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by William Wood

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
Interview with Karen Ellis
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— DR. LIGON DUNCAN
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In the turmoil and tension of our world, one comforting truth that should settle and strengthen us is that our Jesus reigns. No matter what is going on around us in the world, within us in our hearts, or about us in our lives, Jesus reigns. Psalm 2 tells us about that.

The Psalm begins with a complaint about the rebellion of the nations against the Lord (Yahweh) and his anointed king (the son of David, see 2 Samuel 7:11b-16). “Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!’” (Psalm 2:1–3). Luke tells us that the early Christians understood that this Psalm speaks of Jesus and the cross. In Acts 4:25–28, we read “the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people devise futile things? The Kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ.’ For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

Notice the emphasis of this early Christian prayer. The terrible injustice of the cross, the evil plotting against Jesus, was all part of the plan of the Father.
While it may have looked like God’s plan had failed and his enemies had triumphed, it had not and they had not. God was and is in control. In fact, the rebellion of nations against God and his Christ was just a part of God’s sovereign plan.

Psalm 2:4–6 tells us the response of God to the rebellion of his enemies. “He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, ‘But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.’” That is, while the plan of the nations was to unseat God’s anointed, it was God’s plan that his anointed would be seated on the throne to rule and reign. Where is this announced to all the world? In the resurrection of Jesus.

Psalm 2:7–9 explains this: “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’” Acts 13:33 says that this is all about Christ and means “that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; Today I have begotten You.’”

What is our response to this? Repenting of our sin and trusting in God’s Son. Psalm 2:10–12 exhorts: “Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!” There are only two options: worship the Lord and do homage to his Son, Jesus, or perish in his wrath. As Derek Kidner says: “There is no refuge from Him, only refuge in Him.”

But for all those who do trust in Christ, this Psalm offers a world of comfort and consolation as it delights in God’s sovereignty, and his sure and certain promise to his Son, the King, Jesus. No matter what is happening in your life, your God is in charge and he has made a promise that Jesus has fulfilled and that you can rely on. Jesus is risen. God has declared him King. Nothing can thwart his rule, or his purposes of grace. You can count on it. Our Jesus reigns and shall reign, and “blessings abound where’er he reigns: the prisoners leap to lose their chains, the weary find eternal rest, and all who suffer want are blest” (Isaac Watts).
FEATURE

A FAITHFUL FOUNDATION
NFL COACH FRANK REICH
ON LEADERSHIP, DISCIPLINE
AND VOCATION

LYNNE WINGARD

FRANK REICH

is an alumnus of RTS and served as President of RTS
Charlotte from 2003–2006, following a successful college
and professional football career. He returned to coaching
in 2008, and ten years later became the Head Coach of the
Indianapolis Colts. We sat down to talk with him about
leadership—specifically, leadership under pressure—and how
to navigate that with grace, whether on a national stage or
within a church family.
Your roles as husband, father, pastor, coach, and seminary president carry an enormous responsibility with them—lots of pressure with lots of people examining and evaluating your decisions. What is it like to work under intense scrutiny?

I was speaking at a prayer breakfast this morning and one of the things we talked about was this kind of accountability—always being evaluated, always being under the spotlight. And one of the things that I’ve learned to appreciate in the role as a man in this league (playing and coaching in the NFL) is the absolute high accountability on everything that you do. It makes you think of the Scripture to whom much is given, much is required—and then you realize that this is a dream job. It’s been our dream to play or coach in this league, and that comes with a price. You don’t have the privacy, and you are more accountable. But what I’ve found, is that players and coaches learn to embrace that and realize that it helps us grow. That’s what helps us get better. When I was playing, there used to be a saying “the eye in the sky doesn’t lie.” The camera is always on you; you’re always being evaluated—everything you do. And I think that’s a healthy perspective. It’s a healthy Christian perspective—understanding that the Lord sees and knows everything. The Scripture is clear—we live before God, and there’s nothing hidden—he knows every thought, motive, deed—everything.

What culture and values do you prize and how do you communicate their importance to your organization?

We are clear what our values are from day one. And we chose to really focus on three values. Trust, toughness, and team; our three Ts—that’s the foundation. I found that in establishing a culture, two things are really important. Our number one: work really hard on the front end to get the right people in the building. Because if you’re going to establish culture, it’s obviously going to be reflected in the people—so the character of the people is of paramount importance. So you can have great values and great ideas of what your culture is going to be like. You need the right people who buy in (to that), who have that already as part of their fabric. So if you’re able to identify what you want the culture to be, then recruit to those values—because it’s so hard to change someone’s values. I think a big part of the key to the success that we’ve had here is getting players who already have that in their DNA.

You know when I say toughness, that’s really a code word for having a growth mindset. Getting better every day is not just a physical toughness. It’s really an attitude of “I’m pushing myself to get better every day.”

And then the team part is just being unselfish, and focused on team goals. We worked really hard to get the right people in the door who already embody those values, that will live out those values. That’s how you establish your culture.

And then number two, clearly communicate those values from day one as our focus and point of emphasis. So from day one, that’s what we did. We talked about those three values all year, and now we have our “foundation inspection.” We’re going to communicate those throughout the year in different ways. And then once a year we’re going to go through a formal reintroduction and inspection of those values.

I worked for Tony Dungy, who used to say “if you’re not careful, you’ll have death by inches.” You don’t think you’re losing it. Typically, you don’t lose it all at once, you lose a little at a time.
We try to keep short accounts and continue to communicate so it’s always in front of us. Then we have that inspection every year to dig deeply into the foundation and talk about what these values really mean.

The nature of what you do—training coaches to lead and be excellent at what they do—often results in them taking jobs in other organizations. When this happens, it means you’ve succeeded—but it also means you’ve lost a valuable manager. Are there keys to managing the frequent rotation of leaders?

It’s difficult. I think the key is, if we’re doing what we said: working hard to hire the right people up front, and then emphasizing those values already inherent in the person and constantly putting emphasis on them. At the same time, you’re really preparing somebody else to move on and take another job, you’re also at the same time building up the other people on the staff to fill that void. You have to be cognizant of the leadership development.

So if we have a coordinator on our coaching staff who is doing particularly well, that coordinator will get a lot of attention. You have to be always developing everyone on your staff to be able to fill that role if that person moves on to another job.

Given the demanding nature of leading an NFL team, how do you set boundaries around your personal life, for both time with your family and for seeking the LORD in prayer and the word?

I remember a quote from Jim Elliot: “Wherever you are, be all there!” Learning to focus also means
learning to focus when you’re at home. That’s really important. It doesn’t answer all the questions of time. You still have to set boundaries to be able to create time and I think the scheduling and the discipline of that is really important.

For instance, in coaching or seminary or pastoring, there are a lot of hours. You’re always on call, in a sense and you’re always on the job. Structure is your friend; discipline is your friend; routine is your friend. I think what happens – my experience in the pastorate and as a seminary student is that the schedule and the discipline was absolutely critical to create boundaries. You have to be very intentional about that.

Secondly, there are seasons of life. When I was done with football, I had an opportunity to go into coaching and I wasn’t quite ready to do that. My girls were all young. And I knew that the time commitment would be great, and it would take away from time to help raise our daughters. I had some great opportunities that would have been very lucrative; and you know, I just said no. Because it came down to the importance of wanting to be there and spend time with my family. As the girls got older, then it was another season of our life—and I was able to move into coaching. So whether we’re a seminary student or a pastor, there are times when we have to make sacrifices. Decide what’s more important and do it; and be able to piece it together. That helped me come to terms with that.

You transitioned from seminary president, to pastor, to coach. Talk us through the process of this decision. What counsel would you provide pastors who are evaluating their call to ministry?

I came to love and appreciate the vision and mission of the seminary. As an ex-football player it really made sense to me. It was like a training camp experience; seminary students trained really hard because they’re preparing to go out into the battle. You go through this rigorous preparation to get ready for your calling.

When Ric (Cannada) asked me to fill that position, I wasn’t sure I was qualified to be a seminary president. I wasn’t sure I was cut out for this. Every part of that experience exceeded my expectations. It was as good as I thought it was going to be, as far as working with the professors, students, and other presidents. It was an unbelievable learning experience. Ultimately, it didn’t fulfill the calling that I had to be a teacher/coach. It was more administration than I felt like I was cut out for.

At the end of three years, I thought I needed to be out in the field. And that’s when I stepped into the
pastorate. I need to be out in the field with people, teaching, and walking through the Scriptures, and being involved in people’s lives, and counseling people through life’s issues. And after about a year, there were a variety of reasons, but I came to the conclusion that I didn’t believe the pastorate was my calling. I didn’t believe that I was the right person for the job. It was very difficult; I struggled with it. You know, I had guilt about that decision for a couple of years. Did I fail the Lord? Was I not tough enough? Was I not faithful enough? Thankfully I had a lot of good friends and mentors who helped me overcome the guilt of feeling like I was quitting. I’ve never been a quitter.

What ultimately helped me understand was the very thing I was preaching and learned in seminary. All work is to the Lord. Being a pastor is a special calling, but it wasn’t the only way to minister. I tried to live that out as a player. So it’s the idea that no matter what you do, you do it to the glory of God, and it’s sacred work. And that ultimately is what freed me up to understand that I could step away from the pastorate and still do the Lord’s work, still fulfill his calling in my life in a way that was meaningful. At the end of the day, I just wanted to be faithful to exalt the name of Christ; be faithful to live out and eat, sleep, and breathe the word of God. That is my focus.

Lynne Wingard is a teacher and writer, and the wife of RTS Jackson Associate Professor and Dean of Students Dr. Charlie Wingard. She serves as a senior writer for RTS Communications.

PASTORS MUST BE LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

One of the chief purposes of our Doctor of Ministry program is to provide an excellent environment for clergy interaction and graduate research in a ministry-focused context.
UNFETTERED ACCESS TO EVIL

by

DR. J.V. FESKO
There are many benefits to the internet—it provides a platform for lightning-quick communication, opportunities for commerce, and sharing a wealth of information that previous generations only dreamed possible. Many theologians, for example, have greatly benefited from unbound access to all sorts of books and essays which are now available on the web. I have been able to access scores of ancient books that in years past would have required me to travel the world at great expense. Now, with a few strokes of the keyboard and clicks of my mouse, I can download numerous rare books and read them on my computer or tablet. But access to beneficial resources is a two-way street—the ease with which we can now use many good things equally applies to evil things.

In days gone by, in order for someone to access pornography, for example, he had to be willing physically to go to a store. He had to walk in, select the magazine, walk up to the counter, look the clerk in the face, and pay for it. The unwillingness and shame to hurdle the various moral and social obstacles kept some people from accessing evil. In short, temptation and opportunity did not meet. With the internet, however, temptation and opportunity have few impediments. Rather than go to a store, all a person has to do is enter a few words into a search engine and click the mouse, and he can encounter all sorts of wicked images and ideas. Such unfettered access to evil causes troubles even within the church. The recent Poway Synagogue Shooting where a young man killed one and injured three highlights this fact, as he was a member of a Reformed and Presbyterian church.

The young man who attacked the synagogue did not learn his wicked ideology from his friends, family, church, or books. Rather, in his now-deleted manifesto, he explained that he learned his degenerate dogma from on-line chat groups over a period of two years. What is mind-boggling is a person would turn away from the people that are around him, with whom he shares meals, speaks with on a daily basis, those with whom he worships, and turn to a computer screen to imbibe from an evil message which he took into the depths of his soul. We can all shudder in disbelief and disapprove of the shooter’s actions, and rightly so. But the truth of the matter is that many others access evil on a regular basis through the internet in a similar fashion. If the statistics are accurate, every second 30,000 people are consuming pornography on-line and nearly 35 percent of all internet downloads are related to pornography. The sad fact is that many Christians are a part of these statistics. Internet evil, however, comes in many other forms. How often do comment threads on Facebook, news articles, or Twitter feeds circle the drain of immorality as Christians engage in gossip, slander, and anger-filled rants? The question we must ask ourselves is, “What are we supposed to do given our unrestricted access to evil?” There are three important tools at our disposal we need to employ in our use of the internet.

First, some people take extreme measures and completely disconnect their lives from the internet. While this may be a necessary step, at the same time we have to ask a more fundamental question. Namely, what have we done to change the motivations and desires of our hearts? You can remove opportunity, but what if the temptations and sinful desires still lie restless in our hearts? Recall Christ’s words when he addressed the question of what defiles a person’s heart: “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder,
adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person” (Mark 7:20–23). You can completely disconnect from the internet and still engage in sinful conduct by lusting and coveting after things. The internet often only gives opportunity to desires already present in the heart. The only way to change your desires is to change your diet. That is, feeding on Christ through word, sacrament, and prayer can change the desires of our hearts. As Paul writes: “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (Rom. 13:14). If you continually feed upon Christ and cry out to him in prayer that he would change the yearnings of your heart, then when temptation encounters opportunity, you will pass by without a second thought because you will only have a desire to please Christ.

Second, we must use the internet cautiously and deliberately. I think we often all too willingly click on questionable links that lead us to sinful internet content. Even reputable news sites can have links to salacious stories and images. Curiosity gets the better of us and we wander into the sin-darkened corners of the digital world to our detriment. We live during a time when websites purvey violence, sex, hatred, and death as commodities—ideas to increase web traffic and revenue. Such things can easily get our attention and we might click on the links out of a genuine interest to learn about the world around us or perhaps to satisfy our sinful voyeuristic appetites. We should realize, however, that not all links are worthy of our attention. While a story might seem interesting, must we click on it? Perhaps the better part of wisdom is to ignore fantastic headlines and be more disciplined in our reading. Moreover, we should heed Paul’s advice to the Philippians: “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Phil. 4:8). Do we pursue that which edifies or that which tears down?

Third, and finally, the church community is often a vital missing component in our use of the internet. Internet addiction actually erodes our connections to the real world. The Poway synagogue shooter immersed himself in online chat groups and failed to connect to the people around him—his family, school, and church. He withdrew into a twisted world of sinful disembodied ideology mediated to him through the internet. If we find ourselves staring for hours into the bright light of our computer screens and failing to connect to the flesh-and-blood people in our lives, we must stop, disconnect, and re-engage the real world. God has created us as embodied creatures, which means that whenever we disengage from contact with others we begin to erode our God-created flesh-and-blood existence. The author to the Hebrews highlighted the importance of regularly gathering together for worship with God’s people. But in particular, note two of the reasons why he exhorted his recipients regularly to meet: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24–25). When we

How often do comment threads on Facebook, news articles, or Twitter feeds circle the drain of immorality as Christians engage in gossip, slander, and anger-filled rants?

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gathering together as the people of God, we should encourage one another to greater holiness and love. As a community, we can discuss the things we encounter on the internet and share the ideas that we learn. Others can provide feedback regarding whether these beliefs are godly or wicked. Older members of the church can teach us wisdom. Our pastors and elders can help us discern when certain concepts might have false doctrine and ideologies buried deep within. In other words, God created us for community—we are part of the body of Christ—we need to ensure we are connected to it. No person is an island—we are all members of the body of Christ and thus need his body to live and thrive.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once made an astute observation regarding the necessity of the church: “Let him who cannot be alone beware of community... Let him who is not in community beware of being alone... Each by itself has profound perils and pitfalls. One who wants fellowship without solitude plunges into the void of words and feelings, and the one who seeks solitude without fellowship perishes in the abyss of vanity, self-infatuation, and despair.” In this case, Bonhoeffer’s warnings about solitude without community bear significant relevance for the internet and our unfettered access to evil. We must pursue holiness and piety in order to reform and change our desires, but we can never do so apart from the church and means of grace.

J. V. Fesko is Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at RTS Jackson. Read more about Dr. Fesko on page 41.

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Karen remembers “asking God to show me how I could be involved.” Today, that involvement looks like advocating for the persevering Church and helping to develop theology around the virtue of Christian perseverance.

Karen and her husband, Carl, both work at RTS. Karen is the Director of the Center for the Study of the Bible and Ethnicity (CSBE) at RTS Atlanta and the Cannada Fellow for World Christianity. In addition to her roles at RTS, she is a Ph.D. candidate in Virtue Ethics at the Oxford Center for Missions Studies in Oxford, England.

M&L Managing Editor Kelly Berkompas spoke with Karen about her ongoing work and research, the CSBE, and how American Christians can learn from a fuller understanding of the global and historical Church.
For those who might not be familiar with the CSBE, can you briefly outline its history and purpose?

The CSBE exists to deepen Christian understanding of how God has moved, is moving, and has promised to move among the nations through the Church as a distinct and unique cultural minority.

The concept of a study center focused on the local and global connection began organically, in our living room, about seven years ago. We had a number of local and global ministry leaders who wanted to understand better how to connect Covenantal theology with their unique cultural contexts. Eventually, people’s jobs began sending them to come and visit. So many students came through that we decided to group them into cohorts to study together, encourage each other in the Word, and compare notes on creatively addressing the unique challenges they faced in their own communities.

These were sweet times with global and local leaders gathering around meals, a few household chores (to help ease our hosting burden), teaching, and discipleship. Soon, people began affectionately calling our house “Black L’Abri.” We kept praying over the next five years for a way to formalize what was happening in our home but no one really caught the vision except the students who just kept coming through.

Five years in, Dr. Guy Richard came to visit us and described his vision for a Center at RTS Atlanta that would focus on local and global concerns of the church, something that would reflect the unique ethnic makeup of the city of Atlanta. My husband and I looked at him sideways and told him this was already happening in our house. God in His infinite creativity has formalized our little ad hoc study center on the campus of RTS Atlanta. We are now watching it grow into something we pray will be a blessing to both our local communities and the larger global church.

I think that RTS Atlanta is courageously forward-thinking to target issues of perseverance, witness, opportunity and unity in today’s shifting cultural environment. We’re grateful to be supported by an institution that believes the whole counsel of Scripture is sufficient to sustain the people of God in our present and future, as it has in the past.

What has been one of the most exciting things for you to see at the CSBE since you started as director?

There’s been a lot that’s been encouraging, but it’s been especially encouraging to see God bring domestic, rural, and urban leaders together with minority missionaries and global mission leaders under one roof to learn from each other. Whether local or global, these are people who understand the reality of living Christianity “in the hard places,” places where the culture around them is hostile to the transformative gospel of Christ.

Some of these leaders are prospective or current students, some are guest lecturers, some are lay people who live nearby who come to audit seminary and CSBE courses. Seeing Christians of all ethnicities gather around God’s Word to seek solutions and strategies, at a time when the American
Church’s reputation is one of fragmentation, tribalism, and polarization, has been not only encouraging for many of us, it has also been healing.

**A large part of your work over the past years has been advocating for the global church. What does this advocacy look like? What motivated you to get involved?**

I became involved because I saw similarities in the religious freedom violations of biblical Christians in the African American experience and those of biblical Christians overseas. The evil spirit of destruction of God’s people has been in play since Genesis 1–3, but so has God’s promise to keep a people for Himself.

For example, withholding, limiting, or redacting Bibles was seen in the African American Christian experience, a practice we also see in China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and other places today. Secret meetings in the hush harbors or in slave quarters to worship the true and living God (and not pro-chattel-slavery’s perverted view) parallel the underground meetings we see today in North Korea, Iran, and China. Jim-Crow-like systemic dynamics can be seen among Pakistan’s Christians today, where equal citizenship and opportunity is denied—not because of their racial identity, but because of their faith identity. The terroristic assaults against churches through arson, bombing, and raiding by gun is disturbingly alive in America today and is also destroying Christians in Sri Lanka, Northern Nigeria, parts of India, Pakistan, and Egypt.

African Americans suffered as a people group, as our humanity, freedoms, and full citizenship were denied. Throughout the African American experience, from abolition through the civil rights movement,
Christians and non-Christians knowingly and unknowingly used biblical principles to push America toward a more biblical moral order; any rights gains benefited all people who suffered civic injustice. More and more, these heroes are rightly being celebrated in our history books.

But there was also a subset of Christians who were targeted specifically because of their faith in Christ. Their rarely-told stories hold a dual awareness; first of the evil that targeted their race and fundamental imago Dei, but also of an evil that targeted the imago Christi that only Christians bear. These faithful were also concerned with legislative change and a more biblical moral order, but they prioritized the transformative, high-cost, cross-bearing, Gospel change that would crush the spirit of anti-Christ in their oppressors. They knew that Satan—not the slave master—was their ultimate enemy; they knew the racist was the one truly enslaved, spiritually speaking. Moreover, they hoped not in his destruction or domination, but that they would be genuinely converted and ushered into the greater kingdom—not merely into a more just vision of America.

It’s at this personal, historical, and spiritual crossroad that my interest in global religious freedom lies.

How does your advocacy work tie into what you are doing now at CSBE?

The CSBE really is a crossroads of past, present, and future of this unique and distinct minority called the church. We want to help Christians expand their vision of the Body of Christ beyond our own limited American vision and understand how we fit into the larger global picture. The people that have gathered at the CSBE have unique giftings and unique extended relationships
around the globe. This means that in our current climate where Christianity is hyper-politicized by the religious left and right, we have a unique opportunity to share knowledge of what it means to have an alternative witness that reflects an “other-political” reality that’s based on a different set of politics, a reality defined ultimately by the life, death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ.

As we see Christianity being co-opted by those who would redefine the people of God, or redefine biblical Christian values to accommodate a culture that’s hostile to gospel transformation, or by those who wish to bend Christianity into a cultural agenda, we have a gathering place to meet with those who know what it means to be “other-cultural” to be a distinctive and set apart people with a particular historical lineage and a historical future that’s ultimately based on transcendent, eternal categories—not temporal ones like nationalism or ethnocentrism.

**How does your personal research impact your work in advocacy and at the CSBE?**

My research is involved with Theological Ethics, particularly the virtue of Christian perseverance under hostility. I believe that all ethnicities have made significant contributions to carrying the kingdom ball forward to this current generation, that half of their stories haven’t been told but should be, and that the virtues which shaped their habits and priorities created communities that carried the story of the people of God forward to us. I hope that the CSBE will grow into a place where this kind of research can live and grow, and we can pass the kingdom ball forward to the next generation in a way that will serve them well in the world they inherit.

It’s popular today to focus mostly on the Church’s historical failures; at the CSBE we are mining history for her moments of perseverance and faithfulness. We’re committed to the covenantal story of God from every nation, tongue, and tribe; we’re curious how God moves through forgotten and overlooked believers in the hard places. Anyone who sees themselves more as a Christian in America than an American Christian will find the CSBE thought-provoking in the days to come.
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Biff Bracy was looking for rest for his soul. He had invested four years of his life pursuing his dream of becoming a major league baseball player, and that investment hadn’t paid off.

Upon encountering Jesus as Lord and Savior at age 28, though, Biff found a new trajectory in life that he could bank on. Eventually forging a career as an investment broker, the longtime RTS Board of Trustees member has lived a life that has reaped both financial and eternal dividends.

At the age of 76, Benjamin Franklin Bracy has settled near Charlotte, North Carolina for 35 years, following years of moving around the country. One of six children, Biff was born near St. Louis and grew up in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and

GUARANTEED INVESTMENT

FINANCIAL BROKER BIFF BRACY HAS SERVED FOR NEARLY FOUR DECADES ON THE RTS BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

PAUL SCHWARZ
Missouri before landing in Orangeburg, South Carolina at age 15.

“My father was a troubleshooter—he went to [businesses] where they had trouble, and he cleaned them up or shut them down,” Biff explains. “He was a very tough businessman—he had the ability to cut through all the smoke and get to the issues.”

Biff didn’t realize it at the time, but his father was also laying the foundation for his eventual salvation. “I had a wonderful father who was a believer, a ruling elder,” he recalls. “But typical of his generation, faith was a very private thing, defined more by how you lived than what you said. We were in church every weekend, and my father was a wonderful man of prayer, but we never discussed having a personal relationship with Christ.”

A high school football and baseball standout, Biff earned a football scholarship to Duke University, where he continued to excel in both sports. On the diamond, he led the Atlantic Coast Conference in batting average his sophomore year, and on the gridiron, the running back was eventually drafted in 1965 by the Washington Redskins of the NFL and the Denver Broncos of the AFL (which later merged with the NFL).

Baseball won out, though, and upon graduation from Duke, Biff signed a contract with the St. Louis Cardinals. By this time having married Nan, his high school sweetheart, Biff set out on his odyssey to make the major leagues. They bounced around minor-league outposts like Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Little Rock, Arkansas. At one point Biff was at the Triple-A level, one rung below the big leagues.

“But when I started,” he confesses, “I made myself a promise that I’d either be in the big leagues at 25 or I would quit. And I wasn’t, so I did quit.”

Faced with, as he describes it, “putting my trousers on every day like everybody else,” Biff faced a spiritual crisis. “When I quit playing ball,” he continues, “it was an emotional thing for me because I always believed that I would end up in the major leagues. It was also difficult dealing with the fact that I had not achieved what I set out to achieve and assumed was a predetermined thing in my life.”

Through the encouragement of Nan, who was a believer, Biff attended a Christian weekend retreat, where a dentist from Atlanta presented the gospel message to him. “In Matthew 11:38, Jesus says, ‘Come unto me, all you who are heavy laden, and I’ll give you rest.’” Biff says. “I didn’t come to the Lord as a result of a conviction of sin, though that did come eventually. I came to the Lord because I wanted rest from the burden I was feeling in this transition in my life.”

Biff’s transition was not only spiritual, but also professional and geographical. After his baseball career ended, Biff worked for a hospital supply company, then pursued a job opportunity he describes as “one that nobody had made anything out of, and I figured, ‘Well, I’ll go there, and if I make something out of it, I’m a hero, and if I don’t, I’m no worse than anybody else.’”

“There” was Jackson, Mississippi, where two things happened in Biff’s life. For one, he found a professional niche as an investment broker. Also, upon joining First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Biff met Bob Cannada, one of the founders of RTS. While in Jackson, Biff was
invited to join the RTS Board of Trustees and became active in ministry, including teaching Sunday school at First Presbyterian.

Even though they “were very happy in Jackson,” another transition developed. When circumstances prompted Biff to leave the firm he was with, Nan, a native South Carolinian, said to her husband, “If you’re going to do that, then I want to go home.” Biff replied, “What’s home? I’ve never been anywhere long enough to call someplace home.”

As Biff continues the story, “She said, ‘All I know is that when I’m east of Atlanta, I’m home, and when I’m west of Atlanta it’s never going to be home.’ So we came back this way and that’s how we ended up back in the Carolinas. Your wife can be very wise—it was a great move for us.”

The Bracys’ move to Charlotte in 1984 also proved to be great for RTS, as Biff played an active role in bringing the seminary to the Queen City with the establishment of RTS Charlotte. His work as an investment broker continued in Charlotte as well, and he recently retired from the financial services industry after nearly five decades in the business. From his perspective as an investment broker, Biff sees his nearly 40 years on the RTS Board of Trustees as “the most strategic investment you can make in the kingdom of God. It’s like the old adage: You can feed a man a fish and he’s satisfied for a day, or you can teach him how to fish and he’s satisfied forever. That’s the same way I look at the investment we’ve made here in Charlotte and throughout RTS. We’re putting pastors in pulpits, and as we do that, we are having a geometric effect for the gospel, as opposed to trying to convert one at a time.

“There are a lot of great ways you can invest your money, but I don’t think there’s any better than RTS. Because I’ve been a part of it, I know what good stewards we have been of that money, and I have seen how God has blessed that. If you look at it at a return on investment, it’s an incredible multiplier. When you look at how the ministry of RTS has spread literally throughout the world for the gospel of Christ, there’s nothing I could put my money to that has had a greater reward than investing in RTS.”

From Biff’s vantage point of nearly half a century as a believer, he sees a critical need for the development of leaders for the church. “The only hope this nation or this world has is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ,” he declares. “I know God is sovereign and I know how it will all end—every knee will bow and every tongue confess Christ Jesus is Lord. But in the interim, it is a cultural and spiritual struggle, and we need strong, Bible-believing churches filled with pastors who preach the whole counsel of God, who believe that the Bible is the Word of God, not just containing the Word.”

Biff Bracy has scored a secure investment.

Paul Schwarz has been writing and editing for various companies and publications for over 30 years. He has written many articles for RTS in previous editions of M&L.
Pastors are better prepared when the seminary and church train them together. We believe the 106 MDiv curriculum, alongside the practical experience students receive through local churches, is the best possible way to prepare people to do ministry in our day and age.
Ecclesiastes is part of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament; however, there is a sense where Ecclesiastes can be seen more as “futility” literature than wisdom literature. This is not because the book does not provide us with wisdom and understanding (see 12:9–14), but because it teaches wisdom by exposing what is vain.

The Hebrew word for “futility” or “vanity” (hebel) is the most used word in the book (occurring 38 times!) and is highlighted by the opening line of the prologue in 1:2, “vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity!” In a book focused on exploring the nature of life “under the sun” and deducing the meaning for that life, the posing question is: how is life “under the sun” not vain? While the futility of life “under the sun” is the particular focus of the book, there are some glimpses of hope that stem from how the fear of God is seen in Ecclesiastes. The overarching “vanity” that the Preacher speaks of can be seen in relation to the one call that brings us out of this vanity: that we would “fear God and keep His commandments” (12:13).

This call to “fear God” occurs in five places in Ecclesiastes: 3:14; 5:1–7; 7:15–18, 8:10–13, and 12:13–14. While much more can be said on this topic, I
will focus on what I see to be two of the main ways that the fear of the Lord may be seen to counter the vanity of this life: 1) the fear of God lifts you out of the vanity of worldly-mindedness and 2) the fear of God lifts you out of the vanity of worldly wisdom.

The worldly-minded focus of the vanity in Ecclesiastes is highlighted by the specific content that the Preacher is examining. The phrase “under the sun” occurs 29 times in the book, along with analogues such as “under heaven” (3 times) and “upon the earth” (3 times). One of the first things that the Preacher claims in the main body of his work is that he has tasked his heart to “seek out” things that are “under heaven.” In so doing he has seen “everything that is done under the sun” (1:13–14). This illustrates that the particular object being observed is the worldly or “under the sun” life that the Preacher investigates and reveals as “vanity and a striving after the wind” (1:14). The entire first half of the book is, in essence, a cornucopia of this vanity: hedonism (2:1–11), worldly wisdom (2:12–17), work (2:18–23), passing on a legacy or large inheritance (2:21), power (4:13–16; 5:8–9), relationships (4:4–12), wealth (5:10–6:9), and even justice and righteousness (3:16–22). The reason for this vanity is specifically because of their worldly-oriented or worldly-minded “under the sun” focus.

As the mind of the Preacher is caught up with these worldly things, he seeks them out to see whether they can provide a meaningful life. He consistently concludes that they cannot, that all is vain. The ultimate vanity for this worldly-minded focus is found in that the end of all mankind is death (3:18–22). If all life ends in death, then all of life is vain, for “who can bring him to see what will be after him?” (3:22).

The resolution to this worldly-minded vanity is found in fearing the Lord. In Ecclesiastes, there is only one individual who transcends this “under the sun” reality that may give intelligibility to this life: the Lord. In contrast to the temporality of the worldly order and all of man’s deeds, the God that we are called to fear is eternal and ordains whatsoever comes to pass (3:14–15). The resolution to the issue of man’s temporality is a focus on the eternal God.

Moreover, this eternal God whose deeds “endure forever” is notably not located “under the sun” but is “in heaven” while we are “on earth” (5:2); therefore, we must fear him (5:7). The answer to the Preacher’s rhetorical question of “who can bring [man] to see what will be after him” is the eternal God of heaven! This is also seen in the call to “fear God” in 7:15–18 where the presenting issue is that both the righteous and the wicked, the wise and the fool will perish, but the one who fears God “will come out of both of them” (7:18). The connection of the ultimate vanity of death and the call to fear God is also seen in 8:10–13 where it is explicitly stated that, “I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him” (8:12).

The fear of God in these passages takes one’s gaze off of worldly things and places them on the God of heaven. It is in proper fear of the Lord that the worldly-minded focus of man is corrected with a heavenly-minded fear of God. It is in living one’s life before the God of heaven rather than worldly things that renders a life that is not in vain. An old saying has unfortunately
Exposition

permeated the church: “don’t be so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good.” The teaching of Ecclesiastes is the opposite: in order for your earthly life to not be “vain,” you must fear the God in heaven. That is, you must be radically heavenly-minded if you are to be of any earthly good.

It is in the heavenly-minded fear of God that you can properly engage in your labors in service of the God in heaven (1 Cor. 15:58), that you may properly treat your wealth as a steward of the Lord, that any worldly authority you may (or may not) possess may be properly oriented as under the Lord who ordains all things, that you may escape the love of temporal things to be consumed with a love of eternal, heavenly things. Heavenly-mindedness is not something that diminishes one’s ability to properly live in this life. It is the only way that one may properly live a life that is not in vain, for to be heavenly-minded is to fear the God in heaven rather than to be consumed with everything that is “under the sun.” The apostle Paul summarizes this call to heavenly-mindedness well in Col 3:1–2: “seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth.”

The worldly-minded focus of the Preacher has a corresponding worldly wisdom. One might be surprised to find that in 2:12–17 being wise is described as vain. This is because along with a vain worldly-mindedness there is a vain worldly wisdom. When addressing these worldly-minded issues, the Preacher engages them with worldly wisdom. We see this in his mode of investigation where eighteen times in the book the Preacher rationalizes his conclusions with “I have seen it.” Furthermore, while the first half of the book reveals the vanity of worldly-mindedness (chapters 1–6), the second half is dominated by skepticism concerning worldly wisdom (chapters 7–12). The Preacher has put on the spectacles of worldly-wisdom to consider worldly things and has rendered a verdict: both the object as well as the mode of investigation have proven fruitless.

The wisdom of God is not the wisdom of the world (1 Cor. 1:18–31; Isa. 29:14); in order to properly investigate the nature of life we must rest in God’s wisdom rather than man’s understanding. It is again in reference to the “fear of God” that the Preacher is redeemed out of worldly wisdom; as we approach the God of heaven in fear, we are called to “draw near to listen” (5:1). A proper fear of God is seen in how one listens to God rather than to the world or even to your own understanding (Prov. 3:5–8).

In this internet-connected age, we have more access to information that calls for our attention than ever before. So, the question of what you will listen to is all-important. Do you listen to celebrities? Politicians? Random blog posts? Yourself? In the midst of our culture that is dominated by the mentality of “I speak my own truth,” we need more than ever to understand that this too is vain. The call of Ecclesiastes

“ You must be radically heavenly minded if you are to be of any earthly good. ”
is that listening to the world (and even yourself) produces a vain worldly wisdom, but that the one who fears God listens to him. The one who fears God gains understanding for life not in worldly-minded wisdom but in listening to God. God has revealed in his Word all that is needed for faith and life. Listen to him! Indeed, a good test to determine whether or not you truly fear God is whether or not you listen to him by being obedient in all matters (whether in doctrine or in life) to what is found in Scripture.

Don’t listen to the world; don’t trust in your own understanding or worldly wisdom. Fear God and listen to him. Listen to the God who is from eternity and ordains whatsoever comes to pass (3:14), who speaks from heaven and reveals all he requires for faith and life (5:1–7), who calls those who fear him out of worldly-mindedness (7:18), and who promises that it will go well for those who fear him (8:10–13). This, indeed, is the end of the matter, the way to know that your life is not futile, that your end is not vain: “fear God and keep his commandments” (12:13). And so, for you who fear the God of heaven and listen to him, “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58).

Will Wood is an assistant professor of Old Testament at RTS Atlanta and a Ph.D. candidate in Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary.

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HOWARD GRIFFITH:
A Man in Christ

LYNNE WINGARD

Howard Griffith succeeded in preaching his own funeral sermon. His life was his testimony: as Christian, husband, father, friend, pastor, and teacher, Dr. Griffith effectively taught the doctrines of grace and Christ-like humility to his family, friends, congregation, and students.

Dr. Griffith served Reformed Theological Seminary for 17 years as a Professor of Systematic Theology. Prior to his tenure at RTS, he served as pastor of All Saints Reformed Presbyterian Church for 23 years. Dr. Griffith bravely fought a battle with cancer and passed into glory on March 20, 2019.

Hundreds of family members, colleagues, students, and fellow church members gathered at McLean Presbyterian Church to honor Christ and his dearly loved servant on March 30.

Family and friends contributed poignant testimonies to his life and ministry. His son, Alex, said,

“My dad took [fatherhood] very seriously, both when we were young and as adults, and we learned many things. We learned humility and curiosity, and gentleness and passion for the truth, and that started at a young age. As kids, my dad loved to translate whatever he was learning into language we could understand. As adults, my dad continued to learn how God wanted to use him as a father.

“He shared with me...his prayer was to be an example of what our heavenly Father is as a father to us. Specifically, he wanted to be an example of grace, not just of wisdom and truth, but of grace. He did that in many ways throughout his life, but especially over these last ten months as he struggled with cancer. I've never experienced anything like witnessing my dad draw close to the Lord, and I know it’s an example that taught our family how to be obedient to the Lord and to trust his goodness. He was an example of what it was to be weak, and what it was to be transformed.”
DECEMBER 28, 1954—MARCH 20, 2019
Tom Breeden (Assistant Pastor of Grace PCA, Charlottesville, VA) recalled an unforgettable lesson in Christlike gentleness from his professor:

“It was my second semester at RTS, and I was taking Worship with Dr. Griffith. One of our assignments every week was to write a prayer on a doctrinal topic that he would assign. Then each class he would select someone to come up and lead prayer in front of the class, and we would talk about how it went. One week the topic was hell— a pretty tough one to lead prayer on!

“One of the students in class was from Wesley, a woman seeking ordination in the Episcopal Church, and it was her week to lead. I remember her walking up to the front of the class holding her paper so tightly. She quietly started with... ‘I’m not really sure if I believe in hell or not, but I’m going to do the best I can.’

“And with that, she began praying. When she was finished, I looked to the back of the room. I just knew Dr. Griffith, our resident theologian, was going to set her theology straight. But he didn’t. Instead, he responded with remarkable kindness and gracious encouragement. I wanted Dr. Griffith to show her how right we were. He wanted to show us all how beautiful the grace of God is. Jesus doesn’t hurt hurting people, and neither did Howard.”
“Howard Griffith was a disciple of Jesus—a student in the school of Christ. In God’s good providence, the calling of student life was at the heart of our friendship throughout our days.

“We came to know one another in seminary. The experience forged a bond—something like that of comrades in combat—a bond formed by shared terror (of a beloved professor) and by opposition (from the rest of the faculty and the largest part of the student body). We were at a liberal seminary—a reality we were willing to endure because we wanted to study with one of the greatest teachers of Reformed theology in our time, John Gerstner.

“After seminary, Howard took up the work of a pastor, while I became a teacher in a Christian study center. But we remained students together, often by phone, and, when we could, in person—recommending books and enjoying great conversation about what we were learning. Over those days we both became students of the work of the Church as well, studying carefully the directions our Lord had given for its good order, and applying those lessons to the multitude of issues that would come before the annual meetings of the denomination.

“Later we were Ph.D. students at Westminster Seminary...together again.

“Then came the cancer! What a curse! But what a blessing. Howard and I were reunited as in our student days by his illness—trips to and from treatment marked by long conversations about what we were studying. Sitting with him in his living room as we talked about what he was learning from the ever-changing stack of books faithfully by his chair. Calvin, Augustine, Berkouwer. Such bittersweet days. But student days again, in the school of our Savior!”

RTS Washington President Scott Redd recounted Dr. Griffith’s pastoral work. As a pastor and later a seminary professor, Dr. Griffith shepherded those in his care—congregants, colleagues, and students alike.

“I can’t tell you how many times I saw students enter into his office situated next to mine to seek his counsel in areas related to their personal lives. I can’t tell you how many times students have reiterated to me something he said to them, how he prayed for them, how he called them or emailed them just to see how they were doing. You see, Howard left full-time pastoral ministry over a decade ago, but he never stopped pastoring, and a generation of pastors and church leaders are the better for it.

“I met with Howard that two weeks [before his death]. He was a bit tired, but as we talked about some decisions facing the campus, he got that flicker in his eye. Exciting things were happening.
We were moving into a new campus, considering a new faculty hire, and as I had come to expect, he had wise advice to offer and he offered advice freely. And I took it.

“But afterward, he leaned forward in his chair, and said, ‘Scott, I am not trying to force you in anything.’ He recognized his words might carry too much weight, that I might feel bound to do exactly what he said in his weakened health, and he didn’t want me to worry. He was ministering to me. I had come to expect that too. He was not just a colleague, not just my academic dean, he was my friend. And at times, he was my pastor.”

In his November 19, 2018 sermon Treasures in Jars of Clay, Dr. Griffith preached on the resurrection power of Christ demonstrated through the weakness of the believer.

“When he [the apostle Paul] was called on to defend this ministry, he did it by showing his weakness,” Dr. Griffith explained. “And it’s just in that weakness that the power of the resurrected Christ is made evident. There’s no other way. It can’t be done any other way. Suffering with Christ is not the exception in the Christian life. It’s the rule of the Christian life. So, when we ask about the ministry of our church, when we ask about what we’re to expect going forward, what should we expect? Well, we’re to expect to see resurrection power, power made evident only through suffering with Christ.”

Dr. Griffith gave countless lectures that students can recall decades later, preached sermons still held in the hearts of congregants, and wrote A Brief Testimony to God’s Grace,* in which he used the words of his favorite hymn, “I Greet Thee Who My Sure Redeemer Art,” to trace the grace of God throughout his illness. But far beyond any lecture, sermon, or written testimony, Howard Griffith’s life itself proclaimed Jesus as the believer’s comfort in both life and death. Dr. Griffith pursued the glory of God and the good of the church with steadfast humility, gentle courage, and clarity of thought. His legacy continues to hearten faithful Christians as his family, friends, colleagues, and students remember his life and ministry.

*This testimony is available in the RTS resource library along with additional messages from Dr. Griffith: https://rts.edu/resources/a-brief-testimony-to-gods-grace/
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Kelly Jennings has always known he wanted to help people.

“From very early on, I had an interest in finance and things of that nature and an interest in helping people,” Jennings recalled. “But I didn’t know who I was.”

Despite a proclivity toward good deeds and a host of genuine relationships, Jennings felt like something was missing. His interest in money and numbers brought Jennings to the University of Miami, where he played football and earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance. His football career in Miami caught the attention of the Seattle Seahawks, who drafted him as a cornerback.

During his time in Seattle, Jennings came to know Christ. His new identity as a believer changed his approach to helping others, especially when it came to his relationships with his teammates. After six years in the NFL, Jennings moved to Jackson, MS, to pursue a master’s degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and Counseling (MFTC) at RTS.

Jennings had never heard of RTS Jackson, but a mentor and friend encouraged him to look into the MFTC program. Jennings had always enjoyed...
learning about marriage through sermons and messages. Despite the nontraditional schedule of a football career, Jennings had always prioritized time with his family. The MFTC program seemed like a good match.

“Counseling allowed me to steward the intellectual and personal resources that God has given me,” said Jennings. Counseling also enabled Jennings to take on an active role in serving those around him. However, as Jennings worked with clients, he discovered that he had a hard time leaving his clients’ problems at the office—an essential boundary all counselors must have in order to maintain their personal wellbeing and effectiveness in helping clients. Eventually, Jennings decided to combine his financial skills with his heart for advising people through financial planning.

“Financial advising, is, in a sense, a more objective form of counseling,” Jennings explained. “We are often assisting clients to work through deeper underlying issues as we help them plan for the future.”

Jennings continues to refer to his work as stewardship. His calling, and, he believes, the calling of all believers, is to use our God-given gifts to help those around us develop and use their own giftings. He
Jennings encourages Christians to give of their time, money, and other resources toward the sharing of the gospel locally, nationally, and beyond. Sometimes giving towards the Kingdom looks like volunteering at church, and other times it looks like giving money to specific ministries and organizations. One of the ways that Jennings himself furthers the Kingdom is by actively helping his wife, Fritzie, homeschool their five children.

Wise stewardship also requires sorting through priorities. In order to be generous, one must prioritize...
Jennings seems to embody the principles that he shares with clients. He has made plans—finance, football, counseling—while staying open to the Lord’s direction, which ultimately led him to a career field that fits him well. Jennings actively uses his personal and professional gifts to help others and seeks to advance the gospel through his time at work and at home. Kelly Jennings is, indeed, a steward.

Kelly Berkompas is the Communications Manager for RTS. In her free time, she enjoys reading, spending time with friends, and improving her handwriting.
Over the past months, RTS has seen God’s faithfulness in many areas. Professors have continued their excellent work, new faculty and staff have joined RTS, and many new opportunities for students have been established.

In the midst of these encouraging changes, RTS has also grieved the loss of Dr. Howard Griffith of RTS Washington. The testimony of his walk with Christ has been and will continue to be another mark of God’s faithfulness even in hard seasons.

OSBORNE, FESKO

JOIN RTS FAMILY

MIKE OSBORNE
NEW DEAN OF STUDENTS
// ORLANDO

As Dean of Students, Osborne will serve as a pastor to future pastors and a counselor to future counselors. He will also work to ensure that students benefit maximally from their field education placements during their studies. He will equip them to find and prepare for an optimal placement upon graduation. In this regard, he will serve as a needed liaison with area pastors and churches.

President Scott Swain said, “I am very thankful that the Lord has brought one of my former pastors, Mike Osborne, to RTS Orlando. From the moment new students arrive on campus until they are placed in the churches and ministries where the Lord will call them to serve, Mike’s job will be to come alongside students, to care for them, and to assist them as they seek to discern their gifts and callings. I believe Mike’s presence will further strengthen the residential learning experience of students at RTS Orlando and more fully prepare them for gospel ministry.”

Osborne is a graduate of Furman University and Covenant Theological Seminary. He has pastored Presbyterian churches in Missouri, South Carolina, and Central Florida. He has contributed in the RTS classroom already by offering courses in preaching and in pastoral theology.

Osborne remarked, “I am excited about the opportunity to bring my 32+ years of pastoral experience to the RTS Orlando community, to foster the spiritual formation and pastoral-theological development of a new generation of pastors, missionaries, and church leaders. I have fond memories of my seminary years because I had an older mentor who cared deeply for my personal development and that of my wife. I hope to return the favor for the students of RTS.”
Dr. John V. Fesko joined the faculty of RTS Jackson campus as the Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology in June 2019.

Dr. Fesko completed his B.A. at Georgia State University and received his M.A.Th. at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His Ph.D. is from King’s College at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. His research interests include the integration of biblical and systematic theology, soteriology, and early modern Reformed theology.

Since 2009, Dr. Fesko served as the Academic Dean and Professor of Systematic Theology and Historical Theology at Westminster Seminary California (WSC). Prior to his time at WSC, he labored as a church planter in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In 2004, he served as the minister of Geneva Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Marietta, Ga.

President Guy Richardson commented on Dr. Fesko’s appointment to the faculty: “We are so excited that John has accepted our invitation to join our faculty here at RTS Jackson. His pastoral experience, prolific scholarly contributions, and above all his love for our Lord and His Church, combine to make him a great addition to our team. We are truly grateful and look forward to having him and his family with us!”

Regarding his new position at RTS Jackson, Dr. Fesko said, “I am excited about the privilege of joining the RTS Jackson faculty and working with them to train future church leaders. The RTS faculty has a reputation for strong academic scholarship, pastoral care for students, and a love for Christ’s church. I am eager to work alongside them to be a part of this talented team.

“RTS’s commitment to the inerrant Scriptures and our rich confessional heritage appeal to me greatly,” Dr. Fesko continued. “The opportunity to spend quality time with students as we learn more about the triune God we serve gives me great joy.”

When asked about Dr. Fesko’s appointment to the RTS faculty, Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III, Chancellor and CEO of RTS, responded with enthusiasm: “Dr. Fesko is a tremendous addition to our RTS Jackson faculty and to Reformed Theological Seminary as a whole. His appointment adds another strong Systematic Theologian to the RTS family, and John comes with rich pastoral experience. He is a prolific author and engaging teacher. Our students will greatly benefit from having a pastor-theologian of the caliber of John as a mentor. Having known John for about twenty years, I look forward to teaching and serving alongside him.”
when Indonesian students started attending RTS. After graduation, these alumni established churches and seminaries in their home country. Over the years, many RTS professors have traveled to Indonesia as guest lecturers and preachers.

In 2009, Chancellor Emeritus Ric Cannada taught for a week at a seminary co-founded by Dr. Jakub Susabda, an RTS alumnus, and Dr. Stephen Tong. Dr. Susabda serves as the president, while other RTS alumni hold roles such as academic dean and professors.

Dr. Cannada asked his hosts if he could meet James Riady, a prominent Indonesian business leader and Christian. “Yes,” the seminary leaders told him. “He’s one of our students.” Dr. Cannada had first heard of Riady in Little Rock, Arkansas in the 1970s, when the Riady family had partnered with Stephens Inc. to increase their banking presence in America, starting with a bank in Arkansas.

After their first meeting, Riady reached out to Dr. Cannada for help. Riady is the founder of Pelitan Harapan Educational Foundation (YPPH), a foundation that develops and supports Christian schools, universities, and hospitals throughout Indonesia. Riady wanted to move YPPH’s theology in a Reformed direction.

After Dr. Cannada stepped down as Chancellor of RTS, his involvement increased, eventually helping to start a new Reformed denomination in Indonesia, (Presbyterian Reformed Evangelical Church of Indonesia). “It’s not just a story about RTS,” Dr. Cannada reflects as he shares about RTS’ many connections to Indonesia. “It’s a story about how God is at work even when we don’t recognize it at the time.”

Riady also asked Dr. Cannada how he could protect YPPH from “mission drift.” Since all students in YPPH’s many schools must take Bible and
theology courses, Riady wanted to ensure that their courses continued to be in line with Reformed theology. In 2018, after Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, III, and other members of the Board of Trustees, visited Indonesia, they entered into a memorandum of understanding with YPPH, establishing the Center for Reformed Theology (CRT).

The CRT exists to steward the spiritual and theological content and culture of the YPPH’s many education centers throughout the country. Although this is a new direction for RTS, since the CRT is not a traditional campus, RTS’s mission to serve the church through the education of its leaders will still be fulfilled in Indonesia.

When the CRT was established, there was no official director, even with Dr. Cannada continuing in his role as advisor. RTS started looking for the right fit and found Craig Sheppard, a pastor and missionary with decades of experience.

“Craig is the best guy for the job,” said Dr. Cannada. “His experience as a missionary, both on the field and in administration, as well as his education and pastoral work, give him a background that will enable him to lead the CRT well.”

In the ’90s, Dr. Sheppard and his wife, Lisa, were the first missionaries for Mission to the World (MTW) in Bulgaria, where he eventually served as the director for all of MTW’s operations in Eastern Europe.

In Bulgaria, he spearheaded works in theological education, church planting, translation and publishing, mercy ministry, and education for missionaries’ children. Since returning to the states, he has pastored churches in Texas and North Carolina. He has also regularly taught classes at various RTS campuses and has continued teaching in Bulgaria.

“The current spread of the gospel and growth of the church in Southeast Asia (and in Indonesia in particular) is unprecedented,” commented Dr. Sheppard. “RTS has been given the opportunity and responsibility to help provide a biblical and theological anchor at this strategic time in history. My wife and I feel blessed to be a part of this great movement of the Lord.”

In his role as Executive Director for the CRT, he will teach, consult, hire additional employees, interview potential teachers to ensure their theological soundness, as well as serve as the interim pastor at the campus church and preach at chapel services. Dr. Sheppard and Lisa have five grown children.

IN MEMORIAM

DR. HOWARD GRIFFITH Howard Griffith, a long-time professor at RTS Washington passed away in his sleep early in the morning on March 20. After a long battle with cancer, he went to be with his heavenly Father in glory. To read more about Dr. Griffith’s life and ministry, refer to “Howard Griffith: A Man in Christ” on page 30.
Reformed Theological Seminary is pleased to announce four recent promotions among the faculty. In April, Dr. Jay Harvey was approved as an Assistant Professor at RTS New York City, and Dr. Thomas Keene began serving as the Academic Dean for RTS Washington.

Dr. Bruce A. Lowe and Dr. Greg Lanier were both promoted to Associate Professor of New Testament in June. Dr. Lowe teaches at RTS Atlanta, and Dr. Lanier teaches at RTS Orlando.

**DR. JAY HARVEY**

Dr. Harvey will continue to serve as Executive Director at RTS New York City, a position he has held since August 2018, in addition to becoming a voting member of the faculty as Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology.

A graduate of RTS Jackson (M.Div.) and Erskine Theological Seminary (D.Min.), Dr. Harvey pastored Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Newark, Delaware from 2005 to 2018. He also has experience with campus ministry at Princeton University and on the Reformed University Fellowship committee when three new locations were established in Delaware.

These experiences, as well as his background in business, have helped him as Executive Director of RTS New York City. His pastoral experience especially will be beneficial to students who are preparing for ministry.

“Jay has a passion for theologically driven pastoral theology and practice,” commented Dr. Robert J. Cara, Provost and Chief Academic Officer at RTS. “His significant knowledge in the Bible, Reformed theological tradition, and his pastoral background assist him as a professor.”

**DR. THOMAS KEENE**

Dr. Thomas Keene taught at RTS as a visiting lecturer before being appointed as Associate Professor of New Testament in June 2018. He will continue in his role as a professor while adding the duties of Academic Dean for the Washington, D.C. campus.

Prior to teaching at RTS, Dr. Keene earned his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Westminster Theological Seminary. He has also taught classes at Westminster. In addition to his scholarly work, he served as associate pastor of family ministries at Christ the King (PCA) in Conshohocken, PA.
Dr. Scott Redd, President of RTS Washington, commented, “I’m delighted about Dr. Keene’s appointment to Academic Dean at RTS Washington. Tommy brings a great mix of scholarly and pastoral qualities, enriched with the gifts of leadership and administration. Our faculty will benefit greatly from his leadership.”

**DR. BRUCE A. LOWE**

Since 2008, Dr. Lowe has been serving on the faculty of RTS in Atlanta, where he has functioned as the campus pastor. He is eager to pray with and to spend time with students and to have them in his home. Dr. Lowe has written several articles and chapters in academic journals and books. Additionally, he is currently finishing the manuscript for his first book. He is actively involved in his church: he teaches Bible studies and shares preaching responsibilities each month.

Dr. Guy M. Richard, Executive Director of RTS Atlanta, commented on Dr. Lowe’s promotion: “I am happy to see Bruce recognized in this way for his contributions to our campus and mission over the past 11 years. Bruce is a dear brother who clearly loves Christ, loves His Word, and longs to live it out in his life. As such, he is a wonderful example for our students as they prepare for whatever ministry the Lord has in store for them.”

After his promotion, Dr. Lowe said, “It has been such a joy and privilege to be preparing students for the future and serving the body of Christ in this way. I look forward to being part of the Lord’s service here at RTS for many years to come.”

**DR. GREG LANIER**

Dr. Greg Lanier has taught at RTS Orlando since 2016. An alum of RTS Charlotte, he also serves as an associate pastor at River Oaks Church in Florida. During his time in Charlotte, he worked as a pastoral intern and as a teaching assistant for Dr. Michael Kruger and Dr. John Oliver, respectively.

Dr. Lanier received his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge in England. His research interests include the Synoptic Gospels, the Pauline epistles, and the Septuagint. He teaches New Testament courses about exegesis and interpretation, Greek, and preaching.

Dr. Scott Swain, President of RTS Orlando, shared, “Dr. Lanier has already distinguished himself as one of the seminary’s finest lecturers, capable of covering a profound range of issues with clarity and charity. His prolific pen has further set him apart as one of the most faithful and finest up and coming New Testament scholars in the Reformed and evangelical world. And his pastoral care for our students has earned him deep affection from students and colleagues alike.”
**CURRID & WATERS RECOGNIZED BY ECPA AWARDS**

On April 30, the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA) announced its Christian Book awards in twelve categories. Two RTS professors, Dr. John Currid and Dr. Guy Waters, contributed to two of the gold medallion award winners.

Dr. Currid, Chancellor’s Professor of Old Testament at RTS, served as one of the senior editors, along with David Chapman (Covenant Theological Seminary) for the ESV Archaeology Study Bible (Crossway). This study Bible was recognized as the best of the year in the Bibles category.

“A highly-trained team of archaeologists spent over six years producing the ESV Archaeology Study Bible,” Dr. Currid commented. “As a senior editor and contributor of this study Bible, I am pleased for our team that the Bible has been recognized by the ECPA Book Awards for gold status as the Bible of the Year. It is our hope that the Lord uses this work to help train and encourage his people.”

Both Dr. Currid and Dr. Waters contributed to the winner in the Bible Reference Works category: Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique, eds. J. P. Moreland et al (Crossway). Theistic Evolution addresses the tensions that arise from synthesizing various views of evolution with a theistic understanding of creation.

Dr. Currid and Dr. Waters wrote chapters regarding the incompatibility of theistic evolution with the Old and New Testaments, respectively.

**DEYOUNG, SMITH DEFEND DISSERTATIONS**

*Dr. Kevin DeYoung and Dr. Blair Smith, both Assistant Professors at RTS Charlotte, successfully defended their dissertations in 2019.*

**DR. KEVIN DEYOUNG**

DeYoung received his Ph.D. at the University of Leicester in the UK, focusing on the theology of John Witherspoon. His dissertation is titled “John Witherspoon & ‘The Fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel’: The Scottish Career of an American Founding Father.”

Witherspoon was a Scottish-American Presbyterian theologian, and founding father of the United States. DeYoung’s dissertation examines Witherspoon’s historical context and looks at his role as a defender of the Reformed tradition. “It has been a great experience working on my Ph.D. the last five years,” said DeYoung, “learning about the Enlightenment, Scottish church history, Reformed theology, and the Great Awakening.”

“I am so thankful for the good work that Kevin DeYoung has done in his Ph.D. thesis,” stated Dr. J.Ligon Duncan III, Chancellor and CEO of RTS. “This is a field of study that I have been interested in for years. I can’t wait for it to be published. ‘John
Witherspoon and “The Fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel” is the first major theological study of a key figure in American cultural, political and religious history.

“With his sharp mind and pastoral heart, Kevin DeYoung has already been a rich blessing to our students here at RTS Charlotte,” said Dr. Michael Kruger, President of the Charlotte campus. “His top-rated Ph.D. work on John Witherspoon, now finished, shows that it is not impossible to have professors who love God with both their hearts and their minds. Kevin is poised to make significant scholarly contributions in the years to come. We can’t wait.”

In addition to his work at RTS, DeYoung serves as the senior pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, NC. He also speaks at numerous conferences, blogs regularly, and has published a dozen books for adults and children.

**BLAIR SMITH**

Smith studied under Lewis Ayres in Historical Theology at Durham University in the United Kingdom, examining the Fatherhood of God within the Trinitarian theology of the fourth century.

Smith focused on the writings of Athanasius of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil of Caesarea. His dissertation focuses on how the doctrines developed in and around the Council of Nicaea shaped the theology of God the Father.

When asked why he chose to study this specific topic, Smith answered, “I’ve been fascinated by the Patristic Fathers since studying with Dr. Douglas Kelly during my MDiv at RTS Charlotte. I developed a keen interest in the theological questions they were engaging and how integrated these were with spirituality.”

He continued, “In our own day, many are asking questions about hierarchy and subordination within the Trinity. I hope my dissertation can help clarify what the Fathers actually had to say on these matters, especially the fourth-century ones who had a hand in the shaping of classical trinitarianism. I also hope that Christians will be able to glean from my dissertation that theology should not be divorced from spirituality. Greater depth in theology should translate into greater heights in communing with God.”

Smith also researched the Church Fathers and the Trinity when he earned his Master of Theology from Harvard Divinity School. At Harvard, he wrote his thesis on Athanasius’s trinitarian theology of redemption, focusing especially on the Holy Spirit.

“We are so pleased to have Blair Smith as part of the Charlotte faculty,” said Michael Kruger, President of RTS Charlotte. “His specialization on theology in the church fathers is a fitting tribute to the legacy of Doug Kelly. Now with his Ph.D. complete, we know he will make a special contribution to both the academy and the church.”
RTS ANNOUNCES NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

In recent months, RTS has established a new partnership with Missionary Athletes International (MAI) and started a new scholarship for women at RTS Charlotte. RTS Global launched three new courses this summer, with more to come, and RTS Jackson is hosting Rev. H.B. Charles at the John Reed Miller Preaching Lectures this fall.

RTS AND MAI
The partnership between RTS and MAI will help provide biblical and theological education for MAI full and part-time staff. Central to this partnership is a substantial tuition discount to MAI staff and specialized training offered by RTS faculty.

MAI is the parent ministry of the Charlotte Eagles, a professional soccer ministry located in Charlotte, NC which was founded in 1983. MAI also has Los Angeles club team called the Southern California Seahorses and a Chicago club team called the Chicago Eagles. MAI’s ministry expands internationally through multiple team trips each year.

MAI’s mission is to “glorify God and see lives transformed by communicating the message of Jesus Christ through the global environment of soccer.” This mission fits well with RTS’ vision to bring theological training and education to prepare the next generation of front-line missionaries, pastor-scholars, counselors, educators, and other ministry workers for the expansion of the kingdom.

David Urban, the CEO of MAI, commented on the new partnership: “The Bible calls us to take the gospel to the nations and God has given MAI opportunities to accomplish this through the most popular sport in the world, soccer. We are thankful for this new partnership with RTS, through which we hope to train and equip our staff to more effectively accomplish this gospel outreach task from Charlotte to the ends of the earth.”

Dr. Michael Kruger, president of the RTS Charlotte campus, added, “I love the mission of MAI and the Charlotte Eagles. They are on the front lines of ministry, sharing the gospel in hard to reach places through the sport of soccer. RTS is thrilled to provide theological education for their coaches, players, and leaders so they can fulfill this mission more effectively.”

WOMEN IN MINISTRY SCHOLARSHIP
The Charlotte campus will launch the Women in Ministry Scholarship in fall 2019. The scholarship is designed specifically for female seminary students headed into Christian ministry.

Dr. Michael J. Kruger, president of the Charlotte campus, commented on the new scholarship: “We have been so blessed to have a vibrant and growing community of female seminary students here at the Charlotte campus. God has used their faithful ministry to bless his church in so many important ways. Our hope is that this new scholarship allows the Charlotte campus to equip even more women who can be sent out as laborers into God’s Kingdom.”

The Women in Ministry Scholarship was begun with the help of a generous lead gift from Jim and Judy Boyd, long-time friends of RTS Charlotte. Others have also contributed toward the scholarship, with funding now at approximately $300,000. Nancy Guthrie, speaker and best-selling author of the Seeing Jesus in the Old Testament series, also...
commented on the new scholarship: “Sometimes women who want to attend seminary wonder if they will be welcomed, respected, and taken seriously by the administration, the professors, and their fellow seminarians. This new scholarship states loudly and clearly to women: We want you here at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte!”

**NEW COURSES AT RTS GLOBAL**

RTS Global & Distance Education announced three new online courses in summer 2019: Personal Sanctification, Poets, and Worship.

“We have been extremely blessed to work with a wide variety of faculty from across the institution this year,” said David R. John III, the Executive Director of RTS Global & Distance Education. “This has resulted in an unprecedented number of new online courses now open for enrollment.”

Personal Sanctification is a brand new course for RTS Global, with Dr. Michael Allen facilitating. Dr. Richard Belcher will teach a new version of Poets, examining the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. A new version of Worship features lectures from Dr. J. Ligon Duncan.

“With the addition of high definition video, improved eLearning materials, and the full support of our faculty and staff in each online course, our goal is to provide the best experience for RTS students across all campuses,” David John commented. “By integrating more multimedia and a more intuitive course design, it is our hope that a growing catalog of dynamic online courses will provide the quality and flexibility students need to succeed in their seminary journey as they faithfully serve the Lord in all areas of life.”

*For more information about RTS Global, visit rts.edu/campuses/global.*

**REV. H.B. CHARLES TO DELIVER LECTURES AT RTS JACKSON**

Rev. H.B. Charles, Jr., will deliver the 2019 John Reed Miller Preaching Lectures at RTS Jackson, Oct. 29–31.

Rev. Charles is the pastor-teacher of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. He has served in this role since 2008. Prior to joining his present church, he led the Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church of Los Angeles for almost 18 years. Succeeding his late father, Rev. Charles began his pastoral ministry at Mt. Sinai at the age of 17, while a senior in high school.

Dr. Charles Wingard, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and Dean of Students at RTS Jackson, commented, “H.B. Charles is a master Bible expositor. For good reason, his book On Preaching is a required text in our first year preaching class. Students need men like him who teach and model the highest standard of biblical preaching.”

The John Reed Miller Preaching Lectures are named after a longtime pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, MS, who served from 1952–1968. Dr. Miller started the winter lectures on Reformed theology that eventually grew into Reformed Theological Seminary.

Dr. J. Ligon Duncan commented, “First Presbyterian Church established and funded the RTS John Reed Miller Lectures in Dr. Miller’s honor to promote the biblical theology and practice of Reformed preaching and pastoral ministry that Dr. Miller embodied in his own life and work.”
TRAVELING AND SPEAKING

**DR. LIGON DUNCAN**

**OCT. 13:** Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church 25th Anniversary, Leesburg, VA.

**OCT 19-20:** Reformation Heritage Conference, Signal Mountain, TN.

**OCT. 25-26:** Passion for the Gospel Conference, Madrid, Spain.

**NOV. 1-3:** Redeemer Presbyterian Church 25th Anniversary, Austin, TX.

**NOV. 13:** Westminster Theological Seminary Gaffin Lecture, Philadelphia, PA.

**NOV. 18-19:** Mission to the World Conference, Cape Town, South Africa.

**NOV. 20-23:** African Presbyterian Church Conference, Cape Town, South Africa.

**JAN. 13-17, 2020:** Teaching “Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies” with Tim Keller at RTS NYC, New York City, NY.

**JAN. 20-24, 2020:** Teaching DMin Covenant Theology at RTS Charlotte, Charlotte, NC.

**DR. MICHAEL ALLEN**

**NOV. 20-22:** Speaking at the Worldview Conference, Sovereign Grace Church, Apex, NC, July 19–21.

**DEC. 6-8:** Speaking at the retreat for the Knoxville Fellows Program, Knoxville, TN.

**JAN. 6-9, 2020:** Speaking at the retreat for the Raleigh Fellows Program, Raleigh, NC.

**JAN. 23-25, 2020:** Speaking at the retreat for the Trinity Fellows Program, Delcaville, VA.

**DR. JAMES ANDERSON**

**OCT. 26-27:** Speaking at the Reformation Conference, Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Mansfield, OH.

**OCT. 11-13:** Speaking at Cornerstone Christian Church, Medford, OR.

**DR. J. V. FESKO**

**OCT. 26-27:** Speaking at the Reformation Conference, Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Mansfield, OH.

**DR. WILLIAM FULLILOVE**

**OCT. 26-27:** Speaking at the Reformation Conference, Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Mansfield, OH.
TRAVELING AND SPEAKING

DR. MARK FUTATO
NOV. 15-17: Speaking at Grace Toronto Church PCA, Toronto, CAN

DR. PAUL JEON
OCT. 18-19: Speaking at the Men’s Retreat, Arlington Baptist Church, Arlington, VA.

DR. MICHAEL KRUGER
NOV. 21: Giving the Presidential Address at The Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA.

DR. GREG LANIER
OCT. 3-5: Speaking at the Rooted Conference, Chicago, IL.

DR. GUY RICHARD
OCT. 25-27: Speaking at Equip Conference, First Presbyterian Church, Macon, GA.

DR. SCOTT SWAIN
OCT. 14-18: Teaching Systematic Theology at RTS Washington, Washington, D.C.

DR. GUY WATERS
OCT. 10-12: Speaking at the Reformation UK Conference, Durham, United Kingdom.

DR. CHARLES WINGARD
OCT. 27: Speaking at Brandon Presbyterian Church, Brandon, MS.

DR. PETER YODER
FALL 2019: Teaching History of Christianity 1, RTS Houston, Houston, TX.
PUBLICATIONS

DR. MICHAEL ALLEN
“Living and Active: The Prophetic Ministry of the Exalted Christ,” for So Great A Salvation: Atonement in the Epistle to the Hebrews (T & T Clark)

“Retrieval and the Prophetic Imagination” and “Totus Christus: Christ, Church, and Spiritual Union” for the Evangelical Theology Society (November)

DR. JAMES ANDERSON
David Hume (Great Thinkers) (P&R, forthcoming)

DR. ROBERT CARA
“Paul vs. James?” for Tabletalk (November)

DR. ANDREW HOFFECKER
“Predestination and Election” for The Oxford Handbook of Presbyterianism (Oxford University Press, 2019)

DR. PAUL JEON

DR. SEAN LUCAS


DR. WILLIAM A. ROSS

DR. GUY RICHARD

DR. GREG LANIER
“My Kingdom Lasts Forever: Bringing King Job (T.Job 31–33) into the Conversation on Exalted Patriarchs and Early Christology” for Novum Testamentum (2019)


“Bodily Metaphors for the Christian Life” for Tabletalk (June)

“Can Protestants Be Edified by the Apocrypha?” for The Gospel Coalition (June)

DR. GUY WATERS
“Suffering and Discipline in the Age to Come” for Distinguishing the Church: Explorations in Word, Sacrament, and Discipline (Pickwick, 2019)


“Curse Redux? 1 Cor 5:13, Deuteronomy, and Identity in Corinth” for Scripture, Texts, and Tracings in 1 Corinthians (Fortress Academic, 2019)

Reviewed Jeffrey A. D. Weima’s Paul the Ancient Letter Writer: An Introduction to Epistolary Analysis for Reformed Theological Review


“Curse Redux? 1 Cor 5:13, Deuteronomy, and Identity in Corinth” for Scripture, Texts, and Tracings in 1 Corinthians (Fortress Academic, 2019)

Reviewed Jeffrey A. D. Weima’s Paul the Ancient Letter Writer: An Introduction to Epistolary Analysis for Reformed Theological Review


“How Should a Pastor Receive Criticism?” for Servants of Grace
EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

JACKSON

**OCT. 29:** MDiv Preview Day

**OCT. 29-31:** John Reed Miller Lecture Series with Rev. H.B. Charles (see page 49)

*For more information, call 601-923-1600*

ORLANDO

**OCT. 6-7:** Hughes Preaching Lectures Series with Mika Edmondson

**OCT. 9:** Preview Day

**JAN. 9-10:** Paideia Center Winter Conference

**FEB. 11-12:** Kistemaker Academic Lectures Series with Jon Levenson

*For more information, call 407-366-9493*

RTS ORLANDO WILL HOST ITS ANNUAL PAIDEIA CENTER FOR THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLESHIP WINTER CONFERENCE ON JANUARY 9-10, 2020.

This year’s regional reading groups span 14 cities, and are discussing classic Christian texts focused on the theme of soul care. The featured speakers at the Winter Conference will be Dr. Sinclair Ferguson, Dr. Scott Redd, and Dr. Mike Allen. Visit PaideiaCenter.com for more information.

NEW YORK CITY

**JAN. 2020:** Open House featuring Dr. Ligon Duncan and Dr. Tim Keller

*For more information, call 866-926-4787*

**DR. DAVID FILSON WILL TEACH A WEEK-LONG INTENSIVE CLASS, “MINISTRY IN A POSTMODERN CONTEXT,” ON JANUARY 20-24.**

The course will lead students through the intellectual and social aspects of the current postmodern cultural context and suggest a “third way” beyond wholesale acceptance or rejection of current cultural trends. The course is open to students and auditors.

ATLANTA

**OCT. 17:** Grimke Lecture with Mindy Belz

**NOV. 14:** Grimke Lecture with Ada Folajimi

*For more information, call 770-952-8686*
PEACE BE TO THE BRETHREN, and love with faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be with you until the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

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HEBREWS 13:21
SONG OF SOLOMON 2:17
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