Wonderful Counselor

The prophecy of Isaiah announces the certain fulfillment of God’s kingdom.
When RTS opened its doors in 1966, its founders were responding to a rising tide of theological liberalism that threatened the foundation of the church. More than 40 years later, the body of Christ faces a new tide — one that also threatens that same foundation.

Today’s culture has become radically pluralistic and secularized. Sadly, even much of the body of Christ has fallen under the influence of the relativism that marks what has come to be known as “postmodern” thought. This has resulted, among other things, in a weakened commitment to the authority of Scripture, and thus to the essential doctrines of the Reformed faith. For example, according to 2005 findings by the Barna Research Group, 42 percent of self-professed born-again Christians agree that “while He lived on earth, Jesus committed sins, like other people.”

The net result of this cultural drift is that the gospel’s position in the marketplace of ideas is being compromised at a time when the call to gospel ministry is more urgent than ever. Our times today are not unlike those the apostle Paul encountered in Athens, as recorded in Acts 17. “His spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols,” according to verse 16, and in verse 21 we learn that the people there “would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.”

Just as Paul penetrated that cacophony of voices with a clear, cogent proclamation of the gospel, through which we learn that some of his hearers were brought to saving faith, today’s culture needs a biblically sound, culturally relevant witness to spiritual truth. In that sense, though cultural circumstances have changed, the mission of RTS in 2007 is no different than it was in 1966 or than Paul’s mission in Athens.

With that in mind and heart, we continue as a seminary family to “stand firm without standing still.” This is why we have undertaken the effort to expand our ministry so that the Atlanta and Washington, D.C., campuses will be able to offer Master of Divinity degrees. We are also working to expand the reach and enhance the efficiency of our Virtual Campus. In addition, we aim to better undergird all the other elements of the RTS “seminary planting” infrastructure. “Planting for the Future” on page 16 outlines these efforts in more detail.

As always, in everything we do we work to help prepare and send out successive generations of ministers for the body of Christ — men and women with a mind for truth and a heart for God who will preach and teach the gospel to the ends of the earth and make disciples in all nations. In a spiritually lost and dying world, we preach Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. •

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Reformed Quarterly 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.
PUBLICATIONS

- **Rev. Chuck DeGroat** wrote a review of *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* by Francis Collins, a book released this summer. You can find the review in the Rock and Sling Journal online summer issue.

- **Dr. John M. Frame** produced a taped course, *Foundations of Systematic Theology* (Institute for Theological Studies, Fall). He also wrote the article “The Local Church and Cultural Transformation for Nine Marks Journal (Nov./Dec.) and a review of Douglas Wilson, *The Serrated Edge*, with a reply by Wilson (www.douglaswilson.com).

- **Dr. Mark D. Futato** wrote a book titled *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook* (Kregel, Aug.). This is the second in the series, *Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis*.

- **Dr. Charles E. Hill** wrote the essay “Was John’s Gospel Among Justin’s Apostolic Memoirs?” in *Was John’s Gospel Among Justin’s Apostolic Memoirs?* (Publications South Carolina, Aug.) and *Foundations of Systematic Theology* (Institute for Theological Studies, Fall). He also wrote the essay “Understanding God, Evangelism, Justification and Holiness” at the California Conference on Reformed Theology, Fresno, Calif. Nov. 3-4.

- **Dr. John M. Frame** taught History of Philosophy and Christian Thought at RTS-Charlotte, Oct. 8-12.

- **Dr. Mark D. Futato** spoke on “Enjoying God in the Psalms” at a conference at First Bonaire Baptist Church, Bonaire, Ga., Sept. 28- Oct. 1; and on “Psalms Come Alive” at a conference at Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Plant City, Fla., Oct. 14-15.

- **Rev. Michael J. Globo** preached at a mission conference at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Bluefield, W. Va., Oct. 21; and at a weekend area conference at Christ the King Presbyterian Church, El Paso, Texas, Nov. 2-4, on “Meet the Glory: Encounters With Jesus in John’s Gospel.” He will teach a pastoral training course, “Studies in the Book of Exodus,” in an unpublicized country.

- **Howard Griffith, Ph.D.,** was received as a teaching elder member of the Potomac Presbytery of the PCA.

- **Dr. Peter Lee** has been appointed assistant professor of Old Testament, RTS-Washington, D.C.

- **Dr. Michael Milton** has been appointed as new president of RTS-Charlotte and as professor of practical theology. He is formerly the senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, Tenn.

- **Dr. Bruce Lowe** has been appointed assistant professor of New Testament at RTS-Atlanta. He presented his paper “What Does Proxen Really Echo in Romans 3:9?“ at the Romans Through History and Culture Group at the Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego, in late November.

- **Dr. John J. Yeo** has been appointed assistant professor of Old Testament at RTS-Atlanta. He passed his dissertation defense at the Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto, Sept. 21, and was technically awarded the Ph.D. degree. His dissertation is titled *Plundering the Egyptians: The Old Testament and Historical Criticism at Westminster Theological Seminary* (1929-1998).

CAMPUS EVENTS

- RTS-Jackson hosted the 2007 John Reed Miller Lecture Series in November featuring Mark Dever.

- RTS-Orlando will host its annual Christmas concert presented by area church choirs on Dec. 13 at 7 p.m.

- RTS-Charlotte will host a Christmas party and banquet on Dec. 14 at 6 p.m. (reservations required).

- The Kistemaker Lecture Series at RTS/Orlando on Feb. 27-28, 2008, will feature Yale University professor Dr. Miroslav Volf.

ONLINE

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Wonderful Counselor

The prophecy of Isaiah announces the certain fulfillment of God’s kingdom.

Before a crescendo in Handel’s Messiah, tension builds while the choir sings, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given ... and His name shall be called Won’derful, Coun’selor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” Christ resolves the tension.

Isaiah spoke to disobedient Israel about the sins that would carry them out of God’s land (chapters 1-9). What was it like for the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali to watch the Assyrian army carry off their kin? Isaiah says it was like living under a “death shadow” (9:2). The tension builds, but the prophet includes promises of new life — promises so certain that they are written in the past tense. They are wonderful beyond belief, because God Himself will save.

Verses 4-7 in chapter 9 tell how God will bless them. A child will be born who will take off the yoke of bondage and put it on His own shoulders. He will save them, like he saved His people from the yoke of the Egyptians and the Midianites. Gideon was an unlikely savior, without an army. This one will be as well — not impressive, but mighty to save.

In fact, His rule will be so great that He will not save just Zebulun and Naphtali from the Assyrians; He will save the Assyrians too! As Isaiah 9:6,7 says, “The government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

The difference between Israel and us is that God has fulfilled these promises. Christmas is a time to rejoice that the Lord has come! Jesus Christ is the child born of David. He is the Son that God has given.

Matthew tells us Jesus went to live in Capernaum “so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ‘The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles — the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.’ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (4:14-17).

He summarizes Jesus’ ministry: “He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So His fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought Him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics and paralytics, and He healed them. And great crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan” (4:23-25).

Jesus brought in God’s kingdom, providing freedom from sin and Satan, and restoring God’s blessing on the creation. He spent most of His ministry in Galilee, where both Gentiles and Jews believed the gospel. Ever since, He has drawn in people from every nation. Jesus called for a response: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” That is where we are; we must repent because the King has come.

Who is Jesus? What is repentance? Isaiah answers by giving Jesus’ names:
Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor.

Since the other three names in Isaiah 9:6 are word pairs, Isaiah likely pairs “wonderful” and “counselor.” “Wonderful” means like God. King Ahaz’ cunning but foolish decisions had ruined Judah. Solomon was divinely wise, but used his wisdom to serve himself. But in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He comes speaking words given Him from the Father: “The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life” (John 6:63).

Our time is confused. How do we interpret reality? Is it true, as prize-winning author Philip Roth maintains, that life has been given to all “randomly, fortuitously, and but once, and for no known or knowable reason?” Words have become cheap and random. Only one has the words of eternal life: the Lord Jesus. Only He exhaustively understands all things, for only He is God.

Here is the beginning of repentance: becoming humble enough to receive God’s teaching in Christ. Are you a person who can take counsel? Do you want to know God and what He wants before anything else, or are you confident in your own thinking? We need to repent by submitting our thoughts to the counsel of Jesus.

It is easy to live a solitary life, linked to the Internet with headphones on. We do not learn Jesus’ wisdom like that. When the King rules in your heart, you begin to see how foolish your own thinking is apart from God. Grace and forgiveness lead us to stop talking and begin listening to the godly wisdom of others: “Wisdom is found in those who take advice” (Proverbs 13:10). The Wonderful Counselor has come. Listen to Him!

Jesus is the Mighty God.

Here in Washington, D.C., many people seem to believe we have the resources to solve our worst problems. We can do things here! But our enemies are much too strong for us — sin, guilt, Satan and all the chaos they have brought. The Lord who came is God in the flesh (John 1:14). No one else can deal with sin, change our hearts or rule nations.

Jesus is the Everlasting Father.

Though the Trinity was not fully revealed in the Old Testament, even Isaiah did not confuse the eternal Father with the eternal Son. “Everlasting Father” describes the kingly rule of God the Son. God is a father to the fatherless (Psalm 68:5). Israel’s kings did not care much for the needy. But Jesus went throughout all Galilee healing the people of every disease and sickness. He brought life to the dying. For most of us, family is the great joy of the Christmas holidays. I can’t wait for the laughter! We belong to a Lord who cares for us, so we should show it by sharing our joy with the “orphans” around us.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

In Scripture, peace is the wholeness and bounty God gives. In The Doctrine of God, John Frame writes, “God is completely at peace with Himself. We often experience struggles between contradictory impulses within us. God, on the contrary, is completely at harmony with Himself. His three persons glorify and serve one another willingly and cheerfully. He is whole, well, prosperous — blessed and happy.”

My wife, Jackie, and I have lived in the nation’s capital only a few months. We have noticed many busy people anxious with concern for security and prosperity. It is a bracing place to live; we love it. Can we find healing, integrity, security and wellbeing? Yes, when heaven takes over Planet Earth. Jesus is the One Man who knows absolute integrity and the full blessing of his Father. His kingdom brings us these gifts.

The Prince has come. Christ speaks peace through the blood of His own sacrifice for us on the cross. God creates peace with you by removing His anger against you. Will you submit to that message brought by the Prince of Peace? What about relationships — do you need to make peace with someone because you belong to this King? To humble oneself and offer forgiveness and love to an enemy is the power of the Prince.

God is bringing Jesus’ kingdom to this world.

Isaiah 9:7 says, “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” The child will reign on David’s throne forever, establishing an everlasting kingdom of justice and righteousness. God satisfied the demands of His moral rule in Christ’s death. Now the Father has exalted Jesus to His right hand. Whatever our inadequacies, and they are many, we should take heart! Isaiah says God’s zeal is for the rule of his Son. Zeal is God’s burning desire. His kingdom cannot fail.

This, too, calls for repentance. We tend to think the church depends on our gifts, our service and our integrity. It does not. It depends on the grace of Christ. His kingdom cannot fail because it is God’s heart.

Christ is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Adore Him in the wonder of His divine Person, and in joy that His kingdom has come!
In 1993, in the Washington, D.C., area, RTS opened its first extension campus. The extension is just one reflection of the seminary’s ongoing effort to make theological education as available, accessible and flexible as possible. Each RTS location is a potential impact center for the gospel in its respective region.

These three individuals who either currently or formerly attended RTS have roots to churches and other institutions in the Washington/Baltimore megalopolis. They are among the many whom RTS has helped in influencing the region with the gospel message. And due to Washington’s status as the nation’s capital, and with nearby Baltimore’s formidable cultural impact in its own right, they are helping influence the whole world as well.
I was someone who was for all intents and purposes a racist.”

That candid revelation comes from a man who currently shares pastoral leadership with a man whose ethnicity and skin color are different from his own. As senior pastor at City of Hope Church in Columbia, a city along the Chesapeake Bay near Baltimore, Irwyn Ince works to build a congregation that reflects the multicultural nature of the community where the church is being planted.

The New York City native was raised in Brooklyn in a Christian home, but rejected the faith as a teenager. Irwyn devoted himself to climbing the corporate ladder, scaling enough rungs by 1995 to land a position in Maryland as a systems engineer for Motorola.

Little did he and his wife, Kim, realize what awaited them there. “We didn’t really know anyone,” Irwyn recalls, “[but] she had some relatives that went to a church in D.C. We said, ‘We’re not really interested in being Christians, but at least church is a place where we can meet some decent people.’ So we started going every once in a while.

“I went away to Chicago for training, and my wife started attending a young adult Bible study. When I came back, I started to go, reluctantly at first, but then regularly. It was that engagement with God’s Word, [and] the fellowship, that the Lord used to bring us to faith in Christ.”

One immediate change in Irwyn was his ethnic attitude. “When it came to being an African-American,” he admits, “I had a worldview that was — I don’t know how else to describe it other than racist in terms the way I viewed particularly Anglos. So when the Lord saved me, He opened my eyes to that. It became disturbing to me to see that people who know the Lord are my family, but not seeing it worked out in the church.”

Irwyn’s vision as a pastor today is to see local churches become practical reflections of the diversity of their communities. He illustrates the ethnic makeup of Columbia by quoting a statistic he once saw that at one point in the 1990s, the community had the highest per capita rate of interracial marriages in the nation. “Biblically,” Irwyn says, “my heart from the time I came to faith in Christ is to see the church look like I know the church is going to look like in glory — that Jesus Christ has ransomed men and women, boys and girls from every tongue, tribe, people

Irwyn Ince
Columbia, Md.

and nation. What makes someone my brother or sister is our union in Christ, not skin color or cultural background. That’s a difficult thing; it’s not by any means easy.”

This difficulty is illustrated through the personal sacrifice of Irwyn and his congregation. After finishing his Master of Arts in Religion degree at RTS-Washington, D.C., in 2006, Irwyn left full-time employment with Motorola to pastor Mount Zion Covenant Church, a mission church in nearby Bowie, Md., where he had interned. Irwyn had begun meeting and praying with Jeff Rickett, pastor of New Town Church in Columbia. “It seemed pretty obvious to us that if I lived in Columbia,” Irwyn explains, “and he was planting New Town in Columbia, there had to be some way that the Lord would have us work together.”

The two churches ultimately formed a merger committee, eventually developing a unanimous report supporting a merger. The Mount Zion congregation voted overwhelmingly to merge with New Town to form City of Hope, where Irwyn holds the senior pastor title but where Jeff Rickett continues in a pastoral role as well.

“It works out well,” Irwyn says, “because it is a real blessing to do church planting as a team. For us personally, we practically work out what it means to die to self and preferences. We’re two men with opinions about things, and [though] we agree on the vast majority of things, we’ve got to learn to die to our own preferences at times, and our own things are not as important as the building up of the church.”
If the proverb from Ecclesiastes is true that “much study wearies the body,” then Jimmy Lin theoretically shouldn’t be able to get out of bed tomorrow. After all, he’s attending medical school, working on a Ph.D. in accelerated molecular medicine, pursuing a master’s degree in health sciences and attending RTS-Washington, D.C. — all at the same time.

Somehow amid all this study, Jimmy finds time to help with preaching and Sunday school roles at his ethnically Asian church as well as lead Bible studies with fellow graduate students. In his academic and ministry roles, he combines his passions for influencing people for Christ and conducting scientific research.

His med school and Ph.D. work is part of a combined program at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore that has produced graduates such as RTS-Jackson alumus Dr. Paul Hoehner (RQ, Spring/Summer 2006). In the Ph.D. program, Jimmy focuses on researching colorectal and breast cancer. The master’s program in the public health division of Johns Hopkins mostly involves computer analysis of cancer data.

“A lot of people have been affected by cancer, including myself,” says Jimmy, who lost an aunt and uncle to brain and pancreatic cancer, respectively. “It’s a disease where we know enough to make a difference, but there’s still a lot to do and learn. And we can take a lot of the research and see an [immediate] impact in the hospital, which is very exciting.”

Jimmy sees the connection between the cancer he studies every day and the theological perspectives honed by his RTS work. “I try to do science excellently because I’m doing it for the glory of God and examining God’s work in creation,” he explains. “Cancer’s very interesting because it is biology gone bad. You see how intricately the body’s orchestrated and how these little wrenches thrown into the machinery can cause huge problems. You marvel at how it normally doesn’t cause problems, and how we try so hard to figure out the little we know. In all those aspects RTS has helped a lot. Whether apologetics or ethics or all the biblical systematics, it has helped me have a foundational thought from which I can work.”

He views his immersion in the eight-year M.D./Ph.D. program at Johns Hopkins as part of his ministry calling. “When I was accepted into the program,” Jimmy recalls, “I thought, Lord, are You going to send me someplace for eight years? I had taken a year off after college to work with [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship], and there are so many needs within the university, so why so long a time of preparation? Then I realized this is not a time where you do nothing but where you’re in a new mission field.”

To that end, Jimmy recently organized a graduate student Bible study as well as a smaller group of Bible studies with people in the laboratory. At a recent barbecue with fellow medical students, Jimmy challenged the group not to neglect the study of Scripture amid the rigorous intellectual demands of their degree programs.

“[As med students] we are so ready to devote so much of our intellectual time to memorizing tons of information often shown later to be wrong,” he observes. “My encouragement to the medical students coming in is to think of it as tithing their intellectual time, or to investigate deeply. An understanding of theology provides the very foundation of your thought, and that’s so important for all aspects of intellectual life. If you’re a Christian who wants to become a doctor, you have to understand what it means to have God as a loving Creator who created all people. To use your intellect for God is something that’s been lost in this anti-intellectual movement these past decades.

“We have technology up the wazoo now, and we might as well use it for God’s glory. The resources are so available that we have no excuses not to draw deeply into these things. It’s an exciting time to be a Christian in science.”

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**Jimmy Lin**

Baltimore
Kathryn Rapier can hardly remember a time when her life hasn’t been surrounded by music. The northern Virginia native’s parents noticed that she loved playing songs on the piano as a child, so at age 8 she began lessons.

Today, Kathryn makes her living by giving music lessons of her own, primarily in piano. She’s been at it since 2001, during which time she also earned a Master of Arts in Religion degree at RTS-Washington, D.C. One ministry avocation involves directing worship for the young adult ministry at McLean Presbyterian Church, which currently serves as the host site for the D.C. campus of RTS.

Kathryn began her teaching career while working as the director of junior-high ministry at the church she attended before McLean Presbyterian. A woman in the church who was retiring from piano teaching invited Kathryn to take on her students. Kathryn agreed in part, taking six students at first and working her way up to her current 55 a week.

One distinct feature of Kathryn’s studio is her concern for her students’ spiritual well-being. “I made the commitment from the very beginning that for every single private student coming through my studio,” she says, “each lesson would begin with prayer, no matter what, because this is not my venture; it is God’s.” Kathryn sees the studio as a way to develop relationships with her students’ parents and as a community outreach.

“I already know I’m doing things differently than my colleagues,” she acknowledges. “When [George Mason University] students come and observe my studio to get credit for their classes, they’ll see me praying with my students, and their heads turn as if to say, ‘What are you doing? That’s not how piano lessons are supposed to go.’

“But I see it as allowing students to realize that every single day we wake up, God has given us His breath of life. He has enabled us to move our fingers along the piano keys and created us to enjoy music and not to use it for ourselves but to serve others with it. That’s what I’m passionate about.”

Another goal for the studio is to see God raise up church worship leaders. One student that Kathryn has taught for five years is a sixth-grader who is already helping lead worship in his congregation. Her students range in age all the way down to babies whose parents bring them to Kathryn’s early childhood music classes to give them as early exposure to music training as possible.

When not ministering in the realm of music, Kathryn makes the most of Bible teaching opportunities, primarily through leading a women’s Bible study at McLean Presbyterian. Recently she also taught an adult Sunday school class on the Book of Ruth. “When I finished,” Kathryn says, “I thought of that quote from Chariots of Fire when [Eric Liddell] says, ‘When I run, I feel His pleasure.’ It articulates what I felt like when I finished teaching — when I teach, I feel His pleasure. When I sing, I feel His pleasure.”

Singing has remained one of Kathryn’s great loves even as she has battled medical issues on her vocal cords. “Every time I use my voice I know it’s a gift from God,” she explains, “because He can take it away any second. When I do have my full voice, I want to use it for Him and not any other purpose. There is not one iota of glory I can take for anything I’ve done! Each day is an opportunity for His grace to unfold in the process of sanctification.

“One of my [RTS] professors once said in soteriology class, ‘Sanctification is 100 percent God and 100 percent you.’ I see that nothing can happen apart from God’s provision to make it so.”

For more information about RTS-Washington, D.C., visit www.rts.edu/site/about/campuses/washington_dc/index.aspx. Details about the planned expansion of the D.C. campus as part an overall RTS campaign may be found on page 16.
a

JOURNEY
in
STEWARDSHIP

An Alabama couple puts their money — and time — behind world mission projects.

by Paul Schwarz
Horace Sanders says this only half-jokingly, because being dismissed from three jobs at a relatively young age was part of the process by which today he and his wife, Mary Jane, have been enabled to give millions of dollars to mission causes. The extent of their mission investments is remarkable, considering it all started when Horace invested “$25,000 — all I had — plus $20,000 borrowed from my mother” to enable them to purchase a small hospital.

In God’s economy, that relatively meager investment has been multiplied into the funding of countless mission projects worldwide. In addition, Horace and Mary Jane have sent themselves as well as their checks, having taken 41 mission trips to date, ranging from a few days to five and a half months in the Philippines.

The couple certainly does not play the part of millionaires. Their home in Birmingham, Ala., is comfortable and inviting, but by no means extravagant. “We drive Ford Focus, not Mercedes,” Horace says. “We’ve been conservative in our lifestyle, mostly because of the way we were raised,” Mary Jane adds, referencing their common upbringing during the Depression.

Their generational heritage, though, does not explain everything concerning their approach to earthly riches. In the early 1970s, after owning the 75-bed hospital in Russellville, Ala., for four years, Horace sold it to a health-care conglomerate in a transaction in which he acquired stock in the company. The shifting climate of the stock market — and its downward effect on the value of his investment — eventually brought Horace to his knees. The fact that the company that bought him out would soon fire him didn’t help either.

When the market value of the stock continued to drop, Horace said, “Lord, what do You want from me?” The unspoken answer came back to Horace: I want all of you. This started him and Mary Jane on a journey in which they saw the value of their stock skyrocket and where they were able to ramp up the level of their personal and financial investments in various missions.

In 1976 Horace took his first short-term mission trip to Honduras. On this trip, the team built a church from the ground up. Horace and Mary Jane (above) have traveled worldwide on mission trips and promoted mission awareness among their peers.
up to a point of usability in eight and a half days. Mary Jane made her first trip in 1980 to the Dominican Republic while Horace stayed behind with their youngest son, who was then in high school. After their children were grown, they started going on trips together. In a characteristically playful tone, Horace quips when describing his early mission-trip building activities, “I can’t do anything, so I had to be the boss.” Horace doesn’t build buildings on his trips these days. Beginning in 1994, he began to use his skills as an accountant to conduct field audits of various mission agencies at their request.

The couple has maintained their commitment to personal giving and serving through wide fluctuations in their net worth. During one of Horace’s early trips to Bolivia, he and Mary Jane’s stock value went up $320,000 in two weeks. In response, they gave their first of two major gifts — first to their local church and then to a missionary organization. “To see them where they are is so much better than when they come and give their standard church reports,” Mary Jane says, adding “we enjoy traveling, especially when we are able to visit with missionaries in the field.”

Indeed, the list of places they’ve visited would test even the sturdiest of passports — it includes Peru, Cyprus, China, Haiti, Kenya, India, Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand, just to name a few. “I don’t know if I can handle Papua New Guinea!” Mary Jane says, responding to her husband’s comment that he’s “always excited about where we’re going next, because she’s my travel secretary.”

Ultimately, though, Horace and Mary Jane aim to not set limits on what God can do in and through them. “I’ve adhered to three principles,” says Horace. “The Lord will give it to you if He can get it through you. … Number two, you can’t outgive the Lord; it’s impossible. And third, I’ve never given anything to anyone that the Lord hadn’t given to me first. I don’t have anything to give.”

Horace and Mary Jane make a considerable investment in inspecting the end results themselves. Many of their trips have involved visiting missionaries they and/or their church have helped support. “To see them where they are is so much better than when they come and give their standard church reports,” Mary Jane says, adding “we enjoy traveling, especially when we are able to visit with missionaries in the field.”

Guy Richardson, president of RTS-Jackson, along with his wife, Denise, contributed to the reporting for this article.
Allene Putnam: A Long-Term Donor

Allene Putnam has contributed to RTS every month for over 30 years. To find out why, I arranged to visit her at her house behind her daughter’s place on a farm outside Macon, Miss. She patiently answered all my queries concerning her faithful and appreciated habit.

Mrs. Putnam heard about RTS through the late Rev. Sam Patterson, first president of the seminary, under whose evangelistic preaching ministry she sat on numerous occasions. She came to know Stelle, Sam’s late wife, and they went to lunch occasionally. Mrs. Putnam’s late husband, John, was an attorney.

Her interest in world evangelism has encompassed the many missionaries she has known who graduated from RTS. Mrs. Putnam’s support for RTS is a show of support for the seminary’s mission programs and emphasis on evangelism.

Also, like many, Mrs. Putnam was concerned about the drift of the Presbyterian denomination at the time of RTS’ founding. She wanted to help send out men who preach the Bible as the Word of God.

Along the way she came to know many of the RTS professors who preached or taught Sunday school classes in her church. She specifically named Simon Kistemaker and Douglas Kelly, as well as Ligon Duncan, now senior minister at her former church, First Presbyterian Church in Jackson.

Mrs. Putnam keeps in touch with RTS alumni who are missionaries through letters, cards and other means. She has served as a Women in the Church chair for Mission to the World and as a circle leader.

Robert L. Penny is vice president for development at RTS-Jackson.

Why I Give to RTS

Stewardship is an ancient idea and a current concept I wholeheartedly embrace. Historically, the steward was charged with caring for the assets of his master. Those assets were not the steward’s property, but he was to treat them as if they belonged to him.

An interesting article called “Money and Property: Whose Is It?” by the Trinity Forum explores the roots of the ownership question: “The . . . view, represented by Jews and Christians, was that human beings have a qualified right over money and property. Or, put more precisely, God has the ultimate ownership, but we have stewardship of money, property, and our talents. In the true sense of the Old English word steward, we are responsible for the prudent management of an estate that is not our own.”

Hopefully you would not use the assets strictly for your benefit and comfort, instead using some to help others.

How much of the money should go to these causes? I subscribe to the theory that the tithe is a current concept, not just something that applies to the Old Testament. Even though the concept of the tithe is thousands of years old, it remains a good plan today. In fact, in ancient Israel the total tithe came to about 31 percent of gross income. That being said, I think 10 percent is a good place to start when considering how much to give.

If you agree with the stewardship argument I put forth earlier, the tithe looks like a pretty good deal. All the money is God’s, and you get to keep 90 percent of it. Having said that 10 percent is a good place to start, let me add that I believe it is just that — a starting point, not the finish line. Also, the more money you have, the greater percentage you can give, since what you have left is still a substantial sum.

Having determined why I give and how much I should give, I am left with the problem of where to give. RTS is my number one priority for giving because I think the seminary is performing the most important work for the kingdom — preparing men to preach the Word and bring the gospel to the unsaved. In addition, RTS prepares men and women for the vocations of counseling and teaching. There is tremendous leverage in this process. By this I mean that RTS trains these men and women to train others, who train still more people. One RTS graduate can influence countless lives during his or her lifetime of service on this earth.

The old saying goes, “Do your givin’ while you’re livin’ so you’re knowin’ where it’s goin’.” It is more fun to give while you are alive because you see what your money accomplishes.

When noted billionaire John D. Rockefeller died, a newspaper reporter asked his accountant, “How much did John D. leave?” His accountant replied, “He left it all.” You (and I) will too. The only thing you get to take with you is the satisfaction of knowing that you have made the world a better place through your giving and your good work, and that you have been an important part of an important project.

David is chairman of the Bonita Bay Group, Bonita Springs, Fla., and is a member of the RTS Board of Trustees.
How has your vision for ministry and your approach to it changed over time?

We came here with a vision to bring greater Atlanta into what we call “a life-changing encounter with the kingdom of God.” To do that, we’ve been challenged to attempt something so great for God that it would be doomed to failure unless God is in it.

With that in mind, we came up with a model of ministry that I think was the first of its kind — one church in four locations. After 10 years we felt that the model was not going to take us to accomplishment of the vision.

So we moved to a second model called Perimeter Ministries International. We did much more and faster church planting through it, but eventually we felt there would be no way the vision would be accomplished through that model.

Now, in our 30th year, we’ve found what we believe will take us to our destiny. It’s called Unite. We’ve invited churches throughout the community to lock arms with us.

Churches have to work together with other churches; we don’t do it alone. If we try to build our own kingdom, then God’s kingdom doesn’t come. There’s a humility in unity that God loves; He wants to see His people come together.

What do these partnerships look like?

We started in northeast Atlanta with Compassion in Action weekends. We identified every need within a 12-mile radius of the church, and after identifying four key needs, we asked our people to go out on Saturday and Sunday to minister in those four arenas.

Then we took the plan to other churches. We went to six churches as different from us as we could find — denominationally and ethnically — and formed a ministry team.

We’ve launched in about 100 churches in northeast Atlanta, as well as in central and northwest Atlanta and with pilot groups to the south. The goal is to unite about 1,000 churches, with the gospel in mind, in “targeting the city gates.”

Right now we’re targeting school systems. For example, we’re encouraging every church to have someone run for a local school board seat. We want to pull those people together, give them a biblical worldview education, feed them back into the system, and watch the impact.

When such a consortium of churches of all stripes and types works together throughout the city, we think it’s possible to bring the gospel to bear fully on a whole city.

How does RTS fit into this plan?

RTS influences what we do because we keep planting churches in the area — two per year and 30 to date. Every one of these requires a pastor, and ideally we train them locally. RTS enhances our ability to develop the right kind of leaders, because we want the Reformed faith to influence all these churches we’re working with. We think it’s a tremendous partnership.

After three decades as a pastor and church planter in the Presbyterian Church in America, Randy Pope has become an influential voice in the denomination. He and his wife, Carol, planted Perimeter Church in the Atlanta area in 1977. During the subsequent 30 years, Perimeter has planted 30 churches in greater Atlanta and developed biblically based, successful models for training local church leaders.

As lead teacher and directional leader at Perimeter, Randy has become a go-to voice on the issues of church planting, discipleship and leadership development. The RTS graduate has been a guest lecturer at numerous seminaries and pastors conferences, and has preached at the annual PCA General Assembly.

RQ talked with Randy about his vision for Atlanta, Perimeter’s approach to ministry, and his observations based on his pastoral experiences.
You have an acronym, TEAMS, to describe Perimeter’s approach to ministry. What are the components?

The overarching term would be life-on-life missional discipleship. Our leadership base, elder core and everything else is based on this model. The acronym talks about the five ingredients that go into this.

First of all, truth — making sure that people are getting a foundation. We’ve written a three-year curriculum that’s been outstanding. Curriculum doesn’t do the whole job, but you have to have a basis of truth.

Number two is equipping, or “massaging the truth” until it becomes understandable and usable. Our small-group leaders have a life-on-life call to laboring in the lives of a few. Actually, discipling, mentoring or coaching are better terms; it’s not moderating a small group, but taking a responsible role in others’ spiritual formation. Accountability is the third component.

The “M” is mission. That’s the challenging part — getting people to live missionally so that it’s not just an input group, but a place to get equipped for service. We stress three arenas for mission: where we live, work and play. The “S” is supplication, or praying with and for each other.

We work those five ingredients into every meeting where a leader is laboring in the lives of a few.

What role does theological education play in your leadership development?

Theological Foundations for Leaders is our 10-week, intensive study program, which began for elder and deacon nominees. Many men told us that it might have been the most significant 10 weeks of their spiritual growth, so we opened it up for all potential leaders — men and women alike.

TFL ends with an hour-and-a-half-long written test. People study several books, go to 10 weekly meetings, and spend several hours getting ready for their weekly time. I think most of our elders could handle a fairly decent presbytery exam because of what they’re getting.

What key issues should Reformed preachers of the gospel pay attention to?

One, good preaching is talking to people about themselves, their needs and their issues from the Bible. The authors of Scripture did this in that they looked to the needs and issues of people and taught about who God was in light of their needs.

Some people will think we’re just a felt-need people, which is exactly the opposite of what I’m saying. The needs and the wants of people were once closely aligned. Today, in a highly secularized world, the needs and the wants of the Christian community have become far apart. What people want, they often don’t need; what people need, they often don’t want. If we believe the whole counsel of God is important, much of our preaching may not be on the felt-need radar screen.

I see many preachers today saying, “What do you want to hear? I’ll tell you from the Bible.” Instead, we need to say, “What do you need to hear from God?” That gives us the whole counsel of God.

When such a consortium of churches of all stripes and types works together throughout the city, we think it’s possible to bring the gospel to bear fully on a whole city.”

Randy Pope

Also, I see the need for a three-pronged approach to preaching, as opposed to the one-prong approach common today, which is “This is what you need to do and not do according to the Bible.” A Reformed pastor must also address the “why” — the motivation side.

What disturbs me is that I don’t see the third part of preaching a lot, even among Reformed people, and that is the “how” — the appropriation of God’s Spirit within us. It’s not just preaching the gospel to myself as my motivation, but drawing upon the work of the Spirit who indwells me. Putting those three together is paramount, and I’m grieved at how little those three come together.

At pastors conferences nationwide, I’m seeing pastor after pastor agree that we don’t know how to take people into healthy spiritual formation. I do a little exercise where I have pastors write down their best offerings to people’s spiritual formation. They’ll write things like preaching the Word, Sunday school, small groups and others.

Then I ask them to write down their definitions of what a mature and equipped follower of Jesus looks like biblically. I put them in groups to develop a comprehensive description. Then I say, “Tell me honestly how many of you believe that what you’re offering will take people to your description.” I might see zero hands being raised.

Then I say, “Is that not a telltale sign of where we are in the church? We don’t believe our best offerings will do what we’re here to accomplish.” Then I lay out what it means to take somebody into life-on-life missional discipleship and describe what it looks like, and I see hope come to pastors’ eyes.
PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE
In a world of alarming compromise and confusion, RTS is standing firm on the inerrancy of Scripture and the historic Reformed faith. But we are not standing still. God has charged RTS with the vital work of helping prepare His servants to reach the world for Christ — to urge others to prepare for eternity and to “be there” in heaven one day through faith in Jesus.

We are all too aware of the sweeping challenges in our culture today, which call more loudly than ever for thoughtful, biblically minded leadership for the church in the years ahead. RTS is uniquely suited to prepare the kind of pastors and leaders necessary to lead our youth and adults to Christ and to a biblical, Reformed world and life view. RTS combines the truth of the Reformed faith with winsomeness and evangelistic zeal.

The seminary has been blessed with influential campuses — “impact centers” — in Jackson, Orlando and Charlotte. Now we have additional opportunities to take important steps forward through growing “impact centers” in Atlanta and Washington, D.C., and through our Charlotte-based Virtual Campus degree program. With the addition of much-needed professors in Atlanta (the “capital of the South”) and Washington (our nation’s capital), as well as Web-based tutorials that will vastly improve our virtual classroom abilities, we are stepping out in faith to go where our Lord directs.

He heart of our renewed vision to increase our evangelistic outreach can be summed up in the concept of “seminary planting.” We want to establish a Master of Divinity degree program to prepare a whole new generation of pastors in both Atlanta and Washington, using a core of Ph.D. faculty along with area pastors as adjuncts in order to serve the churches in these regions. To date, we have only been able to offer the Master of Arts degree in these places.

Our administrative offices and classrooms have been hosted by partner churches, and we plan to continue that practice, although it may be necessary to rent additional space in the future. We see this as an efficient, effective business model to duplicate subsequently in other metropolitan areas. In placing less emphasis on bricks and mortar, we will look to form partnerships with churches, and renting property as necessary rather than funding buildings and traditional campuses.

While a good seminary will send some graduates nationwide and worldwide, its major impact will inevitably be found in the region around the campus itself. We look forward to seeing many new churches planted, older churches revived, and a variety of denominations and ministries in-
We want to identify, recruit and prepare a new generation of extraordinary leaders on fire for Christ.

We serve both North American and international students wishing to receive theological education and prepare for vocations in churches and other ministries. We wish to make ministry preparation more widely accessible to students who are unable to move to a residential campus. Employment, family considerations or ministry obligations often preclude students from uprooting from their community.

In the process of our past seminary planting, we have learned that we can actually reach more people and prepare more leaders for their witness for Christ by going to them rather than requiring them to come to us. Over the years, most seminaries seem to have said, “We want to be the best we can be in one location; if you want it, come get it.” At RTS we believe so much in the importance of our program, in light of our deteriorating culture and in the face of U.S. church decline, that we want to step up our efforts in the battle for young minds.

We want to do everything we can to bring biblical education to students who want to learn how to serve Christ more effectively but cannot come to us. RTS says, “If you want it and can’t come to us to get it, we will bring it to you.”

At our three extensions (Atlanta, Washington and Boca Raton, Fla.), we now offer the Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) degree with local staff members, adjunct faculty members and visiting regular faculty. We cannot offer accredited Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degrees in these locations without adding resident faculty members.

Students wishing to enter vocational ministry in both Washington and Atlanta have regularly requested us to offer the complete M.Div. at those locations so they do not have to move to one of our residential campuses for the minimum year and a half to complete that degree. Most of them are seeking to be ordained in denominations that require an accredited M.Div., not the M.A.R.

As we have multiplied our campuses in different locations, we have been able to serve students from a wider variety of churches and denominations. In addition to our strong Presbyterian enrollment, RTS serves students from over 60 denominations. A primary factor when students choose a seminary today is location – especially one close either to where they presently live and minister or where they desire to do so.

Worldwide, students want an accredited, Reformed theological education from RTS, but many cannot move to any of our present or projected locations. While some students would prefer the M.Div., the M.A.R. through our Virtual Campus is able to provide necessary foundational training that meets their needs.

Planting Near You

We serve both North American and international students wishing to receive theological education and prepare for vocations in churches and other ministries. We want to identify, recruit and prepare a new generation of extraordinary leaders on fire for Christ.

Plants for the Plants

Part of our plan for the newer campuses is to continue to house some staff members and library resources in the large churches presently hosting RTS. As we add faculty and staff members, we will need to lease office space for them and a larger resident library. The local RTS library will provide basic reference books, with larger libraries available through cooperative arrangements with other theological libraries in the area and through online resources, as well as through interlibrary loan with other RTS campus libraries.

We plan to continue using churches for most classes, though we may teach some classes at rented office space depending on the facilities available. We want to teach courses at various locations around these metropolitan areas to better serve as many students as possible.

At the Virtual Campus, we want to make courses more helpful so as to encourage students to complete them and the degree program. Specifically, we plan to keep upgrading and improving the audio, video and text portions of the recorded courses. In addition, we intend to produce an interactive tutorial for each course. These students will direct students to read or listen to certain materials, take tests and write papers at specific times, and link to study helps.

The Internet platform for these tutorials will automatically record all student interaction with the online material, other distance students and the professor of record for each
course. Capturing this interaction is important for evaluating and improving the courses, assessing the student's work, and reporting to accreditors.

A key focus will be to identify and to recruit gifted students for each campus — students determined to win souls and help build strong and growing churches, and who are especially equipped to thoughtfully engage today's world. We will work to provide 300 scholarships of 50 percent tuition for full-time M.Div. students to help prepare even more gifted and talented pastors and church leaders.

**Planting Finances**

The strengthening and growth of the ministry of RTS is being supported by a financial campaign which will provide the following and more:

- A Leadership Scholarship Fund for students — As noted above, 300 key full-time M.Div. students (100 per year over the next three years) will be identified, recruited and given scholarships for half of their tuition. This will help them complete their preparation for ministry and put them into the spiritual harvest field as soon as possible. These special scholarships will be available at all five RTS campuses where the M.Div. degree will be offered (Jackson, Orlando, Charlotte, Atlanta and Washington), with 20 scholarships available per year at each location.

- A Faculty Fund for Atlanta and Washington — Six faculty members (three each for Atlanta and Washington) are being hired to serve as the core for establishing the M.Div. program at both locations. Four have already been hired (two at each campus).

- A Virtual Campus Course Development Fund — This will provide for the implementation of technological advances in online learning, including video-based online tutorials for each course, allowing students to select learning support based on their needs or interests.

- A Founders Fund — This endowment-type fund will honor those daring men of God who courageously took a stand against biblical compromise to establish RTS, and upon whose shoulders we stand. The interest from this fund will strengthen the ongoing ministry of RTS, with the principal available if needed for significant opportunities or emergency needs.

- An International Scholarship Fund — This fund will address international students, who represent nations dotting the globe and who are in the greatest need for scholarships.

**Funding the Plants**

There are two aspects to the campaign: annual funding to support the ongoing present ministry of RTS and endowment-type funding to provide long-term financial strength and stability. The ministry of RTS requires over $7 million annually in operational gift revenue to cover expenses and scholarships, along with net tuition revenue and endowment income.

We realize we have a small endowment for a school our size. This campaign, therefore, seeks to raise an additional $25 million in endowment-type funds, which at a 5 percent growth rate would produce $1.25 million annually to support the operations of the seminary and remove some of the need for so many major annual gifts.

**Your Part in These Plants**

In order to expand wisely, we need to strengthen the base of support for RTS so that we are stable and solid financially while moving ahead in this expansion. To do all this, we are praying for an additional $15 million by May 31, 2010. We are seeking to raise $75 million over five years, but in the first two years we have already raised $60 million in gifts, pledges and regular annual expectations. We are now in the third year of the campaign.

We are concerned — not so much about raising money but about the fact that the church is losing ground in the battle for souls. We want to identify, recruit and prepare a new generation of extraordinary leaders on fire for Christ and convincingly able to engage our secularized culture. The preaching of the gospel is the singular agent of change and influence for Christ in our country and the world.

Ultimately, a faithful, Reformed seminary is needed in every major city in the United States and abroad. The further development of the Atlanta and Washington campuses, along with the Virtual Campus, is only the next step.

The outcome of our prayers and efforts over the past two years has been dramatic. RTS has been blessed in attracting more support for this campaign than many thought possible in such a short time. The ultimate goal of all our development activities and success is to serve Christ and to build the kingdom of God by preparing more workers for the harvest in our country and worldwide, especially through “seminary planting” in new locations where God opens the door.

Would you prayerfully consider partnering with us by making a significant investment in the lives of future key leaders whose leveraged impact will reach around the world and last through all eternity, as we seek to raise this additional $15 million over the next three years? A return envelope is included in this issue of RQ for your convenience.
Why Ride the Wave of the Market When You Can Have Security With an RTS Gift Annuity?

Are you being tossed about on the waves of an unpredictable financial market — up one day and down the next? With guaranteed payments for life, you won’t need to keep a constant eye on the “ups and downs” of the markets. Support the ministry of RTS, receive very favorable tax benefits and gain added financial security with a charitable gift annuity from those you trust.

See the sample rates below:

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To learn more about RTS’ charitable gift annuity program, call Mark R. Seeley at the Office of Planned Giving at (704) 688-4218.