Celebrating the First Fifty Years of

Reformed Theological Seminary

God is faithful. It is with sincere gratitude that we give thanks to the Lord for his faithful provision for Reformed Theological Seminary for these past 50 years. Born of a concern for the fidelity of the Southern Presbyterian Church to the inerrancy of Scripture and to the historic Reformed Faith, Reformed Theological Seminary was founded in 1966 in Jackson, Mississippi—a city that is still home to the original campus.

It was a handful of faithful men who came together with the singular purpose of preparing ministers who fully embraced the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice and who would faithfully preach and teach the whole counsel of God and a Reformed understanding of His Word. That mission has spread well beyond the original denominational concerns to serve more than 60 denominations over the years.

Over the course of these past fifty years the Seminary has grown to become the most recognized and largest Reformed theological institution in the world with campuses in Atlanta, Charlotte, Houston, Jackson, Memphis, New York City, Orlando, Washington, DC, online classes and degrees globally, and programs in Brazil and Indonesia.

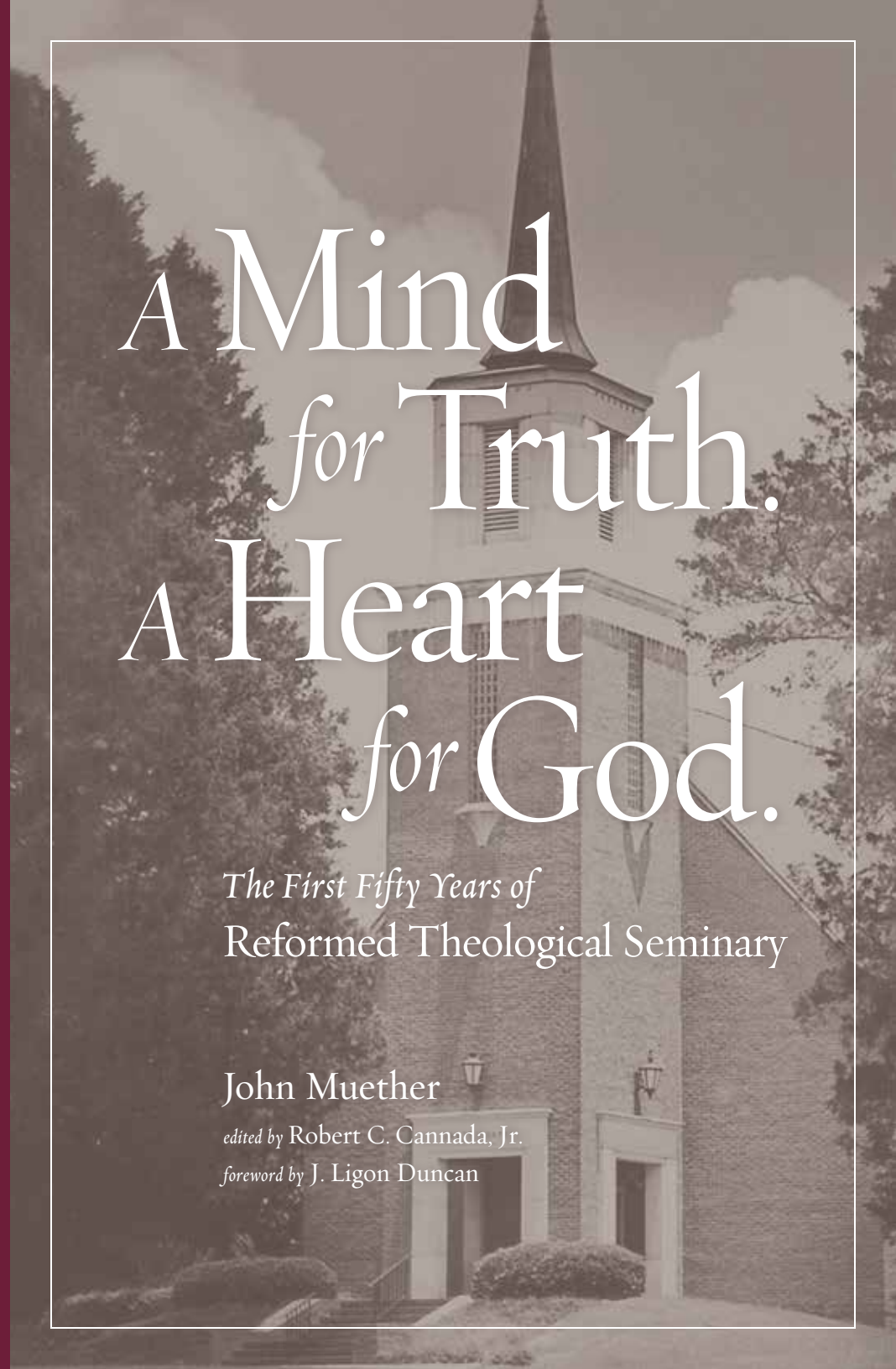
May the Lord find RTS faithful the next 50 years as we continue to carry forward the original vision and mission of our founders— A Mind for Truth, A Heart for God, A Life for Ministry. *"Thy Word is Truth" John 17:17* ■

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

JACKSON · ORLANDO · CHARLOTTE · WASHINGTON DC
ATLANTA · HOUSTON · DALLAS · NEW YORK CITY · GLOBAL

www.rts.edu

A Mind for Truth. A Heart for God. Muether



A Mind *for* Truth. A Heart *for* God.

The First Fifty Years of
Reformed Theological Seminary

John Muether
edited by Robert C. Cannada, Jr.
foreword by J. Ligon Duncan

A Mind for Truth. A Heart for God.

The First Fifty Years of
Reformed Theological Seminary

John Muether
edited by Robert C. Cannada, Jr.
foreword by J. Ligon Duncan

Written by John Muether
Edited by Robert C. Cannada, Jr.
Foreword by J. Ligon Duncan

Designed by Walker360, Atlanta, GA
Printed by Walker360, Montgomery, AL

Printed in the USA

Celebrating 50 years
of teaching *and* preparing
servants *for work in the*
name of our Lord *and* Savior.

Dedicated to

S. Elliott Belcher, Jr.

Robert C. Cannada, Sr.

Charles W. Harmon

Frank C. Horton

Horace H. Hull

Robert G. Kennington

Col. Roy LeCraw

Sam C. Patterson

Frank L. Tindall

Erskine W. Wells

Founding members of the Board of Trustees of

Reformed Theological Seminary

Contents

FOREWORD 9

INTRODUCTION
The History of Reformed Theological Seminary 11

CHAPTER I
Background 15

CHAPTER II
The First Dozen Years 37

CHAPTER III
From Regional Seminary to National Presence 59

CHAPTER IV
Reforming Evangelicalism 87

CHAPTER V
Serving International Calvinism 113

CONCLUSION
How Big is Your God? 131

APPENDIX I
RTS Faculty 137

APPENDIX II
RTS Board Members 141

Foreword

by J. Ligon Duncan III, PhD

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY was founded in a time of crisis. Throughout the Deep South of the United States, historically Reformed churches were in decline. Theological modernism and worldly nominalism had corrupted what we then affectionately called "the Southern Presbyterian Church," a once faithful and robust family of vital, conservative, confessional, mission-minded churches. It was departing from its rock-solid commitment to the inspiration and authority of Scripture and the Christ-exalting Calvinism embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith. In the midst of tremendous opposition and great obstacles, a handful of committed laymen, led by a man who claimed to be a mere "country preacher," banded together with the audacious plan to prepare ministers for the church who would once again lift high the banner of the Gospel, joyously and unapologetically embracing the Reformed faith.

Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III, Chancellor & CEO, John E. Richards Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology

God was pleased to bless their labors, and over the course of forty years the Seminary has grown to become one of the largest and most recognized theological institutions in the world. By God's grace it has been used to revitalize historic but flagging denominations and spawn new movements all the while preparing more than 7,000 alumni who have proclaimed the riches of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, in more than 55 countries, in more than 46 denominations. *A Mind for Truth. A Heart for God.* tells the remarkable story of this growth and gives you a little window into some of the significant moments in the history of Reformed Theological Seminary.

The ecclesiastical landscape has altered since the days of the school's founding, but the seminary continues to serve in a time of crisis. The world needs the Word of God and the hope and comfort of the Reformed faith. May this book encourage its readers with the story of God's faithfulness to His people in the past. And may it remind us to consider what He continues to do through each of us as we remain faithful to Him and to His Word. We must work while it is day, for the night is coming when no man can work (John 9:4).

Introduction

The History Of Reformed Theological Seminary

ON MAY 27, 1968, Edmund P. Clowney, president of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, came to Westminster Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, to deliver the first commencement address in the history of Reformed Theological Seminary. He began with these words: "I am greatly honored to be invited to speak to you on the occasion of your first commencement. Westminster Seminary will be celebrating its fortieth academic year next year, and I want to report to you that the first forty years are the hardest."

Clowney's sobering words reminded his listeners that it was a strange time to begin a new conservative Calvinistic seminary. In the throes of the cultural revolution of the 1960s, it seemed peculiar and futile to invest in the effort to recover the American Presbyterian and Reformed heritage. A year earlier, the northern mainline Presbyterian Church (UPCUSA) had adopted the Confession of 1967, thereby jettisoning its confessional tradition formerly rooted in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. Liberal voices in the South were urging Southern Presbyterians (PCUS) to follow that lead, which they claimed marked the path forward to social progress and theological enlightenment. Yet here was a new seminary calling the church to its past, back to fidelity to the inerrant Word of God and the Westminster Standards. Despite the difficulty that lay ahead, Clowney urged the young school to persevere in its labors. "What does it mean," he asked, "to establish such a seminary in the heart of America's Southland in an age of revolution?" Clowney answered his own question:

> *Brethren in the Lord, it can mean the lifting of the cross of Jesus Christ. It can point to the blood of the cross which is the only source of recon-*

> *ciling peace for our world. It can mean the proclamation of the Gospel of peace and of the Word of life. But it will mean that only if Reformed Theological Seminary holds to its high purpose to honor Christ as Lord and to reform the church in accordance with His Word.*

This is the story of the first 50 years of Reformed Theological Seminary. It is the story of some hard years that were also remarkable times. It is the story of the mighty acts of the Spirit of God as He answered the prayers of the people of God. Like other seminary histories, and indeed, all of church history, it is also the story of secondary causes as well as human efforts, flawed and fallible, that sought to fulfill God's calling and to accomplish His purposes.

The story begins in mid-twentieth-century America. To listen to the founders of the Seminary is to bring to mind Tom Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation*. Brokaw's best seller claims that the American servicemen of World War II, after they saved the world from fascism and returned home to rebuild the world they saved, arguably comprised "the greatest generation any society has ever produced." As Brokaw tells those stories, the passions and disciplines honed in warfare became instrumental in subsequent peacetime vocations of returning veterans.

A few of those veterans went from saving their country to rebuilding their church. Robert Cannada served in the Navy on a destroyer and Erskine Wells fought with the Marines in the Pacific theater. When they returned home to Mississippi, they found a church they did not recognize. Cannada, Wells, and other veterans went to work to recover the Reformed heritage that was lost.

The transition these men experienced, from military to ecclesiastical combat, suggests another comparison to Brokaw's book. Brokaw was impressed with the difficulty many veterans had in recounting their war experience; many of their stories came slowly and reluctantly. In war and in peace, this generation developed a profoundly understated way of describing their accomplishments. So too, it seemed with many Seminary founders. As they recalled those early years, they spoke of the simplicity of the intentions—to prepare

ministers who stood on the inerrancy of Scripture and the Westminster Standards and who could get ordained into their denomination. What is remarkable in talking to these individuals is what little sense they had of the hard work they invested. With great humility they described their work in passive terms. They simply sat back, in their own words, as they watched the marvelous providence of God in answering prayer and building up the Seminary.

This book is an effort to tell that story. This is the story of faithful individuals and noteworthy events that produced Reformed Theological Seminary. Nearly thirty years ago, Fuller Theological Seminary celebrated its fortieth anniversary by commissioning historian George Marsden to write an institutional history. The purpose of Marsden's history, embedded in the book's title—*Reforming Fundamentalism*—was to demonstrate the central role that school played in shaping the direction of twentieth-century American evangelicalism. This commemoration of Reformed's first 50 years does not compare to Marsden's monumental study. But still it is no exaggeration to claim that Reformed Theological Seminary has also played a significant role in shaping Reformed evangelicalism in America over the past fifty years.

Early faculty (1972) of Reformed Theological Seminary. [L-R] George C. Fuller, Morton H. Smith, Guy Oliver, Jr., S. Wallace Carr, R. Allan Killen, Jack B. Scott, Richard A. Bodey, Sr., James R. Wagner, James C. DeYoung, Simon J. Kistemaker, Daniel R. Morse.

Seminary histories often involve legendary stories of their early faculty. Princeton Theological Seminary's history is entwined with the lives of Alexander, Miller, the Hodges, and Warfield. At Westminster Seminary, the phrase, "original faculty," is often invoked with a reverence that is second only to the expression, "original autographs" in discussions about the Bible. The early faculty members at Reformed

Theological Seminary conjure up warm memories, too, among alumni and friends for their learning, diligence, and faithfulness.

For Reformed Seminary, however, the term "founders" is usually reserved for its board members, and especially for its founding Executive Committee, to whom this work is dedicated. Their commitment to the work of the Seminary is exceeded only by their refusal to take credit for its success. Frank Horton insisted that "the strength of the Seminary is in the Lord—as long as we are faithful. That is ultimately the strength of the Seminary." Robert Cannada's memories involved the telling refrain that "over and over, time and again the Lord led us, because we did not know what we were doing."

A Presbyterian historian once observed that Southern Presbyterians were particularly conscious of history: "The great days of the past have not been forgotten, nor have they been permitted to pass unnoticed."[1] This modest effort to record the story of Reformed Theological Seminary is offered in the spirit of these words. May the early years of the Seminary not pass unnoticed.

[1] T. Watson Street. *The Story of Southern Presbyterians.* Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960.

Chapter I · The Beginning

Background

ERSKINE WELLS VIVIDLY REMEMBERED the birth of Reformed Theological Seminary. In a story he was fond of retelling, he was at work in his law office in Jackson, Mississippi, in the summer of 1963 when his receptionist buzzed him to announce: "Sam Patterson is here to see you."

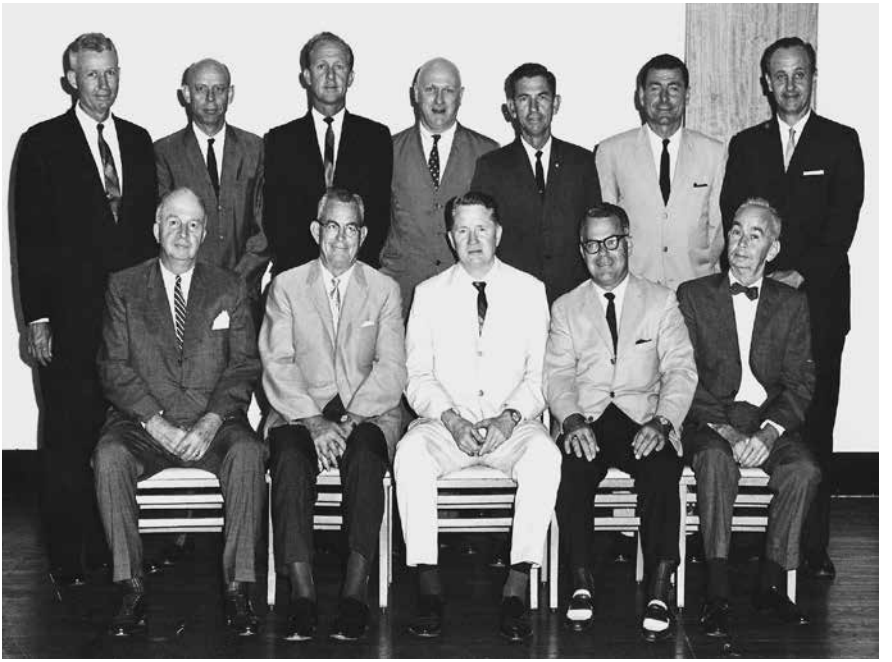
As Rev. Samuel C. Patterson, pastor of French Camp Presbyterian Church, explained his dream for a new seminary, Wells quickly dismissed the idea: "Sam, you are a preacher. You live in an ivory tower, and you are not in touch with reality. I'm a layman, and I can tell you that it's just not practical."

Wells never forgot what followed: "Sam leaned back in his chair and asked, 'Erskine, how big is your God?' The question troubled me. 'Well, Sam,' I responded, "when do we start?'" For Erskine Wells that moment was the beginning of Reformed Theological Seminary.

In an important sense, however, the work was well underway. Wells and other founding members of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary enlisted in a renewal movement already in progress in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS, or more popularly, the Southern Presbyterian Church). This cause was monitoring the theological decline in the denomination, evidenced by its low doctrine of Scripture and weakened commitment to the Reformed faith. "The movement had been going on for years," Robert Cannada remembered, "and RTS just joined in."

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN DECLINE

To fully understand the rationale for the founding of Reformed Theological Seminary, one needs to go back more than 100 years. With the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, American Presbyterians divided along the Mason-Dixon line, when Presbyterians in the South formed the Presbyterian Church of the Confederate States of America.



Early RTS Board of Trustees before the first convocation and opening of classes in the fall of 1966. Back row [L-R]: S. Elliott Belcher, Jr., Erskine W. Wells, Sr., Robert S. Rugeley, Hugh Potts, Sr., Frank L. Tindall, Emory Folmar, Robert C. Cannada, Sr. Front row [L-R]: Gettys Guille, H.S. Williford, Sr., Sam C. Patterson, Frank C. Horton, Robert G. Kennington. Not Pictured: Horace Hull, Charles W. Harmon and Roy LeCraw.

Northern and Southern Presbyterians stayed separate long after war ended in 1865. Although there were efforts to reunite the two branches since 1870, the churches developed two different approaches to Presbyterian identity. In the North, there was a strong impulse toward progressivism—the idea that Presbyterianism must continually evolve to meet the challenges of the modern age. This took the form of embracing the liberal theological trends of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including Darwinism and higher Biblical criticism. In the South, there was a tendency toward the preservation of the past. Presbyterian layman William Faulkner captured Southern sentiment when he remarked that the past was not dead because it was not even past. Southern Presbyterians were

steeped in the tradition of Old School giants such as James Thornwell, John Girardeau, B. M. Palmer, and Robert Lewis Dabney, and a heritage that placed particular emphasis on four Reformed principles: Biblical inerrancy, strict subscription to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, *jure divino* (or divine right) Presbyterianism, and the spiritual mission of the church.

As the Northern church steadily succumbed to the spell of modernism, Southern Presbyterians watched carefully while they strove to stay the orthodox course. After 1,300 Northern Presbyterian ministers signed the modernist Auburn Affirmation in 1923 (which denied the importance of Biblical inerrancy, the virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, Christ's miracles, and His bodily resurrection), the North descended rapidly into the "fundamentalist-modernist controversy." Conservative Presbyterians, led by J. Gresham Machen (a child of Southern Presbyterianism) eventually formed a new seminary (Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929) and a new denomination (the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936). While Southern sympathies generally extended to Northern conservatives, a different voice in the South was heard beginning in 1931, when Southern Presbyterian church historian Ernest Trice Thompson at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia posed a question in the title of his Union Seminary *Quarterly Review* article, "Is the Northern Church Theologically Sound?" After Thompson surveyed the dramatic changes in the North over the previous half century, he pronounced upon the Northern church a clean bill of spiritual health while he urged the Southern church to pursue reunion. "Our sister denomination is fundamentally sound in the faith," he concluded, "and is just as likely to remain so as our own."

This and similar assessments alarmed conservatives in the PCUS, awakening them to the reality that theological modernism was infiltrating the Southern church as well. Their fears were confirmed when efforts were launched (beginning in 1939) to follow the Northern church in softening the robust Calvinism of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. Conservative opposition began to take organized form in 1942. Dr. Nelson Bell, longtime PCUS medical

missionary to China and the father-in-law of evangelist Billy Graham, launched the *Southern Presbyterian Journal*, a lay-oriented magazine. As Bell described it, the weekly's mission was "to call our Southern Presbyterian Church back to her original position, a position unequivocally loyal to the Word of God and the Standards of our church which God has so signally blessed and which He will bless again." Published in Asheville, North Carolina, the *Southern Presbyterian Journal* became a crucial voice for the renewal cause by offering an alternative to its progressive counterpart, the *Presbyterian Outlook.* (The name of the journal was shortened to the *Presbyterian Journal* in 1959.)

These conservative-minded Presbyterians discovered that the threat to their church was not the overt liberalism that Northern conservative Presbyterians fought a generation earlier. Rather, the false teaching they encountered was neo-orthodoxy, a more subtle and therefore more insidious threat to confessional Presbyterianism. Though it sounded much like orthodoxy and even claimed to recover the emphases of the Protestant Reformation, neo-orthodoxy denied the infallibility of Scripture and historicity of the person and work of Jesus Christ. As such, neo-orthodoxy proved to be the "new modernism," in the words of Cornelius Van Til from Westminster Seminary.

Dr. Sam Patterson and Robert C. Cannada

Robert Cannada describes his shock of returning home after his naval service in World War II, "I went off to war and returned to find a different church. Neo-orthodoxy had taken over." Cannada discovered it particularly in the literature he reviewed as the Sunday School superintendent at First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, and in his judgment his church stood at a fork in the road: "It was either orthodoxy or neo-orthodoxy."

Cannada was not alone. Colonel Roy LeCraw, former mayor of Atlanta, Georgia, State Senator and decorated war hero, shared a similar experience, and he toured many Presbyterian churches

throughout the South to warn them of the encroaching influence of neo-orthodoxy. Albert H. Freundt, pastoring at the time in Central Mississippi, observed in the *Southern Presbyterian Journal* that "Dabney, Palmer, [and] Thornwell . . . would hardly recognize the church today."

Resistance to the liberal momentum in the church met with occasional success. For example, a 1954 plan to unite with the Northern Presbyterian Church was soundly defeated. But liberalism was steadily gaining momentum, and alert conservatives stepped up their efforts by forming coalitions of pastors, elders, and sessions. In 1964 Col. LeCraw, Kenneth Keyes, and W. J. (Jack) Williamson led in the formation of Concerned Presbyterians. In that same year Rev. William Hill organized the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, which sought to rekindle an emphasis on evangelism in the work of Southern Presbyterian home and foreign missions.


The Presbyterian Outlook
Do We Need an Infallible Bible?

This December 1963 article in a prominent Presbyterian publication, in which the necessity of holding to biblical inerrancy was flatly rejected, fueled Sam Patterson's vision for a new seminary.

These groups shared a desire to reform the church from within, through positive action and not open criticism. Cannada, Horton, Wells, and others who became founding board members at Reformed Seminary sought to add to their momentum. Over time that desire was joined by another conviction: the Presbyterian renewal movement needed to find expression in a theological seminary, a school that would be a unifying servant of this cause and not a divisive force.

MONITORING THE SEMINARIES

In 1960, the session of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, considered a request from Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, for a contribution to its capital campaign. Of the four official seminaries of the Southern Presbyterian Church, Columbia was generally regarded as the most theologically sound, and over the previous several decades it had produced conservative ministers for the denomination. When the elders of First Presby-

terian Church received reports that neo-orthodoxy had even penetrated Columbia, they responded to the school's appeal with a five-year pledge of $50,000, conditioned on evidence of the Seminary's fidelity to Biblical inerrancy and Westminster orthodoxy. Columbia's Board of Directors voted unanimously to decline the offer, regarding its conditions as unacceptable.

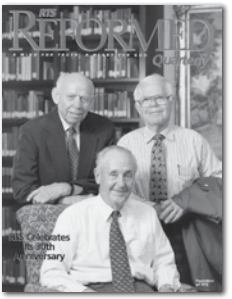
Suspicions about Columbia Seminary underscored the crisis in theological education, and that suspicion was emphatically confirmed in 1962. In its December 24th issue the *Presbyterian Outlook* published a symposium on the question, prominently posed on the cover, "Do we need an infallible Bible?" Professors from four Southern Presbyterian seminaries—Austin, Columbia, Louisville, and Union—provided four negative answers. The very question was "absurd" according to one professor. Another suggested that Biblical infallibility was bound to a system of theology that ultimately denied the authority of the Bible.

If there was any doubt that the problems in the Southern church found their origins in its seminaries, the *Outlook* symposium provided ample evidence to answer them. Clearly, renewal of the church required an alternative to the theological education of its ministers. Only then could the church recover its confidence in the Word of God. As Luder Whitlock later observed, "Once the certainty of 'Thus saith the Lord,' has been lost, the church also loses its sense of direction and begins to flounder. Determining right and wrong becomes an entirely different matter. The old biblical absolutes are washed away, and new values are thrust upon the church. People no longer know what they can or should believe."

STARTING THE SEMINARY

The brazen liberalism of the *Presbyterian Outlook* mobilized Sam Patterson of French Camp Presbyterian Church and French Camp Academy into action. He wrote to the four seminary presidents to confirm each school's doctrine of Scripture. The responses convinced him that if the denomination were to return to its historic roots, it desperately needed a new seminary.

On June 13, 1963, when the Synod of Mississippi met on the campus of Southwestern College (now Rhodes College) in Memphis, Tennessee, four Mississippi ministers joined Patterson for prayer during breakfast in the dining hall: Erskine L. Jackson (Kosciusko), John Reed Miller (Jackson), James Spencer (Crystal Springs), and William Stanway (Hattiesburg). Chief on their prayer list was the need for a new seminary. The five men conducted a follow-up meeting on July 2, 1963, at the Robert E. Lee Hotel in Jackson. They reflected on the state of the Southern Presbyterian Church, the means to further its peace and purity, and the lessons that the Northern Presbyterian story brought to bear on their crisis. The discussion prompted further questions on the direction that their renewal efforts should take. Did the church need a Bible institute for the laity or a seminary for ministerial candidates? There were ways in which either could serve the church. A seminary was a far more ambitious undertaking, and it stood to meet with far more resistance from liberals in the church. By the end of their meeting the ministers determined to proceed, at least at first, with a Reformed Institute.



In 1996, Seminary founders Robert Cannada, Sr., (seated), Erskine Wells (left), and Frank Horton graced the cover of the 30th anniversary edition of the Reformed Quarterly, *the Seminary's magazine.*

The ministers further commissioned Patterson and his associate from French Camp, Leonard T. Van Horn, to call upon several Presbyterian elders in Jackson and present the challenge before them. It was then that Patterson paid his memorable visit to Erskine Wells' law office.

"Sam had more faith in God than any other person I had known, and it was infectious," Wells remembered. "Humanly speaking, there would be no Reformed Seminary if Sam Patterson did not have that deep faith in God and vision." Patterson also paid a visit to Robert Cannada, who in turn recruited Frank Horton. These three young lawyers, former classmates at the School of Law at the University of Mississippi, were joined by Frank Tindall, a farmer from Indianola, Mississippi, and Robert Kennington, who had retired from a successful family department store in Jackson. Together with Sam

Patterson, these five Southern Presbyterian ruling elders immediately threw themselves into the work and took on leadership in establishing the Institute. Within six months, they were joined by Elliott Belcher, from Brent, Alabama. H. S. Williford provided his services as treasurer and accountant, and eventually as a board member himself. (His son, Ed Williford, followed in his footsteps by serving as the business manager of the Seminary for many years.)

LOCATING THE SEMINARY

On Christmas day in 1963, a year and a day after the *Presbyterian Outlook* article, Sam Patterson announced the birth of a new school, Reformed Theological Institute. The natural place to locate the office of the Institute was in French Camp, Mississippi, where Patterson pastored the Presbyterian Church and served as president of French Camp Academy.

Named after the trading post of the Frenchman Louis LeFlore, the town of French Camp was situated 80 miles north of Jackson on the Natchez Trace. Presbyterian missionaries established schools in the village as early as 1820. In 1885 a girls' school, the Central Mississippi Institute of French Camp was established, followed by the French Camp Academy for boys in 1887. Eventually they were merged into a co-educational Christian boarding school.

Sam Patterson eventually served as the Seminary's first president when the need for one became evident in light of accreditation efforts.

Reformed Theological Institute conducted lay-education night classes at French Camp Presbyterian Church in English Bible, Reformed doctrine, and evangelism. In addition, it offered adult education extension classes in Birmingham, Jackson, and Kosciusko, as well as some classes on television. (Although distance learning and virtual education would not become popular until the 1990s, a noteworthy feature of the history of the Seminary is that virtual education actually preceded traditional instruction.)

Resistance to the Institute from within the Synod of Mississippi of the PCUS forced a change in its plans. Because French Camp

Academy was a synod-related school, the Synod insisted that the Academy have no association with the Institute. In order to avoid such association the Institute determined to move its official address to Kosciusko, Mississippi, while it searched for a permanent home.

Suggestions for the school's location extended geographically from Montreat, North Carolina, to Memphis, Tennessee. Also under consideration were several cities and towns in Mississippi as well as Atlanta, Georgia, and Montgomery, Alabama.

Eventually, the question of location was answered when conservatives learned that only the Central Mississippi Presbytery of the PCUS was hospitable to the school's goals and objectives. The board determined, therefore, to find a location within a twenty-five mile radius of Jackson. It was the largest city within the Presbytery and offered other benefits, including better transportation facilities than other Mississippi towns, as well as proximity to Belhaven College, Millsaps College, and Mississippi College.

Soon after the location of the school was settled, a Jackson real estate agent called Robert Cannada to report that the Byrd property in west Jackson, which contained a large home on fourteen acres, was available for $75,000. Cannada immediately called Horace Hull, a car dealer in Memphis, and in Cannada's words, "Hull did not bat an eye." Hull, who would soon join the board himself, supplied a $50,000 loan that would be forgiven if the Institute could demonstrate, upon Hull's death, its faithfulness to the theological direction of its founding. Hull challenged the founders to raise the remaining $25,000, which they were able to do.

Additional funds for the start of the school came in remarkable ways. Cannada secured the services of Reed Construction Company of Jackson to construct a campus library at cost. Near that time an anonymous donor sent an unexpected gift of $100,000 to the school. Other initial expenses were covered by a gift from Jackson's First Presbyterian Church—$50,000 that was escrowed when Columbia Seminary refused its conditional contribution. In these ways a pattern of support from significant donors was established at the school's founding.

RECRUITING A FACULTY

Even before the campus was settled, the Seminary board actively sought to secure a faculty for the school. On March 28, 1964, Morton H. Smith accepted a call as the Seminary's first faculty member. The forty-year-old native of Roanoke, Virginia, and graduate of the University of Michigan and Westminster Seminary received his doctorate from the Free University of Amsterdam, researching the history of Southern Presbyterian theology. Having taught in the Bible department at nearby Belhaven College, Smith was at the time of his appointment at Reformed Theological Seminary a lecturer at Westminster Theological Seminary.

Smith traveled extensively throughout the South on behalf of the Seminary, recording thousands of miles on his private plane. He established contacts at other seminaries, including Westminster, Calvin, and Reformed Bible Institute, with a particular interest in securing recommendations for additional faculty members.

He began the regular purchase of books in order to establish a library, with the view toward the Institute's official opening in the fall of 1965. One key early donation was the 3,000-volume library of the late John C. Blackburn from his widow. Blackburn was a longtime Southern Presbyterian minister and the grandson of John L. Girardeau; his library was one of the finest private collections of Southern Presbyterian theology and history.

Meanwhile the Reformed Theological Institute was officially incorporated on April 13, 1964. Two weeks later, at a meeting in the Creole Room of the King Edward Hotel in Jackson, the board approved a budget of $22,700, for the 1964-65 academic year to fund the following:

- *$8,500 for salaries*
- *$1,200 for moving expenses*
- *$8,000 for library books*
- *$3,000 for administrative expenses*
- *$500 for housing rent and repair*
- *$1,500 for land purchase*

The meeting also saw the approval of the following statement of the Institute's purpose and intent:

"Our endeavor in connection with Reformed Theological Institute is not in the nature of an attack upon any of the church's institutions, but rather it is the positive institutional and educational promotion of the theological and biblical point of view we believe to be that of traditional Reformed Faith, and of the founding fathers of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

"Our endeavor in connection with Reformed Theological Institute is not divisive or schismatic in intent or purpose but wholly dedicated to the preservation of, and the propagation of the original Southern Presbyterian convictions in regard to:

- ***The inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.***
- ***The Calvinistic theological system, as set down in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, in the form in which they were adopted at the origin of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.***
- ***The concept of the spiritual nature and mission of the Church as set forth in the above Standards and in the principles set forth by the founding fathers of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.***

"Our endeavor in connection with Reformed Theological Institute is based on our conviction that the above stated points of view in the area of theological, biblical and ecclesiastical truth have the right to be presented and represented institutionally in the church."


the
PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

In 1969, the Presbyterian Journal*, the leading conservative publication among Southern Presbyterians, featured the growing work of the Seminary.*

Particularly absent in that statement was any negative assessment of the state of the Southern Presbyterian Church. The Institute was very careful not to criticize the denomination's four existing seminaries. Instead, the plan and purpose of the Institute was stated in strictly positive and constructive terms.

In the following summer, the school made two important changes in its planning. First, the opening of the school was postponed an additional year, as it continued to recruit faculty, build a library, and establish a campus. Secondly, the charter of the school was changed

to Reformed Theological Seminary. With this decision the school aimed its ambition higher and determined not to delay its goal of offering graduate-level theological education in order to train a new generation of ministers for the church.

Still a year from the start of classes, the Seminary hired its second faculty member, Albert Freundt, on September 1, 1965. This began a remarkable tenure for Freundt at Reformed that exceeded three decades. He wore several hats in the school's early years before devoting himself full time to the church history department beginning in 1969. In his first year he concentrated on developing the Seminary library while he served as interim supply pastor in Brandon, Mississippi. By January 1966, he reported to the board that 2,000 books had been procured in addition to the Blackburn gift. With the view toward providing adequate library services by the Seminary's opening in September, Freundt stepped up his aggressive purchasing of books and solicitation of gifts.

RETHINKING GOVERNANCE

"What has been truly unique about RTS from the start was its governance," Robert C. "Ric" Cannada often observed. Several early decisions of the founders charted a course for Reformed Seminary different from traditional seminary education in America. One early decision was the establishment of independent control. Understanding its strengths and weaknesses, the Seminary took this direction cautiously and deliberately.

The fear of denominational control was understandable in the context of the Seminary's early history. The four denominational schools had departed from orthodoxy and the denominational bureaucracy was antagonistic to its return. Reformed Theological Seminary needed to be established "free and clear of control by those not dedicated to its purpose," insisted Robert Cannada.

As innovative as this may have appeared, the Seminary actually followed in the tradition of other Presbyterian-related seminaries. Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary began as an independent school before falling under the oversight of the Synod of Texas.

Northern Presbyterian seminaries both liberal (Union Seminary in New York) and conservative (Westminster in Philadelphia) served their respective Presbyterian constituencies effectively while remaining independent. The model of Westminster Seminary was particularly compelling in Reformed Seminary's early years, according to Morton Smith, owing to its Old School theology and its role as the spiritual successor to Princeton. "The original faculty of Reformed Seminary," Smith observed, "viewed it as something of a daughter seminary to Westminster." In fact, several of the original faculty had trained at Westminster.

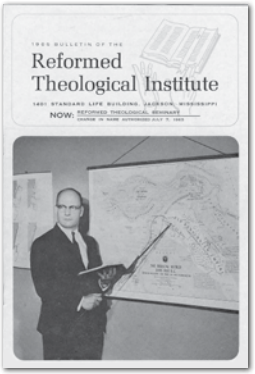
French Camp Presbyterian Church in French Camp, Mississippi was the church pastored by Sam Patterson. French Camp Academy, affiliated with the church, was the site originally proposed for the Reformed Theological Institute that evolved into the Seminary.

Moreover, independence enabled the Seminary to serve all denominations of the Reformed faith. Reformed desired to become, in Sam Patterson's words, "ecumenical in the best sense of the term." From its founding the Seminary recruited faculty and students from several denominations, and it has always labored to serve all Christian churches, especially those of the Reformed faith.

Another early decision by the founders was to follow the Old Princeton model of operating without a president. Instead the board established an Executive Committee that met twice per month. Its rationale was to carefully separate the executive, administrative, and teaching duties within the Seminary and to allocate responsibility for those tasks in the best way to the board, the administration, and the faculty, respectively.

From the start, the Executive Committee of the board played an active role in the governance of the Seminary. They met at least two times a month and at times were involved on a daily basis.

Originally composed of five men (and later expanded to ten and eventually twelve), the Executive Committee, consisting of laymen, became the most distinctive feature of the Seminary's governance. The experimental and venturesome spirit of the Executive Committee often owed to a business mentality that differed from a traditional academic mindset. Wells remembered that many of its meetings were spent kneeling in prayer on behalf of the Seminary's needs, and he often expressed his fear that the Seminary's prosperity might erode its dependence on God.



Dr. Morton Smith, the first faculty member of RTS, shown on the cover of the first issue of the Bulletin, which later became the Reformed Quarterly.

At the same time, from the very beginning the Seminary pursued accreditation from the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Over time, accreditation standards altered and reshaped some of these patterns of governance. When, for example, accreditors insisted that the Seminary appoint a president, Sam Patterson reluctantly accepted the post. Little actually changed in Patterson's work by this appointment. Before and after this appointment Patterson considered himself the "Executive Committee representative on campus," and presidents who followed him continued to serve as chief administrative officers.

Outsiders have often criticized the work of the Executive Committee as demonstrating excessive board control over the day-to-day affairs of the school, even to the point of diminishing the role of the faculty. However, the experience of the Seminary has belied those fears. The Committee's oversight has steered Reformed Seminary into firmer financial ground than other schools, and the faculty has generally expressed relief at the freedom from administrative matters. In the words of Chancellor J. Ligon Duncan, this was "a remarkable structure that has worked beautifully at Reformed Theological Seminary."

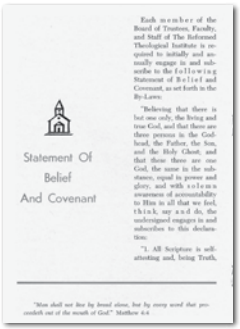
Yet another pivotal decision was not to offer tenure to its faculty. No doubt the board intended to avoid the entrenched liberalism at

other seminaries. Rejection of this long-standing tradition in higher education met with strong objection from accreditors. However, despite claims that a lack of tenure failed to meet standards for job security, it has not prevented the Seminary from recruiting and maintaining a quality faculty throughout its first 50 years. (Indeed the Seminary has experienced greater stability among its faculty than many schools that offer tenure.)

What the board instituted in the place of faculty tenure was a system of annual and renewable contracts. An essential requirement for contract renewal is the annual signing of the Seminary's "Statement of Belief and Covenant," which demands fidelity to the Word of God and its system of doctrine, as set forth in the Westminster Standards.

At the very start of the planning for Reformed Seminary, the founders encountered resistance within quarters of the Southern Presbyterian Church. Opposition within the Synod of Mississippi did not content itself with distancing the Institute from the French Camp Academy campus.

On August 8, 1964, the Stewardship Committee of the Synod of Mississippi wrote to the pastors and clerks of sessions of pastorless churches in the Synod of Mississippi, urging them, in the light of a recent appeal for funds from Reformed Theological Institute (RTI), not to give to causes outside the budget until they have given their apportionment. "RTI has no connection with any court of the PCUS," the Synod reminded them. Some members of the Synod of Mississippi even sought to bring censure against the ministers involved, but those efforts were soundly defeated.


Statement Of
Belief
And Covenant

The Seminary's original "Statement of Belief and Covenant" was published in the first issue of the Reformed Theological Seminary Bulletin *in 1965.*

As the next chapter will describe, on three occasions the Seminary came before the PCUS General Assembly in the form of unfriendly overtures, but in each case the school escaped adverse action by the denomination, as these complaints were properly delegated to the presbytery level.

The opposition to the Seminary often took strange forms. One complaint, for example, argued that ministers associated with the

Seminary had compromised their ordination vows, insofar as the Seminary's historic Southern Presbyterian version of the Westminster Confession to which they pledged their fidelity, differed from the official PCUS version (which included several modern revisions). It was curious, to say the least, to see liberals suddenly rising behind the cause of confessional integrity within the Southern Presbyterian Church.

Despite the desperation of many of its detractors, the Seminary was careful to exercise restraint in its response. Sam Patterson was entrusted with handling public relations for the institution, a task which he took on eagerly and ably. The Seminary, he promised, "will work for the return of the day when evangelical fervor, rooted in the biblical centrality of the traditional Reformed theology will put the strength of that Rock, the fire of the Spirit, and the passion of the gospel into the ministry of the Church."

Patterson endeavored to answer every letter and to quiet all critics. A good example of Patterson's ecclesiastical diplomacy was found in a response he sent to a query from Dr. Cullen Story of the College of the Ozarks. On February 14, 1966, Patterson acknowledged that the existing schools in the denomination were staffed with "very able men" and "doing a splendid job" from "the point-of-view of their program and philosophy." He went on to defend the goals and purpose of a seminary committed to historic Presbyterianism:

"We are not in a fight with other seminaries, but we do feel that, even though we may be in a minority, we do, under God, have the right to remain Presbyterians in good standing and yet support and supply a seminary which represents this position. We further believe that this historic, conservative position tends to promote in the church a proper emphasis upon the Reformed distinctives, the zeal of evangelical passion, and involvement in the spiritual mission and ministry of the Church.

"Our mission is not one of destructive, divisive attack, but it is institutional and, therefore, of constructive nature."

Patterson and the Executive Committee quietly pressed the case that the Southern Presbyterian Church, and beyond it, other evan-

What Does It Mean to Be "Reformed"?

Morton H. Smith, 1973

When we refer to the "Reformed Faith," the question may quite properly be asked, "What does this mean?" Historically, the term comes from the Reformation. The Reformers looked upon themselves as returning to the Bible, and they described their faith as reformed according to the Word. They taught that the church should always be reforming itself to conform more and more to the Word with each generation.

This is a far cry from the modern idea that in order for a church to be Reformed, it must simply be constantly reforming itself, without any definite standard by which the reform is to be made. "Neo-orthodoxy" substitutes the subjective standard of man's concept of the "Word"—meaning their concept of Christ in place of the objective written Word found in the Scriptures.

The orthodox position has always maintained that Christ, the Incarnate Word, has given to us through His Holy Spirit, the written word of the Scriptures as the objective revelation of His guide for us in matters both of faith and practice. It is this commitment to the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice that is the foundation principle of the Reformed faith.

This has not always been understood. Some have wanted to assert the principle of the sovereignty of God, or predestination as the founding principle of Reformed theology. These doctrines are found in Scripture, and are therefore stressed by those who believe in Reformed theology. They do not constitute the basic principle of the Reformed faith, however. The Reformed Christian accepts the Bible as the authoritative work of God, the only rule of faith and practice. He submits to this authority, and endeavors to be true to the Scripture in all matters of his faith and life.

Though all evangelical branches of the Christian church acknowledge the Bible as God's Word, it has been in Reformed theology that we find the most consistent outworking of this principle of

submission to its absolute authority. The essence of this submission is to speak where the Bible speaks, and to be silent where the Bible is silent. This means that the Reformed Christian will believe whatever the Bible says. He is not to place his reason above the Bible, but to submit it to God's revelation.

When it is understood that the principle of Reformed theology is ultimately to let the Bible be the only rule for both faith and life, then one can see how Reformed Christianity has been described as "Christianity come into its own." In a sense, any form of Christianity that conforms to the Scripture is Reformed. Any failure in either faith or practice is a failure to be Christian, a failure to be reformed by the Word. To be Reformed then is to be biblical in the fullest sense of the word.

The RTS White House at time of campus purchase. The White House is the original Seminary building, serving as the initial home of classes as well as faculty and staff offices.

gelical denominations, would stand to benefit from a more consistent and self-conscious witness to Reformed orthodoxy.

Patterson went on, in his response to Story, to concede that "the term 'independence' has an annoying overtone for all of us who are of the Presbyterian tradition." And yet, he hastened to add, independent seminaries have effectively served the Presbyterian cause. Union Theological Seminary in New York had "unswervingly maintained [its liberal] testimony" under conditions of independency, without raising the ire of Presbyterians, and Reformed Seminary sought to do the same from a conservative perspective."

While Patterson's letter to Story was a careful study in diplomacy, he changed to a very direct tone when Story queried him about a rumor that racism lay behind the founding of Reformed Seminary: "The Board of Trustees of the Reformed Theological Seminary has moved to establish this seminary wholly from a theological point of view, and not at all from any particular racial point of view. The primary concern has been the view we maintain regarding the Bible, the Reformed faith, and evangelism. . . . The matter of race had NO part in the momentum that caused us to engage to establish this seminary."

In conclusion, Patterson assured Story, the seminary did not consist of "rabble-rousers or trouble-makers." Despite Patterson's plea and the careful efforts of the Executive Committee, the rumors found in this letter were frequently repeated, and Reformed Seminary was regularly charged with provoking unrest in the denomination. Within a year of the school's organization, yet another controversy threatened to fracture its small and precarious base of support. When the Synod of Mississippi launched an investigation into the teaching at Columbia Seminary, some defenders of Columbia wrongly accused Reformed Seminary of instigating the charges. When word of this rumor reached Nelson Bell, he was irate. "Belligerence, combativeness, and argumentativeness are not what we need today," he wrote in a letter to board member Horace Hull. "We need the demonstration of the power of the gospel in the lives of those who believe it and who stand for conservative faith, and we need this witness offered in love."

The Seminary agreed with Bell's plea, but found itself in a quandary regarding the proper way to respond to the false rumor. Patterson prevailed upon the Executive Committee to take no action, lest its pleading be wrongly interpreted and further damaging. In a February 16, 1966, letter to Robert Cannada, Patterson acknowledged that Reformed could not answer every charge laid at its doorstep:

"We had not expected easy sailing and 'loving understanding' in launching this good ship, RTS, and it will become more and more complex and aggravating. We cannot fight the war on every front which some 'charge' or 'criticism' may tempt us to. We have got to trust God with child-like simplicity, let the battle be the Lord's, and just constructively keep going in getting the school into operation. God will see us through for Jesus's sake."

Here again, Patterson's diplomacy was critical. The delicate political conditions surrounding its founding required the Seminary to proceed cautiously and deliberately. On the one hand, it made an aggressive and unapologetic presentation of Reformed theology. On the other hand, it sought to do so in a constructive and uncritical way. As hard as it tried, the Seminary did not always succeed in maintaining that difficult balancing act.

CONCLUSION

By the summer of 1966, much work had been accomplished. Supporters of the church had grown to 66 churches and 400 individuals. The board had acquired property, made progress in the development of a strong library, and recruited a faculty of five full-time professors: Morton Smith, Albert Freundt, James C. DeYoung, Jack Scott, and Richard A. Bodey.

In addition, several guest lecturers committed to help the Seminary in its first year. One of them was Dr. Robert F. Gribble, professor Emeritus of Old Testament from Austin Presbyterian Seminary. A 1914 graduate of Austin (a school founded by R.L. Dabney) and a professor at Austin Seminary for forty years, Gribble was a symbolic connection to Reformed Seminary's Presbyterian heritage. But Gribble was far more than window dressing. He, too, cast his energy

Statement of Belief and Covenant

Believing that there is but one only, the living and true God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, and with solemn awareness of accountability to Him in all that we feel, think, say and do, the undersigned engages in and subscribes to this declaration.

1 All Scripture is self-attesting and, being Truth, requires the human mind wholeheartedly to subject itself in all activities to the authority of Scripture complete as the Word of God, standing written in the sixty-six books of the Holy Bible, all therein being verbally inspired by Almighty God, and therefore without error.

2 Reformed Theology as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as originally adopted by the Presbyterian Church in the United States, is the system of doctrine taught in Scripture, and therefore is to be learned, taught, and proclaimed for the edification and government of Christian people for the propagation of the faith and for the evangelization of the world by the power of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3 And I do solemnly promise and engage not to inculcate, sanction, teach, or insinuate anything that appears to me to contradict or contravene, either directly or implicitly, any element in that system of doctrine.

4 Now therefore, the undersigned, in the presence of God, states that he consents, agrees and binds himself to all the foregoing without any reservation whatsoever, and that he further obligates himself immediately to notify in writing the Trustees should a change of any kind take place in his belief and feeling not in accord with this Statement. Amen.

into the life of the young school and impressed his students with his industrious study habits. (Because of his habit of falling asleep while studying the Bible, alumni recall his system of standing, sometimes for long hours, while conducting his studies.)

The school was clear as to its initial priorities. It sought to elevate the quality, character, and image of the Seminary and to avoid a provincial outlook and a segregationist reputation. It labored to win the confidence of the church even as it aimed for recognition in the academy.

Yet on the eve of opening its doors, Reformed Theological Seminary was still burdened by four uncertainties. Would the Seminary recruit sufficient numbers of students? (By the summer of 1966 it had secured the enrollment of only three students.) Would it manage to maintain and expand a quality faculty? Would it secure adequate financial support? Finally, and perhaps most haunting, because it would not be answered for at least two years, was this question: Would its graduates be accepted by presbyteries and find calls in churches?

Sam Patterson did not claim to have answers to any of these questions. "But one thing I do know," he reminded the Seminary's faculty, board, and friends. "God is able, and we are willing."

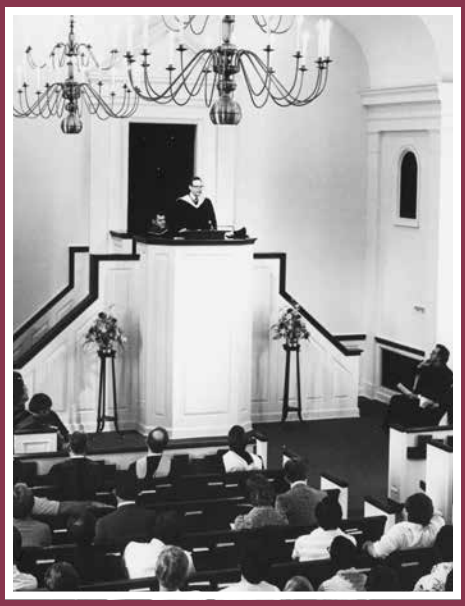
Chapter II · 1969 to 1983

The First Dozen Years

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in Jackson, Mississippi, located a mile east of the campus on Clinton Boulevard, was the host for the opening convocation of Reformed Theological Seminary, on September 6, 1966. The speaker, Dr. C. Darby Fulton, was a fitting choice. As a previous moderator of the PCUS General Assembly and former executive secretary of the Board of World Missions, Fulton's presence gave a measure of denominational sanction to the enterprise, and it symbolized the school's eagerness to work within the mainline Presbyterian Church. His well-chosen topic was the "Relevancy of the Gospel."

The Seminary was delighted that fourteen students had enrolled in the school, representing eight colleges and three denominations. (Three more students joined later in the academic year.) Despite the importance of recruiting students, Robert Cannada regularly sought to *dissuade* inquirers from enrolling: "I told them not to come unless they felt called of God. They had to come in faith that this is what the Lord wanted them to do." Prospective students needed to know that the Seminary was an experiment. It would not receive accreditation before its first class had graduated. Nor was there even a guarantee that the school would stay in business long enough for students to graduate.

Despite the long odds of success, students came to enroll. They came in faith as the board labored in faith. Also tested was the faith of the faculty. In the summer of 1966 Morton Smith and Albert Freundt were joined by three other full-time instructors: Richard Bodey (practical theology), James DeYoung (New Testament), and Jack Scott (Old Testament). Bodey pastored three Presbyterian churches and then taught at McKendree College in Illinois before joining the faculty. DeYoung was a Christian Reformed pastor in Omaha, Nebraska, and Scott was pastoring Mount Salus Presbyterian Church in nearby Clinton, Mississippi.



Grace Chapel was completed in 1971 and became the centerpiece of spiritual life on the Jackson campus and so remains today. The chapel, donated by original board member Robert Kennington, was built on the site previously occupied by "Tyrannus Hall," the building purchased when the Seminary outgrew the White House. Before the chapel's construction, students walked up the street to Westminster Presbyterian Church for chapel.

All of these men put their careers at risk in committing to serve at Reformed Seminary. Sam Patterson remembered their great courage, as the threat of censure and discipline loomed from the saber rattling of some synods. They threw themselves into the task of establishing academic policies and creating courses. The faculty worked hard, often meeting until midnight and then returning for early-morning classes. They supplemented their initial low salaries by filling pulpits in local churches on Sunday morning. All of them shouldered additional administrative responsibilities. For example, Freundt continued to oversee the development of the library until James Wagner was hired as full-time librarian in 1969, and Scott was the executive secretary of the faculty and registrar for the first several years. Morton Smith recalled that "there was probably more dedication and commitment the first year than in latter years, when things became more routine and regular."

Scott was a good example of the industrious work ethic of the founding faculty. For two years he commuted to Philadelphia on a weekly basis to earn his doctorate in Hebrew and Semitic languages at Dropsie College. Students devoured his classroom instruction, and he yielded to popular demand and offered evening studies for student wives. Before long, he was asked to write weekly Sunday school lessons for the local paper, the *Jackson Clarion Ledger.* He soon provided a similar weekly service for the *Presbyterian Journal.* By the time he finished writing for the *Clarion Ledger* in the late 1990s, he had composed over 2,500 Bible studies.

Sam Patterson remembered that a "close prayer and fellowship relationship existed" between the students, faculty, and the Executive Committee. "We were like a close-knit family," he added. Faculty members were invited to Executive Committee meetings, where they actively participated in dialogue and debate. (Though accreditors brought this practice to an end, even today Executive Committee meetings are open to Seminary administrators and senior staff, continuing a spirit of open communication throughout the institution.)

As the faculty and Executive Committee set out to carve academic policy, they were not always in complete agreement. For ex-

ample, in January 1967, the faculty recommended that the Seminary grant tenure to faculty after the fourth year of employment. The Executive Committee, however, was insistent on not granting tenure to its faculty, and the Seminary has always operated on the basis of one-year contracts.

Five part-time guest faculty also assisted in the first year of instruction. Sam Patterson taught a course in evangelism, and he was joined by Robert Strong (preaching), William McIlwaine (Old Testament and missions), and James Spencer (evangelism). Also lending a hand was Dr. Robert Francis Gribble, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. At a time when the Seminary had few friends among the denominational seminaries of the PCUS, the faculty took encouragement in Gribble's service, and acknowledged its gratitude in a resolution that it presented to Professor Gribble on November 16, 1966: "We love you for your willingness to become identified with this institution in its infancy, giving it the support of your reputation and maturity while its opponents are still more numerous than its friends. You will always be remembered by us as a beloved co-worker in the first quarter of the first year of the school's existence."

An early commencement at Westminster Presbyterian Church

The first classes were held in the White House, a building that served many different purposes in the life of the Seminary and became a beloved symbol of the Jackson campus. The faculty conducted chapel exercises in the largest room. Other bedrooms and sitting rooms on the first floor served as faculty offices. Professor Smith lived with his family on the second floor during that first year, and the library was housed in a detached garage. When the White House could not house all the needs of the Seminary, the Seminary purchased an adjacent building. Dubbed "Tyrannus Hall" by James DeYoung (after

Prayer of Dedication for Grace Chapel

Rev. Albert H. Freundt, Jr., Monday, May 31, 1971

OUR GOD AND HEAVENLY FATHER, who hast never left thyself without witnesses on earth, but by thy Spirit hast raised up prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and by the Son hast given to thy Church, some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Visit, we pray thee, with thy heavenly blessing this place built for instruction in and proclamation of thy Word. Make it, O God, a place sanctified unto thee to the name of Jesus Christ and "to the praise of the glory of his grace. "

We dedicate to thee this seminary chapel for the training of those who will preach this Gospel and this grace.

We thank thee for the faithful love and purpose that made this chapel possible, and for the consecrated life in whose memory it is given. So long as it stands make what is said and done in this place to be faithful and true to thy Word, that those who worship and study here may be prepared as thy servants to witness in Church and world, to thine honor and glory.

Grant what is said and done in thy Name, that it may have success beyond our endeavor; and grant to all so to learn of thee that our faith in thy Word, our trust in thee, our hope in thy promises, and our love to all men, may be renewed and enlarged, according to thy will.

Grant that what neither art nor costliness can make worthy for thy service may be hallowed by thy Word and blessing; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

Rev. Clayton Bell standing beside the plaque honoring his father, Dr. L. Nelson Bell at the 1975 dedication of the Biblical Studies Building named in his honor. Dr. L. Nelson Bell was the founder of The Presbyterian Journal *and the father-in-law of famed evangelist Billy Graham.*

Acts 19), the old home was a challenge. Jack Scott recalled that "many of the floors were giving way and the walls were not certain. . . . on a rainy day or windy day, it was a harrowing experience," and there were "running battles with mice, termites, cockroaches," and even an occasional rat.

Healthy academic routines were quickly established, such as a Winter Theological Institute, which brought J. I. Packer to campus in February 1967. Gifts, large and small, continued to arrive as the Seminary gradually built its donor base.

The Seminary's second year witnessed continued progress in the school's development. The student enrollment doubled to 34. Dr. O. Palmer Robertson, a son of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, joined the faculty as professor of Old Testament. Dr. L. Nelson Bell spoke at the opening convocation on September 7, 1967. This was another wise choice. In securing the services of the father-in-law of Billy Graham and the founder of the *Southern Presbyterian Journal,* Reformed Seminary further established its connections with the Southern Presbyterian renewal movement. Ground was broken for a new library building in November.

The seminary's connection with Westminster Seminary was reinforced with two special spring events. Cornelius Van Til, in the twilight of his illustrious career as professor of apologetics, visited the campus in the spring to deliver special lectures, and Edmund Clowney delivered the first commencement address in May, when Reformed Seminary proudly graduated its first class of three. After two years, the Seminary was pleased to witness the first fruits of its hard work, when three transfer students completed their degree programs: H. Timothy Fortner Jr., John Wade Long Jr., and Douglas H.

Miller. These graduates set a pattern that future alumni would emulate. Fortner and Long went on to pastoral ministries in Southern Presbyterian churches, and Miller served for many years as a Presbyterian missionary in France.

PROMOTING THE SCHOOL

The Seminary was eager for positive publicity, but it was slow to come at first, even from renewal-minded conservative Presbyterians. Suspicions continued to linger that the Seminary would be a divisive element within the conservative element in the PCUS. Concerned Presbyterians feared the Seminary's association with the Synod of Mississippi and other voices of the Deep South. After Albert Freundt and Jack Scott attended the "Presbyterian Journal Day" (an annual rally for conservative voices in the church) in the summer of 1967, they reported back to the Executive Committee the decision by the Concerned Presbyterians that it would not commend any project "which could not be heartily agreed upon by all the broad conservative movement." While other efforts received their support, such as the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship and the Pensacola Theological Institute, there remained an arm's-length approach to the Seminary. As carefully as Reformed Seminary proceeded, it was still perceived as a provocative step. It took time to win the full support and confidence of Southern Presbyterian conservatives.

Finally, on October 29, 1969, RTS received long-overdue exposure with a cover story in the *Presbyterian Journal*. The extended article addressed some lingering misconceptions through a question-and-answer format that included these concerns:

> ***Was the Reformed Theological Seminary founded for the purpose of continuing segregation?***
>
> **The Reformed Theological Seminary was established for theological reasons only. The Seminary treats each application on the basis of the quality of the applicant and does not make race a consideration for admission of a student.**

Is Reformed Theological Seminary separatist in intention?
Reformed Theological Seminary believes in and teaches a high view of the visible Church. The seminary is not schismatic. To the contrary, it is our hope to train men for the gospel ministry who will seek to serve in the established Churches of their choice.

Ultimately, the best publicity that the Seminary received was from graduates who were settling in to Presbyterian pastorates. These men spoke warmly of the ministerial preparation they received from Reformed Seminary. One characteristic expression came from Wayne C. Herring (the son-in-law of founding board member Frank Horton):

> *As a recent graduate of the school, I can witness to a magnificent work of grace in my heart while there. Upon entering, my shallow Arminian presuppositions were challenged in love and I settled into a serious study of God's Word. Professors took a personal interest and patiently dealt with all queries. The Bible was held up to be authoritative and infallible in all matters of faith and practice. The Reformed theology of the Westminster Standards was vigorously taught and defended in every class, as it applied to each particular subject. All viewpoints, both liberal and conservative, were studied but the consistency and truthfulness of God's Word remained foremost. Above all, the sovereignty of God was presented as the central tenet of Biblical Christianity alongside the related doctrines of absolute predestination and unconditional election. As time moved on, I found myself deeply affected by such teaching and the Holy Spirit began to illumine me to the beauty of the Reformed faith. Opportunities for service and preaching in the local community were often and during my second year I began working with a small voluntary group of Christians on a nearby junior college campus. What a joy that was! The evangelical mission and passion of the seminary remained uppermost in all the school's activities and instruction. Through it all I found my heart warmed to a love for the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus, and communicating the glorious gospel as never before.*

CAMPUS LIFE

Herring's testimony underscored the evangelistic and missionary character of the Seminary in its early years. In the spring of 1967, Reformed students followed a venerable Southern Presbyterian tradition in forming a Society for Missionary Inquiry. For many years, this was a thriving organization on the Jackson campus. It sponsored a fall Missions Institute, formed a quartet to provide special music for Seminary functions and local churches, conducted regular prayer meetings on campus, and raised financial support for summer missions projects.

This student-led initiative raised the consciousness of the school in the area of world missions, and the faculty provided encouragement in a variety of ways. Morton Smith authored a study on "Reformed Evangelism" that outlined a self-consciously Reformed approach to witness-bearing, and the faculty taught the "Evangelism Explosion" methods developed by Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Mr. Robert Kennington, founding board member, donated Grace Chapel in memory of his wife, Nancy.

The spiritual life of the Seminary was enhanced in 1971 when "Tyrannus Hall" gave way to Grace Chapel. No longer did faculty and students have to walk up the street to Westminster Presbyterian Church, where chapel exercises were conducted. Grace Chapel, which was donated by founding board member Robert Kennington in memory of his wife, was a stately red-brick chapel styled in the tradition of historic Williamsburg architecture. The bell was cast in bronze from a centuries-old foundry in the Netherlands, and the spire that rose above the bell tower became a campus landmark.

With seating for 300, the interior evoked the simplicity of Reformed worship. Red carpets, antique bass chandeliers, pews of white and dark woods, and a raised pulpit connected worshipers with their Reformed and Presbyterian heritage. William W. Wymond, a 1970 graduate of the Seminary, supervised the design and construction of the eight-rank pipe organ. On the evening of the May 31, 1971 dedica-

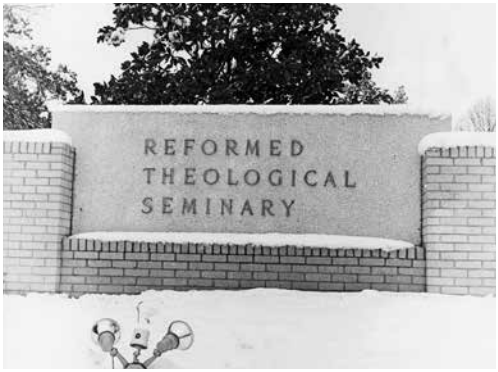
tion, the chapel was used for the school's fourth graduation exercises. William Childs Robinson, professor emeritus of Columbia Seminary, gave an appropriate address on "How to Hold Our Heritage."

The physical plant continued to grow, and the purchase of adjacent property expanded the campus from fourteen to fifty-two acres (a little over half its present size). Married student apartments and a new campus bookstore opened in 1973, and in 1975 the Biblical Studies building was dedicated to the memory of L. Nelson Bell, who passed away in 1973.

In 1978 the Seminary broke ground for the Dean Christian Education Center (named in honor of board member David Dean). In addition to faculty offices and classroom space, the center included a gymnasium/auditorium, and for a time it included a nursery and preschool to provide field experience for Christian Education students. It was the school's ultimate ambition for the building to house a School of Christian Education that would complement a School of Theology.

STRUGGLES WITH THE PCUS

In its early years the Seminary struggled to maintain a good relationship with the Southern Presbyterian Church. An overture presented to the 1966 General Assembly questioned the propriety of ministers in the denomination laboring on behalf of the independent Seminary. The 1967 General Assembly responded in good Presbyterian fashion: it refused to rule on the matter, indicating this was a matter for presbyteries to decide. Every Presbyterian member of the faculty, had, in fact, received permission from either the Central or Southern Mississippi Presbyteries to "labor out of bounds" at the Seminary. A further General Assembly ruling in the following year permitted presbyteries to receive Reformed graduates as ministerial candidates. These were two crucial victories for the Seminary; failure to secure them could have doomed the school to failure. Seminary graduates found calls within the conservative presbyteries of the church, and the Seminary took pride in the high numbers of graduates who went into the pastoral ministry.



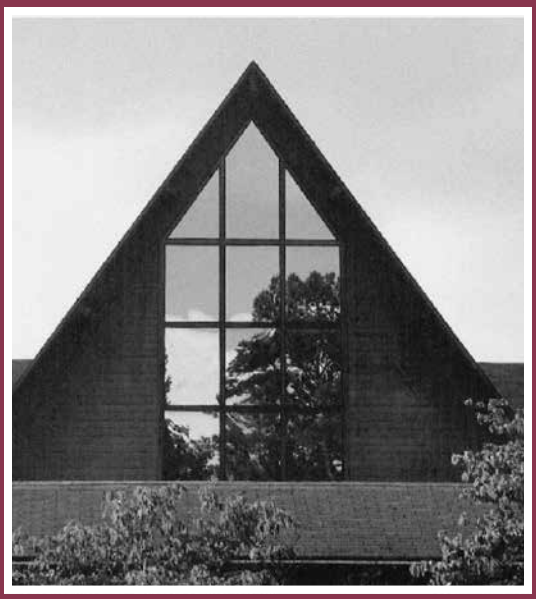
The original sign of the Seminary. This was a rare Jackson snow.

The Seminary's struggles with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. factored into its efforts to attain accreditation, a goal that proved to be an arduous undertaking. In February 1966, the accrediting commission of the state of Mississippi authorized the school to offer the Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degree. (Following the pattern of other North American seminaries, Reformed changed the name of the degree to Master of Divinity [M.Div.] in 1971.) By the beginning of the Seminary's second year, it began to explore membership in the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS—a name later shortened to ATS) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

On June 29, 1970, the AATS granted the Seminary associate membership. The AATS also advised the Seminary to alter its governance if it sought full membership; its standards required the appointment of a president. In compliance with that standard, the Seminary appointed Sam Patterson as the school's first president on March 10, 1975. Three months later, the AATS granted the school pre-accreditation status, and by December 1975, it achieved the same status from SACS.

By 1970, conservatives in the church were coming to different assessments about the state of the seminaries and the future of the Southern Presbyterian Church. The faculty and board of the Seminary produced a position statement to reiterate its standing with respect to other seminaries in the church:

1. *Our endeavor in Reformed Theological Seminary is intended to be a positive contribution to the well-being of the Church. Reformed Theological Seminary is designed to be a positive*



The First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America met December 4-7, 1973, at the original Briarwood Presbyterian Church, in Birmingham, Alabama.

> *educational institution promoting a theological point of view consistent with the historic Reformed faith.*
>
> 2. *It is our desire that our existence and continued contribution not be interpreted in any way as divisive or schismatic in intent or purpose. We recognize that some may judge our very existence as a negative criticism of existing institutions. However, it has been our policy self-consciously to present our program in a positive way without criticism of other institutions.*

Within the Seminary community, passions were high regarding the fate of the Southern Presbyterian Church, and there were advocates for leading in the formation of a new church, along with voices for staying in the existing denomination. Despite strongly held sentiments, a remarkable unity prevailed within the Seminary, and the debate did not fracture the school.

A NEW DENOMINATION

Reformed Seminary sought to infiltrate the Southern Presbyterian Church with biblical orthodoxy, and its hope of winning a hearing for historic Christianity in the denomination was achieving success. Churches throughout the South, with Reformed graduates as pastors, grew in their love for and commitment to the Reformed faith. Seminary leaders did not intend for their efforts to lead to a new denomination, but they were surprised and disappointed at the intransigence of the denominational establishment.

While placing its emphasis on working within established churches, the renewal movement in the Southern Presbyterian Church, much like the Northern church in the 1930s, eventually reached a crossroads. Sentiment was divided between those who believed the time had come to separate and form a new church and those who still felt called to work toward "renewal from within."

Caught in the middle of this debate, with friends and supporters on both sides of the question, Reformed Theological Seminary adopted a position of neutrality on the issue. It would not voice an

opinion on denominational direction, but it declared its full sympathy with those who were dedicated to "the preservation of a Presbyterian church that is true to the principles on which the PCUS and the seminary were founded."

All eyes of the church were focused on a series of actions that took place in 1973, when a joint committee of Northern and Southern Presbyterians were to present a plan of union. In February of that year, the committee made the surprise request that it be given two more years to continue its work, with a report to follow in 1975. Rumors spread that the delay would enable liberals in the church to present a plan that would not include a promised "escape clause" for congregations not wishing to join the united church.

Conservatives quickly mobilized by convening a convocation of sessions on May 18 in Atlanta, followed by an advisory convention in Asheville, North Carolina, on August 7. These meetings led to the First General Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church on December 4, 1973. (Within a year the name of the church was changed to the Presbyterian Church in America.)

The precautions that the Executive Committee exercised in the interest of ecclesiastical diplomacy included silence on the part of the faculty regarding the volatile denominational developments. However, the faculty appealed to the Executive Committee that this policy was unworkable, and the policy was lifted. At the same time, the school's efforts to carefully avoid the reputation of being troublemakers in the church succeeded to a remarkable extent. There was no denominational advocacy from any official pronouncement from the faculty or the board, and the Seminary was steadfast in its goal to develop Reformed preachers for many denominations.

Although its official position of neutrality preserved trust with friends in both camps, the Seminary had an undeniable influence on the new denomination. Looking back, Morton Smith observed that the PCA "would not have had anywhere near its ministerial strength, had it not been for RTS." (Twenty percent of the teaching elders enrolled at the first General Assembly of the PCA [36 of 180] were graduates of Reformed Seminary, which was only seven years old at the

time.) Smith himself enlisted in the work of the new denomination, serving as its first stated clerk.

Yet the Seminary did not abandon the original purpose of its founding. Instead it saw itself with two constituencies after 1973 and expressed its willingness to serve both denominations. The president, Sam Patterson, remained in the PCUS and passionately called others to do the same. It was not the time to leave, he argued, but a time to continue the renewal work from within. To leave now would be to distort Martin Luther's words from "Here I stand" to "Here I split." Patterson also offered the Northern Presbyterian controversy up as an example: "To seek reform, revival and even regeneration from God for the erring church may bring rejection and expelling. If so, then the erring ones are the 'dividers.'" Patterson went so far as to recommend that the Executive Committee take the unusual step of forbidding Presbyterian students to change their denominational affiliation while enrolled at the Seminary. The Executive Committee rejected this suggestion, rightly regarding it as an infringement on freedom of conscience as well as impossible to enforce.

ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIANS

Another denominational constituency opened up to the Seminary in its early years when several ministerial candidates from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP) began to attend Reformed, identifying it as the institution that Erskine Theological Seminary in South Carolina formerly was. These students quickly established themselves as among the brightest in the student body, and their influence encouraged classmates to consider ministry in the ARP as an alternative to the PCA-PCUS warfare. For a time an ARP student fellowship was established on campus. This fueled concerns among some Erskine loyalists in the ARP that Reformed Seminary was sanctioning schismatic behavior and even "guerilla tactics" within the ARP, but visits to the campus by denominational officials quieted these fears.

So many Reformed graduates found pulpits in the ARP that by 1975 the Seminary could boast of having produced about ten per-

cent of the denomination's ministerial membership. These were conservative young men who helped to redirect the ARP away from its flirtation with neo-orthodoxy in the late sixties and early seventies. Some observers have gone on to claim that Reformed was instrumental in returning the ARP to its historic Presbyterian heritage. Reformed Seminary alumni held key denominational posts, such as Jim Corbitt (Outreach North America) and John Carson (who was President of Erskine College and Seminary for seven years).

TRANSITIONS

By its tenth anniversary, the Seminary could point to many signs of institutional strength. The faculty had grown from five to 18 (representing five denominations), and the student body had expanded to 264. The school's budget increased ten-fold, from $110,000 to $1,082,000. The high priority placed on developing a quality library paid dividends, with a collection numbering over 40,000 volumes. The Seminary convened its twelfth academic year in 1977 with the attainment of accreditation from the ATS, the culmination of a ten-year process led by academic dean James DeYoung.

The school's expansion included the addition of new master's programs. The Master of Missiology (M.M.) degree was designed to develop missionary leaders in four fields: world missions, evangelism, church renewal, and church planting. The Master of Education (M.Ed.) offered a graduate degree primarily for public school teachers in an innovative program that involved a summer curriculum. The M.Ed., together with the Master of Christian Education (M.C.E.) program, increased the number of women students. When neither the M.M. nor M.Ed. programs succeeded in recruiting sufficient enrollments, however, they were terminated. Still, they demonstrated the experimental and even risk-taking character of the Seminary that would bear fruit in future ventures.

Over the first ten years the faculty experienced significant changes. Additions in 1970 included George Fuller (practical theology), Allan Killen (philosophy and ethics), and Daniel Morse (Hebrew). Two prominent Southern Presbyterian churches provided professors of

practical theology: William Stanway came from First Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and Robert Strong came from Trinity Presbyterian Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

No faculty appointment in those early years proved more significant than Simon J. Kistemaker's. Born in the Netherlands in 1930, Kistemaker immigrated with his family to Hamilton, Ontario, shortly after World War II. After studies at Calvin College and Seminary and the Free University of Amsterdam, he served on the faculty of Dordt College from 1963 to 1971. In 1971 he began a long and influential association with Reformed Seminary that lasted four decades. Gerard Van Groningen joined the faculty in Old Testament in 1973, having served Christian Reformed churches in Michigan and Australia, and taught at the Reformed Theological College in Australia for 10 years. Luder G. Whitlock was hired in practical theology in 1975. New appointments in the following year included John Richard DeWitt (theology) and Paul Kooistra (Christian education). In 1977 Elmer Dortzbach (pastoral care) joined the faculty, bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of gerontology, and Richard Watson (Christian education) came on board, later to serve a long tenure as academic dean.

The first of the early faculty to leave was Palmer Robertson, who accepted an appointment at Westminster Seminary in 1972. Richard Bodey returned to the pastorate in 1973 and later joined the faculty at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois. James Wagner, who had served the Seminary as librarian since 1969, resigned in 1977 to labor in a PCA mission work in Belize. In 1977 Jack Scott resigned from the Jackson faculty to devote himself full time to the PCA Committee on Christian Education and Publication. Over seven years he wrote an entire curriculum in his 36-volume Adult Bible Education Series, surveying the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. This was a remarkable accomplishment that multiplied Scott's influence, as Seminary alumni eagerly employed the material in their churches. One minister provided this testimony to Scott in 2005: "You are still my teacher, and I am still your student."

Also in 1977, Morton Smith ended thirteen years of service

when he announced that he had "answered the call of my church" by becoming the full-time stated clerk of the PCA. (Smith had served part-time in this capacity since the church's founding in 1973.) Smith's departure from the Seminary established a pattern that other faculty followed. Years later, Roy Taylor and Michael Glodo both left teaching posts at Reformed to become stated clerks of the PCA and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, respectively. Church historian Albert Freundt served for many years as the stated clerk both of the Synod of Mississippi and the Central Mississippi Presbytery of the PCUS. All of these men demonstrated the high churchmanship of the Seminary faculty in their dedicated service to the institutional church.

A noteworthy feature of the faculty at the end of the decade was its strong Dutch influence, including James DeYoung, Simon Kistemaker, Gerard Van Groningen, Willem VanGemeren, and Richard DeWitt. (No fewer than four of its early faculty had earned doctorates from the Free University of Amsterdam: Kistemaker, DeWitt, DeYoung, and Smith.) While the school continued an emphasis on its Southern Presbyterian heritage, it was more than perpetuating a tradition; it was also exposing its students to the riches and depths of international Calvinism, combining Scottish and Dutch schools of Reformed thought. Stimulating guests who lectured on campus included Carl F.H. Henry, Al Martin, George Marsden, John Perkins, R.J. Rushdoony, Ronald Sider, and R.C. Sproul of Ligonier Ministries, whose association with Reformed Seminary began with a week of special lectures on the holiness of God in the spring of 1978.

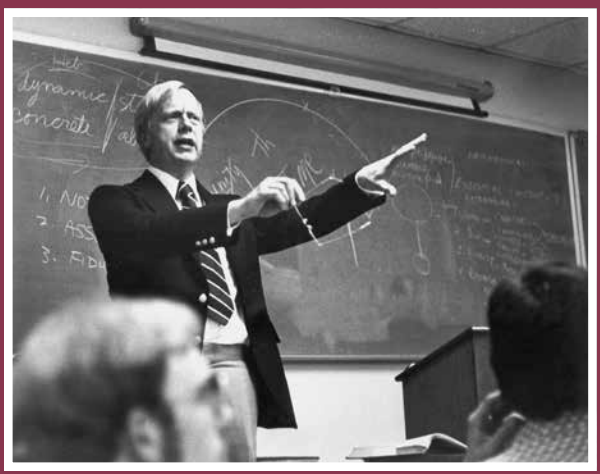
Meanwhile, Sam Patterson's passion for renewal in the mainline church placed strains on the office of the president as the school grew increasingly influential in the PCA. In 1978, he resigned his presidential post to take up other duties for the seminary. As "Special Representative of RTS for Pan-Presbyterian relations," Patterson continued to work quietly in the background as he always had. In his new role he could devote himself to the burden of seeing the Seminary continue to serve as an instrument of renewal in the Southern church. By relinquishing the chief administrative officer posi-

On Sam Patterson

John R. DeWitt

Senior Pastor, Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee, April 1987

"I came to know and to love Sam Patterson during my own years as a teacher at Reformed Theological Seminary. He was a man full of love for Christ, full of love also for others. He did nothing with a greater zest and enthusiasm than preaching the gospel. No sectarian, Sam believed in attempting the reform of the church from within. It was with a degree of sadness and disillusionment that he saw the seminary he had founded become the servant of the Presbyterian Church in America more than it was the Presbyterian Church (USA). Whether Sam was right that the church actually could be changed from within remains to be seen. Certainly there is little evidence that the situation has changed for the better in the more than twenty years since Reformed Seminary came into being. What is beyond dispute, however, is his heartfelt devotion to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ."



Dr. John R. DeWitt, professor of Systematic Theology at RTS, 1976-1983

tion, Patterson sought to draw less attention to himself as mainline Presbyterians north and south moved closer to a reunion that they would consummate in 1983.

Patterson's decision did not surprise his close friends. He had never planned to hold the position long, personally regarding himself as an interim president in those three years. It was characteristic of his understated ways that he declined an inauguration ceremony.

In searching for Patterson's successor it was natural for the Executive Committee to look for candidates within the faculty. The surprising turn that it took was its decision to select a new faculty member to the post, Luder G. Whitlock, assistant professor of practical theology. Patterson gave the appointment his enthusiastic endorsement: "He is a minister, scholar, committed Reformed theologian, earnest evangelist." A native Floridian with degrees from the University of Florida, Westminster Seminary, and Vanderbilt University, Whitlock came to Reformed Seminary after several years of pastoral ministry in Florida and Tennessee churches.

CONTROVERSY

Whitlock's tenure commenced at the end of a painful controversy at Reformed Seminary. In 1977 the Seminary hired Greg L. Bahnsen as assistant professor of apologetics and ethics, succeeding Alan Killen. Bahnsen was a brilliant student of apologetics in the presuppositional tradition of Cornelius Van Til, but his theonomic approach to the application of Old Testament ethics for the contemporary church immediately placed him at the center of controversy. In the year prior to his appointment, his massive, 600-page book, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics,* was published. Faculty colleagues and Executive Committee members spent hours with Bahnsen in an unsuccessful effort to dissuade him of his theonomic convictions. Paul Fowler, professor of New Testament, wrote a lengthy critique, *God's Law Freed from Legalism.*

At the end of Bahnsen's first year, the Executive Committee was convinced that his theonomic convictions were incompatible with the Seminary's confessional standards. Accordingly, the Executive

Committee granted Bahnsen a leave of absence for a year, after which his contract was not renewed. Bahnsen's several friends and supporters within the student body were outraged at the Executive Committee's actions. Many of these students transferred to other schools, believing that the faculty was unwilling or unable to answer Bahnsen's arguments.

Dr. Luder G. Whitlock, second president of Reformed Theological Seminary, 1978-2001

Only slightly less controversial was an episode involving another faculty member at this time. Guy Oliver's instruction in missions took on a growing interest in evangelical social action that some thought entailed sympathy for elements of liberation theology (while critical of other features). Despite his denials, the Executive Committee believed it had evidence to support the charge, and his contract was not renewed either.

Whitlock's first challenge as president was to shore up the Seminary's weakened reputation. Although the school sought to terminate these professors quietly, both left publicly, stirring sentiments within the student body and filing grievances with the Association of Theological Schools that threatened the school's hard-won accreditation. When the ATS was satisfied that the Seminary acted in accordance with its constitution and bylaws, the grievances were denied. However, other accreditation conflicts led to the ATS placing the Seminary on probation.

Accreditation was not the worst of it. The defections of churches from the PCUS to the PCA created tensions between the PCUS and the Seminary, even though several faculty members remained in the mainline church. While PCUS student enrollment maintained high levels for a time, it began to decline by the end of the decade. Fewer contributions came from PCUS churches, and by 1978 the total number of the Seminary's supporting churches dropped significant-

ly. The Seminary experienced serious financial challenges, and this during a period of high inflation. In the midst of this struggle the Seminary suffered a key loss when Dr. John Richard DeWitt resigned and returned to pastoral ministry at Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis.

As Whitlock later summarized his early years as president, he evoked the title of Morton Smith's book on Southern Presbyterianism: "The gold had become dim." The Seminary was in danger of disappointing its hopeful and generous constituency. For some, the early progress of the school seemed to degenerate into disillusionment. The school needed to strengthen its faculty, rebuild its donor base, and develop new constituencies.

Others might have shirked from the challenge. The Seminary's Board of Trustees, now equipped with a youthful and energetic president, eagerly embraced it.

Chapter III · 1983 to Mid-1990s

From Regional Seminary to National Presence

FROM THE START, Reformed Theological Seminary was an independent school with an ecclesiastical agenda. This purpose resulted in a fluid, two-way dialogue between institutions. As the Seminary sought to serve as an agent of renewal in the church, it was itself inevitably shaped by developments within American Presbyterian denominations. In the early 1980s three significant changes in the ecclesiastical landscape reconfigured the identity and direction of the school.

Grace Chapel in Jackson features a raised pulpit signifying the lifting up of the Word of God.

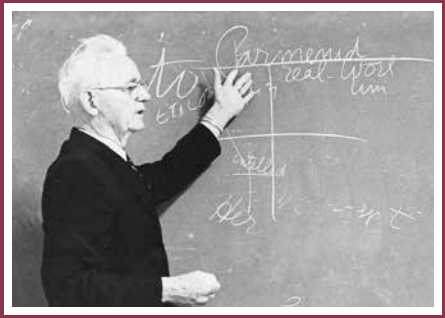
In 1983, the Seminary and the PCUS (the denomination in which it originally focused its renewal efforts) found themselves at greater distance when Southern and Northern Presbyterians, after 122 years of separation, reunited to form the Presbyterian Church (USA). Some Seminary faculty remained in the mainline church after the reunion. However, the Seminary recruited fewer students from the PC(USA), which in turn looked at Reformed Seminary less as a threat to its official seminaries and its donor base.

As noted in the previous chapter, Reformed Seminary had developed a close relationship with the Presbyterian Church in America with the founding of that denomination in 1973. Within a decade many had come to regard Reformed, though independent, as the unofficial seminary of the PCA. But that perception changed somewhat in 1982 when the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (a denomination formed in 1965 with the merger of two small northern Presbyterian bodies) united with the Presbyterian Church

in America through a process known as "Joining and Receiving." As a result of that merger, the nine-year old PCA inherited an official seminary when Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis (founded in 1955) came under PCA control and oversight.

Gradually, Reformed Seminary became perceived less as the de facto seminary of the PCA. Though it continued to serve the denomination and train many of its ministers, Luder Whitlock and the board sought to establish a constituency that extended beyond the former PCUS and the PCA. As previously noted, one fruitful connection was the Seminary's relationship with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Another new constituency arose with the establishment of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in 1981, on the eve of the mainline Presbyterian reunion. A dozen renewal-minded congregations in the Northern Presbyterian Church united to establish the EPC in the wake of the ecclesiastical trial of Mansfield Kaseman. Kaseman was a United Church of Christ minister seeking to transfer into the Northern Presbyterian Church. During his presbytery examination he denied the deity of Christ. After the General Assembly upheld Kaseman's ordination against a judicial complaint, these conservative churches, previously committed to renewing the mainline church, determined that this decision forced their exodus. Because these conservative Presbyterians were open to the ordination of women and the practice of charismatic gifts, they were without a denomination with which to reaffiliate.

President Whitlock and the board used these ecclesiastical developments to guide the Seminary through significant transitions. For example, Charlie Moore, a ruling elder at Central Presbyterian Church (EPC) in St. Louis, joined the board, part of the Seminary's effort to reach out to the new denomination. Over the course of the next decade, Reformed Seminary would shed its regional image in several important respects: it would appear less Southern, less narrowly Presbyterian, and more expansive in its Reformed self-consciousness. This shift in the Seminary's identity was crucial in preparing the school for the expansion it would experience in the years to follow.



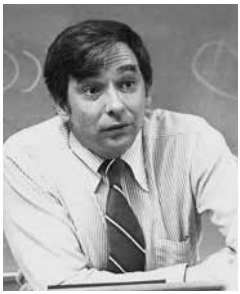
[Clockwise from upper left] ***Dr. Simon Kistemaker,*** *Professor of New Testament (standing) and* ***Dr. James DeYoung****, Professor of New Testament (seated);* ***Dr. Cornelius Van Til****, Professor of Apologetics, Westminster Seminary, guest teaching;* ***Dr. R.C. Sproul****, Professor of Systematic Theology;* ***Dr. Norman Harper****, Professor Christian Education;* ***Dr. Knox Chamblin****, Professor of New Testament;* ***Dr. Al Fruendt****, Professor of Church History.*

RTS BULLETIN

By 1982, the Seminary was taking the offensive. In that year, the 16-year old school had obtained fully accredited status with the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (bringing to an end a period of associate status). It enrolled more than 300 students and had $5 million invested in its physical plant. Six hundred alumni were serving in 35 states and 17 foreign countries. The sense that 1982 began a new chapter in the seminary was confirmed by the advent of the school's quarterly newsletter. *RTS Bulletin* was a glossy, full-color promotion of the school to its growing constituency.

Volume one, number one featured an interview with R. C. Sproul, director of the Ligonier Valley Study Center in western Pennsylvania. Sproul's parachurch ministry sought to provide the "missing middle" between Sunday school and seminary training. Sproul believed that Ligonier and other Reformed and Presbyterian organizations were particularly poised to contribute to the evangelical movement in America:

> *Presbyterians in their heritage and because of their theology understand Christianity not just as a religion but as a life and worldview. The strong centrality and strength of our doctrine is that the sovereignty of God leads us in our heritage to believe that God reigns over all of life, and that all dimensions of society should manifest in some way or another the impact of the kingdom of God. Their theology sends them out of the church and into the world.*



R.C. Sproul, director of the Ligonier Valley Study Center, became an adjunct professor of systematic theology at Reformed Seminary in 1978 and his involvement steadily increased over the next decade.

Sproul, a student of John Gerstner at Pittsburgh Seminary and a graduate of the Free University of Amsterdam, became an adjunct professor of systematic theology at Reformed Seminary in 1978. His involvement in the Seminary steadily increased over the course of the next decade. A generous endowment fund from the Ligonier Valley Study Center expanded the acquisition of library resources at Reformed Seminary for several years; the library

also established a special media center for Ligonier Study Center audio and video tapes.

By the end of 1982, the Seminary extended a regular appointment to Sproul as professor of systematic theology. While continuing his ministry with the Study Center, Sproul agreed to replace John R. DeWitt, who left the seminary that year to return to the pastorate. Under this new arrangement Sproul began to make regular visits every spring semester to teach systematic theology. The following year, Sproul renamed his organization Ligonier Ministries and relocated it near Orlando, Florida, a move that would deepen his ties to the Seminary.

The *RTS Bulletin* regularly featured interviews with church leaders, Bible studies by the Seminary faculty, devotional articles on Christian disciplines such as prayer, Bible reading and Sabbath-keeping, as well as articles on alumni serving in youth, campus, prison, and other ministries. Among the ministries with which the school took particular pride was Reformed University Ministries, which was begun by alumnus Mark Lowrey in 1974 on the campus of Southern Mississippi University in Hattiesburg. The college ministry grew within a decade to 16 campuses throughout the Southeast, as Lowrey teamed up with Bebo Elkin, another Reformed Seminary alumnus. Now the denominational campus ministry of the PCA, it has established chapters on over 100 campuses across the United States. Setting it apart from other campus ministries was its commitment to Reformed theology, leadership by ordained ministers, and a close working relationship with local congregations.

In a 1982 president's column, Whitlock posed this question on the eve of the mainline Presbyterian reunion: "What is the Future of American Presbyterianism?" As he predicted both continuing mainline Presbyterian decline alongside growth in conservative Presbyterianism, Whitlock found particular hope in the contribution that Reformed Seminary could make. "Healthy, thriving churches," he wrote, "are the primary goal of our educational efforts and the only true measure of our effectiveness."

And so *RTS Bulletin* took regular focus on one of Whitlock's passions: aggressive church planting. The cover of the inaugural issue featured alumnus Bernie Kuiper and his Village Seven Church in Colorado Springs, which offered "scratch-where-it-itches" preaching. Soon to follow were stories on Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and Perimeter Church in Atlanta, pastored by alumnus Randy Pope. These were model churches that offered extensive programs and carefully crafted "philosophy-of-ministry" statements.

Whitlock saw Reformed Seminary as a servant for the church planting movement, and he pioneered the expansion of a development office to promote the ways in which the Seminary could serve Reformed churches. A strategic appointment took place in 1985 when a recent graduate of the Seminary, Lynwood C. Perez, was hired as the director of development. Perez teamed with William Robinson, who shifted his efforts toward deferred giving.

Under Whitlock's direction, new programs were launched. The Master of Arts was unveiled in 1981, with concentrations in several areas of specialization, including biblical studies, theology, marriage and family therapy, and missiology. The Seminary also launched a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program that combined advanced instruction and continuing education for seasoned pastors. In 1985, a Master of Theology (Th.M.) program commenced, providing M.Div. graduates with opportunities for advanced study in biblical studies and theology. Even more ambitiously, the faculty voted in 1987 to commit itself to a Ph.D. program in Old and New Testament studies (although this dream never came to fruition).

The Seminary's spirit of experimentation required a willingness to acknowledge when programs did not succeed. In 1988, the board decided to discontinue its Master of Education program. This innovative program, the brainchild of professor Norman Harper, entailed intensive summer courses that allowed Christian and public school teachers to earn a degree over the course of several years without relinquishing their teaching posts. The popular Harper was a "master teacher" in the assessment of his students, and his command-

ing classroom presence was joined by a dry and self-effacing sense of humor. After it failed to attract a sufficient number of students, the program (and its accompanying library) was moved to Covenant College, and Reformed Seminary reoriented its Christian education courses to focus on educational ministry in the church.

In order to support these programs Whitlock was committed to the ongoing development of the Seminary library; he continued to make the library a central part of the life of the institution. In 1981, the Seminary library joined SOLINET (the Southeastern Library Network) through which it accessed the Online Computer Library Consortium database for cataloging and interlibrary loan services. In 1984, the library appointed Thomas Reid as librarian with faculty status. Under his direction the library (by now over 65,000 volumes) continued to expand at a rate of over 3,000 volumes per year, with special strengths in European monographs. In 1987, the faculty commended Reid and his staff for their "cheerful and efficient library services." The Jackson library has since grown to become one of the finest theological research libraries in the Southeast.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Whitlock's efforts to expand the programs and services of the Seminary and his makeover of its promotional efforts were secondary, however, to his primary objective. The Seminary could not truly advance into a school of national prominence unless he poured his efforts into faculty recruitment. "The key to fully achieving our goal," Whitlock wrote in 1983, "is access to the kind of faculty excellence that will attract and equip students as well as rally the support of pastors and churches."

Many faces joined the faculty in the 1980s. Old Testament professor Ralph Davis arrived in 1981 from nearby Belhaven College. Davis joined Willem VanGemeren, whose scholarly accomplishments included his labors in the production of the New King James Version of the Bible. Davis' first tour of duty on the Reformed faculty ended in 1984, when he answered the call to re-enter the pastorate. Ten years later he rejoined the Jackson faculty. During both

stints he authored several expository commentaries on Old Testament historical books.

Knox Chamblin also came from Belhaven College in 1981 to teach New Testament. In addition to his specialization in Pauline theology, Chamblin taught a popular course on C. S. Lewis for many years. In that same year Paul Long, a veteran of 27 years in foreign missions in the Congo and Brazil, became professor of missions. Reginald McLelland was added in 1982 as assistant professor of ethics and apologetics, along with Richard Watson, who was appointed as academic dean, succeeding James DeYoung, who returned full time to the classroom.

Among Whitlock's most important recruits was Douglas Kelly in 1983. A graduate of the University of North Carolina and Union Seminary in Virginia, Kelly went on to earn his doctorate in theology from the University of Edinburgh. He returned to pastor First Presbyterian Church of Dillon, South Carolina. He quickly distinguished himself as the author of several books, including a translation of Calvin's sermons on 2 Samuel and studies on the Westminster Confession. Kelly faithfully continued to represent the Southern Presbyterian tradition in his classroom. Reformed Seminary students were regularly catechized in the five "C's," mastering Kelly's mnemonic that theology at its best was Calvinian, conservative, Caledonian, Confederate, and Carolinian.

Between Simon Kistemaker's Dutch accent and Kelly's Southern drawl, the institution had articulate representation from both the Dutch and Scottish antecedents of the American Reformed tradition. These two pillars engaged in good-natured jostling about the virtues of their ancestry. Kelly remembers how he eventually tired of his colleague's ethnic pride: "Dr. Kistemaker would always boast that 'If you were not Dutch, you were not much!' I finally had enough and said, 'Simon, if you're not Scotch, you're sober!'"

Kistemaker was among the most beloved professors in the history of the school. He taught in Jackson for 25 years, after which he "retired" to Central Florida, where he served at the Orlando campus for 15 years. On both campuses, Kistemaker distinguished

What Does It Mean to be "Reformed"?

Luder G. Whitlock, 1983

Occasionally, someone will ask, "What is the meaning of 'Reformed'?" That question delights me because it gives me an opportunity to explain the nature and purpose of RTS. The name "Reformed" obviously reveals a heritage in the Reformation and the inception of Protestantism.

The Reformation insisted on the final authority of Scripture rather than tradition or reason. Therefore, we view the Bible as God's inerrant Word and as the norm for all we believe or do. To be Reformed means a commitment to study the Scriptures regularly with a willingness to change our thoughts or actions as necessary to conform to the Bible. Simply put, to be Reformed is to be biblical.

RTS was founded in order to assure a succession of pastors who would faithfully preach and live the Word *[Continued next page]*

The International Monument to the Reformation, located in Geneva, Switzerland, commemorates key figures of early Calvinism: William Farel, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, and John Knox.

[Continued from page 67] of God. If there is one hallmark which distinguishes RTS, it is stated in the original charter: "To establish, control and develop an institute of theological studies established upon the authority of the Word of God standing written in the sixty-six books of the Holy Bible, all therein being verbally inspired by the Almighty God and therefore without error."

Flowing from this is our conviction that all of life must be lived in obedience to the Lord as He reveals His will and character in the Bible. There is a comprehensive, inclusive view of the Christian life. As Paul urged, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). No aspect of life can be excluded from this imperative.

B. B. Warfield, champion of Reformed theology at Princeton Seminary, summarized it eloquently, "The Calvinist is the man who sees God behind all phenomena, and in all that occurs recognizes the hand of God, working out His will; who makes the attitude of the soul to God in prayer the permanent attitude in all its life activities; and who casts himself on the grace of God alone, excluding every trace of dependence on self from the whole work of his salvation."

Ultimately, to be Reformed is to live reverently in the presence of God, depending on His infinite grace, trusting in His constant care—husbanding every opportunity as stewards who desire to give a good accounting on the Last Day. At the same time, it gives us confidence that whatever is done for Him—no matter how insignificant it may seem—will not be wasted effort.

himself by his quiet and disciplined life and his faithful dedication to his calling.

Whitlock was not finished. In 1985, two young professors joined the faculty when the Seminary appointed James B. Hurley in the counseling department and Richard L. Pratt Jr. in Old Testament. Both scholars carried impressive credentials. Hurley was a Harvard undergraduate who went on to Westminster Seminary, then to Cambridge, England, for a Ph.D. in New Testament, and he was finishing a second doctorate at Florida State University. He was attracted to Reformed Seminary by the prospect of developing a counseling program that would graduate effective marriage and family therapists. Pratt was also educated at Westminster and he went on to earn a Ph.D. in Old Testament at Harvard. In securing the services of Hurley and Pratt, the Seminary continued its dependence on Westminster, to which it added the prestige of the Ivy League.

Prominent guest lecturers continued to visit the campus. Old Testament scholar Meredith G. Kline from Gordon-Conwell Seminary offered a popular January term course for several years. Anglican scholar Peter Toon taught a course on the history of spirituality in 1985. John Stott and Os Guinness were among the growing number of guest speakers, and in 1984, First Presbyterian Church in Jackson inaugurated the John Reed Miller lectureship.

Whitlock understood that faculty recruitment meant little if it was not accompanied by their retention. While the Seminary's policy against academic tenure may have appeared to have been an obstacle, the Seminary generally succeeded in getting and keeping its faculty. Professors Kelly, Kistemaker, Hurley, Pratt, and many others enjoyed long careers of service at Reformed Seminary. Whitlock was eager to see his faculty produce both in the classroom and in scholarly publications. He understood his role as a facilitator, and he eagerly cultivated the productivity of his colleagues.

Among the most noteworthy faculty accomplishments was the assignment Baker Book House extended to Simon Kistemaker. When William Hendriksen died in 1982, he left his New Testament commentary series uncompleted. Baker's editorial department

determined to complete the remaining volumes (involving Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Hebrews through Revelation), and asked Kistemaker to pick up where Hendriksen left off, convinced that Kistemaker's biblical scholarship, irenically Reformed spirit, and popular writing style could follow in the pattern that Hendriksen successfully established.

"When I accepted the appointment," Kistemaker commented in 1984, "I literally signed my life away. I knew it would mean writing seven volumes for the set—a project which I probably will not finish until 1994 or 1995, if the Lord gives me strength and health." His first volume, Hebrews, earned the Gold Medallion award from the Evangelical Christian Publishing Association in 1984 (an honor repeated with three other volumes in the series). Though the project proved even more time-consuming than he first imagined, Kistemaker's steady and diligent work habits saw it through to completion when he published his commentary on Revelation in 2001.

Other significant writings emerged from the faculty. Luder Whitlock and Douglas Kelly contributed chapters on James Thornwell and R.L. Dabney, respectively, in the symposium *Reformed Theology in America* (published in 1985). Willem VanGemeren published two major Old Testament works, *The Progress of Redemption* (1988) and *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (1990). Two faculty members penned widely read studies on prayer, *Pray with Your Eyes Open* by Richard Pratt and *If God Already Knows, Why Pray?* by Douglas Kelly.

THE PATIENT VISIONARY

In 1986, with the difficulties of the early eighties clearly behind the school, Whitlock led the Seminary in the celebration of its twentieth anniversary. Charles Colson, best-selling author and founder and president of Prison Fellowship, was the 1986 commencement speaker. Other special activities of the celebration included lectures by James M. Boice of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

The Seminary was beginning to take the shape that Whitlock and the board labored to create. He described the Seminary as no longer "fledgling" but rather "strong and mature." By this point the

school had sent over 800 alumni into the world. As eager as he was in promoting changes on the campus, Whitlock used the anniversary as an occasion to remind the school's constituency of the things that stood unchanged. "Some things don't change," he wrote in the *RTS Bulletin*. Reformed Seminary was unequivocally committed to the terms of its establishment twenty years earlier, "Let there be no uncertainty regarding the position of Reformed Theological Seminary. We believe that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, the final authority for all that we believe and do." Still, the Seminary was unwilling to fixate on the past. Its eyes instead were focused on the future. The school was "standing firm but not standing still" (which became the motto for the school for a time).

Institutional stability found expression with the establishment of several endowed chairs. The Trimble Chair of Systematic Theology was created in 1987, followed by the Reaves Chair of Christian Education (1988), the Belcher Chair of Missions (1988), and several others.

Accompanying these developments were changes to the school's purpose statement. Consistent with the development of its M.A. programs, in 1982 the Seminary catalog acknowledged a "secondary purpose" to "provide professional education on the graduate level in order to prepare men and women for Christian service in all branches of evangelical Christianity, especially the Presbyterian and Reformed family." Until 1988, the faculty was described as "individually under the courts of the Presbyterian and Reformed denominations of which they are members." In 1989, the statement was broadened by the elimination of the phrase, "Presbyterian and Reformed," thereby acknowledging the legitimacy of a faculty member's calling in a church that itself was not explicitly Reformed.

A decade later the Seminary also changed the version of the Westminster Confession of Faith to which the faculty and board pledged loyalty. Instead of the version adopted by the Southern Presbyterian Church at its founding in 1861, it adopted the 1789 edition that marked the founding of American Presbyterianism. Though the versions were no different, the change was of no small significance. While it made sense, at its founding, for Reformed Seminary to align

itself with historic Southern Presbyterianism, it made just as much sense to identify later with historic American Presbyterianism. Reformed Seminary was no longer renewing the Southern church but saw itself serving all of American Presbyterianism.

Under Whitlock's hopeful vision, then, the Seminary gradually evolved from a regional school to one with an emerging national prominence. What he would set out to accomplish was born from two qualities that friends and colleagues saw in him: his contagious vision and his farsighted patience. "I learned to be patient and work with people," he later observed, reflecting on the early years of his presidency. "I also realized that change usually occurs gradually no matter how quickly we want it to happen." Characteristic of his leadership was a quiet and steady effort to build consensus within the institution rather than force his views upon either the faculty or the administration. Indeed, the stability of the faculty and the longevity of its associations with Reformed Seminary owed in part to its personal affection for Whitlock and the working conditions he established.

Inevitably, some faculty did leave for other callings. Reggie McLellan joined the Covenant College faculty in 1987. Wallace Carr, a professor of counseling since 1969 (and instrumental in the establishment of the counseling program), retired in 1988. Paul Kooistra, professor of practical theology, left in 1985 to become the president of Covenant Theological Seminary. Willem VanGemeren left for Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 1990, attracted by opportunities to teach in its doctoral program. In 1987, the Seminary mourned the passing of Sam Patterson.

Whitlock continued to express his hopefulness for the future of Reformed and Presbyterian churches, refusing to accept the gloomy and pessimistic forecasts for American Protestantism. Conservative Presbyterian denominations were growing, and there were signs of renewal within evangelical congregations in the recently reunited mainline PC(USA). "I believe we stand on the threshold of a resurgence in biblical, historic Presbyterianism wherever God is at work," he said at the time, "and Reformed Seminary is committed to being at the front in such efforts."

What Is a Seminary?

Simon J. Kistemaker

September 3, 1973 (orientation)

The word, "seminary," is initially derived from the Latin. In fact, the Latin for this word is "seminarium." The word goes back to the Latin root "semen" which means seed. And a seminarium is a place where a seed germinates and grows into a plant. A seminarium, therefore, is a plantation, a seedbed, a nursery. To put it figuratively, a seminarium is a place where students are formed and molded until they can be transplanted into the vineyard of Jesus Christ. Reformed Theological Seminary is a community of professors and students; it is a place where seeds are planted, which in time may develop as plants to bear fruit.

How are seeds planted? In a seminar situation, you see the word "seminary" is used rather frequently on campus. The word "seminar" conveys the idea of a group of advanced students studying under a professor, each one doing research and contributing to a general discussion on a given subject.

That is training at Reformed Seminary. The courses are too numerous to mention in which you are asked to do research, to write papers, and to report to the class before professors and fellow students the conclusion you have reached. You are part of a seminar. You learn by doing. And this is exactly what you need in order to be a diligent student of Scripture, a dynamic preacher of the Gospel, and a faithful pastor in the Church of Jesus Christ.

CURRICULUM CHANGES

Up to this point, Reformed Theological Seminary, like other conservative seminaries in America, sought to perpetuate the "classical" seminary education that was based on the model of "Old Princeton," that is, Princeton Theological Seminary before its reorganization in 1929. Academic Dean Richard Watson feared that education in the Old Princeton tradition offered an increasingly dated and obsolete program of instruction. Moreover, just as faculty had resisted curriculum changes in American college education, so too, he claimed, were faculty the principal obstacles for reform in seminary education. Old pedagogical assumptions needed to be replaced by progressive thinking that integrated theology with a practical oriented curriculum. Watson took particular aim at the Hebrew and Greek language instruction. These courses, he insisted, "must stand the test of usefulness in ministry." As education stood, many contemporary pastors were "crippled because of a lack of training in personnel management, conflict management, [and] general administration."

Watson urged a "totally new mindset" in seminary curriculum. "To require pastors," he argued, "to spend three years studying theories of textual criticism and technicalities of linguistic constructions to the neglect of the Bible in English, the essential doctrines, and practical theology, is to turn our backs on fields white unto harvest, in order to amuse ourselves catching butterflies."

Watson's push for changes prompted President Whitlock to announce, in October 1984, that a "Blue Ribbon Committee," composed of prominent Presbyterian ministers, was engaged in the work of curriculum revision. The committee was given the broad mandate to redesign the entire three-year Master of Divinity program with a view toward establishing three pedagogical goals at its very center: What ought a minister to know? What ought a minister to be? What ought a minister to do?

A year later, the committee proposed a course of instruction consisting of biblical studies in the first year, systematic theology and church history in the second year, and practical theology in the third year. Hours in Hebrew and Greek language instruction were

reduced, and total hours in practical theology increased to the point where it represented 40 percent of the curriculum.

The Seminary faculty did not share Watson's enthusiasm for the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee, and it expressed the concern that the new curriculum was pedagogically unworkable. Church historian Albert Freundt, while welcoming the "practical thrust of the new curriculum" and the wisdom of engaging experienced pastors in reflecting on theological education, voiced his fear that the overall effect was to lose a sense of the Reformed heritage. Adequate theological education, he argued, required theological and historical reflection in all three years of a student's experience.

New Testament Professor Knox Chamblin observed that the new curriculum did not afford enough cross-disciplinary integration of learning, and it restricted the exposure that students would have to professors over the three-year course of their studies. Another faculty concern was placing the instruction in Bible before an introduction to Reformed theology, a challenge that was compounded by the fact that 40 percent of the student body were coming from non-Reformed backgrounds. Moreover, the plan to reserve all communications instruction for the third year did not help students who had preaching assignments in their first two years. Finally there was a prevailing concern that the emphasis on pastoral skills came at too great a cost: the sacrifice of theological content.

In response to faculty feedback, the Blue Ribbon Committee made several adjustments, while remaining committed to the basic structure of its revisions. In 1986, the "new curriculum" was launched amid considerable public relations fanfare. Prominent magazine advertising claimed that the school was "leading the church into the twenty-first century," and in 1987, the Seminary's catalog began to include the school's new tag line: "Extraordinary Preparation for an Extraordinary Calling."

Both supporters and critics shared this assessment of the new curriculum: it offered a radical transformation that fully adopted the practitioner model urged by Dean Watson. One negative consequence of the changes was the spread of the school's reputation that it downplayed the importance of mastering biblical Hebrew

and Greek. The truth of the matter was that Reformed Seminary continued to offer extensive language instruction. While the minimum number of hours for languages was reduced, the hours that a student could elect to pursue in languages were at least comparable to and often exceeded other seminaries. Subsequent faculty appointments in biblical studies brought greater gifts in language instruction, including Kenneth Howell at the Jackson campus, and eventually Allen Mawhinney at the Orlando campus. Moreover, several Seminary professors (Bruce Waltke, Mark Futato, and Miles Van Pelt) have published Hebrew language grammars.

This is to be expected of a school that trains ministers of the Word of God. In his passion for instruction in the biblical languages, Van Pelt is fond of quoting Martin Luther: "We will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall . . . lose the gospel."

Despite the committee that helped create them and the endorsements from the Seminary's Board of Ministerial Advisors, the faculty struggled to adjust to the curriculum changes. Gradual revisions over the next several years were made to the point where the radical new curriculum and the logic behind it were barely visible, according to Knox Chamblin. Part of the pressure came from the expansion of the institution into branch campuses and the need to unify the curriculum across campuses.

Ironically, what most severely undermined the new curriculum was that, in the end, its radical prescriptions were based on a very traditional premise: a student body composed mainly of recent college graduates who enrolled for three years of full-time instruction. By this time, Reformed Seminary and other American seminaries witnessed dramatic demographic changes in the composition of its student body, with rapidly rising numbers of part-time students,

many of whom were older students seeking the ministry as a second career. The traditional student became a minority, and the logic of the new curriculum largely collapsed in an environment of a three-year program being completed over five or six years on a part-time basis.

Still, there have been at least two long-term effects of the curriculum revision. First, the M.Div. curriculum continues to teach a survey of the entire English Bible. Ministerial candidates, some of whom come to the Seminary with little biblical literacy, are presented with a study of the entire canon of Scripture. Secondly, the curriculum established the triad of "knowing, being, and doing" at the heart of the Seminary's instruction. This may have been less an innovation of 1986 than making more explicit a component that had always characterized the Seminary curriculum. As Al Freundt observed, theological education in the Southern Presbyterian tradition never suffered from an excessive emphasis on academics that the new curriculum sought to fix. And practical training for ministers called to pastoral work was deeply established at Reformed Seminary since its founding.

That the 1986 changes didn't prove to be more disruptive to the life of the Seminary owes in part to the shrewd decision on Whitlock's part to hire Allen D. Curry in 1988 to teach Christian education. Curry, who had served as coordinator of production for Great Commission Publications, became assistant academic dean in 1990, and in 1995 he succeeded Watson as vice president of academic affairs, where he skillfully guided the ongoing evolution of the curriculum.

LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD

At the twentieth anniversary in 1986, eight years into his administration, Whitlock posed this question in the *RTS Bulletin*: "What would the Seminary be in the next twenty years?" What lay ahead for the Seminary was exciting times, he suggested, because "I have an unshakable confidence in God's promises."

Whitlock's farsighted gaze focused on the turn of the millennium, as he urged the "shaping a vision for the twenty-first century." Whitlock had a keen personal interest in cultural trends, and he was

eager for students to grow in their cultural discernment. For Whitlock, a new reformation meant a passionate commitment to cultural transformation. A recurring theme in the interviews conducted in *RTS Bulletin* addressed the secularization of American culture. Technology, medical advances, cultural pluralization, the information explosion, and globalization—all presented challenges to the church, about which Reformed's graduates needed to be well read.

"Perhaps the most serious problem facing the Christian church today," Whitlock wrote in 1987, "is its shallowness and super-ficiality. . . . High levels of church membership and activity are no measure of commitment and understanding. Discernment of false doctrine and secular influence is minimal because too few believers have a solid grasp of biblical doctrine." The Seminary, he urged, must assist the churches by providing a comprehensive program of theological education.

Despite the progress that characterized his first decade as Seminary president, obstacles to the Seminary's vision remained, and one of them was the Seminary's location in the Deep South. In the latter part of this decade, the Seminary received a generous offer to relocate the campus in its entirety to South Florida. The Executive Committee declined that offer. Reformed was founded and nurtured by faithful and sacrificial Mississippi Presbyterians, and it could not abandon its Mississippi churches and donors.

But could the Seminary attempt a branch campus? It was a daring question. Westminster had tried and failed to establish a South Florida branch campus in the early 1980s. Reformed had considered participating in Westminster's Florida Theological Center, even to the point of weighing whether it should take over the administration of Westminster's Miami work. It also explored extension work in Birmingham, Alabama.

Whitlock especially urged the board to focus on Atlanta and Orlando as possible extension sites, and he proposed equipping each with four full-time faculty. In May 1988, the board determined to establish a branch campus in Orlando. In a sense, the dream was becoming a reality. Still, for all their vision and foresight, Whitlock and the board could not imagine what would unfold over the next two decades.

"Who Is My Adversary?"

Albert H. Freundt

A sermon based on Mark 9:30-50, preached at Grace Chapel on May 2, 1975

There are several considerations I believe will help us to deal with fellow Christians not as adversaries. I offer these as theoretical grounds to help Calvinists justify treating other Christians as brethren.

1 We must get our priorities straight. We are first Christians; second, Evangelical Christians; third, Evangelical Calvinist Christians; and, fourth, Evangelical Calvinistic Presbyterian Christians. Accepting it that Calvinism is Christianity come into its own, we cannot suppose that there were no Christians until we arrived, that there will be none when we are gone, or that there are none in other denominations or theological traditions.

2 We can balance theological polemics with theological irenics. Let us study the things we hold in common, as well as the points on which we differ. Let us see where our doctrines overlap as well as where they diverge. What is basic to all true Christians is surely of more importance than what is different.

3 Let us recognize that much in our particular confessions is the result of the human enterprise of theologizing. As all theologizing is colored by culture, tradition, time, geography, and other conditioning factors, it needs constantly to be tested by the Scriptures. The Word of God provides the light by which all of our theological traditions are to be evaluated. We do well to expect more light to break forth from God's Word. We have some learning and growing to do, and must be patient with others who are trying to learn and grow.

4 Let us remember that our confessions themselves confess that all true denominations are more or less pure, and that synods, councils, and confessions are fallible and subject to error. Institutions and creeds are not the ultimate tests, but are themselves reformable by the Word of God and subject to correction. *[Continued next page]*

Furthermore, just as we have been enabled to see a few errors in the statements and practices of some of our predecessors, many in later times and other places may be able to see where we are wrong—although we cannot. This realization should give us a measure of humility and teachability.

5 More basic than the doctrines we profess are the realities to which they bear witness. For example, it is more important to be regenerate than to have a correct formulation of the doctrine of regeneration. It is more important to achieve a measure of sanctification than to have a perfect statement of it. All the doctrines have some reference to personal relations—either between God, Christ, the sinner, the believer; the believer and other believers; or believers and the unconverted. Faith, hope, and/or love are involved in virtually every relationship that a Christian is to have with the real persons regarding whom each doctrine has reference. As every doctrine has personal dimensions, devotional aspects, and practical applications, no one who is merely theologically correct can be theologically correct.

6 Every Christian who is in Christ must be acknowledged a member of the True Church of Christ on earth. No Calvinist has ever limited his understanding of the Church of Christ to his own denomination or even to the Reformed family of churches. The least that we can do in implementing our doctrine of the Church is to have some kind of love for, acceptance of, and fellowship with every Christian brother whom we must recognize as inside the Body of Christ. If Christ has accepted him, I cannot exclude him, cut him off, or cut him down.

7 As we reflect on Christian history we must not see it primarily as a history of divisions. We tend to be obsessed by the development of divisions, parties, and denominations. The history of Christianity is better viewed as the realm in which Christ rules by His Word and Spirit. What perversion it is to deny the movement and blessing of God's Spirit in all divisions and traditions but our own! Let us be at least as concerned with the cooperation, the unity, the love and the communion that we see, as we are with the divisions and the differences.

8 Let us learn to make the important distinctions, those between central doctrines and non-necessary points of doctrines, and between explicit teachings and inferences therefrom. Let us follow the motto of the 17th century writer, Rupert Meldenius:

In necessary things unity;
In non-essential things mutual toleration;
And, in all things, love.

Errors should be carefully considered, whether they strike at the vitals of religion, whether they are industriously spread, and whether they arise from the weakness of human understanding and are not likely to do much injury.

9 Let us grant that however correct our theology is, we are often worse than our theology; also, however defective is the theology of our Christian brother, he is often better than his theology. These inconsistencies lie in an area of Christian love and life that should occupy us as much as the perfection of our doctrine.

10 And let us recognize that the doctrine of total depravity, which both Calvin and Wesley affirmed—and which we both believe and practice—requires a different response, depending upon whether we are looking at ourselves or our brethren.

When I look at myself I must be harsh, rigid, merciless, in self-criticism. I must recognize my failings, the vestiges of sin, for what they are, and be ruthless with them to the point of mortification and self-denial.

When I look at my brother in Christ, I must be forgiving and forgetful. I must accept and love whom Christ accept and loves. I must not attribute evil motives. I must put the best possible construction upon his words and works.

He who is not for Christ is against Him. But he who is not for me is not necessarily against Christ. Rather, he who is for Christ is on my side.

A Professor Looks Back

Reflections Presented by Douglas Kelly at the Charlotte Faculty Meeting, August 30, 2006

The amazing providence of God looms large in my thought as I consider the history of RTS, particularly in light of the connections I have had with it since the beginning. In the summer of 1966, as a seminary student from Union in Richmond, I served in First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, under Dr. John Reed Miller, one of the founders of RTS. There was much talk and excitement about the opening of the new seminary in the fall of that year.

Providentially, as only hindsight would show, I attended a few youth meetings in First Presbyterian, run by Jimmy Turner. One night there was a youth meeting at someone's cottage on the reservoir, with a real sense of prayer, praise and consecrated purpose among those numerous young people, under the strong and contagious evangelical influence of Jimmy. Somehow, I still remember their singing "For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son, to die at Calvary, from sin to set me free..." Among these high school students, who were absolutely determined to follow Jesus, was one named Ric Cannada. Little did I think that decades later I would be serving under his leadership at Reformed Seminary!

Providentially, as I now can see, that summer of 1966 under good old Dr. Miller, was formative for my later life, though I had no idea of that at the time. Ebenezer Scrooge saw "the ghost of the Christmas future", and that summer I saw—if not the ghost, at least the spirit—of my future; though it was not filled with foreboding like that shown to Dickens' character, but rather, a shadow of good things to come, the finest of the wheat and honey from the comb. For at the end of my time in Jackson, before I returned to seminary in Richmond, Dr. Miller drove me out to see the new RTS campus near Clinton, which was based in the White House, surrounded by a pleasant green pasture. It was only a week before the new campus opened, so we went inside to where they were quickly cataloguing

books for the library. On the floor I happened to notice a famous volume by one of my Union professors, Dr. John Bright, on the history of Israel. I immediately perceived: this institution, though strongly evangelical in its foundation, is from its very beginning taking scholarship with entire seriousness.

I can still see the faces of that early Board of Trustees: Bob Kennington, Bob Cannada, Erskine Wells, Frank Horton, Steve White, and others. These were men of strength and keen intelligence; very successful in their careers, and not easily run over. Yet they were bowed down as meek as lambs to the yoke of Jesus, and thus were willing to act contrary to the supposed common sense, which held that such an institution could not possibly work in current Southern Presbyterianism. I remember the bright faces and warm hearts of their godly wives, and of many other Christian women around Jackson, who stood with their husbands and with the young seminary, and let it be known that they would go all the way with these founders, whatever it cost, if it was for the glory of Christ. This seminary could never have existed were it not for the sacrificial financial support that has continued to come from so many women of God.

Douglas Kelly, graduate of the University of North Carolina, Union Seminary in Virginia and Edinburgh University, taught at RTS from 1983 until his retirement in 2016.

Well, that was in 1966. During my years of post-graduate study in Edinburgh, I kept in touch with the young seminary by praying for them, and on occasion, sending little checks to support them. How graciously Dr. Sam Patterson always thanked me for a humble sum of fifteen or twenty dollars!

The years went by, as I served in various ministries, and then in 1983, I accepted a call to join the RTS faculty in the theology department. There was never the slightest question in my mind but that this was what the Lord wanted me to do, and I have never doubted it

since that time. Could there be many greater blessings on earth than to know that for all your failings, you have been and still are exactly where God wants you! It is a gift of grace that gives you strength for many a task.

Let me give just a few brief reflections on my early time there. By 1983 the seminary was now seventeen years old and had been signally blessed, beyond all expectations. How well I remember the 25th anniversary celebrations a few years after that. So essentially, what I sensed that I was going into was a place of divine blessing. The prayers and hopes I had felt from so many in 1966 were being wonderfully answered, and now I could be part of it! Surely it was an illustration of the providence of God in getting me ready for these long years of service.

The first president, Sam Patterson, had left a year before I got there, and Luder Whitlock had taken over. Their styles were different, but both were determined to make a Reformed, evangelically warm-hearted education available to as many young people as possible. The seminary kept growing, even when there had been the theonomist controversy, which certainly made life difficult for the seminary for a few years. Dr. Bahnsen had been let go before my arrival in Jackson, and I have often felt grateful that I did not have to fight that one through. So far as I know, that has been the only major controversy that has rocked the seminary during these forty years, and with God's help, the seminary came out of it still holding fast to the Reformed, evangelical testimony, as from its beginning.

Also, I never knew of any kind of back-stabbing or serious division within the faculty, either in Jackson or in Charlotte, at least during my time in both places. If it ever happened, I did not know of it. In that sense, we have by God's good grace definitely known something of the blessings of Psalm 133. May our Covenant Lord continue this grace upon us!

My assessment of RTS in the autumn semester of 1983 was a sense of consecration among students and faculty; a sense of God's presence; a zeal to pray individually and together. Yes, there were weaknesses among us all, but the sheer grace of the presence of the

Lord was so evident that a Christian, at least (and maybe even some unbelievers), could not possibly miss it. With very few exceptions, I felt a sense of general happiness, or joy, within both student body and faculty. It was simply a fun place to work: that was true in Jackson, and it is still true here in Charlotte. Imagine, getting paid for doing something you like to do; something you've always wanted to do! If that is not the providential mercy and grace of God, then what would it take?

Hence, I conclude these reflections with praise to the Lord for what the seminary was, when first I set foot there (in my early 20s), and what it is now (as I am in my early 60s). I turn you to these words from the noble Puritan poet, John Milton, which paraphrase Psalm 136 into elegant English:

'Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for He is kind:
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.'

Chapter IV · Early 90s into the new millennium

Reforming Evangelicalism

FRANK HORTON, LONG-TIME MEMBER of the Seminary's Executive Committee, once observed that from its earliest days, Reformed Theological Seminary recruited many students from the state of Florida. As interest and support from the Sunshine State continued to grow by the time of the establishment of the Orlando campus, Horton and his colleagues on the Executive Committee clearly felt that God's providence was directing the school's attention to Florida.

From its founding in 1989, the Orlando campus sensed its strategic location, and comparisons with the formation of Fuller Seminary in 1947 were common. Florida was the fastest-growing state in 1989, just as Southern California experienced a post-war population boom. Central Florida was also becoming an entertainment and tourist mecca. Universal Studios opened in Orlando, joining Walt Disney World and SeaWorld, and in 1989 the Orlando Magic provided the city with its first major league professional franchise.

Confirmation of the decision to branch out into the Sunshine State came from many quarters. The best-selling book *Megatrends 2000* (published in 1990) focused on Central Florida in its discussion on religion in America. "In the bellwether state of Florida," wrote the authors, "the religious revival is spurring an extraordinary church building boom. Central Florida's more than 450 churches are not enough. 'We're growing so rapidly that we're growing out of our churches,' says Edward Thomas, an Orlando architect."

Among the supporters of Reformed was D. James Kennedy, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Indeed, the Seminary produced promotional literature with his endorsement of an Orlando campus extension. Yet in the spring of 1989 he unveiled plans to start his own school in South Florida, Knox Theological Seminary. Though Kennedy's announcement was a surprise, it reinforced the sense that Florida

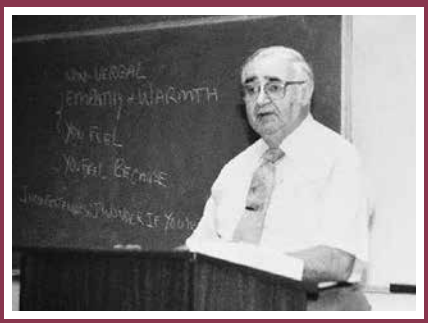
was the new frontier for Reformed theological education.

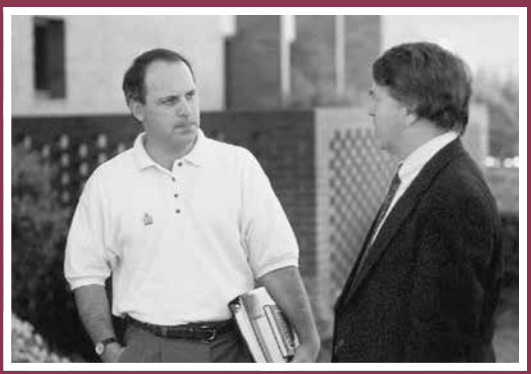
Professor Richard Pratt moved to Orlando to help staff the campus along with Lyn Perez, vice president for advancement, the former serving as dean of students and the latter as campus administrator. Perez set ambitious goals for the campus, praying for 30 students in the first year and 100 students in three years. He was shocked to witness 94 students registering for classes when the doors to its temporary campus in Maitland opened in September 1989.

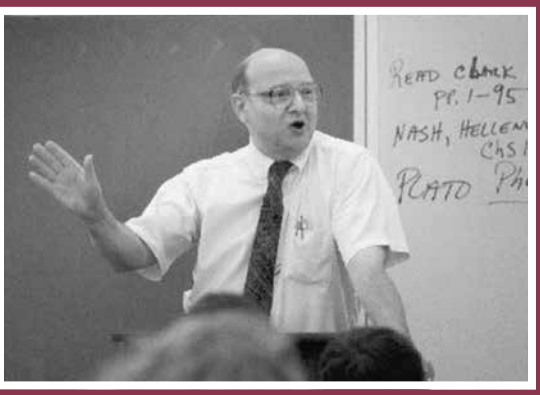
Seminary President Luder Whitlock invested considerable energy in recruiting faculty for the new campus. He was especially pleased to announce the services of Dr. Roger Nicole as visiting professor of theology. Recently retired after four decades of service at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Nicole was one of the founding fathers and staunchest defenders of the renaissance of American evangelicalism in the twentieth century. The Swiss native came to the United States in 1937, earning bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from Gordon College and Divinity School, and eventually, a Ph.D. from Harvard Divinity School. In 1945, Nicole joined the faculty at Gordon Divinity School (later Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary), where he taught until coming to Orlando.

Along with several other brilliant young evangelical scholars—including Carl Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, E.J. Carnell, and Harold Ockenga—Nicole helped shape American evangelical theology for the second half of the twentieth century. He was a founding member of the Evangelical Theological Society in 1948. His article, on "Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament," graced the inaugural issue of the *Gordon Review*, which he helped edit for many years and which continues to be published as the *Christian Scholars Review*. On October 15, 1956, Nicole's name appeared on the masthead of volume one, number one, of a new magazine, *Christianity Today*. Fifty years later, Nicole's name remained on the masthead.

Nicole's theological interests focused on themes such as the inerrancy of Scripture and the atonement of Christ. His expertise led to leadership on the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, and he was also a featured speaker for many years at the Philadelphia







[Clockwise from upper left] ***Dr. Robert Cara****, Professor of New Testament, Charlotte;* ***Dr. Roger Nicole****, Visiting Professor of Theology, Orlando;* ***Dr. Doug Kelly****, Professor of Systematic Theology, Charlotte;* ***Dr. Frank Kik****, Professor of Practical Theology, Charlotte;* ***Dr. Ron Nash****, Professor of Theology, Orlando;* ***Mr. James (Jim) Seneff****, RTS Board of Trustees, who assisted in the establishment and growth of the Orlando campus.*

Norman Harper teaching a class on Christian education.

Conference on Reformed Theology and the Ligonier Conference. A popular Gordon-Conwell course that moved with him to Orlando was "Twentieth Century Reformed Theologians," a seminar that leaned heavily on his personal interaction with many of the giants of the century.

When Nicole joined the faculty of Reformed Seminary, he moved to Florida with his wife, Annette, and his 25,000-volume personal library. He graciously shared the riches of his personal collection with students as the Orlando campus steadily built its own library holdings. As visiting professor of theology for over a decade, he modeled for students and colleagues a keen theological mind that was wed to a warm, irenic spirit.

Another prominent addition to the faculty was Ronald Nash, who joined in 1991. Nash had taught for 27 years in the philosophy department at Western Kentucky University, and also served as visiting professor at Fuller Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Southern Baptist Seminary. He was widely published (over 35 books), and lectured extensively at over 70 colleges and universities in the Unites States and overseas.

An heir of the theological tradition of Carl F.H. Henry and a lifelong student of Augustine, Nash impressed a love for philosophy upon his students. If his passion for biblical inerrancy and evangelical truth at times took on a polemical edge, his friend and colleague at Southern Baptist Seminary, Russell Moore, was quick to explain: "Some might wince at the perceived lack of charity here. But Nash sounded an awful lot like the apostle Paul taking on the wolves. That's because both believed the gospel was more than an ideological parlor game for scholars. Real lives and real souls were at stake." Nash taught at Orlando for a dozen years, and the Seminary mourned his passing in 2006 when he succumbed to a stroke.

As previously noted, the arrival of Reformed Seminary in Orlando was preceded by Ligonier Ministries, the "teaching fellowship of R. C. Sproul." The relocation and restructuring of Sproul's ministry in 1983 was a shrewd recognition of changing demographic patterns. The baby-boomer religious seekers who made pilgrimages to western Pennsylvania as college students in the 1970s became parents in the '80s, and it was more effective to minister to them through audio or video products, radio programming, or an annual weekend conference.

With the opening of the Orlando campus, Sproul, who had been associated with the Jackson campus since 1982, seized the opportunity for greater involvement. While still directing Ligonier full time, Sproul came to campus one day a week to teach two courses per semester in systematic theology. Originally Sproul also served as the academic dean, while Richard Watson paid regular visits from the Jackson campus to establish the academic program and provide advice to students. Sproul's Ligonier conferences were useful in recruiting prospective students, and his Ligonier Ministries provided employment for many students and their spouses.

Although Whitlock worked hard to establish his Orlando faculty, two important additions required no effort on his part to recruit. Frank Farrell, who had been on the staff of *Christianity Today* for many years, had recently retired from Alliance Theological Seminary and moved to central Florida in 1989. Farrell taught church history at Reformed Seminary in Orlando for a dozen years, where students especially benefited from his expertise in English Puritanism and the history of Reformed devotional literature. Charles MacKenzie relocated to central Florida in 1991 after a long and distinguished career in higher education, including the presidency of Grove City College in western Pennsylvania. He joined the faculty as professor of philosophy, and he directed the masters program in Christian thought.

The Orlando campus quickly sought to build a library collection. Supplemented by Nicole's substantial personal library, aggressive retrospective collection development included the purchase of a large number of materials from Princeton Seminary and other

schools, as well as the acquisition of personal libraries from retired biblical scholars, theologians, and church historians. Combined with a large number of duplicate materials from the Jackson campus, the Orlando library accessioned 50,000 titles within its first five years.

THE EVANGELICAL MOMENT

Carl F.H. Henry was the speaker at the first Orlando convocation on September 13, 1989. The selection of the former professor of Fuller Seminary and long-time editor of *Christianity Today* symbolized the Seminary's hope to establish its role among the shapers of American evangelicalism. Henry spoke on "Christianity in a Troubled World." Liberally sprinkling his address with reflections on the growth of American evangelicalism in the twentieth century (events that he personally witnessed), Henry called upon faculty and students to take on the challenge of mission to the world with fresh courage.

When the permanent Orlando Campus, built in Oviedo, was completed in 1999, the clock tower, topped with a cross, became the facility's primary symbol.

Whitlock generally framed his vision for the Seminary by invoking the spirit of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation. "Our real hope," Whitlock wrote, "is to work for a new reformation. With the serious spiritual declension in this country, we are seeing an absolute hemorrhage of Christian influence and effectiveness. Something must be done to reverse it. What happened in Europe will happen here unless something brings about a great spiritual renewal."

One barometer for the Seminary's progress was a 1989 survey of American religious leaders taken by *Christianity Today*. Of dozens of seminaries surveyed, Reformed Seminary ranked thirteenth in "seminary awareness," first in "doctrinal soundness," and second in "spiritual atmosphere." (This, of course, was as much a measurement of the Seminary's advertising effectiveness as anything else.) Still, President Whitlock's promotion of the Seminary's growing leadership in an "evangelical moment" in American culture ran counter to several

assessments of contemporary evangelicalism that were decidedly pessimistic about its prospects. James Hunter's *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (1987) claimed that the erosion of boundaries of evangelical orthodoxy were prompted especially by the uncertain sounds coming from its seminaries (although Reformed Seminary was not among the institutions that Hunter surveyed). Wheaton college historian Mark Noll feared the loss of an evangelical mind. And most ominously, theologian David Wells' multi-volume studies pronounced evangelical theology in grave, if not terminal, condition.

Whitlock studied carefully these authors, inviting all three to lecture at Reformed Seminary, and he took their scholarly findings under advisement. Meanwhile, in the pages of *Christianity Today*, Roger Nicole reflected on his half-century involvement in evangelicalism and wondered whether these evaluations gave adequate appreciation for the accomplishments of evangelicalism. Nicole cited the growth of seminaries (and their libraries), explosion in evangelical publications, and advances in evangelism and foreign missions. Lest the reader interpret his tone as triumphalistic, Nicole ended his article on a characteristic note of caution and humility:

> *As one who has been privileged to participate in the movement these past 50 years, I humbly bow my knees in gratitude to the Lord and pray that in the future God may continue to bless and to guide, to keep us from errant ways, and to use the evangelical witness as salt in the midst of a decaying civilization. To paraphrase Deuteronomy 8:2: Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these 50 years.*

Evangelical leaders debated how best to shape the theological direction of its movement. In 1992 Whitlock and Sproul joined James Boice, Michael Horton, and other Reformed evangelicals in establishing the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals. Two years later, other conservative evangelicals joined with Roman Catholics in the bridge-building document, "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" (ECT).

The latter document, highly criticized for downplaying the significance of the Reformation recovery of justification by faith alone, did not garner enthusiasm or signatures from Seminary faculty. At the same time, consistent with its founding principles, the Seminary did not corporately take a public stand against ECT.

Meanwhile, the press of his duties at Ligonier (where Dr. Sproul was beginning a daily radio show) made it increasingly difficult for him to meet his Seminary obligations, and so he resigned from the faculty in 1995. The Seminary was quick to acknowledge the debt it owed Sproul, without whose influence and support the Orlando campus could not have grown the way it did.

As the campus grew, the Seminary's board expanded with the addition of two Florida members, Jim Seneff and David Lucas (joining Henry Dekker, who had moved to Florida from Atlanta). Seneff later chaired the Orlando campus building committee, and Dekker and Lucas eventually joined the board's Executive Committee.

REFORMED THEOLOGY IN THE QUEEN CITY

No sooner had Reformed Seminary established roots in Florida than it began to explore further extensions of its work. In a sense, a campus in Charlotte, North Carolina, was the logical next step for the Seminary to take. If Florida produced its main stream of students, its second major source came from the Carolinas. Moreover, two longtime board members came from the Carolinas—Biff Bracey and Collie Lehn. Yet the Charlotte campus came about through a very different story. In contrast to the fanfare and publicity that accompanied the Orlando opening, Charlotte began on a much smaller scale.

The "Queen City" was the birthplace of Billy Graham, a city full of churches and rich in Presbyterian history. The large banking center with a rapidly growing urban center was becoming the headquarters of several evangelical parachurch organizations. Reformed Seminary's extension work began modestly in Charlotte when Douglas Kelly traveled from the Jackson campus to teach a weekend course each semester for two years, beginning in 1990. As local interest continued to spread, the Seminary opened temporary quarters in

Carl F. H. Henry

Orlando Opening convocation Address, September 13, 1989

Now the time is at hand for more than faith. The time has come for Christian courage. The Old Testament prophets defied trouble even when life was at risk; they stood tall for Yahweh in the midst of it.

The Christian apostles did not escape trouble; amid the hostility of pagan rulers and or religious bureaucrats they trumpeted Christ's victory.

Augustine in his day did not go underground to circumvent pagan philosophers; he confronted them intellectually and exhibited the superior credentials of biblical faith.

The Protestant Reformers were not intimidated by Rome's ecclesiastical power but proclaimed *sola fide* and *sola scriptura* when church leaders on every hand blurred the foundational tenets of Christianity.

William Carey, despite poverty and deprivation, learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and sailed as a pioneer missionary to India. There, alone or with others, he translated the Bible in whole or part into 26 languages.

It is a time of courage, to dare to be a Daniel, to stand alone if necessary, to do things in the biblical way and not as the world does them. We have a mission that calls for courage grounded in Christ who has overcome the world.

It takes courage to be an evangelist when others declare that the age of mass evangelism is over.

It takes courage to expend one's life in missions when others prioritize material goals.

[Continued next page]

It takes courage to witness to non-Christian immigrants and refugees when sociologists espouse and curry religious pluralism.

It takes courage to live virtuously in a licentious age.

It takes courage to serve God when adversity challenges trust in God's love.

It takes courage to live in a world that still crucifies Jesus and boldly declare that "God works all things together for good to them that love Him, who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28) and that neither trouble nor hardship nor persecution nor famine nor wickedness nor danger nor sword can separate the believer from Christ's firm love for us. We are "more than conquerors"—we are devoted disciples of the overcomer, the risen Lord, and the coming king.

The RTS Orlando campus in Oviedo, Florida

a former real estate office on Monroe Road in 1992. Gordon Reed administered a program that featured evening and weekend courses. Through donations from the Jackson and Orlando campuses, an 8,000-volume library was quickly assembled.

In the following year, alumnus Robert C. ("Ric") Cannada, Jr., then pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Macon, Georgia, was appointed vice president for administration of the Charlotte campus. He was joined by Robert J. Cara, a Jackson graduate and Ph.D. candidate at Westminster who served as New Testament professor and interim librarian. Under Cannada's leadership the campus quickly expanded to over 100 students. The Seminary soon relocated to an attractive ten-acre parcel that it purchased from Carmel Baptist Church (enabling that growing church to move to larger facilities). The former church property was fully retrofitted as a seminary campus in 1997, when the Seminary invited Charles Colson to speak at its dedication service. By that point the campus could boast of five full-time faculty and its first class of 16 graduates.

Douglas Kelly had relocated from the Jackson campus to anchor the Charlotte faculty. Joining him were Will Norton (recently retired from the Jackson faculty) and Frank Kik (who served as professor of practical theology after more than 35 years in the pastorate), and Richard Belcher, who taught Old Testament. In 1999 the Seminary appointed Harold O. J. Brown as professor of philosophy and theology at the Charlotte campus. The Harvard-educated Fulbright scholar had taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for many years and pastored a church in Switzerland. Along with his Charlotte workload, Brown taught a popular summer course on the heritage of the Reformation in Wittenberg, Germany, for several summers. When John Oliver joined the faculty in homiletics (after serving as pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Augusta, Georgia for 28 years), the small campus could boast of special strengths in practical theology.

As Reformed Seminary established a full master's program in Charlotte, it quickly discovered that it was not the only school with eyes on the city. Before long five evangelical seminaries were

established in the region, including a branch campus of Gordon-Conwell. Cannada stressed the need for cooperation among the five seminaries wherever possible. He encouraged cross-registration privileges for students, and the Seminary also took the lead in establishing a library cooperative among the seminaries. The Charlotte campus also extended a welcome to other evangelical organizations once Reformed Seminary took full possession of the Carmel Road campus. Several of them, including Joni and Friends, Promise Keepers, and Operation Christmas Child, moved their regional offices to the Seminary property for nominal fees.

The Charlotte campus especially benefited from the labors of Bill Robinson in development. Robinson secured deferred gifts for the Seminary, including several multi-million dollar estates. Particularly significant was the Barron Estate from Rock Hill, South Carolina, near Charlotte, which came to the Seminary at the time it was considering the Carmel Road campus. It enabled the purchase of that property.

ONE SEMINARY, THREE CAMPUSES

As modestly as the Charlotte campus began, it prompted a significant reshaping of institutional life. With the establishment of a third residential campus, the idea of a truly multi-campus institution began to emerge. The multi-campus structure presented challenges, not least to the accrediting agencies that visited the Seminary. One accreditor threw up his hands in frustration and confessed that Reformed Seminary seemed almost as mysterious to him as the doctrine of the Trinity: "We can't figure out if you are one or if you are three."

The seminary's sign at Christmas, 1995, when the new Charlotte campus property was still being shared with Carmel Baptist Church.

While different corporate personalities and faculty strengths emerged on each campus, the school worked hard to maintain a sense of unity. A common curriculum tied them together, and biennial faculty retreats

fostered greater collegiality.

Meanwhile, the Jackson campus continued to expand. A gift to the library of the 4,000-volume collection of August J. Kling, a distinguished Presbyterian minister, helped the library to accession its 100,000th volume in 1992. That milestone only underscored the long-overdue need for expansion of library space. That need was met when the Board of Trustees purchased the Queens Mall shopping center across Clinton Boulevard from the seminary property. The 100,000-square-foot building was developed as the "south campus" and included a spacious library as well as the school's Center for Marriage and Family Therapy.

The Center for Marriage and Family Enrichment on the the Jackson campus was located in the White House.

New faculty added during this time included J. Ligon Duncan and Duncan Rankin, two young scholars in systematic theology, fresh with doctoral degrees from Edinburgh University. John Currid and Andrew Hoffecker relocated from Grove City College in Pennsylvania to join the faculty in Old Testament and church history, respectively.

Hoffecker's arrival marked the end of an era in 1997 when Albert H. Freundt retired after 32 years of service. Throughout the years Freundt's steady hand was a stabilizing influence in the formation of the school. A rare combination of academician and church statesman, Freundt was "very gifted at illuminating the present with the light of the past," remembered Knox Chamblin. Freundt particularly excelled at encouraging his students to overcome the provincialism that beset many American evangelicals. (One hope that many of his colleagues entertained upon Freundt's retirement was that he would have time to write the history of the school. Tragically, he succumbed to cancer in 2001 before he could accomplish that goal.)

MAKING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AVAILABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND FLEXIBLE

Reformed Seminary's spirit of innovation expanded the institution beyond additional campuses and even into cyberspace. In 1988, Richard Watson created a summer M.A. program that enabled students to earn a degree by enrolling in a series of one-week courses over the span of four summers. Included in the program were 18 hours of audiotape courses produced by the Institute for Theological Studies in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The opening of the Orlando campus confirmed student interest in flexible education (block scheduling of classes proved popular), and the summer program expanded into a summer-winter program with the addition of January courses. In addition to ITS courses on tape, the Seminary established a department of distance education. The first taped products were by guest faculty, including J.I. Packer's course on English Puritan theology. These courses proved very popular for resident students, who could simply listen to the tapes or register for a course for credit.

In 1996, the Seminary hired Dr. Andrew Peterson as vice president for distance education. Peterson had earned a Ph.D. in educational communications and technology from the University of Pittsburgh, and under his leadership the distance education program evolved into the Seminary's Virtual Campus. Taped lectures accompanied by syllabi with reading and written assignments eventually gave way to genuine online learning employing state-of-the-art educational technology. Soon the Association of Theological Schools granted Reformed Seminary permission to test a pilot program for a virtual degree (in which up to ninety percent of the degree could be obtained at a distance). In February 2004, the ATS awarded the school ongoing approval for its Master of Arts in Religion degree through the Virtual Campus.

According to Peterson, the Virtual Campus accommodated the "lifelong learner" by allowing students to stay in their present church context and receive a seminary education without moving to a campus. On-site mentoring under direct pastoral supervision rendered

"Big Answers To Prayer From A Big God"

Robert C. 'Ric' Cannada, Jr.

Third Chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary

RTS started in a prayer meeting—first a meeting of a few ministers, later a series of prayer meetings by a few laymen. One of those laymen was my father. I watched RTS as it was born out of those prayer meetings during my high school years. I even had the privilege of attending the first convocation the week before I left home for college and saw the first academic year begin bathed in prayer.

After graduating from RTS and serving as a pastor for twenty years, I had the privilege of helping to build the Charlotte campus from a handful of students with no faculty and only two staff members meeting in a rented building in an out-of-the-way commercial area of town (formerly housing an insurance company, now a mortuary—"a seminary across from the cemetery"). This third campus of RTS with its meager beginning was also bathed in prayer.

The many "big" answers to prayer from our "big" God included faculty, students, and supporters (such as Aynn Gehron, our first staff member; Doug Kelly, our first full-time faculty member; and the Barnes and Jordan families, our first major donors). Perhaps the biggest though, was the answer to prayer that provided our present campus. As we grew we needed larger facilities and the Lord provided facilities so large that it has taken us years to fill them. The Charlotte campus is gorgeous, situated in a perfect location in the best area of town with enough room to grow indefinitely.

Among the many details about the campus purchase that were clear answers to prayer, several stand out. We were buying a campus from Carmel Baptist Church, which had outgrown their facilities, but our "lease with an option to buy" arrangement meant that we were going to be living together for three years while the church built their new facility. Could we get along? We could easily see that they were a good evangelical church. How would they know who we were, this seminary from Mississippi? Were we really evangelical (a

requirement for their sale)? Did we have integrity in our relationships and our business dealings? Were we substantial enough to be able to purchase their facilities at the end of the lease, something vital to them since they would be counting on those funds to complete their new building? On the day when we met with their committee to close the deal, we discovered that the chairman of their church committee had spent many years living and working in Jackson, down the street from the RTS campus. He knew much about RTS and about my family as well and had high regard for both. The decision by the church was easy. God went ahead of us and cleared the path with prayers answered in an amazing way, many details of which were set in place long before we prayed.

Because of the zoning laws in Charlotte, RTS needed a variance from the county to be able to use the campus for a seminary. The lease/purchase from the church was conditioned on this variance and one of the keys was the attitude of the neighbors, especially a widow who lived next door and whose property line was very close to the church. On the Sunday that the church voted on the RTS proposal, while the church and RTS were fervently praying, the Lord was at work. The previous Sunday a man in a Sunday School class at First Presbyterian Church in Jackson had asked for prayer since he was going to attend the funeral of his mother that week in Charlotte. My parents were in that Sunday School class and asked him to tell his family about me and the new RTS campus in Jackson. When he returned the following Sunday (the Sunday of the church vote!), he told my parents that when he told his family about RTS it turned out that the widow next door to the campus in Charlotte was his sister and that she was pleased to hear about the seminary. My father called me that Sunday afternoon to tell me the story of the widow. I called her immediately and visited with her about her brother and about RTS. With her help we received unanimous approval for our zoning variance from the county. On Monday morning after the positive church vote, the pastor told me that all I needed now was help with the widow next door concerning the variance. I told him that the Lord had already answered that prayer!

R.C. Sproul, Roger Nicole and Luder Whitlock at Roger's 90th birthday party in 2005 on the Orlando campus.

learning as more than mere information-transfer. "A network of millions of computers," Peterson observed, "provides an exciting educational technology to train leaders for His church, filling the earth 'with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.'" By 2006 the Virtual Campus had over 500 students enrolled, and its student body came from as far away as Afghanistan, Belarus, China, and Malawi.

MEASURING THE SEMINARY'S INFLUENCE

Luder Whitlock was aware of the significant role that Reformed Seminary was assuming, expressing this in his remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the permanent Orlando campus on April 25, 1995. "The ministry of this seminary is needed now more than ever," he noted. If it fails, "what shall our culture become?" Whitlock's sense of the Seminary's growing societal influence fit with increasing engagement of evangelicals in the "culture wars" of that day. Reformed Seminary was poised, he claimed, to offer the hope and encouragement of the gospel, not only to American culture but also throughout the world.

In that same year British evangelical scholar Alister McGrath acknowledged the work of the Seminary in his book, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*. There he cited Reformed Seminary along with four other North American seminaries (Fuller, Regent, Trinity, and Westminster) as "leading evangelical centers of scholarship and research." Together they were symbolic of a renaissance and maturity of American evangelical theological reflection. Yet McGrath's congratulatory note also contained a word of caution: success can become an enemy, and the spread of the influence of schools such as Reformed can contribute to a dilution of its identity. An identity, McGrath warned, must be "commensurate with its tradition." For a seminary in the Reformed tradition, this was the challenge of *Semper Reformanda*: always being Reformed according to the Word of God.

Seminary success can often be measured in deceptive ways, and McGrath's words remind an independent seminary such as Reformed that it is a servant of the church. Still there were several positive signs that Whitlock and the Seminary board could legitimately cite. The Seminary placed a high priority on establishing relationships with other Christian organizations, and there were indications that these investments were paying dividends.

Dr. Sinclair Ferguson, Guest Professor of Systematic Theology with Orlando students.

Together with many of the faculty, Whitlock took on a leadership role in the production of the New Geneva Study Bible published by Thomas Nelson Press in 1995 in conjunction with the Foundation for Reformation. Under the general editorship of R.C. Sproul, the New Geneva Study Bible marked the beginning of an effort to renew the influence of Reformed theology in America. A distinctively Reformed study Bible was needed because a new Reformation, Whitlock insisted, must begin with laity enabled to "become energetic disciples of Christ." No fewer than thirteen Seminary faculty members contributed to the project. One of them, Richard Pratt, observed that the New

Geneva Study Bible provided "insights into the Bible that [were] unavailable in any other resource."

The original Orlando campus was located in the Maitland Center from 1989 to 1998.

In 1991, Campus Crusade for Christ (now called Cru) announced the relocation of its world headquarters to Orlando. Since that move, Reformed Seminary has established a close working relationship, and established training programs for many members of the Campus Crusade staff. This network was nurtured by L. Allen Morris and Elliott Belcher, members of the boards of both organizations for over two decades. (This connection continued when Ric Cannada's brother, Barry Cannada, a Jackson attorney, joined the Campus Crusade board in 1993.)

Other mission organizations with whom Reformed Seminary has developed partnerships include Reformed University Ministries, Young Life, and Campus Outreach. The Seminary also established a Doctor of Ministry program in South Korea in partnership with Chongshin University. In Brazil, the Seminary is partnered with the Andrew Jumper Graduate Center of Mackenzie University, and in Scotland with the Highland Theological College. New programs and initiatives were developed in Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Memphis.

Not all of the Seminary's plans took root. Extension sites in Detroit and Boca Raton were short-lived, as was a concentration in sports and recreation ministry. For a time the Seminary offered a European program that featured English-based teaching in Vienna and Budapest for missionaries serving in Europe. The Orlando campus briefly experimented with an Anglican studies program in conjunction with the Central Florida Diocese of the Episcopal Church.

Not to be overlooked was the quiet though impressive body of biblical and theological scholarship that the Seminary cultivated. Frank James and Charles Hill published monographs with Oxford

Our Reformed Hope

Richard Pratt

We also call ourselves Reformed because of our hope for the future. All believers look forward to that great day when Jesus will return in glory. We share this vision with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Yet, throughout the centuries the Reformed branch of the church has sought ways to bring the Gospel to all areas of life.

Dr. Richard Pratt, Professor of Old Testament, Jackson and Orlando, 1985-2006

Our Reformed hope motivates us to expand the Kingdom in two ways. First, RTS prepares men and women to bring the gospel to all people in every part of the world. Our faculty and administration regularly involve themselves in a variety of cross-cultural ministries. We encourage our students to serve every segment of American society. We prepare international students to build up the body of Christ in their homelands. Moreover, we challenge our students to consider the call to foreign missions. We are told that Christ purchased people for God "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation. 5:9). Therefore, the proclamation of the gospel to all people is one of the chief aims of our seminary.

Second, our Reformed hope looks beyond preaching and the building of the church. We believe that the Lordship of Christ extends to all areas of life. Christ is Lord not only of the church; He is supreme over the family, the arts and sciences, and human society at large. For this reason, we do not withdraw from the world. Rather, we prepare our students to bring the Word of God to bear on every dimension of human culture. As the gospel spreads, believers are to transform their cultures to the honor and glory of God. We are the bearers of God's image. We are to fill the earth, every aspect of the earth, with the glory of God our creator and redeemer, and thus fulfill the mandate given to Adam and Eve so long ago (Genesis 1:27-30).

University Press. James was also appointed visiting scholar at the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, affiliated with Keble College of the University of Oxford. Ligon Duncan directed an ambitious, multi-volume project to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Major book-length commentaries by the faculty's biblical scholars have covered over half of the biblical canon, from Genesis (Bruce Waltke) to Psalms (Mark Futato) to Revelation (Simon Kistemaker).

INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING

One of the crowning achievements of Luder Whitlock's long tenure of service for the Seminary occurred when he was elected president of the Association of Theological Schools from 1998 to 2000. Not only did this honor reflect the respect he commanded in American theological education, but it also revealed his success in leading the Seminary from its days of ATS probation to recognized academic excellence.

In 1999, the Seminary's Board of Trustees granted Luder Whitlock a long-overdue sabbatical. He used it as the occasion to pen his first book, *The Spiritual Quest*. The book was autobiographical to a significant extent, with a "what I have learned" tone from the Seminary's leader, now 58 years old and beginning to look back and reflect after more than two decades as the Seminary's president. (To put Whitlock's lengthy tenure in proper perspective, consider that the average presidential tenure at ATS-member schools is five years.)

Whitlock's book was also a survey in cultural trends, a field of long-term interest for him. He explored the renewed interest in spirituality in American life, encouraging spiritual seekers to find growth in spiritual maturity through meditations on God's holiness and sovereignty. All of life was involved in a proper apprehension of biblical stewardship, Whitlock insisted, even the daily and mundane tasks of eating, learning, and earthly vocation.

Whitlock completed that book from his study on the new sixty-acre, lakefront Orlando campus of the seminary, which had relocated to Oviedo, a growing community on the east side of metropolitan

Orlando, in February 1999. There he could watch the construction of the 700-seat chapel, and imagine other buildings that would complete the campus plan.

From one perspective, Whitlock could find great satisfaction in the realization of the Seminary's vision. On the eve of the new millennium, he wrote: "As the hours drift away and the twentieth century becomes history, we are also aware that it has been a breathtaking ride during the past exciting one hundred years. So much has happened one can hardly take it in." That statement aptly described his long-time association with the Seminary as well.

However, a downturn in the national economy put great stress on the Seminary's enlarged operational expenses. When this necessitated the postponement of further building plans, Whitlock submitted his resignation to the Board of Trustees, which it reluctantly accepted at its meeting on May 31, 2001, in Jackson, Mississippi.

Whitlock's retirement brought his twenty-three-year presidency to a close. This tenure was neatly divided in two phases. From 1978 to 1989, Whitlock presided over the Jackson campus, and from 1989 to 2001 he presided over multiple campuses. Characteristically, Whitlock remained active after leaving Reformed Seminary. His labors have included directing the Trinity Forum and serving as interim president at Erskine College and Seminary in South Carolina.

Dr. Reggie Kidd, Orlando Campus Professor of New Testament

Ironically, the same issues that confronted the Seminary at the beginning of Whitlock's tenure recurred at its termination. The school's financial crisis was accompanied by issues that arose during the Seminary's ten-year re-accreditation procedure in 2001. Once again that visit prompted accreditors' concerns about the Seminary's governance.

In the light of these difficulties, the task before the Executive Committee was to underscore its ongoing commitment that Reformed Seminary would remain one united institution. The search for Whitlock's successor in turn raised questions about the

means by which the Seminary would continue its expansion and yet maintain its Reformed identity. The serious financial challenges before the school reminded the older committee members of the struggles during the Seminary's founding, and the Executive Committee committed itself toward "praying like we used to," in the words of Frank Horton.

Dr. Ric Cannada, third chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary

In September 2002, the Seminary inaugurated Ric Cannada as the school's third president. As the son of Robert Cannada, the vice president of the Charlotte campus was well suited for this calling. The elder Cannada had retired in 2000 after 36 years of service on the Seminary's Executive Committee (and was replaced by Jim Moore as Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee). The younger Cannada was a graduate from the early years of the school (M.Div., 1973), and he earned his D.Min. degree from the Seminary in 1996, conducting his doctoral research on nontraditional course scheduling in theological education.

Soon after his inauguration, the Seminary determined that further institutional restructuring was beneficial, because one individual could not oversee an institution that had grown to the size that Reformed Seminary had become. Thus in 2003 the Seminary underwent a complete reorganization at the senior management level. The board announced that Cannada's title would be changed to chancellor and chief executive officer, and that a president would be appointed for each of the three residential campuses. Cannada's role as chancellor, unlike a figurehead or a president emeritus, was one of active leadership that included the task of chief executive officer.

Cannada explained that having a president to oversee each campus, providing "daily leadership needs," would allow them to respond better to the needs of the students and the churches in

each region. Decentralization would yield stronger ties to local communities. Individual campus presidents appointed included Guy Richardson in Jackson, Frank James in Orlando, and Frank Reich in Charlotte, along with Andrew Peterson, who became president of the Virtual Campus. The board also announced the promotions of Robert Cara as chief academic officer and Lyn Perez as chief development officer and president of the RTS Foundation. They joined Greg Markow (chief financial officer) and Robert Bailey (chief operating officer and assistant to the chancellor) as members of the senior administrative staff. Equally significant was the expansion of the Executive Committee, for the first time including representatives from Florida and the Carolinas.

As Ric Cannada stepped into Whitlock's shoes, he posed the question, "What can Reformed do in the next generation?" Having weathered the severest financial crisis in the school's history, he focused the institution's attention on Atlanta and Washington, D.C., hopeful of converting those two sites into full campuses. Encouraged by the recommendation from accreditors, Cannada was eager to outfit both the capital of the nation and the "Capital of the South" with core faculty in theology and biblical studies, with local pastors serving as adjunct professors in practical theology. By enlarging these works beyond extensions that mostly fed students to the other campuses, Cannada sought to develop further the multi-campus system of the Seminary. Reformed Seminary launched an ambitious $75 million financial campaign to expand these two sites and to provide financial stability by significantly enlarging the Seminary's endowment funds. Cannada's bold and renewed vision for the school signaled that the Seminary's restructuring would involve no retreat from its mission.

Book Rat

Roger Nicole

When Roger Nicole joined the faculty of the Orlando campus in 1989, he and his wife, Annette, moved from Massachusetts along with his 25,000-volume personal library. This vast collection was particularly rich in systematic and historical theology, especially in the Reformed tradition. He explained his lifelong obsession with theological literature in a 1976 address before the American Theological Library Association on "Adventures and Discoveries of a Book Rat." Here is an excerpt from that address:

Dr. Roger Nicole and his wife, Annette

What is a *book rat?* Probably this term should be distinguished from other names given to people who deal with books.

There is the ***bibliophile*** or ***bibliophilist***. This is a person who is particularly interested in special books or in books that have an unusual feature that singles them out for attention. Sometimes this may be a special binding; or again it may be evidence of a significant past owner; or it may be a book that General Washington carried and that protected him from what otherwise would have been a fatal bullet! The contents are relatively insignificant for the bibliophilist. What matters is some exceptional circumstance or accoutrement. I am not a ***bibliophilist.***

The ***book dealer*** is especially concerned in providing books for sale to others. I am not a ***book dealer.***

The ***librarian*** is a person who is concerned in making books serviceable to others and who sometimes uses them himself! To do this with proper skills requires very considerable training, which it has not been my privilege to receive. I am not a ***librarian***. The ***bookworm*** is a person who "burrows" in books but may not care whether or

not he owns them. He is interested in mastering the contents, not in acquiring the volumes. I confess that I am something of a ***book-worm***, but it is not in this capacity that I would address you.

The ***book rat*** is one who combines several of the traits of the others and who adds to it a certain scavenging instinct, which leads him invariably to places where books may be obtained and which helps him to enrich his own collection or that of the institution he serves. I confess that I am a ***book rat***.

Chapter V · Looking Forward at Fifty

Serving International Calvinism

EARLY IN 2007, one of the founding board members of RTS, Robert C. "Bob" Cannada, Sr., suffered a stroke. Several months later, on July 5, he passed away at the age of 86. Chairman of the Board of the Seminary for 25 years, Cannada was a pillar of the institution, as well as an elder at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson for a half-century. Arguably no other individual was more instrumental in shaping the formation and development of RTS. Condolences to the family and tributes to his lifetime of service poured in. Prison Fellowship President Chuck Colson observed, "I don't think I ever met a more persistent man in my entire life. . . . RTS is a great living legacy of his life." Amos Magezi, director of the Uganda Bible Institute, while noting that most of the teachers at UBI had trained at RTS, observed that "the church in Africa is harvesting from the fruit of [Cannada's] vision and labor. Indeed, we have lost a friend and a father." Magezi's words suggest an end of an era at the Seminary with Cannada's passing. But they point also to the way in which RTS was also manifesting its influence in the international spread of the Reformed faith.

James (Jim) Moore was the board chairman for 13 years after having served as the vice chairman of the board for many years previously under Bob Cannada, and Jim served as chairman during the entire time that Ric Cannada was chancellor. The two men were close and worked well together, helped by a decades-long relationship between the two families.

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEXT HALF-CENTURY

Bob Cannada's son, Robert C. (Ric) Cannada, Jr., brought his ten-year service as RTS chancellor to an end when he stepped down from

the post in 2012. Throughout his tenure, Cannada's integrity in all of his dealings, especially in cultivating closer relations with "competive" seminaries, was never lost on observers. Typical was the sentiment expressed by Bryan Chapell, president of Covenant Seminary, in assessing the "Cannada years" at the helm of RTS:

> *What I most appreciate about Ric Cannada is simple: friendship. There is no denying that the seminaries each of us lead also serve similar (or, at times, the same) constituencies. There are many opportunities for rancor or resentment to grow. Yet, from the first day he took office, Ric would have none of that. In public and in private, he has reminded everyone that we serve the same Lord and that Christ's kingdom is more important than personal or institutional advantage.*

Although assuming the title "Chancellor emeritus" in order to ease his successor with the transition, Cannada was far from retiring from his service at RTS. Rather, he moved on to help with special projects, including helping with a new financial campaign in connection with the seminary's 50th anniversary in 2016.

The ambitious previous financial campaign begun in 2005 early in the service of Jim Moore as board chairman and Ric Cannada as chancellor was significant because of the recent economic turmoil that had greatly affected in a negative way the annual finances of the seminary and also its relatively small endowment. By God's grace the $75,000,000 campaign goal was reached and surpassed, and the seminary's endowment-type funds were increased from less than $20,000,000 to over $46,000,000, while continuing the ministry and expansion of the seminary, including the cash purchase and renovation of a campus for RTS-Atlanta for $3,500,000. Perhaps most significant for the future financial stability of the seminary was the fact that most of the campaign funds were given undesignated, which added great flexibility to the RTS board for the use of those funds. These undesignated endowment-type funds can be used for emergency needs in financial downturns or for extraordinary opportunities for additional ministry as well as for ongoing steady ministry support.

Ric Cannada represented RTS at the World Reformed Fellowship Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, in March 2009.

Cannada also cast his vision in an international direction. A conference of the World Reformed Fellowship in Jakarta, Indonesia, in March 2009 marked the beginning of the seminary's relationship with the Indonesian Reformed Evangelical Church. Cannada brought greetings to the church's pastor, the Rev. Stephen Tong (often described as the "Billy Graham of Asia"), and the associate pastor, Dr. Benjamin Intan, an alumnus of RTS. Cannada also taught at the Sekhola Tinggi Theologi Reformed Injili in Indonesia. Over the course of the next several years, he would return to Indonesia and cultivate RTS's ties with Reformed institutions in this predominantly Muslim nation.

Additionally, Cannada served in the development of the World Reformed Fellowship as a member of the board of directors and the executive committee. Samuel Logan, international director of the WRF, commented in 2012:

> *Ric has demonstrated extraordinary biblical insights about a dizzying wide spectrum of issues facing our small but global organization. He alerts us to issues about which most of us were not even*

aware and he suggests solutions that seem almost always to be right on target. But he always does so graciously, demonstrating a remarkable and Christlike concern for not only doing the right thing but also for doing it in the right way.

In 2010 the Seminary appointed RTS-Charlotte president, Dr. Michael A. Milton, as chancellor-elect, with the view toward his assuming the full responsibilities of chancellor and CEO in 2012. In accepting this post, Dr. Milton stressed that the opportunity before the Seminary was less as an institution "held together by rules, regulations, and procedures" than as a movement "marked by attractive, clear, unifying vision for the future together with a strong set of values and beliefs," and he saw his role as casting that vision for the Seminary.

Dr. Robert C. (Ric) Cannada with Dr. Michael A. Milton

The inauguration took place on September 14, 2012 at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Matthews, North Carolina. However, in God's providence Milton's tenure would not last long. Within a year, the executive committee of RTS made the surprising announcement that he was stepping down, owing to a debilitating illness for which his doctors prescribed sustained rest from the arduous duties of his post. In describing this "compassionate retirement," board chairman Richard Ridgway explained, "this difficult decision was made out of love for Mike and [his wife] Mae, and a desire to see a return to health and future service in the church of Christ. Mike has served RTS steadfastly."

The Seminary quickly secured a successor. By the summer of 2013 it announced the appointment of Dr. J. Ligon Duncan as chancellor and the fifth chief executive officer of RTS. Originally appointed at RTS in 1989, Duncan was professor of systematic and historical theology for nearly a quarter century at the Jackson campus even while serving as senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Jackson for 17 of those years. Board chairman Ridgway explained, "Dr.

Scripture on Trial

Michael J. Kruger

Attacks on the integrity of the Bible continue in our age. And Dr. Kruger explains that answers to skeptics are readily at hand.

"Virtually every attack on the authority of the Bible includes the claim that the Bible, at numerous points, contradicts itself. There are just too many discrepancies for the Bible to be trusted, we are told. And most of these supposed discrepancies have to do with the four Gospels. Was there one angel at the tomb or two? Did Jesus cleanse at the beginning of his ministry (John) or at the end of his ministry (the Synoptics)? Why does Jesus use different words in different Gospels?

"Of course, there are many more proposed contradictions beyond these examples. And there is no way that a brief article such as this one could ever deal with each one of them. But, many such discrepancies could be resolved if some basic principles of ancient historiography were kept in mind.

"First, in ancient history, stories did not have to be told in chronological fashion. Order was often changed for thematic or practical reasons. Secondly, when passing along the teachings or sayings of an individual, words were often not quoted verbatim. On the contrary, such sayings were often condensed, reworded or summarized in order to save space or meet the needs of the audience in mind. Third, if an author fails to mention the occurrence of an event or action, we should not, on that basis, conclude that the event or action did not occur. If we did so, we would be appealing to an argument from silence—which is widely regarded as fallacious. Authors would leave out details for all sorts of reasons, and we must be careful of the conclusions we draw from omissions.

"When these three principles are applied carefully, and a person is willing to approach the text as innocent until proven guilty (rather

than the opposite), then the vast majority of apparent contradictions quickly disappear.

"Moreover, it should be acknowledged that for generations, evangelical scholars have interacted with these problematic passages in extensive detail and have offered cogent responses and explanations. . . .

"The Bible has excellent historical credentials and can be trusted to give us the very words of God. Such a conclusion should come as no surprise. Jesus also affirmed the trustworthiness of the Bible: 'Scripture cannot be broken' (John 10:35)."

Reformed Catholicity

Is it possible to be both Reformed and Catholic? Theologians Michael Allen and Scott Swain insist that it is not only possible but demanded of theology in our age:

"Reformed catholicity . . . is an exercise in theological remembrance and retrieval, seeking to recover the habits of theological thought and argumentation belonging to an older confessional dogmatics, and to the broad churchly tradition of biblical interpretation that lies both behind and beside it, for the sake of contemporary theological retrieval."

Duncan is uniquely gifted for this important leadership position at RTS. As an RTS professor for 23 years, he knows our institution, and our faculties know him as both a scholar and a pastor. He is an effective communicator with great leadership ability."

Duncan's pedigree was impressive. Having earned a doctorate from the University of Edinburgh, he was elected moderator of the 32nd General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America in 2004 (the youngest minister in the PCA ever to take on that task). He was a co-founder of Together for the Gospel, and he served on the council of the Gospel Coalition and as president of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals.

Dr. J. Ligon Duncan was appointed RTS Chancellor in 2013.

In his inaugural address, on October 2, 2014, from his familiar pulpit at Jackson's First Presbyterian Church, Duncan laid out the challenge before the school that was based on the plan for Princeton Theological Seminary over two centuries ago: "At RTS we want to form people for the gospel ministry who will truly believe and cordially love the biblical truth of Reformed theology, and who will therefore endeavor to preach, propagate and defend it in all its genuineness and simplicity and fullness, and thus extend the influence of true evangelical piety and gospel order."

NEW CAMPUS PRESIDENTS

Dr. Frank A. James III resigned from the presidency of the Orlando campus in 2009 in order to return full time to classroom teaching and his scholarly interests in church history. Shortly thereafter he was called to serve as the provost at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts.

In 2011 the seminary appointed Dr. Donald W. Sweeting as president of the Orlando campus. Having served in the pastorate for

22 years (the last 12 as senior pastor at Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church [EPC] in Englewood, Colorado), Sweeting explained what attracted him to this new call. There is a "strategic role of the seminary," he noted. "It is quite simple—as pastors go, so go the churches; as churches go, so goes the community, as communities go, so goes society. Who shapes pastors? Seminaries. The next generation of church leaders will either be made or marred in the seminary." Sweeting had a personal role model as he made this transition—his father, George Sweeting, was a pastor who went on to serve a long tenure as president of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

For other presidential appointments, the Seminary chose homegrown leadership. When Michael Milton left the presidency of the Charlotte campus to serve as chancellor of the institution in 2012, Dr. Michael Kruger, at the time serving as academic dean and professor of New Testament in Charlotte, moved offices and accepted the post. In his inaugural address, based on 1 Corinthians 1:18, Kruger pledged to maintain the "historic, realistic and optimistic" message of the cross of Christ. Despite the administrative burdens of the office, he continued to produce scholarly works in the field of New Testament canon and the reliability of the New Testament, amid the challenges of new atheism and other current expressions of unbelief, both in the academy and in popular culture.

Dr. Michael Kruger

J. Scott Redd, Jr., a graduate of the Orlando campus who earned a PhD in Old Testament at the Catholic University in Washington, DC, joined the faculty in Orlando in Old Testament for a brief time before he accepted a post as the first president of the Washington, D.C. campus. Under his leadership, that campus has capitalized on its location in the nation's capital to establish an Institute of Theology and Public Life in 2015.

NEW INITIATIVES

Beyond transitions in leadership, the last ten years in the Seminary's life have witnessed a flurry of campus developments and new initiatives. The Atlanta campus purchased new property, a nearly 25,000 square foot building, highly visible from Interstate 75, northwest of the city. The property included land for even further growth of the campus.

The calling of a military chaplain, a particular burden on the heart of Dr. Michael Milton, led to the establishment of the Chaplains Military Institute at the Charlotte campus in 2010. Even while he presided over the RTS-Charlotte campus, Milton was a lieutenant colonel chaplain in the U. S. Army Reserve, and he was an instructor at the U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The institute included a new emphasis in the Master of Divinity program, with electives in the area of chaplain ministry. Beyond that, it entailed conferences, lectures, and regular meetings of CMI fellowship, where strategies and ideas about the chaplaincy could be discussed.

In the spring of 2010, the seminary expanded into the Southwest with an extension campus in Houston, based out of Christ Presbyterian Church, a congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The particular focus of this campus included a "Tex-Mex" flavor, emphasizing the development of pastors from diverse ethnic backgrounds and especially the Hispanic population. RTS graduate and Vietnam veteran Tim McKeown was appointed executive director. McKeown's long tenure of service with the PCA's Mission to the World, including church planting in South America, was part of his impressive résumé as he accepted this post.

Christian Encounter with Islam

When Reformed Theological Seminary was founded in 1966, there were few mosques in America. The growth of Islam over the past half-century in the West has been astonishing to the point where a flourishing Islamic community can be found in every major city in the United States.

In response, in 2012 RTS undertook a curriculum revision in order more fully to integrate a study of Islamic faith and practice in the seminary's Master of Divinity (M.Div.) curriculum. At the heart of this initiative was a new required M.Div. course, "Christian Encounter with Islam." Students in this course read significant sections of the Qur'an along with portions of the *hadith* (collections of the sayings of Muhammad). They study the history of Islam in its wide diversity (including Sunni and Shi'ite expressions) and its relationship with Christianity over the past 1,600 years. They wrestle with "hot-button" issues such as the "Insider Movement" and debates about Bible translations in Muslim cultures. Beyond the classroom, students visit an Islamic mosque and they are encouraged to establish friendships with Muslims.

A mosque against the Atlanta, Georgia, skyline.

Unlike trends in mainline and liberal seminaries, adding Islam to the curriculum was not a step in the direction merely of promoting inter-religious dialogue. Rather, this was the means of equipping RTS graduates to present the claims of Christ to the dark world of Islam. In sum, "Christian Encounter with Islam" sought to encourage RTS students better to understand, love, and witness to their Muslim neighbors.

In his advocacy of this curriculum emphasis, former RTS chancellor Robert Cannada stressed the importance of some "spill-over effects" that would benefit RTS. He noted that apologetics training at RTS (and other seminaries in the Reformed tradition), had generally focused on defending historic Christianity against the threats of secular unbelief or Roman Catholicism. Sustained attention to Islam, he argued, could become a means both of reinvigorating the missionary passion that constituted the founding of RTS as well as broadening the institution's apologetic focus in light of the challenge of other world religions.

The support for this initiative has been enthusiastic, extending to the seminary's alumni, supporting churches, and donors. As America becomes the most religiously diverse country in the world, RTS recognizes Islam as a challenge not limited for foreign missions; it is coming to American middle-class neighborhoods and even small towns.

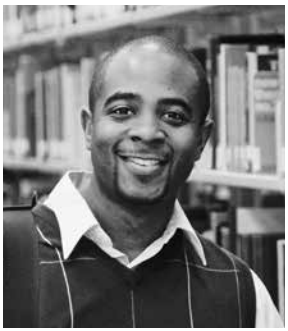
African American Leadership Initiative

Another feature of American religious diversity that RTS had devoted minimal attention to in its early years, even as this was manifested in its own backyard, was the African American community. This began to change in recent years when in 2008 Jackson alumni Elbert McGowan and Roy Hubbard blazed new frontiers by establishing Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) chapters at two historically black colleges and universities (Jackson State University and Tougaloo College, respectively). Both men spoke of the hunger for the Reformed faith among students at these campuses.

About the same time, Anthony Carter, an Orlando alumnus ministering in a church plant in Atlanta, penned the book, *On Being Black and Reformed: A New Perspective on the African-American Christian Experience*, where he demonstrated the compatibility between the historic Reformed faith and the richness of the African-American Christian experience, urging their collaborative service.

In 2012 the Reformed African American Network was established, intended to make more available Reformed theological resources to the African American community and to encourage fellowship among Reformed African American pastors. Network co-founder Jemar Tisby described its goals in this way:

> *We want to create engagement because engagement denotes interaction—it's not just importing or exporting a package. There's much that African Americans can learn from Reformed theology, but there's also a lot that the historic Reformed faith can learn from African American Christians.*
>
> *For example, African Americans need a rootedness in historic Christianity. We tend to think of Christianity going only as far*



Reformed African American Network co-founder Jemar Tisby

back as when missionaries shared the gospel with African slaves. But there's 1,700 years of Christianity leading up to those times. The African American church oftentimes misses the richness of the Reformers and the apostolic tradition. By engaging with Reformed theology, African Americans get a better sense of being part of the universal church.

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

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

Following up on these developments, the RTS Jackson campus developed the African American Leadership Initiative. The goal of this initiative was two-fold: to recruit more African Americans to RTS-Jackson, and to prepare leaders in a diversity of races and ethnicities for ministry in African American, multiethnic or urban settings. Scholarship, mentoring, and field education are some of the platforms by which this initiative will play out.

In 2015 chancellor Duncan announced the appointment of Tisby as director of this initiative. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, Tisby enrolled at the Jackson campus largely because of the presence of nearby Redeemer Church, a multiethnic PCA congregation pastored by Mike Campbell, a fellow African American. Jackson President Guy Richardson spoke enthusiastically of the appoint-

ment, "Jemar exemplifies both a heart for leading men and women to the truths of God's Word as well as a godly passion to build cross-cultural and racially diverse church ministries."

Expansion of Distance Education

One more sign of the international influence of the seminary over the past decade was the expansion in the distance education offerings. Consistent with its goal to offer theological education that is "available, accessible, and flexible," the Seminary began to offer lectures, seminars, and chapel addresses for free downloading from iTunesU. Wrote one gratified listener in 2008: "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."

A significant step in the development of the seminary's "global campus" was the hiring of David John in 2007. Now the executive director of the RTS Distance Education Department, John works with the provost, campus presidents, academic deans, and faculty to incorporate the most effective instructional technology in the life of the seminary, including residential, distance, and hybrid course designs. John brings to bear his extensive background in broadcasting and production, web-conferencing, and smart classroom design, and educational course delivery systems.

A helpful by-product of the RTS distance education department that has served both students and non-seminarians was a Westminster Shorter Catechism mobile phone application. Unveiled in 2010, it has served to encourage the memorization of the classic 17th-century summary of the Reformed faith both by ministerial candidates and laypeople.

Partnership with Redeemer City to City

Perhaps the most ambitious initiative was a strategic partnership with Redeemer City to City, the church-planting program of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, and the vision of its

founding pastor, Tim Keller. In this partnership, established in 2014, RTS and Redeemer City to City plan to collaborate in preparing a new generation of church planters in New York and other cities internationally. This relationship, cultivated by RTS alumni associated with Redeemer's project, including Al Barth, John Hutchinson, and Jay Kyle, entails an RTS extension campus in Manhattan, where RTS faculty will offer instruction for a Master of Arts degree in biblical studies (with classes beginning in fall 2015). Redeemer City to City will provide training in practical theology through a "City Ministry Year" with opportunities for ministry in New York City, studying church planting methods that have proven effective and fruitful in urban contexts.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

As the seminary approached its semicentennial, faculty transitions were inevitable. Simon Kistemaker stepped down after more than 40 years from his long tenure at two campuses (which began in Jackson in 1971 and ended in Orlando in 2011). Roger Nicole's two decades of service at Orlando in active "retirement" came to an end with his passing on December 11, 2011, a day after his 95th birthday. Steve Brown and Reggie Kidd concluded their lengthy terms of service at the Orlando campus. Harold O. J. Brown from the Charlotte campus succumbed to cancer in 2007. (The legacies of Brown and Kistemaker endure in the annual academic lectureships conducted in their names at the Charlotte and Orlando campuses, respectively.)

Perhaps no transition affected the seminary as deeply as when, on February 7, 2012, Dr. J. Knox Chamblin, beloved emeritus professor of New Testament at RTS Jackson, died at the age of 76. Brian Gault remembered him in this way: "He was a kind, gentle and humble man who was captured by the beauty of his King. He loved C. S. Lewis and made Aslan come alive for generations of students. Oh, and he could laugh—there was a jolliness about him. He was a saint that made everyone want to know better the Jesus he knew."

Filling the shoes of these men are recently appointed younger scholars: Benjamin Gladd, Bill Fullilove, Michael Allen, Chad Van

The Scholarship of a Seminary Professor

Derek Thomas

Are the academy and the church two distantly separated cultures? No, insists Derek Thomas, who argues that the calling of a seminary professor is to bridge those worlds:

"I'm an unashamed Calvinist, so I have five points. The first point is that seminary professor scholarship should produce an infectious love for theology. When people ask me what I do, if I say I'm a seminary professor, or if I say I teach systematic theology, there's a mist that descends. So I use the line from William Perkins that 'theology is the science of living blessedly forever.' I am teaching people how to be truly happy. One of the ways that seminaries ought to test whether they're doing their job properly is: Are we creating in students a love and a zeal for good, sound theology? One of my number one goals is to make people fall in love with theology.

Dr. Derek Thomas

"Secondly, scholarship serves godliness. J. I. Packer once wrote that theologies that cannot be sung are wrong at a very deep level. So whatever I'm teaching, I have to say, 'If this does not put a song to my mouth . . . ' We professors need to demonstrate by our own lives how our scholarship actually makes us more godly. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the best scholarship makes me fall down and worship and sing the praises of my God.

"Thirdly, we need to demonstrate a form of scholarship that provides certainty. It's too easy for scholarship to serve the interests of doubt, but we need to teach so that our students and the church can pick up their Bible and be absolutely confident that the Bible

speaking is God speaking. I just read Dr. Michael Kruger's book on canon, which has always been a difficult issue for me. What I got at the end of reading that book is, 'I can trust the 66 books of the Bible as the very Word of God.' Now that is the best kind of scholarship—it gives me certainty.

"Fourthly, scholarship should be reverent and obedient. In the very first of John Calvin's 159 sermons on Job, he says, 'It is a great thing to be subject to Almighty God.' At the very beginning he's telling you what the Book of Job is all about: bowing before the sovereignty of God. There's profound mystery in scholarship, and you cannot cross that line. You can take students up to that line, and then there is awe. . . .

"Fifthly, we are to execute a humble scholarship. We need to remember the apostle Paul's warning and admonition that knowledge puffs up; it has that propensity to bring a sense of arrogance and pride. True knowledge is humble—it's Jesus-like, bowing in humble acknowledgement that what we know, we only know because God has disclosed it to us."

Dixhoorn, Sean Michael Lucas, Michael McKelvey, Bruce Lowe, and many others. All of them show the promise of scholarship in service of the church. *(For a complete list of all faculty in the 50-year history of the seminary, see the appendix on page 137.)*

One of chancellor Duncan's early priorities in his tenure was the public recognition of RTS faculty to endowed faculty chairs. In 2014 he announced the following designations:

- **Dr. Michael Kruger**, *president of the Charlotte campus, as the Samuel C. Patterson professor of New Testament and early Christianity;*
- **Dr. Derek Thomas** *(who was teaching at the Atlanta campus while pastoring First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, S.C.) as Robert Strong professor of systematic and pastoral theology;*
- **Dr. Guy Waters** *(Jackson campus) as James M. Baird Jr. professor of New Testament;*
- **Dr. Richard Belcher** *(academic dean and professor at RTS-Charlotte) as John D. and Frances M. Gwin professor of Old Testament;*
- **Dr. Charles E. Hill** *(Orlando campus) as John R. Richardson professor of New Testament and early Christianity.*

These five scholars joined the ranks of colleagues at the seminary holding endowed chairs, including *Harriet Barbour Professor of Missions* **Dr. Elias dos Santos Medeiros**; *Alan Hayes Belcher, Jr. Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Languages* **Dr. Miles Victor Van Pelt**; *James Woodrow Hassell Professor of Church History* **Dr. Donald William Sweeting**; *Richard Jordan Professor of Theology* **Dr. Douglas Floyd Kelly**; *Carl W. McMurray Professor of Old Testament* **Dr. John Dana Currid**; *Robert L. Maclellan Professor of Old Testament* **Dr. Mark David Futato**; *Hugh and Sallie Reaves Professor of New Testament* **Dr. Robert James Cara**; *John E. Richards Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology* **Dr. Jennings Ligon Duncan III**; *John Dyer Trimble Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy* **Dr. John McElphatrick Frame.**

IN ONE SENSE, the growth of the seminary from a small regional school to an institution of international influence is the story of expanding concentric circles (not unlike the pattern in the Book of Acts): from Jackson, throughout the Southeast, to the ends of the earth. In another sense, the seminary has learned, over the course of a half-century, to recognize its obligations to minister to African Americans, Muslims, and other next-door neighbors. In other words, the world has come to RTS through the dynamics of globalization. In ministering to a rapidly changing world, Reformed Theological Seminary has embodied both the confessional unity and cultural diversity of the Reformed community in the contemporary world. Chancellor Ligon Duncan has put the maintenance of the seminary's Reformed theological witness as a priority as it begins its next half-century of service to the church. As he explained in his inaugural address:

> *"RTS stands at the center of providing the theological ballast for [this movement] because we remain committed to what this institution has always been committed to. We have been absolutely certain of who we are theologically. We are Reformed, evangelical and confessional, and we are not apologetic about that. At the same time, though, we're happy—we are not mad at anybody. We have taken an attitude of appreciative but critical engagement with other evangelical traditions. We genuinely want to serve the whole Christian community, but we know who we are—being firm in our theology but wanting to serve the whole Christian community."*

Conclusion · 2016 and Beyond

How Big is Your God?

AT THE DEDICATION of the Orlando campus on January 26, 1999, Luder Whitlock reflected on the history of Reformed Theological Seminary with his characteristic understatement. "Through all these years," he observed, "the Lord has been faithful and has blessed us far more than we had reason to expect."

In the wider context of the growth of American evangelicalism and its institutions in the latter half of the twentieth century, Reformed Seminary's story may at first seem unremarkable. After all, other evangelical seminaries have expanded and developed satellite campuses. And no doubt Reformed Seminary's location in the Southeast provided it a demographic advantage, as that quadrant of the country particularly experienced population growth and an economic boom. Still, no school can claim such remarkable growth as Reformed from its inauspicious and humble beginnings in 1966.

From its founding, RTS is committed to the inerrancy of the Word of God and to an understanding of biblical truth represented in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The founding motto of RTS is "Thy Word is Truth."

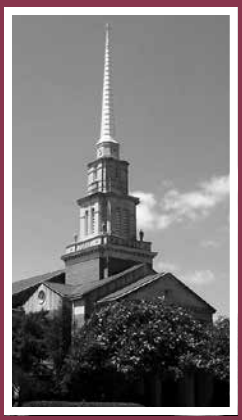
None of this was possible without the sacrificial gifts of the friends of the Seminary. The Maclellan Foundations and family made significant gifts to the Seminary beginning in the 1970s and have been ongoing supporters throughout its history. Other families whose financial support has been especially significant in the development of the ministry of the Seminary over the years include the Belchers, Irbys, Sells, Bradleys, Pamplins, Lucases, Seneffs, and Davises. All investments in the work of the Seminary, from individ-

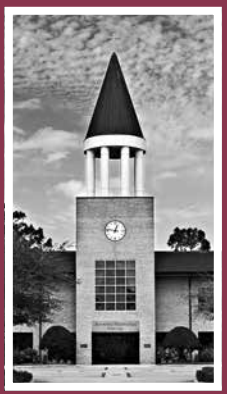
uals, churches, and foundations, are always gratefully received and enable the Seminary's mission.

Statistically, the story of the Seminary is staggering. After 50 years of fervent prayer and generous giving by countless laypeople, farsighted vision and imaginative thinking by the board, and faithful and diligent service by the faculty, Reformed Seminary at its enrollment height became one of the 10 largest seminaries in North America. The Seminary had grown to over 11,000 alumni in 46 states and 43 foreign countries. On its five campuses and various extension sites it currently touches over 2,000 students each year. Its full-time residential faculty grew from five to over 40. Its inaugural year's operational budget of $110,000 is a mere fraction of its current annual budget, which exceeds $14 million. Formed at first primarily as an effort to renew one denomination (the Southern Presbyterian church) Reformed Seminary now has students from well over 60 denominations.

But statistics do not tell the whole story, and there are better ways to measure the success of the Seminary. Mere numbers cannot convey the Seminary's ongoing commitment to combine intellectual integrity with a focus on serving the church. For example, in his classroom lectures Simon Kistemaker visualized behind every student a congregation that would eventually profit from his teaching. Accordingly, Kistemaker was fond of citing the role the Seminary played in the growth of the Reformed faith in Indonesia, where the Seminary's graduates established churches, seminaries, and Bible colleges. It is precisely this investment in the formation of international leaders, notes Elias Medeiros (alumnus from Brazil and professor of missions), that has enabled the Seminary to serve in the spread of the Reformed faith.

And yet, if the Seminary was not daunted by its humble origins in 1966, neither should an assessment of its history derive merely from its size and influence today. Perhaps the best image for the school's first 50 years took place in the summer of 2005 when Hurricane Katrina blasted through the Gulf Coast and roared north through Mississippi. The storm tore down a 200-year old oak tree that collapsed upon the north wing of the Seminary's White House. Although the





[Top, left to right] RTS campuses in Memphis, Tennessee; Jackson, Mississippi; and Charlotte, North Carolina; [Middle, left to right] New York City, New York; and Atlanta, Georgia; [Bottom, left to right] Washington, D.C.; Houston, Texas; and Orlando, Florida.

stately building was badly bruised, the original home of the Seminary survived, a symbol of God's sustaining faithfulness. It was soon refurbished, and it continues to serves as a Seminary guest house and conference center on the Jackson campus (renamed the Belcher Campus, in honor of the many ways in which long-time board member Elliot Belcher has served the Seminary).

In 2016, the Seminary's faculty still reflects on the question that prompted the school's founding, "Do we need an infallible Bible?" As it refutes old heresies and new perspectives, the Seminary continues to teach the people of God to trust the Word of God. Faithful to the Scriptures and its system of doctrine as summarized in the Westminster Standards, the faculty understands its scholarship as spiritual warfare against modern unbelief, and holds to its pastoral calling to place the gospel in the center of peoples' lives.

By God's grace, Reformed Theological Seminary will continue to train ministers of the Word of God for another 50 years and beyond. To do so, it will need diligent faculty members eager to teach the whole counsel of God, wise board members exercising careful stewardship of God's abundance, and faithful laypeople like the Mississippians who gathered to hear the dream of the founding board.

Most of all, it must cultivate a community of faith that continues to ask the question that Sam Patterson posed in Erskine Wells' office: "How big is your God?"

The first faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary: [back row, left to right] Dr. Robert Strong, Dr. Sam Patterson, Dr. Al Freundt, Dr. Richard Bodey; [front row, left to right] Dr. Jack Scott, Dr. Morton Smith, Dr. James DeYoung

From left to right: Robert Kennington (trustee), Dr. Jack Scott (Faculty), Dr. Sam Patterson (Faculty), Dr. Al Freundt, Jr. (Faculty).

Appendix 1: RTS Faculty

JACKSON FACULTY

Morton H. Smith ..... *1964 - 1977*
Albert H. Freundt, Jr. ..... *1965 - 1997*
Richard A. Bodey ..... *1966 - 1973*
James C. DeYoung ..... *1966 - 1989*
Jack B. Scott ..... *1966 - 1977*
O. Palmer Robertson ..... *1967 - 1972*
James R. Wagner ..... *1969 - 1977*
S. Wallace Carr ..... *1970 - 1988*
George C. Fuller ..... *1971 - 1973*
R. Allan Killen ..... *1971 - 1976*
Simon J. Kistemaker ..... *1971 - 1996*
Daniel R. Morse ..... *1971 - 1979*
Norman E. Harper ..... *1973 - 1988*
O. Guy Oliver ..... *1973 - 1981*
William J. Stanway ..... *1973 - 1986*
Robert Strong ..... *1973 - 1978*
Gerard Van Groningen ..... *1973 - 1980*
Samuel C. Patterson ..... *1974 - 1975*
Paul B. Fowler ..... *1975 - 1985*
Greg L. Bahnsen ..... *1976 - 1979*
John Richard de Witt ..... *1976 - 1983*
Paul D. Kooistra ..... *1976 - 1985*
Luder G. Whitlock, Jr. ..... *1976 - 2001*
Elmer M. Dortzbach ..... *1977 - 1985*
Richard G. Watson ..... *1977 - 1994*
Willem A. Van Gemeren ..... *1978 - 1990*
Robert B. Ashlock ..... *1980 - 1988*
Kenneth J. Foreman, Jr. ..... *1980 - 1983*
L. Roy Taylor ..... *1980 - 1983, 1993 - 1998*
J. Knox Chamblin ..... *1981 - 2002*
D. Ralph Davis ..... *1982 - 1985, 1994 - 2003*
Paul B. Long ..... *1982 - 1998*
Reginald F. McLelland ..... *1982 - 1988*
R. C. Sproul ..... *1983 - 1989*
James B. Hurley ..... *1984 - Current*
Douglas A. Kelly ..... *1984 - 1994*
Richard L. Pratt, Jr. ..... *1985 - 1989*
David M. O'Dowd ..... *1985 - 1990*
Dominic A. Aquila ..... *1986 - 1987*
Thomas G. Reid, Jr. ..... *1986 - 1989, 1990 - 1993*
Gordon K. Reed ..... *1987 - 1994*
Allen D. Curry ..... *1988 - 2009*
Kenneth J. Howell ..... *1988 - 1994*
H. Wilbert Norton ..... *1988 - 1993*
William J. Richardson ..... *1989 - Current*
Samuel F. Rowan ..... *1990 - 1993*
J. Ligon Duncan, III ..... *1990 - 1996, 2012 - Current*
William L. Hogan ..... *1991 - 1999*
James T. Berry ..... *1992 - 1997*
Judith K. Jacobson ..... *1992 - 1994*
John D. Currid ..... *1993 - 2007*

Elias Medeiros ..... *1993 - Current*
W. Duncan Rankin ..... *1993 - 2003*
Dennis J. Ireland ..... *1994 - 2011*
Enoch Wan..... *1994 - 2001*
Derek W. H. Thomas..... *1996 - 2011*
Douglas L. Falls, Jr...... *1997 - 2000*
Julie R. Clinefelter ..... *1997 - 2000*
W. Andrew Hoffecker ..... *1997 - 2010*
Michael W. Payne ..... *1997 - 2006*
Samuel H. Larsen ..... *1998 - 2009*
David Jussely..... *1999 - 2010*
William B. Barcley ..... *2001 - 2007*
Miles Van Pelt ..... *2003 - Current*
Paul B. Long, Jr...... *2004 - Current*
Guy Waters..... *2007 - Current*
Bruce Baugus..... *2008 - Current*
Daniel C. Timmer ..... *2009 - 2012*
Benjamin L. Gladd..... *2012 - Current*
Michael McKelvey..... *2014 - Current*
Charlie Wingard ..... *2014 - Current*
Sean M. Lucas ..... *.2014 - Current*

ORLANDO FACULTY

R. C. Sproul..... *1989 - 1995*
Richard L. Pratt, Jr. ..... *1989 - 2006*
Frank E. Farrell ..... *1989 - 2002*
John R. Muether..... *1989 - Current*
Roger Nicole..... *1989 - 2002*
Stephen W. Brown..... *1990 - 2009*
Allen Mawhinney..... *1990 - 2004*
Reggie M. Kidd ..... *1990 - 2015*
Ronald H. Nash ..... *1991 - 2002*
Michael J. Glodo ..... *1991 - 2000*
2006 - Current
Elmer B. Smick ..... *1992 - 1994*
William B. Eckenwiler..... *1993 - 2002*
Frank A. James, III..... *1993 - 2009*
Gary L. Rupp..... *1993 - 2001*
Bruce K. Waltke..... *1994 - 2011*
Steve Childers ..... *1995 - Current*
Charles E. Hill ..... *1994 - Current*
Simon J. Kistemaker..... *1996 - 2011*
Charles S. MacKenzie ..... *1994 - 2008*
Richard C. Gamble..... *1996 - 2003*
Scott K. Coupland ..... *1999 - Current*
Mark D. Futato ..... *1999 - Current*
John M. Frame..... *2000 - Current*
James L. Coffield ..... *2003 - Current*
Scott R. Swain..... *2006 - Current*
John Scott Redd, Jr...... *2009 - 2012*
Donald W. Sweeting ..... *2010 - Current*
R. Michael Allen ..... *.2015 - Current*
Gregory R. Lanier..... *2016 - Current*

CHARLOTTE FACULTY

Robert C. Cannada, Jr. ..... 1993 - Current
H. Wilbert Norton ..... 1993 - 2002
Robert C. Cara ..... 1993 - Current
Frank N. Kik ..... 1994 - 2006
Douglas F. Kelly ..... 1994 - 2016
Richard Belcher..... 1995 - Current
Kenneth J. McMullen ..... 1997 - Current
S. Donald Fortson ..... 1997 - Current
Harold O. J. Brown ..... 1998 - 2007
John W.P. Oliver ..... 1999 - 2013
Douglas L. Falls, Jr..... 2000 - Current
Michael J. Kruger ..... 2002 - Current
John D. Currid ..... 2007 - Current
Rodney A. Culbertson, Jr. .... 2007 - Current
Michael A. Milton ..... 2008 - 2013
James N. Anderson ..... 2009 - Current
James Newheiser, Jr..... 2016 - Current
D. Blair Smith ..... 2016 - Current

ATLANTA FACULTY

Bruce A. Lowe ..... 2007 - Current
John J. Yeo..... 2007 - 2012
Samuel H. Larsen..... .2009 - 2011
Eunsoo Kim..... 2009 - 2011
Derek W.H. Thomas ..... 2012 - Current
William B. Fullilove ..... 2013 - Current

WASHINGTON, DC FACULTY

Howard Griffith ..... 2007 - Current
Peter Y. Lee..... .2008 - Current
John Scott Redd, Jr..... 2012 - Current
Chad B. Van Dixhoorn..... 2013 - Current

Appendix 2:

RTS Board Members

All previous and current board members as of September 1, 2015 (In order of election)

Robert C. Cannada

Frank C. Horton

Robert G. Kennington

Sam C. Patterson

Frank L. Tindall

Erskine W. Wells

Charles W. Harmon

Horace H. Hull

Roy LeCraw

S. Elliott Belcher, Jr.

Emory Folmar

Gettys Guille

Hugh S. Potts

Robert S. Rugeley

Steve A. White

David P. Dean

Granville Dutton

Dr. J. Wesley McKinney

Henry B. Dendy

Peter R. Branton, III

H. S. Williford

L. Allen Morris

Sidney A. Robinson, Jr.

Kenneth S. Keyes

Robert J. Ostenson

Henry Dekker

W. Jack Williamson

John A. Crawford

James L. Moore

James M. Baird

B. F. Bracy

George R. Fair

Collie W. Lehn

Charles J. Moore, Jr.

Larry W. Edwards

William L. Watson, III

James M. Seneff, Jr.

Bryant R. Boswell

James W. Hood

Andrew Ginstead

William Caruth

David Lucas

Scott Maclellan

Richard L. Ridgway

William M. Mounger, II

Donald G. Breazeale

Roderick S. Russ, III

Warren Williamson

J. Scott Redd, Sr.

Paul A. Hurst III

Hu Meena

Current board members are indicated by bold typeface

About the author

John R. Muether

JOHN MUETHER came to Reformed Theological Seminary in 1989 as library director at the Orlando campus. He now serves as dean of libraries and professor of church history. In addition he is the denominational historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and a ruling elder at Reformation Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Oviedo, Florida. He has written *Cornelius Van Til: Reformed Apologist and Churchman*, and he co-authored (with Darryl Hart) *Fighting the Good Fight: A Brief History of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*; *With Reverence and Awe: Returning to the Basics of Reformed Worship*; and *Seeking a Better Country: 300 Years of American Presbyterianism*.