “Praying for God” starting on page 14.
KRUGER FAMILY / BOOK RELEASE PARTY

RTS Charlotte president Dr. Michael Kruger and his wife, Melissa, are both published authors. On June 8, the campus hosted a book release party to celebrate their most recent book projects. For Dr. Kruger, it was the publication of *Christianity at the Crossroads*, and for Melissa it was the writing of *In All Things: A Nine Week Devotional Bible Study on Unshakeable Joy* and the editing of *Identity Theft*.

About 100 RTS friends, supporters, faculty and staff members gathered at Wellinghall Books & Coffee at RTS Charlotte to celebrate the accomplishments with a time of food and fellowship. The Krugers took a few minutes each to talk about their books.

*Contact the RTS Charlotte bookstore at 704-688-4211 to order.*

DR. JAMES HARVEY
NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / NYC

Dr. James Harvey has been appointed as the next executive director of RTS New York City. He succeeds Steve Wallace, who provided faithful leadership and service during the first seven years of starting and developing the campus.

“For our next executive director, we needed a leader that would live in New York City and help take the campus to the next phase of its potential, and Jay Harvey has the gifts and leadership to do that,” Steve says about his successor. “I look forward to introducing him to our students and friends in the city and assisting him in his transition.”

Dr. Harvey is an RTS Jackson alumnus, completing his Master of Divinity degree in 2002 and having served since 2005 as pastor at Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Newark, Delaware. The Princeton University alumnus earned his Doctor of Ministry degree in 2016 from Erskine Theological Seminary and is the author of a new study on Song of Solomon, published this summer by Crossway.

RTS New York City is a strategic partnership between RTS and Redeemer City to City to provide theological education and practical ministry training in New York City with the goal of “preparing future pastors and ministry leaders in the city, for the city.”
RTS Orlando has launched the Paideia Center for Theological Discipleship. The center is intended to “cultivate theological wisdom for today’s church,” providing pastors and lay leaders with guided exposure to classic theological texts of the Christian tradition. RTS Orlando President Dr. Scott Swain and RTS Orlando professor Dr. Michael Allen direct the center, while faculty from a range of RTS campuses participate in its varied programs.

The center will offer monthly reading groups in various cities around the U.S. and the world and an online group to provide forums for rich conversation about classic theological texts under the guidance of qualified leaders. RTS professors from various campuses will be among those leading these groups on RTS campuses or in nearby churches. This year’s theme is the doctrine of God, with participants reading texts from fourth-century theologian Gregory of Nazianzus this fall and from Martin Luther in spring 2019.

There will also be a conference at RTS Orlando on January 10-11, 2019, with guest speakers Dr. Carl Trueman of Grove City College, Dr. Swain, and RTS Charlotte professor Blair Smith. It will include times of prayer and worship, presentations, panels, discussion groups, and shared meals. A specially discounted rate is available for current RTS students from any campus.

In addition, various public lectures will be offered at RTS Orlando. The Paideia Center was formally launched on July 16 when Dr. Liam Goligher, senior minister of the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, gave a lecture about the importance of reading the Song of Songs anew for direction about living with God and loving Him today. “I’m excited at the launch of the Paideia Center and the possibilities of studying great texts from the past for the sake of the present and the future of the church,” Dr. Goligher says.

For information about the center, including the conference and how to register, visit www.paideiacenter.com. Also hear Dr. Allen being interviewed about the center’s activities at www.mortificationofspin.org/mos/podcast/44171.

“Wholeness doesn’t mean we are sinlessly perfect. It means that what we are on the outside is what we are on the inside.”

- Dr. Ligon Duncan, from Wisdom Wednesday
HONORING DAVID LUCAS
IN ORLANDO

David Lucas has been an integral part of the ministry of RTS for over 25 years. An exceptionally successful businessman, a visionary leader and a man driven by his love for God, David has immensely blessed the RTS community with his stewardship and servanthood. On October 24th, in recognition of David’s significant generosity and faithful service, RTS will name the Orlando campus “The Lucas Campus.” This will take place at a 10AM chapel honoring Mr. Lucas.

Born in Pittsburgh, David earned a Bachelor of Science in industrial management from Purdue University and a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School. In 1985, he and his wife, Linda, moved to southwest Florida to take over the estate of Linda’s father, who had begun developing land in Bonita Springs. David became the chairman of Bonita Bay Properties (now the Bonita Bay Group), and led this development enterprise in distinguishing itself for integrity, innovation, environmentally responsible development and relational investment in the community.

Upon moving to Florida, David and Linda began attending Westminster Presbyterian Church in Fort Myers, where David would eventually become a ruling elder and treasurer. At a men’s retreat through Westminster Presbyterian, David became acquainted with Dr. Luder Whitlock, then president of RTS. Dr. Whitlock was immediately impressed by David’s evident and stalwart integrity as well as his commitment to stewardship. When they met, RTS Orlando was located at an outdated site in Maitland that the seminary was outgrowing.

In 1993 Dr. Whitlock asked David to be on the steering committee for a brand-new campus in Oviedo. Offering his visionary guidance as well as experience in land development, David helped oversee the construction of the beautiful 60-acre campus that RTS Orlando enjoys today, including the iconic Pamplin Chapel.

David joined the RTS Board of Trustees in 1998, serving on the Executive Committee since 2002. During his tenure on the board, David was instrumental in the expansion of RTS to Washington D.C. and Atlanta, and has been a wonderful advisor and voice of reason regarding the strategic planning for the seminary’s future. In addition to his service on the board, David and Linda have been exceedingly generous in financial support for RTS.

David expresses their philosophy of giving like this: “Stewardship involves the realization that your money, possessions and talents are not your own, but are ultimately owned by God, who owns everything.”

His legacy of service and leadership includes over 137 combined years on charitable boards and 52 years on for-profit boards. In their commitment to biblical stewardship, David and Linda have also inspired many others to give generously, founding the Lee County chapter of the Alexis de Tocqueville Society, which recognizes and advances philanthropic leadership.

David’s outstanding community service, charitable giving, civic leadership and ethical business practice all flow from his faith in Christ. In his biography, David describes all his endeavors in service to others as an effort to “lead my life where I am an instrument of God’s will.” Those who know him attest that David is a talented and humble leader, a man of strong spirit and fortitude, and a servant who loves and serves the Lord. David and Linda still reside in southwest Florida, and are blessed by their three children and seven grandchildren.

— Christina Mansfield, RTS Orlando
The RTS family suffered a major loss on May 15 when Dr. Kevin Collins was in a fatal car accident in Knoxville, Tennessee. At the time of his passing, Kevin was director of enrollment management for the entire RTS system, as well as serving as assistant director of the Doctor of Ministry program and as guest faculty in practical theology at RTS Orlando.

Dr. Scott Swain, RTS Orlando president, wrote this reflection about Kevin immediately following his death:

**This past Sunday (May 13) was Ascension Sunday.**
**Kevin posted Q&A 49 from the Heidelberg Catechism regarding Christ’s ascension:**

**Question:** How does Christ’s ascension benefit us?

**Answer:** First, He pleads our cause in heaven in the presence of His Father. Second, we have our own flesh in heaven — a guarantee that Christ our head will take us, His members, to Himself in heaven. Third, He sends His Spirit to us on earth as a further guarantee. By the Spirit’s power we make the goal of our lives not earthly things, but the things above where Christ is, sitting at God’s right hand.

**Even as we mourn Kevin’s loss, we draw comfort from the fact that our ascended Lord Jesus has taken Kevin up to Himself in heaven, where there is fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore.**

Kevin began his RTS service in 2012 in Orlando as director of admissions, marketing and placement for three years. Before that, the ordained PCA teaching elder was senior pastor of West End Presbyterian Church in Hopewell, Va. Kevin leaves behind his wife, Candace, and their two daughters. Please keep Kevin’s family in your prayers as they go through this difficult time.
Dr. Nicholas Reid has been promoted to associate professor of Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern studies at RTS Orlando. Having joined the RTS Orlando faculty in January 2017, he also serves as director of the hybrid Master of Divinity program there.

“He is a brilliant but humble scholar, a sound theologian, a faithful churchman, a loving husband and father, and an outstanding teacher,” says Dr. Ligon Duncan, RTS chancellor and CEO. “Dr. Reid has distinguished himself very quickly as a scholar of the languages and cultures of the ancient Near East,” adds Dr. Scott Swain, RTS Orlando president, “and he has made a wonderful contribution on campus both inside and outside the classroom.”

With research interests covering a broad range of topics, Dr. Reid is co-authoring a textual edition of a group of unpublished Old Babylonian letters for Oxford University Press. He also contributes to the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (cdli.ucla.edu).

For more information about RTS Orlando, visit www.rts.edu/orlando.

CENTER FOR REFORMED THEOLOGY IN INDONESIA

RTS has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Pelita Harapan Educational Foundation (YPPH) in Indonesia to form the Center for Reformed Theology. It is the latest fruit of RTS’ ministry investment in Indonesia, which includes chancellor emeritus Dr. Ric Cannada serving as founding pastor of Karawaci Presbyterian Church and as senior advisor for YPPH. The center is intended to serve as the spiritual and theological steward of YPPH’s system of universities and schools throughout Indonesia.

“The partnership between RTS and YPPH is both exciting and encouraging,” says Dr. Ligon Duncan, RTS chancellor and CEO. “The gospel opportunities at this time in Indonesia are enormous, and with RTS’ longstanding priority on the Great Commission, and our expertise and experience in theological education, this opportunity seems providentially designed.”

To learn more about the RTS influence on the church in Indonesia, read “Through the Open Door” in the Winter 2014 issue of M&L, as well as the news section in the Fall 2017 issue, both found at www.rts.edu/MandL. Contact Dr. Cannada at rcannada@rts.edu for more information about the center.
The first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer provide something of a puzzle for Reformed theologians. Why, for example, does Jesus instruct his disciples to pray that “God’s will be done”? Won’t God’s will be accomplished regardless of the prayers of mere humans? And while we’re at it, what about “thy Kingdom come”? The coming of God’s kingdom is a promise, not some hoped-for possibility that is somehow contingent on my prayer!

These kinds of questions are not the impertinent musings of the theological malcontent — the kid in the back of the class who simply wants to expose his teacher as a fool. These are precisely the kinds of questions that Jesus wants His disciples to be asking, and it is for this reason that the Lord’s Prayer is really quite remarkable. Though many of us recite it at least weekly, it continually challenges the worshipper to consider anew the power and privilege of prayer. In the course of six short petitions, Jesus not only provides the church with, as the Westminster Larger Catechism describes it, “a special rule of direction … as a pattern, according to which we are to make other prayers,” He at the same time challenges our assumptions about what prayer is and what it can accomplish. We have precisely this sort of challenge in the first three petitions, for here Jesus instructs us not only to pray to God, but also and preeminently to pray for God.

by Dr. Thomas Keene
GODLY PRAYERS ARE PRAYERS FOR GOD

Notice first of all that these three petitions, like the first portion of the Decalogue, are each radically God-centered in their subject matter. They are “vertical” petitions, in contrast to the more “horizontal” petitions that follow. Jesus opens in this way to remind us that all our prayers are ultimately not prayers for and about ourselves or our neighbors, but rather prayers for and about God.

Those words are not my own; they come from the 17th-century pastor and theologian Herman Witsius. After considering the variety of privileges with which prayer endows the believer, Witsius concludes in his Sacred Dissertations on the Lord’s Prayer that:

the most wonderful of all, and one which almost exceeds belief, is that a man should be allowed to plead, not only for himself and for his neighbor, but for God,—that the kingdom of God and the glory of God should be the subject of his prayer,—as if God were unwilling to be glorious, or to exercise dominion except in answer to the prayers of believers.

Jesus exhorts us to make the concerns of our heavenly Father — His glory, kingdom, and purposes — the first and preeminent concern of our own prayers.

Even in our prayers we are to seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33); “to glorify God and to enjoy him forever” is also the chief end of prayer.

We can go a bit further, in fact, and argue that every petition we bring to our Father, whether for the safety and success of missionaries, or the healing of a church member, or even the comparatively trivial and mundane pursuits of ordinary life, is ultimately subsumed under these petitions. The first three petitions remind us that the last three (for daily bread, forgiveness of sins and deliverance from evil) must also be God-centered and kingdom-oriented prayers; we only ask for bread rightly when we ask for it in a manner that hallows the name of God and is submissive to His will (James 4:15).
Godly Prayers Are Effectual

The God-centeredness of prayer is an important reminder, but the opening petitions also give us some profound theology to ponder. Returning to our opening question, for example, how can it be that my prayers are contingently significant in the outworking of God’s will, or the coming of God’s kingdom? There are deep mysteries embedded in each of these petitions, but the revelation that underlies them all — the encouragement and responsibility that Jesus wants us to appropriate — is fairly simple: our prayers are meaningful. Our prayers are not mere spectators of the divine decree, but rather a significant means by which God accomplishes His eternal purpose.

Take the first petition as a kind of case study. If God cannot be more holy than He is in and of himself, then what sense does it make for me to pray that He would “hallow” (that is, “make holy” or “glorious”) His own name? Can God be more glorious than He already is? Of course not! But, and here’s the rub: His name can be more hallowed by His creatures; God cannot be more glorious, but He can be more glorified. So my prayer is causally connected to the actual hallowing of God’s name in space and time. Jesus is thus reminding us that His people are to be active and prayerful participants in the honoring and glorification of God’s name. In His providence, God has chosen to make the hallowing of His own name on the earth at least partially dependent upon the prayers of His people. What a privilege! What a responsibility!

We find the same dynamic at work as we meditate on “thy will be done.” For this one let’s invert the issue; instead of asking “Does God bring about his will in response to my prayer?” let’s ask “Are there real and genuine consequences when I fail to pray?” If I promise someone to pray for them, but fail to do so, is there any real loss or lack that would result in the outworking of their lives? Our personal practice betrays our subconscious answer: “not really.” If God wants to do something, surely He will do it whether or not I prayed about it. My prayer doesn’t really matter, and so my failure to pray likewise isn’t a big deal. God will accomplish His purposes regardless of my activity; indeed, He will accomplish them regardless of any contingency or “secondary causes.” But that’s fatalism, not confessional Calvinism.

According to the Westminster Confession, God ordains whatsoever comes to pass in such a way that “the liberty or contingency of second causes [are not] taken away, but rather established.” That includes our prayers. (Now of course our prayers don’t change God’s eternal will; rather, God’s eternal will is accomplished as He genuinely and temporally responds to my prayer, but this does not change the fact that our prayers matter). Our prayers are meaningful because of God’s providence, not in spite of it. God genuinely responds to our prayers as He responds to all our actions. When we sin, He disciplines us; when we are righteous, He strengthens and establishes us; when we praise Him, He takes delight. When we pray, He answers. And when we do not pray? “You do not have, because you do not ask” (James 4:2).

“Are there real and genuine consequences when I fail to pray?”
One final lesson we can consider, related to both of the above, is that our prayers delight our Father (Proverbs 15:8). We might approach such a statement with a bit of suspicion. Why should the God of the universe want to hear from me? I don’t want to burden God with my petty concerns! Surely God only hears my prayer reluctantly; surely my presence in His temple is only tolerated, not delighted in.

The clear testimony of Scripture, though, is that God is pleased by our prayers. There are, of course, prayers that do not delight God — hypocritical prayers in particular (Hosea 6:6; 1 Peter 3:7) — but when we come to our heavenly Father as little children, full of faith and love and reverence, our presence is His joy (Matthew 19:13-15) and our request His pleasure to give (Luke 11:5-13). That may seem counterintuitive at first, but it actually makes total sense when we consider the first three petitions.

Godly prayer isn’t the nagging demands of spoiled children; it isn’t “me, me, me.” Godly prayer is prayer for God; it seeks the glory of God first and finds its chief enjoyment in the presence of God. Godly prayer makes God its chief end, just as God does so Himself (to borrow from Jonathan Edwards), and so of course God is delighted in the prayers of His people. Godly prayer is therefore not only a comfort and a delight for us, but also for our Father.

If all these things are true — that is, if all prayer has God and the concerns of God as its chief end, and if God has condescended to use our prayers in the accomplishment of His purposes, and if God is in fact delighted by our prayers — then what will hinder us from prayer? In our prayers we take up the most lofty of concerns (God’s own glory) with full assurance of success (since God will answer His people) and ultimately without cost or burden (being a delight not only to ourselves, but also to God). It is a wonder we are not more taken by this privilege.

Dr. Keene is the newly appointed associate professor of New Testament at RTS Washington D.C. Before coming to RTS, Dr. Keene served as associate pastor of family ministries at Christ the King Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Conshohocken, Pa. and as a visiting lecturer in New Testament at RTS. Learn more about RTS Washington at www.rts.edu/washington.
the Road to

John 21
shows how Jesus restores our broken relationship with Himself.

RESTORATION

by Dr. Guy Richard
That is one reason why I find the context leading up to John 21 so intriguing. Jesus has appeared to His disciples twice since His resurrection. He has already dealt with the unbelief of Thomas, but He has yet to do anything about Peter’s threefold denial. Twice Jesus and Peter are together in the same room, and twice Jesus says and does nothing about Peter’s failure. The silence is deafening. Peter was the proverbial “elephant in the room” for both these meetings, and Jesus apparently does nothing to secure reconciliation and restore the offending party.

At some point after these two meetings, Peter decides to go fishing. We don’t know for sure why — it’s possible that he was simply looking to pass the time until Pentecost and could find no better way to do so. But I think the context points in a different direction. John 21 is the first time that we see Peter fishing since he was originally called by Jesus to be a disciple. This fact, together with the context of the broken relationship between Jesus and Peter and the lack of reconciliation in Christ’s first two appearances, suggest that Peter may well have given up and was now returning to what he had been doing before Jesus called him. Most certainly, Peter’s failure was still front and center in his own mind and experience. Perhaps Jesus’ silence during those two meetings was more than Peter could handle.
I can imagine Peter’s thinking going something like this: “Why would Jesus choose to deal with Thomas and yet not deal with me? Thomas wasn’t even there for our first meeting with Jesus. And yet Jesus still dedicates the entire next meeting to dealing with Thomas’ doubts and addressing his needs. But I was there on both occasions, and Jesus said nothing to me.” For all these reasons, Peter’s decision to go fishing looks to me like he is giving up, allowing his failure to get the better of him.

Perhaps you might be where Peter was in John 21, ready to pack it in and quit. Maybe you feel this way because you have failed, maybe repeatedly or even publicly (as had Peter). And Satan has used the opportunity to come alongside you and kick you while you are down. Or maybe Jesus has been silent in your experience, seemingly giving His attention to others (the Thomases of the world, for instance) and passing you by. If you find yourself in any of these situations today, remember that you are not in uncharted waters. Peter was there long before anyone else, and that ought to encourage those enduring similar circumstances.

But let us do more than simply remember Peter’s example; let us focus on what Jesus is doing with Peter in John 21, because this is where the real encouragement can be found. Specifically, there are three things to be encouraged by: the preparation Jesus allows, the conviction Jesus brings, and the restoration Jesus offers.

The Preparation Jesus Allows
As I indicated previously, I find it fascinating that John makes no mention of Jesus saying anything to Peter during their first two meetings. The silence really is deafening. Why would Jesus choose not to deal with Peter right away? Why would He wait until the third meeting with him, especially when He chooses to deal with Thomas at the very first opportunity that He can?

“For some people, Jesus’ silence with Peter might appear unloving.”
I realize that for some people, Jesus’ silence with Peter might appear unloving. Why would Jesus let someone He cares about squirm like that? Why would He put off what He could have done the first time He saw Peter?

Admittedly, the text doesn’t answer these questions. But I think we can formulate a likely answer based upon what Scripture tells us about the nature and character of God. We know, for instance, that God is not cruel or mean-spirited, but rather perfectly loving, and that means that He always has our best interests in mind. As the late RTS professor Dr. Knox Chamblin used to say, God is always as drastic as necessary but as gentle as possible. He might “cause grief” in the lives of His people; but He always does so with “compassion” in mind, because He is always doing what is best for us (Lamentations 3:31-33; Romans 8:28).

Thus it seems likely that Jesus waited until the third meeting to deal with Peter because the timing was not right until that occasion. Maybe the unbelief in Peter’s heart had not yet come to the surface, and so Peter was not yet ready to receive restoration. Whatever the case, we know that the silent treatment must have been what Peter needed most at the time. Otherwise Jesus would never have given it; He would have done something different. Jesus was clearly preparing Peter for what would follow.

**The Conviction Jesus Brings**

When Jesus does finally deal with Peter, He does so in a way that brings Peter’s failure to mind. Notice the evident parallels between John 21 and the account of Peter’s denial in John 18:

*In 21:4, we are told that Jesus deals with Peter “just as day was breaking” — to be sure, we do not know whether a rooster had yet crowed (see 18:27), but it was certainly around that exact time of day.*

*In 21:9, we are told that Jesus invites Peter and His disciples to gather around a “charcoal fire” (see 18:18 — these are the only two times the word occurs in the New Testament).*

*In 21:15-17, Jesus asks Peter a question three times around the charcoal fire, and three times Peter has to answer (see 18:17, 25, 26).*
t should thus be obvious what is going on here in John 21. Jesus is recreating the scene of Peter’s failure in an attempt to bring conviction by causing Peter to come face to face with himself and his sin. And Peter seems to have gotten the point, because we read in verse 17 that Peter was “grieved” (“hurt” in the NIV) after the third time Jesus questioned him.

I am reminded of a passage from Augustine’s Confessions in which the north African bishop says, “but Thou, O Lord ... didst turn me round towards myself, taking me from behind my back where I had placed me, unwilling to observe myself; and setting me before my face, that I might see how foul I was, how crooked and defiled, bespotted and ulcerous. And I beheld and stood aghast.” That seems to be what Jesus is doing to Peter in John 21 — setting Peter in front of his own eyes, showing him the ugliness of his sin, and allowing him to stand aghast at the sight.

Doesn’t Jesus do the same thing so often with you and me? When the time is right — never sooner or later — He comes at the very point of our failure and brings conviction of sin. To be sure, this is not a pleasant experience. As the NIV renders John 21:17, it “hurts.” We right- ly stand aghast at what we see in ourselves. But without this painful step, there can be no true and lasting restoration.

The Restoration Jesus Offers

John 21 is not the first time that Peter was told by Jesus to let down his nets after a long night of fishing and catching nothing. Luke 5:1-11 records the first (and only other) time that Jesus did this. On that occasion, Jesus calls Peter specifically by name and charges him to follow Him (5:10). In recreating the Luke 5 scene in John 21, Jesus seems to be reminding Peter of his calling. Peter had been called away from fishing to be a fisher of men. But now, as a result of his failure, Peter was returning to his former way of life for the first time since then. So Jesus recreates the scene to remind him that he has been called away from that way of life. Verse 19 would seem to confirm this, as Jesus once again charges Peter to “follow me!”

Therefore, John 21 appears to be a second calling, if you will — a starting over, a wiping the
slate clean. Jesus seems to be telling Peter, “Yes, I know what you’ve done, Peter. I know that you have failed. Follow Me, Peter! We’ll start over at the beginning. I’ll wipe your failure away. I will put it as far from Me as the east is from the west. I’ll remember your sins no more.”

This is the restoration Peter had been waiting for. And what a restoration it is! Jesus waits until the time is right in Peter’s life, recreating the scenes of Peter’s failure and then his calling, in order to show Peter — not just tell him — that his sin has not changed his calling: “I know that you have sinned, Peter; follow Me!”

One of the reasons so many of us love to celebrate New Year’s Day is because it offers us a chance to start over with a clean slate — a do-over, if you will. This is precisely what the gospel offers every follower of Christ. It offers us a second chance and a third chance and a fourth chance, and so on. It says to each of us, “Yes, I know that you have sinned; follow Me!”

Wisdom Wednesday is a weekly series of videos where RTS faculty members and friends of the seminary address relevant matters of the Christian faith with truth, candor and grace.

CHECK BACK EACH WEEK AT RTS.EDU/WISDOMWEDNESDAY

Dr. Richard is executive director and assistant professor of systematic theology at RTS Atlanta. Learn more about the campus at www.rts.edu/atlanta.
An Abundance of Counselors

The Master of Arts in Counseling program at RTS prepares licensed servants both inside and outside the church.

by Paul Schwarz

Janet showed up in Dr. Guy Richardson’s counseling office anxious, depressed, discouraged and burdened with feelings of failure. Fellow believers had loved her and encouraged her with Bible verses like “Be anxious for nothing,” but after months of trying to change, she felt guilty because she hadn’t pulled out of her anxiety and depression.

That’s when Dr. Richardson asked Janet several seemingly random questions, after which he encouraged her to seek further medical evaluation. Janet came back to Dr. Richardson two weeks later with a different countenance. It turned out that her thyroid was not functioning adequately (which can cause increased anxiety or depression), so when prescribed medication by her doctor, Janet felt truly different starting the very next day. Her problems, which she (and others) had assumed were primarily spiritual, had proven to be interwoven with psychological and biological aspects. With the biological piece addressed, she was freer to work on the other aspects of her situation.

Dr. Richardson tells the story of Janet (not her real name) to illustrate the importance of the “clinically competent” aspect of the Master of Arts in Counseling program offered by RTS. “There are various levels at which things may be going on, and it takes adequate training about both God’s Word and God’s world to perceive them,” observes Dr. Richardson.

“Our learning about general revelation is subservient to the special revelation of the Bible, but learning about general revelation is God’s gift to us and important as we work out how to live in obedience to God’s commands, especially when we consider the complexity and uniqueness of each person as being made in the image of God.”

Dr. James Hurley, longtime RTS Jackson professor with earned doctorates in both theology and counseling, adds, “Our biblical, Reformed worldview stresses that all the world is under the Lordship of Christ. As Christ’s servants, we want to treat the whole person.” Dr. Scott Coupland,
professor of counseling at RTS Orlando, concurs: “To be holistic and biblically responsible, our approach to people’s problems must be based on an awareness of the whole person, not just as spiritual beings, but also taking into account biological, psychological and social aspects of what it means to be human as well. I don’t think that we have a scalpel sharp enough to know where one element of our being ends and another starts.”

To illustrate the importance of learning from God’s gift of general revelation as well as God’s special revelation in the Bible, Dr. Richardson uses an analogy. “While the Bible commands us to feed the poor, it says nothing about how or what to cook,” he observes. “We have to learn from other sources — from general revelation, if you will — how to do those things.”

According to Dr. Richardson, “We already learn from general revelation to minister in the church. ‘God instructs us in Proverbs 22:6 to ‘train up our children,’ and to help apply this, nearly all Sunday school curricula take advantage of things we have learned from developmental psychology about how children learn and effective techniques for training children in age-appropriate ways. It should be the same in counseling. As Christian counselors, we should see every level of our being under the authority of and through the eyes of Scripture, even as we learn by studying God’s creation many things that can help us apply His instructions given to us for life.”

Trained Christian counselors strengthen many church ministries at a point of need. “Busy pastors have limited time to disciple their flocks, and many are hard-pressed to deal with complex problems with the physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects such as Janet’s.” says Dr. Richardson. “That is the point at which specialized training in counseling can really make a difference.”

The RTS Master of Arts in Counseling program teaches prospective counselors to be both biblically faithful and clinically competent counselors, prepared to address the complex issues facing many of their clients. The rigorous curriculum includes numerous Bible and theology classes especially oriented for counselors, along with counseling classes.

But MAC students do not learn only in the classroom. Each student receives extensive experience with real clients (at least 400 clock hours with individuals, couples, groups or families in face-to-face counseling) either in RTS’s on-campus clinics or in partnership with approved service sites. Each student also receives over 160 additional hours of direct supervision of clinic work by experienced counselors with specialized training.

“Learning about general revelation is God’s gift to us.”

Dr. Guy Richardson
“Every thought captive to Christ.”

Even the interactive aspect of studying and training together in such an intensive cohort has great benefit in the personal development of the students as they prepare to be Christian counselors. Evidence of the quality of the RTS training program at both the Jackson and Orlando campuses is demonstrated by the 100 percent pass rate thus far on national exams by RTS counseling graduates, qualifying them to pursue licensure in most states as professional counselors to serve in the church and the community at large.

The goal of the RTS Master of Arts in Counseling program is to bring “every thought captive to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5), using that knowledge to “do good to all men, especially the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10). In doing this, graduates will be trained to be biblically faithful and clinically competent counselors effectively serving the suffering Janets of the world.

Prior to coming to RTS Jackson in 1999, Dr. Richardson was both a minister and professional counselor serving in church-based counseling centers in Georgia and Alabama. He has been president of RTS Jackson since 2004 and now leads the MAC degree program, recently combined into one curriculum offered at both the Jackson and Orlando campuses. In this, he joins long-serving professors Dr. James Hurley, Dr. William Richardson, Dr. Scott Coupland and other professionally trained men and women on both campuses.
The Christian counseling program at RTS Charlotte seeks to prepare students to engage in the personal ministry of God’s Word in the church, through parachurch ministries and in missions. Our students also find that their participation in the MACC program transforms their own lives.

The wisdom of God’s Word is unsurpassed (Proverbs 2:1ff). As RTS professor emeritus Dr. John Frame writes, “The Word does things that only God can do.” The Psalmist declares, “The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (19:7).

We believe that the best equipping one can have for soul care is to know God’s Word well. A unique feature of the MACC program is that every student takes every single Bible and theology course that future pastors in the Master of Divinity program are required to take. Those preparing for the personal ministry of the Word through the MACC program gain the same biblical and theological foundation as those preparing to engage in the public ministry of the Word.

Our counseling courses equip students to apply God’s Word to the issues faced by church leaders, both male and female, as they care for God’s flock. We study counseling theory and methodology, as well as learn to apply God’s Word to typical counseling problems including anger, depression, conflict, fear, worry, trauma, suicide, family conflict, etc. We also help students to understand basic medical and psychological issues in counseling so that counselors can both know when to refer their counselees to physicians and how to help those who are suffering to better deal with the spiritual ramifications of their physical and mental trials.

In addition to engaging in our robust curriculum in Scripture and counseling theory, students also engage in hands-on practicums in which they have the opportunity to observe live counseling, to counsel one another in role-play situations, and finally to counsel for a minimum of 50 hours under the supervision of an experienced mentor counselor.

Along with the MACC degree, which takes two years of full-time study, we offer a four-year dual degree program (M.Div. and MACC) and an M.Div. with a counseling emphasis (which takes three years of full-time study).

Because of the great need for women counselors, we are excited to have many women in our MACC program. Also, many future pastors have chosen to become better equipped to engage in soul care by pursuing our dual degree or our counseling emphasis programs. In addition, we have several international students and future missionaries who plan to bring biblical soul care to other nations.

The MACC program at RTS Charlotte prepares students for jobs as campus ministers, church staff and pastoral positions, work in Christian schools, service in biblical counseling centers and as chaplains, and work in a host of other fields.

Learn more about the RTS Charlotte MACC program at rts.edu/charlotte by clicking on the Master of Arts in Christian Counseling icon.
Earl Bradley had a saying: “You can’t take it with you, but you can send it on ahead.” Now that both he and his wife, Billye, have gone to be with the Lord, that saying has taken on new significance. The Bradleys, who started and operated a successful iron foundry in Texas, have blessed RTS and other ministries through their giving.

“My parents were very generous, cheerful givers,” says Leslie Keffer, the Bradleys’ daughter. “They were always interested in helping others and especially in kingdom work. They felt like in giving to seminaries, that was their way to multiply their dollars because seminaries are training people who are going out and influencing so many others.”

The biggest influence on Billye’s life was her grandparents, whom she went to live with after her parents divorced at age 2 and her mother went to work. “They were godly people who raised her to know the Lord, and she never remembered a time when she didn’t believe,” Leslie explains. Earl, on the other hand, didn’t come to faith in Jesus until after marrying Billye, having been raised in the Christian Science belief system.

After working in sales in the iron foundry business for many years, Earl “couldn’t find a job that could pay what he needed to take care of his family, so he decided he needed to start his own business,” Leslie says. The genesis of what became EBAA Iron took place in 1964 in the Bradleys’ garage near Dallas.

“Father bought a drill press from Sears, drilled the holes, tapped them, put the screws in, and sold them and shipped them,” recalls Leslie, who was barely 8 years old at the time. When he outgrew the garage, Earl rented a Quonset hut that he also outgrew. In 1973, as God blessed the business, the Bradleys moved to Eastland, 90 miles from Dallas, as according to Leslie, Earl had another saying: “Neighbors don’t like foundries, and foundries don’t like neighbors,” so they decided to find a place a little more remote.”

EBAA made its mark by manufacturing joint restraints and flexible expansion joints for water distribution pipelines as well as wastewater pipeline systems. As unglamorous as
that sounds, the Lord blessed the Bradleys financially. “They knew exactly where it came from, and that they had a responsibility and privilege, and found great joy in being able to help ministries,” Leslie says.

One of those ministries is RTS, as Earl and Billye were good friends with RTS chancellor emeritus Dr. Ric Cannada and his wife, Rachel, as well as longtime RTS staff member Bob Bailey and his wife, Amanda. When Billye passed away in March at age 89 (Earl predeceased her in 2005), Dr. Cannada was invited by the Bradley family to speak at her graveside service.

“Two couples who are some of the closest friends to the Bradley family told me separately, and each couple initiated these comments more than once on my visit, that they knew how much Billye loved us and RTS, and that she talked a lot about all that RTS is doing to serve the Lord,” Dr. Cannada notes.

The Bradley family continues an active presence in the leadership of EBAA Iron. Leslie Keffer’s husband, Jim, runs the sales company; her brother E.T. Bradley is president of the foundry division, running all the production; and her brother Jeff Bradley is vice president of the sales company.

Also, the three Bradley siblings co-own EBAA, and each has a child working in some aspect of the business.

As Earl and Billye’s iron-willed legacy continues, the kingdom of God benefits.

For more information about EBAA Iron, including an archive video in which Earl tells the story of how he started the foundry, visit www.ebaa.com.

“Did you know there are creative ways to support RTS, ways in which RTS, you and your loved ones all benefit at the same time? Such giving techniques are called “planned gifts,” because with thoughtful planning, you create win-win solutions for you and RTS.”

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For more information on planned giving to RTS visit rts.plannedgiving.org or call Cheryl McCullouch, Development Operations Coordinator, at 601-923-1653.

The material presented on the website is not offered as legal or tax advice.
Keith Berger is a self-described mutt — culturally speaking, that is. All his life, in God’s sovereignty, Keith has been placed in situations where he’s had to learn to fit in. That’s what happens when, like Keith, your father was Jewish, your mother was Protestant, you attended a Catholic high school, you went to college in North Carolina after growing up near Philadelphia, you served five years in the Army, you lived in Florida for a year, you attended RTS Jackson — OK, you get the picture.

Today, after all his cultural transitions, Keith serves as an area coordinator for Reformed University Fellowship, the official campus ministry of the PCA denomination (see “RTS and RUF: A Common Legacy” on page 35). In that role he has found a distinct ministry fit, through which he helps RUF campus ministers carry out their callings more effectively.

Keith’s own calling to vocational ministry followed the aforementioned circuitous route. That path began in his teen years, when he came to faith in Christ through the influence of peers who evangelized him, as well as his studies in high school.
“One year in school, one of my teachers’ curriculum for the entire year was man’s inhumanity to man,” Keith explains. “I read all these books on, basically, human sin and how it affects one another. By the end of my sophomore year I was pretty undone, and I remember being by myself in my room, [thinking about] all the care of my friends and their talk about Jesus and the gospel, and I prayed, ‘Lord, if you’re true, if you’re real …’ I felt the weight of my sin, and it was a real turning point.”

Keith attended Duke University on an Army ROTC scholarship, matriculating there alongside many future gospel ministers, including Mark Dever (co-founder of Together for the Gospel) and others he later joined in the PCA. After graduation, Keith served his mandatory five-year Army hitch at Fort Campbell in Kentucky, where as a platoon leader he learned many lessons about leadership that helped prepare him for his future calling.
“Taking orders and giving them, leading folks who were twice my age, I had to outgrow a huge intimidation factor at first,” Keith recalls. “But I learned that age didn’t matter if they knew that you cared for them and had their best interests at heart, even if you had to make hard decisions. You earned trust with them over time.”

Part of the trust-earning process involved seeing some of his fellow soldiers come to faith in Christ. “It was a wide array of people,” he says. “One was a fellow platoon leader who was a self-proclaimed deity. Another was my company commander’s driver, a guy from a broken, poor family in Chicago. Another was an atheist — we met the first day at Fort Campbell and struck up a friendship, and three years later he came to faith. It was a sweet season of reaping.”

Keith finished his time in the Army at a self-proclaimed crossroads. “I could’ve stayed in for a career or applied to medical school,” he recalls. “But through seeing some gifts and being involved in a PCA church plant, my pastor was encouraging me toward ministry, and some friends were also encouraging me in that regard.”

The next step in that direction involved a stint as a full-time college minister at a church in Tennessee. “I said to myself, ‘I’m going to give this a shot and see what happens.’ They gave me the keys to two vans and gave me 26 students, and said they wanted me to take them all to [RUF’s annual] summer conference. It was an eye-opening experience — I had a lot of questions about ministry and the sense of knowing just enough to be dangerous, not knowing what I was doing, but knowing I didn’t know what I was doing. At that conference I saw guys who loved what they were doing and who loved students, and I resonated with the ethos of what they were about. I saw a thoughtfulness to ministry that valued students and their questions.”

Along the way Keith met Bebo Elkin, an RTS alumnus and a longtime RUF campus minister. Through Bebo’s influence, Keith spent a year as an RUF intern at Florida State University, which was “a sweet time” (“sweet” is a
favorite word of Keith’s). At the end of that year Keith began looking at seminaries, during which he met Dr. Ligon Duncan, now chancellor and CEO of RTS, but then senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi. Through Dr. Duncan, Keith made the final decision to attend RTS Jackson. Keith served on the First Presbyterian staff and for RUF at Millsaps College while attending RTS.

When Keith reflects on his time at RTS, he talks about the “Four Horsemen” — not of the Apocalypse, but rather four professors who influenced him most: Dr. Ralph Davis, Dr. John Currid, Dr. Knox Chamblin and Dr. Dennis Ireland.

“They made me understand biblical theology in a way that was both rigorous but beautiful,” Keith explains.
“There was a pastoral kindness in Ralph Davis and Knox Chamblin that was really sweet, and I needed. John Currid was helpful because he was willing to say things as they were, but he showed me how to do it in the right way. I appreciated Dennis Ireland because he was in charge of our prayer group, but he was willing to say, ‘I don’t think we’ve done this well so far.’ There was a humility in him that was helpful for me.”

After graduating from RTS in 1998, Keith and his wife, Paige (an RUF intern he met while in seminary) moved to Baton Rouge, La., where he became the RUF campus minister at Louisiana State University. After 10 years at LSU, Keith transitioned in the role of area coordinator with RUF. That position carries three responsibilities: shepherding, coaching and consulting.

“Shepherding involves pastoral care for campus ministers and their wives and families, with an understood limit to that role of that based on proximity and frequency,” Keith observes. “There’s also a coaching aspect that involves teaching young campus ministers, but also helping veteran ministers rethink and retool in light of a fixed theology and philosophy of ministry. The consulting piece involves helping [PCA] committees understand what effective ministry looks like, being an advocate for the campus minister to the committee, but also an advocate for the work to the presbytery.”

Keith acknowledges that his current area coordinator role was somewhat undefined when he started — as he puts it with a laugh, “I think we were building a plane as we were flying it.” But if anyone has been equipped to take on such a distinct role in ministry, it’s a mutt like Keith who’s had to learn to adapt to a new culture at every stage in life.

Learn more about Reformed University Fellowship at www.ruf.org.
The relationship between RTS and Reformed University Fellowship runs deep. RTS alumnus Mark Lowrey started the first RUF campus ministry at the University of Southern Mississippi in 1971, two years before the founding of the PCA denomination, of which RUF is the official campus ministry. Dr. Rod Mays, an adjunct professor at RTS Charlotte, was RUF’s national coordinator for many years and has returned to that role on an interim basis. RTS alumnus Bebo Elkin served as a longtime RUF campus minister and helped recruit countless RTS students (including Keith Berger — see main article) to RUF. In fact, more RTS graduates serve in RUF campus ministry than those from any other seminary. The RTS influence on RUF has helped shape RUF’s distinct mission. One way to explain this mission is to break down the three words in its name. Reformed describes RUF’s commitment to the biblical convictions of historic Christianity. University refers to how RUF seeks to be more than just a ministry on the university campus, but also a ministry for the university, striving to help students explore how the Lordship of Christ informs every area of life. Fellowship emphasizes how God’s answer to human alienation from Himself is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and how His answer to disintegrated relationships is the church of Jesus, RUF being an arm of the church reaching out to the college campus.

Practically speaking, RUF is committed to ordained, seminary trained campus ministers and interns serving on college campuses, gathering student groups, and equipping them for a lifetime of service both in the church and in the world. From a student’s viewpoint, RUF will appear in various forms:

- Large-group meetings for teaching, worship and fellowship
- Small-group Bible studies for connecting and deeper study
- One-on-one meetings with the campus minister, interns or student leadership
- Regional and national conferences
- Service opportunities to those in need

Learn more about Reformed University Fellowship at www.ruf.org.
Photographs by Andrew Welch
JOHN JOHNSON, AFRICAN-AMERICAN PASTOR

Interview by Dr. Charlie Wingard

JOHN JOHNSON is a historic pastor. The RTS student, who until this spring studied at the Jackson campus, was formally installed in June as the pastor at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Houston. Founded in 1866, Antioch is not only the oldest historically African-American Baptist church in Houston, but it is also the first structure of any kind in Houston built, owned and operated by newly emancipated slaves.

Dr. Charlie Wingard, one of Pastor Johnson’s professors at RTS Jackson, interviewed him in April after an RTS class on leadership taught by Dr. Wingard. The interview also served as a tribute to the professor/student relationship between the two men as Pastor Johnson began his transition from Jackson to Houston, both in his new pastoral calling to Antioch and the continuation of his RTS studies at RTS Houston.
I confessed that the Lord had called me to preach, and pastor sat me aside for about a year, taught me, gave me books to read. Even from there I knew I needed more. That was my call to preaching. People talk about how far they ran from the calling, but it wasn’t that kind of experience for me. As ignorant as I was to all the nuances and paradigms of preaching, I knew this is what I had been placed on this earth to do. I knew because when I did, it was like a burden lifted, like eyes opened. I loved to read, but I didn’t know a lot. I couldn’t afford the education I wanted at that time. But I knew I had been called to preach the gospel. And at that early age of 19, I started out. I had a church at 20 years old.

In the African-American tradition I grew up in, to be called to ministry you had to be presented before the church. I didn’t know a lot about what it was, but I knew I wanted to share God’s Word. I don’t know why at that early age I was so in love with preaching. I would be on the church bus at age 15 going to hear preaching in the afternoon. It was then that it was burning in my heart to share the gospel.
I served my first church starting in October 1994. I preached at a youth day at a church, and the other deacons heard me and asked me if I would come over, and I said sure. I didn’t know anything better, so I preached for them every Sunday, and they elected me and was ordained. That was my first church. In hindsight, with all the experience I learned, I never would’ve taken that church. I would’ve waited, gotten me a mentor, went to school, taken my time and learned more. But nevertheless they were wonderful people.
I was at Bible college, and my Greek professor said, “John, you’re about to graduate, and you highly need to consider seminary.” I looked at other seminaries, but my professor said, “You need to go online and look at RTS. You’re serious about biblical language; you’re good at it.”

So I looked at RTS, and I found out that its heart was in preaching the Word of God and training ministers in the Bible — not around the Bible, and not all the philosophical whims attached to the Bible, even though those other areas of learning are great. The people at RTS are so driven to study the Word of God. That immediately caught my attention, because it was so conservative, and the other schools were so liberal in their approach.

I wanted RTS, and I was already driving two hours to Bible college, so the drive wasn’t going to bother me. I came to RTS, and it’s the best decision I ever made.

John Johnson
WHAT DO YOU THINK RTS CAN OFFER MEN PREPARING FOR MINISTRY IN HISTORICALLY BLACK CHURCHES?

It offers a biblical approach to ministry, a true heart drive for biblical preaching, the formation of your spiritual life, and a camaraderie of colleagues beyond the professor and student — it’s a family here. RTS will go far beyond to make sure you succeed. And they want you to learn not to be an “A” student, but a godly person with a heart after God.

So I think for any African Americans serious about their call to preach the gospel, RTS would be the greatest place for them, because it would sharpen them, and put a discipline and a passion in them that no matter where they go, nobody can take away what they got. Nobody! For any African American, RTS is the place to be if you’re serious about Scripture, about the language and about the forming of your own life.

IN THE LEADERSHIP CLASS EARLIER THIS MORNING, YOU TALKED ABOUT BLACK MINISTERS THAT RTS STUDENTS SHOULD BE READING. WHO ARE SOME OF THOSE MINISTERS?

We talked about Lemuel Haynes, John Chavis, E.V. Hill, Samuel DeWitt Proctor, A. Louis Patterson, H.B. Charles, Ralph West and Manuel Scott. And James Earl Massey is good for keeping a pastor humble.

YOU HAD RECOMMENDED JAMES EARL MASSEY’S BOOK THE BURDENSOME JOY OF PREACHING TO ME LAST YEAR, AND I READ IT WITH GREAT PROFIT. WHAT ABOUT THE MINISTRY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.? HOW HAS HE INFLUENCED YOU?

People often misunderstand Martin Luther King because they think of him and the civil rights movement, but they don’t get to know Martin Luther King the preacher. All those speeches we hear — like “I Have a Dream” — were founded as sermons. What we heard at the Lincoln Memorial was a sermon he’d preached years ago.

So I think it would behoove all of us to know Martin the preacher at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, that guy who came straight out of seminary and grew up in his father’s church. Preaching had been in his family lineage for years. There are many others like him.
IT'S VERY IMPORTANT BEFORE WE GET DISTURBED ABOUT A TRADITION THAT WE DO OUR DUE DILIGENCE TO LEARN THE TRADITION ABOUT A TRADITION BEFORE WE GET DISTURBED.
to get to know, even though we don’t agree with their doctrinal presentation, but we need to see the environment they came from.

SOME OBSERVERS FROM OUTSIDE YOUR TRADITION ARE SURPRISED BY THE EMOTION EXPRESSED IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN WORSHIP. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM YOUR TRADITION?

That’s what it is — a tradition. It’s very important before we get disturbed about a tradition that we do our due diligence to learn the tradition, where it came from, back to the days of slavery, back to the days of plantations, and find the relationship between the pastor, the preacher, the slave, the slave owner, the master of the house, and the slaves in the field and the slaves in the house, and how dangerous it was for any preacher or slave to go out and preach a message that would contradict the message of the master. He could lose his life. So codes had to be created. The call-and-response is nothing more than the code in the congregation. Nowadays it has turned into a lot of fallacious things that have no bearing on the truth of God’s Word. Some use it, and shouldn’t use it, to drive people’s emotions to get their point across. I don’t think we should ever clearance-rack the truth just to get a cheap “Amen.” The truth of God’s Word stands for itself, and we don’t need anything to bag it up or prop it up.

But let’s not degrade or turn a blind eye to what it means for a suffering person who has gone through injustices and racist biases, and they’re hurting, and they hear an affirming, encouraging, exhortative word on Sunday from the biblical text, expository preaching in its context, and they just cry out. You’ve got to understand the environment where they’re coming from, instead of condemning it, and not use the call-and-response as a polluted paradigm of preaching in order to get your own personal point across or to get applause. I think that’s dangerous.

YOU’RE GOING TO BECOME PASTOR AT THE HISTORIC ANTILOC BAPTIST CHURCH IN HOUSTON. WHAT ARE YOUR LEADERSHIP GOALS AS YOU BEGIN YOUR WORK THERE?

First off, I’m very excited. This has been a long process. St. Paul Baptist is a wonderful, loving church, and if it were left up to me, I would be there the rest of my days. But God moved and created another assignment.

My first objective is, honestly, to go in and pray for the people. I don’t have this big vision in the first week — we need to take our time and be patient. I’m going to start a series preaching through 1 Thessalonians. I’m starting there because it was recommended a couple of years ago by one of my professors — you in particular. When you start at a new church, look at 1 Thessalonians to see the hope, the joy, the encouragement for the people as they live in the time of the coming Christ.
I also want to get to know the people and my elders; I want to spend some time with them. I want to see where we are. Antioch is a great ministry now — they don’t need my own personality to change the whole paradigm. In time, as ministry needs approach, we will look at those together. But for now, I just want to go in and pray for the people, go through this transition, be with my family, get to know my deacons and elders and leadership staff, and love those people, and preach the gospel.

I am privileged beyond my imagination to be the pastor of Antioch. If you had told me two years ago that I would be the pastor there, I would’ve told you that you were the biggest comedian in the world. But by God’s sovereign grace and providential hand, he brought it to pass, and I’m humbled beyond my thought pattern at this opportunity. Not to make me big, but it’s amazing how God can make your name great if you just follow after God, and He will do all the rest.

At Antioch they didn’t even know my name, but God somehow brought my name to them. And out of all the lofty qualifications, God looked beyond all that and found a guy in Mississippi, hiding out here at RTS.

And now RTS is in Houston, 20 minutes away from the church. I’m going to continue my RTS classes this summer — I’ve got 39 more hours to go, so I can’t stop now!
TRAVELING AND SPEAKING

DR. LIGON DUNCAN

will speak at the Grace Evangelical Church missions conference, Germantown, TN, Sept. 30; the TGC West Conference, Fullerton, CA, Oct. 16-18; the OPC Presbytery at RTS Orlando, Oct. 25; Bible Church of Little Rock (AR), Oct. 28; the Doxology and Theology Conference at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, Nov. 8-10; the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting, Denver, Nov. 13-15; the 9Marks Conference, Kansas City, MO, Feb. 12-13, 2019; Covenant PCA, Birmingham, AL, Feb. 24; the Shepherd’s Conference, Sun Valley, CA, Mar. 5-8; the Ligonier National Conference, Orlando, FL, Mar. 14-16; and Westminster Theological Seminary (Gaffin Lecture), Philadelphia, Mar. 20.

DR. MICHAEL ALLEN


DR. JAMES N. ANDERSON

will speak at the RTS Charlotte Faculty Forum, Oct. 30, on “Discrimination and Privilege in Biblical Perspective.”

taught a course on covenant theology, and preached and led a workshop on apologetics and pastoral ministry in East Asia, June 25-July 2; participated in the first consultation of the Global Alliance for Theological Education, Seoul, July 3-5; and presented the invited paper “Post-Christian Apologetics: The MA & PA Objection to Christian Faith” at the Korean Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting, July 7. He will lead a Reformation Conference, Ruston, LA, Nov. 2-4.

DR. BRUCE BAUGUS

will present his paper “A Neglected Text: Critical Siglum in Codex Vaticanus, and Its Import for the Matthean Text” at the Society of Biblical Literature meeting, Denver, Nov. 17-20.

REV. KEVIN DEYOUNG

will speak at a conference at Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC, Oct. 12-14; the TGC West Coast Conference, Fullerton, CA, Oct. 16-18; the TGC Canada National Conference, Toronto, Oct. 23-31; conferences at Queensland Theological College, Brisbane, Australia, and the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students, Sydney, Nov. 23-Dec. 6; the Cross Conference, Indianapolis, Jan. 2-5, 2019; Clarius 2019, Albuquerque, NM, March 1-3; and the TGC National Conference, Indianapolis, April 1-3.

DR. CHARLES HILL

will speak at the Grace Evangelical Church missions conference, Germantown, TN, Sept. 30; the TGC West Conference, Fullerton, CA, Oct. 16-18; the OPC Presbytery at RTS Orlando, Oct. 25; Bible Church of Little Rock (AR), Oct. 28; the Doxology and Theology Conference at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, Nov. 8-10; the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting, Denver, Nov. 13-15; the 9Marks Conference, Kansas City, MO, Feb. 12-13, 2019; Covenant PCA, Birmingham, AL, Feb. 24; the Shepherd’s Conference, Sun Valley, CA, Mar. 5-8; the Ligonier National Conference, Orlando, FL, Mar. 14-16; and Westminster Theological Seminary (Gaffin Lecture), Philadelphia, Mar. 20.
TRAVELING AND SPEAKING

**DR. JAMES NEWHEISER**
will speak at the ACBC National Conference, Fort Worth, TX, Sept. 28-Oct. 4; Conference Covenant Church (OPC), Orland Park, IL, Oct. 5-7; Grace Covenant Church, Virginia Beach, VA, Oct. 21; an underground seminary in the Far East, Jan. 2019; a conference at Cornerstone Bible Church, Middlefield, OH, Feb. 15-18; and a conference at Timberlake Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA, March 1-3.

**DR. MICHAEL KRUGER**
will preach at Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, NC, Oct. 28; and speak at the Reformation Conference, FirstReformed Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Nov. 3-4; and a conference at Peach Church (PCA), Cary, NC, Mar. 2-3, 2019.

**DR. GREGORY LANIER**
will deliver two presentations in November at the ETS meeting and one presentation at the SBL meeting, on various topics related to the Greek Old Testament.

**DR. SCOTT SWAIN**
will travel to Denver in November for the annual gatherings of the ETS and SBL. He will also speak at the Bethlehem Pastors Conference, Minneapolis, Jan. 29, 2019, and teach systematic theology at RTS Washington D.C., Mar. 18-22.

**DR. GUY RICHARD**
will speak at the Westminster Bible Conference, Clinton, SC, Oct. 13-14.

**DR. MICHAEL MCKELVEY**
will participate in a panel discussion on the canonical approach to the Psalms at the ETS annual meeting in November.

**DR. MILES VAN PELT**
will teach *Isaiah to Malachi* at SEMBEQ Seminary, Montréal, Apr. 15-19, 2019.

**DR. GUY WATERS**
will speak at the missions conference at Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church, Simpsonville, SC, in October.

**DR. SCOTT REDD**

wrote a new commentary on Amos for the 12-volume ESV Expository Commentary (Crossway, Sept.) and the chapter “Exalting Christ by Preaching Him and Him Crucified” in the festschrift *Exalting Christ: Essays in Honor of Fred A. Malone* (Founders Press, 2018).

**DR. MIKE MCKELVEY**

wrote *Grounded in Heaven: Recentering Christian Hope and Life on God* (Eerdmans, Oct.).

**DR. RICHARD BELCHER**

wrote *Finding Favour in the Sight of God: A Theology of Wisdom Literature* as part of the NSBT series (Apollos and InterVarsity, early fall).

**RE. KEVIN DEYOUNG**

wrote *Baptism: Answers to Common Questions* (Reformation Trust, late 2018 or early 2019).

**DR. GUY RICHARD**


**DR. MILES VAN PELT**

**PUBLICATIONS**

**DR. CHARLES HILL**


**DR. GREG LANIER**


**DR. GUY WATERS**

wrote *The Lord’s Supper as the Sign and Meal of the New Covenant* (Crossway, Jan. 2019).
EVENTS

JACKSON

- Dr. Ric Cannada, RTS chancellor emeritus, was keynote speaker at the missions conference, Sept. 11-12.
- The Conference on Christian Counseling, Oct. 11-12, will include keynote speakers Dr. William Richardson (RTS Jackson professor), Dr. Lindsey Fikkert and Dr. Curt Thompson.
- The John Reed Miller Preaching Lectures, Oct. 30-Nov. 1, will feature keynote speaker Dr. Sinclair Ferguson, RTS chancellor’s professor.

ORLANDO

- A seminar room was dedicated in memory of Dr. Simon J. Kistemaker, Sept. 4.
- The Hughes Preaching Lectures, Nov. 6-7, will feature Dr. Phillip Ryken, president of Wheaton College, on preaching and depression.
- The first Paideia Center for Theological Discipleship conference will take place Jan. 9-10, 2019. The topic will be the triune God, and Dr. Carl Trueman, Rev. Blair Smith and Dr. Scott Swain will speak (see page 9 for more information).
- The Kistemaker Academic Lecture Series, March 5-6, will feature Fred Sanders.
- Preview Day: Oct. 10.

WASHINGTON D.C.

- Dr. Scott Redd and Dr. Paul Jeon are leading an eight-week study on Philippians on Tuesdays from 10-11 a.m. It not only covers the content but also ways to lead others in the study of the letter.

ATLANTA

The campus is launching its new Center for Study of the Bible and Ethnicity. Dr. Carl Ellis, RTS assistant to the chancellor, senior fellow of the African American Leadership Initiative, and provost’s professor of theology and culture, gave the inaugural lecture on Aug. 24, and a kickoff event took place on Sept. 20.

HOUSTON

- Oct. 11 — Student Dinner at Christ Evangelical Presbyterian Church
- Mar. 21, 2019 — Spring Banquet

DALLAS

- Dr. Scott Redd and Dr. Paul Jeon are leading an eight-week study on Philippians on Tuesdays from 10-11 a.m. It not only covers the content but also ways to lead others in the study of the letter.

NEW YORK CITY

- Chapel — Oct. 4, Nov. 8 and Dec. 6, 7:15 p.m.

CHARLOTTE

- Harold O.J. Brown Lecture, Feb. 19, 2019, 11 a.m., Dr. Michael Horton
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 Churches need leaders with sound theological training and the heart of a shepherd, yet many seminaries hire professors with no pastoral experience. At Reformed Theological Seminary, 90% of our full-time faculty are ordained pastors because we see the importance of having scholars who are pastors to prepare pastors. Learn from pastor-scholars who understand that sound doctrine and fervent love for God’s people are the bedrock of ministry.