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—*Tristan Admiraal, MDiv ’24*

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Covenant Magazine is a publication of Covenant Theological Seminary, the denominational seminary of the Presbyterian Church in America. For nearly seventy years, Covenant Seminary has equipped thousands of pastors, counselors and ministry leaders to lead and serve the church globally. This magazine is a testimony to the Lord's work in and through the people associated with Covenant Theological Seminary.

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CONTENTS

VOL. 34

FALL 2023

ISSUES 1 & 2

Features

28

Jesus Our Good Shepherd

34

A Tribute to Jerram Barrs

40

Jerram Barrs and Os Guinness on Apologetics and Evangelism

Departments

4 From the President

6 Faculty and Staff News

13 Faculty and Alumni Books

44 Alumni News



Reaching the Next Generation

20

Pastoral ministry is always challenging. Today's cultural climate makes it especially so. Every week, it seems, we hear of another noted ministry leader stepping down. Yet the demand for raising up new church leaders is ever present. So what ought we to do? The prophet Isaiah helps us consider this important question.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Rev. Dr. Tom Gibbs



Walking in God's grace is the first component of the training students receive at Covenant Seminary, as referenced in our mission statement. Everything we do flows out of the grace we have received in Christ.

This grace allows us to be bold in asking God to build his church in big ways. Because we know he is gracious to listen, we can request that he multiply his church—both in America and globally—in ways we cannot even imagine now. This is what we work towards at Covenant Seminary: the multiplying of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

I am now finishing my second year as President of Covenant Seminary. In Texas we had a saying: "I wasn't born here but I got here as quick as I could." This is how I feel about this campus. I got here as quick as I could because of the vital work the Lord is doing.

Our mission isn't just to graduate students. It's to graduate the future of the church. The pastors, counselors, and ministry leaders we train here are coming to us because they have tasted the grace of God so fully that they want to lead others to the source. It's up to us to teach them to walk in that grace daily, so that they may give to others from the wealth they have received as they follow the risen Christ.

Covenant Seminary has trained men and women for the work of ministry for almost 70 years now. We are thankful to God for the rich heritage he has given to us, and for the responsibility he has entrusted us with, both for the future leadership of the Presbyterian Church in America and beyond. The global church is the Lord's design for matching his will on earth to that as it is in heaven.

For that very reason we are thankful for you and your connection to this place. We are thankful that you too are a part of the church and a part of this mission as well. I hope what you read here helps you to walk in his grace today, as we both look to Christ, the Head of the church, to lead us.

All for Jesus,

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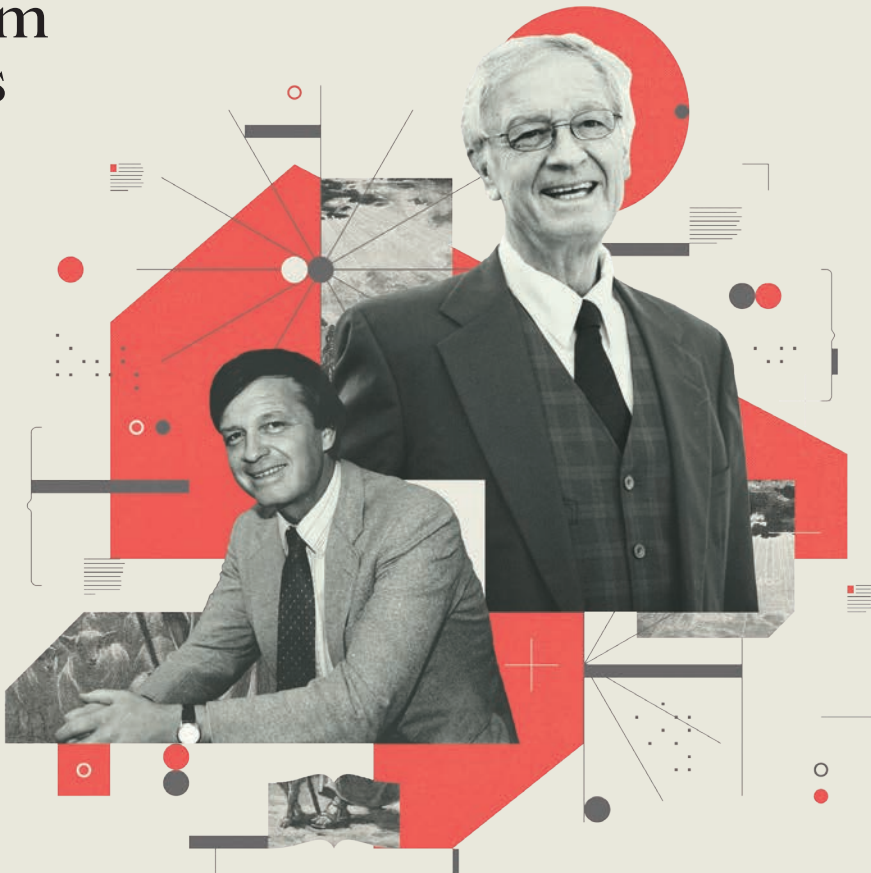
FACULTY & STAFF

VOL. 34

FALL 2023

ISSUES 1 & 2

Prof. Jerram Barrs



**Professor of Christian Studies
and Contemporary Culture**

Prof. Jerram Barrs, Professor of Christian Studies and Contemporary Culture, retired at the end of 2022 after 34 years with Covenant Seminary. Jerram joined us in 1988 following 18 years with L'Abri Fellowship in England, where he also pastored a church he helped plant. In 1989, he founded and served as the first Director of the Seminary's Francis Schaeffer Institute (FSI) to help students learn to engage with people and cultural issues in a courageous but compassionate and biblical way. Through FSI, his teaching, his personal mentoring and friendships, his writings (including *Being*

ILLUSTRATION BY ISRAEL G. VARGAS

Human, Echoes of Eden, The Heart of Evangelism, The Heart of Prayer, Through His Eyes, and many others), and his speaking engagements in the US and around the world, Jerram's influence on the lives of generations of our students, faculty, and staff has been profound. We are immensely grateful for him and his wife, Vicki, and pray God's blessing on them as they move into a new phase of ministry.



Rev. John Chung joined our staff in 2022 as Senior Director of Enrollment, where he oversees the functions of the Admissions, Communications, Financial Aid, and Institutional Retention teams. A 2009 MDiv graduate of Covenant, John is an experienced pastor and highly skilled leader with expertise in team leadership and staff development. He has served in a variety of ministry roles over many years: with the PCA's Mission to the World; as Institute Director for Next (formerly Global Youth and Family Institute); as a youth minister, associate pastor, pastor, and executive pastor with churches in St. Louis and Virginia; and as a visiting and adjunct professor at the Seminary. John's ability to communicate across generational, cultural, and language boundaries is instrumental in strengthening and advancing the missions of the organizations he works for. John holds a BA in speech communication from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and an MDiv from Covenant Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Saras, have two children.



Rev. James Dickson, currently Senior Pastor of Christ Church (PCA) in Trussville, Alabama, will join our Advancement team in January 2024 as Vice President of Advancement. He will oversee and provide strategic leadership for all aspects of the Seminary's development, donor relations, and fundraising efforts, as well as other avenues for communicating and advancing our mission. James is an experienced pastor/church planter and a highly skilled business leader with expertise in finance, sales, banking, and real estate development. In addition to holding a BS from Auburn University, an MBA from Emory University, and an MDiv from Reformed Theological Seminary-Charlotte (MDiv), he is currently pursuing a DMin at Covenant. Before planting Christ Church in 2011, James was an elder and pastoral intern at a church in North Carolina, worked in process engineering, served as a capital markets associate and investment banking relationship manager, and was a partner and vice president with a real estate firm. James and his wife, Anna, have three children. He is the author of a new book titled *A Thousand Little Moments: Grace-Shaped Parenting*.



Dr. Robbie Griggs, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Director of the ThM Program, was recently named chair of the Seminary's recently renamed Division of Theological Studies. Dr. Griggs holds a PhD in New Testament from Durham University and an MDiv from Covenant Seminary, as well as a BA in philosophy and a BS in finance from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is an expert in New Testament theology and early Jewish theology

whose research focuses on Paul's theology of grace in Galatians in comparison with contemporary Jewish theologies of God as "giver." This research takes him to the heart of several key historic and contemporary debates in Pauline and systematic theology. Dr. Griggs previously served as a pastor at Central Presbyterian Church (EPC) in St. Louis for eight years. He is a life-long Missouri resident, a St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan, and an avid supporter of Mizzou football and basketball. He and his wife, Jane-Ellis, have three boys.



Mr. Ken McDonald, previously our Senior Director of Business Development, has been serving as our Interim VP of Advancement since the departure of Mr. John Ranheim (see below) and during our search for a new VPA (see James Dickson above). Ken, a west-coast import to St. Louis, is a 2014 MDiv graduate of Covenant and brings a diverse background in corporate and entrepreneurial business and ministry to the Development team. His heart beats for taking the gospel out to the world. With interests in practical theology, discipleship, evangelism, and church planting, Ken thrives on Covenant's mission to raise up pastors, teachers, counselors, and lay ministers to lead God's people on God's mission. He desires to work with Covenant partners, alumni, and donors to position the seminary as a lifelong partner for a lifetime of ministry. Ken is the husband of Shari and the father of three children.



Dr. Andrew J. "Drew" Martin joined us in 2022 as Associate Professor of Systematic Theology. He served as a PCA pastor and church planter for 15 years, including as pastor of West Charlotte Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, which he co-founded and which is considered to be the first PCA church planted from a mother church with an African American senior pastor. Drew has taught systematic theology and church history at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Charlotte campus, Vanderbilt University, and the School of Theology at Sewanee: The University of the South. His deep commitment to Reformed theology and the Westminster Standards is reflected in his PhD dissertation, which focused on the development of covenant theology in the post-Reformation period. Drew has contributed to *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, *The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology*, and *Richard Hooker and Reformed Orthodoxy*. His upcoming book (in Crossway's Theologians on the Christian Life series) focuses on the practical ethics of prominent black pastor and theologian Francis Grimké. Drew and his wife, Meg, have five children.



Miss Diane Preston, who filled many important roles at Covenant, most recently as Associate Dean, retired in 2022 after 32 years of service. Diane began in 1991 as the Registrar and was involved in almost every area of the Seminary's mission over the years. Initially responsible for student records, she eventually moved into advising, created the class schedule and monitored classrooms, joined the President's Cabinet, represented Covenant at PCA women's

One of the Lord's greatest gifts to Covenant Seminary is the people who serve as faculty, staff, or trustees. Whether they're here for a short time or a lifetime, we are grateful for each of them and for the blessings they are to the Seminary, our students, and the Body of Christ.

discipleship events, helped hire adjunct faculty, created the course catalog and Student Handbook, handled accreditation matters, and a host of other things. Along the way she earned an MAC degree and the love and respect of everyone at the institution. Diane noted, "It has been such a joy and privilege to work with people who love the Lord and love our students. Thank you for loving me and welcoming me into this venture to train servants for God's Kingdom." We thank Diane for her faithful service over so many years and ask God's blessing on this new chapter of her life.



Mr. John Ranheim stepped down from his role as VP for Advancement at the end of 2021 to pursue other opportunities in fundraising and financial consulting. A 2006 MDiv graduate of Covenant, John joined the Development staff in 2005 to assist with the *By His Grace, for His Glory* capital campaign—which raised funds for major campus improvements, including the construction of Founders Hall—and stayed on to eventually lead us through several more such campaigns. These included a mini-campaign to renovate and expand the Community Center and the highly successful *Hope for the Future* campaign, which raised more than \$42 million to increase our endowment, support additional scholarships and endowed faculty chairs, establish the Church Planting Track for our MDiv and MABTS degrees, upgrade our technology, and make other needed improvements. John especially enjoyed finding ways of connecting donor passions with specific institutional needs for advancing the gospel. We are grateful for his years of service and dedication to our Covenant community.



Dr. Mark Ryan, Director of the Francis Schaeffer Institute and Adjunct Professor of Religion and Culture since 2013, stepped out of his role with FSI in early 2023 to pursue another apologetics ministry opportunity. He continues to teach some classes for Covenant on an adjunct basis. Before joining our faculty part time in 2010 and full time in 2013, Mark served with L'Abri Fellowship in Boston and Vancouver and pastored congregations in Australia and the US. In leading FSI, Mark taught multiple classes across numerous departments and disciplines, organized a variety of conferences and weekend course electives, built bridges between the Seminary and the community, helped develop the FSI Apologetics and Communications Cohort as part of our DMin program, and taught hundreds of students to think biblically about cultural issues and engage compassionately with people whose world-views are different than their own. Mark now serves as Executive Director of Sage Christianity, an apologetics education and training ministry founded by Covenant colleagues Zack and Jessica Eswine.



Dr. Michael D. Williams, Professor of Systematic Theology, retired last year after 26 years on our faculty. We are grateful for his dedicated service to our Seminary community and to the broader church. An adult convert to Christianity who once served as a US Army Ranger, Mike came to Covenant in 1996 from Dordt College, where he was Professor of Theology. For Covenant, he also taught extensively at our Missional Training Center–Phoenix site, and at churches, conferences, and seminars locally, nationally, and internationally. His research and writing focused particularly on the nature of theology and theological method, biblical and theological anthropology, and history. His books include *This World Is Not My Home: The Origins and Development of Dispensationalism*, *Why I Am Not an Arminian* (with Robert A. Peterson), and *Far as the Curse is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption*. He holds an MTS from Harvard Divinity School, an MDiv from Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, and a PhD from the University of Toronto. Mike and his wife, Jackie, have two sons.

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BOOK RELEASE

VOL. 34

FALL 2023

ISSUES 1 & 2



“Take Up and Read...”

A selection of recent faculty and alumni publications for the growth of the church.

O

Our faculty’s influence reaches far beyond the classroom as professors mentor and disciple students, serve in local congregations, share their teaching and preaching abilities with the larger church in the US and around the world, and engage with the culture of our day from a biblical, gospel-centered perspective. Their books, journal articles, blog posts, seminar talks, and other online resources are a great blessing to the church. The same is true for our growing number of alumni who serve as pastors, church planters, missionaries, counselors, and other ministry leaders in churches and other settings in all 50 states and 100 countries.



“[T]he psalms do not simply express emotions but when sung in faith they actually shape the emotions of the godly.”

DR. C. JOHN "JACK" COLLINS, *“Introduction to the Psalms,”* ESV Expository Commentary: Psalms—Song of Solomon

Faculty Releases

The Jerram Barrs Collection: Selected Shorter Writings

CTS, 2022

● By Prof. Jerram Barrs. Compiled and edited by Rick Matt. Special limited-edition volume offers a selection of Jerram's shorter writings from multiple publications across the entirety of his career.

Daily Joy: A Devotional for Women

Crossway, 2022

● By Dr. Tasha Chapman. Features 365 daily devotional thoughts by 50+ Christian writers, some of which were originally published in the *ESV Women's Devotional Bible*.

ESV Expository Commentary, vol. 5: Psalms–Song of Solomon

Crossway, 2022

● Edited by Dr. Jay Sklar, Iain Duguid, and James Hamilton. Features commentary for Psalms by Dr. Jack Collins and for Song of Solomon by Covenant alumnus Max Rogland.

Getting the Message: A Plan for Interpreting and Applying the Bible

P&R, 2022

● By Dr. Dan Doriani. A revised and expanded edition of the 1996 classic that has helped countless Bible teachers understand and apply the truths of Scripture.

Romans

P&R, 2022

● By Dr. Dan Doriani. Part of the Reformed Expository Com-

mentary series. Provides historical, cultural, and biblical context for the book of Romans, with practical lessons on Christian living and salvation from a Reformed perspective.

THE MASTERY OF METHODS DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT GOD WILL BLESS ONE'S LABORS. . . . BIBLE STUDY FACILI- TATES AN EN- COUNTER WITH THE LORD, NOT JUST A BOOK.

DR. DAN DORIANI,
Getting the Message, rev. ed.

Becoming a Missionary Church: Lesslie Newbigin and Contempo- rary Church Movements

Baker, 2022

● By Dr. Michael Goheen and Timothy M. Sheridan. A bal-

anced historical assessment and critique of contemporary church movements and the need to recover the missionary nature of the church.

Numbers

Zondervan, 2023

● By Dr. Jay Sklar. This book in the Story of God Bible Commentary explains each passage of Scripture in light of the Bible's grand story in a way ideal for use by pastors, students, and laypeople alike.

Encountering the New Testa- ment: A Historical and Theologi- cal Survey, 4th ed.

Baker Academic, 2022

● Edited by Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough. New edition of a classic work makes studying the New Testament less daunting and more rewarding.

Alumni Releases

Addressing Abuse: A Theologi- cal and Practical Guide — PCA Paper on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault

PCA, 2022

● Authors include several Covenant Seminary alumni and faculty members. Provides biblical and confessional foundations for understanding and addressing abuse situations in the church.

All Parishioners Great and Small: The Adventures of a Small-Town, Small-Time Pastor

L. Edward Brown, 2022

● By Dr. Eddie Brown (*DMin '02*). A light-hearted look at

church life from a rural pastor's experiences in serving with three different churches.

I Am Not the Christ: Pastoral Identity in View of the Cross
M. Caston, 2021

● By McKay Caston (*MDiv '95, DMin '05*) Practical biblical advice from an experienced pastor/church planter on keeping our lives and ministries closely tethered to Christ.

The Gospel Promised Beforehand: An Advent Devotional
K. Dehnert, 2022

● By Kelly H. Dehnert (*DMin '17*). These Advent readings and commentary help us reflect on the Old Testament promise of freedom in Christ, its fulfillment in the New, and its consummation at his return.

Remember Your Joy: A Bible Study of Salvation Stories in the Old Testament

Gospel Coalition, 2022

● By Courtney Doctor (*MDiv '13*) and Melissa Kruger. Traces the promised seed of Genesis 3:15 through seven Old Testament stories; includes access to online video lessons.

Re:velation: Seeing Jesus, Seeing Self, Standing Firm
Reformation Heritage, 2021

● By Stanley D. Gale (*DMin '97*). Unpacks chapters 1–3 of Revelation to remind us of our certain hope, assure us of Christ's victorious presence, and embolden our faith to persevere.

“What if the goal isn't to win an argument but to win a friend? . . . Jesus didn't come to earth to recruit culture warriors. He came to recruit disciples who imitated his sacrificial love.”

PATRICK MILLER AND KEITH SIMON,

Truth Over Tribe

Parenting & Disabilities: Abiding in God's Presence

P&R, 2021

● By Stephanie Hubach (*MATS '19*). Thirty-one daily readings from a disability researcher and the mother of a Down syndrome child explore the many blessings that come through the promise of “God with us.”

Wisdom for Dissidents: The Book of James through New Eyes

Athanasius Press, 2022

● By Jeffrey J. Meyers (*MDiv '88*). Contends that James is

more than a generalized message to all Christians but is meant to caution leaders against the seductive lure of revolutionary zeal in the face of intense suffering and persecution.

Truth Over Tribe: Pledging Allegiance to the Lamb, Not the Donkey or the Elephant

David C. Cook, 2022

● By Patrick Miller (*MDiv '18*) and Keith Simon. Shows how tribal thinking fractures relationships and how Jesus's life models our way forward toward unity and healing.

**Rembrandt is in the Wind:
Learning to Love Art through
the Eyes of Faith**

Zondervan, 2022

● By Russ Ramsey (*MDiv '11*). Learn how art illustrates the struggle of life and points to the beauty of redemption in Christ. Gospel Coalition 2022 Book Award winner.

**Black History for White People,
vol. 1**

Independent, 2022

● By Katina Stone-Butler, Gerin St. Claire (*MDiv '13*), Sharifa Stevens, and Brad Wycle. A timely, pastoral introduction to America's racial history

for those who want to grow in understanding.

The Amethyst Project

J. Sizemore, 2022

● By Jared Sizemore (*MDiv '10*). The conclusion to the Lights of Zoain trilogy follows the ongoing conflict as the final showdown between good and evil approaches.

Singleness: Living Faithfully

P&R, 2021

● By Jenilyn Swett (*MDiv '13*). Daily readings explore the challenges and opportunities of singleness and reflect on the practical, emotional, and spiritual

dimensions of faithful living as a single person.

**The Deep, Deep Love of
Jesus: 50 Reasons for the
Cross of Christ**

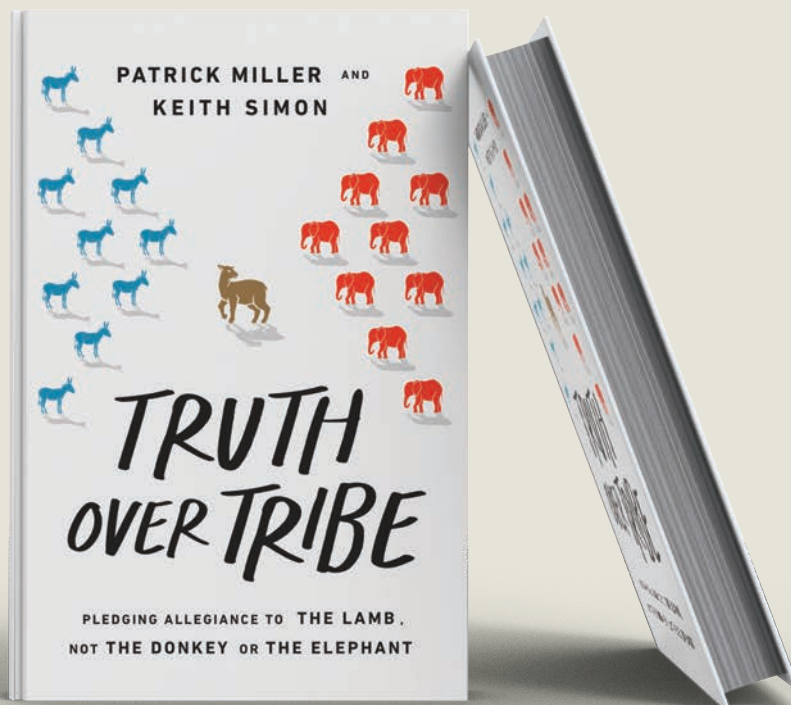
Renew Book Co., 2022

● By Nate Walker (*MDiv '09*). Plumbs the depths of Jesus's love for us as displayed in the beauty and wisdom of his cross.

**Living in View of the God of
Grace**

Community Arts Media, 2022

● By Bruce D. L. Young (*ThM '91*). A life-long missionary to Japan helps us see how to live with a full view of God's grace.



As Covenant trains the leaders of God's church for tomorrow, we remain committed to the authority and inerrancy of Scripture, the Reformed tradition, and the embodiment of our theology to reach those around us with the gospel. Your generous support provides us with needed resources to impart these commitments to the next generation.

Tom

—Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Gibbs, President



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COVENANT
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FEATURES

VOL. 34

FALL 2023

ISSUES 1 & 2

Preparing Pastors
& Ministry Leaders
to Reach the next
Generation

PAGE 20

Jesus Our
Good Shepherd

PAGE 28

“Solidly
Committed to a
Biblical and
Reformed
Understanding
of the Christian
Faith.”

A Tribute to
Jerram Barrs

PAGE 34

Jerram Barrs
and Os Guinness
on Apologetics
and Evangelism

PAGE 40



HERE I AM, SEND ME

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK HARRIS

Preparing Pastors
— *and* —
Ministry Leaders
to Reach the
Next Generation

BY DR. TOM GIBBS

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" . . . And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

– Isaiah 6:1–3, 8

THE PRESSURES of pastoral ministry are always challenging. However, today's cultural climate—characterized by political tribalism, racial conflict, further declines in public morality, and the lingering effects of COVID—have made it the most difficult season for ministry leaders I have experienced. It seems every week I hear about another friend or noted ministry leader who is stepping down. The burdens have just become too great. While it remains to be seen if this trend will continue, there can be no doubt that pastors are resigning in record numbers.¹ At the same time, the demand that the church raise up new ministry leaders is ever present. No crisis reduces the priority of this task that is always before the church. So, what ought we to do now?

Let's consider this question against the backdrop of Isaiah the prophet, who was called during a time of uncertainty and upheaval in the nation of Israel. His call is something of a paradigm for the people of God. You might say that as Isaiah goes, so goes the nation. The same is true for us today. As our pastors and ministry leaders lead faithfully, so go our churches. So let's consider the cultural moment, the place, and the encounter Isaiah has with the Holy God of Israel.

THE CULTURAL MOMENT

The Death and Failure of Uzziah

King Uzziah (Isa. 6:1; 740 BC) had been a powerful, innovative, and prosperous king. Second Chronicles 26:6–15 records for us his achievements in war against the Philistines, building up the defenses and civil infrastructure of Jerusalem, and his amassing and training of a great army for the nation. We are told that "his fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful."

At the end of his life, however, Uzziah faltered in his faith and succumbed to pride. Second Chronicles 26:16–21 tells how he was unfaithful to God and entered the temple to burn incense. When the priests confronted him about the inappropriateness of his action, Uzziah raged at them, and suddenly he was afflicted by God with leprosy, from which he suffered for the rest of his life. He had to live in a separate house, was banned from the temple, and "Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land."

The Rise of Assyria

We also note that this cultural moment was marked by the decline of the northern Kingdom of Israel, which reached a crescendo at the close of Uzziah's reign in Judah. Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, was making Israel a vassal state. Thus, the end for Israel was basically here (2 Kings 15).

The Moral Decline of the Nation

Clearly, Judah was at something of a crossroads. The nation's leadership was in transition. Political upheaval lay to the north. The last thing Isaiah notes is the moral decline of the nation, as recorded in Isaiah 1:21–22:

How the faithful city
has become a whore,
she who was full of justice!
Righteousness lodged in her,
but now murderers.
Your silver has become dross,
your best wine mixed with water.

So, the world around Judah was changing. It was turbulent time. The stable leadership Judah had enjoyed had come to an end. Judah was in decline.

The Situation Facing the Church Today

Fewer and fewer young people are considering a call to pastoral ministry. Though we sometimes think declining ministry impact is the problem of liberal churches, it's a challenge for theologically conservative churches also. For example, a recent report from the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod shows that enrollment trends of pastor-minded students at its two denominational seminaries dropped 13 percent from 2016 to 2018. In 2019 they had 81 students ready for pastoral placement, whereas back in 2009 the number was 159—a 48 percent decrease.² These challenges are pressing down on many seminaries.³

General Traits

For this reason, I want us to understand some of the traits that characterize the rising generation known as Gen-Z, which is distinct from the Millennial generation. By most descriptions, anyone born between 1981 and 1996 is considered a Millennial. Anyone born from 1997 onward is considered Generation Z. Notable traits include:

- *More likely to be enrolled in college and on track to be the most well-educated generation yet.*
- *The first generation to be considered “digital natives,” having little or no memory of a world that existed before smartphones and are sophisticated users of social media and on-demand entertainment.*
- *Are more racially and ethnically diverse than any previous generation.*⁴

Faith and Religious Practice

How is this generation relating to matters of faith and religious practice? An article for the In Trust Center for Theological Schools highlights the Springtide Research Institute's report *The State of Religion and Young People 2021: Navigating Uncertainty*, which was “the product of over 10,000 surveys and a full year of research.”

- Though spiritual and maintaining a tie to religion, *this generation is much less institutionally oriented when it comes to matters of faith.*⁵
- *Less likely to turn to the church in a time of need.*⁶

→ *Deeply suspicious of the church, and likely to have been wounded by the church.*⁷

→ *Have an “unbundled approach” to religion, meaning that they “combine, or bundle, the elements of their faith . . . from a variety of religious and non-religious sources, rather than receiving all these things from a single, intact system or tradition.”*⁸

The bottom line is that young people today, even more than earlier generations, take a smorgasbord approach to their spirituality. They do not feel the same dissonance that previous generations may have had by embracing views and values that are possibly incongruent. They are turned off by an authoritarian, have-all-the-answers approach and are more likely to want to discover their own answers.⁹

What's the Fundamental Question?

James Choung, Vice President of Strategy and Innovation at InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, helps us sort through this data by highlighting one question that brings these strands together.

- Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, ask, “What is true?”
- Gen-Xers, born from 1965 to 1980, ask, “What is real?”
- Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, ask, “What is good?”
- iGens or Gen-Zs, born about 1997 to about 2015, ask, “What is beautiful?”

What is this generation saying about the church? According to Walter Kim, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, it goes something like this, “A God that is *that* ugly, cannot be true.”¹⁰

So, what ought we to do? With the prophet Hosea, we can say, “Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up” (Hos. 6:1).

THE PLACE

In the time of Hosea and Isaiah, a return to the Lord was designed to occur only in one place—

the temple. The temple was God's holy dwelling place, the place that symbolized that God had chosen Israel to be his people (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18), through whom would come blessings to the nations (Gen. 12:1-3).

The temple was undoubtedly a grand place, set at the top of the hill on which Jerusalem was settled and beautifully appointed. Everyone looked up to the temple of the Lord. Nevertheless, the temple was also a place of mystery and hiddenness. Rules and regulations governed every aspect of life surrounding the temple. It's inmost chamber, the holy of holies, was entered only once per year on the Day of Atonement, and then, only by the High Priest (Lev. 16:2-34). Dale Ralph Davis's comments about the tabernacle apply equally to the temple: "Yahweh's glory is both revealed and concealed . . . there is a certain hiddenness about God; there is much we cannot see and do not know."¹¹ Without a doubt, it was at the temple that God had determined to do his business with his people, but what that business required remained but a shadow for the saints of the Old Testament.

THE PROPHET'S ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

Finally, we come to the call of Isaiah. Scholars, as you may know, suggest that the first chapters are not chronologically ordered so that Isaiah can make a theological point. As John Oswalt puts it, "If the *people of unclean lips* (6:5) can have the same experience that he, the *man of unclean lips* had," then there is hope for Israel.¹²

I remember a statement one well-known college football coach made about his players after the team got off to a rocky 2-4 start: "Some of them have had kind of this zombie-like, go through the motions [attitude] . . . Some of them quite honestly have an empty corpse quality."¹³ We might think such an indictment harsh, but the coach had a point. Ask anyone who has ever played football or any other sport competitively and they'll tell you that it must be played from the heart. It's about both the rules of the game and the intensity of those who come to play. You can't be a zombie and expect to win.

Our following of the Lord is like this, only there is a lot more at stake. As the church, at some level, we must become servants to this next generation so that they might have a genuine, beau-

tiful, and transformative encounter with the Holy God of sovereign grace.

In my mind, there are three movements to that genuine, beautiful, and transformative encounter.

Holiness that Confronts (Isa. 6:1-4)

Notice first that Isaiah sees the exalted and enthroned Lord. And the "train of his robe filled the temple." It's a glorious vision of who God is in his holiness. Isaiah speaks of the holiness of God not just once or twice, but three times for emphasis. Isaiah hears the heavenly choir of angelic beings declaring God's holiness and glory: "Holy, holy, holy!"

This must have been an overwhelming moment for Isaiah. Indeed, like all real encounters with God recorded for us in the Bible, a person's first reaction is not cozy warm-fuzzies, but an almost terrified response to an experience for which we do not have words. The word "holiness" refers not only to God's moral purity, but also to his utter distinction. God is "other." He is not like us. There is no one like the Lord. He is utterly unique and transcendent over all that he has made. The vision Isaiah is given here is of a God who rules over all things, and who will not be subject to anyone or anything that he has made.

Yet, this is not the way many of us approach God. We imagine a God who agrees and approves of the choices we have already made. I am reminded of a pastor who told about a poignant moment in a counseling session when he asked his client how she saw God working in her particular difficult situation. The client's reaction was startling: "Her eyes turned to steel. She leaned forward as if every nerve in her body were electric, 'My God is not like that. That isn't my God.'"¹⁴

We all like to imagine that God agrees with us, that he's aligned with our preferences. I think writer Anne Lamott is right when she says, "You can safely assume you've created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do."

If we have any inkling as to what the holiness of God is about, it means that we recognize that God is not "my" God. I don't possess him. He's not on *your* team. He cannot be shaped in my image and according to my preferences. He stands outside of me and for himself. He is not accountable to me, but I to him!

“Young people today . . . are turned off by an authoritarian, have-all-the-answers approach and are more likely to want to discover their own answers.”

Grace and Mercy that Convicts and Comforts (Isa. 6:5–7)
In verses 1–4, the holiness of God overwhelms Isaiah, but in verses 5–7 we see a transition. Holiness gives way to God’s grace and mercy. At first, Isaiah experiences this as conviction, but through that same grace it becomes a beautiful comfort.

Conviction. Isaiah’s recognition of the holiness of God brings him to utter conviction so that he confesses, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” He confesses his own condemnation, realizing he stands in the presence of a holy God who would be perfectly just in sentencing him to immediate death. In fact, his words mean literally, “I have been made to cease, I am cut off, undone, doomed to die.”¹⁵

When we are not reminded of the depth of our sin and the penetrating gaze of God’s holiness, our worship will inevitably be false. We haven’t dealt with ourselves honestly. What kind of relationship can you have with someone who repeatedly refuses to own up to the way he or she has violated the

relationship? Even if someone says that they want a relationship, a refusal to deal honestly with their own faults makes relationship impossible.

In the same way, if we refuse to acknowledge our sin before our God, a real, worshipful relationship will be impossible. Worship doesn’t start with cleaning ourselves up but with acknowledging how unclean and broken we are.

Comfort. But look what happens next: “Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for’ (v.6).”

In beautiful imagery, Isaiah is reminded that it is only by God’s grace made available through the purifying and atoning sacrifices in the temple that he is able to stand in God’s presence. As those who stand on this side of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection, we know even better than Isaiah that this burning coal from the altar only typified the better and once for all sacrifice made by Jesus. He is literally both the sacrifice and temple, who has atoned for all our sin. In him alone we find comfort and our sins atoned for.

When considering reaching this next generation with the gospel, there are many obstacles. Yet, there are also opportunities. One of the studies mentioned earlier found that young people today are responsive to relationships and will turn to trusted relationships when they have questions or concerns about how to live a meaningful life or navigate an uncertain time. Seminary leaders and educators have an opportunity to be the trusted adults that young people turn to, and to model the presence with aspiring ministry leaders that is critical to building trust with Gen-Z.¹⁶

So, what ought to be the basis of our relationships that are essential for connecting with the rising generation? Of course, it’s the grace of the gospel.

At Covenant Seminary two of our seven Core Values are:

→ Grace Foundation – *We believe that the foundation for all that we do must be the gospel of grace—our absolute confidence in God’s acceptance of us provided through his redemptive work as the supreme motivation and enablement for love and holiness.*

→ Relational Emphasis – *We believe that the relationship between students and professors must take a meaningful place alongside teaching content, so that we may affect the entire character of the student for ministry. Therefore, we seek to develop a faculty of pastor-scholars and a staff which both individually and as a community effectively model what it means to walk with God, interpret and communicate God's Word, and lead God's people.*

Relationships are what create context for us to hear and process unpopular or difficult ideas. In all honesty, I don't think this is a generational issue as much as it is about our humanity. God has made us to be in relationship. Without trusting relationships, we could never learn to embrace those truths that are sometimes hard to accept at first. For example, how are we convinced that the bad news the Bible speaks about our sinfulness is true? That Jesus became one of us, lived perfectly, loved us, and then went to the cross to save us from the guilt and power of sin gives us a relational context to confront the difficult truth about our own sinfulness.

Commission that Calls (Isa. 6:8)

This brings us to verse 8, which is the final movement of worship's gospel heartbeat—the commission with which Isaiah receives his call to ministry: “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’” This verse reminds us that fundamental to the mission of the kingdom are the servants that the Lord sends. As Christopher J. H. Wright has noted: “It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission.”¹⁷ Thus, another key value of Covenant Seminary is our commitment to this task of training up pastors to serve in the church—pastors who will equip the church for God's mission.

Pastoral Training – We believe that our primary task is to train students for pastoral ministry (including church planting, campus ministry, chaplaincy, and missionary service). To accomplish this task, we have gathered a faculty of pastor-scholars experienced in ministry (as understood by our denom-

“Young people today . . . will turn to trusted relationships when they have questions or concerns about how to live a meaningful life or navigate an uncertain time.”

inational standards and institutional history), as well as other educational resources. These enable us to serve other students and the broader Christian community, while continuing to enhance pastoral training. To strengthen pastoral training and all of our educational programs, we continually seek to assess and improve student learning and development.

CONCLUSION

Toward the end of his life, Richard Lovelace, one of my favorite authors and theologians, asked an audience a provocative question: “How many people here believe that waterfalls can run backwards?” “Of course they don't,” the audience thought. But one man who knew Lovelace well blurted out, “Yes; the answer is yes!” But how?

Lovelace went on to explain the extreme tidal fluctuations that occur where the St. John's River, a substantial river, enters into the Bay of Fundy along the Canadian coast of New Brunswick. There the tidal shifts are so great that the water-

falls, perhaps better called rapids, of the exiting river are overwhelmed by the incoming tide. In fact, the tidal influx of sea water is so great that they actually disappear and the river reverses course. The waterfall flows backwards!¹⁸

In the same way, the newness of the life that is found in Jesus Christ is like the ocean tide flowing into our lives and overwhelming our sin and changing the currents of our hearts so that they conform to the purposes of God.

This is, in fact, Isaiah's vision in chapter 2:2–3:

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
and many peoples shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

This is the power of the gospel that makes the water courses reverse flow. This is what we need in this cultural moment more than anything. May God grant us a real and a renewed encounter with the triune, holy God who saves through his new and living Temple, the Lord Jesus Christ! ■

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Endnotes

1. See for example the studies here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2021/12/24/christmas-covid-pandemic-clergy-quit/> and here <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being/>.
2. Concordia Theological Seminary, “More Students Needed to Meet Growing Demand for Pastors,” <https://www.csl.edu/2019/09/more-students-needed-to-meet-growing-demand-for-pastors/>, September 5, 2019.
3. The decline in enrollment is not uniform. According to Chris Meinzer, Senior Director and COO at The Association of Theological Schools, 54% of evangelical seminaries have increased and 46% decreased in enrollment in the fall of 2021. Among all ATS schools, 48% have reported increases in enrollment and 52% reported decreases. Chris Meinzer, “ATS Analyzes Fall 2021 Enrollment Trends of Member Schools,” <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/colloquy-online/ats-analyzes-fall-enrollment-trends.pdf>, October 2021.
4. Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik, “On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Gen Z So Far,” Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/05/14/on-the-cusp-of-adulthood-and-facing-an-uncertain-future-what-we-know-about-gen-z-so-far-2/>, May 14, 2020.
5. Josh Packard and Kevin Singer, “Uncertain and Unbundled: Are you ready for Gen Z?,” In Trust Center for Theological Schools, <https://intrust.org/Magazine/Issues/Autumn-2021/Uncertain-and-Unbundled>, Autumn 2021.
6. Packard and Singer, “Uncertain and Unbundled.”
7. Packard and Singer, “Uncertain and Unbundled.”
8. Packard and Singer, “Uncertain and Unbundled.”
9. Packard and Singer, “Uncertain and Unbundled.”
10. Packard and Singer, “Uncertain and Unbridled.”
11. James Choung and Walter Kim, “Generational Approaches for Gospel Understanding,” Podcast, National Association of Evangelicals, <https://www.nae.org/choung-podcast/>, June 15, 2021.
12. Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly*, Focus on the Bible (Fearn, Roth-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2008), 81.
13. John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 125.
14. “Mike Leach Calls Out Seniors,” ESPN, October 10, 2012, https://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/8486774/washington-state-cougars-mike-leach-compares-seniors-empty-corpses-zombies.
15. Dan Zink, “Who Is This God We Serve? Reclaiming a Biblical Fear of God,” *In Covenant* 13, no. 4 (August–September 1998), 4.
16. Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, vol. 1: *Chapters 1–18* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 247.
17. Packard and Singer, “Uncertain and Unbundled.”
18. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 62.
19. Cited by Eugene Heacock, “Waterfalls Can Flow Backwards: An Evangelical Theology of Hope,” *Ashland Theological Journal* (2009): 92.

A sepia-toned photograph of a flock of sheep in a field. The sheep are scattered across the foreground and middle ground, some standing and some lying down. The background is filled with tall, bare trees, creating a misty or hazy atmosphere. The overall tone is warm and nostalgic.

JESUS OUR GOOD SHEPHERD

by Dr. Dan Doriani



photographs by Marina Reich

WE NEED SHEPHERDS. The church needs shepherds. Some of our students here at Covenant Seminary will graduate soon and they'll find what they think is the ministry job of their dreams—and after three months they'll realize it is not the job of their dreams at all. In fact, most of them will probably like about 15% of their job. And then they'll have to remind themselves, "The Lord is my shepherd. I don't like this job, but he did lead me here. The Lord is my Shepherd. I'm supposed to learn something here."

Or suppose you're looking for someone who might be a good spouse, and you're looking to get connected to someone, but that person doesn't fit all the boxes on your list. He or she may fit the excitement and happiness and joy and connection boxes, but not the want-to-be-a-missionary-to-Peru box, for example. And then there's this other person who fits all the boxes, but there's just no spark. And in a case like that, we also tell ourselves, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

Or maybe you have children, and if you do, they either are old enough or soon will be old enough for you to worry about them as they go out to a party of unknown location, duration, and chaperoning activity. And you tell yourself—you better tell yourself—"The Lord is my Shepherd and my child's Shepherd."

We need a shepherd. And when we think of Jesus as our Good Shepherd, we think of guidance and care and protection. And that's all correct, but that's not all there is to it.

A Good Shepherd is

STRONG & TENDER

The truth of the matter is that if you look at the teaching about God as Shepherd, and therefore Jesus as Shepherd, it includes strength. One of the first places where Scripture mentions God as a shepherd is in Genesis 49:24, which says, "God is the shepherd, the rock of Israel." He is a rock. And as Joseph says in one place, "He's been my shepherd all my life."

The line we read in our passage about Jesus saying he would lead us in and out is also a theme in the Old Testament. What it means is that God leads his people. He leads them here, and then he

*"A good shepherd
is both strong
and tender."*

leads them there. So, the Lord is Israel's Shepherd, but the Lord also appoints under-shepherds for his people, and those under-shepherds are not always good. We have to think about that because Jesus emphasizes over and over, "I am the Good Shepherd." And he also says about some of the under-shepherds, "Look, they're bad shepherds. They're thieves and robbers and hired hands and false shepherds." And he's the Good Shepherd.

God appointed shepherds in Israel: prophets and kings. And they weren't all good. Ezekiel 34 as a whole describes shepherds who didn't care for the flock, didn't bind up the wounded, but shepherded the flock for themselves. David, however, despite his flaws, was a good shepherd. And in fact, when he finally became king, the people of Israel came to him after Saul died and said, "You are the one who led Israel on her military campaigns, and the Lord said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel'" (2 Sam. 5:1-3). The Lord appointed David to be a mighty shepherd, a warrior shepherd.

So, being a shepherd is not just about tenderness. We have a strong shepherd. Isaiah says, "See the sovereign LORD comes with power and his arm rules for him. He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers his lambs and carries them in his arms" (Isa. 40:10-11). He's mighty and he's tender, which of course is what we need.

We see the same thing in Psalm 23: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He leads me in quiet paths." And he also has a rod, and the rod smites evil-doers, wolves, and so forth, which of

course is also what David did as a good shepherd. He killed a lion and a bear with his hands.

In our passage, Jesus picks up on these things and says, “I am the Good Shepherd.” But there’s a difference. There are many shepherds, and they’re not all good. But Jesus says, “I am the Good Shepherd,” and that “I am” language is the same language God elsewhere uses to identify himself. In Exodus, for example, God tells Moses, “I am that I am.” That’s his name. But there are also many other “I am” statements, like “I am the one who blots out your sin.” That’s in Isaiah, and Jesus picks up on that a lot in the Gospel of John. He says things like, “I am the bread,” “I am the life,” “I am the water,” “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” And he also says, “I am the Good Shepherd.” And when he does this, he’s directing our needs and our longings to himself. We are lost and need to find the way. He says, “I’ll show you the way.” We need light. He says, “I am the light.” We need protection. He says, “I am the Good Shepherd.”

A good shepherd is both strong and tender. As we study these matters and as we serve God’s people in various ways, we have to think about this and make sure that we direct our longings to him and lead our people to direct their longings to him.

A Good Shepherd is

LOVING & SACRIFICIAL

Given some of the conversations going on in our society today, one of the things we worry about is shepherds who graduate from various schools—maybe, heaven forbid, even some from Covenant Seminary—who aren’t good shepherds. We have news and reports about fallen shepherds all too often. We also have lots of books written about narcissistic pastors and saying this is the reason for all these scandals. But I’m not quite convinced that the problem is always narcissistic pastors.

I think that pastors, just like many other people, can be insecure, and they try to protect themselves and create safety for themselves, and it often comes across as narcissism because they’re asserting themselves. But they’re not always doing it to put themselves first; rather, it’s to be safe. People want respect and if they feel disrespected, and life has been hard for them, and they had people who told them they were good for nothing

and worthless, they think, “Well, if I get a position that’s honorable, then I’ll be respected.” And so, a desire for respect can lead to something that looks like narcissism but is in fact something else.

I don’t say all this because I want us all to recognize what our needs are, but to say that if you need respect, go to your Good Shepherd. Don’t try to prove yourself to the world. People will never be impressed enough. But Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and he tells us, “I love you and I carry you in my arms.” If you feel deeply insecure, if you think people are scorning you—and maybe they really are—you can’t find your happiness by making sure everybody has the right opinion of you. But Jesus has a high opinion of you. He’s your Good Shepherd. He knows how to silence—at least in your heart and in your mind—the voices of people who have told you you’re no good and let you relax on this quest you’re on to show your prominence or to take care of yourself or show power so that you behave poorly. We do these things because we’re not receiving Jesus as our Shepherd. We keep trying to prove something to ourselves. This is endemic to human life.

For example, when I was a kid, I was a baseball junkie. I just loved baseball. When I was too young to play baseball, I played stickball in the streets of New York City, and I just loved to have a thing hit a ball. I loved that. And my parents moved a lot, so I was always the new kid wherever we went. We moved to small towns where outsiders weren’t always welcome, and the way I was accepted every time I moved was by playing baseball well. “If I play baseball well enough,” my nine-year-old soul said, “I will be accepted.” I didn’t know Jesus was my Shepherd then. So, in one of those places, the one where I felt the most disliked, I played baseball and in my second game, I got the game-winning hit. Two outs, two on, two strikes, everything perfect. And I got a hit—a line drive to left field. And my team won the game, and of course, they loved me—for all of about three days, then they went back to not liking me again. You’re not going to find real acceptance in baseball or anything else. Our Shepherd loves us—whether we play baseball well or not. That’s what Jesus is saying here. He loves us enough to lay down his life for us, which is really a lot of love. We can go to him for acceptance because he loves us.

But wait, there’s still more.

A Good Shepherd is

KIND

A good shepherd is kind. He is very kind. John 10 actually appears in a segment of Scripture that needs to be read together—chapters 9 and 10. They are two pretty long chapters. If you know the Bible well, you know what happens in John 9. There's a man who is born blind and Jesus heals him, and this causes trouble because he healed the man on the Sabbath. The Pharisees come by and want to question the man. They want to know who did this healing and who was breaking the Sabbath by doing so—because according to their rules you were not allowed to heal on the Sabbath unless someone was liable to die. They want this man to incriminate Jesus, but he won't do it. He stands by Jesus and he stands up to the Pharisees, and they essentially curse him and kick him out of the synagogue.

In the language of the Bible, they're bad shepherds. Here is a man who has been blind his whole life, who finally has sight, and then they beat him down again. Then Jesus shows up at the end of the chapter and wins him to life, to faith—he is not just healed physically, but actually now has eternal life. And Jesus says, "I'm the Good Shepherd. I'm the one who takes care of people like this blind man."

As we've noted, Jesus uses all these "I am" statements in the Gospel of John. In John 8 he says, "I am the light," and then heals. In John 9, he takes care of a man who's been beaten down by life and then beaten down again by the leaders of Israel, and he says, "I am the Good Shepherd. I am your Good Shepherd." He's kind. He cares. He defends this man when he's being attacked.

He is kind. He is strong. He is tender. He is loving. He is sacrificial. That's what a good shepherd is.

GOOD SHEPHERDS VS. BAD SHEPHERDS

The contrast here, of course, is with the other shepherds, the bad shepherds. There are two kinds of bad shepherds.

First, there are bad shepherds who are thieves and robbers. They care nothing for the flock, they just plunder it and take no care whatsoever. These

are the wicked religious leaders. There are different forms of this. There is overt malice; there's also sloppiness, false teaching, accommodation to the ideas of the world. They also lead people astray, so they're bad shepherds, thieves and robbers, people who say, "If you trust Jesus, all will be well." Maybe they mean well, maybe they actually believe what they're saying, but they're misleading the flock. They're bad shepherds.

The other kind of bad shepherd is the hired hand. The hired hand does well when all is easy. He's perfectly willing to watch the sheep when they don't move. He's very willing to nourish and feed the sheep when the water's right there and the grass is right there. But then the wolf comes, and the hired hand says, "See you later, folks! I'm not going to risk my life for sheep that aren't mine. I'm a hired hand." There's a sense in which, we can't blame them, but it is terrible when it happens.

You may be aware that a lot of people climb Mount Everest every year. A few decades ago, it was pretty rare, but much more common now. Back in 1996, there was a group of about 25 people going up Everest with their guides of one form and another, and a tremendous storm came up that separated out what kinds of shepherds those guides were. One of them simply left. He just left. He said, "That's a bad storm. I'm going down to base camp. Goodbye." Others shared their oxygen with the climbers and stayed with the weakest. One of them, who was one of the most famous hikers in the world at the time, gave his life to save several people under his care. The Good Shepherd stays and cares.

I talked to a pastor recently who told me, "I'm leaving the ministry. I'm done." I wasn't going to condemn him because I know a lot of pastors who have felt the same way. I said to him, "Many pastors who get tired. They're so tired of so much hardship over for the last few years, and it makes sense that you might want to leave. But please don't leave the ministry and don't leave your church unless there's another shepherd to take your place." He could be a good shepherd even though he might need to do something different for a while.

People do think about quitting. They think about it a lot. I was with a group of pastors a few years ago, and one of them said, "There are periods in my life where I think about quitting

just about every day.” And the room got quiet. Then one person said, “That’s not unusual. Most leaders do have a period where they think about quitting every day. The question is, how do you handle those thoughts? Do you handle them like a hired hand? Say, ‘It’s too tough. It’s too difficult. I’m fleeing.’ Or do you stay when the wolves are coming again? There is time to go, a time to leave. But you don’t just abandon a flock. You make sure someone else is caring for the flock.”

Jesus says, I am the Good Shepherd.

WHAT THE GOOD SHEPHERD DOES

So, what does the Good Shepherd do?

He directs his sheep. He leads them in and out, as verses 9 and 10 say. He takes us where we need to go when we’re looking for a job, when we’re meditating on the course of action to take, or when we have some illness, or when we’re trying to decide if we want to continue a relationship with somebody or not. Jesus is the one who leads us in and out. But he doesn’t just lead us.

He loves. He has work to do and he does it with love. He says that he delights in his sheep.

He knows us perfectly. “I know my sheep,” he says, “and my sheep know me.” He knows our best thoughts. He knows our worst thoughts. He knows our lightest thoughts and our darkest thoughts, and he is still our Shepherd. It’s easiest to believe this, I think when life is very good or very bad. When it’s very bad, we come near the Lord more than ever. A friend of mine lost his daughter to cancer recently. He is resting in God his Shepherd. He is so full of faith right now. He knew it was coming. He saw it coming for a couple years. “God has been so good,” he says. “He’s taken such good care of my wife and me.” He knows the Lord is his Shepherd. When you’re at the top of the world, you say, “The Lord’s been leading me so well.” I think sometimes the hardest place to receive Jesus as Shepherd is somewhere in the middle, when you’re kind of wandering around and you’re not seeking God and you’re not praising God. You don’t know where you are, but you’re wondering. Jesus is also our Good Shepherd then, even when we don’t know he is our Good Shepherd.

He lays down his life. Of course, Jesus is a *really* Good Shepherd. He’s better than any other shepherd. He lays down his life for the sheep. If you think about it, what we have here is a metaphor that breaks down because, literally speaking, it would make no sense to lay down your life for your sheep, because then you’re dead and the sheep are defenseless. So, Jesus says, “Okay, I’m going to give you a metaphor. I’m going to tell you how I shepherd. I lead you, I carry you, I know you, you hear my voice; and then I’m going to explode that metaphor”—because there’s no metaphor in the world that can cover what he does as our Good Shepherd. He lays down his life for the sheep—for us, for you and me. And that makes him not just a Good Shepherd, but the Best Shepherd.

He is good. The Greek words for “good” can vary. There’s the word *agathos*, which just means generically good, maybe morally good. But the word that’s used here is *kalos*, which tends toward the idea of beauty, excellence. Someone has said that it is possible to be good repulsively. Jesus is good beautifully. It’s best to be good in a way that wins people to goodness. It’s even better than the best to be good in a way that wins people to Jesus. He really is our very best and most beautiful Shepherd. He cares for us, he leads us, he’s strong, he’s tender, he carries us in his arms. He doesn’t run when the wolf comes. He lays down his life for us.

May our prayer be that we as a community of church leaders would delight in Jesus, our Good Shepherd, and that we would be a worshiping, loving, faithful, trusting family of his people. Let us pray that any who are unsure about any aspect of their own leadership, or any other needs or challenges they may be facing, would find in Jesus the assurance that he knows them, that he hears their prayers, and that he will lead them in and out, caring for them, because he is the Good Shepherd. Amen. ■

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A
Tribute
to
Jerram
Barrs

BY
DR. MARK RYAN



This article is adapted from the Foreword to The Jerram Barrs Collection: Selected Shorter Writings, published in honor of Jerram's retirement in 2022. To purchase a copy of the book, visit our online store at <https://www.covenantseminary.edu/store>.

ILLUSTRATION BY
SAM KERR

I FIRST SET FOOT on the campus of Covenant Seminary in August 1997. I knew remarkably little about the school, except that David Jones taught ethics and Jerram Barrs led the Francis A. Schaeffer Institute (FSI). David sharpened my thinking at many points before his passing in 2017, but it was Jerram who would play an outsized role in my life, modulating my apologetics and shaping my ministry in many concrete ways. Three distinguishing emphases loom especially large in my mind.

**COMPASSIONATE DISPOSITION OVER
CURATED METHODOLOGY**

After completing various programs of theological study in Australia, I came to the US to pursue additional work in Christian apologetics. An esteemed professor in Melbourne had commended to me Francis Schaeffer's way of keeping apologetics connected to evangelism and accessible to a wide variety of people, yet rooted within

the Reformed confessional tradition. Others had pointed me to the L'Abri communities, the Schaeffer Institute, and Jerram Barrs in particular. So here I was. I had no reason to imagine that I would get to know Jerram in the way I am so glad for today, but after taking a total of 17 credit hours of Barrs classes in my first academic year, it was almost inevitable that I would be invited to serve FSI as an intern (under then-Director Wade Bradshaw) and as Jerram's teaching assistant in my second year.

That second year, I took four further courses with Jerram and continued to benefit from his classroom instruction. I would often ask him why he (and, back of him, why Schaeffer) was not more explicitly presuppositional in terms of his apologetic methodology. Jerram welcomed my inquiry and spoke to questions of methodology with insight. What I learned and took to heart was the primacy of *disposition* over methodology. Schaeffer was clearly indebted to Cornelius

1.



2.



Van Til's presuppositional apologetics, and just as clearly, Jerram was alert to presuppositionalism's central tenets. However, what Jerram, following Schaeffer, has always been most concerned to communicate and see carried forward is the need for a more outward-facing, compassionate apologetic.

Recognizing that it is God who saves people and that all persons possess innate dignity by being made in the image of God, Jerram calls for (and models) a compassionate disposition toward individuals and their questions, regardless of who they are and how their questions challenge the Christian position. Jerram's deepest desire is not that we commit to and master a specific methodology for apologetics, but that we treat our interlocutors with respect, answer their questions gently, and pray for them while also challenging them with the truth in compassionate fashion (avoiding the twin errors of aggressive confrontation or evangelistic indifference).

1. *Jerram reading to children during a chapel service.*
2. *Jerram ministering at L'Abri England before coming to teach at Covenant Seminary, ca. 1980s.*
3. *Jerram speaking in Rayburn Chapel at Covenant Seminary, ca. 1990s.*



3.



**RELATIONSHIPS AND “BEING HUMAN”
OVER “GOTCHA” APOLOGETICS**

Over the years, I have been privileged to get to know Jerram more personally. I often conversed with him in the old FSI building on campus. Sometimes I joined him in public contexts where he was speaking. Occasionally, I visited with him and his wife, Vicki, in their home. Regardless of the setting, I was positively impacted by the remarkable consistency I observed. Whereas many popular apologists tended to speak in shrill tones, Jerram spoke plainly, kindly, and always with a disarming vulnerability.

Rather than defending the faith in an impersonal “us versus them” posture, Jerram was remarkably accessible, practicing his “bridge-building” approach by way of embracing people in relationship. It was not uncommon for individuals unconnected with the Seminary to visit with Jerram in his office on campus. Despite his teaching load and frequent travel for Covenant, Jerram deliberately scheduled time to meet one on one with local non-Christians. He willingly gave time to their individual concerns, even allowing them to sit in on his evening classes.

Whether dealing with a mature Christian, a new Christian, or a not-yet-Christian, Jerram practiced what he taught in the classroom. He gave time to those whose sorrows and struggles eclipsed their ability to believe, as well as to those for whom the pleasantness and current ease of life made Christianity seem unnecessary or austere. He received every question with seriousness and addressed all questions from an unwavering commitment to making known the goodness of God and encouraging “being human”—emphasizing human responsibility and the construction of a beauty-filled and pleasing life, which glorifies God.¹

Never perpetrating “gotcha” apologetics or offering trite answers to sincere questions, Jerram worked hard to match his response to the need he discerned. Sometimes he drew attention to trusted works written by his L’Abri colleagues or by others he found personally helpful.² Other times, it was less about directing questioners to external resources and more about inviting them into a deeper dialogue with him and his own life experience. Frequently, Jerram responded by

“Jerram’s witness to the beauty he finds in God’s still-good earth is part and parcel of his apologetic posture.”

weeping with those who were overwhelmed. Always he listened generously and gave of himself. In a manner I had seldom seen before, Jerram invested in relationships without backing away from his own firm commitment to God’s truth and kindness. With tenderness and tenacity, he commended a biblical spirituality that acknowledges our profound sinfulness while moving us closer toward God and what he intended us to be as human creatures.

BEAUTY AND “THE BASICS” OVER EVERYTHING ELSE

Apologetics, like every vocation, has its unique challenges and deformations. Always contending with assaults upon our faith can tempt us toward becoming reactive and critical by default—thereby succumbing to a gradual loss of joy and delight in the manifold goodness of life. Many fine people in the field of apologetics maintain biblical standards and sound doctrine, but, sadly, relatively few are known for a joyful relationship with Christ and a thankful reception of every good thing created by God. Here again, I am indebted to Jerram, who openly delights in beauty and in the basics of the Christian faith over everything else. As an heir of both Schaeffer and Abraham Kuyper (who previously spoke in similar ways), Jerram’s apologetic essence is found not so much in pushing back on Christian critics, but in living a life of his own within the circle of what God has given and made known.

In ways I did not immediately grasp as a student, I have come to see that Jerram’s witness to the beauty he finds in God’s still-good earth is part and parcel of his apologetic posture. His moving comments on prominent figures he saw as being on their way to faith; his stories of Florida sunsets drawing vacationers out of restaurants and onto the beach; his insertions of poetry (especially Hopkins) into his lectures; his collection of pictures of English woodland flowers heralding the spring; and even images of collided protons and massive particles from the Large Hadron Collider on the Franco-Swiss border—are all

part of what Jerram’s students recall as “various testimonies of God in the lives of unbelievers.” More interested in assisting people toward a satisfying human existence than compelling them to agree with a particular point, Jerram maintains a focus on the basic truths of the Christian faith and traffics provocatively in beauty. He reminds the Christian to acknowledge—and calls the non-Christian to account for—whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, or worthy of praise in the world around us.

Though Christians are called to respond reasonably to the ever-shifting concerns and objections of contemporary critics, Jerram teaches us to also live a uniquely Christian life wherever we are placed. He exemplifies rejoicing in the many beautiful things God sustains while living confidently within the circle of basic Christian truths revealed to us. Opening our hearts, abandoning our fears, demonstrating joy, and embracing beauty and truth where we find it—these are vitally important and can preserve us from becoming cynical and unduly critical.

Having had the good providence of being able to learn these things from and observe them in Jerram firsthand, I am now glad to fall quiet and allow his personal legacy and his body of written work to further fill out what I have barely outlined. ■

Dr. Mark Ryan served as Director of the Francis Schaeffer Institute at Covenant Seminary from 2013 to 2022, when he transitioned to the role of Executive Director of Sage Christianity. Mark continues to teach at Covenant Seminary as Adjunct Professor of Religion and Culture.

Endnotes

1. Jerram’s volume, *Being Human: The Nature of Spiritual Experience* (IVP, 1978), co-written with Randal Macaulay, does not talk much about apologetics, yet undergirds and informs Jerram’s practice of apologetics in foundational ways. Though it is one of Jerram’s earlier writings and indebted to his work at L’Abri rather than in the seminary context, I continue to return to it and to hear Jerram’s more explicit teaching on apologetics in dialogue with this volume.
2. Jerram is widely read, but as all students know, his go-to authors include William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Dorothy L. Sayers, Wendell Berry, Marilynne Robinson, and of course, J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series.

Jerram Barrs & Os Guinness on Apologetics & Evangelism



Mark Ryan (MR): As we begin our discussion, I think we can say that Francis Schaeffer was not especially concerned to construct a particular apologetic methodology, but was more concerned with pivoting away from intramural debates toward the deeper work of apologetics. You both worked with Dr. Schaeffer for many years. Can you give us a brief word about how he conceived of the work of apologetics?

Jerram Barrs (JB): Schaeffer said over and over again, “I’m not an apologist; I’m an evangelist.” For him, what mattered was the person in front of him at the moment—the questions that person had and the barriers between that person and coming to faith in Jesus Christ. He and Edith saw their task as being entirely shaped by their calling to reach out to these particular people. Even if somebody was attacking Schaeffer angrily, he would often weep for the person and then try to get to the root of what their questions really were

In a special tribute to Prof. Jerram Barrs at the Fall 2022 Francis Schaeffer Lectures, then-FSI Director Dr. Mark Ryan led a discussion between Jerram and fellow L'Abri alumnus and renowned author Dr. Os Guinness on the importance and legacy of the Schaeffer/Barrs approach to Christian apologetics. Following is an abridged transcript of that discussion.

**Moderated by
Dr. Mark Ryan**



so he could try to answer them. He was gracious in some very challenging situations. He was always concerned to help people know the truth of the gospel and embrace it in their hearts.

Os Guinness (OG): I'm often asked, "What did Schaeffer mean to you?" He meant a lot of things, but I boil it down to this: You could see that he loved God passionately and he loved people passionately. When he preached, often his voice would break with awe at what he was

saying about the Lord. With people, you could watch him talking and after about five minutes, his eyes would be welling up with tears. He was so empathetic about what they were sharing. And truth! You could have said about Schaeffer what Nietzsche said: "All truth is bloody truth to me." His love for the Lord, his love for people, and his love for truth were quite amazing.

MR: This may be one area where we struggle deeply today. How do we keep those two poles togeth-

er—love of people and love of truth—as we think about teaching and training on apologetics?

JB: I don't think the particular battles we face as Christians ever really change from generation to generation. Defending the truth, presenting the truth, may change from one place or time to another, but fundamentally, you've always got the same issues. Everybody thinks their own historical moment is the worst. We look out at our culture, and we see people so hateful toward each other when they disagree passionately about ideas, but it's not necessary to be hateful. For example, in public debates many apologists take every opportunity to destroy their opponents intellectually. Schaeffer didn't do that even when he easily could have. He always treated people—even those who strongly disagreed with him—with respect and dignity. Schaeffer would say all the time, "When you are talking with somebody, you're not trying to win a boxing match and knock somebody out. You're actually trying to win people. You always leave somebody a corner to retire gracefully into." He saw himself called to be an ambassador of Christ's love to people no matter what they believed, no matter how bizarre their ideas, or no matter how they lived.

OG: I can't add much to that. Jerram himself is celebrated for doing that same thing with such love. I remember in the sixties and seventies there were Christian apologists—one in particular—who again and again won the debate but lost the audience. It was a disaster because there was no love in it. I live in Washington, DC, which is not exactly an apologetic town. With postmodernism now everything is about power and not truth. Especially with social media, it's a matter of using a clever put-down that wipes the other person out. Even among people I admire, some of their use of social media is closer to what the Jews would call evil speech. It says in Scripture that when we demean others with words that's tantamount to murder. There's no interest either in truth or in people. So, what Jerram is saying is so important today.

MR: What I'm hearing here is that a hallmark of Christian apologetics should be that ideas matter, but people matter more. Here at Covenant Seminary, we often talk about cultural apologetics. Dr.

Every atheist is different because each one is a person with his or her own story

Schaeffer taught us to pay attention to the culture. Why is that important as an apologetic concern?

OG: I came to faith in the 1960s in England. Everything in apologetics was about evidence for the resurrection: 1,001 reasons why Jesus rose from the dead. That was about it. It was revolutionary to me to see Francis Schaeffer's understanding of presuppositions, so I added that to what I was doing. Much of L'Abri, and a great deal of apologetics around the world, is concerned with the history of ideas. That's good—but you can't focus on ideas only. Cultural issues also shape us. Good apologetics must be much more fully orbbed than many people think. I know people who have done a course in apologetics and then they meet an atheist and treat them as if every atheist is a card-carrying version of the same thing. No! Every atheist is different because each one is a person with his or her own story, their own journey, and is very different from a hundred other atheists you might meet. If people think in terms of ideas only, it makes so much of apologetics ugly and shallow. We are all from a particular culture, affected by the whole of everything that's shapes us. Our Lord

spoke of “the treasure of the heart.” What is it, for the person you’re talking to, that really makes that person tick, that matters supremely to this particular person in front of you? To love them we have to listen to them and try to get down to that level. That’s the issue that we’ll need to engage.

MR: Jerram, in 34 years of teaching at Covenant Seminary and 18 years prior to that at L’Abri, you’ve helped many people to think about the culture. What has changed for you in all that time as you think about cultural apologetics? What are you most conscious of or what would you encourage us to pay attention to?

JB: I don’t think there are one or two particular things that one needs to look at. As Os just said, it’s a matter of getting to know this person in front of you. What is the idol of this person’s heart? What’s this person living for? What shapes the decisions they make? While reading all sorts of books or watching a movie everyone is watching or something else like that may help you, in the end, nothing will help as much as getting to know *this* person who is asking questions. One of the most beautiful things about Jesus as a model evangelist is that he was constantly asking questions to understand what was in the person’s heart and mind, what was shaping their life. But he was also helping the person see himself and understand what was shaping his life—and that is sometimes very different from what the person thought. There’s no substitute for actually spending time with people, asking them questions, getting to know them, finding out where their hurts are, where their joys are, what their hopes and longings are, what is shaping the choices they make day by day. In the end, that’s what really matters.

OG: A couple of things in the culture I think have changed apologetics very much. One is postmodernism. Today there is no truth. Everything’s relative or emotive or generational, and so a lot of Christians are really uncertain as how to tackle that. The other thing is the collapse of the Christian consensus in America. So many Americans are now uncertain and insecure, whereas previously maybe they were too secure. They thought, “We are the Christian consensus, the majority, here’s the good news.” Now you can see many peo-

ple are a little embarrassed or uncertain as to how to share the gospel. Evangelism in many circles is disappearing. Apologetics too—I heard of a seminary recently that closed down its apologetics department. I think there are things in the culture which are dead against the sharing of the faith, whether evangelism or apologetics, and these are very, very important.

MR: I have one more question. Many people today, “Is Schaeffer still relevant?” So, I ask you: Is this a personality, a thought leader, an individual whom we might still learn from and whom we should be putting in front of our students? Are Schaeffer and his apologetics still relevant in our time?

JB: Yes. I think the genius, if you like, of both Francis and Edith was that they did not have any particular methodology they practiced themselves or that they taught other people to follow. Rather, they operated on a set of biblical principles: a deep commitment to the truth, a love for the Lord, and a love for other people. Those are the things that matter. I think Schaeffer’s basic approach is just as helpful today as when he was alive. And every day I meet people who have just recently come across Schaeffer’s books or are listening to some of his talks. While these may be dated in some ways, I find people all the time whose minds are set aflame by what they’re reading, and they see how relevant it is to our moment.

I think Schaeffer, along with C. S. Lewis, was prophetic. They both wrote and talked about what Os mentioned—the loss of truth and the loss of a Christian moral consensus in the wider society. They saw already in their times that that was where society was going. Schaeffer was acutely aware of the loss of truth, that truth was seen as purely personal or individual, and how this leads to the loss of any kind of solid moral foundation for the culture. So, I think his words are still helpful to us today. But again, his genius is that he simply tried to be biblical. You need to be biblical in every generation, no matter what is happening. It comes back to what we’ve already said: a passion for God, a passion for truth, and a passion to love people. Those things never change.

MR: Amen! Thank you, Jerram and Os. We are grateful for you and your helpful insights. ■

CLASS NOTES

VOL. 34

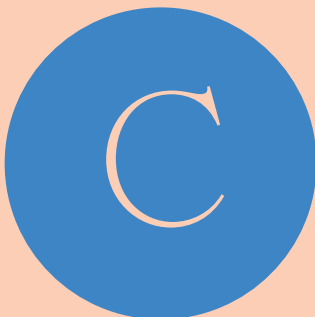
FALL 2023

ISSUES 1 & 2



“Go Therefore and Make Disciples”

More than 5,000 Covenant alumni serve Christ's church and kingdom in 50 states and 100 countries.



Connections made in the Covenant community extend well beyond the time spent on campus or in classes together. We celebrate the joys and share in the sorrows of our alumni by highlighting some of their life and ministry milestones in each issue of Covenant. Additionally, to access the ongoing care and resources we offer alumni, contact Director of Alumni and Career Services Dr. Joel Hathaway at joel.hathaway@covenantseminary.edu. From job placement assistance to vocational discernment, we are always happy to assist our graduates as they seek to serve the Lord for a lifetime of fruitful ministry.

ILLUSTRATION BY VALERO DOVAL

*Ordinations,
Installations,
& Transitions*

Logan Almy (*MDiv '08*) from Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro, GA, to Senior Pastor, Christ Presbyterian, Olive Branch, MS.

Pablo Ayllon (*MDiv '09*) from Assistant Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Dalton, GA, to Associate Pastor, Meadowview Reformed Presbyterian, Lexington, NC.

Dawson Bean (*MDiv '10*) from RUF Campus Minister, University of Tennessee–Martin, to West London with International Presbyterian Church of Ealing and Mission to the World.

Nick Bratcher (*MDiv '19*) from RUF, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI, to RUF Campus Minister, University of Kentucky.

McKay Caston (*MDiv '95, DMin 05*) from Founding Pastor, Creekstone Church, Dahlonega, GA, to Dean of Doctor of Ministry Program, Metro Atlanta Seminary.

Marty Cates (*MDiv '13*) from Associate Pastor, Sycamore Presbyterian, Midlothian, VA, to Church Planter in Amelia County, VA.

Jonathan Clark (*MDiv '17*) from RUF Campus Minister, New Mexico State, to RUF Campus Minister, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO.

Justin Clement (*MDiv '03*) from RUF Area Coordinator to Pastor, Grace Presbyterian, Lexington, VA.

Ministry life can be quite challenging. No one can do it alone. That's why Covenant Seminary's Alumni and Career Services staff provides ongoing care and resources for alumni long after graduation.

Bryan Counts (*MDiv '04*) from pastoral staff, Village Seven Presbyterian, Colorado Springs, CO, to Senior Pastor, Clemson Presbyterian, Clemson, SC.

Robert Cunningham (*MDiv '15*) from RUF Campus Minister, University of Virginia, to Church Planter with the Anglican Church in North America in Charlottesville, VA.

Lucas Dourado (*MDiv '11*) from RUF, University of Connecticut,

to Assistant Pastor, Resurrection Presbyterian, Knoxville, TN.

K. J. Drake (*MDiv '12*) from Assistant Professor of History, Redeemer University, Ontario, CA, to Assistant Professor of Historical Theology and Academic Dean, Indianapolis Theological Seminary.

Matt Esswein (*MDiv '12*) from Assistant Pastor, Valley Springs Presbyterian, Roseville, CA, to

RUF Campus Minister, University of Arizona.

Brandon Farquhar (*MDiv '09*) from Area Director with the youth ministry FOCUS in Greenwich, CT, to church planting in Norwalk, CT.

John Fender (*MDiv '02*) from Founding Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Pooler, GA, to Pastor of Parish Development, First Presbyterian of Augusta, GA.

Chris Florence (*MDiv '01*) from Assistant Pastor, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Rock Hill, SC, to Senior Pastor, Peace Presbyterian Church, Cary, NC.

Jordan Griesbeck (*MDiv '17*) from Assistant Pastor, All Saints Presbyterian, Austin, TX, to RUF Campus Minister, University of Texas at Austin.

Joshua Hall (*MDiv '13*) from pastoral ministry to co-founder, Eureka Technical Services.

Josh Hammans (*MDiv/MAC '14*) ordained by the EPC as Air Force Chaplain. Kim Hammans (*MAC '13*) is an LPC in Eagle River, AR.

Steven Hansen (*MDiv/MAC '06*) from Pastor, Redeemer Church, Riverview, FL, to Senior Pastor, Redeemer, Sylva, NC.

Michael Hart (*MDiv '07*) from Assistant Pastor, University

Presbyterian, Orlando, FL, to Assistant Pastor, Seven Rivers Presbyterian, Lecanto, FL.

Jon Hessel (*MDiv '08*) returned to higher education as Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students, Missouri Baptist University.

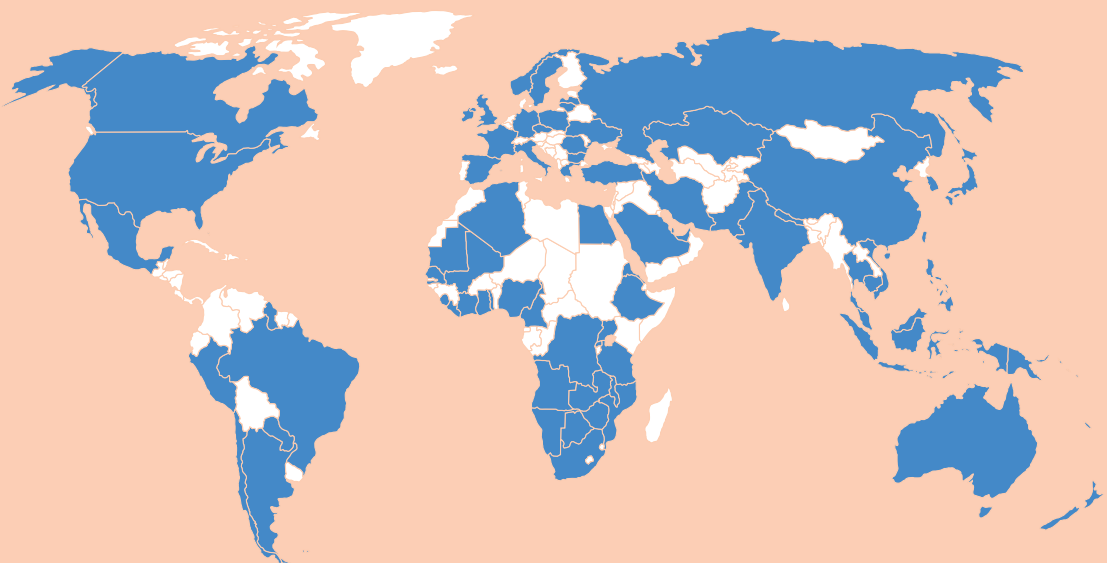
Jeremiah Hill (*MDiv '17*) from Assistant Pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, TN, to Assistant Pastor, Grace Church of Marin, Marin County, CO. Jeremiah and Madeline (*MDiv '18*) welcomed son Caleb on December 24, 2022.

Danny Hindman (*MDiv '16*) from RUF Campus Minister, University of Wisconsin–Madison,

Where Our Graduates Go

■ ALUMNI PRESENT

■ TO BE REACHED



to Vicar, All Souls Anglican Church, Richmond, VA.

David Hoffelmeyer (*MDiv '16*) from Pastor, Trinity Presbyterian, Sparta, IL, to Senior Pastor, Faith Church, Loveland, CO.

Corbin Hoornbeek (*MA '95*) to President, University of Northwestern, St. Paul, MN.

Marc Hunsaker (*MDiv '09, MAEM, '12*) from ministry staff, Central Presbyterian, St. Louis, MO, to Dean of Personal and Professional Development, Berry College, Rome, GA.

Murray Lee (*MDiv '06*) from Senior Pastor, Cahaba Park Presbyterian, Birmingham, AL, to Executive Coordinator, Mission to North America.

Tommy Lee (*MDiv '98*) from Pastor, Decatur Presbyterian Church, Decatur, AL, to Pastor, Riveroaks Reformed Presbyterian, Memphis, TN.

Matt May (*MDiv '16*) from Assistant Pastor to Senior Pastor, North Cincinnati Community Church in Mason, OH.

Curtis McDaniel III (*MDiv '09*) from RUF Campus Ministry, Purdue University, to RUF Area Coordinator.

Dustin Messer (*MATS '14*) from Director of Young Adult and College Ministry to Vicar of All Saints Dallas, TX.

Jon Mould (*MDiv '91*) from teaching bible in Senegal to mission work in Guinea, serving through East West International Mission.

Steve Muzio (*DMin '05*) from Pastor, Hope Evangelical PCA, North Liberty, IA, to Senior Pastor, Hazelwood PCA in Waynesville, NC.

Brad Owens (*MDiv '17*) from Pastor of Discipleship, Blythewood Presbyterian, Blythewood, SC, to RUF Campus Minister, University of Alabama, Birmingham.

Matthew Patrick (*MDiv '17*) from RUF Campus Minister, Wofford College, Spartanburg, SC, to church planting, Huntsville, Alabama.

Colin Peters (*MDiv '99*) from Pastor, New St. Peter's PCA in Dallas, TX, to RUF Area Coordinator.

Adam Porcella (*MDiv '11*) promoted to Senior Vice President and Provost of Cairn University.

Jim Pulizzi (*MDiv '16*) is currently serving as a US Navy Chaplain stationed in Camp Lejeune, NC, ministering to Marines.

David Rapp (*MDiv '03*) from Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Temple, TX, to church planter in Golden, CO.

Ed Rogland (*MDiv '12, MAC '13*) transitioned to Chief of Chaplain Services at the VA Medical Center, Butler, PA, and the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team chaplain (2IBCT), 28th Infantry Division. He was promoted to major in May 2021.

Melanie Rainer (*MATS '17*) is now serving as the Ministry Director at Christ Presbyterian Church in Cool Springs, a

location of Christ Presbyterian in Nashville, TN.

Chip Reed (*MDiv '11*) from Pastor of Discipleship to starting a new business, M3 Solutions. His wife, Kelsey (*MAEM '19*), serves with WORLD News Group.

Katie Tracy Ribera (*MAC '19*) helped to launch Bell Tower Counseling, a non-profit ministry in Seattle, WA. DongWon Park (*MDiv/MAC '13, ThM '16*), Jordan Brand (*MAC '18*), and Amanda Lee Peterson (*MAC '09*) are part of the counseling center team.

Tom Ricks (*MDIV '94, DMin '05*) from Pastor, Greentree Community Church, Kirkwood, MO (for 23 years), to National Director of Church Planting for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC).

Mark Robertson (*MDiv '12*) from Founding Pastor, The Heights Presbyterian, Shaker Heights, OH, to Senior Pastor, Safe Harbor, Kent Island, MD.

Phillip Ryan (*MAET '14*) from Pastor, Marion Presbyterian, Marion, AL, to Assistant Pastor of Discipleship, The Kirk Presbyterian, Savannah, GA.

Steve Schaper (*MDiv '15*) from ministry staff of New City Fellowship, St. Louis, MO, to Associate Pastor at New City Fellowship—West End, St. Louis, MO.

Andrew Seley (*MDiv '14*) from St. Paul's Evangelical Church in St. Louis, MO, to Pastor, West Lisbon Church, Lisbon, IL.

Laura Shultz (*MAC '06*) is Senior Director of Behavioral Health for Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare in Memphis, TN. She and her family returned to St. Louis, where her husband Jim (former student) serves as the Senior Pastor of Bonhomme Presbyterian Church.

Jeff Simpson (*MDiv '17*) from Cru at the University of Virginia to Assistant Pastor, Church of the Advent, Washington, DC.

Jon Storck (*MDiv '08*) serves as Interim Pastor of Resurrection Presbyterian Church, Madison, WI, and runs *Arrive of New York*, a non-profit ministry to children of immigrant families.

John van Rij (*MDiv '15*) from Pastor in Invercargill, New Zealand, to Assistant Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Nelson, New Zealand.

Alex Young (*MDiv '16*) from Associate Pastor in Ohio to Senior Pastor, Crossroads Presbyterian Church, Woodbridge, VA. Alex and his wife, Jenny, welcomed Bennett in June 2022.

Celebrations

Shawn Behan (*GC '14*) received his PhD in Intercultural Studies from Asbury Theological Seminary.

Rodrick Burton (*MAEM '07*) received The Norman A. Stack Community Relations Award from The Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis. He is Pastor of New Northside Missionary Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO.

Caylee Dodson (*MARC '12*) was named one of USA TODAY's Women of the Year, a recognition of women across the country who have made a significant impact.

Rebeca Gomes Gilbert (*MAC '07*) received her Mental Health Counselor Licensure in Florida.

Martin L Hawley (*MAET/MDiv '05; ThM '14*) successfully defended his PhD thesis at University of Aberdeen, earning his doctorate July 5, 2021.

Stephen Jones (*MDiv/MAC '09*) received his Master of Business Administration from Warwick Business School (UK).

Dustin Messer (*MATS '14*) received his ThD from La Salle University.

Walt Nilsson (*MDiv '05*) completed his PhD in Preaching at The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Heather Sparkman (*MDiv '08*) received her MA in Digital and Web Design from Lindenwood University, St. Louis, MO, and recently joined Webster Arts as Communications and Marketing Director.

Condolences

Marianne Mason Burke (*MAC '07*) promoted to glory August 30, 2022.

Julian Kampf (*MDiv '03*) promoted to glory, September 23, 2022. Julian is survived by his beloved bride of 57 years, Dorothy.

Nick Protos (*DMin '09*) was promoted to glory, August 3, 2022. He is survived by his wife, Linda, and their children.

Family Updates

Adam and Kelly Maxwell Haer (*MAC '08*) welcomed Andrew Adam, August 5, 2022. Kelly is Executive Director of the Boone Center for the Family at Pepperdine University.

Mike (*MDiv '16*) and **Susan** (*GC '16*) **Jorgensen** welcomed Anya Jane, August 19, 2022.

Zach (*MDiv '19*) and **Margarita Lutz** (*MATS '19*) welcomed Alora Beatriz, April 3, 2022.

Andy and Ayla McNeely (*MAC '18, MAM '20*) welcomed Olivia Rhea McNeely, June 9, 2022.

Caleb (*MDiv '15*) and **Renee Miller** welcomed son, Bruce, April 2022.

Scott Allen Sipe (*MATS '12*) married **Julie Reineke**, December 25, 2022.

Josiah (*MAC '16*) and **Katie** (*current student*) **Stanton** of St. Louis, MO, welcomed twin boys, Silas Tucker and Callum Christopher, August 12, 2022.

Covenant Seminary's Alumni and Career Services staff provides ongoing care and resources for alumni. To share updates or access alumni support, contact Dr. Joel Hathaway at joel.hathaway@covenantseminary.edu.

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