

MINISTRY & LEADERSHIP

REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SPRING / SUMMER 2008

Bridging the Gulf

Two RTS alumni lead an effort to rebuild the Mississippi coast physically, emotionally and spiritually.

THIS FAMILY ASSISTED BY

Lagniappe
Presbyterian Church

Soli Deo Gloria
"TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY"

228-HOPE-887

Chancellor's Message



Robert C. Cannada, Jr.

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A name is an essential part of the identity of someone or something. The best names capture the core of that identity in a succinct, memorable manner. Even our Heavenly Father identified Himself by name. In Exodus, when God made His presence known to Moses at the burning bush, He told him to tell the Israelites that “I AM” had spoken to him.

In this spirit, we at RTS have looked for a name that succinctly and memorably identifies this magazine to the reading public. The name *Reformed Quarterly* has served us — and you, we trust — reasonably well. After all, we are *Reformed* Theological Seminary, and this magazine has traditionally been published on a quarterly basis.

For some time, though, those who help produce this magazine have sought to develop a new name for it — one that would better reflect the very goals and purposes for which RTS exists. By God’s grace, this seminary works to equip leaders in the church universal for ministry, whether pastoral or otherwise. Ultimately, then, we are preparing the saints for ministry and leadership.

That’s why, beginning with this issue, the magazine you are reading has been renamed *Ministry & Leadership*. This new name is intended to communicate these two core purposes of RTS so as to, while you read, better remind you why we exist and what we are working to accomplish in helping build God’s kingdom.

The articles in this inaugural issue of

M&L are intended to reflect this sharpened focus. Consider Ron Bossom (see page 14), pastor of The Harvester Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Va. In Ron’s more than 30 years of pastoral ministry, he and members of his congregation have helped plant 54 churches in the Washington, D.C., area.

To do this, Ron has personally mentored many of those whom God has called to lead those churches, whether as pastors or elders or in other roles. He has exemplified ministry and leadership in the way he has, in effect, reproduced himself in the lives of many more local church leaders.

Jean Larroux and Curt Moore (see page 8) have also modeled effective ministry and leadership on a broad scale in the way they have facilitated the work of volunteers and RTS student interns at Lagniappe Presbyterian Church on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Jean and Curt are helping lead a church-planting effort that is helping an entire community continue to rebuild physically, emotionally and spiritually more than two years after Hurricane Katrina.

Ministers and leaders like Ron, Jean and Curt are some of God’s instruments to lead His church into bringing the gospel to an ever-changing world. Change is hard — whether it be in Egypt or on the Gulf Coast or in something as inconsequential in comparison as a new name for a magazine. May we as ministers of the gospel demonstrate godly leadership by faithfully proclaiming that most ageless of names — that of Jesus Christ crucified and risen. ♦

Lyn Perez, Editor in Chief

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Ministry & Leadership promotes RTS through articles designed to edify its readers through solid biblical instruction, and through reports that focus primarily on the national and global impact of RTS students, faculty and alumni. Our goal is that readers will become partners with RTS through prayer, financial giving, educational experience and student referral, as well as providing placement opportunities.

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PUBLICATIONS

- **Dr. Donald Fortson** will publish *The Presbyterian Creed: A Confessional Tradition in America, 1729-1870* (Paternoster Press, summer).
- **Dr. John Frame** has released *The Collected Works of John Frame, Vol. 7* in a downloadable CD format (P&R, Bits & Bytes). He also wrote *Doctrine of the Christian Life* (P&R, June).
- **Howard Griffith** has two reviews in an upcoming *Westminster Theological Journal*: one of "Divinity and Humanity: Incarnation Reconsidered," by Oliver Crisp, and the other of "For Us and for Our Salvation" by Stephen Nichols.
- **Andrew Haffecker** edited *Revolutions in Worldview: Understanding the Flow of Western Thought* (P&R, August). Contributors to the volume include John Currid, John Frame, Rick Gamble, Michael Payne, Peter Leithart, Vern Poythress, Rick Lints and Scott Amos.
- **Dr. Douglas Kelly** has completed the French translation of *Creation and Change*, to be published in France later this year.
- **Dr. Simon Kistemaker** wrote the article "Pro Ecclesia: For the Church" for *Tabletalk* (Ligonier Ministries, April). He wrote the chapter "Symbolism in the Book of Revelation" for the festschrift honoring Stephen Tong (*God's Fiery Challenger for Our Time*, November 2007) and the chapter "Psalm 110 in the Epistle to the Hebrews" for *The Hope Fulfilled*, in honor of O. Palmer Robertson (P&R, June).
- **Elias Medeiros** published *Evangelizacão E Ministerio Pastoral (Evangelism and Pastoral Ministry)* in December 2007.
- **Dr. Mike Milton**, RTS-Charlotte president, wrote an article, "Preaching in Pluralistic Culture," featured in *Preaching Journal* (March/April). He also wrote *What Is the Perseverance of the Saints?* (P&R Publishing), and *Hit by Friendly Fire: What to Do When You are Hurt by Another Believer* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, summer).
- **John R. Muether** wrote *Cornelius Van Til: Reformed Apologist and Churchman* (P&R, March), as well as the article "Seal Harbor's Patron Saint: John D. Rockefeller Jr. and the Mount Desert Larger Parish" for *Maine History* (January).
- **Polly Stone**, director of institutional assessment, wrote "Is Assessment the Slough of Despond?" for *Colloquy* (Fall 2007).

- **Dr. Derek Thomas** contributed the articles "Vision of God," "Sovereignty of God," "Temptation" and "J.I. Packer" for the second printing of *New Dictionary of Theology* (InterVarsity Press, summer). He will also publish *What Is Providence* (P&R, summer).

TRAVELS

- **Dr. Steve Brown** spoke at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention, March 8, Nashville, Tenn.; at Mission to the World's Ambassador's Weekend, March 14-15, Palm Coast, Fla.; and to the Gospel Music Association, Nashville, April 19.
- **Ric Cannada Jr.** preached at Sooyoungro Church (40,000 members) and Hosanna Church (15,000 members), in Busan, South Korea, March 9, on "Secure in the Father's Love: Assurance of Salvation" from Romans 8.
- **Dr. Steve Childers** will speak on "How to Start & Strengthen Regional Church Planting Networks" at the interdenominational National New Church Conference in Orlando in April. In May he will be the keynote speaker at the West Africa Partnership Summit in Delaware. In June, he will be the plenary speaker at the West Africa Church Planting Institute Conference, Accra, Ghana. Dr. Brian Fikkert from the Chalmers Center for Economic Development, Chattanooga, Tenn., will join Dr. Childers to train African leaders in micro-enterprise development.
- **Dr. James Coffield** provided counseling and teaching in Rwanda in December 2007 along with RTS students. In January he traveled to Turkey to speak at a conference where RTS students participated and offered member care. In April he co-presented a paper at the international Christian Association for Psychological Studies meeting, Phoenix, Ariz.
- **Dr. Allen Curry, Dr. Eunsoo Kim, Dr. Sam Larsen and Dr. Derek Thomas** taught courses during January in Los Angeles and Taiwan. Dr. Curry, Dr. Larsen and Dr. Kim also conducted dissertation defense hearings in Asia during January and March for more than 20 Korean students completing their D.Min. degrees.
- **Dr. Mark Futato** taught "Genesis to Joshua" in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in January (74 registered students, 47 pursuing RTS credit).
- **Mike Glodo** taught a biblical studies course for a church training program in Central Asia in January.
- **Howard Griffith** preached at a conference at Reformed Presbyterian Church, Bowie,

Md., April 18-20, titled "The Riches of Union With Christ." He is teaching "Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies" at West End Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Va.

- **Dr. Charles E. Hill** will deliver a paper at a session of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas annual meeting, Lund, Sweden, July 29-Aug. 2, titled "The Gnostics' Gospel? John in the Maelstrom of Second-Century Christianity." He will deliver one of the plenary papers, titled "The Canon of the New Testament," at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Providence, R.I., Nov. 18-21. He will deliver a paper at the New Testament Canon, Textual Criticism and Apocryphal Literature study consultation at the ETS meeting, titled "From Codex to Loose-Leaf Binder: Some Recent Trends in Canon Criticism."
- **Dr. Douglas Kelly** gave lectures on "Calvin as Pastor" to Colloque Biblique (evangelical French-speaking ministers) in Aix-les-bains, France, in March. He will speak at a prayer conference at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Montgomery, Ala., May 4. He will serve as chaplain at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games, July 10-13, and preach to ministers and elders of the New Wineskins Presbytery at First Presbyterian Church, Baton Rouge, La., Nov. 10.
- **Dr. Simon Kistemaker** will lecture on "The Parables of Jesus" at San Pablo Seminary, Merida, Mexico, June 6-12.
- **Elias Medeiros** presented a paper, "The Centrality of God's Infallible Word in the Context of the Diasporas," in Frankfurt, Germany, and another in Lisbon, Portugal, for the Evangelical Brazilian Diaspora titled "The Great Diaspora: An Exegetical Study on Matthew 28:11-20."
- **Dr. Mike Milton** will teach a course on pastoral theology in August in Monterrey, Mexico. He will be on chaplain duty in August at the Chief of Chaplains Office at the Pentagon, and in September, he will preach at the Bible Conference at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Johnson City, Tenn.
- **Derek Thomas** spoke at the Philadelphia Conference of Reformed Theology, Sacramento, Calif. (March) and Grand Rapids, Mich. (April), on "The Blood of the Atonement"; and on "Planting 'Means of Grace' Churches" in April at the MTW Conference, Malaga, Spain.
- **Guy Waters** delivered the spring faculty-sponsored convocation lecture at Westminster Seminary, California, on March 13, titled "Back to the Future: Reflections on an 'Emerging' Reading of Jesus and the Kingdom."

RTS TOURS

- The RTS history tour to Ireland, "Celtic Christianity and the Beauty of Ireland," will be Sept. 4-13 (registration deadline June 1). Dr. Donald Fortson will be the guide.
- The RTS history tour to Greece, "Paul's Travels - Ancient Pathways" will run from Oct. 10-20 (registration deadline June 1). Dr. John Currid and Dr. Dennis Ireland will be the guides.

APPOINTMENTS/ AWARDS



• Tom Campbell was appointed vice president of development, RTS-Atlanta.

- Dr. Ric Cannada was selected for the World Reformed Fellowship executive committee and participated in the WRF meeting in Seoul, South Korea, in March.
- Dr. Chuck DeGroot earned his Ph.D. in educational psychology from Capella University, Minneapolis. His thesis is titled "Expectation Versus Reality Among Male Graduates of Seminary Who Entered the Ministry: A Phenomenological Study."
- Dr. Douglas Kelly received the Scottish Heritage Center Service Award at a banquet at St. Andrews Presbyterian College in March.
- Dr. Elias Medeiros has become part of the LCWE Executive Counsel for Diasporas.
- Dr. Mike Milton will be installed as RTS/Charlotte president on Sept. 21 at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church, Matthews, N.C.
- Andy Peterson has been selected for the curriculum review committee of Joni and Friends.



• Brad Tisdale was appointed chief financial officer.

Continued on Page 13

KEEPING SABBATH WITH SON OF MAN

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus clarifies an issue that often troubles believers.

REFORMED CHURCHES VIEW Sunday as “the Lord’s Day,” the continuation and realization of everything the Old Testament Sabbath was designed to be. The Lord’s Day is celebrated weekly as a special gift from God and as a sign of our full, final salvation in Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath.

Yet for all the beauty and blessing of this day, it is sometimes an occasion of confusion for many sincere believers. Because we recognize the Lord’s Day to be God-given, not merely a human custom or invention, we are rightly concerned to keep it in a manner pleasing to the God who gave it.

The problem is that Scripture seems to teach many different things about this subject. The Jews observed the last day of the week as their holy day, but the early church gathered to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). The Jews also celebrated numerous sabbatical festivals, but because these festivals have been fulfilled in Jesus (Colossians 2:16,17), the church celebrates them by celebrating Him (1 Corinthians 5:8). Add Jesus’ numerous confrontations with Jewish authorities on the Sabbath, and our confusion is compounded. Do the Gospels mean to portray Jesus as the ultimate ecclesiastical rebel, undermining Sabbath “law” for the sake of “love”?

Certainly not. But given the apparent diversity of biblical teaching on this topic, it is understandable that we sometimes find ourselves confused about the meaning and purpose of the Christian Sabbath, or find it difficult to “call the Sabbath a delight” (Isaiah 58:13). For many, it remains more a puzzle than a pleasure.

In Mark 2:23-28, our Lord sets us on the right path for keeping the Christian Sabbath. Although this passage does not address all the questions we may have about the Lord’s Day, it does teach us a fundamental principle: As important as it is to understand how and when to keep the Sabbath, it is ultimately who we keep the Sabbath with that makes all the difference.

The Text: Mark 2:23-28

One Sabbath He was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, His disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to Him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” And He said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

The Scene: Verse 23

The Sabbath is a recurring point of conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees throughout the Gospels. Mark 2:23-28 recounts one instance of this conflict. According to verse 23, what sparks this particular clash is the disciples’ plucking heads of grain to satisfy their hunger as they travel with Jesus.

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by Dr. Scott R. Swain



CHRIST: THE KEY TO THE OLD TESTAMENT



The Old Testament (hereafter OT) is a mystery for most Christians. Although it clearly presents the history of Israel from Creation to the post-exilic period (i.e., the Persian Empire), the redemptive history of the OT alone gives the impression that the story is incomplete and truncated.

There are two obvious reasons for such an interpretation. First and foremost, the promises of the OT covenants were not completely fulfilled during the period of OT history. Secondly, the divine covenants appeared to be in jeopardy by reason of the failures of those whom God unilaterally chose to be His covenant people. These observations, therefore, beg the question: “How should we understand the OT in light of these apparent shortcomings?” Christ is the answer to this significant question because He alone is the key that unlocks the message of the OT and, in fact, completes and fulfills the OT story. The truth of this statement has profound and abiding implications for believers today.

From the very outset of the OT, we see the covenant failings of man, namely the first Adam (cf. Genesis 2-3). From the initial divine promise of the “First Gospel” in Genesis 3:15, to its reiteration in the Abrahamic covenant as found in Genesis 22:17,18, the fulfillment of the promised “seed” is conspicu-

ously absent within the pages of the OT. In addition, Israel’s disobedience to the laws given by God under the Mosaic covenant at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1-17–23:33) and at the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy 5:1–30:20) also establish the fact that the nation never lived up to God’s covenant demands.

There is an important parallel here between Adam and the Israelite nation. For just as Adam had failed to obey God’s command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so too Israel had failed to live according to the prescribed ordinances delineated under the Mosaic covenant. It is apparent that both Adam and Israel were under a “covenant of works” as formulated in the expression: “Obey and you will live; disobey, and you will surely die.”

We see, therefore, that there was a one-to-one correspondence between Eden and Canaan in their being conditional administrations that required unmitigated obedience on the part of the lesser party within the covenantal relationship. God, as the greater party, had demanded perfect obedience from Adam and from Israel. Adam and Israel, however, were ultimately disobedient to the covenant and were similarly exiled and cast out of the land.

In the case of the latter, after much warning from the Prophets, Israel’s disobedience led to two devastating exiles: the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. by the Assyrian Empire (cf. 2 Kings 17), and the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians (cf. 2 Kings 24-25).

Furthermore, in 2 Samuel 7, God had promised King David that he would never fail to have a son upon the throne because his kingdom would have no end (cf. 2 Samuel 7:12-16; 1 Chron-

icles 17:12-14). The pressing issue at the end of the exile and during Judah's restoration period, therefore, involved the continuity and legitimacy of the Davidic throne. Because there was no king reigning in Israel at that time, the question at the forefront of the post-exilic community was: Had God utterly forsaken the Israelites as a result of their covenant disobedience, or was He still their covenant God, and Israel His covenant people?

The OT hints through prophetic texts that the latter was indeed the case. Not only had God provided a remnant to survive the 70 years of exile as prophesied by Jeremiah (2 Chronicles 36:21), but God had also provided the means to return and rebuild through the edict of Medo-Persian kings (especially Cyrus) who helped rebuild not only the walls surrounding the city of Jerusalem, but even the Temple. The prophecies of the

by virtue of His being completely righteous before the Father (i.e., Christ's active obedience).

Thus, we see that Christ, like Adam and Israel, was also under a "covenant of works" in order that He might merit for His people the perfect righteousness demanded by God Himself. This merited righteousness by Christ has now been imputed to us based on our union with Him as given within the context of the new covenant, and it is, in the words of the Westminster Confession, the culmination of the "Covenant of Grace."

Finally, in Acts 2:30-36, the apostle Peter stood up at Pentecost and declared that David had prophesied that God would place one of his descendants on his throne — one who would never see corruption. Peter announced, however, that David could not be speaking of himself since his tomb was still in Je-

CHRIST'S FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROVES THAT HE COMPLETES THE OLD TESTAMENT STORY.

OT repeatedly confirm that God had not forsaken His people even in the face of covenant rebellion and failure.

Amazingly, God not only offered hope, but also spoke of renewal and restoration. In Ezekiel 36-37, for instance, we hear the prophet speaking of the return from exile in terms of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic and new covenants.

But how can this be true if the OT does not record their fulfillment? It is true because the OT was not the last divine word. The Word that had become flesh and "tabernacled" among us (John 1:14) is that final Word (cf. Hebrews 1:1,2) spoken to us from the Father. The New Testament (hereafter NT), therefore, is the organically related continuation of the OT story. It properly records both the redemptive work of Christ (cf. the Gospels) and the inspired interpretation of His objective work (e.g., the Pauline Epistles). The NT explicitly claims that Jesus Christ, in His Person and work, is not only the fulfillment of the OT prophecies and types, but that He is also the reversal of its failures.

In the Gospels, Jesus is portrayed in terms of a second Adam who, unlike the first Adam, successfully overcame the temptations of Satan (Matthew 4:1 ff.; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:1 ff.). Paul sheds light upon this significant parallel in Romans 5:12-21, where the respective federal (or covenantal) headships of Adam and Christ are juxtaposed in order to present how believers have been delivered from "sin and death" and been given "life and justification" through their present union with Christ.

Also, in Galatians 4:4,5 Paul refers to Christ as being "born of a woman, born under law." These significant phrases are clear allusions to Christ as fulfilling Genesis 3:15 as the promised "seed of the woman" as well as being the True Israel (cf. Matthew 2:15) who was completely obedient to the Mosaic covenant. Christ, therefore, could "redeem those under law"

Jerusalem, further exclaiming that David's greater Son, Jesus, was resurrected and "exalted to the right hand of God" (2:33) and that God had made "this Jesus ... both Lord and Christ" (2:36).

Peter concluded that Jesus was not only the rightful heir to David's throne (i.e., "Christ" or "Messiah"), but also that Jesus Himself was equal to the God of the OT (cf. Exodus 3:14,15; Psalm 110:1; Philippians 2:11). Hence, Christ is the key that unlocks the meaning of the OT because He is its ultimate fulfillment, just as He asserted in Luke 24:44b: "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

But how does this truth affect believers today? Christ's fulfillment of the OT proves that He completes the OT story. The OT is not truncated after all, but only the beginning of a story that was yet to be divinely revealed in history. Because Christ has fulfilled the OT covenants and prophecies in the new covenant as recorded in the NT, this confirms that Jesus successfully completed the work of objective redemption that had been graciously planned by the Father (cf. John 17). If, then, we are assured of Christ's finished work, we can be equally assured that Christ's salvation has been subjectively applied to us by the Holy Spirit and that the gospel is, indeed, "Good News"!

This also has implications regarding inspiration. The fact that the Bible's 66 books were written by more than 40 writers over a 1,500-year period in three languages and yet contains the central and unified story of Christ's redemption from OT to NT proves that the Scriptures have only one Author. The Bible, therefore, is truly the inspired, inerrant and revealed Word of God. ♦

Dr. John J. Yeo was recently appointed as assistant professor of Old Testament at RTS-Atlanta. He and his wife, Junna, live in Roswell, Ga., with their two children, Grace and Andrew.



Bridging

Two RTS alumni lead an effort to rebuild the Mississippi coast — physically, emotionally and spiritually.

by PAUL SCHWARZ

lagniappe (lan' yap) n. [Creole: French *la*, “the” + Spanish *ñapa*, “lagniappe” — Quechuan *yapa*] 1 (Chiefly South) a small present given to a customer with a purchase 2 a gratuity or the like (adapted from *Webster’s New World College Dictionary*)



“We picked up one excellent word — a word worth travelling to New Orleans to get; a nice limber, expressive, handy word — ‘lagniappe.’” (Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, 1883)



In Gulf Coast culture, it almost literally means “a little extra.” In New Orleans and surrounding areas, it’s customary for merchants to throw in a small gift as part of a purchase. This “lagniappe” would be the equivalent of the 13th in a baker’s dozen, or a similar token of unmerited goodwill.

Bay St. Louis, Miss., is serving as the setting for a redefinition of “lagniappe” that carries eternal proportions. This community, along with its neighboring Mississippi coastal towns, found itself in a tragic spotlight on August 29, 2005, when the eyewall of Hurricane Katrina roared overhead and permanently changed the face of the Deep South. Thousands of buildings — and hundreds of lives — proved no match for Katrina’s vast, destructive Category 3 force.

One of those buildings and two

of those lives belonged to the uncle and aunt of Jean Larroux, then an associate pastor at Independent Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tenn. The Bay St. Louis native recruited some church members to join him in transporting a trailer full of gasoline, water, supplies and medicine down to his hometown, which “looked like something out of a movie,” recalls Jean.

The RTS-Jackson graduate began making weekly trips to the Gulf, eventually reaching a crisis of faith. A missions conference sermon challenged Jean to consider whether he saw “grapes or giants,” à la the Israelite spies in the promised land, when considering God’s calling for him.

That’s when Jean resigned his position and presented himself to the presbytery covering the Mississippi coast, describing his vision for planting a church amid the rubble left by Katrina. “I told them we don’t have a viability study or anything saying this would be a prime location,” Jean admits. “There’s no people, no money, no community infrastructure, no core group, no anything. But it’s just the kind of place where a God who started everything in Bethlehem might start a church.”

The presbytery agreed, and in January 2006, along with his wife and three children, the self-admitted Jimmy Buffett fan changed his latitude and his attitude, moving from Memphis into his mother’s FEMA trailer armed with a cell phone, a laptop and a broken spirit. Even though, by Jean’s admission, “the math doesn’t work,” God began to provide manpower and provision for a distinct work of “declaration and demonstration” of the gospel through Lagniappe, a name reflecting the church’s intent to give back

the math doesn’t work,” God began to provide manpower and provision for a distinct work of “declaration and demonstration” of the gospel through Lagniappe, a name reflecting the church’s intent to give back



Jean Larroux (above, left) and Curt Moore (above, right) graduated from the Jackson and Orlando campuses, respectively. Their responsibilities at Lagniappe include helping lead teams of volunteers who work to build houses and perform other acts of service and mercy.

the Gulf

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to others in the gracious spirit of the gospel.

One of the first tasks of “demonstration” came through helping residents rebuild their homes. “For the first four houses we ever built, we had enough money for three of them,” Jean says. “At our staff meeting in a coffee shop, we prayed, ‘God, we need You to fund these houses, because You own everything. We will keep our vision based on our calling, not on the budget.’”

“After we prayed, I walked out to return [an anonymous] phone call. A guy in Dallas answered and said he wanted to find out if we had any unmet needs. He told me his deacons had agreed the night before on a one-time gift of \$25,000, which was exactly what we needed to build the houses.

“I walked back in bawling my eyes out, and the guys are asking, ‘What’s wrong?’ All I could say was, ‘He already did it.’ “Did what?” I said, “God already provided the money.”

The fact that Jean even had a staff team with which to share the story is another example of God’s provision. Curt Moore had been a hospice chaplain in Gulfport, Miss., east of Bay St. Louis, when Katrina hit. The RTS-Orlando graduate was, not unlike Jean a few months before, looking to escape the Gulf.

“I thought, ‘My home was spared, but this place is destroyed. I want to go to a nice put-together place,’” Curt says. He had actually begun to pursue a call to a church position in North Carolina when a series of circumstances redirected his heart

to the Gulf. “It was death to what I wanted,” Curt confesses, “and the beauty that came out of that is that what I’m doing now is more than I could have ever imagined.”

Curt’s job description, in reflection of the condition of Bay St. Louis post-Katrina, remains fluid, as he is dually employed by Lagniappe and the PCA Mission to North America. One element in-





Those helping out at Lagniappe have included college students wielding painting implements as well as music legend Jimmy Buffett (top of previous page, in yellow cap), who shot a video in the area.

volves, ironically, the exercise of skills he honed for many years in the hospitality industry before his calling to seminary. “We say we started a church, a construction company, a hotel, a restaurant and a travel agency,” Curt says, laughing. “It’s amazing how none of those experiences were wasted.”

As associate pastor, Curt provides pastoral care for the 17-person staff team, coordinates the efforts of the more than 13,000 volunteers who have helped with Lagniappe work projects since the church’s launch, and preaches at services when Jean doesn’t. He also performs assessments to determine which applicants for assistance have the greatest needs.

Everything else on the job description is up for grabs — after all, this is a place where about 40 percent of the population still lives in FEMA trailers. Other than the preaching of the Word and the proclamation of the gospel, nothing much else about Lagniappe would be considered conventional.

One unconventional guiding principle of Lagniappe, reflecting the surrounding destruction, is that God moves His people toward brokenness. “If we are called to love one another as He has loved us, it’s that magnetic pull that draws the church to broken people,” Jean explains. “If the gospel’s true, then it’s OK that we’re not OK. Jesus has died to atone for what’s wrong with us, and He’s lived in order to earn the righteousness that we could never earn.”

A murder-suicide committed in Bay St. Louis several months ago by one of Jean’s boyhood soccer coaches (the man killed his wife, then himself) illustrates the depths of this broken-





Vivian Jensen (above, left) joined Lagniappe volunteers in rebuilding her daughter's home, which was destroyed by Katrina.



ness in the community in the wake of Katrina. "As I stood in line at the church as everyone went through for the visitation," Jean recalls, "the most frightening comment repeated over and over again was when people would hug each other and say, 'It's so sad, but we understand.'"

"That is very telling — when somebody murders their spouse and then commits suicide, and everybody at the funeral isn't scratching their head and saying, 'How does this happen?', instead saying, 'We understand,' it's the death of sanity."

The withering pace of the relief work and the church ministry has, by their own admission, taken its toll on Jean, Curt and their fellow staff members. Curt acknowledges that 80-hour weeks are not uncommon for them. With this in mind, in recent months Jean invited Barb Martin from the RTS-Jackson counseling department to visit Bay St. Louis to provide counseling service — mostly for himself.

"Don't candy-coat it any other way; we are a mess," admits Jean. "We realized that the helpers need help." Lagniappe team members describe themselves only half-jokingly as "Bay-polar," describing how laughter and tears flow simultaneously in dealing with their own emotions and those of the people to whom they minister.

Jean and the Lagniappe team have been working on formalizing a partnership between themselves and RTS-Jackson counseling students. An impetus came when the daughter of Guy Richardson, RTS-Jackson president, served as a Lagniappe volunteer and spoke excitedly to her father about her experience. A subsequent conversation between Guy and Curt moved the partnership plan forward.

A 1,000-square-foot building originally built as a bunkhouse for volunteers has been converted into a counseling center. The plan calls for teams of students to make the three-hour drive from Jackson to Bay St. Louis on selected weekends so as to supplement work begun in February by

Colin Foster, an RTS-Jackson counseling graduate.

"We're praying that God would open a clinic here," says Curt, noting the dearth of gospel-centered counseling services on the Mississippi coast. Curt and Jean both note that such a ministry would better serve the long-term counseling needs of local residents. "In order to be a viable reality in a therapeutic context in the community," Jean explains, "you really have to live here so you can create that relationship."

The relationships built among the Lagniappe staff members, the congregation and the community have slowly borne fruit. The first house built by Lagniappe, in 2006, resulted in the church's first baptism, and nearly 600 homes or storage units have either been built or renovated to date.

Only about 50 people currently attend Lagniappe regularly, but the church's impact on the Bay St. Louis area transcends numbers. "There's a cultural sense in which a lot of folks are looking for a works righteousness through performance, through church membership — it doesn't matter what affiliation," Curt observes. "The goal is to plant a Reformed church proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in a community where the gospel hadn't seemed to have taken root."

In Curt's estimation, Katrina tilled the soil for that gospel root to hold. "There seems to be this powerful transformation taking place in this small, rural community, as opposed to the pockets of power," he says. "What I have seen at Lagniappe is that God is mobilizing the church, and the transformation is coming to the Bay, where people are hearing the gospel and seeing it displayed in action."

"But the transformation is also occurring in a tremendous way where the church is coming to us and then going back out to all across the country with this same picture of gospel transformation — beauty out of brokenness."

In God's version of "lagniappe," He gives abundantly, not just a little extra. For Jean Larroux, Curt Moore and their collaborators, God's lagniappe is just beginning to rain down on a place desperately in need of that kind of storm.



More information about the church and its volunteering opportunities may be found at www.lpcpa.com.

The Accusation: Verse 24

The Pharisees, who had been watching Jesus with great suspicion, see the disciples plucking and eating grain and bring an accusatory question to Jesus: “Why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath — and with your permission no less?”

The Pharisees were not upset that the disciples were taking grain from someone else’s fields. Deuteronomy 23:25 authorized such activity so that a needy person would not go hungry. The Pharisees were upset that the disciples were plucking grain on the Sabbath. In their judgment, plucking grain amounted to “harvesting,” one of 39 activities prohibited on the Sabbath by Jewish tradition.

Viewed through Pharisaic tradition, the disciples were guilty of “working” on the Sabbath. And Jesus, because He was their master, was guilty of approving such lawlessness.

Jesus’ Response: Verses 25-28

In verses 25-28, Jesus offers three responses to the Pharisees’ accusation. He first appeals to an authoritative precedent for the disciples’ action from the life of David, then to an authoritative principle from the doctrine of Creation, and finally to His own authoritative presence as “the Son of Man.”

An authoritative precedent: Jesus draws the Pharisees’ attention to an event recorded in 1 Samuel 21:1-6, where David and his hungry men are given bread reserved by law for the priests alone. According to Jewish tradition, this event occurred on the Sabbath. Jesus appeals to David’s example to show that David, a man after God’s own heart, understands something about the Sabbath and its regulations that the Pharisees do not.

An authoritative principle: In verse 27 Jesus identifies that something: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” Jesus’ point is that God created the Sabbath day to benefit man. God did not create man so there would be someone to keep Sabbath laws!

Therefore, the prohibition against “work” on the Sabbath was never intended to rule out actions necessary to preserve life — even if it meant eating food ordinarily reserved for priests! The Sabbath was designed for the relief and refreshment of man, not as an occasion on which man might starve (cf. Mark 3:4,5).

Contrast this understanding with that of the Pharisees, whose extensive catalog of Sabbath prohibitions failed to honor this principle, instead placing an undue burden upon the backs of God’s children. The effect was to turn the

Sabbath into the exact opposite of its intent (cf. Deuteronomy 5:13-15).

An authoritative presence: Jesus finally refutes His accusers by appealing to the authority of His personal presence. According to Jesus, He is “the Son of Man,” and as the Son of Man, He “is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

By identifying himself as the Son of Man, Jesus invokes the authority of one to whom God had promised to give “an everlasting dominion” (Daniel 7:13,14). Throughout Mark’s Gospel, Jesus repeatedly uses this title to signify the full extent of His Messianic authority.

Moreover, as Mark makes clear, Jesus exercises the authority of the Son of Man in a specific — and surprising — way. Jesus has come with the authority to liberate His people from the burden of sin and misery. In Mark 2:10, Jesus declares that “the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” Similarly, in Mark 10:45, Jesus declares that “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (cf. Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33). Jesus has come to take the chief obstacle to everlasting rest — namely sin — out of the way.

By virtue of His authority and action as the Son of Man, Jesus thus identifies Himself as the One in whom the Sabbath is finally coming into its own. By responding to the Pharisees as He does, Jesus reveals that the Sabbath is not a day where we “serve” God by submitting to an endless list of impracticable and, in the end, lawless rules. The Son of Man did not come to be served in that way.

Indeed, through His “service” to us on the cross, Jesus reveals the Sabbath to be a day to celebrate our blood-bought freedom — from sin and misery and for the everlasting rest to which the Sabbath has pointed since the foundation of the world (Hebrews 4:3,9).

Conclusion

The question of when and how we should keep the Sabbath is thus determined by whom we keep it with. We gather on the first day of the week because it is “the Lord’s Day,” the day of the resurrection of the Lord of the Sabbath. We gladly lay aside the work of the other six days because we long for the renewal that flows from the One who so freely served us on the cross, and now sits at His Father’s right hand with all authority to bestow the Spirit of rest upon His people.

Serving this Lord in this way is no burden at all. Keeping Sabbath with the Son of Man is truly a delight. ♦

Scott R. Swain, Ph.D., is assistant professor of systematic theology at RTS-Orlando. He and his wife, Leigh, have four children.

Continued from Page 3



• Steve Wallace was appointed chief operations officer.

CAMPUS EVENTS

- RTS-Orlando hosted a lecture and reception for Oxford University faculty members Dr. Richard Turnbull and Dr. Simon Vibert on Jan. 15. The Kistemaker Lecture Series in February featured Dr. Miroslav Volf of Yale University speaking on “Islam and Christianity.”
- The RTS-Jackson Spiritual Life Conference in February featured Robert Reymond.
- Oxford Rhodes Scholar Dr. Daniel Dreisbach spoke on “The Wall of Separation Between Church and State” at RTS-Washington, D.C.
- The RTS-Charlotte Spring Lecture Series in February featured Sinclair Ferguson. Also, the first women’s conference on campus, “Through the Knowledge of Him,” was held April 25-26. Speaker and Bible teacher Elsie Newell brought the keynote address, and Marni Halvorson and five other RTS-Charlotte students conducted breakout sessions on apologetics, discipleship and teaching.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- RTS-Charlotte has formed a partnership with Mission to the World in Monterrey, Mexico. The Rev. Andres Garza, an RTS-Charlotte graduate, will represent MTW.

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Harvester of Plants

Through one local congregation,
Ron Bossom has helped launch more than 50 churches.

by PAUL SCHWARZ



Watching hecklers and drunks disrupt a planning meeting would quite understandably bring an aspiring church planter to the end of himself. That's where Ron Bossom was some 30 years ago. By God's grace, the RTS graduate overcame obstacles like this and has persevered in ministry to see the birth of 54 churches in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area.

Ron and his wife, Susie, who attended RTS with him, left the seminary upon graduation in the spring of 1975 armed with Ron's two-year plan to plant a church in Springfield, Va., just inside the D.C. Beltway. Their work was sponsored by the then-new denomination that eventually became known as the Presbyterian Church in America.

God led them through many detours, though. "I got up here and put the plan into practice, and absolutely nothing worked," Ron admits. Eventually Ron identified enough sympathetic individuals to organize an opening meeting for what was intended to be a PCA church. "It was an absolute disaster," Ron recalls. A heckler who had shown up at the meeting, held at a local social hall, conspired to sour many of the attendees on the group's plans. Then toward the meeting's end, a drunk person walked in, looked around and said, "What are you people doing here?" and then passed out on the floor.

With everything in the two-year plan collapsing in Ron's face, Susie suggested a new plan based on information she'd learned in one of her RTS classes. Willing to try anything, Ron and Susie created and distributed invitations to their home for a Bible study for singles. To Ron's amazement, 17

people showed up at the appointed time to eat spaghetti and participate in the Bible study.

Thus, The Harvester church was born out of a singles Bible study. Ron's journey into a lifetime of church planting began through one of the first couples to attend The Harvester driving 45 minutes from an outlying town to get to the church each Sunday. After Ron accepted their invitation to help them start a church closer to their home, within one month Ron saw a bigger nucleus of people meeting there than were meeting at The Harvester after more than two years.

"As I began to put into effect the original plans I had come up with," he says, "every single thing worked with incredible speed [in the new church]." Ron attributes this not only to the sovereignty of God but also to his practice of principles he learned from the Lord about working with people and developing leaders. "What is an elder?" Ron asks rhetorically. "What is a deacon? How do you disciple a person into becoming an elder, or a deacon or a teacher? The words I knew; the reality behind them I didn't know."

As Ron began to answer his own questions in the context of practicing pastoral ministry, he developed a plan for discipling men in the church. "The first component is to meet with a guy and study the Scriptures with them," Ron explains. "I've found that if I study the Scriptures with somebody, I learn about him as we go through the passages. Eventually I have a guy who's trusting me, and I understand him."

Another part of the discipleship process involves giving tests that Ron has developed. "I begin to put them in positions

of responsibility and help them learn how to work with other people,” he says, “because most guys have difficulty in doing that.” Other details of the discipleship plan depend on the specifics of the man’s calling, keying largely on what works for that person. “I’m eclectic,” he explains, “because I’m not creative — I’m more of a visionary.”

The discipleship process that has fed Ron’s church-planting vision was born of necessity. In the early years of his ministry in the D.C. area, Ron admits to being angry with God, because “every time it seemed like I had somebody that might become a leader — here in the D.C. area, there’s about a 33 percent turnover on a yearly basis, so they’re only here for a very brief span and then they’re gone. I kept thinking, *Everything I learned in school, I can’t do! It takes years to get this stuff across. I can’t understand why You’re doing this to me, God.*”

Once again, wise wife to the rescue. “My wife asked me, ‘Ron, if God had given you your desire, what would it have really been?’” he remembers. “When I said, ‘A professor or teacher,’ she said, ‘Then how long would you have had a student?’ I answered, ‘Some of them about a year, some of them two years, and most of them no more than three years.’ She said, ‘Guess what? That’s what God’s given you, so now you’ve got to start thinking that way.’

“I had to start realizing that God had given me a precious short time with these men, so I had to start thinking through what to teach them and what to do with them.”



As Ron trains men for leadership in the church, The Harvester develops a pool of leaders for the new church plants. “We don’t expect to become a mega-church,” he says. “The Harvester exists to start churches. Once we reach a certain size, it’s time to call

in an intern for me to disciple and send out to take people from The Harvester. That’s one of the ways that Harvester starts churches.”

Ultimately, though, the starting of the 54 churches has not followed a specific plan. “It has been anything you can think of,” Ron says. “It could be recruiting guys and connecting them with a small group somewhere, starting a Bible study somewhere and [seeing the] group ready for a guy to [lead], finding a group already formed and working with them until they have someone ready to come in with them, sending interns out to different places until a church gets started, or forming a group right here.”

Recently, Ron’s church-planting vision has expanded internationally. The man who spent much time at RTS helping Korean and Taiwanese students understand the lectures is discipling an Ecuadoran surgeon who believes God is calling him to be an evangelist and a teacher. Ron periodically meets with him and four Chinese men to prepare them for pastoral ministry.

“When I look at the Book of Acts,” he says, “I see that God uses a variety of ministries and effects, and there are varieties of results. I look for God to bring people here that He’s given a burden to. Then as I see that burden, as I get to know them, and as they begin to trust me and I begin to trust them, I begin to think, *How can this be used to extend the kingdom of God and plant His churches?*

“That’s fun, and I’m ready to stay here until the Lord calls me.”

Dr. Roger Nicole: A Living Legacy



Dr. Roger Nicole is one of the intellectual giants of American evangelicalism. The professor emeritus of theology at RTS-Orlando played a leading role in the shaping of evangelical theology, both as one of the founders of the Evangelical Theological Society and as a professor at what eventually became Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Still sharp of mind at age 92, Dr. Nicole has faced recent personal tragedy, as barely two weeks after this interview was recorded, his wife, Annette, went home to be with the Lord. Her death underscores the urgency of documenting Dr. Nicole's legacy in the evangelical world.

In that spirit, John R. Muether, RTS library director and RTS-Orlando professor of church history, sat down with Dr. Nicole to talk about his experiences and his theological passions. Paul Schwarz, M&L managing editor, also contributed to the interview.

Q The inerrancy of Scripture is a controversial doctrine in some quarters. How do you define inerrancy, and how is the term given to being misunderstood?

Inerrancy is an articulation explicit of the nature of the influence of God on Scripture, which takes a full account of the fact that it is God's Word. The question, therefore, is "What can be defined as an error, and what does inerrancy therefore avoid?" If that is not properly understood, then some people may have a mistaken notion of what we want to assert.

Very definitely, inerrancy does not come as a result of testing all the statements of Scripture and finding them to be true, because if that were the case, we would never end this job. Therefore, inerrancy is not some concept that theologians have developed and then placed onto Scripture, then have to validate by checking any kind of statement that might contradict what was said.

The origin of inerrancy is that God is the divine author of Scripture, and Scripture is presented as the Word of God, which it is, actually, jointly and concurrently with being the word of the human authors whom God used. Therefore, the concept is that we need to have a representation of the activity of God that is in keeping with the character of God Himself. For God, in fact, any error would be a lie.

Q What would you say to those who argue that inerrancy is a modern idea created by desperate evangelicals responding to the conclusions of higher criticism?

That would be answered by looking at all the major thinkers in the Christian faith and finding out what they thought about the Bible and whether they thought there were errors to be corrected. The doctrine of the Bible has been that this is the Word of God, and you don't correct God.

The doctrine follows the reverence of the Jews for the Old Testament, also demonstrated by Jesus in His own approach to Scripture and maintained by the Apostles. It has been the doctrine of the church from the start.

Q So what's at stake with the doctrine of inerrancy?
It is to recognize that whatever the Bible says is conformed to factual identity or reality and does not depart from proper criteria of truth. There are difficulties — passages where we seem to have a problem — but the fact that we are not able to find a complete reconciliation ought not lead us to challenge something as firmly established as the fact that God Himself acknowledges to be the author. It is stated in more than 2,000 places in Scripture that this is what God says.

Q What, then, is the greatest threat to the doctrine of inerrancy today?
It is that if you deny inerrancy in the sense that you say the Bible maintains things that God does not stand for, or garble the events that actually occurred, then the authority of Scripture as being God's Word has been challenged and perhaps canceled. As a result, you have lost the supreme criterion of truth — what God has said cannot be false.

Q Where do we see the bad fruit of a faulty view of inerrancy today?
We find that challenge in churches where people say we ought to receive practicing homosexuals as members. Scripture has said clearly that homosexuality is so nefarious that those who practice it may be punished with death. The New Testament presents it as so bad as to show the depths of corruption unparalleled in humanity, and it states expressly that those who practice that will not go to heaven.

Some say, "OK, these are in the Bible, but it represents customs of that time, so there's no authority of God in there." But if you have liberty to do that, then you can take whatever it says and say, "That's for days gone by, and we can't have that anymore." Therefore our feelings, practices and sin begin to be the authority instead of God. The damage is terrific. It's a leak so bad that all the liquid may go through it.

Q Why does there seem to be a recurring pattern of voices within evangelicalism challenging the doctrine of inerrancy?
What happens is that the critical approach has been so thoroughly endorsed at the graduate level that people in the universities are constantly confronted with it. And if they are not carrying through with it, they are at times discriminated against.

I have the case of a thesis by one of my Gordon-Conwell colleagues who was writing about the Old Testament. He had a view contrary to the prescribed approach to Scripture, and he was rejected for his doctoral thesis on the grounds that he did not sufficiently acknowledge the critical view. So especially in the area of Scripture, if you accept inerrancy, you disqualify yourself, so to speak, in this particular way.

Q Another area of lifelong interest of yours, and where you've made vital contributions to evangelical theology, is the doctrine of the atonement. Why did this become the focus of so much of your scholarly attention?

In my conception, the atonement is the Grand Central Station of the whole of Christian doctrine. All the lines of Christian truth touch the atonement. Christianity is basically a redemptive religion; what we need is God's redemption. The atonement is simply a statement that God has done what was needed, and He's doing it.

Q Why is substitutionary atonement so unpalatable to some people?
Because they don't want to have this done for them, and they want to be part of the doing. They think they have abandoned their individuality if Christ has taken their sin and put His righteousness on them. So substitution is anathema for the unregenerate human mind.

These theologians cannot explain the intensity of the suffering of Christ on the cross. I ask them, "How could a holy God permit the cross to take place, though Jesus was completely innocent?" They have no explanation for that.

"The atonement is the Grand Central Station of the whole of Christian doctrine."

Dr. Roger Nicole

Q How do you assess competing theories of the atonement, such as Christus Victor, moral influence and governmental theory?
They want the fruit but they remove the root. I agree with them in having the fruit, but they don't have a right to it. The fruit they want is good, but the way they get it is ruined because there's no root. If they remove substitution, they've ruined the whole business. They are building a big aqueduct in the desert.

Q One way in which people reject the atonement is they don't like the wrath of God. How do you defend the doctrine of propitiation?
St. Anselm said, "You have not yet considered how grievous a thing sin is." Other theories of the atonement are developed as people hold a palliative attitude or understanding of sin. They say everything is basically all right with human beings. I respond, why did God permit the enormous suffering of Christ, which was much more moral and spiritual suffering than physical suffering?

Q The recurring pattern in all these challenges to the atonement seems to be the higher we elevate humanity, the lower we regard the Cross.
And the higher we elevate Christ, the bigger is the atonement. If somebody says there is no hell, then I say, "Why did Jesus have to say, 'My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" Jesus suffered the pain of hell for me. It's not lasting, but that is part of it.

Continued on Page 18

Q Something you have spoken about, written about and modeled to many of your students is the art of disagreeing — the challenge to demonstrate respect to those with whom you disagree. How have you learned and cultivated that?

When I celebrated my 30th anniversary of teaching, I was asked to give a lecture in the chapel at Gordon-Conwell. Instead of taking a theological subject, I took something about the practice of theology and how to present it. At that point I felt led to put into order some things I had thought through. I had three questions: “What do I owe them?” “What can I learn from them?” and “How can I cope with them?”

First, “What do I owe?” I owe them to seek to understand what makes them tick. Also, I owe them to go back as much as I can to a place where we can agree, so as to limit disagreement as much as you can. In that way you become not an enemy but a friend who guides them.

Then there’s “What can I learn from them?” Many people are not thinking of learning; they are thinking of teaching. I say, “How do they indicate where I can improve?” In that, of course, I can learn that I’m wrong. If I learn that, it’s a great

“What God has said cannot be false.”

Dr. Roger Nicole

blessing because they are helping me know the truth and not carry on in the wrong.

I can also learn that I’m not expressing myself well, that they don’t understand what I’m trying to say. So I have to learn to express myself better so it will have better acceptance. I may also learn that there’s something further that belongs to the subject that I have omitted. They are pointing out a deficiency I have in which I failed to represent the whole truth.

Then I can learn that in order to reach people, I have to find other ways of approaching them than what I’ve done so far. If I find out I don’t communicate, it’s great for me to know it because I’m going to improve this.

Finally there’s “How can I cope with them?” What can I do to vindicate the truth I have and reject the error I see with them? You can use biblical ways, and you can use other arguments. Logic is already a possibility — you show that things don’t fit with this or that. History can be a way. I’m also very careful not to mention a set objection. I know some objection is coming, so on purpose I don’t mention it. I let them do it because I know I can get them there.

Q A pedagogical technique I’ve seen you display is when a student raises a criticism. You stop him and say, “I want to address your question, but first we have to perfect your argument. You should argue from this passage.” So you actually make a better case for him, and then in a loving way proceed to demolish it.

When I do that, he’s saying to himself, “This guy understands me. He understands what I want to say.” That’s why I said it’s important not only to hear what they say, but also try to find out what they mean and what they aim at. In many cases I can share with them in their aim. If our aim is the same, then really I’m on their side anyway. We don’t need to press.

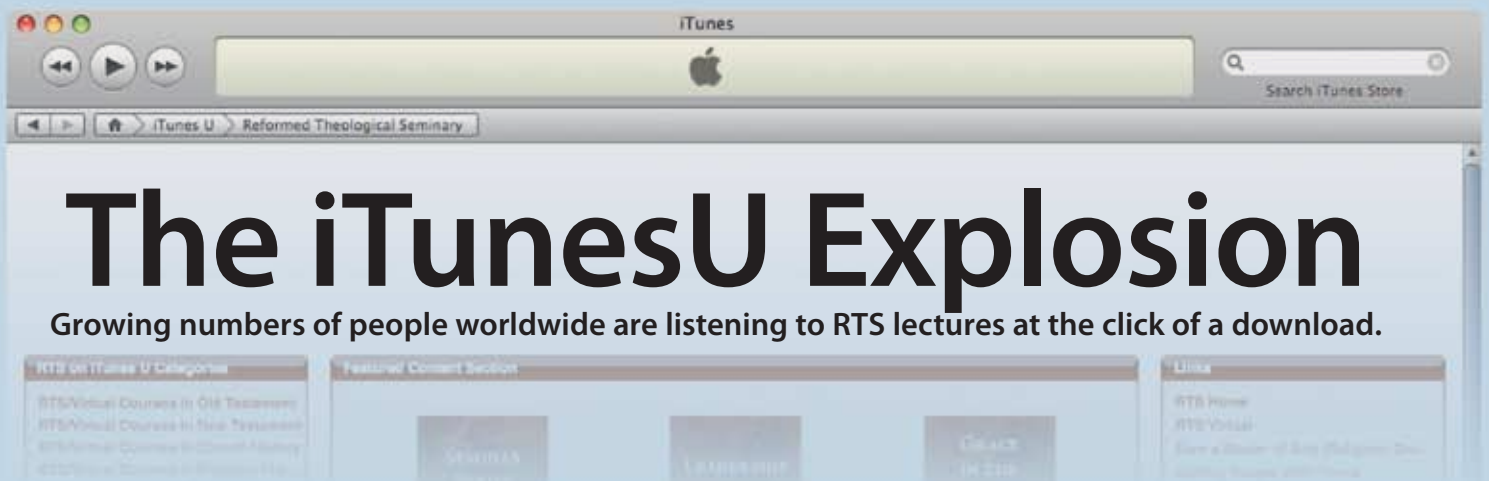
That’s the point — don’t press the difference, but try to press the things you aim at together. I want to be sure to take the benefit from that. ♦

Extra Features Online at www.rts.edu/m&l:

- The full interview with Dr. Nicole, including his thoughts on justification and the Evangelical Theological Society
- A tribute Dr. Nicole wrote to his wife, Annette, upon her recent death
- An article written by Dr. Nicole concerning the challenges to the doctrine of justification



Annette Nicole went home to be with the Lord on February 8, two weeks after the interview with Dr. Nicole was recorded. A tribute he wrote to his late wife may be found at www.rts.edu.m&l.



The iTunesU Explosion

Growing numbers of people worldwide are listening to RTS lectures at the click of a download.

RTS has long endeavored to make theological education “available, accessible and flexible.” This goal is now being pursued through the seminary’s presence on iTunesU in conjunction with the Virtual Campus.

Through iTunesU, anyone with a computer or MP3 player can download lectures from RTS professors and listen to them at any time. The RTS iTunesU connection also enables listeners to download audio from RTS events such as chapel services, seminars and guest lectures.

To date, the RTS iTunesU site incorporates 25 courses and nearly 800 lecture files from 16 different professors, with an average of about 15,000 downloads weekly.

Here are excerpts, edited for clarity and space, from a series of e-mails received by Dr. Frank James, RTS-Orlando president, from an iTunesU listener in Nashville, Tenn. The exchange illustrates the amazing lengths to which God chooses to use this technology.

The RTS courses at iTunes are astonishingly good, and I’m not even a believer. Forgive me. Also, I am not an antagonist. I read as deeply as I know how in mystical traditions with a special love for Meister Eckhart. And I have interest in the history of Christianity and the early church fathers, and philosophy in general. I’m listening to some of your lectures. Great!

I’m listening to Dr. [John] Frame’s course in the History of Philosophy and Christian Thought also. How delightful to listen to both of you.

I have found no other institution, including Oxford and the Ivy Leagues, represented so fully as you are online. It

is in a wonderful Christian spirit of sharing and giving, and it is my honor to accept what you offer. Thank God for all of you. The RTS courses online are worth a fortune, as far as I’m concerned.

Your lectures and those of Dr. Frame blew me away. They’re as solid as any of the courses I sat in on at [a divinity school] or any course I had at [university]. Also, I like it when the prof is a believer. I sat in on [a] course years ago, [and the prof] told me one day, “I’m not sure what I believe anymore.” [Another declared] he is no longer a believer.

I realize you and Dr. Frame differ from me, but I find [your approach to] theology the most powerful combined emotional and intellectual phenomenon I have encountered. It seems to push the human consciousness as far as it can go without drugs, which I never did. I’m 62 years old.

Each morning, preparing breakfast, I listen to Dr. Frame on the History of Philosophy and Christian Thought. I’m up to Kant. Frame is like a friendly neigh-

bor who has dropped in to serenade me with knowledge I love to know.

He marries an unintimidating delivery with substantive content, and brings an immediacy to the subject with seemingly common sense and casual observations. But they’re not really. His insights are the result of many years of study and thought, of sifting and weighing things in the balance. For me, it’s wonderful review and much, much more.

OK, I’ve gone on too long, and you’re a very busy gentleman. Of course I’d love to shake your hand and walk your campus and have lunch with you [Editor’s note: In one of his replies to the listener, Dr. James invited him to do so]. I shall contact you in advance if my way ever makes it to Orlando.

Gotta run. Time for “Breakfast With Frame.”

Excerpts from more iTunesU listener feedback can be found at www.rts.edu/me&l.



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The Catalyst Conference is the largest gathering of Next Generation Leaders in the country, but it pains us to call it just a conference. Catalyst is a three-day convergence, an experience in which you'll find yourself fully immersed in learning, worship, and creativity.

Created in 2000 to fill the void within the church for a leadership event for Next Generation Leaders, the Catalyst Conference has quickly grown to 12,000 leaders and represents the influencers, do-ers, cultural architects, and change agents who will reclaim our culture for good.

Dr. Andrew J. Peterson, president of RTS-Virtual, says, "In an effort to bring the possibility of seminary education to more people, the Virtual Campus has been carefully developing relationships with leaders of evangelical organizations like Catalyst. I am looking forward to a productive, long-term relationship." As a strategic partner with Catalyst, RTS-Virtual will have a presence at this year's event and we invite you to meet us there.

The Catalyst Conference takes place October 8-10, 2008 in Atlanta. Register today online at catalystconference.com, or register with a Catalyst Concierge at 888.334.6569.

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