

REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# MINISTRY & LEADERSHIP

FALL 2021

## WHEN BROTHERS DWELL *in* UNITY

EIGHT PASTORS SHARE STORIES OF HARDSHIP AND  
BLESSING FROM THE PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS

### WHAT IS YOUR IDENTITY AS A CHRISTIAN?

By Dr. Greg Beale

### WORKING FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

By Dr. Sean Michael Lucas

Robert S. Duncanson,  
*Landscape with Shepherd*,  
oil on canvas, 32.5" x 48.25", 1852.

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Covenant Life Church, Sarasota, Florida

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

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# CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

## THE BASIS OF OUR UNITY

DR. LIGON DUNCAN

**Christian unity has had a rough go of it in this last year or so. As I talk with Christian pastors and leaders around the country as well as in other parts of the world, many of them report experiencing the tensions and polarization we are seeing in the wider culture in the local church. Disunity is not a new challenge, but one we see addressed by Paul, who was not unaware of the challenge of Christian unity.**

On the one hand, as Christians, we are one in Christ. This is a reality. Everyone who is united to Christ is united to everyone who is united to Christ. If we belong to Christ, we belong to one another; we are spiritual kin and part of the same family. Paul even says that we are members of the same body — that's how one we are.

On the other hand, Paul knows that unity does not just happen, even among Christians. It has to be aimed at, prayed for, cultivated, and preserved. As he says in Ephesians 4:3, we are to be “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

*Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.*

EPHESIANS 6:23-24

Paul's little letter to the Ephesians gives us a big picture of God's eternal plan to make us one in Christ. You see this especially in Ephesians 1 and 2. John Stott explains:

[Paul] began by unfolding God's purpose, conceived in a past eternity before the foundation of the world, to create a single new human race through the death and resurrection of Christ and ultimately to unite the whole church and the whole creation under Christ's headship. He has emphasized that a distinctive shape has been given to this divine plan by the inclusion in God's new society, on an entirely equal footing, of Jews and Gentiles. The old days of division and discrimination have gone. A brand new oneness has emerged, in which through union with Christ Jews and Gentiles are equal members of the same body and equal sharers in the same promise. So now the one Father has one family, the one Messiah-Savior one people, and the one Spirit one body.<sup>1</sup>

So, Paul is emphasizing what God has done to make us one, and thus, we are one. That's the "on

the one hand" I mentioned earlier. Then, especially from Ephesians 4 on, Paul calls on us to live out the reality of this unity. That's the "on the other hand" I mentioned. As John Stott says in *The Message of Ephesians*:

These sure facts of what God has done through Christ and by the Spirit form the basis on which Paul went on to issue his eloquent appeal. His readers must live a life that is 'worthy' of their calling and 'fitting' to their status as God's new and reconciled society. They must demonstrate their unity in the Christian fellowship, while at the same time rejoicing in the diversity of their gifts and so of their ministries. They must put away all the uncleanness of their pre-conversion behaviour and live a life of 'true righteousness and holiness.' And they must learn to submit to one another in every kind of domestic relationship and so promote harmony in their homes. Unity, diversity, purity and harmony—these the apostle has stressed as major characteristics of the new life and the new society in Christ.

## So how do we do live out the reality of our unity?

Well, Paul is really answering that question in the whole second half of his letter to the Ephesians (4-6), but his benediction certainly speaks to it as well. He says, in Ephesians 6:23-24, “Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.”

In other words, Paul prays for God’s blessing of peace (shalom), that we will know the fullness of God’s favor, the enjoyment of the total well-being that only he can bestow. And because of God’s blessing of peace and his gift of saving love, we may experience and express “love with faith” in the Christian life. Again, John Stott says: “Peace and love belong together, for peace is reconciliation and love is its source and outflow.”<sup>1</sup>

Then, Paul adds “grace” to his benediction. Paul combines grace and peace often in his greetings and benedictions. God’s reconciling work in Christ has given us peace. Peace with him and peace with one another. And the reason why he has done this is simply his grace, and the means by which he has made us one is grace. So, it is wholly appropriate for Paul to invoke these two blessings on us. God’s grace and peace save us, make us to know his love, evoke in us a love for him, and create the basis for our unity.

<sup>1</sup>John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*

This is why Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf asks us to sing:

Christian hearts in love united,  
resting in God’s holy will.  
Let his love, in us ignited,  
more and more our spirits fill.  
Christ the head, and we his members—  
we reflect the light he is.  
Christ the master, we disciples—  
he is ours and we are his.

Grant, Lord, that with your direction  
‘Love each other’ we comply.  
Aiming with unfeigned affection,  
your love to exemplify.  
Let our mutual love be glowing  
thus will all men plainly see  
that we, as on one stem growing,  
living branches are in thee.



# *from the* **EDITOR**

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**PHILLIP HOLMES**



**A**t some point, we've all played the telephone game. The rules are simple. Typically, participants stand in a straight line close enough that whispering is possible, but not so close that players can hear every whisper. The first person in the line whispers a message into the ear of the person standing to their right. The person receiving the message whispers it to their neighbor, continuing until the message reaches the last player in line. The last player says the message out loud so everyone can hear how much it has changed from the original message at the beginning of the line.

While amusing, the simple, iconic game has many benefits. First, it's fun for participants and often serves as a great ice breaker. It's also helpful for teaching and developing active listening skills for young children. Many Christian youth groups often use it for lessons to help children understand the impact of gossip and rumors.

---

THEREFORE, HAVING PUT AWAY FALSEHOOD, LET EACH ONE OF YOU SPEAK THE TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, FOR WE ARE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER.

BE ANGRY AND DO NOT SIN; DO NOT LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOUR ANGER, AND GIVE NO OPPORTUNITY TO THE DEVIL.

LET THE THIEF NO LONGER STEAL, BUT RATHER LET HIM LABOR, DOING HONEST WORK WITH HIS OWN HANDS, SO THAT HE MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE WITH ANYONE IN NEED.

LET NO CORRUPTING TALK COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTHS, BUT ONLY SUCH AS IS GOOD FOR BUILDING UP, AS FITS THE OCCASION, THAT IT MAY GIVE GRACE TO THOSE WHO HEAR.

AND DO NOT GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, BY WHOM YOU WERE SEALED FOR THE DAY OF REDEMPTION.

LET ALL BITTERNESS AND WRATH AND ANGER AND CLAMOR AND SLANDER BE PUT AWAY FROM YOU, ALONG WITH ALL MALICE.

BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, AS GOD IN CHRIST FORGAVE YOU.

• • •

Ephesians 4:25–32

As I've reflected on Ephesians 4:25–32, I think it's crucial to highlight an additional benefit of the telephone game: it shows how only communicating a portion of a message, rather than the whole, often leads to people filling in the gaps themselves, resulting in chaos and confusion.

One example of this confusion is illustrated in how some Christians hold a view of unity that is as shallow as it is unbiblical. As Dr. Richard Lints correctly asserts,

A biblical theology of unity reveals a richer and deeper understanding of unity than mere uniformity, but it also holds out the goal of visible unity towards which Christians should aspire. The model of church unity presented in Scripture is a unity-in-diversity which protects it on one side from an over-reliance on human hierarchies but also from too great of an emphasis upon human autonomy.<sup>1</sup>

Another example of this confusion is revealed in how Christians, from the pulpit to the pew, provide correction and instruction. In Ephesians 4:25, Paul provides an excellent model in the way he instructs the church at Ephesus. In his instruction, he provides a negative prohibition, followed by a positive exhortation, and then ends with an explanation.

Therefore, having put away falsehood (NEGATIVE), let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor (POSITIVE), for we are members one of another (EXPLANATION).

This is modeled throughout the end of Ephesians 4. Paul recognizes the importance of the entire

<sup>1</sup>"The Unity of the Church," [thegospelcoalition.org](http://thegospelcoalition.org)

message. It is insufficient to simply say, “Stop spreading lies.” It’s also not enough to say, “Tell the truth.” By design, we have been hardwired to ask “why?”, which Paul answers by explaining that we are members of one another. Is it possible that our inquiring children are gracious reminders of our duty to explain “why” as well as our freedom to ask “why?”

As pastors and parishioners, it is of utmost importance that we possess a complete, biblical view of what the Bible has to say about unity, which is why I’m excited about this issue of *Ministry & Leadership*.

Kelly Berkompas, Managing Editor for *Ministry & Leadership*, provides a glimpse into how pastors have worked to foster unity in their local congregations. In the article titled “When Brothers Dwell Together in Unity,” Berkompas interviews pastors to better understand how churches are navigating national tensions, shepherding their flocks, and promoting unity during a tumultuous season.

Dr. Greg Beale, Professor of New Testament at RTS Dallas, reminds us of our identity as Christians. In practice, Christians are tempted to primarily identify by political, cultural, or social status, especially in this current controversial climate. Dr. Beale points out that Christians can sometimes get so caught up in the debate that we find ourselves identifying more with our favorite political cause than our Christian faith. Dr. Beale emphasizes that it is important for Christians to remind ourselves who we are.

Alicia Akins, guest contributor and RTS Washington student, covers the testimony of DeMyron Haynes in “Connecting Knowledge with

Practice.” Haynes is a student at RTS Dallas and a full-time pastoral resident at Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA) located in Shreveport, Louisiana. We learn about the unique challenges Haynes and his family have endured, how God’s grace has been with them, and how seminary has helped him become a better leader by constantly presenting a picture of pastoral leadership built on godliness, humility, commitment to prayer, and deep trust in the Lord.

With the aim of presenting a more holistic and biblical view of unity, Dr. Sean Michael Lucas, Chancellor’s Professor of Church History at Reformed Theological Seminary, has penned an informative piece on Martin Bucer’s work toward unity entitled “Working for the Unity of the Church.”

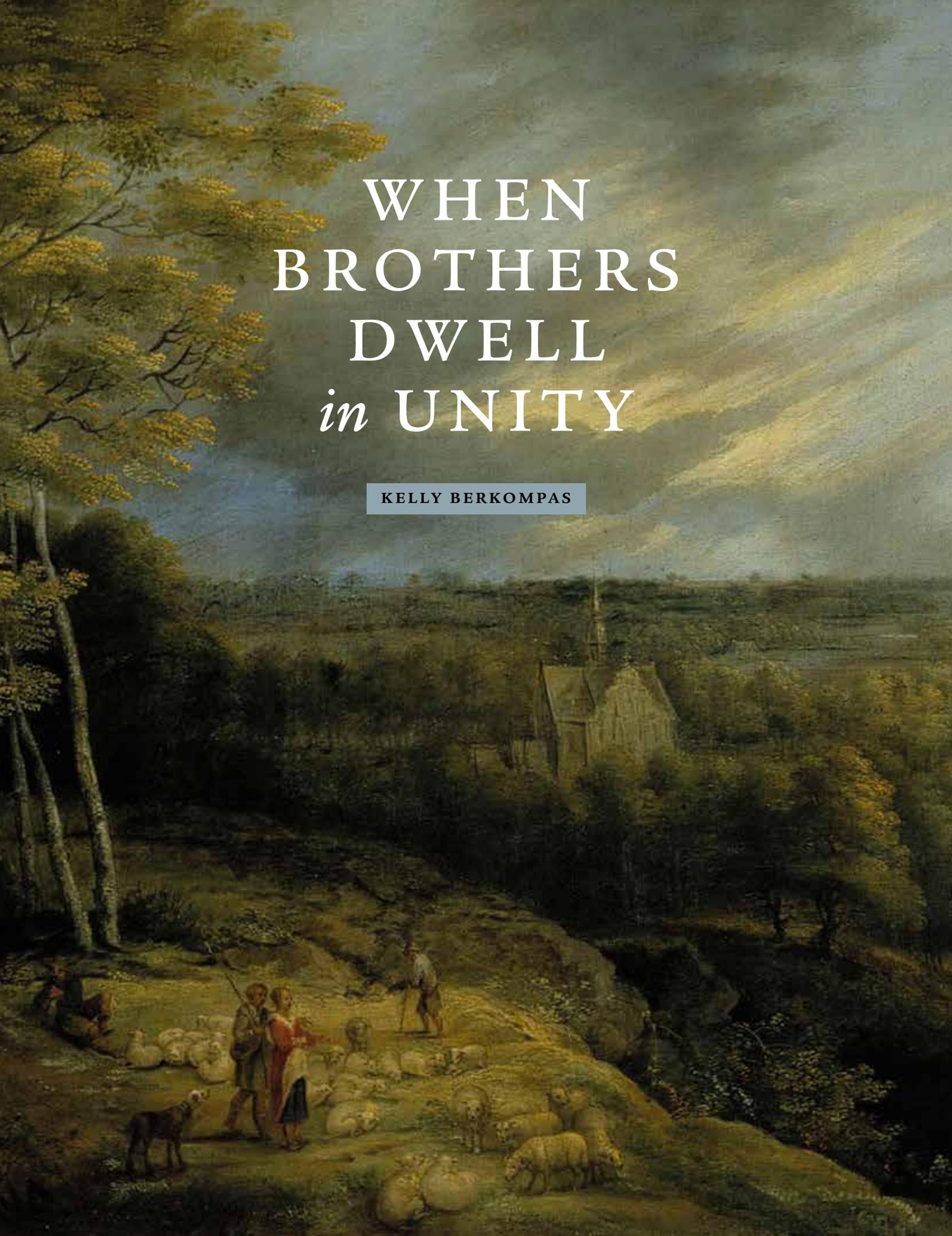
Finally, guest contributor Mary Davis reflects on the life of Dr. Robert Strong, a Presbyterian minister and professor at RTS. She traces Dr. Strong’s dedication to preaching the Word of God during a time when multiple Presbyterian denominations were splitting and re-forming.

At RTS, we pray that *Ministry & Leadership* will be a blessing and resource for the church. May the articles in this issue edify and encourage you, wherever you are, in your service to the Lord and his church.

Sincerely,

**PHILLIP HOLMES**

*Editor in Chief, Ministry & Leadership*  
*Chief Communications Officer*  
*Reformed Theological Seminary*

A detailed landscape painting in a classical style. The scene is a valley with a church spire visible in the distance. In the foreground, a man and a woman are walking with a dog and a flock of sheep. The background shows a large tree on the left and a valley with a church spire in the distance. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is peaceful and pastoral.

WHEN  
BROTHERS  
DWELL  
*in* UNITY

KELLY BERKOMPAS



*There's no question that the past year and a half has been challenging.*

Between a global pandemic, a disputed election, and racial tensions, the United States seems increasingly polarized. We don't have to dig far to find articles and pundits highlighting division in the U.S. We don't have to scroll far to find accusations hurled or subtweeted on social media, whether or not the users are Christians.

How do churches navigate these tensions when they seep into local congregations? How do pastors — in some cases facing personal trials and losses — shepherd their flocks and promote unity during a tumultuous season?

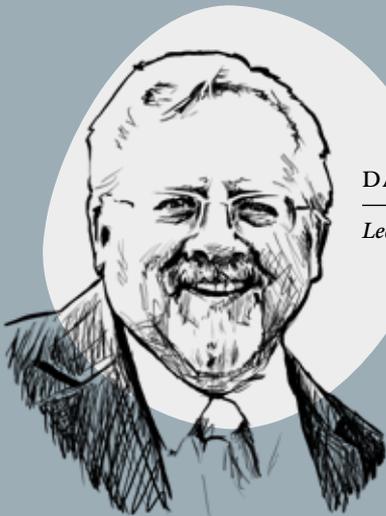
We talked to eight pastors around the country about their experiences over the past 18 months — both the hardships and the ways they've seen God's faithfulness to them and their churches.

“Of my 30 years in pastoral ministry, this was the hardest. I’ve never been more mentally drained and emotionally exhausted for such an extended period of time — much more so than in any other time of my life,” said **Dr. David Silvernail**, Senior Pastor at Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church (PCA) and visiting lecturer at RTS Washington. He reports that many pastors were feeling discouraged, and some have taken jobs outside of the church to get a break from the constant demands they faced.

Various factors contributed to the tiredness that Dr. Silvernail described; leaders found that the increased level of decision-making was mentally exhausting. **Chad Scruggs**, Lead Pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee, said he realized what a luxury it was to be able to plan. During the early months of the pandemic, the leadership asked day-by-day and week-by-week, “What are we going to do this week?”

“There was a whole lot of newly-introduced strain just to decide about normal things that we’d never had to think about before,” agreed **Eric Youngblood**, Senior Pastor at Rock Creek Fellowship in Georgia. He recognized that Rock Creek wasn’t alone; leaders in almost every church and organization were listening to disparate voices, discussing options, building a consensus, and communicating it to others.

To make decisions, many churches created task forces. RTS Washington alumnus **Ryan Mowen** became senior pastor at Church of the Atonement (ARP) in Maryland on January 19, 2020. Less than two months later, they had directions from the state and local government not to meet in person. He found that “keeping up with the latest research, policy, and procedures was too large a task for [their] staff.” The committee they created did “amazing work” and helped the session to make various decisions.



DAVID SILVERNAIL

*Leesburg, Virginia*



CHAD SCRUGGS

*Nashville, Tennessee*



ERIC  
YOUNGBLOOD

*Lookout Mountain, Georgia*



RYAN MOWEN

*Silver Spring, Maryland*



BRIAN GAULT

*Jackson, Mississippi*

JIM DAVIS

*Altamonte Springs, Florida*

GREG LANIER

*Lake Mary, Florida*

RICHARD HARRIS

*Houston, Texas*

Redeemer Church in Jackson, Mississippi, is an intentionally multiethnic church in a city that is about 80% African American (according to the 2010 U.S. Census). Assistant Pastor of Shepherding and Discipleship **Brian Gault** shared that, in Jackson, “COVID hit the African American population harder than the white population... Many of the large African American churches didn’t reopen until Easter 2021.”

When Redeemer started planning to return to in-person services, they looked at what local PCA and African American churches were doing. Since June 2020, they’ve conducted four surveys to listen to congregants’ voices, especially around seating. “With a diverse congregation, it was paramount that we have seating where anyone who wanted to come back [to corporate worship] had a way to come back where they felt safe and comfortable.”

At Covenant Presbyterian, the leadership talked about the importance of protecting the church’s

unity before communicating the particulars of their decisions. Rev. Scruggs reflected, “[It’s] powerful for our people to hear that unity was what we were after... We confessed early on that we wouldn’t get it all right, but we were pleading for the congregation to both voice their thoughts and also trust us to do the best we could.”

In addition to surveys, pastors and sessions sought to foster transparency in their decision-making via videos, emails, and Zoom meetings. **Dr. Greg Lanier**, Associate Professor of New Testament at RTS Orlando, is associate pastor of River Oaks Church (PCA) in Lake Mary, Florida. He appreciated that their leadership team did not always agree on how to respond to the pandemic:

“It primed us to be aware of how to convey our decisions to a group of people who, like us, were at different places on the spectrum of opinion. When the congregation saw that the leaders could unite behind a course of action even though not everyone

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

EPHESIANS 4:1-3

agreed with the specifics per se, that went a long way to helping them do the same.”

Congregants’ responses to these decisions were varied. “97% of folks have been incredibly supportive, but it’s hard not to be particularly impacted by the 3%,” shared Dr. Lanier. **Jim Davis**, Teaching Pastor at Orlando Grace Church, recalled, “Each disgruntled household was like an open browser tab in my mind using an already limited amount of battery power.”

The strain of the past year has highlighted practices that pastors want to continue in less stressful seasons, including transparent communication with church members and personal pastoral care. Many pastors realized they needed better systems to ensure that nobody falls through the cracks and want to equip church leaders to better care for families and congregants.

As Covenant Presbyterian Church began to gather in person again, Rev. Scroggs saw the congregation celebrating their fellowship: “People are mobilized for the work of hospitality.” They want to see that hospitality and celebration remain part of their church’s DNA.

At Christ Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas, they’ve endured crises due to

hurricanes and floods every few years. “Each storm upsets our normal routine, and we have to strive for unity and peace with one another,” shared **Richard Harris**, a current Doctor of Ministry student at RTS Charlotte.

Most churches have had to strive for unity and peace this year to varying degrees. Rev. Youngblood found that the widespread isolation and loneliness created even riper conditions for people to be “substantially disciplined by lots of other things than their local church, including cable news and their social media diet.” He sees part of the burden of pastoring as helping to shape Christlike character so the church can express the unity that is ours in Christ.

“We are one,” he said. “But the realization of that is not always apparent.”

The leadership at River Oaks Church recognized that the pandemic didn’t create the rising divisiveness but “certainly exposed [it].” To address the us-versus-them thinking, they held a four-month Sunday school series “to spur [their] folks to think about challenging topics from a robust scriptural perspective and not just from left or right talking points.”

Rev. Davis shared that social unrest hit his church harder than COVID-19. “When pretty much all of



our ministries were shut down and racial tensions were rising, we tried to expose our church to teachers we considered to be wise, charitable, and helpful through our podcast, ‘As In Heaven.’”

He continued, “I have learned how important it is for believers to be physically present with the body of Christ... It’s easier for us to believe the worst and gossip or even slander when we are not in physical contact with each other.”

According to Rev. Harris, unity in the church “does not look like uniformity in thought, opinion, conviction, and practice down to every detail... It looks like giving each other the benefit of the doubt. It looks like believing the best about each other. It looks like being charitable in our assumptions about one another. It looks like being long-suffering with those who disagree with us on matters of preference.”

Despite the temptation to give in to us-versus-them thinking, pastors saw frequent examples where the oneness of the church was on display. Members checked in on each other, finding creative ways to spend time together, and longed for the regular rhythms of corporate worship and other ministries. Believers put up with restrictions out of care for one another, especially the vulnerable in their congregations. When regular volunteers couldn’t attend church due to health concerns, new volunteers filled the gaps.

Members at Redeemer Church have a history of giving up personal preferences; one example is seen

in congregational music ranging from gospel music to traditional hymns. Rev. Gault shared, “I think that Redeemer is practiced enough and conscious enough in laying aside our preferences, that...we worked together to love others by laying aside those preferences.”

Dr. Lanier was notably encouraged by the responses to mask policies at River Oaks Church. Those who disagreed with the rationale “put aside their views in order to worship together in person.” When the church pivoted to a mask-optional policy, “those who were pro-mask continued wearing them but... did not foster a sense of judgmentalness toward others.”

Rev. Scruggs has seen God at work uniting churches in the Nashville area. “I’m grateful for the way the pandemic humbled us in terms of our ability to organize and control ministry... It eliminated any competitive spirit [among pastors]. We shared best practices and rooted for each other.”

Dr. Silvernail also talked about how the pandemic forced churches to get back to the core of their mission and vision. As he reflected on the importance of prayer, preaching the Word, and pastoral care, he said, “Sometimes in our striving to be creative and relevant we forget the basics, and our congregations suffer. When the basics are all you have to offer, you discover that is actually [what’s needed] most.”

Other pastors shared their deep love and affection for their congregations. When asked how he’s seen



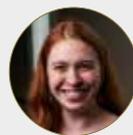
God at work, Rev. Youngblood responded, “I adore our congregation... I’m proud of them and have seen God creating a kind of endurance — the endurance of bearing with each other and with the situation at large.”

Rev. Mowen felt similarly. “As we have come through this season, I have come to see just how wonderful the congregation of Church of the Atonement are. They have a heart for God and desire to honor him. They really care for one another and their pastors. They are excited about seeing the gospel at work in our world.”

At Orlando Grace Church, they sense that God is doing a new work, despite what “feels like a winnowing of sorts.” Rev. Davis shared, “I have never felt more encouraged by the people in our church or by our elders... I believe that we are a more outwardly-focused, missionally-minded church because of some of the trials 2020 brought us.”

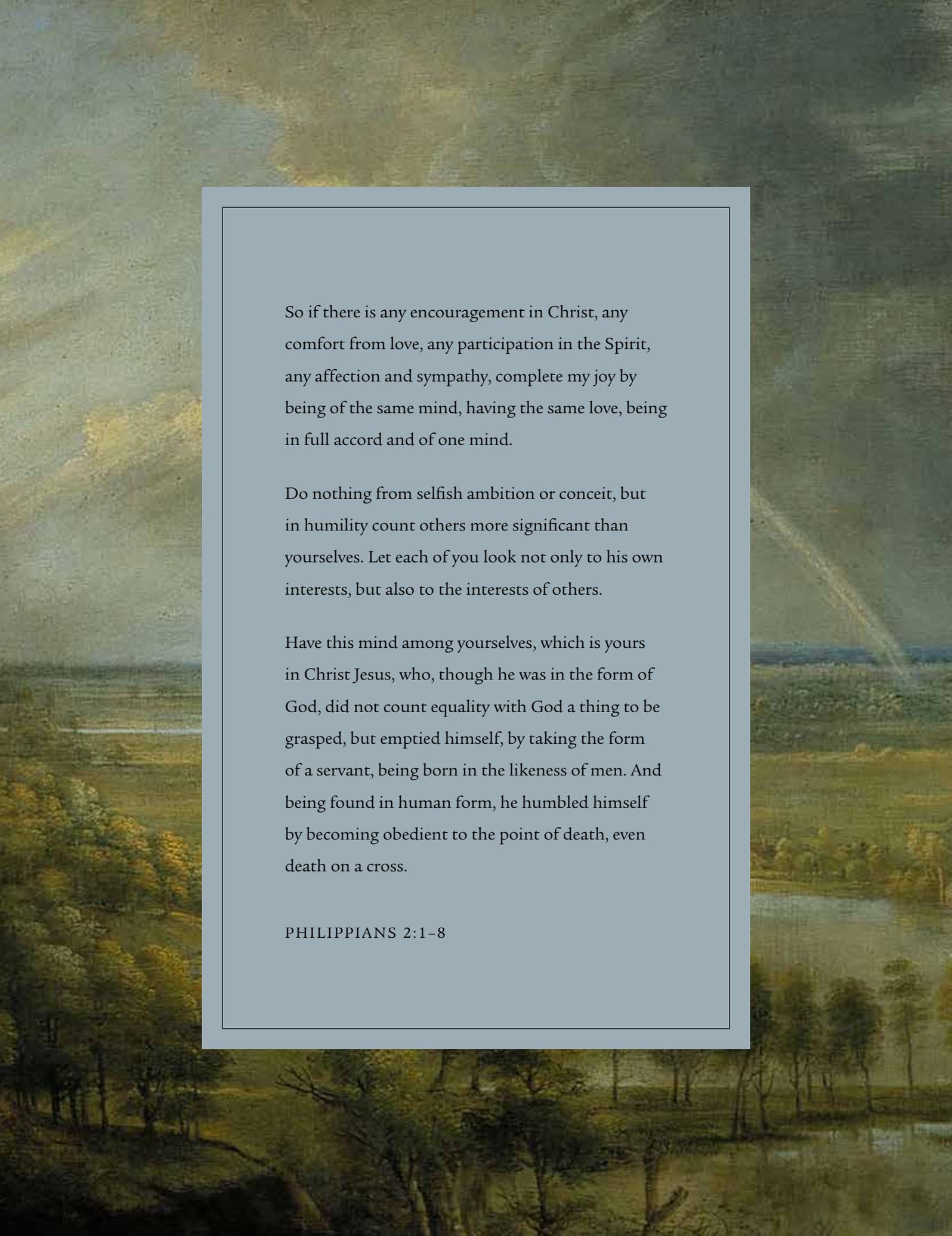
In Rev. Davis’ own life, “God has used this experience to solidify in my soul why I do what I do. Many of the ministry idols I had ten years ago have been successfully crushed. It is clearer to me than ever before why I do what I do and who I ultimately do it for.”

The weariness, division, and physical isolation we’ve experienced have highlighted the importance of being together as the body of Christ. And these stories of God’s faithfulness — the church’s care, long-suffering, and humility — echo David’s song in Psalm 133: “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” ♥



*Kelly Berkompas is the managing editor for Ministry & Leadership.*

*Illustrations by Rusty Hein.*

The background of the page is a soft-focus landscape painting. It depicts a wide, green field or valley with scattered trees. In the distance, a faint rainbow is visible against a pale, hazy sky. The overall color palette is muted and naturalistic, with greens, yellows, and soft blues.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-8

# WHAT IS UNITY?

We asked pastors how they would define church unity and what it takes to achieve.

Here are some of their responses:



**REV. RYAN  
MOWEN**

“Unity describes our commitment to our relationships as God’s people... In the New Testament, unity seems to always be encouraged along with these two things: an understanding of our union in Christ and humility.

“The first step is for believers to understand what Christ has done for us and understand his plans for the church. It is our union with Christ that subsequently informs our union with one another. Unless we understand who Christ is, what he has done to form the church, and what he desires to do in and through the church, we will have a low commitment to unity.

“But when we do understand [our union in Christ], it drives us into radical humility. By seeing the tremendous grace in Christ’s work for us, we can experience Spirit-driven humility that shifts us from selfishness to selflessness.”



**REV. JIM  
DAVIS**

“Much of our divisions today comes from mistakenly confusing conformity for unity... Simply put, [unity is] a body of believers united to each other in Christ. Church unity is wonderfully on display when Christians hold tight the precious primary doctrines taught in the Bible, but hold loose our own personal preferences.”



**REV. BRIAN  
GAULT**

“Church unity is a process whereby people from a variety of different walks of life lay aside personal preferences and come together to accomplish a particular mission and vision. It is considering one another ahead of ourselves and focusing on a shared task.”



**DR. GREG  
LANIER**

“Unity operates at two levels, I think. For church leadership (elders, etc.), there is a deeper calling to unity around a fairly large set of scriptural convictions (e.g., a confessional statement)... Among regular church members, the picture of unity is a bit broader and looks more like the ability to hold a different view on a given topic than someone else but still be able to worship and serve side-by-side.”



**DR. DAVID  
SILVERNAIL**

“Church unity comes when members place the needs and wants of the whole church above their own personal needs and wants. Unity is a byproduct of taking the ‘one another’ commands seriously. That’s why, when the Apostle Paul talks about unity in Romans 15, he immediately follows it up with several of those one another commands — ‘live in harmony with one another’ and ‘welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.’”



**REV. ERIC  
YOUNGBLOOD**

“I’ve probably been shaped by C.S. Lewis’ observation, ‘Aristotle has told us that a city is a unity of unlikes, and St. Paul that a body is a unity of different members.’ You’re somehow trying to get them to work in conjunction with one another, even though they’re all quite different.

“There’s a lot demanded to be unified — [it] demands a certain kind of patience, a certain kind of humility, a certain strength of love, a certain devotion to the needs of the other, and the suspension of your own.”



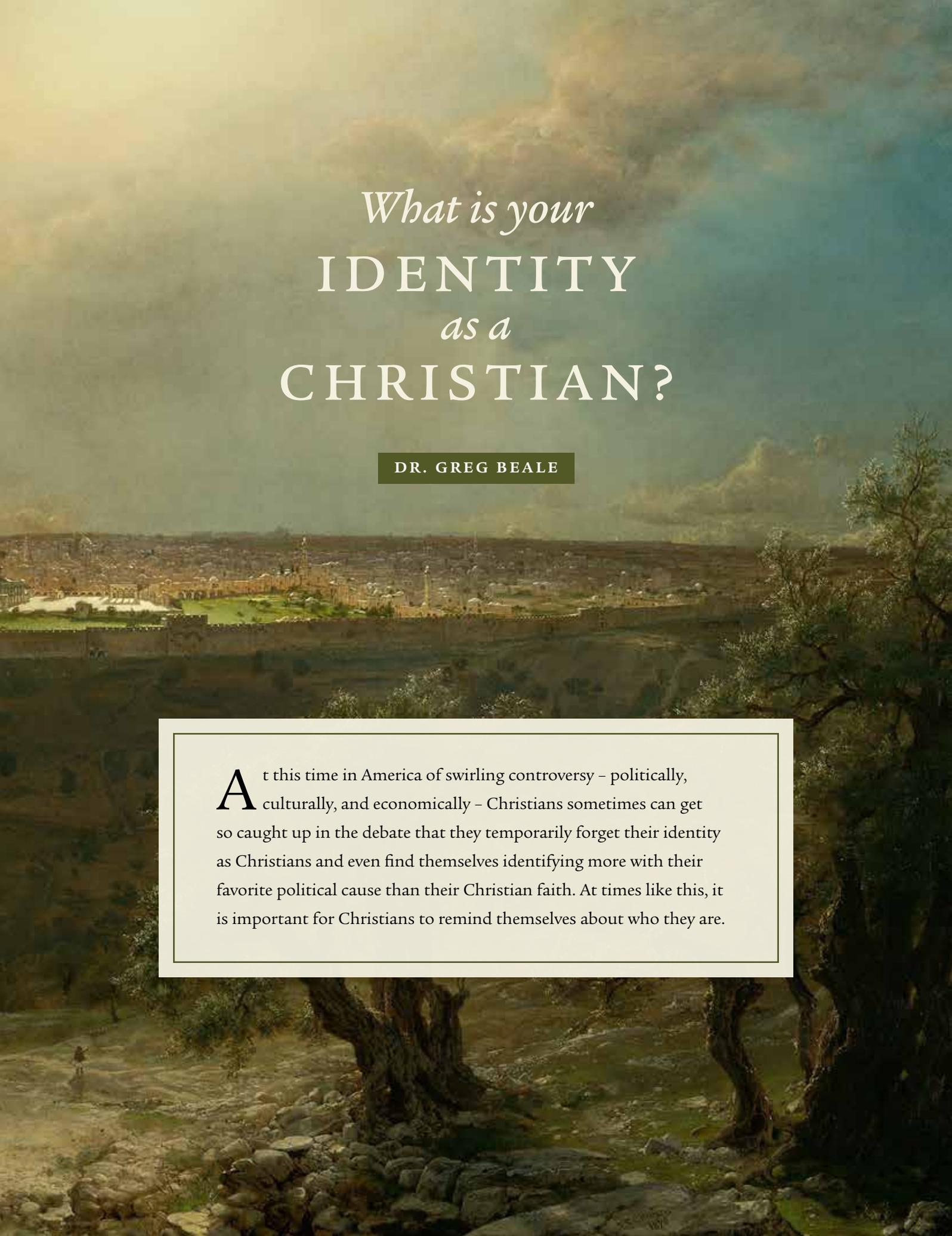
**REV. CHAD  
SCRUGGS**

“I would start with unity in the leadership, among pastors, staff, session, and diaconate... It’s not uniformity, where we all think the same or are the same. There’s a sense that we are together in the work that God has called us to do; we sense a real bond forged in that work, connected to vision or brotherhood and sisterhood in the work itself.

“In the church, it’s not full agreement or consensus, but there’s a willingness to submit and to be together through hard choices that we have to make. It takes a high degree of trust in the leaders that God has placed in that particular local community.”



Frederic Edwin Church,  
*Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives*,  
oil on canvas, 54" × 84", 1870.



*What is your*  
IDENTITY  
*as a*  
CHRISTIAN?

DR. GREG BEALE

**A**t this time in America of swirling controversy – politically, culturally, and economically – Christians sometimes can get so caught up in the debate that they temporarily forget their identity as Christians and even find themselves identifying more with their favorite political cause than their Christian faith. At times like this, it is important for Christians to remind themselves about who they are.

Who are we as Christians, and how can remembering our identity help us live better in this culture? Among other identities that the New Testament gives Christians (true Israel, adopted sons of God, people in God's image, etc.),

1 Peter 2 goes a long way to answering the question of who we are.

1 Peter 2:4-9 shows that we are identified and in union with Jesus as the new temple, and it shows the unified purpose of why we are identified as a temple:

And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNERSTONE," and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"

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## THE NEW TEMPLE

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I cannot comment on every part of this passage but will focus on those parts which highlight the Christian's identity and associated unity. Verse 4 refers to believers "coming to him [Christ] as a living stone" of the new temple, which has been rejected by men but "is choice and precious in the sight of God." This language is an allusion to Psalm 118:22, which is quoted fully in verse 7 and typologically refers in its context to the coming Messiah as the "cornerstone" of the temple. (Vv. 6 and 8 also apply Isaiah references – respectively Isa 28:16 and 8:14 – about the temple to Christ).

"Coming" to Christ as the "living stone" of the new temple (v. 4) brings one to be identified with Christ as "living stones being built up as a spiritual house [temple]" (v. 5). The probable reason that Christians are identified with Jesus as the "living stone" is that they have come into union with him when they have "come to him," which is explained as "believing in him" (v. 6). The repetition of "living" emphasizes the organic relationship between Christ and his followers, which is close to the notion of union. They are what he is as the "living" resurrected Christ. He is one new temple, and we are part of that one temple, which is part of the basis for our unity as a church and believers.

This concept of union with Christ as the temple is supplied by Psalm 34:8, "if you have tasted that the Lord is good" (CSB), cited directly before our passage in 1 Peter 2:3. The conclusion of Psalm 34:8 (34:9 in the Septuagint) reads, "blessed is the man who takes refuge in him," which is the unspoken bridge to "coming to him" in verse 4, and explains that the identification with Christ as the temple is due to people "coming to him" and "taking refuge in him."

This is very close to the idea of union with Christ, which causes us to be identified with him as the temple. In fact, the fuller phrase of Psalm 34:8b ("who [he] takes refuge in him") occurs several times elsewhere in the Old Testament, sometimes in direct connection with "taking refuge in him [God]" as the temple (Ps 61:4; cf. "taking refuge in him" as a "rock" in Pss 18:2–3, 30–31; 31:1–2; 71:1–3; 144:1–2).

How can you know if you are in Christ's temple? One way is to ask yourself how much you "long for the pure milk of the word," mentioned in 1 Peter 2:2. "If you have tasted" of that Word and "the kindness of the Lord," it will lead you to the temple of Christ; continuing to "long for" God's Word is a sign you are in the temple. Indeed, one of the activities of priests who served in the temple in the Old Testament was to learn and teach God's Word to Israel (e.g., Deut 31:9–19; Neh 8). Another sign of being a priest in the temple is if you desire to pray, since this was to be a function of priests in God's end-time temple (see Isa 56:7; for the role of prayer in the Old Testament temple, see 1 Kgs 8:23–53). So, signs of being in Christ's temple are if you desire God's Word and desire to pray to him as his spiritual priests.



## LIVING SACRIFICES

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This idea of priests serving in a temple is formally developed in verse 5. Verse 5 goes on to say that believers are not only a temple in Christ, but that they are, at the same time, “a holy priesthood,” and as such, they are “to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” Just as Old Testament priests offered animal sacrifices, so believers in the new covenant age are to offer up sacrifices, but these are not animal sacrifices.

What do we sacrifice? We sacrifice ourselves, as Romans 12:1 says: “Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” Similarly, in 1 Peter 2:21, Peter also specifies how we are to sacrifice ourselves: “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.” Christ atoned for our sins by his sacrifice. We are to follow his example of sacrifice, though, of course, our sacrifice does not have atoning power.

There are innumerable ways that Peter says we can “sacrifice” ourselves as priests in the new temple of Christ. Peter sees these sacrifices as involving the following:

“For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God” (1 Pet 2:19–20).

Likewise, these sacrifices include “not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead” (1 Pet. 3:9). This is similar to Romans 12:21: “do not be overcome with evil, but overcome

evil with good.” Appropriately, this concludes Romans 12, which began with “present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.” Romans 12:21 is likely one of the ways to “present our bodies a living and holy sacrifice.” Hebrews 13:16 also says, “And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

What is the nature of these sacrifices that we are talking about? The Old Testament talks about a “sacrifice of thanksgiving,” which was an actual animal sacrifice (Lev 7:12–15). The Psalms appear to understand this sometimes in a non-literal manner (Pss 50:14, 23; 116:17), and it is clearly understood in that way in Hosea 6:6: “For I delight in loyalty and not in sacrifice and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Jesus understands Hosea 6:6 in the same way (Matt 9:13). Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.” The author of Hebrews writes this to people who “accepted joyfully the seizure of your property” (Heb 10:34). They were to give thanks even when they lost their own homes! That was a real sacrifice!

How does this apply to the New Testament age? When something is going on that we do not understand, perhaps sickness or some financial setback, how should we react? I remember someone in a church I attended years ago who was an accountant for a car dealership. His boss asked him to “cover-up” some of the dealership’s earnings, so the business would not have to pay as much federal tax. The accountant refused to do so. As a result, he lost his job, but he continued to trust God through this trial. He was sacrificing himself (i.e., his job) in order to be faithful to God.

As a priest in God's new temple, we are to offer sacrifices of ourselves. To offer a "sacrifice of thanksgiving" now would be to thank God for the trial you are going through and to continue to trust him in the midst of it, knowing that "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28, and cf. "called" above in 1 Pet 2:21).

In Philippians 2:3–6a, Paul also lists the general principle of sacrificial living in imitation of Christ: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although he existed in the form of God," sacrificed himself.

Thinking of others before ourselves often involves sacrifice, and it is a wonderful recipe for bringing about unity, as "we are of the same mind" about this (Phil 2:2). Peter says we are called to sacrifice because we are priests in the temple of Christ, whose example of sacrifice we follow. As priests in the temple, we are all to have a cruciform lifestyle, and as we are unified in this sacrificial lifestyle, we will make an impact on the world when they see that we live so differently from them. Such different living inspires inquiries from unbelievers as to why we live this way and gives an opportunity for witness.



## A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

But there are other ways in which we function as priests in Christ's temple, which develops this notion of witness. The reference to "holy priesthood" in verse 5 is developed later in verse 9 as "a royal priesthood," which reveals another role that we have as priests:

"But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

There are several Old Testament allusions in this verse, but I want to focus on only two. They are "you are...a royal priesthood, a holy nation." Both these phrases are from Exodus 19:6: "And you shall be for me a royal priesthood and a holy nation" (author's translation). This is a statement of Israel's purpose as a nation. The entire nation is to function as "priest-kings." There are different ways to translate this: either as "royal priests" or a "priestly kingdom."

The key is that their task had both a kingly and a priestly aspect to it. As royal priests, they were to be mediators between God and the dark world. Furthermore, in order to do this successfully, they

had to be a "holy nation," that is, holy priests who kept themselves clean from the impurity of the world around them (e.g., separate from pagan idolatries and immoralities). They were to mediate the presence of God's light to a dark world. Spreading God's light to the world is one way God would work through them as "kings" to dominate the world for him, until "the earth [would] be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:9, NIV). They would begin to rule over the world spiritually as part of their mandate. Israel had an evangelical mandate but had to maintain its priestly holiness in order to accomplish this mandate.

Likewise, we are to be a "royal priesthood" and a "holy" people in order to be mediators between God and the dark world. Now, in the new covenant age, we are the continuation of true Israel, and we mediate the presence of God through spreading the gospel of Christ. 1 Peter 2:9 further describes this priestly and mediatorial task: "that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." We have been called out of darkness into light, and, now as mediatorial priests in Christ's temple, we mediate the light of Christ to the dark world. This is our task together as a church and as Christians (Rev 1:6 and 5:10 also refer to the church as a "royal priesthood," alluding to Exod 19:6 and making the same point).

May God give us the grace to function as mediatorial priests to a dark world. The more unified we are about this priestly role of sacrificing ourselves and reflecting God's light to the world,



the more the impact there will be on the world. May we be of “the same unified mind” in this (Phil 2:2). Indeed, it is through sacrificing ourselves through various forms of suffering that we will reflect God’s light, gain the attention of some in the world, and “silence” the world’s accusations against our faith (1 Pet 2:15). For God loves to demonstrate the power of the gospel through weakness: “I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (2 Cor 12:9). ♥

*Editor’s note: All Scripture references in this article are from the NASB 1995, except where noted.*



*Dr. Greg Beale is Professor of New Testament at RTS Dallas. To learn more about Dr. Beale, see page 46.*

*Illustrations by Rusty Hein.*



# CONNECTING KNOWLEDGE WITH PRACTICE

*DeMyron Haynes Prepares for  
a Life of Ministry*

ALICIA AKINS



With campuses in Jackson, Orlando, Charlotte, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, and New York City — along with online courses — Reformed Theological Seminary has a global presence that produces local fruit. The Dallas and Houston campuses prepare students to serve Texas and the greater Southwest. RTS Dallas' strong relationships with local churches and intimate classroom settings were some of the draws for third-year, full-time Master of Divinity student DeMyron Haynes.

Haynes, a full-time pastoral resident at Grace Presbyterian Church (PCA), located in Shreveport, Louisiana, his hometown, did not end up in Dallas by chance. The North Texas Presbytery, made up almost exclusively of churches in North Texas, including Dallas, also includes one single church in Louisiana: Grace Presbyterian. Attending RTS Dallas allows Haynes to interact with and learn alongside classmates who are also under the care of the same presbytery and with fellow North Texas Presbytery ministers.

But his choice was about more than just geography and proximity. Haynes described what made RTS Dallas stand out. “As I began to think about what type of minister I wanted to be, I found myself desiring to attend a seminary that would train me to be an ordinary, simple pastor in the Reformed tradition... I chose RTS ultimately because I was impressed by the ‘type’ of ministers that RTS was producing. They seemed to be producing ministers who were committed to shepherding their respective churches by preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments, and praying that God would do glorious things in their churches and communities.”

Small class sizes that allow for close relationships with professors were also a plus. “Each of my professors, particularly Dr. McDowell and Dr. Yoder, have been intentional in pastoring me and other students,” Haynes explained.



His classes are a large part of why he and his family have managed to continue trusting the Lord through a seminary experience marked from the start by personal suffering. He preached his first funeral when his beloved grandmother died during his first week of classes. In his final year, his second son will undergo chemotherapy.

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**“I feel like our current cultural moment demands our *best* theological reflections, our *best* exegesis, and our *best* preaching.”**

Various lectures, professors’ prayers, and assigned readings have buoyed his confidence in God’s sovereignty, and he

now sees suffering as a form of seminary itself. He explained that “the Lord not only uses seminary to shape his servants, but he also uses the cauldron of life to make ministers who are strong, gentle, kind, and who are acquainted with grief.”

In addition to buttressing his faith, his courses have also equipped him to, as he put it, “be a faithful, ordinary pastor who preaches God’s Word, who walks alongside God’s people, praying for and with them, celebrating and grieving with them as they seek to follow Christ in their respective callings.” As he comes to Scripture and the confessions of the church, he frequently finds himself asking how they come to bear on particular issues of the day.

While he admits his education hasn’t given him answers to all his questions, it has been immensely helpful in many ways. Haynes explained that what he

has learned has given him the tools — tools necessary for these times — to “think theologically and pastorally about various pressing issues.”

He continued, “Now that I am in seminary, I’ve found myself constantly thinking that this is the best time to be in seminary. I feel like our current cultural moment demands our best theological reflections, our best exegesis, and our best preaching.” Haynes recognizes that ministers are increasingly asked to be subject matter experts across a range of fields (politics, sociology, public health, etc.), but his coursework and professors have grounded him in his calling to minister to the church of God in a way those other fields cannot.

When it comes to training in leadership, Haynes credits his professors as being most influential, learning not only from their expertise, but from who they are. How they live has,

in many ways, been as powerful as what they teach. “It has ultimately been my professors who have made me a better leader by modeling Christlike leadership. Each of my professors in their own way has emphasized the necessity of the humility, prayer, conviction, and joy that is needed to be a good leader,” Haynes shared.

His leadership training has been almost by immersion. Haynes continued, “RTS is helping me become a better leader by constantly presenting a picture of pastoral leadership that is not built on a platform or one’s personality but one that is built of godliness, humility, a commitment to prayer, and a deep trust in the Lord.”

Haynes believes “it takes a church, a presbytery, and a seminary to form healthy pastors (at least in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition).” By connecting knowledge with practice, the joint

pursuit of seminary at RTS Dallas and his Grace Presbyterian pastoral residency are preparing him to become fit for ministry. Grace Presbyterian Church provides him with the opportunity to be discipled by his pastor and to serve and walk alongside “a community of broken people redeemed by the gospel of Jesus Christ”; RTS Dallas provides him with instruction, training, role models, and tools to nurture a mind for truth and heart for God with a view to a life for ministry. ♥



*Alicia Akins works in international education by day, is a part-time Master of Arts (Biblical Studies) student at RTS Washington, and is the author of the forthcoming book, Invitations to Abundance, with Harvest House Publishers.*

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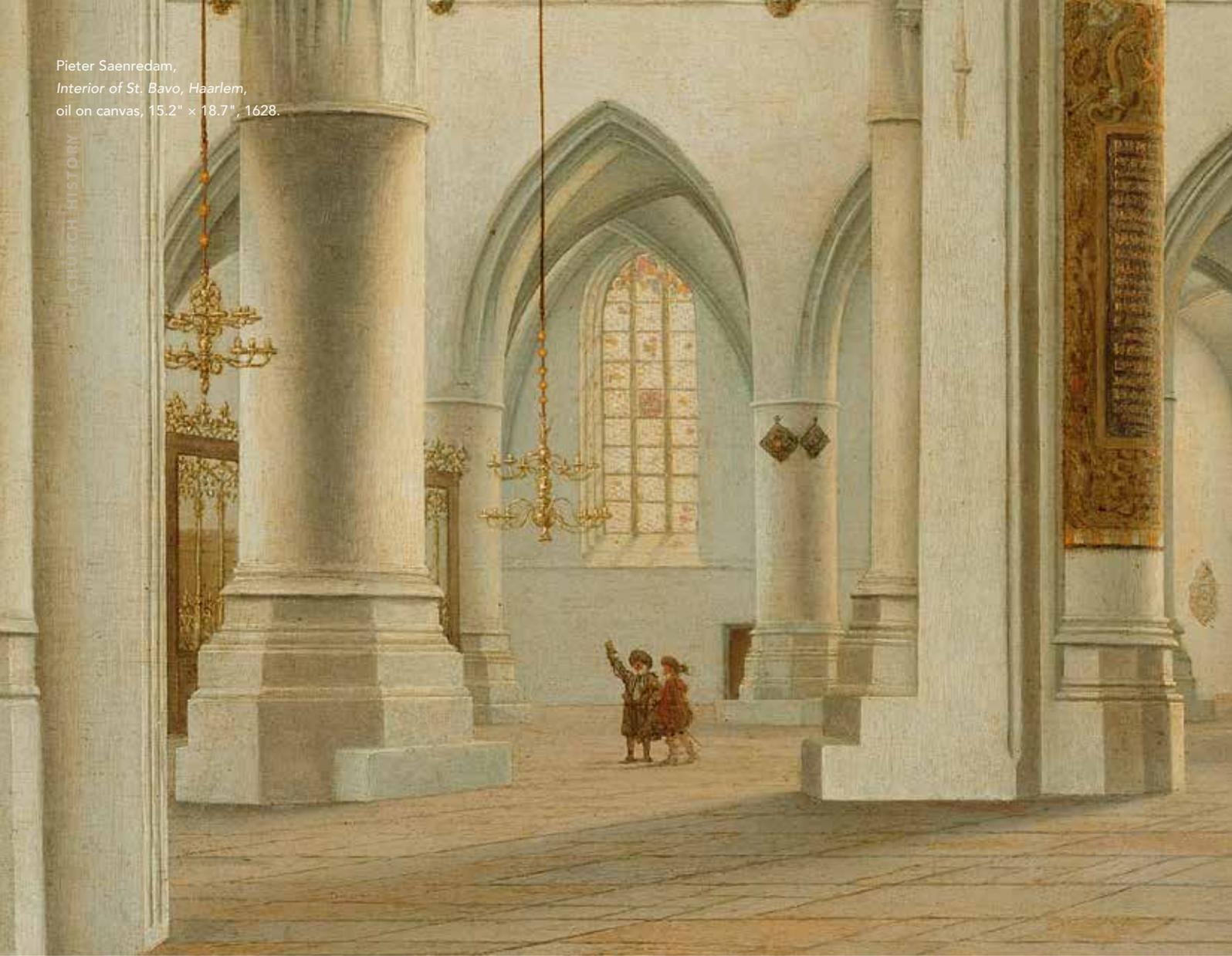
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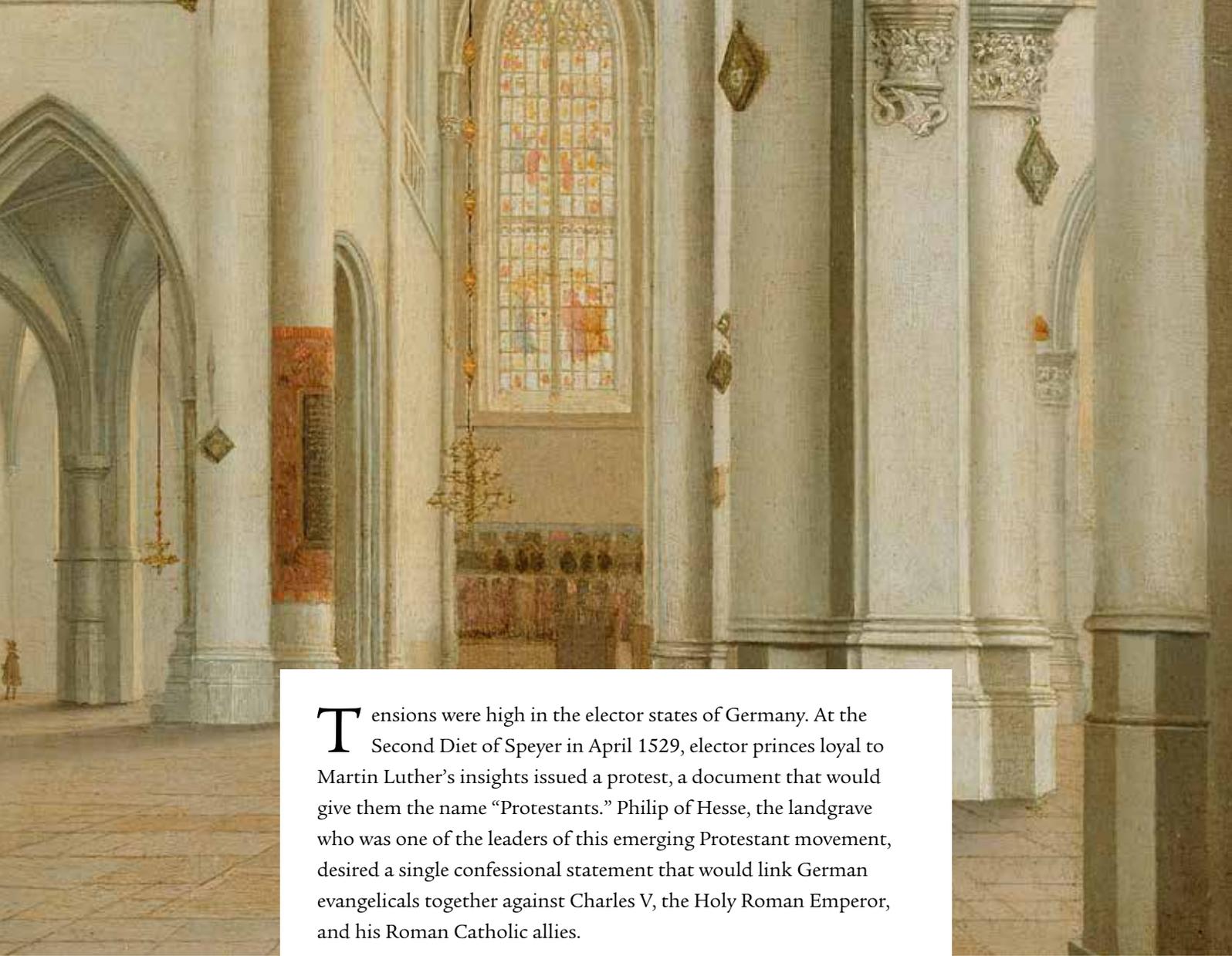
CHURCH HISTORY



WORKING FOR THE  
**UNITY** *of the* **CHURCH**

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DR. SEAN MICHAEL LUCAS



Tensions were high in the elector states of Germany. At the Second Diet of Speyer in April 1529, elector princes loyal to Martin Luther's insights issued a protest, a document that would give them the name "Protestants." Philip of Hesse, the landgrave who was one of the leaders of this emerging Protestant movement, desired a single confessional statement that would link German evangelicals together against Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, and his Roman Catholic allies.

However, there was a significant barrier in the way: the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. In order to work toward unity, Philip gathered key evangelical theologians to Marburg, a city in the territory he oversaw as landgrave. In addition to Luther, Philip Melancthon, Martin Bucer from Strasbourg, and Huldrych Zwingli from Zurich were also present.

In October 1529, as the theologians debated among themselves before engaging in public debates before the landgrave, it became clear that there were two sides: the Lutherans, who generally followed Luther's insistence that "this is my body" meant some sort of corporal presence, and the Reformed, who sided with Zwingli's claim that Jesus' words required a symbolic understanding. Shuttling between the two sides, working for the unity of the church, was Martin Bucer. It was a role that he was well-suited to play.

## *The Formation of a Mediator*

Bucer was born in Selestat, near Strasbourg, in 1491. Though his father was a shoemaker, he received a solid education at the Latin school in his town and entered the Dominican monastery there at the age of 15. His order eventually sent him to Heidelberg to receive further training. It was a fateful trip: not only was he exposed to the work of Erasmus, committing him to a humanist interest in the biblical text, but he was present for Luther's 1518 Heidelberg Disputation. As he heard Luther unpack the differences between the theology of glory — that relied upon the law for right standing with God — and the theology of the cross — that relied upon Jesus alone for salvation — Bucer began to wrestle with the gospel in its pure and recovered form.

By 1521, Bucer had committed himself to Luther's reformational understanding of the gospel. He left Heidelberg and began to pastor a parish in Landstuhl. He embraced the further reform of clerical marriage in 1523, marrying Elizabeth Silbereisen, a former nun. However, his patron's political and military failures forced him to leave his parish; Bucer had decided to flee to Wittenberg. In order to protect his wife, he took her to relatives in Strasbourg. Bucer himself never made it to Wittenberg; at the urging of the Strasbourg city council, he took the parish of St. Aurelia in 1524 and, seven years later, the parish of St. Thomas.



Though Bucer never wavered from the insights on *sola fide* that he gained from Luther, by the time he made it to Strasbourg, he raised questions about Luther's teaching on the Lord's Supper. His friendship with Zwingli and Andreas Carlstadt caused him to listen to their concerns about the downstream effects of Luther's doctrine of ubiquity (the idea that the physical body of Jesus is omnipresent) on Christological belief. In addition, Zwingli argued that if Jesus' resurrection body is a real body and it is present at the right hand of God the Father, then surely it cannot be "everywhere."

And yet, Bucer also believed that Luther had some important points, too. Something happens in the Lord's Supper — Jesus is present in feeding his people with food for the spiritual journey. There is an objective reality in the Supper, an objective reality that grounds our subjective response. As believers eat the Supper by faith, they actually gain spiritual benefit. Luther was right about that, Bucer held.

## *Failure and Success in the Work*

Thus, Bucer was the right person to mediate between the two sides, to work for the unity of the church. As the theologians gathered at Marburg in 1529 and debated privately, they worked in pairs: Melancthon discussed with Zwingli, Luther with the Reformed theologian Johannes Oecolampadius. Bucer worked in the background, trying to get the sides to come to an agreement.

None of this work was easy because the two sides were fairly entrenched. In one of Luther's first speeches, he declared: "I am prepared, then, to take part in a debate. Not as if I were desirous of changing my conviction, which, on the contrary, is absolutely firm. Still, I want to present the foundation of my faith and show where others err." In a similar fashion, Zwingli would get frustrated with Luther, at one point declaring that John 6:63 was a verse that would break his neck.

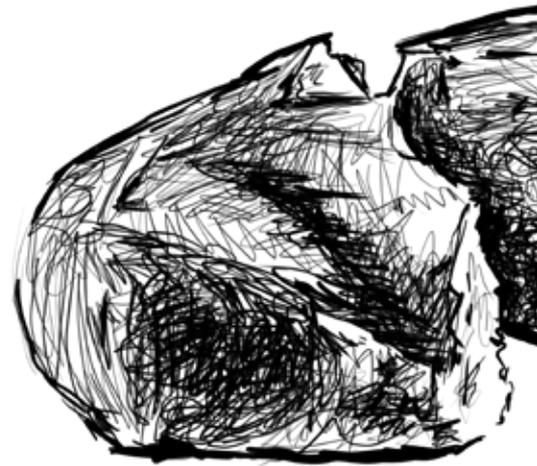
In the end, neither side would back down. The final document that was published, the Marburg Articles, declared that "although we have not at this time agreed whether the true body and blood of Christ are bodily in the bread and wine, each side is able to display Christian love to the other (as far as conscience allows)." And so, perhaps Bucer's work for the unity of the church was a failure at this point.

Yet Bucer did not stop working for the church's unity. The following year, he crafted the Tetrapolitan Confession as a middle way between the Lutheran and Reformed positions. In it, he provided his mediating position on the Lord's Supper: that in the Supper, Christ "deigns to give his true body and true blood to be eaten and drunk for the food and drink of souls," and that any further contention and inquiry into how that happens is "superfluous" and unprofitable. And yet, with a nod toward Zwingli, Bucer also taught that "we who partake of one bread in the holy Supper may be among ourselves one bread and one body."

Because he was able to find a middle ground between Luther and Zwingli, he urged Strasbourg to subscribe to the Augsburg Confession in 1532 and came to an agreement with Luther and Melancthon in the Wittenberg Concord in 1536. In that document, the theologians agreed that the body of Christ is in heaven at the right hand of the Father, even as the Supper is a true means of grace to the one who receives it by faith. Even though several of the Zurich theologians failed to adopt the concord, Bucer did not stop working for the unity of the church.

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*Bucer did not stop working for the unity of the church.*



### *A Life Toward Unity*

This determination to work with others to seek the unity of Christ's church would continue to typify Bucer's ministry until the end of his life. Famously, in 1539, he took in the apparently failed Reformer, John Calvin, and gave him a place of ministry in Strasbourg — one that proved instrumental in Calvin's future return to ministry in Geneva. He engaged in various conferences with Lutherans and Catholics at Hagenau, Worms, and Regensburg in 1540–41, trying to find a middle way toward further reforms in these cities. When Peter Martyr Vermigli fled Italy, having embraced the Reformation, Bucer called him to Strasbourg so that he might teach theology in the city's academy.

Even when Bucer was finally forced to leave Strasbourg in 1549, he went to England to assist the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, in



trying to craft unifying solutions to divisive issues. In the revision of the Book of Common Prayer produced in 1552, Bucer's influence was seen in mediating language, especially in the rubrics for baptism and the Lord's Supper, and in the ongoing use of vestments. Bucer would not see this new prayer book. He died in England in 1551, buried at Great St. Mary's Church in Cambridge. But Bucer's testimony and example still live on as one who believed in and worked for the unity of Christ's church. ♥



*Dr. Sean Michael Lucas is Chancellor's Professor of Church History at RTS. He also serves as senior pastor of Independent Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Memphis, Tennessee.*

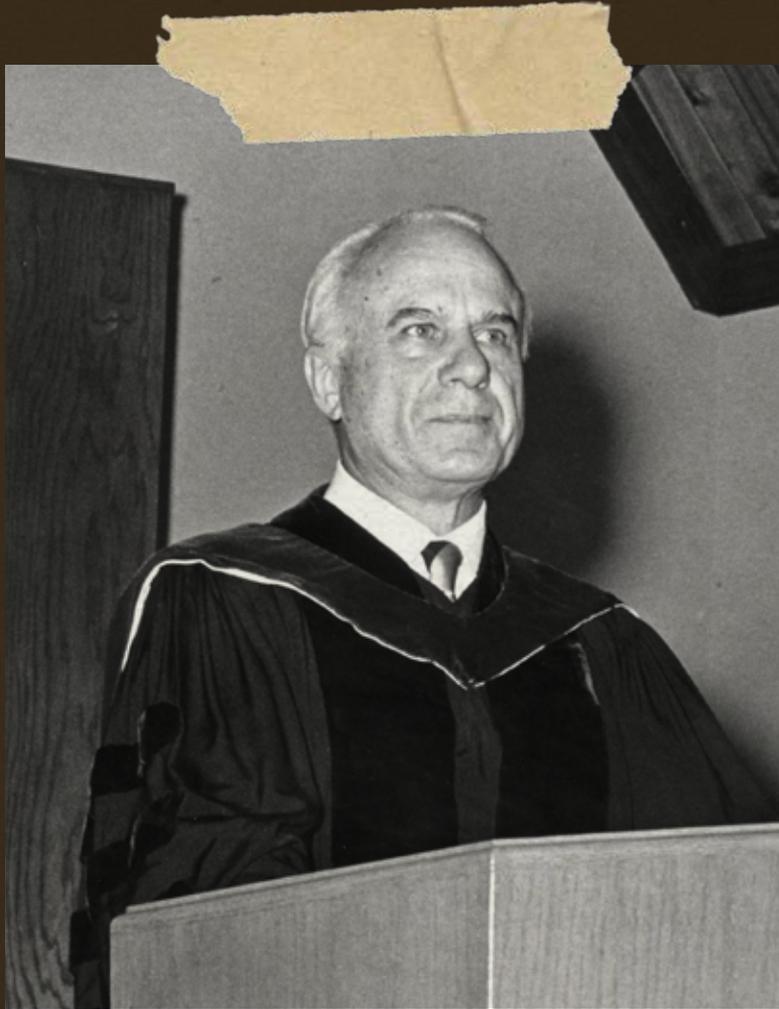
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# Robert Strong

## *Staying True to the Word*

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MARY DAVIS

Perhaps never more than in the middle of the 20th century, American Presbyterianism was characterized by uncertainty and turbulence. But amid this turbulence, a calm figure, always in a suit and tie, a shock of white hair on his head, entered the pulpit. His presence in the pulpit was more than his erect posture, natural dignity, or powerful voice. It was the noble sense of his purpose that made such an impression on those who heard Dr. Robert Strong.

Born in Illinois in 1906, Robert “Bob” Strong met his future wife, Roberta Kirkpatrick, while studying in California. Roberta was a concert violinist who graduated from the Juilliard School of Music. They were married in 1933, a year before Strong graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. Dr. Strong’s daughter, Patricia (Patty) Strong Barrett, remembers that he always spoke positively about his wife, praising Roberta and her personality.

Not long after his ordination, he followed Dr. J. Gresham Machen and others in their exodus from the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (commonly known as the Northern Presbyterian Church). Dr. Strong faithfully pastored churches for decades, including First Presbyterian Church in Augusta, Georgia, and Trinity Presbyterian Church in Montgomery, Alabama, before joining the faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary in 1973.

In a memorial about Dr. Strong after his death in 1980, Dr. John R. de Witt, former professor at RTS Jackson, writes, “Though [he] was distinguished in every part of the ministry, it was especially as a preacher that he excelled.” Dr. Strong’s son, James “Jim” Strong, remembers, “Even as a

child, people talked about what a good preacher my dad was.”

Rev. Claude McRoberts is the current senior pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church and says Dr. Strong’s impact cannot be overstated. “Many people would say, ‘I didn’t know what it was to be a Christian until I sat under his teaching or served as an officer in the church.’ He inspired people to think when he was preaching.”

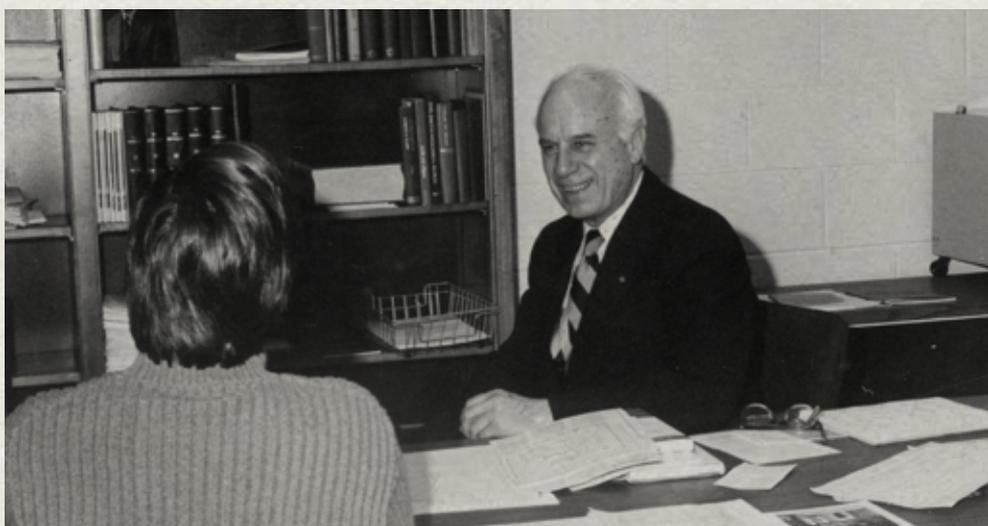
“Soaring above the whole range of the truths which he expounded from the pulpit was his manifest determination to preach, to preach always the Lord Jesus Christ,” writes Dr. de Witt.

“He was the example of someone who spoke with a love and sincerity for the Word of God,” says Dr. Guy Richardson, President Emeritus at RTS Jackson. Dr. Richardson sat under Dr. Strong’s ministry at Trinity

and then studied at RTS during Dr. Strong’s time as a professor. “He obviously spent great labor in having sermons with depth and thought-provoking application.”

Strong says preaching is what people remember his father for most. “People enjoyed hearing him preach. His sermons were intellectual, biblical, spiritual, and well-articulated.” But behind the scenes, he says that while his father never preached “off the cuff,” his sermons were not always meticulously planned. “He composed his sermons...by the seat of his pants. But they were well-educated pants!”

Barrett described her father as a natural preacher, “[Preaching] was as natural as brushing his teeth... He just opened his mouth, and it happened.” She also remembers her father praying every morning, often kneeling beside his bed for 30 minutes to start the day.





Although Dr. Strong left his role as pastor of Trinity to teach at RTS, Strong says the burden of preaching was deeply rooted in his father. “He never really retired from active ministry,” he explains. “He was preaching in a little Presbyterian church right there in Pensacola, [Florida,...] until the Sunday before he died.”

**Dr. Strong represented a generation of bold ministers who “bore courageous testimony to the ancient faith. They were not many in number, and the tide which swept others away could only be resisted at great cost to themselves.”**

“In that generation, next to Machen himself, Strong was probably the staunchest advocate for biblical, theological truth. He preached it on a regular basis, taught it on a regular basis, lived it on a regular basis,” remarks John Ward Weiss, Montgomery attorney and lifelong Trinity member.

Weiss, who currently serves as a ruling elder at Trinity, says Dr. Strong’s ministry was formative

for him as a young man. “I’m frequently amazed at how much theology I absorbed through my junior high and high school years under his preaching,” he reflects. “It was a blessing for me and a tremendous blessing for the church.”

But Dr. Strong’s ministry was not confined to the pulpit. Weiss remembers Dr. Strong visiting him when, at 16, an injury confined him to bed for weeks; Dr. Strong made frequent visits to his bedside to play chess. Rev. McRoberts also remembers Dr. Strong’s pastoral impact on him as a teen: “He made it very clear that I mattered.”

“His example sets a legacy that would be hard for anyone to surpass,” says Dr. Richardson. “He was accessible and very pastoral.”

Dr. and Mrs. Strong also made time for their children and grandchildren. Barrett has memories of playing chess and riding roller coasters with her father. She shared that her children, to this day, “talk about what Bob said. You can just see the influence he had on their lives.” She also still remembers her father telling her, “Patty, don’t major in minors,” a saying that has stayed with her throughout the years.

Dr. Strong's leadership ability and zeal for the purity of the church set him at the helm of the effort to restore confessional evangelicalism in Southern Presbyterianism. His unwavering voice could be heard in the church courts, raised in defense of the church's confessional heritage and the integrity of the gospel. To Dr. de Witt, Dr. Strong represented a generation of bold ministers who "bore courageous testimony to the ancient faith. They were not many in number, and the tide which swept others away could only be resisted at great cost to themselves."

Though American Presbyterianism was fractured, Dr. Strong never wavered in his devotion to the church, particularly the congregation at Trinity, where he spent most of his ministry. According to Dr. de Witt, Dr. Strong never sought personal advancement or accolades in his life and witness. Although disunity grieved him, he never turned aside from those who were brothers and sisters in Christ.

Broad in his sympathies but narrow in conviction, he remained in the Southern Presbyterian Church (PCUS) as long as he felt he could minister faithfully under the constitution of the denomination. He remained at Trinity until he accepted a position as professor of homiletics on the faculty of RTS Jackson.

Dr. Strong's history with RTS goes back many years to conversations with Sam Patterson during visits to Belhaven University. Jim Strong remembers his father was passionate about the possibility of what would eventually become RTS: "He was enthusiastic about it because he wanted there to be a seminary that would be the truly conservative, biblical, scriptural side of preaching."

To honor Dr. Strong's legacy, RTS has established the Robert Strong Chair of Homiletics. Strong says this chair memorializes his father's lifetime of faithfulness and will inspire future and current pastors to be zealous ministers of the gospel. "He was a successful servant of the Lord who labored virtually 24/7, doing the Lord's work until he died at age 74."

Matthew Bryant, Senior Vice President of Development for RTS, shares, "A few years ago, I had the honor of meeting Patty Strong Barrett. It's been

a privilege to know her and to hear and see her determination to honor her father in this way. Her generosity, as well as that of others impacted by Dr. Strong, is a testament to the importance of preserving his legacy through this chair. It's exciting to think of the generations of students who will follow and benefit."

"His preaching, prayer, and pastoral care, and preparing the leadership — obviously those were Robert's commitments," says Rev. McRoberts. "We want to have alumni like that from RTS."

Dr. Richardson believes that today, Dr. Strong's primary desire for RTS would be what he exemplified in his own pastoral ministry and in his teaching at RTS: staying true to the Word. ♥



*Mary Davis is a Canadian transplant to the South. Wife and mother by day, she moonlights as a freelance writer and editor.*

RTS is grateful for the ongoing generosity of the churches, friends, and family of Robert Strong who have faithfully contributed to the **Robert Strong Endowed Chair** at RTS Atlanta. With a goal of \$3M, this endowed fund will support a faculty position in homiletics.

To learn more or to inquire about how you might contribute, contact Sheldon Nordhues, Director of Development at RTS Atlanta at [snordhues@rts.edu](mailto:snordhues@rts.edu) or (770) 952-8884.

## NEWS

Since April 2021, Reformed Theological Seminary has celebrated our 2021 graduates and the accomplishments of our professors. We've had professors promoted to new positions, graduate with their doctorates, and retire from full-time teaching. We've welcomed new students, two new professors — Drs. Greg Beale and Zachary Cole — and new staff members.

As we share faculty news, we also want to remember Dr. Gordon Reed, who passed away in April. Dr. Reed taught at RTS Jackson, helped establish the Charlotte campus, and impacted many students.

Our various campuses have continued to grow. RTS Atlanta started offering courses in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Auburn, Alabama. Join us in thanking God for his continued faithfulness!

## DEYOUNG, REDD, RICHARD, AND WINGARD

# PROMOTED

*On June 1, 2021, Drs. Kevin DeYoung, Charles Wingard, and Scott Redd were promoted. Dr. DeYoung is now Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at RTS Charlotte; Dr. Redd was appointed to a new faculty chair position at RTS Washington; Dr. Wingard is now Professor of Pastoral Theology at RTS Jackson.*

*In August, Dr. Guy M. Richard was appointed as president of RTS Atlanta. Dr. Richard had previously served as executive director at the Atlanta campus and will continue in his role as associate professor.*

### DR. KEVIN DEYOUNG

#### ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY /// CHARLOTTE

Dr. Michael Kruger, president of the Charlotte campus, commented on Dr. DeYoung's promotion: "We are so pleased to have Kevin DeYoung as a professor here at RTS Charlotte. Not only does he bring a wealth of pastoral experience, but his sharp mind and theological precision are a rich blessing to our students in the classroom. His Ph.D. work on John Witherspoon has made an impressive contribution to our understanding of Reformed theology in the time of the Enlightenment, laying a wonderful theological foundation for future scholarship. We look forward to many more years with Kevin on the Charlotte faculty."



Dr. DeYoung joined the RTS Charlotte faculty in 2017 and also serves as the Senior Pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, North Carolina. He received his MDiv from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and completed his Ph.D. from The University of Leicester in 2019. His dissertation, entitled "The Religious Formation of John Witherspoon: Calvinism, Evangelicalism, and the Scottish Enlightenment," was published by Routledge in 2020.

Dr. DeYoung has published more than a dozen books, including his most recent books: *The Ten Commandments: What They Mean, Why They Matter, and Why We Should Obey Them* (Crossway, 2018), *Grace Defined and Defended: What a 400-Year-Old Confession Teaches Us About Sin, Salvation, and the Sovereignty of God* (Crossway, 2019), and *Men and Women in the Church* (Crossway, 2021). He regularly blogs for and is a board member of The Gospel Coalition.



## DR. SCOTT REDD

### STEPHEN B. ELMER PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT /// WASHINGTON

Dr. Scott Redd has been appointed to the newly formed “Stephen B. Elmer Chair of Old Testament.” Dr. Redd currently serves as president of the Washington campus, and was promoted from associate professor to this new position.

Before Dr. Redd began serving as president of RTS Washington in June 2012, he was dean of students and professor at RTS Orlando. “I am grateful for this new faculty chair and the opportunity to appoint Dr. Redd as the first professor at RTS to hold it,” said RTS Chancellor and CEO Ligon Duncan. “This appointment speaks to the quality of his scholarship and leadership in the Washington campus.”

## STEPHEN B. ELMER

The newly endowed professorship is named after Stephen B. Elmer (1924–2007), a native of New York who left a lucrative career to serve as a church member in Orleans, Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, he served as a role model and mentor to RTS Washington alumnus and donor Luke Gibson, who, together with his family, provided the core funding for this endowment.

“Mr. Elmer’s example of diligence, generosity, and Christian discipleship influenced Luke and many others in their community, and it embodies RTS’ vision of training the next generation to be men and women devoted to serving Jesus Christ, his church, and the world,” said Dr. Redd. “We are thankful for this gift. The endowed professorship is a powerful tool for the Christian seminary because it provides important funding for our work that will continue in perpetuity.”

After graduating from the U.S. Military Academy in 1946, Stephen B. Elmer (“Buzz”) served the U.S. Constabulary Forces in occupied Germany as command of headquarters in Heidelberg and the Russian Intelligence and Language School in Bavaria. In

1950, he resigned from the Army to pursue a career in investments, which led him through various companies and positions: assistant vice president at the First Boston Corporation, head of European institutional sales for F.S. Smithers & Co., and vice president for investment counsel at Loomis Sayles & Company. He also served as the director and chairman of the board of trustees of the Haydon Trust in Bermuda.

Stephen Elmer was a man beloved by his family and community. He was married to Isabel, and together they had four children: Monica, David, Lucy, and Victoria. Elmer was a committed church member and an active community leader; his faith in Christ moved him toward giving his time and resources. He volunteered at the Cape Cod Hospital and at a local outreach that provided lunch for those in need.

“Buzz was a dear friend and mentor to me and many others in the church in which I grew up,” said Mr. Gibson. “His ministerial heart and generous manner were an encouragement to me as a young man pursuing God’s call in my life.”

## DR. GUY RICHARD

### PRESIDENT /// ATLANTA



*"I see it as a campus-wide promotion, because a whole lot of hard work on the part of the entire staff and faculty here in Atlanta has gone into making this a reality."*

DR. RICHARD

Since Dr. Richard's appointment as executive director in 2017, RTS Atlanta has seen record growth or near-record growth in enrollment and development. Under his leadership, the campus launched the Alonzo and Althea Edmiston Center for the Study of the Bible & Ethnicity in 2018. The Atlanta campus has also launched several other initiatives in the last few years that will have a kingdom impact in the greater Atlanta area and beyond. In 2020, he was promoted to Associate Professor of Systematic Theology.

RTS Chancellor and CEO Ligon Duncan shared, "Dr. Guy Richard's leadership of the RTS Atlanta campus has been outstanding and exemplary. The growth of RTS Atlanta attests to that. His promotion to president is a vote of confidence and grateful recognition by the chancellor and Executive Committee of RTS. RTS Atlanta is in very good hands."

Dr. Richard has a Ph.D. in Historical and Systematic Theology from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Prior to coming to Atlanta, he served as senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Gulfport, Mississippi. During his 12 years in Gulfport, he led the congregation in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which completely destroyed the church facility and many homes.

"I am both greatly encouraged and tremendously humbled to be receiving this promotion," said Dr. Richard. "In a very real sense, I see it as a campus-wide promotion, because a whole lot of hard work on the part of the entire staff and faculty here in Atlanta has gone into making this a reality. It is a huge vote of confidence in what we are doing as a campus and a recognition of all the good things that are happening. If you are ever in the Atlanta area, please stop by and allow us to show you first hand."

**DR. CHARLES WINGARD**  
**PROFESSOR OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY /// JACKSON**



Dr. Wingard joined RTS in 2014 after spending 28 years as an ordained pastor in the PCA and OPC, serving congregations in North Carolina, Massachusetts, and Alabama. He received his B.A. in political science from the University of the South, his MDiv from Vanderbilt Divinity School, and his DMin from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Dr.

Wingard also serves as dean of students and dean of chapel for the Jackson campus.

Dr. Ligon Duncan, President of RTS Jackson, said, “I’ve said before that Charlie Wingard is the consummate Reformed pastor. He blesses our students at RTS Jackson as he models pastoral ministry to them inside and outside of the classroom. His promotion to full professor is well-deserved.”

In 2016, Dr. Wingard began serving as Senior Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Yazoo City, Mississippi. He recently wrote *Help for the New Pastor: Practical Advice for Your First Year of Ministry* (P&R, 2018) and also blogs at [charliewingard.com](http://charliewingard.com), where he reviews books and provides tips for seminarians.

Colton Underwood served as a pastoral intern with Dr. Wingard in Yazoo City. He said, “In whatever engagement he is employed, Dr. Wingard approaches everything with a desire to encourage, to equip, and to edify men and women in the Lord that they might be better servants in God’s kingdom. While he may deny it, he is a treasure trove of rich wisdom and insight to all those seeking a call within and surrounding God’s church.”

# APPOINTMENTS

*In June, Dr. Greg Beale was appointed as Professor of New Testament at RTS Dallas, and Dr. Zachary Cole joined the faculty of RTS Orlando as Associate Professor of New Testament.*

*In August, Douglas “Doug” E. Baker was appointed Chancellor’s Chief of Staff.*

## DR. GREG BEALE

### PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT /// DALLAS

Dr. Beale, a native Texan, joined the faculty of the Dallas campus after over a decade of serving at Westminster Theological Seminary (WTS). At WTS, he was the J. Gresham Machen Chair and Research Professor of New Testament and Biblical Interpretation.

“Dr. Beale is a renowned scholar of New Testament and biblical interpretation, and we are delighted to welcome him to the RTS faculty,” shared Chancellor and CEO Ligon Duncan.

“As a Texan and graduate of Southern Methodist University (SMU) and Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS), this is a sort of homecoming for Greg. We know that Greg will be a blessing to our students in Texas and throughout RTS as we co-labor to train up the church’s future ministers and leaders.”

In addition to his studies at SMU and DTS, Dr. Beale received his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge. An ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Dr. Beale has had a long and distinguished academic career, teaching at Grove City College, Gordon-Conwell Seminary, and Wheaton Graduate School, in addition to his work at WTS and RTS.

Dr. Mark McDowell, Executive Director of RTS Dallas, shared, “I am delighted that Dr. Beale has joined our learning and ministry community. As one of the world’s leading biblical scholars, he not only brings a wealth of experience in the classroom, expertise in biblical languages, and a broad contribution to the academic field of biblical studies, but he also displays a firm commitment to our Triune God. All of these are essential qualities that will

help train our students in the Scriptures and shape them for ministry in the church for the sake of spreading the glory of Christ across the globe.”

Dr. Beale has served as a president of the Evangelical Theological Society and is known for his work in the New Testament’s interpretation and use of the Old Testament. He has written many books, including *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* and *The Book of Revelation (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*. He recently co-authored *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* with Dr. Benjamin Gladd, who teaches at RTS Jackson.



**DR. ZACHARY COLE**  
**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**  
**OF NEW TESTAMENT ///**  
**ORLANDO**



RTS Orlando President Scott Swain said, “If ministers are to fulfill their calling to make God known through the gospel of Jesus Christ, they must acquire both theological wisdom and practical skill. The latter includes the capacity for rightly handling the Word of God in the languages in which it has been revealed. I am excited about the contribution that Dr. Zachary Cole will make to the work of helping our students acquire the theological wisdom and interpretive skill they need to fulfill their callings for the good of the church to the glory of God.”

Since 2016, Dr. Cole has served as lecturer in biblical studies at Union Theological College in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and has been a recognized teacher at Queen’s University Belfast. He has taught a wide range of students: undergraduate and graduate students, Presbyterian candidates for ministry, and religion students from varied or no religious background.

Before moving to Belfast, Dr. Cole taught as a visiting instructor at his alma mater, Palm Beach Atlantic University. Dr. Cole is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Dr. Cole completed his Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh, studying with Professors Paul Foster and the late Larry Hurtado. His dissertation was titled, “Numerals in Early Greek New Testament Manuscripts: Text-Critical, Scribal, and Theological Studies.” He has published articles in a number of leading journals and is an active member presenting research at the Society of Biblical Literature and Evangelical Theological Society.

Dr. Cole said, “God has given me a passion to serve his church by teaching students how to read Scripture carefully and apply it faithfully in today’s world. Considering RTS’ history, mission, and reputation for serious theological education in the Reformed tradition, I cannot think of a better place to do that work.”



## DOUGLAS BAKER

### CHANCELLOR'S CHIEF OF STAFF

At RTS, Baker will assist Dr. Ligon Duncan in his duties as chancellor and serve as a liaison between the Chancellor's Office, the RTS Board of Trustees, and administration. He will assist with increasing efficiency and responsiveness into existing operations, help define new operational strategies, and assist the chancellor and senior leadership on special projects.

Dr. Duncan shared, "I sincerely look forward to many years of service with Doug here at Reformed Theological Seminary. May the Lord prosper the work of our hands, and bless, protect, provide for and grow his seminary."

"Historically, institutions created by and for the church often turn against their founding doctrines in ways that actually create a cycle of downgrade across generations.

Aware of this fact, the faculty and staff of RTS know their service is a sacred stewardship entrusted to them by faithful believers to advance the work of Christ in this world," Baker stated. "It is an honor and great privilege to join with them and serve among such dedicated servants of the church. I look forward to all that is before us as we, together, hold forth the light of the gospel."

Baker has served on the executive staff of five governors across two decades as well as consultation with the White House and other federal cabinet agencies. As special assistant to former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, he assisted the governor in his communications office and led efforts for Gov. Huckabee's notable economic development initiative – From Fiber Optics to Fly-fishing.

Baker later served under Dr. David Dockery in the Office of the President and Provost of Union University and as a key leader in the corporate relations division of the United States Naval Academy Foundation. He has also recently assisted Dr. Dockery in his work with the International Alliance for Christian Education (IACE).

Returning to his home state of Louisiana during the second term of Gov. Bobby Jindal, Baker led policy and communications work for tax reform, technology advancements for budgeting across 11 state agencies, and helped to advance a government efficiency project for Gov. Jindal, resulting in more than \$2 billion in savings over five years.

His work at the US Leadership Foundation focuses on education reform and advancement for poor and at-risk students in urban and rural communities across the nation. He also served on the staff of the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as executive administrator.

Baker is a graduate of Louisiana State University (B.A.), New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and the Johns Hopkins University (MA with highest academic honors). He is a two-time recipient of the Governor's Award for Outstanding Achievement. Baker has been recognized by Louisiana State University as an outstanding alumnus of the LSU Tiger Marching Band. His writing has appeared in many national publications and journals.

## ELIZABETH PENNOCK DEFENDS DISSERTATION

RTS Orlando is pleased to announce that Elizabeth Pennock has successfully defended her doctoral thesis and officially earned her Ph.D. from the

University of Central Florida. A graduate of the RTS Master of Arts in Counseling (MAC) program, Dr. Pennock has served as Assistant Professor of Counseling since 2019, teaching a range of core courses in the counseling curriculum.



For her thesis, Dr. Pennock researched the factors that predict the trauma-related attitudes and beliefs of Christian clergy as a first step in applying a trauma-informed care model to churches. More than 230 participants completed an online survey that included measures of trauma-related attitudes and beliefs, emotional intelligence, personal trauma exposure, the completion of trauma-related training, and other factors.

Results showed that trauma-related training and emotional intelligence were statistically significant predictors of trauma-related attitudes and beliefs. In light of these findings, Dr. Pennock delineated implications for mental health professionals, counselor educators, clergy training programs, and researchers.

Since joining the RTS faculty, Dr. Pennock has played a crucial role in shaping the cohorts of students who come to Orlando to earn their

MAC degrees and pursue licensure. In addition to teaching, she coordinates students' counseling internships.

Dr. Scott Swain, President of RTS Orlando, said, "Dr. Pennock brings to RTS Orlando a wealth of experience in clinical counseling and cross-cultural ministry, along with academic expertise in the area of trauma. By her presence, experience, and gifts, she has already enriched colleagues and students in a multitude of ways. We rejoice with her at this milestone in her academic career."

Dr. Pennock hopes that her research will help her better instill an understanding of trauma-related influences on clerical practice in her students. While she works most directly with counseling students, her expertise will benefit students in various degree programs offered at RTS Orlando. Alongside its central doctrinal commitments, RTS is dedicated to educating its students in pastoral competencies and giving them opportunities to study best practices surrounding issues of abuse, trauma, and counseling, including courses such as "Abuse and the Church."

**"DR. PENNOCK BRINGS TO RTS ORLANDO A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE IN CLINICAL COUNSELING AND CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY, ALONG WITH ACADEMIC EXPERTISE IN THE AREA OF TRAUMA."**

*Dr. Scott Swain*

# RETIREMENTS

In May 2021, Dr. Charles “Chuck” Hill, John R. Richardson Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, retired after 27 years at RTS. The RTS Board of Trustees made Dr. Hill Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity Emeritus at RTS Orlando.

Dr. Guy Richardson retired from his role as president of RTS Jackson in 2020, but as of May 2021 is also retired from his role as Assistant Professor of Counseling and Director of the MAC program for the Jackson and Orlando campuses.

## DR. CHUCK HILL



Originally from Nebraska, Dr. Hill studied art at the University of Nebraska, after which he worked for a few years as a commercial artist. After graduating from Westminster Seminary in California, he pursued further studies, earning a Ph.D. in New Testament at Cambridge University. His dissertation in early Christianity was subsequently published as *Regnum Caelorem: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity*. After teaching at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, for five years, he joined the faculty at RTS in 1994, moving to Orlando with his wife, Marcy, and their three children.

Dr. Ligon Duncan, Chancellor and CEO, remarked, “It has been a true blessing to be Chuck’s colleague over the years. I’ve learned from him, read his work, and benefited from our conversations and friendship. Chuck’s work in the area of Christianity, New Testament studies, and canon, combined with his love for the Lord and the church, model the type of scholarship we want to do at RTS.”

Dr. Hill has established an international reputation in the fields of New Testament and early Christian studies through scores of articles, essays, and other works. His books include *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (2004), *Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great “Gospel Conspiracy”* (2010), and the forthcoming *The First Chapters: Dividing the Text of Scripture in Codex Vaticanus and Its Predecessors*, all from Oxford University Press. Dr. Hill also collaborated on several other

books, including co-editing a Festschrift for Dr. Roger Nicole: *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Practical Perspectives* (InterVarsity Press, 2004).

In his retirement, Dr. Hill plans to continue his research and writing and hopes to teach occasionally at RTS Orlando and other campuses. He and Marcy are eager to travel to visit their children and grandchildren.

RTS Orlando President Scott Swain said, “Dr. Hill has shaped the RTS Orlando community in a number of enduring ways. His rigorous and reverent exposition of the Bible in the classroom set a stellar example for our students’ own ministry of the Word, while his service on several faculty search committees ensured that professors of his academic caliber and piety would continue to bless RTS Orlando students for years to come.”

At his retirement celebration, Drs. Greg Lanier and Nicholas Reid surprised Dr. Hill with a Festschrift in his honor. A Festschrift is a traditional way in which scholars recognize the contributions of a peer by collecting essays that focus

“Chuck’s work in the area of Christianity, New Testament studies, and canon, combined with his love for the Lord and the church, model the type of scholarship we want to do at RTS.”

—  
DR. LIGON DUNCAN

on themes of that scholar’s writings. *Studies on the Intersection of Text, Paratext, and Reception: A Festschrift in Honor of Charles E. Hill* assembles 13 essays that show the need to work across a variety of particular fields in New Testament scholarship.

Eunike Indrawan served as Dr. Hill’s teaching assistant. She shared, “Dr. Hill’s love for Christ and the church always shines forth both inside and outside the classroom. In the beginning of each class, Dr. Hill always asked how everyone was doing and prayed for us. He continued to pray for us through a recorded video when the pandemic hit and forced us to learn remotely from home.”

Jonathan Duckett was struck by Dr. Hill’s kindness and humor from their first lunch together. “I remember sitting in Greek Exegesis and stifling my laughter from the unexpected jokes he would make during his lectures. But even more than his humor, I’ve known Dr. Hill to show deep care for his pupils, always generously giving his utmost attention to any student who asked for some of his time. I can only hope that this pastoral spirit has rubbed off on me.”

“DR. RICHARDSON HAS DEDICATED HIS TIME TO NOT ONLY EDUCATING COUNSELORS ON HOW TO USE THEIR SKILLS TO SERVE THE CHURCH BUT ALSO TO TRAINING FUTURE PASTORS ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY COUNSEL THEIR CONGREGANTS.”

## DR. GUY RICHARDSON

Prior to his work at RTS, Dr. Richardson received his undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Auburn University in 1972. He later earned three graduate degrees: a Master of Arts in Christian Education from Reformed Theological Seminary, a Master of Education in Counseling from Georgia State University, and his doctorate in Counselor Education from Auburn University.

In 1987, he was ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church in America. He is a licensed professional counselor (LPC) and served as the director for two church-based professional Christian counseling ministries: the first in Augusta, Georgia, and the second in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1996, the Richardsons moved to Newark, Delaware, where he was the interim pastor for Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Newark.

Dr. Richardson moved to Jackson with his wife, Denise, and their two young daughters in 1999. He was president at RTS Jackson until 2020 when he transitioned to Assistant Professor of Counseling and Program Director for the MAC program. Dr. Richardson became heavily involved with the counseling program in 2018 when he oversaw the transition from the Master of Arts in Family Therapy (MFT) to the Master of Arts in Counseling. “It’s a wonderful opportunity for our students because the program now meets the academic and clinical requirements for the state boards overseeing Licensed Professional Counselors in most states,” he shared.

Dr. Ligon Duncan, President of RTS Jackson, said, “For 21 of the 55 years of our seminary’s history, Guy Richardson was at the helm of the Jackson campus (only Luder Whitlock served us longer in that role). The hundreds of pastors, teachers, and counselors who were trained here during that time are the fruit of his labors. Furthermore, after his retirement as president, Guy continued to serve and lead as the director of the MAC program in Jackson and Orlando. He is a bridge to our past and our future, having studied under Wallace Carr (who founded the counseling program of RTS), worked alongside

Jim Hurley (who established the MFT and professional counseling program of RTS), and prepared the way for CACREP accreditation of our programs in Jackson and Orlando. Dr. Richardson's legacy of humble, faithful, fruitful service will live on."

Dr. Duncan continued, "The fact that the Executive Committee of RTS unanimously granted Dr. Richardson the title of President Emeritus, upon my recommendation, is an indication of our respect and appreciation for his ministry in our midst."

Dr. Bill Richardson, Professor of Counseling, recalls his long-lasting friendship with Dr. Richardson. "I met Guy in 1980 when we were both graduate students in the Counseling and Psychological Services Department at Georgia State University. For a believer studying psychology in a secular university, Guy was an oasis of brotherhood-in-Christ for me. We developed a friendship that remains to this day. I was part of the RTS faculty when Guy became the Jackson campus president. His dual

academic backgrounds in both Christian education from RTS and in psychology from Auburn University have been powerfully used by God at RTS.

"But, beyond academic and administrative gifts, Guy is a pastor. In so many ways, Guy has continued to be that oasis of Christ-like brotherhood to me. On many occasions, for over 20 years, Guy has 'pastored' me with godly encouragement. I know I am not alone. Guy's office has always been more than an administrative helm. It has always been a place of loving, pastoral care, as well."

Jaycee Terry graduated with her MAC degree in 2020 and now works at RTS Jackson as Assistant Site Administrator for the MAC program. She said, "I've truly enjoyed getting to know Dr. Richardson as both a professor and coworker. His intentionality in developing meaningful

relationships with those around him is one of his most memorable qualities. Dr. Richardson has dedicated his time to not only educating counselors on how to use their skills to serve the church but also to training future pastors on how to effectively counsel their congregants. I can't thank him enough for the hundreds of hours he has devoted to improving not only the MAC department and Jackson campus but also RTS as a whole."



## IN MEMORIAM

# GORDON K. REED

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Dr. Gordon K. Reed passed away on April 13, 2021, at the age of 90. Born in October 1930, he spent 53 years in ministry — as a pastor and preacher, professor, and administrator.

After his graduation from Columbia Theological Seminary, Dr. Reed was ordained in 1956. Over the course of his ministry, he pastored 11 churches throughout the Southeast. In 1964, Dr. Reed was installed as pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina, where he served for over a decade.

In 1973, he was one of the teaching elders who formed the Presbyterian Church in America. When the PCA established the Ridge Haven Conference and Retreat Center in 1978, Dr. Reed became the center's first director.

In 1987, Dr. Reed joined the faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary, teaching at what is now known as the Jackson campus. He served as a professor from 1987 through 1994. In the early '90s,

he helped found RTS' Charlotte campus, administering a program that featured evening and weekend courses in Charlotte, North Carolina.

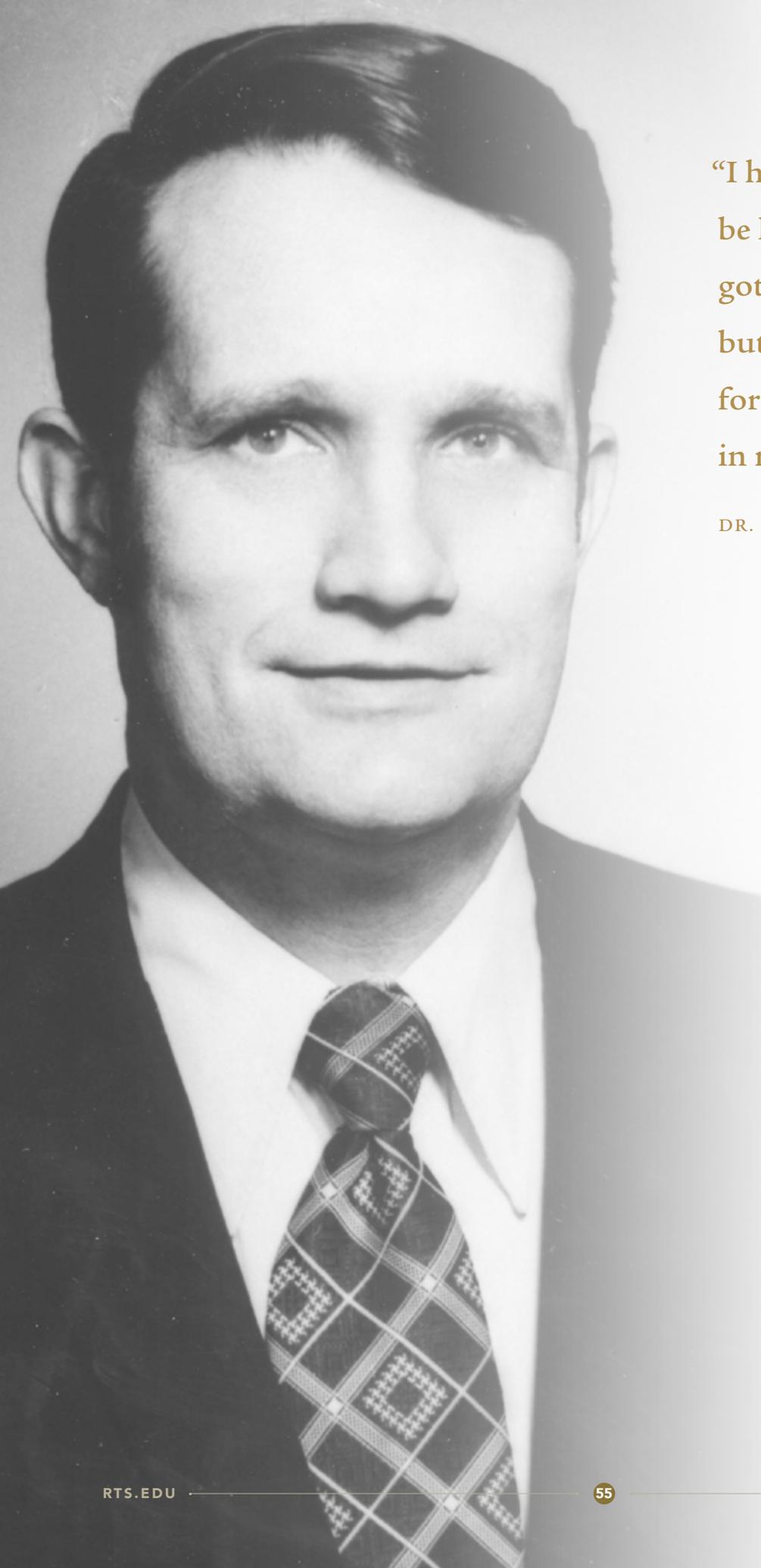
RTS Chancellor and CEO Ligon Duncan shared his memories of Dr. Reed. "Gordon Reed was my boyhood pastor, and no boy could have wished for or had a better pastor. He will always be 'Mr. Reed' to me. I came to faith under his preaching at Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville. I served as his junior colleague at Reformed Theological Seminary and as his assistant at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Jackson.

"He was truly a founding father of the PCA," Dr. Duncan continued. "But at heart, he was a local church pastor. A funny, smart, humble, devoted, godly minister who hated the spotlight, loathed church politics, loved pastoral visitation, invested in his people, prayed fervently, preached faithfully, and loved tangibly. I have always aspired to be like him and never have gotten even halfway there, but I am eternally

grateful for his example and role in my life."

Paul Hahn, an alumnus of RTS Jackson, shared his memories of studying under Dr. Reed. "Among so many godly and gifted faculty serving at RTS Jackson when I was a student — Richard Pratt, Knox Chamblin, Douglas Kelly, Steve Brown, RC Sproul, Bebo Elkin — Gordon Reed was perhaps the most significant in my formation as a Christian and candidate for gospel ministry.

"He befriended me on my first day on campus. His wisdom shared in numerous class settings proves invaluable to me, even 35 years later. In my first big crisis as a pastor, Gordon Reed's teaching served as a kind of North Star to guide me through a very dark night. What I love most about Gordon was his willingness to embrace whatever call God placed in front of him with energy and infectious joy in the Lord and with a gospel hope that Jesus intended to do beautiful, gracious work in that place, whether the church was large or small, urban, suburban, or rural."

A black and white portrait of a man with short, dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression.

“I have always aspired to be like him and never have gotten even halfway there, but I am eternally grateful for his example and role in my life.”

DR. LIGON DUNCAN

After leaving RTS, he returned to pastoring two small congregations in South Carolina. Dr. Reed was gifted in helping and counseling pastors and churches struggling to grow and loved pastoring and preaching the gospel. Upon retiring in 2004, he continued to preach in interim or supply positions for several churches.

Dr. Reed authored multiple books, including *Lord, Teach Us to Pray* (1970), *Living Life by God's Law: A Study in the Ten Commandments* (1983), and *The Ministry: Career or Calling?* (2004).

Dr. Reed was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Miriam Reed, a daughter-in-law, and a granddaughter. He is survived by five children, 13 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

*Some of the information in this article was first reported by byFaith.*



## RTS ATLANTA HOSTS COURSES IN AUBURN, CHATTANOOGA

In 2021, RTS Atlanta offered courses in Auburn, Alabama, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. Both locations are within two hours of the Atlanta campus in Marietta, Georgia.

As RTS has grown, each campus has had the opportunity to offer courses that work for its campus culture – weeklong or weekend intensives, evening classes, or courses at extension locations such as Auburn and Chattanooga.

President of RTS Atlanta Guy Richard shared, “The Atlanta campus has historically drawn a lot of students from the Chattanooga area and has generally enjoyed strong partnerships with churches there. We are hopeful that in bringing the same high-quality, in-person theological education closer, we will be able to attract even more students and further strengthen these church partnerships. The response thus far has been very encouraging!”

In July, Dr. Richard taught “Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies” in Auburn.

The course was taught as a weeklong intensive. In Chattanooga, RTS Atlanta will offer one course in fall 2021, with additional courses planned in 2022. These courses will focus on systematic theology, taught by Drs. Guy Richard, Brian Cosby, and Hans Madueme. First Presbyterian Church in Fort Oglethorpe will host the classes.

As with all graduate classes, coursework may be applied to MDiv and MA degrees (except the MAC degree) at any RTS campus.



*To learn more, contact the admissions team at RTS Atlanta via email or phone:*

**[admissions.atlanta@rts.edu](mailto:admissions.atlanta@rts.edu)**  
**(770) 952-8884**

## TRAVEL AND SPEAKING



### DR. LIGON DUNCAN

**OCT 15-17:** Preaching at Perimeter Church Conference, Johns Creek, GA.

**OCT 24:** Preaching at First Presbyterian Church 175th Anniversary, San Antonio, TX.

**OCT 29-31:** Speaking at Reformation Conference, Audubon Drive Bible Church, Laurel, MS.

**FEB 20-21, 2022:** Preaching at Feed My Sheep Conference, Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Sandy Springs, GA.

**APRIL 19-21, 2022:** Speaking at T4G 2022, Louisville, KY.



### DR. MICHAEL ALLEN

**OCT 22:** Speaking at Covenant College chapel, Lookout Mountain, GA.

**NOV 16-18:** Presenting a paper at the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) Annual Meeting, Fort Worth, TX.



### DR. ROD CULBERTSON

**OCT 18-20:** Speaking at Evangelism Conference, Hazelwood PCA, Waynesville, NC.



### DR. KEVIN DEYOUNG

**OCT 22-23:** Speaking at Reformation Heritage Conference, Chattanooga, TN.

**DEC 29-31:** Speaking at CROSS Conference, Louisville, KY.

**JAN 11-16, 2022:** Speaking at Crieff Fellowship, Crieff, Scotland.

**APRIL 19-21, 2022:** Speaking at T4G Conference, Louisville, KY.



### DR. J.V. FESKO

**JAN 11-13, 2022:** Teaching at Institute for Reformed Baptist Studies Theological Seminary, Mansfield, TX.

## TRAVEL AND SPEAKING

**DR. JAMES HURLEY**

**OCT 14:** Speaking at Conference on Christian Counseling, RTS Jackson, Jackson, MS.

**DR. MICHAEL KRUGER**

**OCT 4-6:** Speaking at Association of Certified Biblical Counselors National Conference, Charlotte, NC.

**FEB 26-28, 2022:** Delivering the plenary address at Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church Annual Conference, Simpsonville, SC.

**MARCH 24-26, 2022:** Speaking at Ligonier National Conference, Orlando, FL.

**DR. GREG LANIER**

**NOV 16-18:** Presenting a paper with Dr. William Ross at the ETS Annual Meeting, Fort Worth, TX.

**DR. JAMES NEWHEISER**

**OCT 4-6:** Speaking at Association of Certified Biblical Counselors National Conference, Charlotte, NC.

**FEB 6-12, 2022:** Teaching at Baltic Theological Seminary, Riga, Latvia.

**MARCH 4-6, 2022:** Speaking at Counseling Conference, Grace Community Church, Huntsville, AL.

**DR. SCOTT REDD**

**SEPT 17-18:** Speaking at Presbytery of the Midwest, West Lafayette, IN.

**OCT 1-2:** Speaking at Memphis City Seminary, Memphis, TN.

**OCT 14:** Giving the president's report at the RTS Washington Vision Dinner, Arlington, VA.

**DR. GUY RICHARD**

**OCT 22-24:** Teaching at Reformation Conference, Wayside Presbyterian Church, Signal Mountain, TN.

**FALL 2021:** Teaching Women's Bible Study at RTS Atlanta, Marietta, GA.

**FALL 2021:** Teaching at Carriage Lane Presbyterian Church, Peachtree City, GA.

## TRAVEL AND SPEAKING



**DR. BILL RICHARDSON**

**OCT 14:** Speaking at Conference on Christian Counseling, RTS Jackson, Jackson, MS.



**DR. WILLIAM ROSS**

**NOV 15-18:** Presenting a paper with Dr. Greg Lanier at the ETS Annual Meeting, Fort Worth, TX.

**NOV 20-23:** Attending the Institute for Biblical Research Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX.

**NOV 20-23:** Attending the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX.



**DR. BLAIR SMITH**

**OCT 8-9:** Speaking at Greenville Conference on Reformed Theology, Greenville, SC.

**NOV 16-18:** Chairing a Consultation at the ETS Annual Meeting, Fort Worth, TX.



**DR. SCOTT SWAIN**

**FALL 2021:** Teaching “Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology” at RTS Washington, Washington, D.C.

**JAN 28-30, 2022:** Teaching and preaching at Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, PA.

**MARCH 11-12, 2022:** Speaking at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL.



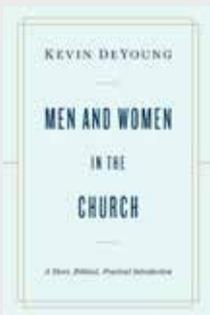
**DR. GUY WATERS**

**OCT 9-10:** Delivering the Cornerstone Lectures, Cornerstone Christian Church, Medford, OR.



For up-to-date information on travel and speaking engagements, please contact the event organizers.

BOOKS



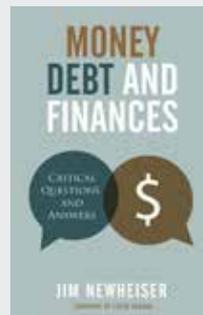
**DR. KEVIN DEYOUNG**

*Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction*  
(Crossway, 2021)



**DR. JAMES NEWHEISER**

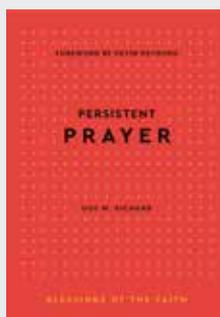
*How to Love Difficult Parents: Wisdom for a Challenging Relationship*  
(New Growth Press, 2021)



*Money, Debt, and Finances*  
(P&R, 2021)

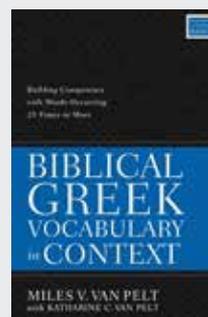
**DR. CHARLES HILL**

*The First Chapters: Dividing the Text of Scripture in Codex Vaticanus and Its Predecessors*  
(Oxford University Press, 2021)



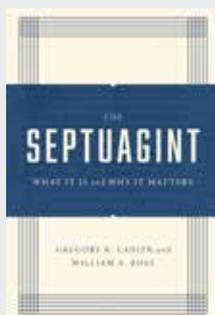
**DR. GUY RICHARD**

*Persistent Prayer* (P&R Publishing, 2021)



**DR. MILES VAN PELT**

*Biblical Greek Vocabulary in Context*  
with Katharine C. Van Pelt  
(Zondervan, 2021)



**DRS. GREG LANIER AND WILLIAM ROSS**

*The Septuagint: What It Is and Why It Matters*  
(Crossway, 2021)

**DR. GUY WATERS**

*Well-Ordered, Living Well: A Field Guide To Presbyterian Church Government*  
(Reformation Heritage, 2022)

*Word and Spirit: The Selected Shorter Writings of Dr. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.*  
with Dr. David B. Garner  
(Westminster Press, 2022)

## PUBLICATIONS

### DR. GUY RICHARD

“Baptism Now Saves You” for *Tabletalk* (2021)

### DR. GRAY SUTANTO

“On Maximal Simplicity” for *Philosophia Christi* (2021)

## EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



### JACKSON

**OCT 14-15:** Conference on Christian Counseling with Drs. Heather Daveidiuk Gingrich, James Hurley, and Bill Richardson

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



### WASHINGTON

**NOV 5-6:** Biblical Theology Workshop for Women with Nancy Guthrie

*For more information, call (703) 366-5066*



### ATLANTA

**DR. GUY M. RICHARD HAS A NEW WEBSITE:  
GUYMRICHARD.COM**



**BENEDICTION**  
FALL 2021

PEACE BE TO THE BROTHERS,  
AND LOVE WITH FAITH, FROM  
GOD THE FATHER AND THE  
LORD JESUS CHRIST.

GRACE BE WITH ALL WHO LOVE  
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WITH  
LOVE INCORRUPTIBLE.



**EPHESIANS**  
6:23-24

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Thanks to the support of our donors, RTS has continued to grow. During the 2020–21 academic year, RTS students took more classes than ever before, and RTS' supporters increased their donations by more than 25% compared to the prior year.

Will you help support the future of the church? Consider joining many others who have included RTS in their planned giving by becoming a member of the Heritage Society.

Donations given through the Heritage Society help grow the RTS endowment and fund current operations including student scholarships, faculty, and facilities.



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HERITAGE SOCIETY,**  
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McCullouch at (601) 923-1653*

