

# Westminster Today

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RELEVANCE . LEADERSHIP . RESOURCES . DISCOVERY

{ *making* }

## HISTORY

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and Systematic Theology | [page 11](#)





## making history

### *There's History, and Then There's HISTORY*

D

DURING THE NEARLY three years I've served at the helm of Westminster, I've been repeatedly struck by the commonplace reality of amazing events and extraordinary people on our campuses.

But this has also been frustrating. The frustration has been two-fold: The events often happen so fast, I can't keep them straight; and until now we haven't had a vehicle to share them with the world.

But things have begun to change—not the extraordinary happenings, but the missing communication tool. Welcome to Westminster's new magazine, *Westminster Today*, and to this column, "Making History."

As a student of history, I've learned that making history and securing a place in history are two different things. Whether we are aware of it or not, every day we make history, in big ways or small. But is our history securing a *place* in history—a place worthy of the Church to remember, for believers to reflect upon and for which to thank God?



Westminster Theological Seminary has been securing a place in history from its very beginning. As you'll read in this inaugural issue, Machen's theological integrity and courage launched the evangelical movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Van Til's apologetic made worldview thinking a reality for everyone, from youth groups to seminary theologians.

Clowney's historical-redemptive preaching has shown us that the gospel shines as brightly in 1 Chronicles as in 2 Corinthians. And Adams launched a reformation in counseling in 1970 that the CCEF-WTS\* faculty has continued to develop and proclaim, making biblically rich counseling a daily reality in countless churches around the world.

Westminster continues to make history, because we are a seminary where God's eternal Word meets man's changing world.

The substance of a Westminster education will secure your ministry's place in history *and in eternity* as you learn to minister with that Word as your rock-solid foundation. After all, Jesus taught us that heaven and earth will pass away, but God's Word abides forever.

Please come study at, pray for and invest in this place where history is made. Every day.

Sincerely in Christ,

REV. DR. PETER A. LILLBACK  
President

\*Christian Counseling & Educational  
Foundation - Westminster Theological  
Seminary is a strong partnership for putting  
"feet" to practical theology.

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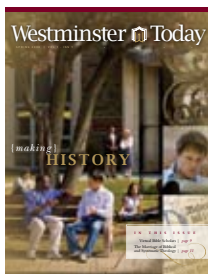
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*Westminster Today's* mission is to highlight the Westminster difference—relevance, leadership, resources and discovery—in the lives of faculty, students and alumni who are engaging the changing world with the eternal Word.



In any given year, Westminster students—coming from 100 denominations, 40 countries and 35 states—are being equipped to become ministers, missionaries, professors, writers, speakers and Christian workers worldwide.

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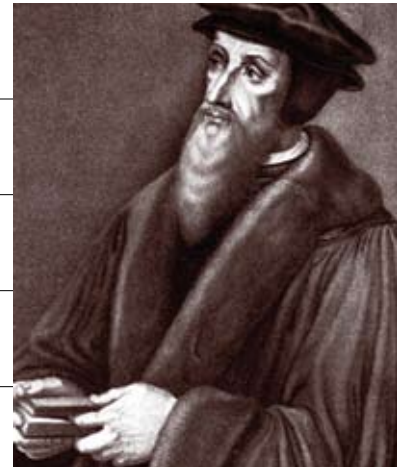
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## WESTMINSTER VOICES

*No man is excluded from calling upon God, the gate of salvation is set open unto all men: neither is there any other thing which keepeth us back from entering in, save only our own unbelief.* ~ JOHN CALVIN



# NOTABLES

## Opportunities to interact with Westminster

- **April 13** • **Dr. Kirk Lowery**, adjunct professor of Old Testament & director of the Groves Center • preaching on Job at Pilgrim Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pa.; worship at 11:00 a.m. • [www.pilgrimchurchphilly.org](http://www.pilgrimchurchphilly.org)
- **May 11-14** • **Dr. William Edgar**, professor of apologetics & chairman of the faculty • lecturing at the World Journalism Institute, The King's College, New York, N.Y. • [www.worldji.com](http://www.worldji.com)
- **May 16-17** • **Dr. Timothy Z. Witmer**, professor of practical theology & minister of preaching at Crossroads Community Church, Upper Darby, Pa. • conducting officer training at First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S.C. • [www.firstprescolumbia.org](http://www.firstprescolumbia.org)
- **May 17** • **Dr. John S. Leonard**, associate professor of practical theology • teaching a semester-long series on "Current Christian Outreaches to Muslims," Flushing (N.Y.) First Baptist Church • [www.encounteringislam.org](http://www.encounteringislam.org) or [ewi.nyc.08@gmail.com](mailto:ewi.nyc.08@gmail.com)
- **May 22-24** • **Dr. Carl F. Ellis**, lecturer in practical theology & dean of intercultural studies • speaking at the Going Global Conference, Willow Creek Church, Winter Springs, Fla. • [www.goingglobalnetwork.org](http://www.goingglobalnetwork.org) or [www.willowcreekchurch.org](http://www.willowcreekchurch.org)
- **June 28 - July 9** • **Dr. Peter A. Lillback**, president & professor of historical theology • teaching on the Sea Cloud, a four-mast sailing yacht, on a First Century Voyage to Izmir, Smyrna, Sardis, Ephesus, Pergamum, Troy, Philippi, Patmos, Cape Sounion, Corinth and Athens • [info@firstcenturyvoyages.com](mailto:info@firstcenturyvoyages.com) • [www.firstcenturyvoyages.com](http://www.firstcenturyvoyages.com)
- **August 18-24** • **Dr. Bill Smith**, adjunct professor of practical theology • speaking at Harvey Cedars (N.J.) Bible Conference, Family Week • [www.hcbible.org](http://www.hcbible.org) or [bsmith@cheltenbaptist.org](mailto:bsmith@cheltenbaptist.org)

# AT A GLANCE

## Couples called to the ministry



**W**HETHER MARRIED OR SINGLE, male or female, any believer who senses a calling to full-time vocational ministry—or to simply learning how the gospel applies to a chosen profession—will find kindred spirits at Westminster.

And scholarships help make it that much easier to follow the calling: In fall 2007, 235 total scholarships were granted—which adds up to a remarkable 31 percent of all students.

Amid the academic rigor, married couples at Westminster face extra challenges—nurturing their relationship with each other and, for many, parenting. Yet, inevitably, shared study of the Word grows into shared mission of the heart.

In recognition of the unique needs facing married couples,

**“We chose Westminster because the curriculum combines the biblical and practical material essential to lifelong ministry, and it allows us to learn and study together for God’s kingdom,” say Don and Diana Lee.**

(M.Div. 2010, M.A. 2008)

Westminster specifically offers a spouse scholarship. To qualify, the spouse of any full-time M.Div. student must also enroll in a qualifying program. (Spouses of full-time students in other degree programs may apply for the scholarship, with signed approval.

For more details, see [www.wts.edu/students](http://www.wts.edu/students)

and look under “financial aid.”)

While study at Westminster is not for the faint-hearted, participating couples strongly attest to the benefits, which far outweigh the rigors of study. The Lord says, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10). ●

### Fall 2007 Matriculated Students



“Biblical theology shows how all the Bible points to the glory of God in Christ.”

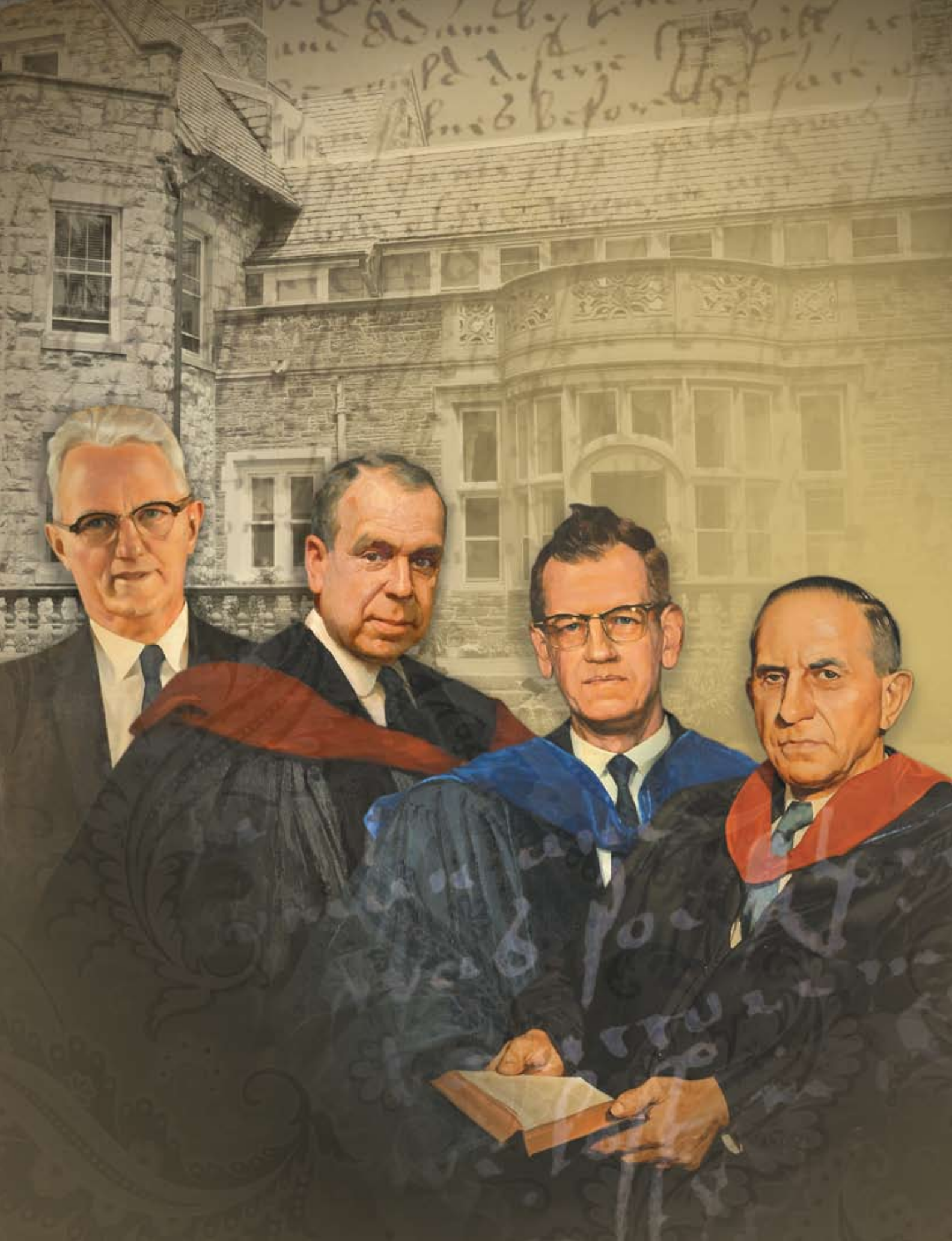
— WESTMINSTER FACULTY

TELL  
US

## Why did you choose Westminster, and what difference has it made?

This is your chance to tell us what you’re thinking! In subsequent issues, we’ll include responses, as well as new questions for your consideration. And if you have a question to suggest for faculty, current students or alumni, please let us know. This is your *Westminster Today*.







# Making History

## *The Difference of Westminster*

As a student at Westminster Seminary in the late 1960s, I had the privilege of living at the home of Professor and Mrs. Woolley for several months. My wife, Barbara, and I were often invited to dinner, where our remarkable hosts served us with china and cutlery from Finland. Mrs. Woolley, of Russian nobility, had owned a summer home in Finland before she fled the Red Army in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution.

How I wish we had recorded those conversations. They were a combination of European history and a rich narrative on the American Presbyterian movement—centering on the genesis of Westminster Theological Seminary. Even as it began its own history, Westminster has been *making* history—changing how believers view the world and how they interact with it.

Paul Woolley was indeed there when it all began. In 1929 he had received an urgent call from J. Gresham Machen, asking him to help a small group form a new seminary. When Westminster opened its doors in Philadelphia at 1528 Pine Street that fall, Paul Woolley was registrar and, later, professor of church history.

Initially joining Woolley and Machen were Oswald T. Allis, Cornelius Van Til, the Rev. R.B. Kuiper, Allan A. MacRae and Ned B. Stonehouse. Not long after, John

by Dr. William Edgar

Murray and Edward J. Young came as well. In his book *Between Faith and Criticism*, evangelical scholar Mark Noll made the oft-quoted statement, “It is an exaggeration to say that conservative evangelical Bible scholarship during the 1930s was confined to the faculty common room of Westminster Theological Seminary. But not by much.”

**W**estminster has been committed from the beginning to the historic Christian position, as expressed in the Westminster Standards. Rather than constricting us, this has given us great creativity. The Confession gives the professors “a place to stand and room to move.”<sup>1</sup> A brief highlight of the people who did both would have to include the following.

Until his death in 1937, J. Gresham Machen taught New Testament at Westminster—clearly the most powerful defender in his day of biblical Christianity against what was then known as “modernism.”

Machen identified many trends that are still with us, such as the tendency in critical New Testament scholarship to erect a wall of separation between Jesus and Paul, or between Jesus and the institutional church. At a popular level, *The Da Vinci Code* novel and movie both promote this view (see box above).

Cornelius Van Til has been called the most original apologist of the 20th century by many theologians, whether they agree with him or not. He effectively founded the approach known as “presuppositionalism,” in which he saw unbelief and belief not as bits and pieces of knowledge, but as systems—worldviews—that hold together. His work laid the foundation for Francis Schaeffer, Os Guinness and others.

Professor Edmund Clowney spent his career developing a theology of the church that has immeasurably enriched the Christian community. His book *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (1961) revolutionized the way preachers presented Christ in their sermons, avoiding both moralism and lifeless doctrinal preaching.

But Westminster’s history-making extends into popular culture as well. Through our recently launched Gospel and Culture Project, we challenge students to take a look at globalization, film and media, sex-trafficking, and the like from a distinctively redemptive-historical viewpoint.

That’s because we see the arts not only as a means of

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*Westminster Standards. Rather than constricting us,*

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## The Truth About Da Vinci

One of Westminster’s many valuable resources is [www.thetruthaboutdavinci.com](http://www.thetruthaboutdavinci.com)—a response to Sony Pictures movie *The Da Vinci Code*, based on Dan Brown’s novel. Given the movie’s May 2006 release, the 8,265,884 total hits to Westminster’s Web site (from April 2007 to March 2008) attest to a world seeking real answers to religious mysteries. Throughout its history, Westminster has engaged the changing world with the transforming gospel of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word.

evangelism but also as a way to show forth the true story of creation–fall–redemption.

Whether through the arts, politics, or other aspects of popular culture and life, we advocate informed, Christ-centered involvement. This is lived out as well through the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (see article on page 10).

Westminster also sponsors the country’s longest-existing seminary program for urban ministry. The program acknowledges the significance of the city—its significance not only to our world today but also to God’s plan for the new heavens and new earth. The extraordinary studies in urbanization, leadership and cross-cultural ministries have changed the way many evangelicals approach missions altogether.

*Before*, evangelicals tended to send missionaries to faraway places, emphasizing tribes and single people groups. *Now*, they recognize that the city is the major opportunity of our times. *Before*, there was a “we vs. them” mentality, a sending church and a daughter church. But *now*, we look for ways God is already at work in the city (or anywhere) and then try to partner with those who are already there.

Westminster is a vibrant community. Today, still, much of the learning goes on privately, as it did in my day, when I gathered at the Woolleys’ home for dinner and conversation. Indeed, in every setting from classrooms and dining rooms to cross-cultural gatherings, history has been made here at Westminster.

And history will continue to be made—by the grace of God—for years to come. ●

<sup>1</sup>SINCLAIR FERGUSON, *in a private conversation.*

DR. WILLIAM EDGAR is professor of apologetics at Westminster, where he has served since 1989. He is moderator of the faculty and director of the Gospel and Culture Project.



## The Groves Center »

# Virtual Bible Scholars

**T**he history of the 20th century is characterized by two unprecedented trends in human affairs: the population and information explosions. Both trends are still with us and force Christians to respond. And these trends directly fuel Westminster's J. Alan Groves Center for Advanced Biblical Research.

The Groves Center was birthed in 1986 through the dedicated work of J. Alan Groves. As an engineering student at Dartmouth University in the 1970s, Alan Groves was exposed to the mainframe computer. He quickly realized that computers crunched not just numbers, but also text. He dreamed of a tool to make the study of the Bible easier and more effective.

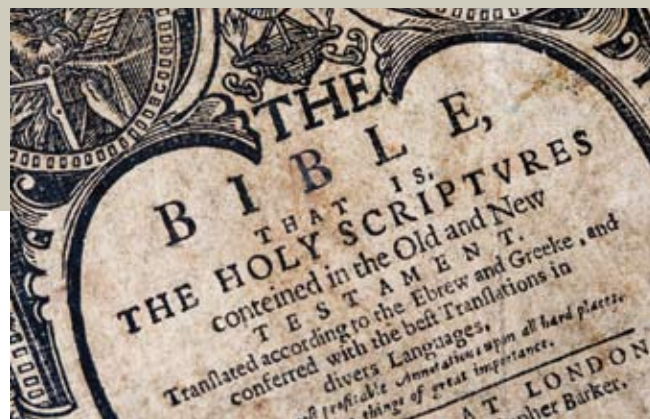
By the early 1990s, others were developing Bible software and turned to Prof. Groves for the content that would make their programs meaningful. For the next 15 years, Prof. Groves' databases of the Hebrew Bible text and grammar were the only ones widely available. Prof. Groves was the world's first—and for a decade, the world's *only*—“virtual” Hebrew scholar.

Today the Groves Center is following Prof. Groves' example: thinking outside the box, dreaming about what could be.

Innovation always begins with a need. China's 1.3 billion people—one-fifth of the world's population—cannot be ignored, least of all by Bible translators. But few Mandarin speakers are also Greek and Hebrew scholars. And those few are busy teaching future spiritual leaders, as well as interpreting the Bible for their culture. But what if there were a way to connect Mandarin-speaking Bible translators globally and provide a “virtual Bible scholar” at their elbow as they work?

The Asia Bible Society (ABS<sub>o</sub>)—based in the Far East—set itself to that task. ABS<sub>o</sub> members envisioned a globally networked “translator's tool” that would not only present the translator all the information needed for translation, but also present a proposed translation to the user.

The tool would improve consistency, compensate for lesser skills in the original language and shorten the time needed. But where would they find a virtual Bible scholar to include in their software?



In April 2004, ABS<sub>o</sub> and the Groves Center discovered that their separate goals overlapped. Together, we are now developing the databases needed for the grand vision of a computer-assisted Mandarin translation. The process of mapping Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek to modern Chinese is nearing completion—with the software framework completed and being tested.

Just as Johann Gutenberg utilized new technology to speed the process of making copies of the Bible and dramatically reduce the cost, so the Groves Center and ABS<sub>o</sub> are leveraging modern networking and computational linguistics—this time, to place the Bible in the mother tongue of 1.3 billion people.

And it just keeps getting better: Now that we understand how to teach the computer to translate the Bible into Chinese, it is a relatively simple matter to “unplug” the Mandarin part of the system and “plug in” any other target language of choice.

This partnership is just one example of how the “global village” of our modern age encourages us to move on to the next generation of Bible study software tools.

All to the glory of Jesus Christ. Always. ●

DR. KIRK LOWERY is director of the J. Alan Groves Center for Advanced Biblical Research ([www.wts.edu/resources/alangroves.html](http://www.wts.edu/resources/alangroves.html)).

# *The Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation »*

## Theology Applied to Life

**I**n 1987, I made the 1,000-mile journey from southwest Georgia to Philadelphia to begin my seminary training at Westminster. When I graduated four years later, I started the first of 10 years of pastoral ministry in a local church.

That first year, I hit the ground—but not running. What I found were broken marriages and lives that quickly revealed my own inexperience and lack of maturity. It was within the crucible of pastoral ministry that I began to seek out the help of the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation.

What I found at CCEF was the rich theology I had received in the classroom at Westminster—applied to life. Over the next 10 years, I would avail myself of the resources of CCEF and continue to grow as a pastor. In 2001 I joined the faculty, and in April 2007 I became executive director of the ministry that had saved my pastoral ministry. I now have the privilege of leading an organization that is helping thousands of pastors and churches apply the gospel to the problems of life.

CCEF stands in a long tradition of pastoral care that dates back to the first-century church. The ministry of Jesus and the apostles inaugurated a rich practice of hands-on cure of souls. The “better promises” in Christ also brought a richer understanding of people and of the processes of lifestyle change into the image of Christ.

In principle, for the first 1,900 years of the Church’s existence, Scripture formed the basis for diagnosing both psychological-spiritual maladies and interpersonal problems. And Scripture offered a consistent cure for those same maladies, rooting our lives in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

A fundamental shift came with the advent of modern

secular psychologies around 1900. Historic biblical categories of creation, fall and redemption were replaced by secular categories. This shift began to work its way into seminary instruction. Seminarians had been instructed to make the Scriptures primary in the preaching of God’s Word but had not been equally instructed to make the Scriptures primary in pastoral care and counseling. There was a vacuum in pastoral care, and that vacuum was often filled by modern psychological models.

In the late 1960s, in response to this reality, a “biblical counseling” movement emerged that in 1968 became the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation. CCEF called pastors and seminaries back to the primacy of Scripture as the basis for thoughtful and effective pastoral care and counseling.

CCEF continues to mature as an organization as it works out the implications of a Christ-centered understanding of pastoral care, discipleship and counseling.

It is a rewarding experience to be part of an organization that continues to grow in influence. CCEF’s partnership with Westminster intersects in the 17 counseling courses we teach. In these classes, both seminarians and active lay people from local churches participate.

In addition to teaching courses, CCEF also hosts an annual conference, provides on-site counseling, publishes books and papers, and encourages its faculty to equip local churches and pastors around the country. ●



*DR. TIMOTHY LANE is CCEF’s executive director and Westminster’s associate professor of practical theology. Check out CCEF’s seminars, conferences and resources at [www.ccef.org](http://www.ccef.org). For a more detailed history of the biblical counseling movement, see *Competent to Counsel?* by David Powlison.*

COMPLEMENTARY DISCIPLINES



*The Marriage of*  
**Biblical**  
& Systematic  
**Theology**

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Biblical theology has long served an important role at Westminster Theological Seminary. And it is blossoming in other quarters as well. Because errors and misunderstandings abound, serious Bible students must sort out the different meanings of the term *biblical theology* and understand its relationship with *systematic theology*.

*by Dr. Vern Sheridan Poythress*



## History lesson

**B**iblical theology of one sort had a history even before Westminster Seminary was founded. Historians point especially to the German biblical scholar Johann P. Gabler, who defined biblical theology in 1787 as a distinct historical discipline: discovering “what in fact the biblical writers thought and taught.”<sup>1</sup>

But Gabler rejected the Bible’s authority. He drew a sharp line between the task of describing past biblical writers (whose views allegedly could not be accepted today) and the task of propounding present-day belief—which was supposed to be “in agreement with the deliverances of Reason.”<sup>2</sup> Gabler’s thinking was corrupted by non-Christian rationalism.

## A new definition

**A** decisive turn came from Geerhardus Vos (1862-1949). Vos saw the need to re-found the discipline of biblical theology on genuinely biblical and God-honoring principles. Vos framed this definition: “Biblical theology is that branch of exegetical theology which deals with the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible.”<sup>3</sup>

Vos’ definition focused on revelation as process, before and up to the time of its deposit. “Biblical theology deals with revelation as a divine activity,” he wrote, “not as the finished product of that activity.”<sup>4</sup>

Vos himself preferred the term “history of special revelation,” but he settled for the expression already in use. Because several of the earlier definitions of biblical theology placed it closer to the Bible than systematic theology, Vos was at some pains to stress that the two are parallel disciplines:

There is no difference in that one [of the two disciplines] would be more closely bound to the Scriptures than the other. In this they are wholly alike. Nor does the difference lie in this that the one transforms the biblical material, whereas the other would leave it unmodified. Both equally make the truth deposited in the Bible undergo a transformation: but the difference arises from the fact that the principle by which the transformation is effected differs in each case. In biblical theology this principle is one of historical, in systematic theology it is one of logical construction. Biblical theology draws a *line* of development. Systematic theology draws a *circle*.<sup>5</sup>

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## Special Revelation

Special revelation includes both word and deed: God’s Word to Israel through Moses is word revelation, while Egyptian plagues and the dividing of the Red Sea are deed revelation. Similarly, Christ comes as both a speaker (word revelation) and as a worker of miracles who heals the sick and casts out demons (deed revelation). Special revelation is characterized by organic growth: Each stage of revelation is “perfect” in its own shape but destined according to the plan of God to grow into the succeeding stages.

Vos expects the two disciplines to interact fruitfully. For example, he tacitly uses input from systematic theology in his formulation of biblical theology. He requires above all that biblical theology work with a doctrine of special revelation and with a conviction about the divine authority of the Bible. He also draws on biblical teaching about the sovereignty of God and the unity of God’s plan of redemption.

Vos does not explicitly point out that he is drawing on systematic theological doctrine; he presupposes rather than debates the use of orthodox theology as a foundation for biblical theology. There is no question for Vos that, as the newer discipline, biblical theology should build its investigatory framework using all the pertinent resources from centuries of systematic theology.

And how might biblical theology provide a root for systematics? Gaffin suggests three ways:

- Biblical theology reminds systematic theology of God’s historical activity as a theme integral to redemption and therefore one to be incorporated within systematic theology itself. Students of the Bible must continually watch out for a tendency to abstraction and to “timeless” formulations—those that, in the end, threaten to make Christianity into a religious philosophy rather than the announcement of the good news of Jesus’ accomplishment.

- Systematic theology must engage in accurate exegesis of the texts to which it appeals for support of its doctrines. Exegesis must attend to context, including the context of the various epochs of redemption and the plan of God, who works out His purpose in each.

- A systematizing process is already beginning to take place within Scripture, as evidenced in the theology of Paul or of Hebrews. Systematic theology ought to learn from and build on these beginnings.

## The influence of systematic theology on biblical theology

In these formulations above, the flow is all in the direction from biblical theology to systematic theology. Like Vos, Murray and Gaffin presuppose a reverse flow, according to which biblical theology will develop its framework of investigation in harmony with systematic theology. But a danger arises when this reverse flow is not affirmed explicitly—that scholars less respectful of systematic theology will fall back in the direction of Gabler’s idea of independent disciplines.

This tendency arises from: (a) a desire for an allegedly neutral methodology that would enable us to converse both with mainstream biblical scholarship and with the postmodern world; (b) suspicion of and consequent disrespect for classical systematic theology; (c) a desire to “follow the evidence where it leads” while dispensing with the authority of the Bible.

But as Vos emphasized, biblical theology can also be conducted with presuppositions consistent with the Bible.

Vos conceived of biblical theology as a unified discipline, the “history of special revelation.” But nowadays we can distinguish different related emphases.

First, like Vos, students of the Bible can conduct an overview of the history of the whole of special revelation. The character of that overview depends on what someone presupposes about special revelation and the authority of the Bible.<sup>6</sup>

Second, Bible students can follow the historical development of a single theme within the whole of special revelation, or a small cluster of related themes—such as the theme of covenant or kingship, divine warrior or theophany. Sometimes, such thematic biblical theologies use their theme as a kind of organizing center for the whole of the Old Testament or the whole of the Bible. Such information from themes may suggest ways of enriching systematic theology.

Third, students may examine the distinctive theological and thematic shape of different biblical books and different human authors. Vos engaged in such study in his work on *The Pauline Eschatology* and *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. This third kind of study, combined with the second, appears also in Gaffin’s work on the centrality of Christ’s resurrection in Pauline theology.<sup>7</sup>

The rich interpenetration of biblical theology and systematic theology enhances both disciplines and enables us to understand God and His Word more deeply. The eternal God has revealed himself unambiguously in the successive stages of revelation, stages set out in the pages of Scripture and climaxing in the revelation of Jesus Christ. ●

The above article is condensed from “Kinds of Biblical Theology” by Vern S. Poythress, *Westminster Theological Journal* 70/1 (spring 2008). Used with permission.

## Recommended Reading

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<sup>1</sup>Gaffin, “Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 38/3 (spring, 1976), 283; see also Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 17-20. <sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 18. <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 13. <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* <sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 24-25. <sup>6</sup>Vos works out this overview in his book *Biblical Theology*. <sup>7</sup>Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul’s Soteriology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987).

DR. VERN SHERIDAN POYTHRESS has taught at Westminster since 1976 and has served as professor of New Testament Interpretation since 1987.



# Looking Back as Well as Forward

## *Portrait of Dr. Richard B. Gaffin Jr.*

DR. GAFFIN'S OVERHEAD PROJECTOR is retiring with him after the spring 2008 semester, along with countless threadbare transparencies of biblical passages in Greek. Thousands of students remember the passionate dry-erase marks pointing to where and why Christ is found in the passage at hand.

"As a Westminster student," attests his own pastor, Rev. John Currie of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, in Ambler, Pa., "I learned to preach Christ not by taking a single preaching course but by watching Gaffin find Christ in all the Scriptures."

Oblique ties between Richard Gaffin and Westminster were formed from before the cradle. Gaffin's parents were missionaries to China, where Gaffin was born in Beijing in 1936. His parents recall being interviewed for service by J. Gresham Machen himself, after Gaffin Sr. studied at Westminster. Before the outbreak of World War II, the family returned to the States, and China's loss was our gain: Young Gaffin eventually enrolled in Westminster in fall 1958, shortly before marrying Jean Young, daughter of faculty professor E.J. Young.

Gaffin then came on board as the "baby" faculty member in 1965, back in the day when administration was a bare-bones, do-it-yourself affair and Cornelius Van Til was chairman of the buildings and grounds committee.

Over the next 43 years, Gaffin raised three children and filled several different roles at Westminster. His final position, since October 6, 2002, has been as the Charles Krahe Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology. And it reflects his theological passion.

Gaffin is a self-described enthusiast for biblical theology (see page 11). Yet he's aware that some people have reservations—believing that biblical theology has introduced novelties that

hurt the church—undermining doctrinal stability and diminishing interest and confidence in the formulations of classic Reformed theology.

"The fear is largely misplaced," Gaffin says. "A deep compatibility exists between the Westminster Standards and biblical theology."

He points to history—when, as early as the second century, the church was doing biblical theology against the Gnostic heresy by reasserting that our salvation rests on what God did for us in history in Jesus Christ. Indeed, the Westminster Standards themselves, in their talk of covenants, were incipiently biblical-theological.

Biblical theology gets a bad rap in some quarters because of its "problematic history," Gaffin says. First mentioned in 18th-century German Pietism, its heart was in the right place: Get back to the Bible! Peel away centuries of speculative accretions! But this motive was partly hijacked by "late Enlightenment, with its rationalistic rejection of inspiration."

Still, Gaffin asserts, biblical theology is the handmaiden of systematic theology.

A marriage made in heaven then? According to Gaffin, the predominant concern of biblical theology is the accomplishment of salvation in history; the predominant concern of the Westminster Standards is the ongoing application of that completed salvation. "Differing accents. Not mutually exclusive. Not antagonistic but complementary." ●

ANDREE SEU, MAR '79, is a senior writer at *World magazine* and instructor at the *World Journalism Institute*.

by Andree Seu



[ *Westminster students* ]



## ■ Francelia Chavez

**F**RANCI CHAVEZ grew up in an extremely poor neighborhood in Mexico City—the youngest of six children, living in a two-room shack. The family later moved south to Tabasco, but life was miserable there.

Franci loved school, and she paid for university by taking tutoring jobs as she became fluent in French, English and Italian. Along the way, she also grew disillusioned with her Catholic faith and became an atheist.

When Franci turned 21, however, God changed her life. Longing to study the Bible and eventually plant a church, she attended a local Presbyterian seminary. When Franci finished her bachelor's degree, the seminary president encouraged her to go to Westminster.

Franci is now a second-year student at Westminster on an international scholarship. Much of her additional support comes from her hometown and church. She hopes to return to Tabasco to teach practical theology.

Franci's vision to return seemed abruptly cut off in fall 2007 when massive flooding devastated southern Mexico. Members of her home church lost everything, and Franci immediately returned to Tabasco. Not only did she want to help, but she had also lost all financial means of continuing at Westminster.

But not for long. Just as quickly, her classmates, professors and members of her church began contributing, to help her family and to help her continue her education.

Franci's gratefulness is heartfelt. "I am more and more convinced of my call to serve Him in my country" she says, "not only because of my desire but for God's glory." ●

*FRANCELIA CHAVEZ is pursuing an M.A. in religion and general studies and plans to graduate in May 2009.*

## ■ Willie L. James

**I** came to Westminster because of my passion for God's Word. I still remember my Episcopal bishop, Charles E. Williams, saying to me, "Willie, those men get deep into the Word, like no other. Go to Westminster!"

At the same time, coming to Westminster is coming to worship. The professors often slip in and out of preaching during their lectures, depending on how the passage at hand has impacted their own lives.

Yes, the academic standards are high, but the worship experience is real because it's God's Word. Remember the two pillars of Christianity: relationship and doctrine bound up in Christ. They stand firm at Westminster.

At Westminster, I've gained a vision for my future: to be a Christian, disciple-making, kingdom-building pastor. Most of us are not making disciples as Jesus called us to do. Westminster is preparing me to "go and make disciples." ●



*WILLIE JAMES holds an M.A. in Christian Education and an M.Div.; in fall 2008 he will begin Westminster's Doctor of Ministry program.*



## Investing in Westminster

**W**ESTMINSTER EXISTS “to extend the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ until that knowledge covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.” For nearly 80 years, we have been gifted with biblical-theological scholars who have faithfully prepared and sent out 5,962 Christian workers worldwide. The Lord has blessed us so that we may bless others.

Blessed as that may be, some people still ask, “Why give to Christian education with so many other important needs abounding?” Robert F. Davis, Westminster’s director of development, answers by quoting Dr. Frank E. Gaebelein from his book *The Pattern of God’s Truth*:

“Christian education today has the one principle that can give learning a frame of reference spacious enough to comprehend all knowledge and dynamic enough to develop moral and spiritual maturity in the midst of a materialistic and violent age.”

More importantly, God encourages our *shared stewardship* in relation to our spiritual gifts. “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12).

The principle of shared stewardship prompted Calvin to say in his commentary on that passage: “In regard to everything which God has bestowed upon us, and by which we can aid our neighbor, we are His stewards, and are bound to give account of our stewardship; moreover, that the only right mode of administration is that which is regulated by love.”

This speaks to the heart of Westminster—a shared love of God, His Word, His chosen workers and this lost world.

Our shared stewardship depends on the generous support of churches, individuals and organizations to enable us to serve Christ and His kingdom. Give today at [www.wts.edu/investing](http://www.wts.edu/investing) and help us keep tuition within reach of those called to serve Him selflessly. ●



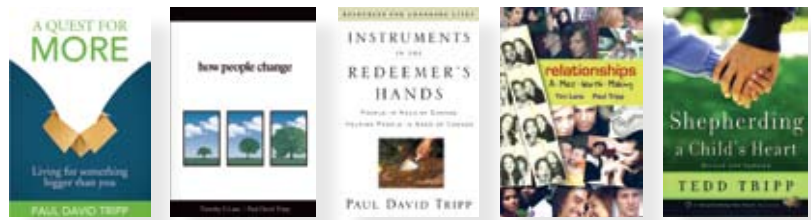
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**Alan White**  
*Vice president for institutional advancement*



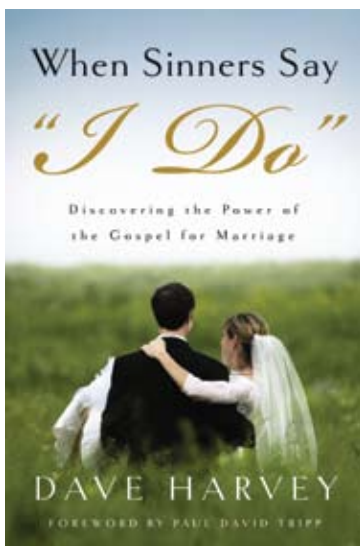
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*Vice president for finance*



## BEST-SELLING WTS ALUMNI AT WESTMINSTER BOOKSTORE

TOP  
10

Westminster alumni are prolific writers, offering both practical help and encouraging thoughtful conversations worldwide. Listed here are alumni whose books are historic best-sellers at the Westminster bookstore.



2007 best-seller by a WTS alumnus

- 1 **Rev. Paul David Tripp**, D.Min. '90, adjunct professor of practical theology; author of *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*

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- 2 **Rev. Dave Harvey**, D.Min. '01, senior pastor, Covenant Fellowship Church, Glen Mills, Pa.; author of *When Sinners Say "I Do": Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage*

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- 3 **Rev. Tedd Tripp**, D.Min. '90, pastor, Grace Fellowship Church, Hazleton, Pa.; author of *Shepherding a Child's Heart*

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- 4 **Rev. Tim Lane**, D.Min. '06, assoc. professor of practical theology and executive director of CCEF; author of *Conflict and Forgiving Others: Joining Wisdom and Love*

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- 5 **Rev. Edmund P. Clowney**, Th.B. '42, first president of Westminster, 1966–1982; author of *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*

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- 6 **Rev. K. Scott Oliphint**, Ph.D. '94, professor of apologetics and systematic Theology; author of *Reasons for Faith: Philosophy in the Service of Theology*

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- 7 **Rev. Charles Drew**, M.Div. '78, senior minister, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, New York City; author of *A Journey Worth Taking: Finding Your Place in This World*

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- 8 **Sean Michael Lucas**, Ph.D. '02, chief academic officer, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.; author of *On Being Presbyterian: Our Beliefs, Practices, and Stories*

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- 9 **Wayne Grudem**, M.Div. '73, research professor of Bible and theology, Phoenix Seminary, Ariz.; author of *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*

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- 10 **David Powlison**, M.Div. '80, adjunct professor of practical theology and counselor at CCEF; author of *Seeing With New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition Through the Lens of Scripture*



## POINT OF CONTACT

[ *Westminster alumni* ]

### AREA Team ▶

ON THE FRONTLINES of ministry, Westminster Theological Seminary graduates boldly proclaim the gospel in word and deed, implementing their education to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom. Yet, needs for education, fellowship and refreshment only grow after graduation.

Accordingly, Westminster has formed the Alumni Relations and Educational Advancement Department (AREA) to minister to its alumni. Westminster graduates enjoy Point of Contact e-Newsletters, fellowship dinners, preaching conferences, continuing educational resources, a growing database of media files at [www.wts.edu](http://www.wts.edu) and much more. . . .

Alumnus David B. Garner, Ph.D. '02, is vice president of the AREA department and serves alongside Steve Cairns (M.Div. '84), director of alumni relations; Jay Cuzzolina (M.Div., '05), director of communications; and Jason Peterson, M.Div. student/administrator. The AREA team exists to serve Westminster's great alumni worldwide. ●



*THE NEW AREA TEAM (from left):  
Jason Peterson, David Garner, Jay  
Cuzzolina, Steve Cairns*



*SUSAN P. MICHAELSON (M.Div. '07) lives in Radnor, Pa., where she does freelance writing and speaks at various events.*

### ◀ Susan P. Michaelson

MY FIELD EDUCATION at Westminster was designed to integrate my secular business background into Christian settings, so that I might experience how each could inform the other. In my first project, I served on my church's finance and construction committees during a building project. In my second, I worked for the seminary as a management consultant.

These experiences made it clear that the church needs to both *make use of* and *minister well to* men and women in the business world. Stewardship ministry is more than fund raising; it involves taking thoughtful account of the call of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures *and* the employment of best business practices.

When infused with Christian faith and disciplined biblical thinking, a business professional's career is a high calling before the Lord. ●



eternal Word, changing world



[ *The discipline of practical theology* ]

## Shaping Today's Shepherds

**F**ROM ITS VERY BEGINNINGS, the mission of Westminster Seminary has been to prepare shepherds for Christ's flock who are equipped to proclaim the eternal Word to a changing world. ¶ In the August 3, 1929, issue of the *Sunday School Times*, a brief news item announced the establishment of a new seminary. In it, Princeton Professor J. Gresham Machen was quoted as saying that, in light of the liberal movement afoot at Princeton, "we must have at least one sound source of ministerial supply." ¶ In Machen's address at the opening

of Westminster Seminary the next month, he affirmed:

"We believe . . . that God has been pleased to reveal Himself to man and to redeem man once for all from the guilt and power of sin. The record of that revelation and redemption is contained in the Holy Scriptures, and it is with the Holy Scriptures, and not merely with the human phenomenon of religion, that candidates for the ministry should learn to deal."

Through the years, however, some have said, "If you want to be a scholar, go to Westminster. If you want to be a pastor, go somewhere else." The seminary's excellence in scholarship has indeed produced many professors and administrators in institutions of theological education around the world. Yet this doesn't preclude the mission of shaping shepherds for Christ's flock.

In fact, the seminary's records show a remarkable catalog of effective pastors who have graduated, including 518 who have served in the Presbyterian Church in America, and 278 who have gone on to serve in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church—composing a large proportion of those two particular denominations.

Increasingly common is the e-mail response of a pastor who took a close look at the resources available to our students:

"The impression that I have always held about WTS is that it was a place of outstanding academics, but it was weak in the practical aspects of ministry preparation. You have proved me seriously wrong, and I apologize for such an unfair caricature. In fact, after studying [peer institutions mentioned], you have the most comprehensive of all."

Westminster continues its commitment to shape shepherds. And in the coming issues of *Westminster Today*, this column will provide insight and resources for our ongoing mission of living out practical theology. ●

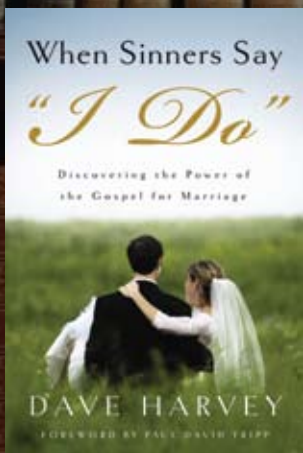


DR. TIMOTHY Z. WITMER is coordinator of Westminster's Department of Practical Theology. Tim's new book, *Like Sheep Without a Shepherd*, will be published later this year by P&R Publishing.

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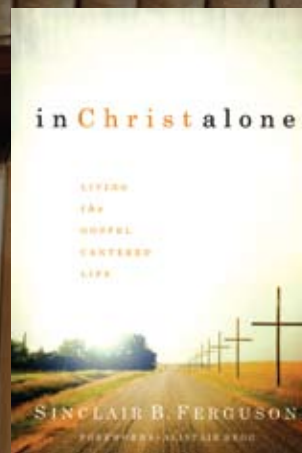
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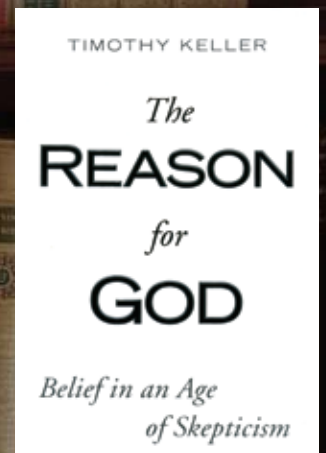
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