

MINISTRY & LEADERSHIP

2023



A RETROSPECTIVE OF DR. LIGON DUNCAN'S 10 YEARS OF SERVICE,
HIS VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF RTS, AND A GLIMPSE INTO EACH CAMPUS



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CHANCELLOR'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY

2023

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WHO WE ARE

Reformed Theological Seminary exists to glorify the Triune God and to serve his church in all branches of evangelical Christianity, especially Presbyterian and Reformed churches, by providing Reformed graduate theological education that is globally accessible. RTS equips its students for ministry, primarily through pastoral preparation, to be servant leaders marked by "a mind for truth, a heart for God."

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

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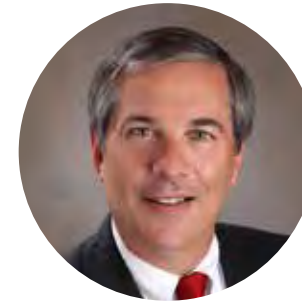
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FROM THE *Chairman*

RICHARD RIDGWAY

I first met Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III in September 1992 when he sang to the Reformed Theological Seminary Board of Trustees as a member of a quartet. My relationship with him deepened after he came to be the senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi in 1996. I am convinced that his 17 years at First Presbyterian was one way the Lord was preparing him for his next role as chancellor of RTS. After all, how can a man properly train others to be the pastor of a flock if he himself has not first walked this path?

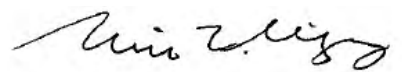
As important as Dr. Duncan has been to the development of the seminary, we should make sure the focus is where it belongs. The Lord is the one who has prepared and brought men to the role of chancellor. Dr. Duncan is the third in a line of men the Lord called to lead and build this institution. Sam Patterson,

RTS' founder, was technically its first president, but only took the position because RTS' accreditors required the young seminary to be led by a president. He stepped aside as soon as Dr. Luder Whitlock was chosen to take the helm in 1978. Dr. Whitlock led and grew the infant seminary against great cultural headwinds. He was uniquely gifted by the Lord for that day. The Lord prepared him and brought him for that work in his time.

Following Dr. Whitlock was Dr. Ric Cannada, who became president in 2001. The Lord had equipped Dr. Cannada with the skills to continue the growth and expansion of the seminary, the ability and insight to enhance the organizational structure, and the tenacity to build an endowment. During Dr. Cannada's leadership, the title of the chief executive was changed from president to chancellor as was appropriate with the multi-campus structure.

Dr. Mike Milton followed Dr. Cannada, but his time as chancellor was shortened due to health issues. Trusting the Lord in all things, we regretfully accepted Dr. Milton's resignation.

Dr. Whitlock laid a foundation, Dr. Cannada built an infrastructure, and Dr. Duncan has extended the reach and influence of RTS to the church and the culture beyond. What do we learn from this? Dr. Duncan's first 10 years as chancellor is about much more than these three men and the seminary itself. Rather, it is about the Lord's promise that he would build his church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. When you are tempted to fear the meltdown of the culture around you, remember this: The Lord is building his church. May he continue to use RTS in this glorious work!



Richard Ridgway



BUILDING ON A SURE FOUNDATION: RTS DURING THE DUNCAN YEARS

DR. SEAN MICHAEL LUCAS

Over the past 10 years, theological education in North America has shifted ground extensively. Institutions have been plagued by enrollment declines, internal dissension, and leadership transitions. Moves away from traditional, on-campus education to new delivery systems have led some seminaries to downsize and re-envision how spiritual formation happens. Many churches have questioned the historic seminary model, preferring to do theological education and ministerial preparation in-house with varying degrees of success.



Against that darkening backdrop, Reformed Theological Seminary has stood out against nationwide trends as an example of the continuing validity of residential theological education done from a robustly confessional framework. What accounts for this success that RTS has enjoyed?

Surely, a key factor is the leadership that RTS has received over the past decade from Dr. Ligon Duncan, Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer and John E. Richards Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology. Duncan has served RTS as a faculty member since 1990 and in his present role since 2013.

Dr. Duncan is quick to recognize that he has built on a solid foundation. Several of the significant initiatives that have led to RTS' continued vitality were begun under the leadership of his predecessor, Dr. Ric Cannada. These initiatives and projects constitute vital factors for the present health of the institution.

ENROLLMENT

The most obvious indicator of sustained success at RTS has been enrollment. Especially when compared to peer institutions, what God has done through Dr. Duncan and the rest of the leadership at RTS has been stunning.

Peer institutions throughout the world of theological education have struggled over the past 10 years. Comparing data from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), between 2013–2014 and 2021–2022, some peer evangelical institutions are down in total headcount anywhere from 26% to 43%; one institution is down in their Master of Divinity degree full-time equivalent students nearly 66%. By contrast, according to ATS data, RTS is up over 12% in total headcount and 34% in total Master of Divinity headcount. And while students are shifting the number of hours they take and the

modalities in which they take them, RTS sold more credit hours during the 2021–2022 academic year than at any other point in its history.

Undoubtedly, one of the major contributors to this is RTS' faculty. Throughout its history, RTS has had several notable faculty members—Drs. R.C. Sproul, Simon Kistemaker, John Frame, Douglas Kelly, and Richard Pratt come to mind. However, additions to the faculty during Dr. Duncan's time as chancellor include Drs. Greg Beale, Kevin DeYoung, and J.V. Fesko, as well as a new voting faculty role for seasoned theologians and scholars such as Drs. Sinclair Ferguson and Derek Thomas. Together with continuing faculty well-known in their fields, such as Drs. Michael Kruger, Scott Swain, Michael Allen, and Miles Van Pelt, RTS professors continue to draw students from around the world to study the Reformed faith and return well-equipped to their spheres of ministry.

NEW YORK CITY AND TEXAS

Central both to the growth of the institution and its mission-focused outreach is the New York City campus, which began in 2015 as a ministry partnership with Redeemer Presbyterian Church's City to City mission and with Dr. Tim Keller. While this project started under the leadership of Dr. Cannada, it came to fruition through Dr. Duncan's friendship with Dr. Keller.

Not only did students have an opportunity to study with Dr. Keller through RTS, but they experience the full richness of the RTS faculty, as many professors travel to New York City to teach intensives. Students can take about half of their Master of Arts (Biblical Studies) curriculum in

person in Manhattan, with some credits being completed online via RTS Global. The program has benefited enrollment, but far more, it serves to anchor RTS in one of the most important global cities for kingdom impact.

In a similar fashion, RTS also seeks to extend theological education in some of the fastest-growing emerging cities in the world. Through its campuses in Dallas and Houston, Texas, RTS works through partnerships with leading churches, including Christ Presbyterian Church in Houston, to train pastors and leaders in those locations.

Continuing to provide residential theological education through its distributed model allows RTS to support enrollment in a sustainable fashion. In addition, the faculty resources of the entire institution can be accessed by students throughout the RTS system through RTS Global as well as through faculty travel and engagement.

RTS ALSO SEEKS TO EXTEND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN SOME OF THE FASTEST-GROWING EMERGING CITIES IN THE WORLD.





OneRTS

In 2018, the entire faculty voted to synchronize the various campus curriculums to ensure that each student pursuing a degree at a particular campus had the same sequence of courses. While students are still required to take a certain number of credits at their “home” campus, the net effect of this change was to unlock the resources of the other campuses to each student. The whole faculty is now available for RTS students, regardless of location.

Three years later, a strategic plan approved by the RTS Board of Trustees sought to ensure that the same unity and sense of mission that faculty have would be extended to administrators and staff. Through a streamlined senior leadership structure and an intentional human resources development plan, the desire is for administrators at every level of the institution to understand how their role advances the mission, vision, and values of RTS.

LEADERSHIP WITHIN EVANGELICALISM

None of this would be possible without Dr. Duncan’s leadership, both at RTS and within global evangelicalism. On leadership boards of The Gospel Coalition and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, as one of the leading organizers of Together for the Gospel, and as a regular conference speaker, Dr. Duncan has been indefatigable in promoting the seminary throughout the evangelical world. Who is more well-known than Dr. Duncan among North American Reformed seminary presidents or leaders? This has undoubtedly helped RTS reach students throughout the American evangelical sphere. They trust what Dr. Duncan represents: a warm and winsome commitment to the Reformed faith as set forth in the Westminster Standards.

Within the Presbyterian denominations that RTS serves, Dr. Duncan is a constant presence. He regularly attends the assemblies or synods for the Presbyterian Church in America, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. He preaches in their churches, attends local presbyteries, and advises their leaders. Dr. Duncan is known far and wide as a Presbyterian churchman.

This has allowed him to provide servant leadership to global Presbyterian and Reformed groups. Since becoming chancellor, he has preached for the Presbyterian Church of Brazil and served the emerging Reformed churches in Indonesia. He maintains his close relationships with the Free Church of Scotland and its theological seminary, Edinburgh Theological Seminary. Such leadership assists the seminary in accomplishing its mission: training students in the goodness of the Reformed faith.

While this decade of leadership has served to build on the sure foundation represented by almost 50 years of stewardship, the coming years will bring challenges presently unknown—after all, who could have predicted the havoc created by the COVID-19 pandemic, from which many educational institutions are still recovering? Knowing that RTS has a leader like Dr. Duncan offers confidence that the Lord will continue to guide and direct the institution in the days ahead. ♥



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

Illustrations by Rusty Hein



BINDING UP THE BROKENHEARTED

DR. MICHAEL HILLERMAN



Anthony, a local graduate student, was struggling with his faith. He had grown up in a large family with a mother and father who were devoted Christians. Anthony had been very successful academically and otherwise in high school and college, but he recently performed poorly on some important exams. These poor performances led him to begin questioning why God would allow this to happen when he had worked so hard to be a good Christian and a good student. He decided to talk to a Christian counselor, which led him to the Counseling Center at Reformed Theological Seminary.

For more than 40 years, the RTS Jackson campus has provided a counseling ministry to the local community. Founded in the 1980s, the counseling center provides reduced-fee counseling services to all who are in need. It is also the primary internship site for students in the Master of Arts in Counseling program. In 2022 alone, the center provided 4,634 counseling sessions to 365 different clients. Many of the clients of the counseling center have few resources and are otherwise unable to get help from a local licensed professional counselor or other mental health professionals.





**IN 2022 ALONE, THE CENTER
PROVIDED 4,634 COUNSELING SESSIONS
TO 365 DIFFERENT CLIENTS.**



The RTS Jackson student counselors assigned to Anthony helped him begin to understand some of the underlying beliefs he held that contributed to his recent struggles. He reported that he had strived to be the “good son” while growing up, and had come to believe that his good behavior and intentions were what made him acceptable to God. So long as he was successful in his academic

endeavors, this belief had remained unchallenged. But now that he experienced academic struggles, he realized that he felt angry at God for allowing these circumstances and simultaneously guilty due to these angry feelings toward God. As he disentangled these thoughts and feelings, Anthony realized that God’s love for him did not hinge on his own efforts, and he began to see significant improvement.

Among the distinct offerings of the Counseling Center at RTS are services for children and families. A husband and wife brought their elementary school-age son to the center because they were concerned about the intense worry he experienced, primarily around the well-being of his siblings and other family members. They noticed he sometimes felt fear and distress for them, even though they were safe and healthy. The student counselors assigned to work with the son began weekly sessions with him in one of the center’s play therapy rooms. They also began meeting with the parents to better understand the family and social dynamics that might be impacting their son.

Over the ensuing weeks, the RTS counseling students learned that there was significant tension between the husband and wife. The husband’s job required him to travel occasionally, and his wife reported that she often felt significant anxiety whenever he traveled. She was worried that he might not be faithful while he was away, but she also told the counselors that he had never given her any reason for these fears. She believed her husband loved her and was faithful but found that her anxiety spiked when he traveled regardless.

In time, the student counselors helped the wife connect her difficulty trusting her husband with a parallel difficulty in trusting God with these issues. Once she made this connection and could talk through the roots of her mistrust in God’s protection for her family, her

anxiety began to diminish. Interestingly, the son’s anxiety also diminished around the same time. As is often the case, it was hard to tell if the weekly sessions with the student counselors helped him, or if the decrease in tension between the parents was the key to reducing his anxieties, or a combination of the two.

Another common demographic often served by the center is that of single mothers. Rosie came to the counseling center because she felt deeply depressed. Her boyfriend had recently cheated on her, so she had ended the relationship. Understandably, this triggered a deep sense of betrayal which for her led to strong feelings of loss and hopelessness. She was the mother of two children whom she was raising alone, and she did not have medical insurance to cover counseling services from a licensed professional counselor. RTS student counselors began seeing Rosie on a weekly basis and soon discovered that, in addition to her depressive symptoms, she was experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder.

Rosie described to her counselors how she had survived multiple forms of childhood abuse and household dysfunction while growing up. In addition, she disclosed to them that near the end of high school, she had become pregnant, that her mother had kicked her out of the house, and she had lived on the street for a time. She later married a man who was violent and abused her terribly. The culmination of these early-life



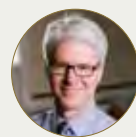
experiences had resulted in a cluster of mental health symptoms that she lived with daily.

In spite of these challenges, Rosie worked at a full-time job and was a graduate student, pursuing her master's degree at night. As Rosie talked through her experiences, both past and present, her depressive feelings began to subside. Her counselors used a variety of empirically validated counseling interventions to help her resolve some memories that were at the root of the difficult emotions she experienced.

Rosie's work with her RTS student counselors did not resolve all of her issues, but she was able to reduce her depression significantly, which helped her care for her children, serve her employer better, and complete her graduate studies.

Like Anthony, the couple and their son, and Rosie, we have all experienced the reality of what it means

to live in a fallen world. In each of these stories, we see how counseling is a way of applying to the counselee what the counselor has learned from the study of both God's Word and God's creation. Reformed Theological Seminary has been providing this type of care to the Jackson community for nearly half of RTS' existence, and we pray that God will continue to raise up new generations of biblically faithful and clinically capable counselors to serve in Jackson and beyond. ♥



Dr. Michael Hillerman is Assistant Professor of Counseling at RTS Jackson and Director of the Master of Arts in Counseling program.

The names and certain identifying details of counseling center clients in this story have been changed to protect their privacy.

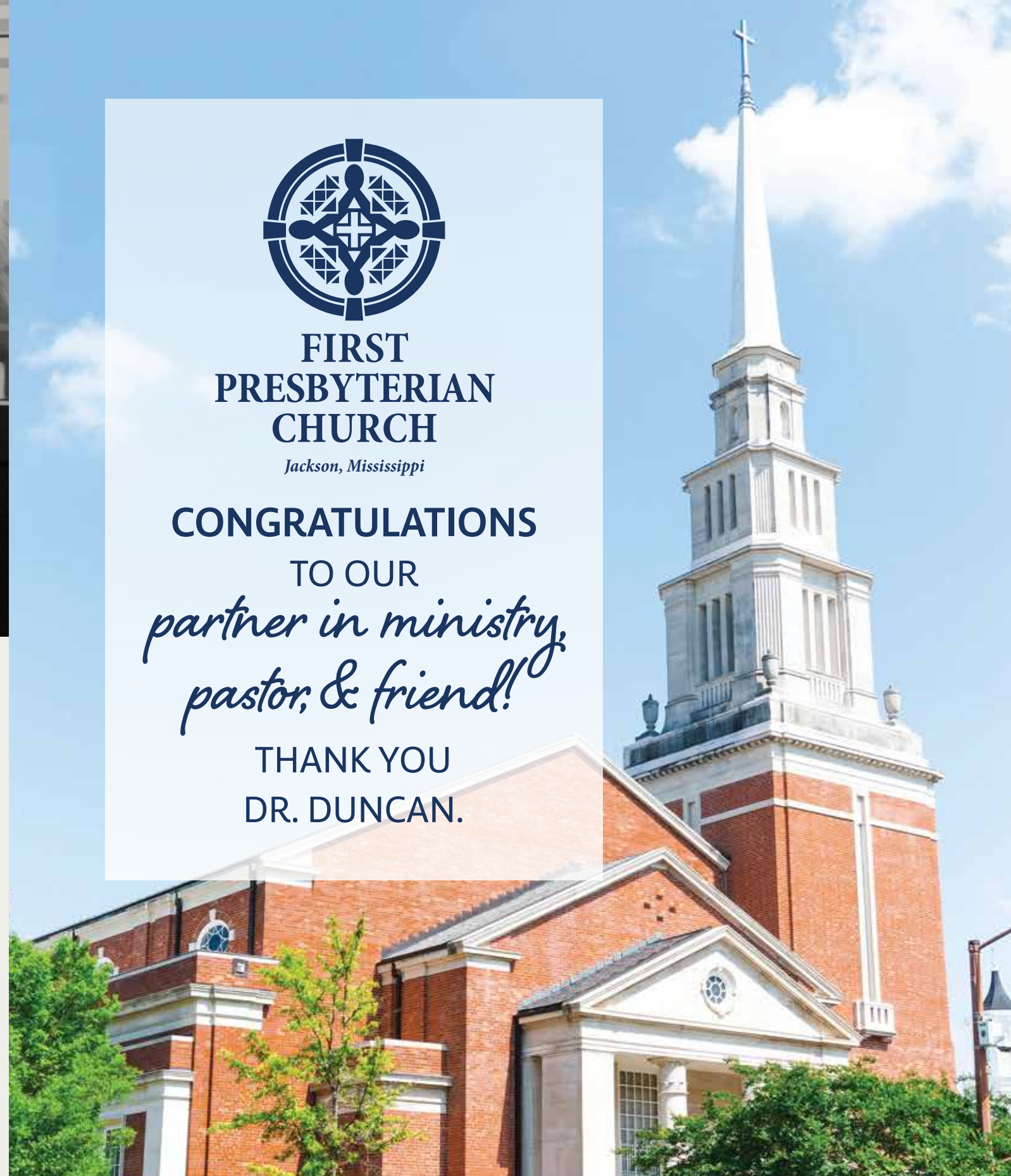


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Jackson, Mississippi

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TO OUR
*partner in ministry,
pastor, & friend!*

THANK YOU
DR. DUNCAN.





FROM
STUDENT
TO
SHEPHERD



DR. JOHN TWEEDDALE



"GODLY WISDOM ... IS BEST CULTIVATED WITHIN A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS."

MIKE GLODO



St. Paul's was packed. Young and old alike gathered at the church on the first Lord's Day of 2023 to launch a new Sunday school series on the book of Proverbs taught by Mike Glodo, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at RTS Orlando. It was not an uncommon scene. As people were catching up from the holidays, the hum of conversation filled the fellowship hall as moms and dads, newlyweds and singles, working folk and retirees, longtime members and newcomers took their seats in anticipation of the class to begin. Reflecting on Proverbs 1:1-7, Glodo defined wisdom as "skillfulness in living according to the masterful Creator's ways." To grow in wisdom, Israel needed Solomon, the primary author of Proverbs, children need parents, and students need professors. Godly wisdom, in other words, is best cultivated within a community of believers like St. Paul's, a vibrant neighborhood congregation located in Orlando, Florida, just a few minutes north of downtown. Among those sitting in the class was Justin Borger, the senior pastor of St. Paul's and a former student of Glodo's.

Borger grew up in a Christian home as the son of a pastor in the Presbyterian Church in America

(PCA). Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he was raised in the area surrounding Chattanooga, Tennessee. Grateful for the faithful witness of his parents and grandparents, he came to saving faith in Christ when he was seven years old. From a young age, Borger was drawn to pastoral ministry, although he resisted that vocational path during his high school years. His sense of calling, however, was confirmed the summer before going to Covenant College. Working as a camp counselor at Ridge Haven, the PCA's retreat center in the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina, Borger had the opportunity for the first time to lead someone to faith in Christ. He knew then that he wanted to be a pastor. After studying philosophy at Covenant, he decided to follow in the footsteps of two friends, Drs. Kelly Kapic and Jason Hood, who both graduated from RTS. In 2008, Borger arrived at RTS Orlando ready to study for the ministry.

Glodo was born to modest, hardworking Christian parents in a small farming and coal mining town in southern Illinois. Having openly professed faith in the sixth grade, he experienced significant growth as a Christian during his sophomore year at the University of Illinois through the ministry

of Cru. Although Glodo considered going to seminary after college, he decided to serve Christ by embarking on a career as a CPA. As Glodo gained experience in the workplace, he received encouragement from his pastors and elders to attend seminary. By the spring of 1987, he was ordained as a minister in the Central South Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), where he served as an assistant pastor at Sutter Presbyterian Church, a small, diverse congregation in the western portion of St. Louis County.

Over the years, Glodo has worked in various roles in small and large churches, including two terms as

the stated clerk of the EPC. In 1990, he was invited to guest lecture at RTS Orlando before being asked to join the faculty, where he has taught courses in Hebrew, Old Testament, New Testament, hermeneutics, preaching, and pastoral theology. As a pastor, administrator, and professor, Glodo is uniquely qualified to teach his students about the contents of the Bible and the demands of ministry.

As a student at RTS Orlando, Borger remembers sitting in Glodo's Gospels and Acts class, struck by his professor's ability to make textual connections within the Bible while reinforcing his point with a cultural reference or homespun illustration.





"BEFORE I PASTORED HERE, I WAS PASTORED. BEFORE I FED THE FLOCK, I WAS FED. BEFORE I ADMINISTERED THE SACRAMENTS, I RECEIVED THEM."

JUSTIN BORGER



Commenting on his impressions of Justin in this class, Glodo recalls, "From the start, Justin struck me as humble and personable, yet curious, open, and keen in his intellect.... I particularly remember our time in Gospels and Acts where I sensed we shared a mutual conviction that the gospel was both joyous good news and serious business."

As their relationship grew during seminary, Borger remembers enjoying hallway conversations, receiving constructive feedback on his sermons, and celebrating Thanksgiving dinner with the Glodo family.

"Mike is a great conversationalist and raconteur who makes himself wonderfully available to his students," Borger remarks.

In this sense, Borger sees in Glodo a model of what Paul told the Thessalonians: "So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess 2:8).

Shortly after arriving in Orlando, Borger joined St. Paul's Presbyterian Church (PCA) and became an intern. He's been there ever since. In 2011, he was hired as a pastoral fellow. In 2013, he was ordained as an assistant pastor. In 2017, he served as the interim pastor. And in 2018, he was installed as the senior pastor. He met his wife at the church, and their three children have been baptized there as well. St. Paul's has become his family.

"The thing I love the most about serving as a pastor at St. Paul's is the joy of caring for my

God-given family," says Borger. "Before I pastored here, I was pastored. Before I fed the flock, I was fed. Before I administered the sacraments, I received them. The fact that this family experience overlaps and coalesces with so many of my former professors and classmates from RTS makes it all the richer."

Among those who now sit under Borger's ministry is his former professor, Glodo.

"I'm extremely proud of so many of my former students and would be grateful to have any one of them as my pastor," Glodo says. "Justin is one of them, and I'm grateful he's my pastor. I have a very strong conviction that seminary professors should be friends of the pastor.... I want more than anything to be part of the church's life in such a way that Justin is glad I'm there. His humility and considerable ability allow him to pastor me and several other professors with generosity and confidence."

Glodo's words serve as a good reminder that students not only need professors, but professors also need pastors, some of whom might even be their former students. ♥



Dr. John W. Tweeddale is Vice President of Academics and Professor of Theology at Reformation Bible College. He is an alumnus of RTS Jackson.



LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP



KELLY BERKOMPAS

In October 2022, the RTS Charlotte community gathered on its beautiful grounds to celebrate 30 years of God’s faithfulness to the Charlotte campus. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, board members, and friends shared an evening of joyful reflection and expectant hope for the decades to come.

As Charlotte campus President Dr. Mike Kruger has often shared, the story of RTS Charlotte is one marked by “God both using and impacting his people through RTS Charlotte—all for his glory.” And many of the stories told about RTS Charlotte reflect the same theme: God bringing people to Charlotte—students, faculty, staff, and donors alike.

One of the greatest blessings that God granted to the campus from the start has been its faculty. RTS Charlotte, like all of the seminary’s campuses, is committed to teaching biblical fidelity and winsomely Reformed theology. That commitment has required sound teaching from faculty who have been devoted to the Word of God since the beginning: Dr. Douglas Kelly, then a professor at the Jackson campus, began traveling to Charlotte to teach weekend classes in 1990, two years before the campus officially opened.

In 1992, Dr. Gordon Reed made a slightly more permanent move to Charlotte, coordinating evening and weekend courses from a rented building on Monroe Road. The next year, RTS President Dr. Luder Whitlock asked Dr. Ric Cannada if he would lead the new campus in Charlotte. Dr. Cannada had been a high schooler in the 1960s when his father, Bob Cannada, began praying with other men about founding Reformed Theological Seminary. After college, Dr. Cannada attended RTS before pastoring various churches for 20 years.

When Dr. Witlock asked Dr. Cannada to become a seminary leader, his initial reaction was “no.” But after connecting with other pastors and churches in the Carolinas, he decided to come on board. During his time as a pastor, Dr. Cannada had planted a church in Little Rock, Arkansas, and he refers to the early days at RTS Charlotte as “seminary planting.” He wore many hats as the vice president of the Charlotte campus, from fundraising to mopping the floors and learning how to turn the computers on and off. In the early days, he would call the Jackson or Orlando campuses each morning and ask them, “Right, what do I do next?”

RTS Chancellor and CEO Dr. Ligon Duncan shared how God blessed Dr. Cannada's servant leadership. Asked to fill in for Dr. Kelly one weekend, Dr. Duncan, a young professor at the time, saw Dr. Cannada going around the offices emptying the trash. Dr. Duncan recalls thinking, "There is a humble, godly man that the Lord has put over this work in Charlotte."

One of Dr. Cannada's first tasks as vice president was to gather faculty, and one of his first hires was Dr. Bob Cara. Dr. Cannada's leadership also made an impression in their first meeting. Dr. Cara, now the seminary's provost and chief academic officer, recalled, "Meeting [Ric], I realized, 'This [is] a first-class guy. I'm willing to throw my chips in with this start-up campus.'" Dr. Cara himself filled many roles in his early years at the seminary, teaching New Testament and working in the campus library.

As the campus grew, the original faculty and staff could pass on some of their hats to new hires. Polly Stone joined the campus as a registrar, and Dr. Rod Culbertson started with the campus in admissions before becoming associate professor and dean of

student development. Like many of RTS Charlotte's faculty, Dr. Cara and Dr. Culbertson have been with the Charlotte campus for decades. Two of the seminary's other long-term professors, Drs. Richard Belcher and Don Fortson, recently marked 25 years of teaching in Charlotte.

When Dr. Cannada became chancellor of the RTS system in the early 2000s, he asked Frank Reich to become president of the Charlotte campus. Frank was playing professional football for the Carolina Panthers when he began taking courses at RTS. The two men had become friends when Reich was a student, and Dr. Cannada had recognized Reich's leadership, vision, and heart. After a few years as seminary president, Reich became a pastor before returning to the NFL as a coach. Most recently, Reich has been hired as the head coach of the Panthers, the very team he was playing for when he first attended RTS Charlotte.

The current president of RTS Charlotte, Dr. Kruger has served at RTS for over 20 years. A native of North Carolina, he first came to Charlotte as a visiting professor in 2001, filling in while



"WE OFTEN OVERESTIMATE WHAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH IN A DAY, BUT UNDERESTIMATE WHAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH OVER YEARS."

DR. MICHAEL KRUGER

Dr. Cara was on sabbatical. He calls it a "year-long job interview." However, in the spring of 2002, the administration was unsure if the budget would support Dr. Kruger for a longer-term position, and Dr. Kruger started looking for other jobs. Dr. Cannada called when the money became available and said, "Mike, don't take another job!"

Ten years later, when Dr. Kruger was asked to become president of the Charlotte campus, he "actually laughed out loud." Although he'd served

as academic dean, Dr. Kruger had never desired a larger leadership role and told the administration "no" several times before realizing that God was leading him to accept.

Since then, he's been encouraged by how far the Charlotte campus has come: "I've heard people say that we often overestimate what we can accomplish in a day, but underestimate what we can accomplish over years. And I have found that to be true, having been [president] for more than a decade."



“I’ve really enjoyed Mike Kruger’s leadership,” shared Dr. Culbertson. “I think he brings a great combination of the pastoral side, the scholarship side, and leadership. It’s not that type of leadership where he’s in your face or pressuring you. He believes in working as a team and he cares for people pastorally, including me!”

Dr. Culbertson also talked about Dr. Kruger’s vision, particularly citing his vision for the Master of Arts in Christian Counseling program. Dr. Kruger recalled the challenges of raising financial resources, hiring new faculty and staff, and meeting accreditation standards. Now on the other side of those challenges, he shared, “It’s clear that the counseling degree has been a great blessing to our campus.”

As RTS Charlotte looks ahead to the next several years of ministry, they continue to see the faculty as an investment in the future of the church. Alongside many of the faculty members who have been serving since the 1990s, the Charlotte campus has hired a new generation of pastor-scholars, including Drs. Kevin DeYoung, Will Ross, Blair Smith, and others.

Of course, all of these wonderful faculty members need students—and the Lord has consistently brought students to Charlotte who seek a strong foundation of biblical training before going out to pastor, counsel, and evangelize.

As Dr. Culbertson puts it, “Learn in Charlotte; bless the world!” ♥



Kelly Berkompas is the Assistant Director of Marketing for Reformed University Fellowship.



CONGRATULATIONS

to Dr. Ligon Duncan on an amazing 10 years as Chancellor of RTS!

When RUF was founded 50 years ago by RTS Alumni Mark Lowery, Bebo Elkin, and others, none of us could have imagined how God would grow both of our organizations! Over the years, including this past decade with Dr. Duncan’s leadership, we have been so grateful for his commitment to biblical scholarship and pastoral integrity, and the ways RTS has faithfully trained RUF alumni, Interns, and future Ministry Staff, preparing them for years of fruitful service.

Photo above: First RUF staff training held at RTS Jackson

EFFECTIVE COMPASSION IN THE LIGHT OF THE IMAGO DEI

JENNIFER PATTERSON



Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck enriched our understanding of what it means to be made in the image of God by emphasizing wholeness. The whole person and the whole of humanity display the divine likeness, explained Bavinck. Not just one human characteristic like rationality, but the whole person—body, soul, and faculties—images God. Nor does the fullness of the image end there. Only humanity as a whole, spread throughout all places and all time, “is the fully finished image, the most telling and striking likeness of God.”

Bavinck’s insights about the image of God shed light on human well-being, individually and in community. His observations help us discern how to respond to our neighbors in need. Theology teaches us about God’s design for flourishing and shapes our approach to the task of organizing life together in community.



**TO BE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF THE TRIUNE GOD
MEANS WE ARE RELATIONAL. EFFECTIVE COMPASSION
RECOGNIZES THIS REALITY BY SEEKING THE
FLOURISHING OF THE WHOLE PERSON AND BY PURSUING
RELATIONSHIPS THAT NURTURE THAT WHOLENESS.**



Reflection on the image of God, for example, will form what we think about wholeness and how we act for our neighbors' welfare, both in the church and in the public sphere. Contemplating the doctrine of the *imago Dei* casts a vision for effective compassion that addresses the needs of the whole person, in the context of community.

**RESPONDING RELATIONALLY
TO OUR NEIGHBORS' NEEDS**

"We often think of needy people as those who lack material things. But people are complex," writes Chris Sicks in *Tangible: Making God Known Through Deeds of Mercy and Words of Truth*. "Everyone has emotional, spiritual, relational, and material needs. Ministry is less compassionate, less effective, when it addresses one type of needs but ignores the others."

A 2010 graduate of RTS Washington, Sicks led mercy ministry at Alexandria Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Northern Virginia for 20 years. He now serves as pastor of One Voice Fellowship, a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic church plant that grew, in part, out of the extensive refugee ministry of

the Alexandria church. Sicks has a passion for the work of deacons and deep insights about how congregations can share the love of Christ by serving their communities. Students in RTS Washington's Institute of Theology and Public Life courses now benefit from the wisdom he has passed along in his book.

Sicks' reflections on mercy ministry make clear that it is inescapably relational: "Real, incarnational ministry requires investment—of your time, your energy, your presence, *yourself*. But without those investments you have not made your love, or God's love, tangible." Relationships establish the context for ministry that communicates both in words of truth and deeds of love.

To be made in the image of the Triune God means we are relational. Effective compassion recognizes this reality by seeking the flourishing of the whole person and by pursuing relationships that nurture that wholeness. Because need is relational, so should the response be. But this is easy to overlook. Material needs can be the most obvious and urgent, overshadowing deeper issues of broken

relationships. Responding to material needs also tends to be much simpler. Writing a check is faster and easier than the long-term, complicated work of building a relationship.

Yet neglecting relational ministry denies to those in need the most unique gift churches can share with them. After all, the church is built on the restored relationship made possible through Christ's work of reconciliation. Having received such mercy, Christians should respond by desiring for others the wholeness that comes when relationships are restored, first with God and then with self, other people, and the material world. Sicks reminds us, "There is a deep connection between our comprehension of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, and the ministry we offer to others."

**A HOLISTIC VISION FOR
PUBLIC LIFE**

The flourishing of the whole person should also shape Christians' approach to these issues in the public square. Over the past half-century in the United States, lawmakers have become more concerned with addressing material needs through public policy. Conditions in the U.S. have improved in comparison to the lack of access to basic sustenance faced by millions around the world. For that we ought to rejoice, but we cannot be satisfied. During the decades that material conditions have improved, relational conditions have worsened. Four out of 10 children are born to single mothers, and data indicate these children are at much greater risk of experiencing poverty. Deaths of despair, as researchers have called overdose and suicide, have markedly increased in the last two decades.

Broken relationships are at the heart of some of the most pressing challenges individuals and communities face today. While targeting material

needs, policymakers must not overlook the importance of relationships to human flourishing.

Discerning the implications of theological principles in such contexts requires us to pay attention to concrete circumstances and specific policy details. One way to do this is by seeking out the expertise of others. Just as God designed the whole person in his image to flourish through spiritual, relational, and physical development, so he designed creation to flourish through humanity's knowledgeable stewardship of its many facets.

Our common life depends on the competencies of various institutional spheres of responsibility. Family, church, government, business enterprises, and wide-ranging associations all contribute to human well-being. Each has roles to play in addressing needs. What Sicks points out about teaming up among individuals is also true at an institutional level: sharing the load is essential to bring all the necessary capacities and expertise to bear on challenges that hinder human flourishing. In particular, Christians' experience in the life of the church shapes our conception of the range of potential responses to such challenges.

Our convictions concerning the *imago Dei* will influence our approach to our neighbors in need. How has God designed us and the world for flourishing? How should we approach the tasks of common life in light of that? As we search out answers to questions like these, our hope rests on the God who is renewing all things and whose common grace is at work today through his Spirit. ♥



Jennifer Patterson is Lecturer in Public Theology and Director of the Institute of Theology and Public Life at RTS Washington.



ATLANTA

SINCE 1996

KNIT TOGETHER

IN MINISTRY



MARY DAVIS

You'll find Todd Lowery, Nathan Parker, and Jared Bryant all ministering in Athens, Georgia. All three men pastor PCA churches in the heart of Bulldog country. Georgia natives, these three pastors were some of the first MDiv students to emerge from Reformed Theological Seminary's Atlanta campus in 2009 and 2010. Although their paths diverged to Louisiana, England, and elsewhere after seminary, they now find themselves back in Georgia, knit together by local ministry and their years together at RTS Atlanta.





TODD LOWERY



NATHAN PARKER



JARED BRYANT

How did you hear about RTS Atlanta?

Todd Lowery (TL): I was involved in a PCA church for two decades prior to seminary, but not in a pastoral role. But I felt called to ministry and I was familiar with a lot of pastors in the Atlanta area and was able to get a job there at a church while I was going to RTS Atlanta because it was close by. I was a little older than your typical student. But Nathan, Jared, and I became friends. That's the cool part of this story for us—we all graduated around the same time (Jared was a year behind), then we all ended up in Athens after 10–15 years.

Nathan Parker (NP): I had in my mind that I was going to go to a different seminary, a Reformed seminary out of state. I came home and thought, “I don't want to go there at all.” There was nothing horrible about it, but I was not feeling it at all. Then I considered RTS Atlanta. It seemed to make sense. My life [was] already here, [I was] already working at a church. Why not do both at the same time?

Jared Bryant (JB): Looking at the campuses and which was a best fit for my needs at the time, I saw the value of RTS in general and how it enabled me to pursue a good education while at the same time getting ongoing ministry experience.

What factors led you to select RTS Atlanta for your theological education and training?

TL: I was a dad. I had three kids and a wife, and I was a little older than your typical student. I didn't want to move them to Philadelphia or California. It was a radical move on my family's part to start over—to leave my job and begin seminary at 37 years old. It was easy because of how the campus is set up to be able to have a job and take seminary classes with some really good professors.

NP: I looked around at the first seminary I visited, and I saw me everywhere: an early to middle 20s white male, fresh out of college. RTS Atlanta wasn't homogeneous. I loved that almost all my classmates were currently in ministry or already had a lot of years of ministry experience under their belts.

JB: It was super helpful to have the weekend offerings, weeknights—the flexibility. It was a smaller campus. The staff and faculty are invested and flexible. Atlanta is a very diverse large city, a significant urban context, and I think that flavors Atlanta's campus.



How is this campus positioned to prepare pastors, church leaders, missionaries, and campus ministers?

TL: I thought it was very helpful to be able to commute to the campus, instead of just everyone moving across the country to go to seminary. Nathan was from the Atlanta area, Jared was coming in from Athens, I came from Macon, and there were a lot of guys like that. You think of a typical seminary where everybody's living around each other and developing camaraderie and fellowship in a typical setting, but we actually did that while we ministered together at Smyrna Presbyterian while we were in seminary. It was a big church, and we were coming in and out, spending time together not only in classes but while we were ministering together.

NP: The maturity of the students seemed different than some of the other seminaries. The median age [at other seminaries] was 23–24, while median age at RTS Atlanta was late 20s, if not early 30s. There is an intangible benefit to having lived a little more life. Students would contribute to discussions with their own stories about challenges and experiences in their own ministries. You're not going to get that from fresh college graduates.

JB: RTS Atlanta is in the heart of a city, and that flavors everything. There has to be a sensitivity to that. I think of Bill Davis's classes, especially the engagement between church and culture. You see that playing out. There's a give and take between what the professors are teaching and the student body. The professors are aware that students are operating under a variety of contexts. That was valuable.

"I DIDN'T FEEL I WAS IN A THEOLOGICAL BUBBLE WITH PEOPLE WHO LOOKED JUST LIKE ME AND WERE ASKING THE SAME QUESTIONS."

JARED BRYANT

How do you think what you learned at RTS impacts your current ministry?

TL: We have three interns, and right now two of them are taking a class at the Atlanta campus. You can have a life in the church—working in the church, in practical ministry—and then go to class, read your books, and immerse yourself in church ministry while you're in seminary. It's not just head knowledge for four years. We're asking those guys to come back and use that knowledge in the church. It works.

NP: The nuggets of wisdom you can glean from others inform your ministry. Sometimes it's something you're very conscious of and you kind of tuck it away. And other times that influence is subconscious. Being around others who have that boots-on-the-ground ministry experience—I think I can trust that wisdom. A lot of these lessons we learn are painful and hard-earned, and those things have impacted me significantly.

JB: The church is diverse. It's not just 25-year-old guys who want to talk theology. At RTS Atlanta, I didn't feel I was in a theological bubble with people who looked just like me and were asking the same questions and were in the same ministry contexts.

What class or professor influenced you most?

TL: We had Derek Thomas, Sinclair Ferguson—some bigger names who were great—but teachers who you don't necessarily know about, like [Jonathan] Stuckert and [Bill] Barclay, are good guys who care about their students and care about what they teach. Those are the guys that stood out to me.

NP: That's not a fair question. Kenneth Stewart really mentored me, and he is still a good friend. I'll always remember Jonathan Stuckert telling the class that he was praying for us every day. Bruce Lowe can teach just about anything, but what I remember most is he and his wife Rachel inviting me and some classmates for dinner, and we sat in their living room and talked until 2 o'clock in the morning.

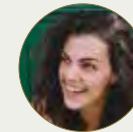
JB: Bill Davis taught me so much about the church's relationship to the world. He was able to provide a framework for understanding how we got to where we are and the people we're trying to serve. And then Bruce Lowe's pastoral heart and his love for Jesus—he takes time, sharing his own journey and his pastoral heart. They [all] brought important pieces to my ministry.

How do you think God is using this campus to build the kingdom?

TL: They're providing an opportunity for people at different stages of life and preparing individuals in the church to minister well. Whether it's the man or woman who just finished being an RUF intern, the 30-year-old dad, or the guy that works at Chick-Fil-A who wants to see what the Lord might be calling him to.

NP: They're just being faithful and showing the nature of Christ's kingdom—the truth of the gospel spreading subtly and slowly through men and women as they're change agents in the world.

JB: It has been neat to see the developments in the campus and faculty. The Center for the Study of the Bible and Ethnicity was a huge addition that flavors all of RTS. I can see very plainly its influence here in Athens—three senior pastors who have been heavily shaped by RTS Atlanta and are now ministering and leading and shepherding here. ♥



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



Thank You,
Dr. Ligon Duncan.
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A DOUBLE BENEFIT

STEPHEN GRIFFIN



Dave and Nancy Morris had always had a passion for serving the local church in whatever vocation or stage of life in which they found themselves. And after Dave's retirement from a long career as a family physician, the couple was ready to find new ways to be involved in the life of the church.

The Morrises spent a significant amount of time in the small northeast Texas town of Atlanta. Dave practiced family medicine in Atlanta and was able to deliver nearly 4,500 babies, often praying for them with their parents as they came into the world. A desire to be closer to their own family brought them to Katy, a suburb of Houston, in 2010.

"We made this transition, and it was hard," remembered Nancy. "It was hard emotionally. It was hard financially—for Dave to start all over again."

Shortly after moving to the Houston area, the Morrises began attending Christ Church Katy, a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America, where the pastors were alumni of Reformed Theological Seminary.



“We moved here on a Tuesday and went to Christ Church on Sunday, and we’ve been here ever since,” said Nancy.

It was a love for and involvement in Christ Church that caused the Morrisses to feel led to contribute to the ministry of RTS Houston. Dave, who had become a ruling elder at the church and was recovering from stage four lymphoma, discovered

something that caught his eye while reviewing the annual budget for the church: a line item designated for a student’s seminary tuition. The student was a pastoral intern at Christ Church named Curt Mire.

“That kind of started us thinking that if we did a scholarship, we could have a double benefit of relieving the church of that burden, plus providing for Curt’s education,” shared Dave. “It all started

with looking at a budget at a session meeting and thinking that this could be a ministry we could have.”

The Morrisises decided to set up a scholarship fund at RTS Houston so that leaders in their church like Mire, who was studying for an MDiv degree, would be able to complete seminary and enter pastoral ministry without financial concerns. Other RTS Houston students called to ministry have also benefited from the scholarship.

“If nobody meets those criteria at our church, then it applies to anybody at RTS Houston, and then even more broadly if that need arises,” said Dave.

Mire, now an assistant pastor at Christ Church, recounts how much the support of the Morrisises meant to him throughout his time in seminary and as an intern: “I began to preach more at Christ Church about a year or two into my internship. Then I really got to know the Morrisises. Dave was very interested in the process for preparing a sermon and delivering a sermon. So we had lots of great talks about that.

“They eventually approached me with this idea. They said ‘We want to take the financial burden away from Christ Church to pay for seminary.’ And that was a wonderful blessing for me, for the church. It was something that they wanted to do.”

The scholarship fund remains a tangible blessing to Christ Church and RTS Houston. However, the Morrisises’ relationship with students like Mire wasn’t



**“THEY WANTED TO
SEE SOMEONE GO
INTO MINISTRY,
BUT THEY KNEW IT
WASN’T JUST MONEY
THAT MAKES A
MINISTER.”**

CURT MIRE

"WE WANT PEOPLE'S HEARTS TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION."

DAVE MORRIS

merely financial. Their support of his development in ministry went beyond finances to something much deeper.

"I'm still at the age where some people can become second parents to me, in a sense. The Morrisses are like second parents," Mire commented. "They wanted to see someone go into ministry, but they knew it wasn't just money that makes a minister. It was studying. It was growing. It was fitting into a church body. It was learning how to preach."

The Morrisses agree that their impetus for supporting the seminary boils down to seeing Bible-believing gospel ministers raised up in the midst of their own congregation. In that way, they have the unique blessing of being able to see the direct result of both their prayers and their financial provision.

But there's at least one more key reason the Morrisises have for their confidence in the mission of RTS, of which Mire is also an example.

Sam Patterson, the founding evangelist of RTS, was known for asking, "Who is going to pastor

your grandchildren?" In the spirit of Patterson's question, the Morrisises care deeply about investing in future generations through the ministry of the church.

"Assuming the Lord doesn't return soon, there's going to be another generation following us, and maybe another," said Dave. "And if a generation is not revitalized spiritually, then it doesn't take long for deterioration to set in. We're ready—we want people's hearts to prepare for the next generation, particularly those in our age group. It's just an orientation toward the future.

"I was reminded of the Scripture out of Matthew 6:21 about 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' So, I think a good question would be 'Where's your heart?' at this stage in our lives and other people's lives. That's our orientation." ♥



Stephen Griffin is the Communications Content Manager at Reformed Theological Seminary. He is a managing editor for Ministry & Leadership.



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A CLENCHED FIST AND A BOWED HEAD IN NEW YORK CITY



DR. JAY HARVEY

When Dr. Ligon Duncan assumed leadership of RTS in 2013, he inherited an invitation from Dr. Timothy Keller to launch a campus in New York City. Much of the first year of the new chancellor's tenure would be given toward finalizing the accreditation and the strategic plan for the new campus and preparing to teach one of the marquee courses in the program, Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies. Dr. Duncan would be the professor of record for this course of 39 instructional hours given to an overview of Reformed theology and the distinctives of Reformed pastoral ministry. But he was delighted for his friend, Dr. Keller, to teach 16 of these hours.

"By that time Tim and I had been close friends for over a decade," Dr. Duncan recalled. "The church I pastored in Jackson had supported Redeemer's ministry initiatives in the city for years."

Dr. Duncan and Dr. Keller's friendship first deepened over a shared love of J.R.R. Tolkien. Then, the two worked closely together as council members when Dr. Keller and Dr. D.A. Carson launched The Gospel Coalition in 2007. By the time Dr. Keller asked RTS to start a campus in New York City, he had become known for his writing, his church planting, and his balance of expository and evangelistic preaching.

"Through my friendship and work with Tim," said Dr. Duncan, "I knew how important Reformed theology was to him. I was not surprised that he asked RTS to start a campus in the city given our purpose, commitments, and ethos."

Collin Hansen notes in his biography of Dr. Keller that Dr. Keller's vision for theological training can be captured through the dual image of "a clenched

fist and a bowed head.” The bowed head represents a prayerful piety that is humble, non-triumphalistic, and always dependent upon the Holy Spirit. When the time came for Keller to realize his vision for theological education in New York City, the clenched fist and bowed head would become “a mind for truth and a heart for God.”

RTS did not have to adjust its values at all to respond to the invitation. Consider the purpose statement found in the seminary’s academic catalog:

The purpose of RTS is to serve the church in all branches of evangelical Christianity, especially the Presbyterian and Reformed family, by preparing its leaders, with a priority on pastors, and including missionaries, educators, counselors, and others through a program of theological education on the graduate level, based upon the authority of the inerrant Word of God... This program shall be characterized by biblical fidelity, confessional integrity, and academic excellence, and committed to the promotion of the spiritual growth of the students. The breadth of this ministry will include multiple campuses... as led by the Lord.

Even those familiar with RTS are often surprised to learn that the first statement of its purpose is “to serve all branches of evangelical Christianity.” That statement hearkens to the founding of the institution. From its inception, it would be free from denominational control, not to seek theological license, but to maintain orthodoxy. The training would focus on raising up a new generation of Bible-believing and gospel-preaching ministers, but would welcome the full breadth of Christian workers and laypeople who wanted to deepen their faith. Considering the stated purpose of RTS, the church in New York City provides an ideal context for its ministry expression.



RTS’ purpose also proved essential to obtaining permission from the state of New York to launch the seminary in New York City. There were already seminaries with plenty of capacity to train new students in New York City, so any institution that came in would have to demonstrate a distinctive contribution. RTS’ adherence to the Westminster Standards was and is what distinguishes it from other seminaries in New York City. The seminary obtained permission to operate and began teaching its first cohort of students in 2015. Now, RTS New York City has a headcount of over 70 students and has graduates serving as senior pastors, church planters, campus ministers, and ministry directors throughout the city. In 2023, the campus reached a new milestone when a recent graduate and current student were admitted to Ph.D. programs in theology and New Testament.

Duncan notes how every year, when he begins his Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies course, he starts by expressing appreciation for Dr. Keller’s emphasis on theological education: “I tell students, ‘RTS and I believe with Dr. Keller that ministers today need to know more, not less. To do faithful contextualization requires better, more robust theological education than ever before.’”

RTS’ ADHERENCE TO THE
WESTMINSTER STANDARDS
WAS AND IS WHAT
DISTINGUISHES IT FROM
OTHER SEMINARIES IN
NEW YORK CITY.





Hansen's biography of Dr. Keller notes how in the early days of Redeemer, it was clear that he was no control freak.

Similarly, Dr. Duncan has been appreciative of the generous collaborative spirit of Dr. Keller in inviting RTS to New York City. Because RTS is an accredited institution with its own board, Dr. Keller was lending his influence to start RTS New York City while never having any real control of the work.

"It was remarkably generous of Tim and a testimony to his kingdom-mindedness," recalled Duncan. "As a former seminary professor, Tim knew that he would have to trust us to run everything. He respected our theological commitments and ethos as an institution and gave us the reins to fulfill our ministry."

"MINISTERS TODAY NEED TO KNOW MORE, NOT LESS. TO DO FAITHFUL CONTEXTUALIZATION REQUIRES BETTER, MORE ROBUST THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION THAN EVER BEFORE."

DR. LIGON DUNCAN

As RTS continues to fulfill its ministry in New York City, it has seen notable growth in diversity. Former New England Patriots and New York Giants offensive tackle Nate Solder is an MABS student at RTS New York City.

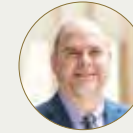
"I would say that two of the greatest things about RTS are that its faculty loves the students and their families, and that the students are wildly diverse," said Solder.

Brandon Cobb is the executive pastor at Renaissance Church in Harlem. He has six credits left to complete his MABS degree and plans to graduate in January of 2024. A native of the New York metro region, Cobb was living in Harlem and working full time in the tech industry during the first years of his studies at RTS New York City. Having an RTS campus in New York City allows Cobb the opportunity to experience a world-class theological education with in-person instruction while not having to leave the city or disrupt his service to Renaissance Church.

Cobb is grateful for the seminary's presence in the city: "I have become a better father as much as I have become a better pastor studying with RTS. I'm encouraged to look at New York City through a tested and biblically sound lens."

The love of the faculty, along with their confessional commitments, is the reason that the RTS New York City student body reaches native New Yorkers. In fact, the campus is unique in that it does not often admit students who do not already live in the city. Students come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, from all five boroughs, and from various ecclesiastical traditions, but each one comes for a Reformed theological education. Every applicant reads and responds to the Westminster Shorter Catechism as part of the application process. They trust that RTS professors will teach them the Bible as the inerrant Word of God, and love and respect them and their communities

as a beloved branch of the tree of evangelical Christianity. Such is our calling to have a clenched fist and a bowed head—a mind for truth and a heart for God. ♥



Dr. Jay Harvey is Executive Director and Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology at RTS New York City.

This article was completed prior to Dr. Tim Keller's succumbing to pancreatic cancer and finishing his race. Now that Dr. Keller is with the Lord, RTS remains committed to the strategic ministry of RTS New York City, and joins our partners in New York City as we seek to honor his legacy of gospel faithfulness. We give thanks to God for Dr. Keller's life, ministry, and example.

We celebrate Dr. Duncan and his faithful service to the Lord and His Church through his leadership at RTS!

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A THEOLOGY THAT PERSEVERES

DR. JORDAN STONE



Theodore Pease was a powerful congregational preacher in the late 1800s. “It is quietly assumed in many quarters that the special charm of the Christian ministry is broken,” he declared in 1893. “That the distinctive attraction of this field of labor is in large measure irretrievably lost.”

It is a delight to report that Pease’s claim largely does not stick—even 130 years later. Churches are growing. The gospel is advancing. Many students enroll in seminary ready to learn pastoral theology with an earnestness about faithfulness to Jesus Christ in pastoral ministry.

TRAINING IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

The Lord Jesus assures us that the church will never fail (Matt 16:18). And so, we are confident that the ministry will not fall either.

In shaping future ministers for service in Christ’s church, we are laboring for a revival in pastoral theology. Renewal in this subject means training students in four key areas.



DALLAS

SINCE 2017

PERSONAL PIETY IS ALWAYS THE FIRST LESSON IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY.



We need revival in our piety. Before we can build the preaching, we must build the preacher. Seminary students must be children of God before they can preach God's Word (1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:17). They must be lovers of Christ before they can preach Christ's love (2 Cor 5:14; Col 1:28). They must stroll with the Spirit before they can preach in the Spirit's power (Gal 5:16, 25; 1 Cor 2:1–5).

One model for such a ministry is Robert Murray M'Cheyne. One of his more searching statements came in a letter to his friend, the Rev. Dan Edwards. He wrote in October of 1840, "Remember you are God's sword—his instrument—I trust a chosen vessel unto him to bear his name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfections of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."

Personal piety is always the first lesson in pastoral theology. What Christ's church needs most are pastors thriving in communion with the Triune God. "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching," Paul commanded Timothy. "Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim 4:16). We insist on this

priority because without personal piety no minister has a reason to expect God's blessing on their ministry (2 Tim 2:21).

We need revival in our praying. "Of course the preacher is above all others distinguished as a man of prayer," Charles Spurgeon lectured. "He prays as an ordinary Christian, else he were a hypocrite. He prays more than ordinary Christians, else he were disqualified for the office which he has undertaken."

Revival comes through prayer. Study any period of awakening in church history, and you'll discover the centrality of prayer—public and private. We need preachers who proclaim Jesus Christ with compassion and courage. We need men burning with the zeal that comes from an enflamed love of Christ. We long for men who expose the secret sins in the congregation and lead them to the balm of the gospel. We need angelic ministers who shine with the eternal weight of glory. If we do not ask, we will not have.

Before one can be a preacher of Jesus Christ, one must be a man of prayer. Prayer is one half of our ministry and gives the other half—preaching—its life and power. We recognize that men will never preach properly if they do not pray fervently.

We need revival in our preaching. We long for ministers who prize the treasure that is heralding Jesus Christ. What glory belongs to faithful preaching! Preaching is the ordinary means by which God awakens cold, crusty, and callous hearts to breathe in the grace of faith. Preaching is the chariot that carries Christ to sinners' hearts. It is the spiritual sword God uses to assault hell's gates and ruin Satan's strongholds. The Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2) dawns upon the earth in his proclaimed Word to harden clay hearts and melt icy souls. Preaching convicts, illuminates, rebukes, encourages, and enlivens the soul.

We strive for students to learn what it means to herald the gospel with logic on fire and eloquent reason. Preachers are not merely to preach *about* Christ, they are to preach Christ. "We are to preach the Gospel, and not to preach about the Gospel. That is a very vital distinction, which one cannot put into words, but which is nevertheless really important. There are men who think that they are preaching the Gospel when actually in fact they are saying things about the Gospel," Martyn Lloyd-Jones explained. We aim for students to know this vital distinction.

We need revival in our persevering. The first three traits of pastoral theology are essential and probably predictable. But we find this fourth and final characteristic is one often forgotten.

Ministry is a mantle that Christ places on the shoulders of his servants. The weight is heavy. Shepherding sheep is both exhausting and exhilarating. We pray for students to leave their studies not merely prepared in piety and prayer and equipped to preach, but also ready to persevere.

Charles Bridges calls ministers to remember that "our 'heavenly pattern' did indeed furnish a striking illustration of the true spirit of the Christian minister—'doing so with our might.'" Our Savior's ministry was one of unblushing activity as he never lost an opportunity to be useful to lost and weary

souls. The Apostle Paul trod the same ministerial path. With undaunted perseverance, he was "afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor 4:8–9).

Instructing the next generation in pastoral theology means calling them to the Lord's joy, which is their strength (Neh 8:10). Apart from Jesus Christ, the Lord's servant can do nothing (John 15:5). We thus train students unto readiness in Christ, a readiness for giving their mental, emotional, spiritual lives in the church. The verse we long to place as frontlet between their eyes is, "So death is at work in us, but life in you" (2 Cor 4:12).

PASTORAL THEOLOGY UNTO ETERNITY

Richard Baxter once penned a poem titled "Love Breathing Thanks and Praise." The verses contain his famous rhyme about ministering in light of eternity.

*Still thinking I had little time to live,
My fervent heart to win men's souls did strive.
I preached as never sure to preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men!
O how should preachers men's repenting crave
Who see how near the Church is to the grave?*

A minister's task is to grow in piety, be faithful in praying and preaching, and persevere through trials, and so set Jesus Christ before souls, preparing God's children to live well and die well.

That's the kind of pastoral theology we want to have, whether in the classroom, in the pulpit, or at the bedside. ♥



Dr. Jordan Stone is Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology at RTS Dallas. He is also the senior pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA) in McKinney, Texas.

A NOURISHED MIND AND HEART

ALICIA AKINS



Born into a Muslim family in Iran, Hamid Forotanfard, an RTS Global Master of Arts (Theological Studies) student, would not have imagined his life to turn out as it has. Fleeing the dangers of religious persecution in Tehran in the late 1980s, a pre-adolescent Forotanfard and his family made a new home in Sweden. Years earlier, when he was four years old, his mother had converted from Islam to Christianity—a religion claimed by less than 0.2% of the population of Iran at the time. Christianity was not just rare in Iran—it was illegal. Churches were shuttered by government authorities and Christians could be imprisoned or killed for practicing their faith.

“We have had several pastors in the past who were martyred after the Islamic Revolution,” shared Forotanfard.

One of the greatest influences in his life and faith was his mother. He credits her for his development of a love for theology and the Bible at an early age. In college, he continued to pursue those interests, earning a bachelor’s degree in Bible and theology. He was later ordained in the Swedish Alliance Mission denomination. His studies at RTS introduced him more formally to Reformed theology, despite briefly attending a Presbyterian church in Iran before emigrating to Sweden.



GLOBAL

SINCE 1994



“More and more, I was drawn to Reformed theology,” he recalled.

Though college whet his appetite for Reformed theology, it did not satiate it. Most of his training took place outside of the Reformed tradition.

What he did learn in college, however, sparked what became a lifelong interest that eventually fueled his decision to enroll in Reformed Theological Seminary’s Global program in October 2022, after more than a decade in ministry.

Forotanfard explained, “I believe a deeper study in theology and the Word of God will always affect my personal walk with the Lord. It is through the studying and understanding of the Word of God and being submitted to the Scripture that I can grow in my faith and walk with the Lord.”

Forotanfard did not think of his decision to enroll as one of practicality, but one of pleasure: “For me, this is the nourishment that feeds my mind and heart.”

Through continued study, Forotanfard was eager to develop a deeper understanding of Reformed theology and tradition and to be fed spiritually. He sees his participation in the MATS program as something of a duty that will pay dividends in his ministry as well as his personal faith.

“I believe as pastors and ministers we should never stop learning and developing a deeper understanding of the Scripture and true biblical doctrines,” Forotanfard shared.

Over the past 10 years, Forotanfard has lived with his wife and daughters in Stockholm and has served as associate pastor at the Persian-speaking Iranian Grace Church. His congregation provides him with the opportunity to connect with and minister to other former Muslims from Iran who have since relocated to Sweden, as he has walked in their shoes. He also serves as a prison chaplain through a partnership between his denomination, his local church, and the Swedish Christian Council, an ecumenical umbrella organization for Christian denominations in Sweden. He visits two prison facilities a week to provide counseling and organize worship services.

Due to his location and other family and ministry commitments, RTS’ Global program seemed ideal. A friend also recommended it to him as an option. It has not disappointed. Forotanfard does not currently foresee a role change upon completion of his program. But he is interested in learning as much as he can and



“STUDYING THEOLOGY AND THE WORD OF GOD AT RTS IS NOT JUST ABOUT GETTING AN ADVANCED ACADEMIC EDUCATION, BUT ABOUT GAINING EXPOSURE TO, ENGAGING IN, AND BEING CHALLENGED BY SCRIPTURE ON A PERSONAL LEVEL.”

HAMID FOROTANFARD

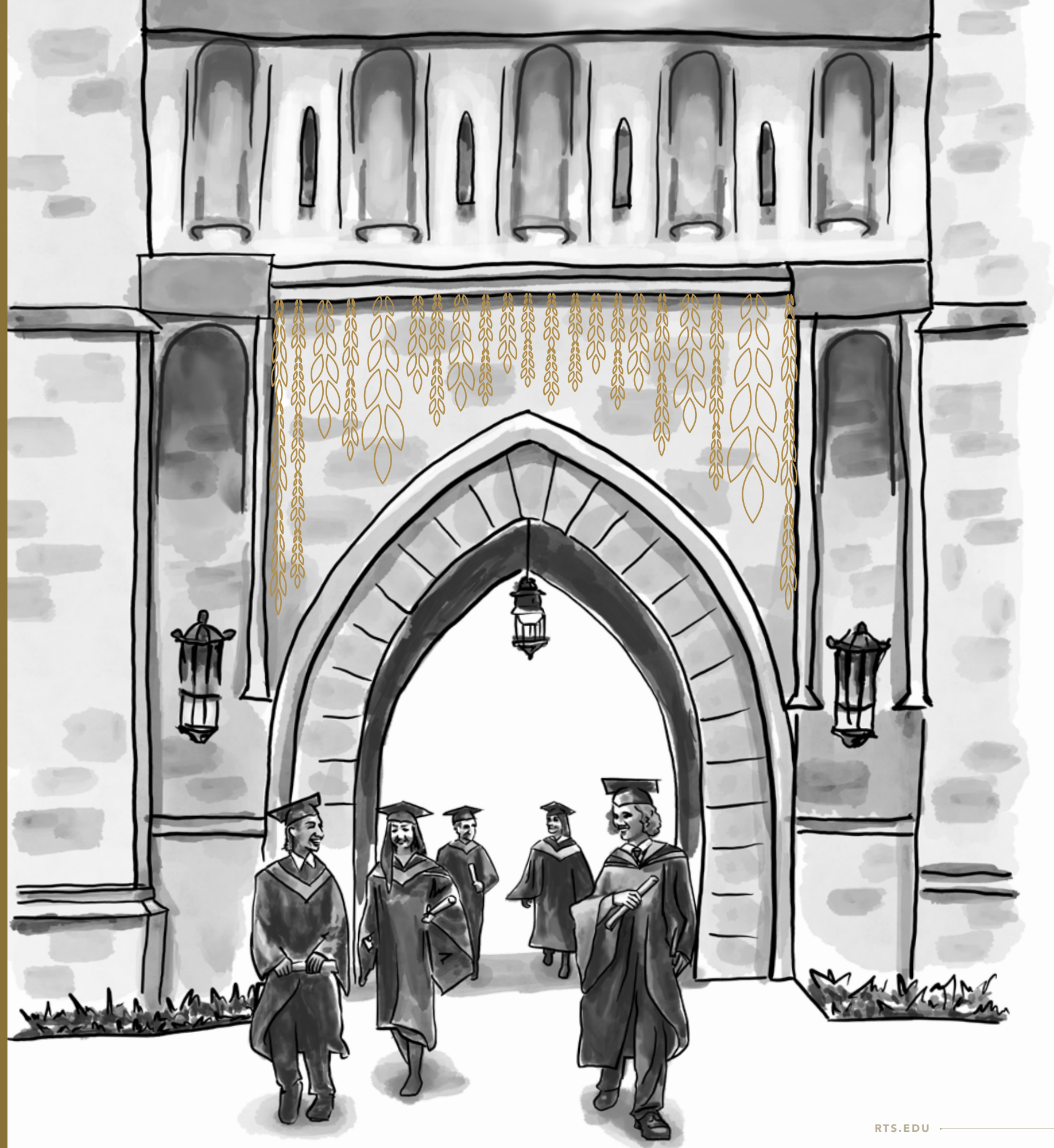
even continuing his studies after he graduates, Lord willing.

“I really enjoy my studies at RTS and am grateful to have this opportunity. Studying theology and the Word of God at RTS is not just about getting an advanced academic education, but about gaining exposure to, engaging in, and being challenged by Scripture on a personal level and growing in my walk with the Lord,” he explained. “It is valuable

not because it is required of me, but the value is spiritual and it will equip me more for the ministry that God has called me to.” ♥



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



WHERE

DO WE GO FROM HERE

?

THE FUTURE OF

RTS

DR. LIGON DUNCAN

"THERE IS NO GOOD NEWS COMING FROM FREESTANDING SEMINARIES..."

So reported Kirsten Sanders recently in an article published in Christianity Today called "Seminaries in Trouble." Frank Yamada, President of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), the major accreditor of graduate theological education in North America, has been telling everyone who will listen for some time now that most schools are not "stable to growing." That is, most theological schools are in numerical decline. When you remove the numbers for distance education, the statistics for residential theological education look even worse. There are several reasons contributing to this decline, including economic, demographic, ecclesiastical, cultural, educational, and spiritual factors.



This was a topic at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) in Denver, where I was invited by Dr. David Dockery to speak on a panel about the future of Christian higher education and theological education. Dr. Dockery is one of the most widely and highly respected people in Christian education today, having served as president at Union University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. I am glad to count him as a friend.

...AND THERE HASN'T BEEN FOR SOME TIME."

During our discussion, he asked me an important question. "By any measure, we are seeing theological education become less of a requirement for ministry," he said. "The rise of church-based institutes for the training of pastors and other church leaders, the rise of online education courses, and the reduction in ordination requirements for denominations that require ordination, as well as denominations that require no ordination or require no seminary training all, point to a shrinking opportunity for theological seminaries. With so many churches not requiring accredited theological education, what is the future of the Master of Divinity degree?"

I said four things in response. First, local church-based practical training for pastors and church leaders can be a very, very good thing, but it cannot provide what a seminary ought to. For instance, no local church could afford to employ an expert in the Old Testament, ancient Near Eastern studies, and biblical languages. But to prepare to read and explain the Old Testament well, future Christian ministry leaders need to study with someone with that expertise. I could illustrate this example in reference to every department of a solid seminary.



Second, online distance education cannot compete with what a student receives from a residential MDiv seminary education. Reformed Theological Seminary was one of the first accredited seminaries approved to do online and distance learning, but most of our students prefer in-person educational experiences. In my opinion, RTS does distance learning as well as it can be done—and our students regularly express their gratitude and enthusiasm—but we have kept our focus on residential theological education because we believe that the more personal theological education is, the better. Our students attest to this, as well.

Third, the statistics provided by ATS show that many institutions too quickly abandoned their emphasis on the MDiv degree and instead reduced its requirements to their own detriment and the detriment of their students. While this was happening almost everywhere, RTS maintained high standards and the full content of its MDiv curriculum, and the results show.

Fourth, the residential MDiv programs that survive in the future will have robust components of biblical, theological, historical, and pastoral theology. To make sense and make a difference, the MDiv degree must prepare students to (1) understand and explain the whole Bible well, (2) understand and explain the whole scope of

Christian theology well, and (3) inform pastoral ministry with sound biblical theology. Where biblical languages, biblical studies, theology, and church history are reduced and even eliminated from MDiv curricula, two things happen. First, it hurts the student and the church, because the graduate is ill-prepared to rightly handle the Word of God. Second, it means the eventual death of that MDiv program, because people will figure out that it isn't delivering what is needed. This is why the RTS MDiv is so highly valued in theological education today. We haven't watered down what our students and the church need.

Amid all this generally bad news about theological education, I am happy to report that there is good news at RTS. The Lord has been incredibly gracious to us. RTS is growing while most other schools are shrinking. We now have the largest confessional Reformed faculty in the world, influencing hundreds of students each year as the seminary provides the church with a new generation of well-equipped ministers. Yes, these are challenging times for theological education. But because we believe in God's providence, we also believe that challenging circumstances and discouraging situations are opportunities for us to trust in the goodness of God and the wisdom of his providence, and to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7).

"THE MORE PERSONAL THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION IS, THE BETTER."



WHEN THE
LORD
RETURNS, WE WANT
HIM TO FIND US
FAITHFUL
AND WITH NO BURIED
TREASURE

MATTHEW 25:21

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Where do we go from here? What does the future hold for RTS?

By the help of God, we will continue to believe the truth and serve the church. We were built on these commitments. In our founding documents, written almost 60 years ago, we said that we wanted to serve all branches of evangelical Christianity, especially the Presbyterian and Reformed family, by preparing its leaders, with a priority on pastors, and including missionaries, educators, counselors, and others, through a program of theological education on the graduate level, based upon the authority of the inerrant Word of God, the 66 books of the Bible, and committed to the Reformed faith as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith. We have never stopped doing that, or wavered in doing that, and by God's grace, we will continue to do that in all our days ahead.

Why do we do it? Why are we committed to offering this kind of theological education and pastoral preparation? We want to see the church supplied with ministers and leaders who know and believe the Bible, treasure God and trust in Christ, who are transformed by grace and truth, love people and live to serve, and have a passion for the Great Commission. We want our graduates to aspire to call people to Christ, and to help Christians live the Christian life better. We want to see a host of godly ministers who embody the Reformed faith in their devotion to God, their sound doctrine, their commitment to worship, their churchmanship, and their Christian practice.

What are some of my hopes and dreams for the future of RTS? There are two things in particular.

I want RTS to remain faithful. We live and minister in a day and age that is unfriendly to the commitments of confessional Christianity in the setting of higher education. RTS has stood firm in the storms of late modernity, and gospel-believing churches and institutions worldwide need us to continue standing firm. I want the students who attend to know that they will hear the truth taught right out of God's holy, inspired, and inerrant Word. I want churches and our fellow evangelical universities and seminaries to know they can count on us to hold fast to our confession and stand on the Word of God.

Alongside this faithfulness, I want RTS to remain missionary in its orientation:

"Standing Firm, but not Standing Still." What I mean by this is that we aren't aiming just to hang on. We want to deploy our resources for the Savior. We want to be outward and forward-looking. To "attempt great things for God and expect great things from God." We do not simply want to affirm truth. We want to deploy the truth in ministry and mission. We want to be "true to the Bible, the Reformed faith and obedient to the Great Commission." In other words, RTS is focused not only on biblical faithfulness and doctrinal adherence but also missionary boldness.

When the Lord returns, we want him to find us faithful, and with no buried treasure (Matt 25:21). ♥



Dr. Ligon Duncan is the Chancellor and CEO of Reformed Theological Seminary and the John E. Richards Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology.

Illustrations by Rusty Hein

"STANDING FIRM,
BUT NOT
STANDING STILL."

Over the past half year, we've been witness to God's continued faithfulness to RTS in a number of ways. First, the Lord has blessed RTS with several new key leaders that will help guide the institution into its next season of life and service. Byron Johnson was elected to the board of trustees, Jessica Short was hired as Chief Financial Officer, Ricky Rayborn accepted the position of Chief Operations Officer, and Dr. Tony Doggett has been named Chancellor's Chief of Staff. RTS Washington has also hired a new Director of Admissions.

RTS campuses have continued to host events that instruct and encourage students, faculty and staff, and their respective communities.

Lastly, RTS faculty members have produced books and other resources that are recognized for their impact on both the academy and the local church.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

BYRON JOHNSON

Reformed Theological Seminary is pleased to announce the unanimous election of Byron Johnson to the Board of Trustees, effective August 2, 2022.

Johnson joined the board from Atlanta, Georgia, and is the Founder and Executive Director of VISION 9:38, a fundraising organization that exists to empower and equip ethnic minority missionaries. He serves as a fundraising coach, mentor, networker, and counselor for ethnic minority missionaries and ministry workers.

Prior to VISION 9:38, Johnson served in various capacities with Campus Outreach for 20 years. He is also a consultant and advisor to various missions agencies and a conference speaker and workshop leader.

"We are thrilled that Byron has joined the RTS Board of Trustees. RTS is made better when we have men who live in an area around each campus, and Byron will be our first to hail from Atlanta. As an Atlanta native and RTS Atlanta graduate, Byron will bring a valuable perspective to our work in Atlanta. He will be an encouragement to and a voice for the work there, and I am most thankful to serve alongside him in the years ahead," said Board Chairman Richard Ridgway.

Johnson is a graduate of the University of West Georgia (B.S.) and RTS Atlanta (MDiv) and serves as a ruling elder at Atlanta Westside Presbyterian Church. He is married to Kim and they have four adult children: Kelsey, James Byron, Jordan, and Jonathan.



"I CONSIDER IT A PRIVILEGE AND AN HONOR TO SERVE THE LORD AND RTS IN THIS CAPACITY."

Chancellor Ligon Duncan added his welcome: "Byron has already been an integral part of the campus community in Atlanta, and I am excited to welcome his expertise to the board. Byron and his wife Kim are invested in mentoring our students and helping them prepare for a lifetime of ministry. It is a blessing to have someone of Byron's character

and experience serving with us at RTS."

"I consider it a privilege and an honor to serve the Lord and RTS in this capacity," said Johnson. "It's a pleasure to play a role in continuing to help RTS equip ministry leaders with 'a mind for truth and a heart for God.'"

APPOINTMENTS

JESSICA SHORT

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

As CFO, Short is responsible for all business and financial operations, organizational sustainability, and liquidity management at RTS, serving as a member of the Chancellor's Cabinet and an ex-officio member of the Chancellor's Council. She also oversees the seminary's finance team.

Short has an extensive background in accounting. No stranger to the Jackson, Mississippi area, she came to the seminary from Belhaven University, where she had worked as Controller since 2017. Previously, she served as senior manager of the audit division at BKD, LLP (now FORVIS, LLP) in Jackson.

"We are delighted to welcome Jessica Short into the RTS family as our new CFO," said Chancellor Ligon Duncan. "Jessica's experience and expertise in Christian higher education, her work ethic and humility, and her Christian faith and character, will make her a valuable and trustworthy member of the RTS senior leadership team. I am looking forward to serving alongside Jessica during this important and exciting time in the history of this institution."



Short is an alumna of Millsaps College, where she graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in accounting. She went on to become the 2003 Outstanding Master of Accountancy Graduate of Millsaps's Else School of Management and earn her licensure as a Certified Public Accountant.

RICKY RAYBORN

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Rayborn received a unanimous recommendation as Chief Operations Officer in April 2023 at an ad hoc search committee of the board to the Executive Committee. Rayborn has served RTS as Director of Human Resources since November 2022.

"During Ricky Rayborn's time as Director of HR, it became increasingly clear that his talents as a leader, mentor, and manager were needed on the business side of RTS," said Board Chairman Richard Ridgway. "His leadership could not have come to the seminary at a better time in our history."

Rayborn's focus as COO is to guide and support the Cabinet—the institution's chief officers—in accordance with the chancellor's direction, as well as the Council, or campus presidents and executive directors. The COO serves as a liaison between these core leadership groups.

Rayborn brings extensive business leadership experience to the role. He is the cofounder of Laborchex, Inc., a national employment background screening company, where he served in the roles of president, chief operating officer, and chief human resources officer as needed. He has provided human resources leadership and business improvement consulting to a variety of industries nationwide, from small businesses to Fortune 500 corporations.

Before earning a B.S. in liberal arts from the University of Southern Mississippi, Rayborn served in the United States Marine Corps. He and his wife Janie have three adult children and attend Pinelake Church in Brandon, Miss.

DR. TONY DOGGETT CHIEF OF STAFF

Dr. Doggett's appointment to Chief of Staff was a unanimous recommendation at an ad hoc search committee of the board to the Executive Committee in April 2023.

Dr. Doggett has served as a teaching assistant for Dr. Duncan since 2018 and graduated with an MDiv degree from RTS Jackson in May 2023. As the Chancellor's Chief of Staff, Dr. Doggett will aid and extend the chancellor by assisting in office administration, facilitating the board and Executive Committee, communication, development, project management, and change management.

Prior to experiencing a call to ministry and beginning studies at RTS, Dr. Doggett earned B.A., MA, and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi. He was a tenure-track faculty member in the School Psychology Programs at Mississippi State University, serving at different times as Program Coordinator for the School Psychology Programs and Graduate Coordinator for the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology. He then worked as a school psychologist and was a partner in his own school consulting company.

Hu Meena, Chairman and CEO of CSpire, is an RTS trustee and served as chairman of the ad hoc search committee. "As organizations grow, a chief of staff is often utilized to ensure tight operations in the CEO's office and the broader organization, such as outlining the CEO's personal priorities, ensuring their time is aligned, drafting communications, and supporting their relationship with direct reports," said Meena. "Tony will excel in all of these responsibilities, and we were glad to recommend him for the position."

Dr. Doggett has also worked as the senior minister's intern at First Presbyterian Church in Jackson since 2019. He is married to Theresa and they have two children.

DR. MIKE PARK DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS /// WASHINGTON

Dr. Park was born in South Korea and moved to the United States in 1985. He is currently an associate pastor at Grace Downtown, part of the Grace DC network in Washington. He has also served as a guest lecturer at RTS Washington for several years. In his new role, he will oversee admissions and recruitment efforts at the

campus and help to guide and support students through the enrollment process.

"I am elated that Mike Park is bringing his years of pastoral and theological experience to the admissions process at RTS Washington," said Dr. Scott Redd, President. "From counseling prospective students to teaching in our pastoral theology curriculum, Mike will be a profound influence for good in the RTS Washington community."

Dr. Park earned a B.S. in educational psychology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

REV. BRIAN HABIG DELIVERS 2022 JOHN REED MILLER PREACHING LECTURES

RTS Jackson hosted the annual John Reed Miller Preaching Lectures in October 2022. The Rev. Brian Habig lectured on the topic of "The Self-Aware Preacher."

Habig is the pastor of Downtown Presbyterian Church in Greenville, S.C. He grew up in Jackson and was converted through the ministry of First Presbyterian Church. For 10 years, he was a campus minister with Reformed University Fellowship at Mississippi State University and Vanderbilt University. He also serves on the board of trustees of Covenant Theological Seminary, where he earned an MDiv degree.

Dr. Charlie Wingard, Professor of Pastoral Theology and Dean of Students at RTS Jackson, commended Habig: "We were delighted that Brian delivered this year's John Reed Miller preaching lectures. Seventeen years ago, he planted a congregation in Greenville, South Carolina that has contributed to the revitalization of that city's downtown. His pulpit ministry has been influential in shaping the lives of new and mature believers. These lectures helped both seminarians and veteran pastors sharpen their tools

as well as MDiv and DMin degrees from Covenant Theological Seminary. He is married to Grace, and they have four children.

"As Director of Admissions, I look forward to developing partnerships with local churches and Christian organizations for the purpose of assisting, equipping, and training seminarians for kingdom work," said Dr. Park. "I'm thrilled by the opportunity to work with outstanding members of the RTS Washington faculty and staff."

of ministry."

Dr. Ligon Duncan said, "I was very grateful to have Brian Habig give the John Reed Miller Lectures at RTS Jackson last fall. Brian is a gifted preacher and has had a profound impact on the faith and lives of thousands of students and congregants through his Reformed University Fellowship campus ministry at Mississippi State and Vanderbilt, and his pastorate at Downtown Presbyterian Church in my hometown of Greenville."

The annual lectures derive their name from the renowned pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson from 1952–1968, Dr. John Reed Miller. Dr. Miller began a winter lecture series on Reformed theology at First Presbyterian that served as a sort of precursor to the founding of RTS. The establishment of the John Reed Miller Lectures through First Presbyterian's generous funding has been a means of stimulating the same biblical preaching and ministry that characterized Dr. Miller's life. Habig's lectures were the final John Reed Miller Lecture series given in historic Grace Chapel at RTS Jackson.



RTS ORLANDO LAUNCHES INSTITUTE FOR FAITH, WORK, AND CULTURE



*Institute for Faith,
Work, and Culture*

For more information about
the IFCW, visit
paideiacenter.com/ifwc

RTS Orlando launched the Institute for Faith, Work, and Culture (IFWC) in late 2022. The institute will facilitate the development of a biblically-grounded, God-centered vision for integrating faith and work, both in current students and the wider church.

The “faith and work” movement has been a significant development in evangelical Christianity over the past several decades. The main goal of the movement is to help Christians cultivate an integrated approach to their faith and occupations.

Situated amid a vibrant faith and work community in Central Florida, the IFWC has three primary goals. First, it aims to bring the resources of Reformed theology to the faith and work conversation. Second, it provides RTS students, staff, and faculty with the opportunity to learn from leaders in the faith and work movement. Finally, the institute will broaden the application of faith and work principles to underserved communities.

“RTS Orlando seeks to provide the best biblical, theological, and practical training available in order to prepare future pastors for service in Christ’s church. The Institute for Faith, Work, and Culture will help us better fulfill this goal by equipping pastors to apply the rich resources of Reformed faith and practice to issues that Christians face in their various vocations on a daily basis,” said Dr. Scott Swain, RTS Orlando President.

In celebration of the launch of the institute, the Orlando campus hosted the inaugural Bavinck Lecture with Dr. James Eglinton on October 26, 2022 in Pamplin Chapel. Dr. Eglinton is the Meldrum Senior Lecturer in Reformed Theology at the University of Edinburgh and the author of *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Baker Academic, 2020). His address was entitled “Worldview, Worldvision, and Workplace.”



DR. DAVID STRAIN DELIVERS 2022 HUGHES PREACHING LECTURES

Dr. David T.A. Strain delivered the Hughes Preaching Lectures at RTS Orlando in November 2022. His lecture series was entitled “The Priorities of Preaching.”

Dr. Strain has served as the Senior Minister of the historic First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi since 2014. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, he was ordained to ministry in the Free Church of Scotland in 2003 and has held pastoral charges in London, England, and

Columbus, Mississippi. He holds a DMin degree from Reformed Theological Seminary.

“We were thrilled at the opportunity to host Dr. David Strain on campus for our 2022 Hughes Lectures,” said Dr. Scott Swain, RTS Orlando President. “Dr. Strain is a model of expository excellence, biblical conviction, and wise judgment. I know that our entire seminary community was blessed by his presence.”

The Hughes Preaching Lecture Series is an annual forum at RTS Orlando for a prominent pastor or scholar to give a series of lectures which address the subject of preaching in order to resource faithful and effective Christian preaching. The lectures were established in 2017 through the generous support of Robbie Hughes as part of the Hughes Initiative for Pastoral Excellence.

CENTER FOR CHURCH PLANTING HOSTS IRWYN INCE AND CHARLES MCKNIGHT

RTS Charlotte’s Center for Church Planting hosted the Forge Conference on January 16, 2023. The topic of the 2023 conference was “Engaging the Shift: Forward Facing Mission in an Age of Cultural Upheaval.”

The purpose of the conference was to engage local pastors, church planters, and other church leaders with training and resources for healthy and effective church planting. Dr. Irwyn Ince and the Rev. Charles McKnight were the featured speakers.

“I was delighted to welcome Dr.

Irwyn Ince and Charles McKnight to the Charlotte campus for the Forge Conference. Irwyn and Charles are important leaders in the field of church planting generally and, of course, both are especially important to us here at RTS,” said Dr. Michael Kruger, RTS Charlotte President.

Dr. Ince is the Coordinator of Mission to North America (MNA), the domestic church planting arm of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). He is also an Adjunct Professor of Pastoral Theology at RTS and regularly teaches classes at several

RTS campuses. Dr. Ince earned an MAR degree at RTS Washington and a DMin degree at Covenant Theological Seminary.

McKnight also serves at MNA as Coordinator of African American Ministries and in several other advisory and leadership roles. He has coached and mentored church planters for several years and is a church planter himself. McKnight is a graduate of RTS Charlotte, having completed his MDiv degree in 2015.



RTS FACULTY MEMBERS HONORED WITH TGC BOOK AWARDS

RTS faculty members were represented in The Gospel Coalition (TGC) 2022 Book Awards. Each year, TGC reviews books across 12 categories and makes two awards for each category: Book of the Year and Award of Distinction.

Editors and judges review nominations from publishers based on the extent to which a book offers gospel-centered argument and application, includes faithful and foundational use of the Old and New Testaments, fosters spiritual discernment of contemporary trials and trends, and encourages efforts to unite and renew the church.

Bully Pulpit: Confronting the Problem of Spiritual Abuse in the Church (Zondervan, 2022) by Dr. Michael Kruger received the Book of the Year Award in the ministry category. Dr. Kruger is the President and Samuel C. Patterson Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at RTS Charlotte. *Bully Pulpit* offers a unique perspective for church leaders and members on spiritual abuse, how to identify it, and how to handle it. Dr. Kruger consults Scripture, church history, and pastoral wisdom to help address issues of abuse in churches and Christian ministries.

“[Kruger] succeeds in creating a work that will be a change agent in our time and should live well beyond it,” says TGC’s website.

In the history and biography category, *Reformed and*

Evangelical across Four Centuries: The Presbyterian Story in America (Eerdmans, 2022) received the Award of Distinction. Dr. Don Fortson co-authored the book with Drs. Ken Stewart, Nathan Feldmeth, and Garth Rosell. Drs. Fortson and Stewart served as co-editors. *Reformed and Evangelical across Four Centuries* is a definitive history of evangelical Presbyterianism, emphasizing the role of the evangelical movement in shaping various Presbyterian bodies in the United States.

Dr. Fortson is Professor of Church History and Pastoral Theology at RTS Charlotte, as well as Director of the RTS DMin program. Dr. Stewart is a visiting lecturer at RTS Atlanta.

The Biggest Story Bible Storybook (Crossway, 2022) by Dr. Kevin DeYoung and illustrator Don Clark received the Award of Distinction in the Bible study and devotional literature category. *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook* invites families to engage the unified story of Scripture through gospel-centered writing and captivating illustrations. From Genesis to Revelation, the book shares accessible retellings of key stories that connect the reader to the overarching storyline of the Bible. Dr. DeYoung is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at RTS Charlotte and the senior pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Matthews, North Carolina.

IN MEMORIAM

Kaitlyn Mazie Johnson

Kaitlyn Johnson, daughter of RTS board member Byron Johnson and RTS Atlanta Director of Women’s Ministry Kim Johnson, was welcomed into the arms of Jesus on January 19, 2023.

Kaitlyn was born on April 17, 1999, in Montgomery, Alabama. She graduated from Whitfield Academy in 2017 and received her undergraduate degree in Music Business and Management from Berklee College of Music in 2021.

A gifted classical pianist with a lovely voice, Kaitlyn had a deep abiding faith in Christ. Leading praise and worship at Atlanta Westside Presbyterian Church was a delight to her and the hearts of many. Kaitlyn had a way of seeing people and loving them well. She loved her family, friends, and beautiful music. Kaitlyn also had a love for missions and had an opportunity to go on her first missions trip at age 15.

Kaitlyn is survived by her parents, Byron and Kim Johnson; siblings, Kelsey, James Byron II, Jordan, and Jonathan; grandparents, Maize Lee Knight and Nancy Marie Johnson; uncles and aunts, Randy Henderson, Lamar (Sabrina) Johnson, Stephen Johnson, Frazier Knight, Rickey Knight, LeBaron (Monique) Knight, and Alvin Knight; and a host of loved ones in the family of God.



TRAVEL AND SPEAKING



DR. LIGON DUNCAN

MAY 7: Preaching at New Covenant Presbyterian Church, Natchez, MS.

JUNE 14: Preaching at PCA General Assembly, Memphis, TN.

JUNE 18: Preaching at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS.

JUNE 26-30: Teaching “Covenant Theology” at RTS Washington, Vienna, VA.

JULY 2: Preaching at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, DC.

JULY 9: Speaking and preaching at First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, SC.

JULY 17-21: Teaching “Covenant Theology” at RTS Atlanta, Marietta, GA.

JULY 23: Preaching at High Pointe Baptist Church, Austin, TX.

SEPT 25-27: Speaking at The Gospel Coalition National Conference, Indianapolis, IN.



DR. MICHAEL ALLEN

APR 28-29: Speaking at a colloquium on Roman Catholic and Reformed theologies, the Angelicum, Rome, Italy.

JUNE 6-8: Speaking at Edinburgh Dogmatics Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland.



DR. ZACHARY COLE

JULY 20-22: Speaking at Family Retreat, Epworth by the Sea, St. Simon’s Island, GA.



DR. ROD CULBERTSON

OCT 6-8: Speaking at World Missions Conference, First Presbyterian Church, Stanley, NC.



DR. J.V. FESKO

OCT 22-24: Speaking at Reformation Conference, Calvin Presbyterian Church, Phoenix, AZ.



DR. KEVIN DEYOUNG

MAY 10-11: Speaking at Scottish Reformed Conference, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

MAY 11-15: Speaking at Scottish Reformed Conference, Glasgow, Scotland.

OCT 17-18: Speaking at Westminster Conference on Preaching and Preachers, Westminster Theological Seminary, Glenside, PA.



REV. MICHAEL GLODO

APR 16 & AUG 20: Preaching at Covenant Life Community Church, Casselberry, FL.

APR 23 & AUG 27: Preaching at St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, Orlando, FL.

TRAVEL AND SPEAKING



DR. MICHAEL KRUGER

APR 1: Speaking at Kingdom Come Conference, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Coral Ridge, FL.

APR 4: Speaking at Reformed University Fellowship, Clemson University, Clemson, SC.

SEPT 16-17: Speaking at Fall Bible Conference, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Statesboro, GA.

SEPT 25-27: Speaking at The Gospel Coalition National Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

OCT 25-27: Speaking at Apologetics Conference, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, AL.



DR. GREG LANIER

JULY 31 - AUG 4: Teaching at Presbyterian Theological College, Melbourne, Australia.



DR. JAMES NEWHEISER

APR 14-15: Speaking at Center for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship, Granbury, TX.

APR 22-24: Speaking at Marriage Conference, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Franklin, TN.

APR 28-29: Speaking at Marriage Conference, Hickory Bible Church, Hickory, NC.

MAY 1-3: Speaking at ACBC Refuge Pastoral Retreat, Ridgecrest, NC.

MAY 5-7: Speaking at Marriage Conference, Tri-City Covenant Church, Somersworth, NH.

MAY 17-21: Speaking at Biblical Counseling Training Conference, Medellín, Colombia.

MAY 22-24: Speaking at Fellowship of Independent Reformed Evangelicals International Fellowship, Audubon Drive Bible Church, Laurel, MS.

JUNE 22-24: Speaking at Institute for Biblical Counseling and Discipleship Annual Conference, Riverside, CA.

JUNE 25: Preaching at Cornerstone Church of West Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA.

JULY 23-31: Speaking at Biblical Counseling Conference, Czech Republic.

SEPT 11-17: Speaking at Network of Biblical Soul Care Conference, Stuttgart, Germany.

SEPT 29 - OCT 4: Speaking at ACBC National Conference, Santa Clarita, CA.

OCT 6: Speaking at Marriage Conference, Faith Presbyterian Church, Morganton, NC.

OCT 9-13: Teaching “Marriage and Family” at Reformed Baptist Seminary, Taylors, SC.

TRAVEL AND SPEAKING



DR. SCOTT REDD

APR 16: Teaching at Fourth Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, MD.

MAY 29 - JUNE 2: Speaking at Apologetics Seminar, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Lippo Village, Tangerang, Banten, Indonesia.

JUNE 3: Speaking at C.S. Lewis Institute Fellows Meeting, Annandale, VA.



DR. NICHOLAS REID

JULY 3: Delivering Joseph C. Miller Memorial Lecture Series, Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany.

JULY 17-20: Speaking at Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands.



DR. GRAY SUTANTO

APR 12: Delivering Paideia Center Lecture, RTS Orlando, Oviedo, FL.

MAY 9-11: Speaking at book launch of *Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction*, Kuyper Conference, Ontario, Canada.

OCT 29: Speaking at Christ Church West Chester, West Chester, PA.



DR. GUY RICHARD

APR 15: Speaking at Men’s Retreat, Cherokee Presbyterian Church, Canton, GA.

MAY 7: Preaching at Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Sandy Springs, GA.

JUNE 11: Preaching at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS.

JUNE 18: Preaching at ChristChurch Presbyterian, Atlanta, GA.

JULY 23: Preaching at Christ Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Marietta, GA.



DR. SCOTT SWAIN

APR 1-2, 14-15: Teaching “Doctrine of the Trinity” at RTS Dallas, Dallas, TX.

APR 16: Preaching at Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Southlake, TX.

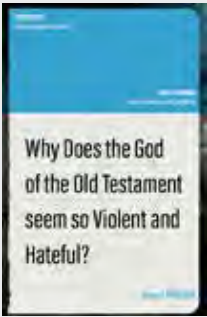
SEPT 17: Preaching at St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, Orlando, FL.

SEPT 26: Speaking at The Gospel Coalition National Conference, Indianapolis, IN.

OCT 16-20: Teaching “Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology” at RTS Washington, Vienna, VA.

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

BOOKS



DR. RICHARD BELCHER
Why Does the God of the Old Testament Seem so Violent and Hateful? (Christian Focus, 2023)

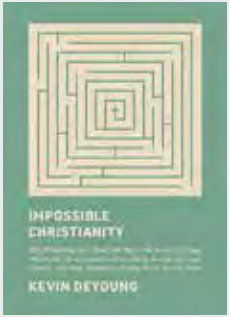


DR. KEVIN DEYOUNG
Do Not Be True to Yourself: Countercultural Advice for the Rest of Your Life (Crossway, 2023)



REV. MICHAEL GLODO
The Lord Bless You and Keep You: The Promise of the Gospel in the Aaronic Blessing (Crossway, 2023)

DR. WILLIAM ROSS
Coeditor: *Linguistic Theory and the Biblical Text* (Open Book Publishers, 2023)



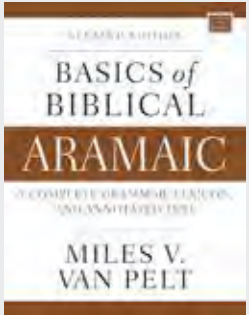
Impossible Christianity (Crossway, 2023)



DR. GRAY SUTANTO
Editor and translator: *Christianity and Science* by Herman Bavinck, with James Eglinton and Cory C. Brock (Crossway, 2023)



DR. GUY WATERS
Facing the Last Enemy: Death and the Christian (Ligonier, 2023)



DR. MILES VAN PELT
Basics of Biblical Aramaic, Second Edition: Complete Grammar, Lexicon, and Annotated Text (Zondervan Academic, 2023)

PUBLICATIONS

DR. JAMES ANDERSON

“John Calvin” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Suffering and the Problem of Evil* (Bloomsbury, 2023)

“Whence This Evil? Towards a Biblical Theodicy” and “Evangelizing Fallen People: Apologetics and the Doctrine of Sin” in *Ruined Sinners to Reclaim: Human Corruption in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective* (Crossway, 2023)

DR. ROBERT CARA

Review of Lane G. Tipton’s *The Trinitarian Theology of Cornelius Van Til for Reformed Faith & Practice* (2023)

Review of David M. Moffitt’s *Rethinking the Atonement: New Perspectives on Jesus’s Death, Resurrection, and Ascension for Westminster Theological Journal* (2023)

DR. ZACHARY COLE

“Illustrating a Pauline Imperative (Phlm. 17): Προσλαμβάνω in P.Mur. 2.115” for the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (2023)

“The Date of Codex Sinaiticus: Revisiting Milne and Skeat’s Numerical Argument” for *The Journal of Theological Studies* (2023)

DR. NICHOLAS REID

“Punishment for the Coercion of Labour in Mesopotamia During the Ur III Period” in *Punishing Worker, Managing Labour*. Special edition of *International Review of Social History* (Cambridge University Press, 2023)

“Corporal Confinement, Mutilation, and Slave Marks: Approaches to Mobility Control in Early Mesopotamia” in *Punishment, Labour and the Legitimation of Power* (Amsterdam University Press, 2023)

“Carceral Bodies: Hebrew Bible” in *Routledge Handbook of Marginalization in the Bible* (Routledge, 2023)

DR. GUY RICHARD

“Ingratitude” for *Tabletalk* (2023)

“Impatience” for *Tabletalk* (2023)

“Envy” for *Tabletalk* (2023)

“Greed for Unjust Gain” for *Tabletalk* (2023)

“Gluttony” for *Tabletalk* (2023)

DR. WILLIAM ROSS

“Cognitive Linguistic and the Biblical Languages” for *Linguistic Theory and the Biblical Text* (Open Book Publishers, 2023)

Contributor: *The Baker Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Baker, 2023)

DR. GUY WATERS

Review of John Piper’s *What is Saving Faith?* (Crossway, 2022) for *Reformed Faith & Practice* (2023)

Review of Lynn H. Cohick’s *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Eerdmans, 2020) for *Reformed Theological Review* (2023)

Review of Christoph Heilig’s *The Apostle and the Empire: Paul’s Implicit and Explicit Criticism of Rome* (Eerdmans, 2022) for *Westminster Theological Journal* (2023)

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



JACKSON

MAY 20: Commencement

AUG 23: Convocation

OCT 24-26: John Reed Miller Preaching Lectures with Rev. Jason Helopoulos

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



ORLANDO

APR 12: Paideia Center Lecture with Dr. Gray Sutanto

MAY 3-4: RTS Board Meeting

MAY 26: Commencement

AUG 23: Convocation

OCT 4: Hughes Lectures with Dr. Nigel Biggar

OCT 16: RTS Orlando Preview Day

For more information, call (407) 366-9493.



CHARLOTTE

MAY 26: Commencement

AUG 29: Convocation

For more information, call (704) 366-5066.



ATLANTA

APR 29: RTS Atlanta Advisory Council Meeting

MAY 20: Commencement

AUG 21: Convocation

SEPT 12: RTS Atlanta Preview Day

FALL 2023: Edmiston Center Grimké Lecture Series

For more information, call (770) 952-8884.

DR. GUY RICHARD CONTINUES TO POST ARTICLES TO HIS WEBSITE MONTHLY AT WWW.GUYMRICHARD.COM.



WASHINGTON

MAY 20: Commencement

SEPT 6: Convocation

For more information, call (703) 448-3393.



BENEDICTION
2023

*THE LORD BLESS YOU,
and keep you;
The Lord make His face
to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance
upon you, and give you peace.*



NUMBERS 6:24-26


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