

# MINISTRY &

REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FALL 2012  
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# LEADERSHIP

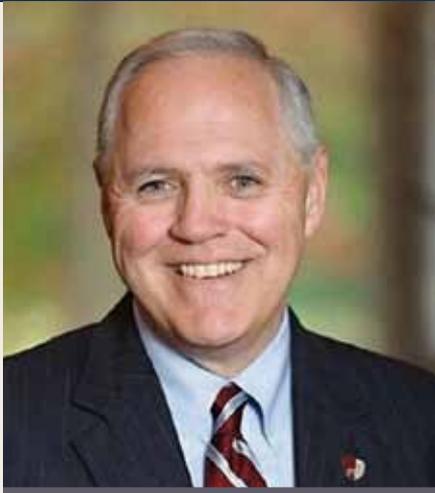


## MUSLIMS AMONG US

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“CHRISTIAN  
ENCOUNTER  
WITH  
ISLAM”  
IS A NEW  
RTS  
CURRICULUM  
INITIATIVE.

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Chancellor and CEO

## From Humble Beginnings to Glory in the Sky

I remember a sign in a tree nursery that read, “Mighty oaks come from tiny acorns!” How true! Consider that one can step across the Mississippi River at its head in Minnesota, and yet as Old Man River dumps into the Gulf of Mexico, great merchant ships take advantage of the mighty expansiveness of that famous waterway.

Humble origins and extraordinary conclusions also happen with people. For instance, Abraham Lincoln’s compelling epic story is well known. Also, in recently reading a new, wonderful biography of George Washington, I have been reminded that Washington, too, started in rather humble fashion before becoming the “Father of Our Country.” And if you’ve never read Dr. Paul Kengor’s *God and Ronald Reagan: A Spiritual Life*, you are missing a modern-day classic biography.

The 40th president of the United States started his life as the son of an alcoholic traveling salesman who couldn’t keep a job. Yet his Calvinistic Christian mother grounded the future leader of the free world in the truths of the Word of God and particularly in the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Later in life, Reagan would point

to that doctrine as the single greatest spiritual force that shaped his thinking. In a real way, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the outcome of the Cold War can be traced, at least in part, to the doctrinal conviction of a Midwestern homemaker and believer named Nelle Reagan, who placed in her son Ronnie a vision of the glory of God and His power over evil. Indeed, great things often have humble beginnings when the Lord is at work.

RTS is, in many ways, a growing oak that started as a small acorn, or, if you prefer, a sweeping river that began as a narrow stream. This seminary is, I believe, a movement of the Holy Spirit through the lives of humble servants, faculty members, staff members, students and alumni. The power of this movement began by the quiet but ardent prayers of a small band of believers and the many unnamed supporters who followed them. More specifically, this great river carrying the truth of God’s Word to the world began with a handful of men on their knees in a hotel room in Memphis, Tennessee. It also began through a humble evangelist by the name of the Rev. Sam Patterson, who had a clear dream, and

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### WHO WE ARE

Reformed Theological Seminary exists to serve the church by preparing its leaders through a globally accessible program of theological education based on the authority of the inerrant Word of God and committed to the Reformed faith. This program promotes biblical fidelity, confessional integrity and academic excellence, and seeks to prepare students marked by “A mind for truth. A heart for God.”

As such, Ministry & Leadership exists to show how God is working through the ministries of its graduates, faculty members and students.

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Ministry & Leadership promotes RTS through articles designed to edify its readers through solid biblical instruction, and through reports that focus primarily on the national and global impact of RTS students, faculty and alumni. 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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## TRAVEL

**Dr. James Anderson** will give a lecture at Virginia Tech on Sept. 19 with the tentative title "Why Universities Need God."

**Rev. Reddit Andrews** will deliver a plenary address at the Together for Adoption national conference at Cross Pointe Church, Duluth, Ga., Sept. 15.

**Dr. Steve Childers** will help lead a national "Treasuring Christ Together" Church Planting Network meeting at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Sept. 27-28.

**Prof. Mike Glodo** will chair a panel discussion sponsored by Crossway Books on the forthcoming *Inerrancy and the Gospels* by Vern Poythress at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Milwaukee, Nov. 14-16.

**Dr. Michael Milton** will present his paper "The Green Puritan Party: 17th Century English and American Puritanism and the Pastoral Integration of Theology and Creation" at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Milwaukee. He will also begin taping for the fall season of *Faith for Living* starting on Aug. 31, with six planned sessions around the theme "Fly High with 'The Mighty Eighth': An Exposition of Romans Chapter Eight." Dr. Milton continues his chaplain duties at Fort Jackson, S.C., Sept. 16-28 and Oct. 28-Nov. 9.

**Dr. Don Sweeting** spoke on "The Spiritual Life of the Busy Pastor" at the monthly gathering of the Colorado Acts 29 pastors at L2 Church, Denver, July 27. He will be a panel speaker and workshop presenter at the Leaders Learning From Leaders Conference at RTS-Orlando, Sept. 7-8, in conjunction with Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Oviedo. Also, he will preach at Redeemer PCA Church, Traverse City, Mich., Sept. 2; Wooddale Church, Eden Prairie, Minn., Sept. 29-30 and Oct. 6-7; and at the Reformation Day chapel service at RTS-Orlando, Oct. 31.

## TRAVEL (INTERNATIONAL)

**Dr. Bruce Baugus** will teach three different

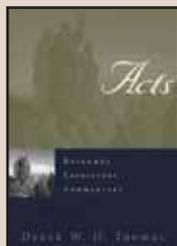
courses at three different locations in East Asia over three weeks this October.

**Dr. Sam Larsen** taught two modular courses at RTS and Andrew Jumper Graduate Theological Center's joint D.Min. program, Sao Paulo, Brazil, Aug. 6-17. He also spoke along with RTS alumni Dr. Valdeci Santos and Dr. Emilio Neto at a conference on Reformed ministry at the church planted and pastored by Dr. Neto in Brasilia, Aug. 18-19.

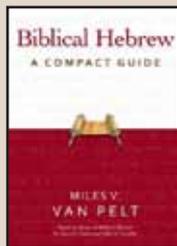
## PUBLICATIONS

**Dr. John Frame** has re-edited his book *Evangelical Reunion* and made it available online with easy-access links to Bible references at [www.evangelicalreunion.org](http://www.evangelicalreunion.org). He wrote the chapter "N.T. Wright and the Authority of Scripture" for David B. Garner, ed., *Did God Really Say?* (P&R); and "Tribute to Norman Shepherd" in Andrew Sandlin, ed., *Obedient Faith: A Festschrift for Norman Shepherd* (Kerygma House).

**Dr. Michael Milton** has authored the book *Sacred Assembly: 15 Biblical Steps to Renew Your Church* (P&R Publishing, Oct. 29).



**Dr. Derek Thomas** has authored the book *Acts Commentary* (part of the *Reformed Expository Commentary* series). It has been selected as a 2012 Christian Book Awards finalist in the Bible Reference category.



**Dr. Miles V. Van Pelt** authored the new book *Biblical Hebrew: A Compact Guide* (Zondervan, Aug. 1). It offers intermediate Hebrew students the opportunity to quickly refresh their memories on Hebrew language forms, grammar and word meanings.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Dr. James N. Anderson** was approved as academic dean for RTS-Virtual by the executive committee on June 7. He will retain his full-time duties as a professor at RTS-Charlotte.



**Dr. Ric Cannada** was elected vice chairman of the board of World Reformed Fellowship at the annual WRF board meeting, Apr. 24-26. Also, the board of RTS has named a building at RTS-Charlotte campus in honor of Dr. Cannada, who is now RTS chancellor emeritus (see above).

**Dr. Michael J. Kruger** has assumed the role as academic dean of RTS-Atlanta, in addition to his position as academic dean and professor of New Testament at RTS-Charlotte.

**Dr. Peter Lee** has been promoted to associate professor of Old Testament at RTS-Washington, D.C.



**Dr. Scott Redd** became president of RTS-Washington, D.C., on June 1. He is a graduate of The College of William and Mary, earned his M.Div. at RTS-Orlando

(where he was a professor and dean of students), and recently completed his dissertation to earn his Ph.D. in the Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures program at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

**Dr. Guy Prentiss Waters** was recently appointed to serve on the PCA's Study Committee on Insider Movements.

The Georgia House of Representatives passed a resolution on March 21 commending RTS-Atlanta "for its contributions to the field of education" and extending to the seminary its "sincere best wishes for future success." The resolution

specifically mentions that RTS exists to glorify the triune God and upholds the authority of His inerrant Word. To view the resolution, visit [www1.legis.ga.gov/legis/2011\\_12/sum/hr1952.htm](http://www1.legis.ga.gov/legis/2011_12/sum/hr1952.htm).

**Kevin Collins** became director of admissions at RTS-Orlando on June 1. He most recently served as senior pastor of West End Presbyterian Church, Hopewell, Va. Before that he was assistant pastor / church planting apprentice at Kirk o' the Isles Church, Savannah, Ga., under the leadership of Dr. Michael Milton. He graduated cum laude with an M.Div. from Knox Theological Seminary and earned his D.Min. at Covenant Theological Seminary.

**Geoff Sackett** has been appointed dean of students for RTS-Washington, D.C.

This January, RTS is sponsoring the China's Reforming Churches conference. To be held in the Washington, D.C., area, it will promote opportunities to advance Reformed theology and biblical church practice. The three-day event will gather Reformed scholars, China experts and key ministry leaders to discuss the current need, opportunities and challenges for biblical church development in mainland China. For more information, e-mail **Dr. Bruce Baugus** (RTS-Jackson) at [bbaugus@rts.edu](mailto:bbaugus@rts.edu).

## MILTON INAUGURATION

On September 14, **Dr. Michael Milton** will be inaugurated as chancellor and CEO of RTS at Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, N.C., at 1:30 p.m. A scholars conference precedes the ceremony at 9 a.m. with a panel of distinguished guests including Dr. Ric Cannada, Dr. Bryan Chapell, Dr. Ligon Duncan, Dr. George Grant, Dr. Peter Lillback, Dr. Samuel Logan, Dr. Albert Mohler and Dr. Derek Thomas. Information about attending can be found at [rts.edu/miltoninauguration](http://rts.edu/miltoninauguration). Dr. Milton became chancellor and CEO of RTS on June 1 upon the retirement of Dr. Cannada.

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# GET A MIDLIFE!

## Make the second half of your life count.

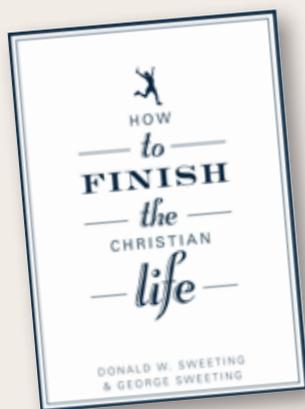
**EVER HAVE SOMEONE TELL YOU TO** “get a life”? As a pastor I’ve had to tell quite a few people recently to “get a midlife.” Why? Because so many are not prepared for this season ahead. We’re either in denial that we are in the second half of life or unaware of the challenges and opportunities before us.

The second half is not what it used to be. People are living longer and retiring later. Consider this: In 1900, the average life expectancy in the U.S. was 46 for males and 47 for females. Today it is almost 80. In other words, in the last 100 years God has added 30 years to our lives. Bottom line: Many will have a much longer second half and have not yet come to terms with God’s new gift.

Not only that, over 20 years of pastoral experience has shown me that many Christians do not have a vision for the second half of life. All the while, the boomer generation is moving toward retirement with astonishing speed (10,000 boomers will turn 65 each day for the next 20 years).

To complicate matters further, the American retirement dream we grew up with now has huge holes in it. Our 401(k)s have become 201(k)s. Company pensions and perks have fallen away. The value of our homes has dropped. Social Security is in crisis. All this should be enough to get us thinking about what’s ahead.

In our new book, *How to Finish the Christian Life: Following Jesus in the Second Half*, my father, Dr. George Sweeting, and I look at many issues on the road ahead — the need to think about retirement biblically, the importance of investing in the younger generation, job transitions, identity, generosity, significance, suffering, getting our relational house in order, dying and what it means to finish well. Here are just a few lessons we’ve discovered about getting a midlife and finishing well.



First, **people who finish well have a marathon mindset.** They view life not as a sprint, but as a marathon. They run with endurance. Hebrews 12:1 says, “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” It envisions a long race.

Consider marathon runner John Steven Akhwari from Tanzania, who stumbled and badly injured himself in the Mexico City Olympics in 1968. He finally limped to the finish line and then collapsed, an hour after the winner crossed it. When asked why he endured such pain, the runner said, “My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race. They sent me to finish the race.”

In the words of Eugene Peterson, those who finish well pace themselves and aim at “a long obedience in the same direction.”

Second, **those who finish well are good stewards of their bodies.** They remember that their bodies are temples of God (1 Corinthians 6:19).

A doctor friend who specializes in aging said to me, “Don, there are two ways to grow old — you can grow old in shape and out of shape. Those who grow old out of shape have immensely more complications. While we can’t stop aging, we can slow down the aging process by taking care of ourselves.”

In our book, my father and I talk about some of our heroes who have served Christ into their upper 80s. By taking care of themselves, they have extended their life impact on their children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren.

A third lesson is that **people who finish well stay close to Christ and embrace the gospel through the second half.** They know that Jesus is life! He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is forever young — the fountain of youth. Charles Spurgeon once said, “Christ is the great master-key



of all the chambers of God: there is no treasure-house of God which will not open and yield up all its wealth to the soul that lives near to Jesus.” One of those treasures is that He gives living water to those who abide in Him.

Not only that, but His gospel keeps us young on the inside. It preserves us, stabilizes us, and holds us up when life weighs us down. It is a treasure in jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:16). So even as our outward body wastes away, our inner person can be renewed day by day.

Fourth, **people who finish well think about death and heaven!** This sounds insane to most people. It is not conventional wisdom. According to conventional wisdom, thinking about your death is morbid, and if you think about heaven, you will be “so heavenly minded you are no earthly good!”

Like Paul, their vision of ending well is not lounging at Club Med with a drink in hand. Instead it is one of crossing the Med (Mediterranean Sea) and having one’s life poured out as a drink offering for the fame of Christ.

People who finish well do not check out of service. They serve as long as they possibly can until the Lord calls them home. They do what was modeled by my friend Chuck Colson, whose ministry came to an abrupt halt this year in the midst of service. He lived out that famous quotation he liked to repeat: “Remain at your posts and do your duty — for the glory of God and His kingdom.”

That’s great advice for second-halfers, and all those who need to get a midlife! **M**

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## PEOPLE WHO FINISH WELL HAVE A MARATHON MINDSET. THEY VIEW LIFE NOT AS A SPRINT, BUT AS A MARATHON.

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But the truth is just the opposite. It is supremely wise to think about your death and the legacy you want to leave. In a previous age, contemplating the day of one’s death helped people live more fully and urgently in the present. If you think about your death, you will not waste your life, but will strive to make each day count!

Not only that, the conventional wisdom is also wrong about heaven. Heaven is not Sun City, Arizona, or Naples, Florida. Heaven involves being with Christ and a regenerated universe. Truth is, if you live with heaven in mind you will be of more earthly good now. For you will realize that God’s retirement plan is the best package out there. Heavenly hope infuses Christians with courage and the strength to take risks for the glory of God and the blessing of others.

Finally, **people who finish well do not drop out of service.** Instead, they serve Christ as long as they possibly can in any way that they can. The biggest mistake you can make is to “retire from serving.” In Luke 10:28, after hearing a lawyer repeat the Great Commandments, and just before the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus said, “Do this and live.” When we love God and serve others, we receive life.

The craziest words I think I ever heard as a pastor were, “Pastor, I did my time — it’s time for someone else to serve.”

“Really? Retire from serving?” I would say in disbelief. “Don’t you understand that the surest way to shrivel up and die on the inside is to stop serving?”

Those who finish well don’t retire from serving others.

*Dr. Sweeting is the president of RTS-Orlando. His father, Dr. George Sweeting, was the longtime president of Moody Bible Institute. This article is based on their new book How to Finish the Christian Life: Following Jesus in the Second Half, which can be ordered from the RTS-Orlando bookstore by e-mailing [gthompson@rts.edu](mailto:gthompson@rts.edu) or calling 800-390-7426.*



## The Overcoming Church

God's people can successfully engage today's world with the gospel.

**TODAY'S CHURCH IS CONFRONTED WITH INTENSE** cultural pressure from within and without. Much of it is rooted in our generation's reigning "plausibility structures" — a term popularized by Peter Berger referring to beliefs and meanings held by individuals and groups, imbedded in cultural institutions and processes. They can also be thought of as what Tim Keller calls "defeater beliefs," described in his book *Deconstructing Defeater Beliefs* as "common-sense consensus beliefs that automatically make Christianity seem implausible to people."

Keller offers six such "defeater beliefs" that hinder gospel witness:

- The exclusivity of Jesus Christ is perceived as arrogant.
- Attempts to harmonize the existence of a sovereign, loving God with historical horrors such as slavery, human trafficking and genocide are extraordinarily perplexing.
- Notions of individualism are so ingrained that the idea of a single ethical norm is inconceivable.
- Church history contradicts its own claims: If Jesus is Lord, why do His followers often seem morally inferior to those claiming no allegiance to Him?
- If God is love, why can He not simply forgive? After all, wouldn't that be the high road?
- Christian morality seems antiquated and repressive. It is viewed as sexist, homophobic, anti-scientific and so opposed to enjoyment that even its own adherents seem unable to follow its norms.

The implications of these cultural pressures beg an important question: What responsibility does the church have to confront these "defeater beliefs," and what resources does it have to address them?

### Faithful Presence and Proclamation

The church's responsibility rises out of its identity and function. According to Paul, the church is "the household of God, a pillar and buttress of truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Jesus not only defines the church's identity but its function as well: "You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13,14). Two central ideas appear: faithful

presence and proclamation. As described in James Davison Hunter's *To Change the World*, faithful presence and proclamation describe the church's recognition of its call to bear witness to and embody Jesus' coming kingdom.

As the church exercises faithful presence and proclamation, potential missteps abound. One common misstep is the tendency to engage cultural ills apart from proclamation. This contradicts both the church's nature and function, with disastrous results. Truth may be contended for, but not clearly proclaimed and thus not seen. The church is perceived as unloving, scolding the culture for reasons not clearly understood.

### A Step in a Hopeful Direction

What can the church do? In *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, Lesslie Newbigin helpfully frames the question: "What could it mean for the church to make once again the claim which it made in its earliest centuries, the claim to provide the public truth by which society can be given coherence and direction?" How should Christians engage "defeater beliefs" in the church and broader culture?

It can be argued that they are best engaged by persistent proclamation and faithful presence. Some claim, "It's already being done!" But this is not a given. The abandonment of that fundamental proclamation is evident in three ways:

- **In many local churches, biblical and theological terms and categories are increasingly being avoided.** This is a serious issue — the concepts aren't as easily substituted as many suppose. There is often slippage of vital content. For example, sin is increasingly referred to as "brokenness." While this may adequately describe one aspect of sin's work, it sacrifices important elements such as moral responsibility.
- **The doctrines themselves are being replaced.** For example, in some circles, a biblical perspective on mankind is being supplanted by social sciences. This often results, for example, in personal fulfillment being the motive for change instead of love for God and obedience to Him.



- **The church has become “selectively prophetic.”** Certain implications of the gospel are habitually ignored, fueling secular suspicions that the church is bigoted and self-serving. The church’s historic response to issues such as racism and poverty are examples of this.

In *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, though, Newbigin again points us in a hopeful direction toward the world observing the power of the gospel through the lives of people in the church:

How is it possible that the gospel should be credible, that people should come to believe that the power which has the last word in human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross? . . . The only answer, the only hermeneutic of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it.

He argues that such congregations should have six characteristics:

- **They are communities of praise and thanksgiving.**

These are activities the culture finds impossible to sustain in an atmosphere of pervasive suspicion and entitlement. Churches like this are visible signs pointing to a trustworthy one who is immeasurably kind in a harsh world.

- **They are communities of truth.** Newbigin asserts, “The reigning plausibility structure can only be effectively challenged by people who are fully integrated inhabitants of another.” Such churches will be places where the truth about God and man can be remembered, rehearsed and treasured, enabling others to escape the reigning plausibility structure so as to function redemptively in society.

- **They are embedded in communities.** They neither so identify with their community as to cease to be God’s ambassadors nor are so consumed with serv-

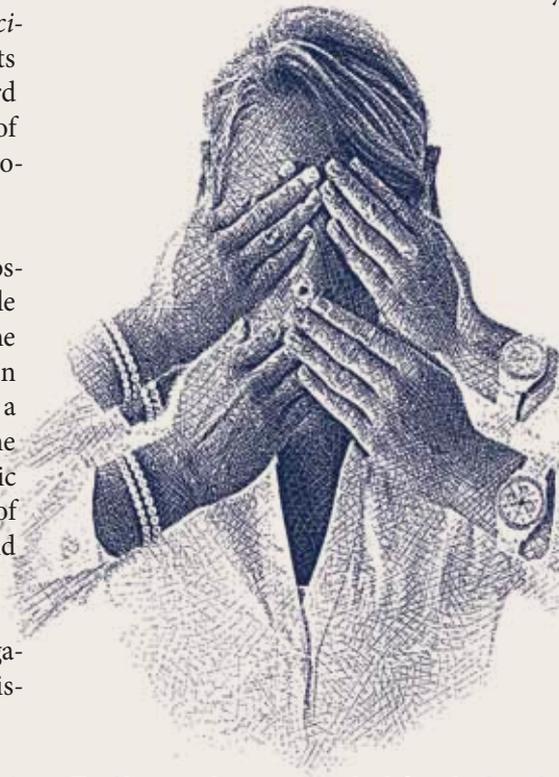
ing their members that they become ingrown and cease to have a presence in their communities. They function as salt, retarding corruption and providing redemptive savor through their faithful presence.

- **They are equipping centers.** The church is sent into the world by Christ to continue His priesthood.

Thus, the church is a place engaged in equipping its members to exercise its priesthood.

- **They practice mutual responsibility and accountability.** The church cannot effectively work toward establishing a new social order without itself being a new social order. This requires the church to be a place where human freedom, justice and equality actually exist in some undeniable measure.

- **They will be marked by genuine hope.** In an age where most give in to either pessimism or shallow optimism, the church can boldly offer real hope in a God who overcomes both human pessimism and optimism in the new heavens and the new earth.



**Truth may be contended for, but not clearly proclaimed and thus not seen.**

The church’s ability to faithfully and winsomely function in these ways hinges on its trust in the power of God and His unwavering commitment to bless His appointed means of grace and display His splendor in the church. Sadly, the church has often lacked confidence in these things.

But such congregations will have unimagined impact on the culture by proclaiming and modeling truth that can be embraced as a refuge from the swirl of lies fueling the secular age we live in. Such churches can produce a constant supply of saints who function redemptively and reproduce themselves at all levels of society. **M**

*Rev. Andrews joined the RTS-Jackson faculty earlier this year as assistant professor of practical theology. Before coming to RTS he served as senior pastor of Soaring Oaks Presbyterian Church in Elk Grove, Calif., and as adjunct professor of pastoral theology at City Seminary in Sacramento, Calif.*

# CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH ISLAM:

## A NEW RTS CURRICULUM INITIATIVE

BY JOHN R. MUETHER

**T**HE FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE IN THE *Orlando Sentinel* on May 2 confirmed what any alert observer could have predicted: 2010 census data reveal the dramatic growth of the Islamic population in metropolitan Orlando.

In central Florida, Muslims now outnumber Presbyterians and many other Protestant denominational families. The growth of Islam over the past half-century in the West has been astonishing. When RTS was founded in 1966, there were few mosques in America. Today, a flourishing Islamic community can be found in every major U.S. city.

What has not changed since 1966 is the mission of RTS, which serves the church by preparing its leaders through a program of graduate theological education based upon the inerrant Word of God and committed to the Reformed faith. In fidelity to this calling, RTS recently undertook curriculum revision in order to more fully integrate a study of Islam in the Master of Divinity curriculum.

At its heart is a newly required M.Div. course, “Christian Encounter With Islam.” Students will read significant sections of the Qur’an along with portions of the *hadith* (collections of the sayings of Muhammad). They will

study the diverse history of Islam and its relationship with Christianity, and wrestle with “hot-button” issues.

Beyond the classroom, students will visit an Islamic mosque and be encouraged to establish friendship with Muslims. Unlike trends in mainline and liberal seminaries, this is not a step toward mere inter-religious dialogue. Rather, this is a means of equipping RTS graduates to present the claims of Christ. In sum, “Christian Encounter With Islam” aims to encourage students better to understand, love and witness to their Muslim neighbors.

Along with this class, RTS campuses will address Islam in other ways. Other classes will pay greater attention to Islam, and library holdings in Islam will be increased and updated. In addition, RTS will secure missionaries, authors and other experts on Islam to lecture on campuses and speak at faculty retreats.

As RTS embarks on this project, it is not reinventing the wheel in theological education. Rather, it is mindful of its own heritage. A pioneering Reformed missionary, Samuel Zwemer, was dubbed the “Apostle to Islam.” When he later joined the faculty at Princeton Theological Seminary, Zwemer was fond of telling his students that only

study the diverse history of Islam and its relationship with Christianity, and wrestle with “hot-button” issues.



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# VOICES FROM THE FIELD

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI WORKING IN THE MUSLIM WORLD TALK ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES.

*Across the globe, including here in the United States, RTS alumni reach out to Muslims with the truth of the gospel. Oftentimes these ministers work in relative anonymity — for their own protection and especially for that of the people with whom they work. Here are some testimonies from just a few of these faithful missionaries (some names and other identifying details have been omitted for security reasons).*

## HALUK BILGEN

VIRTUAL, COMPLETING M.A.R.S.

I work with Words of Hope, the worldwide radio ministry of the Reformed Church in America. As the director of Turkish ministries for Words of Hope in Turkey, I am a radio/TV broadcaster, and I am also a pastor of a small Turkish Christian fellowship. I also serve as the founder/president of an international school in Ankara that has 250 students from 36 nations.

Being born in Turkey, I came to America to go to college. Shortly after graduating from Purdue University in the early 1980s, I became a believer in Jesus Christ. In 1987 I felt called by God to return to Turkey. In 1998 I returned with my family to share the good news of Jesus with my own people.

Even though Turkey is a moderately secular state in which “freedom of religion” is legally guaranteed, practice of any religion other than Islam is strongly discouraged and opposed. For instance, Christians have difficulty establishing



churches because of legal roadblocks, can be legally persecuted for sharing the gospel, and can lose their jobs and sometimes be disowned by their families. And in small towns and rural areas, Christians may face martyrdom.

God’s work in Turkey is like a submarine moving in the deep — steady and slow, yet effective. It can also be characterized as “two steps forward and one step back.” Many young people (more than 55 percent of the country is under 25) are inquiring about Christianity through printed

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## MUSLIMS AMONG US

material, the Internet, and radio and TV broadcasts. The number of Muslim-background believers has risen from the hundreds in 1985 to several thousand as of 2005. The Bible was introduced in modern Turkish in 2001 after a translation work that took more than 20 years. After that, many Turks started to read God's Word and became believers. In addition, many come to Christ through visions and dreams.

The greatest ongoing needs in this type of work are prayer and fasting. Unless the stronghold of Islam is broken by the power of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible for Turks to see the truth or even seek it. We need much prayer with fasting (Zechariah 4:6 and Isaiah 59).

### JOEL

ORLANDO, FLA.

My long-term ministry is among Palestinians from both Christian and Muslim backgrounds. I will soon be living in the Middle East, working among Palestinians there. My work is focused on developing younger Christian leaders from the Palestinian community, encouraging them as they take on many responsibilities in local churches. While living in the States, we have also worked to develop relationships with Muslims in U.S. cities, primarily through reaching out to mosque leaders and then arranging regular meetings for better understanding with them. I'll be engaged in that type of ministry in the Middle East as well.

I had the opportunity to be involved in a monthly dialogue with a group of Muslims in college, and through those relationships, God began calling me to the Middle East. After my first year at RTS, I took a break from academics and lived in the Middle East for a year. Through learning Arabic and developing relationships with many more Arabs, both Christian and Muslim, God made it clear to me that I was called to serve Him there. Accordingly, I returned to the States, finished my RTS degree, and am now moving back to the Middle East long-term.

The challenges are numerous. Political difficulties com-

plcate everything, particularly since I am easily identifiable as an American. Muslims are historically resistant to the gospel, as there is much social pressure against conversion. Christian witness in the region has hardly been unified, as there are traditional churches that often do not welcome evangelicals. It is also difficult to faithfully show Muslims



that they need not become Westerners to follow Christ. Stereotypes abound on both sides, and so the challenge is to patiently, oftentimes over many years, bear witness to the truth and break down stereotypes and misunderstandings.

I've recently been reminded in powerful ways how vital prayer is in this work — for those of us who go from the West to the Middle East, for those believers determined to stay in a tough region for the sake of the gospel, for the gospel to heal families and to bridge racial and even political lines, for the Holy Spirit to draw people to Himself, for ongoing financial needs, and (perhaps even more obviously) for more laborers.

### DAVID

JACKSON, MISS.

My wife, Jan, and I have been with Mission to the World since 1988. We were in rural Africa, but about eight years ago moved to urban Europe to join a church-planting team focused on Muslims. Now I'm also overseeing and supporting about half of MTW's Muslim-focused workers worldwide.

We were invited to lead a church-planting team being



established in a major European city. We moved into a transitional neighborhood that was about 35 percent Muslim. The initial challenge was in meeting people in a setting that would lead to ongoing relationships. In Africa it was relatively easy — almost everyone was Muslim, we were the only white people in our area and were an object of curiosity, and the opportunity for medical help attracted people. In Europe, basic social needs were taken care of, the Pakistani community was somewhat inward-looking, and we didn't have obvious ways into people's lives.

Now, eight years later, the challenges are to find those in our large network of Muslim friends who are truly interested in the gospel. It's easy to talk to Muslims about God and even about the gospel, and they are usually interested on a superficial level, but not many seem to want to go deeper.

The biggest need is for God to open hearts to the gospel and grant faith and repentance. That means we need an outpouring of fervent prayer. We need many new workers — there are many opportunities we could enter into if we had people willing to go and others willing to support them.

That said, around the world, Muslims are becoming followers of Christ, with churches being planted in many Muslim contexts. Not long ago, I visited a West African country and got to know leaders (some from Muslim backgrounds) who are faithfully following Christ, planting churches in difficult areas, discipling young believers and proclaiming the gospel. **M**

*To protect the security of these alumni and their ministries, if you'd like to contact any of them, please direct your inquiry to [lperez@rts.edu](mailto:lperez@rts.edu).*

# WHAT IS A QEP?

BY JOHN R. MUETHER

**A**CCREDITATION TENDS TO ELICIT a variety of responses from seminar-ies. Some regard it as the hijacking of a school by hostile bureaucrats. Others see it as a necessary evil. At RTS, the 10-year reaffirmation visit this past spring from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Theological Schools was welcomed as a helpful review of educational curriculum, student services policies and financial practices.

SACS has recently added a new feature to its reaffirmation process. In addition to demonstrating its compliance to accreditation standards, a member school conducts a Quality Enhancement Plan that identifies one aspect of student learning that it considers weak and in need of addressing. RTS chose the QEP theme "Our Muslim Neighbors: Improving Student Knowledge of the Diversity of Islamic Faith and Practice."

I chaired a QEP steering committee that over two years surveyed the coverage of Islam in the RTS Master of Divinity curriculum, and then laid out a plan for improving that instruction. Specifically, RTS seeks to improve student learning in these areas:

**Demonstrating knowledge of Islamic history**  
**Improving knowledge of present-day Islamic faith and practice**

**Formulating apologetic and evangelism strategies for ministry to Muslims**

The committee was eager to emphasize that QEP curriculum revisions would not change the mission of RTS. Rather, they seek to assist the seminary in greater faithfulness to its missional commitment.

The combined team of accreditors from ATS and SACS were impressed with the QEP topic, and several visitors commented that this was a groundbreaking initiative that other seminaries were likely to study and incorporate into their curricula. **M**

*More information about the RTS QEP can be found at [www.rts.edu/qep](http://www.rts.edu/qep).*

A former teacher helps fellow African Americans pursue seminary training.

# HIGHER EDUCATION

by Paul Schwarz

**J**EMAR TISBY HAD BEEN CALLED TO a real place — not real as in the opposite of imaginary, but real as in authentic. That place, the rural Arkansas delta, had enough of a hold on him that he tried to leave once and then went back. What finally drew Jemar away was the sense that he had finally completed his work there and that God had given him a new calling.

After spending several years first as a teacher and then as a principal at a charter school for underprivileged children, Jemar is now a student at RTS-Jackson. There he not only prepares for vocational ministry, but also helps encourage fellow African Americans to follow in his footsteps and attend seminary.

Jemar began thinking seriously about full-time vocational ministry while in high school in Waukegan, Ill., near Chicago, embracing Christ at age 16 and becoming a leader in his high school youth group. While Jemar attended the University of Notre Dame, a friend gave him a copy of John Piper's *Desiring God*. "What he was saying fit very closely to what I instinctually sensed about what I was reading in the Bible," he explains, "so before I ever knew what it was called, I was Reformed. That's when I started looking into Reformed churches and seminaries."

Upon graduating from Notre Dame, Jemar joined Teach for America, an organization that recruits teachers to low-income areas. "I wasn't quite ready to go into ministry, I wanted some 'real world' experience and I wanted to serve," he says. Jemar landed in the town of Helena, Ark., where he taught sixth-grade science and social studies for four years.

"I got a sense of what it's like to do ministry where you're dying to self every day," he explains. "I mean, the closest movie theater and bowling alley was an hour away — little conveniences like that, but also only seeing family and friends once or twice a year. In the meantime you're working 10-, 12-, 14-hour days because you're not just trying to teach, but teach what the Bible calls the least of these. These were kids coming

in at fifth grade, but reading at a third-grade level or lower. So it's not just a traditional teaching experience — it's the hardest teaching experience you can have. It sobered me, matured me."

After that experience, Jemar left Arkansas to attend RTS-Orlando, but after one year there, he realized he wasn't quite ready to continue with seminary. A position as principal opened up at his old school, so Jemar returned to Helena (the town is now known as Helena-West Helena) for three years until he sensed that his assistant principal was ready to take over ("and he could do a better job than I could," he adds). Upon returning to seminary, and now with a wife and son, Jemar enrolled at RTS-Jackson,

largely because of the presence of Redeemer Church, an intentionally multiethnic PCA congregation pastored by Mike Campbell, a fellow African American.

Though Jemar will always be passionate about public education, namely to under-served students in high-poverty settings, he senses a calling to create engagement between Reformed theology and African Americans. "That's a broad umbrella," he admits, "and a lot falls under that. My primary calling is to preach and to teach, so I'm training for the pastorate and ordination in the PCA. But I have a multiethnic vision, which is being shaped and matured at Redeemer Church and RTS."

Jemar nurtures and casts that multiethnic vision at RTS-





## ABOUT THE REFORMED AFRICAN AMERICAN NETWORK

by Jemar Tisby

**T**he Reformed African American Network is intended to bring Reformed theological resources to the African-American community. If you're African American and become Reformed, at some point you're going to ask yourself, "Is there anyone else out there like me?" The answer is yes — RAAN seeks to form an online community by which we can feed and sharpen each other, and provide a place to discuss and engage pressing issues.

It's a multiethnic vision, so we certainly don't want just African Americans. We want people of any race or ethnicity to get a glimpse into the thinking and the different voices among Reformed African Americans..

We want to create engagement because engagement denotes interaction — it's not just importing or exporting a package. There's much that African Americans can learn from Reformed theology, but there's also a lot that the historic Reformed faith can learn from African-American Christians.

For example, African Americans need a rootedness in historic Christianity. We tend to think of Christianity going only as far back as when missionaries shared the gospel with African slaves. But there's 1,700 years of Christianity leading up to those times. The African-American church oftentimes misses the richness of the Reformers and the apostolic tradition. By engaging with Reformed theology, African Americans get a better sense of being part of the universal church.

On the other side, I think the historic Reformed faith can learn from the African-American community in the context of our coming out of the shackles of slavery. African Americans have an entire racial, ethnic experience of slavery, and the only way we can explain that experience without going into despair or fatalism is through a sense of divine providence and God's sovereignty that still reverberates today. The way we articulate this will be different from any other people who haven't had that experience.

In other words, the African-American and historic Reformed traditions are both getting at the same ideas — God's providence and sovereignty — but we're coming at it from different perspectives that enrich everyone. **M**

*The RAAN Facebook page can be found by searching for Reformed African American Network (RAAN).*

Jackson through working in the admissions office, where he has helped develop and administrate the African American Leadership Initiative facilitated by RTS-Jackson faculty and staff members. "AALI is an umbrella for lots of different strategies to achieve two goals," he explains. "The first is to recruit more African Americans to RTS-Jackson, and the second is to prepare people of all races and ethnicities for ministry in African-American, multiethnic or urban settings." The AALI program has four platforms — a scholarship, fellowship with like-minded students, mentoring from pastors and other church leaders in the Jackson area, and modeling through

Continued on Page 18



# EM MOUNTAINOUS

**Matt Howell reaches out to students at Appalachian State through RUF.**

**MATT HOWELL IS A SILLY COMPETITOR. WHEN HE MAKES HIS TONGUE-IN-CHEEK BOAST THAT HE CAN DOMINATE YOU IN ANY BOARD GAME, HE CLARIFIES HIS PREFERENCE FOR GAMES LIKE CRANIUM, TABOO AND APPLES TO APPLES — “BASICALLY ANYTHING THAT’S FAST-PACED AND INJECTS SOME SILLINESS INTO THE EVENING.”**

Silly as Matt may be at times, he’s as serious as the sunrise about his calling to ministry to college students. The RTS-Charlotte graduate is a Reformed University Fellowship campus minister at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., tucked two hours away from Charlotte in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

As a native Texan who went to college in Oklahoma, and thus grew up accustomed to flat terrain, Matt is an unlikely candidate to be living and ministering in a mountain town named for Daniel Boone. His journey to RUF is no less circuitous. After coming to faith in Christ during high school, Matt arrived at the University of Oklahoma in 1999 with the intention of sampling the smorgasbord of campus ministries available there.

“Being involved in a campus ministry was important to me,” he explains, “but I had this mentality that I had to be involved in 10 campus ministries. So any sort of ministry that was offered, I went to at least once, and I thought that was a mature Christian thing to do.”

During Matt’s junior year, RUF came to OU, and for him

# WHAT RUF?

by Matt Howell

As a student at the University of Oklahoma, Matt Howell sampled from a smorgasbord of campus ministries before embracing Reformed University Fellowship. Here he talks about what distinguishes RUF:

One of the things that makes RUF different is that it's not a Christian club — it's a Christian ministry. We don't want to just get a bunch of Christians in a room and hang out together; we want unbelievers at everything we do. The presence of unbelievers at everything we do, including Bible studies and large-group meetings, informs the way we go about doing the ministry.

RUF emphasizes three things: the authority of Scripture, the sufficiency of the gospel and the necessity of the church. It is not a parachurch ministry, but rather the arm of the church on the campus.

Also what makes RUF different is we're trying to create a safe environment where anyone, believers or unbelievers, can ask questions they may not feel free to ask anywhere else and not get embarrassed. We're trying to provide space and time for damaged, hurt and lost students to explore the truth claims of Christianity, and provide space to let Jesus find them.

Another thing we keep doing is to point students back to the church. If a ton of students are involved with RUF and then graduate but are not connected to the local church and have a home there, that's not really a successful ministry. We'll know we're a successful ministry if in 20 years our students are loving the local church and are involved as elders, deacons, nursery helpers and so on. That's the vision and the goal we want to realize: students loving and embracing a life of church involvement.

Part of it is helping them see that they need it. We keep coming back to 1 Corinthians 12 — how the hand can't say to the foot, "I don't need you." I have a lot of conversations with students about how they live in a bubble, where being surrounded by 18- to 22-year-olds is the extent of their relationships. They come over to our house for dinner, and they love it because it feels like home, and they're around older people and younger kids. This taps into something deep in them that says they need older and younger people in their lives. I've found that the conversation begins there, with their need for the multigenerational community they don't find on the college campus, and getting them to see that they can find it right down the street. **M**

For more information about RUF, visit [www.ruf.org](http://www.ruf.org).



# TALK

by Paul Schwarz

(to paraphrase the outdoorsy poet Robert Frost), that made all the difference. "I just went there because it was another option," he admits. "My buddies and I started going, and after a while we found a home — it was a safe place for us to process what we were learning in the Bible, and explore deep theological things and connect them to life."

Matt's RUF minister encouraged him to take a two-year internship with RUF after graduation, which led him to Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge as well as the opportunity to meet Kathryn, a fellow RUF intern serving in Atlanta. The internships confirmed their calling to ministry together with RUF, so after their marriage in 2005, the Howells moved to Charlotte to attend RTS.

While at RTS-Charlotte, Matt and two fellow students began taking turns making weekly drives to Boone to speak at the RUF large-group meetings at App State, as the campus was without an RUF minister at the time. "I thought I was just filling in until they could hire someone else," says Matt,

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# “I HAVE A LOT OF CONVERSATIONS WITH UNBELIEVERS WHO ARE MORE THAN WILLING TO SIT DOWN AND TALK, AND EVEN INITIATE.”

— MATT HOWELL

Continued from Page 15

whose wife is expecting their second child in November. Eventually, though, as Matt completed his degree program, it became clear that he was the man for the permanent position. That led the Howells to App State for good in the summer of 2009.

Matt and the App State students have taken well to the mountainous climate. “Especially in the summer and fall,” he explains, “the outdoors is central to what we do. The terrain is one of the main reasons why students go here, and it shapes their identity as students at App State.”

To that end, RUF at App State takes on a decidedly outdoor flavor, with “Adventure Fridays” and other events featuring healthy doses of hiking, jumping off waterfalls, swimming in water holes, tubing and related activities. “Students love it,” Matt declares. “It creates easy, non-threatening things for believers and nonbelievers alike to do together,” acknowledging that “during the six months of the year when we’re up to our eyes in snow, you kind of hate the outdoors more than enjoy it.”

Similarly, the spiritual climate at App State has its ebbs and flows. “The campus is very spiritually open,” Matt explains. “I have a lot of conversations with unbelievers who are more than willing to sit down and talk, and even initiate [conversations].” At the same time, considering its mountainous locale, App State has a hippie reputation. “Parents at churches I speak at are always concerned that it’s such a liberal and tolerant place,” Matt continues. “But as dangerous as that can be, I see it as a positive. It has a common-grace way of opening doors, because so many students are open to talking about spiritual things.”

That said, Matt identifies App State as “an incredibly lost, dark and broken place” not unlike any campus

environment. However, he sees God at work not only in numerical growth of the ministry, but especially in students’ lives. “We’re seeing unbelievers becoming converted,” he reports, “students with a lack of assurance of their salvation coming to a deeper assurance in the gospel and a reliance on Jesus, students embracing the means of grace, and students embodying a lifestyle of repentance.”

Matt tells the story of one student he met two years ago who “kind of wandered into our ministry,” as he describes it. “He was involved in our freshman Bible study, and he began talking about being ‘melted and loved by the gospel.’ It wasn’t until this past year that he felt confidence and safety to tell me that since high school he had been struggling with same-sex attraction. He had never really told anyone, and didn’t know how to [fight against] it. He considers himself a gospel-believing Christian, and yet here’s this secret struggle he’s never told anyone about, and deep down he feels like God hates him, and is dealing with a lot of shame and fear.”

In reflecting on the honor of being allowed into this student’s life, Matt proclaims the joy of reassuring him “that there’s no sin so big that makes God want to undo what He’s done on the cross. To see this sophomore bawling in the middle of the cafeteria reminds me of the sweetness and the goodness of the gospel. He’s fighting [this temptation] — he’s a great young Christian man who really takes his faith seriously, but just needs gospel reassurance. The fact that God is at work is what gets us up in the morning and frees us to keep working here.”

As Matt bounces between silliness and seriousness as befitting the seasons of campus ministry, he remains focused on the tasks at hand. **M.**

*For more information about RUF at App State, visit [appstate.ruf.org](http://appstate.ruf.org).*

The RUF experience at App State takes on a distinct outdoor orientation for much of the year.



# THE RTS-RUF CONNECTION



Matt Howell is hardly the only RTS alumnus serving as a Reformed University Fellowship minister. In fact, nearly 50 alumni work with RUF on campuses in 16 U.S. states and one foreign country, with locations including both Athens, Ga., and Athens, Greece.

This map illustrates where these RUF ministers are located. To find out how to contact one near you, visit [www.ruf.org/ministry-locator-results/?fullList=1](http://www.ruf.org/ministry-locator-results/?fullList=1).



Matt's fun-loving nature extends beyond board games and into various hijinks with RUF students (left).

City	ST	College	16 Clinton	MS	Mississippi College	31 Tulsa	OK	Tulsa
1 Huntsville	AL	Alabama - Huntsville	17 Hattiesburg	MS	Southern Mississippi	32 Lancaster	PA	Millersville
2 Normal	AL	Alabama A&M	18 Jackson	MS	Belhaven	33 Columbia	SC	South Carolina
3 Fayetteville	AR	Arkansas	19 Jackson	MS	Jackson State	34 Greenville	SC	Furman
4 Los Angeles	CA	UCLA	20 Kosciusko	MS	Holmes Community College	35 Rock Hill	SC	Winthrop
5 Santa Barbara	CA	California-Santa Barbara	21 Oxford	MS	Mississippi	36 Jefferson City	TN	Carson-Newman
6 Colorado Springs	CO	United States Air Force Academy	22 Starkville	MS	Mississippi State	37 Johnson City	TN	East Tennessee State
7 Jacksonville	FL	North Florida	23 Boone	NC	Appalachian State	38 Lookout Mountain	TN	Covenant College
8 Orlando	FL	Central Florida	24 Chapel Hill	NC	North Carolina-Chapel Hill	39 Memphis	TN	Memphis
9 Tampa	FL	South Florida	25 Charlotte	NC	UNC-Charlotte	40 Nashville	TN	Vanderbilt
10 Athens	GA	Georgia (RUF)	26 Charlotte	NC	Johnson and Wales	41 College Station	TX	Texas A&M
11 Atlanta	GA	Emory University	27 Davidson	NC	Davidson	42 Houston	TX	Rice
12 Statesboro	GA	Georgia Southern	28 Raleigh	NC	North Carolina State	43 Newport News	VA	Christopher Newport
13 Bowling Green	KY	Western Kentucky	29 Las Cruces	NM	New Mexico State			
14 Louisville	KY	Louisville	30 Norman	OK	Oklahoma			
15 Cleveland	MS	Delta State						

University of Athens (Greece)

Note: Information accurate as of July 2012

## MUSLIMS AMONG US

Muslims Among Us continued from Page 8

the Reformed faith had satisfactory answers to the challenge of Islam.

Other theologians in the Reformed tradition have been careful students of Islam. In the late 19th century, for example, Dutch Reformed thinkers such as Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck described the threat of Islam as it spread through North Africa.

RTS has reaped the wisdom of present-day voices as well. It has consulted missionaries and Muslim-background believers in order to prepare future missionaries and pastors with cultural sensitivity.

In reflecting on these curriculum emphases, RTS chancellor and CEO emeritus Dr. Robert C. “Ric” Cannada noted that this initiative could have many “spill-over effects” benefiting RTS. At RTS and other seminaries in the Reformed tradition, apologetics has traditionally focused on defending historic Christianity against secular unbelief and apostasy in the church. Sustained attention to Islam can become a means both of reinvigorating missionary passion and broadening apologetic focus.

In addition, these developments build on partnerships al-

ready established by RTS. The seminary has engaged with World Reformed Fellowship to develop an Islamic Studies Resource Center. In fall 2011, I attended a WRF consultation on Islamic missions, and RTS-Orlando will host a follow-up consultation with WRF in February 2013.

Faculty and students alike are enthusiastic about new attention to Islam in the RTS curriculum. Those teaching the new class have much preparation before them: ambitious reading lists, wrestling with the diversity of Islamic faith and practice, and learning to strike a careful balance between factual knowledge and practical application. Above all, there is a zeal for seeing students develop a mission heart for Muslims.

In God’s providence, one RTS professor received a close, personal “Christian Encounter With Islam.” While preparing for this new course, a Muslim family moved into a house next door. Conversations with the husband so far have advanced to the neighbor’s willingness to discuss the Gospels. So the program is bearing fruit even before the new course. **M**

*John R. Muether is library director for RTS and is a professor of church history at RTS-Orlando. The “Christian Encounter With Islam” course syllabus can be downloaded at [www.rts.edu/Site/qep/CEI-Syllabus.pdf](http://www.rts.edu/Site/qep/CEI-Syllabus.pdf).*



Higher Education continued from Page 13

visits to local churches and other ministries.

Looking back, Jemar sees that his teaching experience has prepared him for his current role. “Especially through my time as a principal,” he says, “I’ve identified some administrative gifts I wouldn’t have named before. In Jackson I’ve been able to utilize, organize, mobilize and break things down into steps — to take something from an idea to implementation, which is something a teacher has to do every day.”

Jemar sees AALI as an organic movement that’s just beginning to bear fruit. “We’re seeing an increase in the number of African-American applicants,” he reports, “but the important thing is putting out the call and saying to African Americans,

‘Hey, we want you, and we’re willing to make changes so that this is an accessible place for you.’ I think that’s the start for any Christian organization that wants to become multiethnic — you have to be truly humble to say you’ll change in order to be as accessible to everyone as to the majority.”

God willing, Jemar has two more years at RTS-Jackson to complete his degree and continue to help implement the multiethnic vision for the campus. As he does so, he helps make theological education available, accessible and flexible for all. **M**

*For more information about the African American Leadership Initiative at RTS-Jackson, visit [www.rts.edu/site/rtsnearyou/jackson/aali.aspx](http://www.rts.edu/site/rtsnearyou/jackson/aali.aspx).*

Continued from Page 3

## CAMPUS EVENTS

### Convocations

Orlando — Aug. 22, 11 a.m. Speaker: Dr. Don Sweeting

Charlotte — Aug. 28, 11 a.m. Speaker: Dr. James Anderson

D.C. — Aug. 29, 7:30 p.m., McLean Presbyterian Church. Speaker: Dr. Scott Redd

Jackson — Aug. 22, 11 a.m. Speaker: Dr. Ligon Duncan

### Charlotte

The inaugural chapel for the Chaplain's Ministry Institute will take place on Sept. 4 at noon. Chaplain Michael Stewart will speak.

The Fall Lecture Series will be held on Sept. 25, with Mark Noll as guest speaker.

### Jackson

The World Missions Conference will take place on Sept. 11-12. Dr. Paul Chinchen, president of African Bible College, will speak.



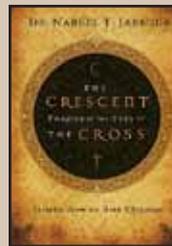
The John Reed Miller Lecture series will take place on Nov. 6-7. Thabiti Anyabwile, senior pastor of First

Baptist Church of Grand Cayman and council member with the Gospel Coalition, will speak.

### Orlando

RTS-Orlando and Antioch Missionary Baptist Church will co-sponsor an event for local lay leaders with the theme "Maximizing Your Impact in Your Sphere of Influence" on Sept. 7 from 7-9 p.m. and Sept. 8 from 8:15 a.m.-2 p.m. The cost is \$25 (Saturday lunch included). Keynote speakers will be Rev. Charles Jones and Dr. Richard Pratt, and Charles Cooper, Chan Kilgore, Dr. Don Sweeting, Howard Dayton, Demetrius Summerfield, Bob Orner and Cameron Triggs will be panelists and/or workshop presenters. For more information or to register, visit

[www.rts.edu/orlando/leadersconference](http://www.rts.edu/orlando/leadersconference).



The campus community will read *The Crescent Through the Eyes of the Cross: Insights from an Arab Christian as its One School, One Book*

selection for the fall semester. The reading event will culminate in a series of lectures on Nov. 13 by the book's author, PCA teaching elder Nabeel Jabbour. The lectures will be open to the public.

Casting the Vision continued from Page 2

yet a God-sized vision that was out of this world.

These men trusted that God would raise up an army of preachers, now RTS alumni, who believed in the inerrant and infallible Word of God, whose Spirit-saturated hearts pulsed with a white-hot mission for personal evangelism and global mission, and who were steeped in the historic Reformed faith, which is "salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone." They envisioned a gospel army of preachers, prepared by RTS, who would equip the saints for the work of ministry in God's kingdom here, throughout the world and through the generations.

This vision of a gospel army has come to fruition, as RTS alumni serve faithfully in a multitude of ministry capacities around the world. Some of these gospel ministers preach the Word in unglamorous, even dangerous circumstances. In fact, in telling their stories in this issue of *Ministry & Leadership*, we do not even have the liberty to identify some of them by name, for their safety and that of those to whom they minister (see page 8). They, along with the dedicated pastor/scholars who comprise the faculty, illustrate the selfless commitment of the RTS family to that founding vision.

I believe — in fact, the idea literally possesses me — that our faithfulness to the vision of RTS is leading us to a more glorious, larger opening in the sky, so that when Jesus Christ comes again, we will see a multitude of souls safe

in the arms of Jesus. In 1 Thessalonians 2:19,20, St. Paul asked, "What is our hope or glory or crown of boasting?" The "apostle of the heart set free" answered his own question to the blessing of those who heard him: "Is it not even you? For you are our glory and joy."

Whoever you are, whatever your role in RTS — alumnus, student, supporter, prayer warrior, faculty member, staff member or just a welcomed spectator — please know this: Our glory, our hope and our crown of boasting is not how many professors we have, how many students we have, how large our campuses are, how many alumni we have or how many iTunesU downloads we have. God forbid that we glory in such! Our glory, our joy and true crown of boasting lies in the generations of pastors, missionaries, teachers and other church leaders being used by the Lord to reach the lost with Christ's gospel.

That is a vision that is out of this world! That is a vision only Christ can accomplish and for which only He can receive glory and honor. And that must be the throbbing vision of our hearts. Our glory and our joy and true crown of boasting lies in a Great Day where a humble beginning — a trickle of prayer and a band of believers that you could count on one hand — becomes a glorious end: *souls safe in the arms of Jesus*.

Please pray that we will be faithful to this simple vision that focuses on God's redemption and a new heaven and a new earth. Only then, in Christ, will this acorn become the mighty oak He has planted. **M**

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