

Focus: The Priority of Preaching

Proclaiming
Ἰησοῦς Κύριος
Jesus is Lord



2009

Journal
Beeson Divinity School ✝ Samford University

Features: The Lordship of Jesus Christ
Doctrine That Dances
Walking with John Chrysostom

Journal

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TAKE MY LIFE
AND LET IT BE,
CONSECRATED,
LORD, TO THEE

Graduates enter Hodges Chapel for the service of consecration and commencement.

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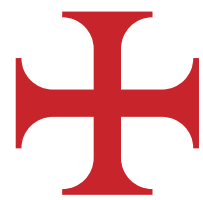
On Preaching



“The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God.” This statement comes from the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), one of the great documents of the Swiss Reformation. This definition points to an emphasis too little recognized in evangelical Christianity today: the public proclamation of the Word of God is an indispensable means of grace and a sure sign of the true church.

When we think about the many tasks and expectations facing pastors today, the image of an air-traffic controller comes to mind. The pastor often seems to be someone in a high-stress job with many responsibilities, trying to get through the day without a serious mishap or crash. But when we think of preaching as a central aspect of pastoral calling, another image from an earlier era comes to mind. Preachers of the Gospel are heralds of another world, charged to deliver a message they did not invent, a message of great urgency addressed to every single person in the world. A preacher is sort of like an old-fashioned mail carrier. In an age before e-mails and websites, it was all the more important that “the mail get through,” even if this required those who carried the letters to go through rain, hail, snow, inhospitable terrain, and even enemy territory to make the delivery.

Yes, preachers are like such devoted persons of the post, but with this difference: the message we carry to others is addressed to us as well. We are “stewards of the story,” as James Earl Massey has put it so well, and the demands and promises of this amazing Story claim us as well as those to whom we have been sent.



Preachers of the Gospel are heralds of another world, charged to deliver a message they did not invent, a message of great urgency addressed to every single person in the world.

Beeson Divinity School is committed to prepare “pastors who can preach,” and this task touches every aspect of our curriculum. For, as James Stalker has reminded us, “the effect of a sermon depends, first of all, on what is said, and next, on how it is said; but hardly less, on who says it.”

The what of preaching requires the deliverance of a message that is grounded in and faithful to the Holy Scriptures. “We do not preach ourselves,” St. Paul wrote, “but Christ Jesus the Lord.” Let the preacher be a bonus textualis—a good one with a text—well-versed in the Scriptures. We are to preach not only about the Bible but from it. This does not mean that sermons should be filled with exegetical minutia and theological jargon (marks of a bad sermon) but they should display the pattern of Christian truth in every passage. The Bible presents a coherent account of God’s purpose for the world and for each of us

being entrusted with such a stewardship. We all need the forgiveness we preach to others. No man or woman of God is ever far from the words Jesus heard one day in the temple, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.”

Preachers are heralds into whose care and responsibility something precious—indeed, something infinitely precious—has been entrusted. In the most basic sense, trustees are not “owners” of the prized bequest they have received. Rather, they hold the bequest in trust, and they have a fiduciary responsibility to pass it on intact to those who will one day receive it in turn from them. To discharge this duty faithfully requires both diligent study of the Word of God, and also the kind of wisdom that comes only through the hard work of listening, praying, serving, loving, and representing the One in whose name we speak and for whose sake we do this work.✝

and this is the message we must get across every time we stand to speak.

The how of preaching involves far more than the preacher’s personality and pulpit mannerisms. When delivering the message, the preacher will sometimes rise to majestic heights and sometimes stoop to lend a sympathetic ear, but the message will always be marked by a sense of something momentous being said. True preaching is not clever words strung together in an entertaining manner “to charm away an hour or two of dull Sabbaths,” as one nineteenth-century observer characterized certain popular clerics of his day. Rather, we need pastors who preach because they, like Jeremiah, have a fire in their bones—heralds of the Gospel who, like Paul, are compelled by the love of Christ.

The who of preaching may be the most difficult to assess, but we dare not neglect it. We dare to speak because God has tapped us on the shoulder and drawn us into a holy accountability. We have been ordained, set apart, blessed and prayed for by others in the church. We speak in light of that unique calling and divine commissioning. There is a certain shaping of character that comes from



▲ Dean Timothy George visits with Charles T. Carter and other members of the preaching faculty to discuss the upcoming Conger Lectures.

Proclaiming 'Ιησοῦς Κύριος

Second in a series of three lectureships, the William E. Conger, Jr. Lectures on Biblical Preaching are made possible through the generosity of the late Colonel William E. Conger, Jr. After a distinguished military career, Colonel Conger served for many years as a close personal advisor to Ralph Waldo Beeson, the founding benefactor of Beeson Divinity School.

Colonel Conger long shared Mr. Beeson's deep commitment to the pastoral ministry of preaching. In 1991, that commitment was expressed through the endowment of a lectureship to recapture the vision of preaching ministry, furthering the cause of Christ in today's world.

This year's Conger Lectures will feature the preaching faculty of Beeson Divinity School lecturing on the theme, "Proclaiming 'Ιησοῦς Κύριος.'" In anticipation of this event, The Beeson Journal asked each of these preachers to share a recent sermon or publication on preaching with its readers.

Featuring...

Charles T. Carter,
Robert Smith, Jr.,
and Doug Webster



Stained glass window, sanctuary, Mountain Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala. The Preaching Window illustrates scenes from the gospels in which Jesus speaks to groups of people. "Jesus went about all of Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matthew 4:23).

Journal

The Lordship of Jesus Christ

The fundamental premise of our Christian faith is the lordship of Jesus Christ. It stands at the heart and core of Christianity. Everything in the Christian faith—becoming a Christian, living the Christian life, and the ultimate outcome of being a Christian—stands or falls on the lordship of Christ.

The term “lord” occurs over 600 times in the New Testament. It is true that sometimes it is merely a term of address or respect or affection. However, at least 150 of these times it is used of God Himself, and nearly 250 times it is used to describe Jesus. In his excellent Christology of the New Testament, Oscar Cullmann concludes that the early church expressed its whole faith with the single word “kurios” (Lord). Dynamic Scottish preacher James S. Stewart’s evaluation is that “Paul’s most loved name of Jesus was not ‘Messiah’ but ‘Lord,’” further noting that Luke represents Paul as using this title in the very first sentence he ever spoke to Jesus as he said, “Who art thou, Lord?” (Acts 9:5). Thereafter, no demand Jesus ever made of Paul was too great—nor will it be of us when He is truly our Lord.

Three definitive New Testament passages address the implications of His Lordship and further point to our acceptance of others (Ephesians 4:4-6) and our evangelization of the world (2 Corinthians 4:5 and Romans 10:9).

Ephesians 4:4-6 speaks of “one body, and one Spirit...one hope;...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all....” If we take the New Testament seriously it would seem that this seven-fold emphasis upon Christian unity (including the one on the lordship of Christ) would go a long way toward dissolving the fragmentation and polarization that have come to characterize much of Christendom.

The lordship of Jesus Christ speaks to our acceptance of other Christian traditions. I am grateful for my own Southern Baptist tradition—and I trust you are for yours. However, in our

emphasis upon our heritage, our principles, and our distinctives, God forbid that we become ecclesiastical snobs! We do not have to be identical twins to be brothers and sisters in Christ. What a group believes about church polity is not nearly as important as what they believe about the person of Christ. If He is their Lord, then they are our brothers and sisters, and we must convey this acceptance to them.

The lordship of Christ speaks to our acceptance of other races. Wherever in the world there are differences of color, there are problems. This is not a “southern” problem nor merely a “black/white” problem—it is a world problem. As people committed to the lordship of Christ we cannot and must not ignore seething social issues. Much healthy, intelligent, productive progress has been made in race relations. However, if anyone anywhere is denied a hearing of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ because of the pigmentation of his or her skin then our gospel is weakened and our efforts at world evangelization drastically decimated. We who are united under the lordship of Christ must convey to all other Christians, regardless of ethnic background, that we accept them as brothers and sisters in the Lord and that we take seriously the “whosoever will” of the gospel. There is only one Lord and all who know Him are our brothers and sisters. Beyond our acceptance of others, the Bible also teaches that the lordship of Christ has implications for our evangelization of the world—both in the message we proclaim and in the response we expect. As a preface to the giving of the Great Commission, Jesus states in Matthew 28:18, “All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Then He says, “Go ye therefore, and make disciples....” Thus all evangelism is predicated upon His lordship. The lordship passage in 2 Corinthians 4:5 deals with the proclamation by the preacher (the message) and the one in Romans 10:9 deals with the affirmation by the believer (the response expected).

In 2 Corinthians 4:5 Paul declares, “For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord; and ourselves your slaves for Jesus’ sake.” Here we have clear evidence that early New Testament preachers had one basic message. Once convinced of His lordship by His resurrection, they proclaimed Him as Lord to the whole Greco-Roman world. Their pattern for such preaching had already been set by the Lord Himself. The theme of Jesus’ preaching was the kingdom (or rule) of God. This phrase emphasizes His lordship.

The examples of Christ and Paul set the pattern for us. Our task in proclamation is not to project ourselves or passing fads, but to confront people with the person and reality of

our living Lord and His claims upon their lives. Concerning our preaching, Ian Macpherson says, “Every sentence should suggest Christ and every sermon should leave hearers at the feet of Christ. The chief art of preaching is to exalt Christ!”

Christian laypersons must not exonerate themselves from responsibility at this point. Though they usually do not engage in the official act of public proclamation, the greatest proclaiming of the lordship of Christ done by any of us is demonstrating daily in concrete reality that He is Lord of our lives—Lord of my mind, Lord of my will, Lord of what I read, Lord of my moral standards, Lord of my pocketbook, Lord of my time, Lord of my home. It is true

that in the past the resurrection of Christ irrefutably revealed Him to be Lord to His disciples, and it is true that in the future the Second Coming will reveal Him to be Lord to all creation. In the present it is committed Christians living daily under His lordship who reveal Him to be Lord to the modern world. When the unbeliever sees the

◀ Charles T. Carter is the James H. Chapman Fellow of Pastoral Ministry at Beeson Divinity School. He has served as pastor of churches in Alabama and Kentucky, served in leadership roles in the Southern Baptist Convention, and led missions worldwide for more than 45 years. He is also a member of the Samford University Board of Trustees. In 1998, Carter retired as senior pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, where he served for 26 years.

This article is excerpted from a sermon he has prepared for the 2009 William E. Conger Jr. Lectures on Biblical Preaching. An audio recording of the sermon will be available for download in March 2009. Go to www.beesondivinity.com/downloads for the complete lecture series and other sermons from the 2008-2009 academic year.



▲ Architectural crosses rise high above Shades Mountain Baptist Church where Charles T. Carter served as pastor for 26 years.

translation of our proclamation into daily living, he or she will see the incontrovertible truth that Jesus Christ is Lord!

After the proclamation of the lordship of Christ by the preacher (whether by lip or life or both), there must be a response by the hearer to our message. As the Baptist pulpiteer E. V. Hill said, "For Him to be Prince of Peace in our lives, a coronation service must take place." Thus we come to consider the affirmation by the believer. The definitive passage here is Romans 10:9 which says, "That if you will confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord,' and will believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Here we confront, according to all reputable Bible scholars, one of the most ancient Christian confessions of faith—two words in Greek: "Kurios Iesus"; three words in English: "Jesus is Lord."

In the Greco-Roman world of the first century, the worship of Caesar was the order of the day. Many of those accused of being Christians were required to do three things: (1) to say "the emperor is Lord," (2) to offer a sacrifice to the emperor, and (3) to curse Christ in order to prove their sacrifice was

called "Savior." The term occurs only once in Luke (2:11), once in John (4:42), twice in Acts (5:31, 13:23), six times in Paul's letters, five times in 2 Peter and once in 1 John (4:14). All other references to His saving work are in connection with the verb "to save." On the other hand, as indicated earlier, some 250 times Jesus is called "Lord." The emphasis is obvious. On the basis of God's grace and our faith, as we make Christ the Lord of our lives, one of the many glorious results is that He saves us from our sins. The lordship is primary; the being saved is derivative. According to Romans 10:9, the affirmation by the believer that "Jesus is Lord" results in his "being saved." For salvation to be experienced by the believer a full, complete commitment to Christ as Lord is mandatory. A proclamation of anything other than this results in what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace" and must be avoided at all costs.

This does not ignore the need for Christian growth, nor does it imply absolute perfection. However, a perfect (or full, complete) commitment must be made to Christ as Lord. We have no difficulty accepting such absolute exclusivism in Christian marriage. In our performance as mates, none of us would be so audacious as to claim perfection. Yet certainly there should not be the remotest question about our attitude of total commitment and loyalty to each other. We have no difficulty requiring

that our international missionaries insist that nationals abandon all pagan deities and surrender only to Christ for salvation. Many Romans of the first century and many moderns in the twenty-first century would be only too glad to add Christ as "just another niche" in their impressive array of deities. "Impossible!" we Christians scream—and rightly so.

Only by distorted logic and flagrant inconsistency can modern church members make these demands on others yet hold on to their affluent gods of materialism, science, business, intellectualism, pleasure, etc., and simultaneously claim to be committed to Christ as Lord. Let there be no question about it: to whatever or whomever you yield first allegiance and loyalty, this is our "lord." In our proclamation and affirmation, this prime position must be given to Jesus Christ.✝

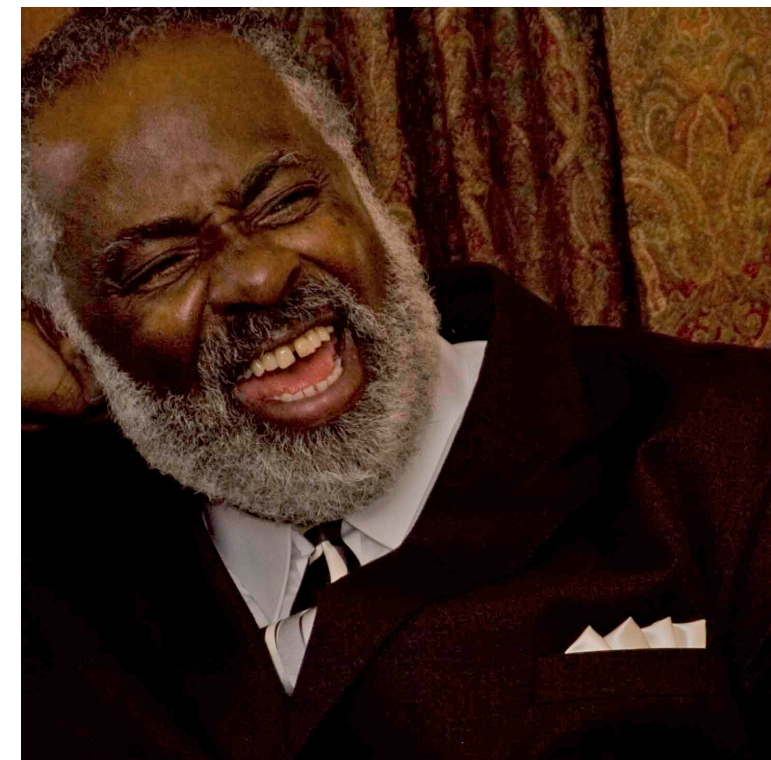
Doctrine That Dances

Is There Any Word from the Lord?

The attitude of the doctrinal preacher must be, "Hallelujah! What a privilege it is to preach about a great God." The truths of Bible doctrine are appropriated, and the preacher serves as a personal witness of those truths because the text of scripture not only works on the preacher, but works in the preacher as well. Ministers who dare to preach doctrinally must always remember that they not only participate in rightly dividing or "cutting straight" the word of truth before the congregation, but that they are also divided by that same word. Ministers can be guilty of spending much of their time preparing messages that will impact others and not enough time allowing the text of scripture to impact themselves.

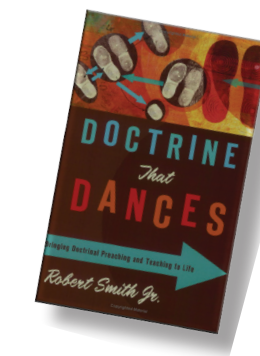
Preachers cannot address people effectively with the gospel by an intellectual engagement alone. This is exactly what biblical scholar Gerhard von Rad has asserted in his statement that "No understanding at all is possible without some form of inward appropriation. It would be an illusion to think that we could deal with the transmitted intellectual content as a foundry worker handles molten ore with long-handled ladles—and thus keep them at a distance from ourselves. Moreover, no understanding is possible unless what is to be interpreted is applied to ourselves, unless it touches us existentially."¹

The preacher who handles the Word must first be touched by that same Word. Preaching that is not joyous comes across as sterile and, oftentimes, is not received. Dorothy Sayers challenged the thought of many naysayers of her time who claimed that doctrinal preaching led to boredom and a lack of interest. She wrote, "Official Christianity, of late years, has been having what is known as bad press. We are constantly assured that the churches are empty because preachers insist too much upon doctrine—'dull dogma,' as people call it. The fact is the precise opposite. It is the neglect of dogma that makes for dullness. The Christian faith is the most exciting drama that staggered the imagination of man – and the dogma is the drama."²



▲ An ordained Baptist minister, Smith is a frequent speaker at national and international conventions. He is a contributing editor of a study of Christian ministry in the African-American church, "Preparing for Christian Ministry," and with Beeson dean Timothy George is co-editor of *A Mighty Long Journey: Reflections on Racial Reconciliation*.

Excerpts taken from *Doctrine That Dances* by Robert Smith, c. 2008 B&H Publishing Group. Used by permission. *Doctrine That Dances* was named 2008 Book of the Year by Preaching Magazine. Smith, professor of Christian preaching at Beeson, was hailed for the book's practical counsel that will help doctrinal preaching "dance rather than drag."



✝ **"Everything in the Christian faith—becoming a Christian, living the Christian life, and the ultimate outcome of being a Christian—stands or falls on the lordship of Christ."**

sincere. Failure to comply often resulted in forfeiture of life. The Roman state, with its multiple gods and goddesses, could not understand why Christians were so obstinate at this point. What harm is there in saying "Lord Caesar"? But many Christians died rather than say it, for to them the confession of Romans 10:9, "Kurios Iesus," would no longer be valid if there were another Lord other than Jesus.

Today there is an incipient danger creeping through much of modern Christianity. It almost suggests that there is a dichotomy between Jesus as "Savior" and Jesus as "Lord." New Testament Christians never saw these two titles in conflict. The Bible does teach that Jesus is our Savior, but the primary emphasis is placed upon His lordship. There are sixteen times in the New Testament where Jesus is

After Peter preached the Pentecostal sermon and approximately three thousand people were added to the church, the church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine.³ Preaching doctrine can lead to huge response! Let the rocks cry out as an indictment upon us if we fail to pick up the mantle of doctrine!

Does theology exist in order to make preaching as hard as it needs to be? Can the same be asked about doctrine? Doctrine frames and monitors the church's proclamation of the gospel. It also serves as a reservoir from which preaching draws its resources. Doctrinal preaching not only serves as corrective surgery on a congregation, it also offers an element of disease prevention. It is more than attaching a Band-Aid to a wound; it is also a prophylaxis to prevent the affliction. Doctrinal preaching is trifocal in nature. Apologetically, it affirms what is orthodox, or correct teaching; it contends for "the faith that the Lord has once for all entrusted us, his people, to the saints."⁴ Apologetics argues for what the church has believed on the basis of God's Word. Polemically, doctrinal preaching stands against false teaching; it sets the church in order when heresies have infected her life. Catechistically, doctrinal preaching nourishes the congregation and thus

edifies the body of Christ; the sheep are fed.

Doctrinal preaching has an impact within both the cognitive and emotive sectors. Preaching that leaves the cognitive untouched produces hearers who may leave the sanctuary feeling better, but without having been helped by the deep doctrinal truths of the scriptures. Preaching that avoids head engagement will lead to blindness, and preaching that ignores heart engagement—the emotive realm of the believer's existence—does so at the cost of boredom and dullness, which prevents the result of an engaged hearing for a transformed life. Solid doctrinal preaching should be joyful, filled with engaging ideas and provoking appropriate emotion.

This Is My Story

As a teenage boy I had the misfortune of not knowing how to dance. I remember giving one of my friends a dollar to teach me to dance. He made a diligent effort, but to no avail. As a result, I did not go to community parties or junior high dances after school. I did not even attend our senior high school prom. I was attracted to Ian Pitt Watson's work, *A Primer for Preachers*, because in the book I saw a glimpse of my story. In the chapter "Biblical Truth and Biblical Preaching," Watson admitted that as a teenage boy of fourteen, he could not dance. He was awkward and uncoordinated. He missed out on certain social fringe benefits because of his inability to dance. He was envious of his friends who could dance. He decided to master the art of dancing by buying the book *Teach Yourself to Dance* and practicing in private until he perfected his dancing skills. Then he would come out of his privacy and step into the public arena with confidence and coordination. The book contained detailed dance instructions and elaborate diagrams which he learned and memorized. He acknowledged,

I really knew the book. Intellectually, I had mastered the subject. I also spent many hours trying to put what I knew into practice. I did so alone in my bedroom, using a pillow for a partner and studying my progress in the wardrobe mirror. What I saw in the mirror was not reassuring! I was putting my feet in all the right places, for I knew the book, and I was doing what the book said. But something was clearly missing. I was thinking the right

things and doing the right things, but I couldn't get the feel of it, and in consequence everything I did seemed clumsy—graceless.⁵

Watson said that he attended a party one night and was befriended by a girl who could see that he was having difficulty transferring content into coordination. She invited him to dance with her. He had been accustomed to dancing with a pillow in front of the mirror in his bedroom. Initially, he was quite reluctant to dance because she was so graceful in her movements, and he was so awkward and uncoordinated in his attempts to dance. Finally, he yielded to her invitation. After she began to dance with him he immediately became aware of a tremendous transformation. He revealed:

Then something strange happened. A little of her grace seemed to pass to me and I began to get the feel of it. For the first time, all I had learned in the book began to make sense, and even the painful practice in front of the mirror started to pay off. What had been contrived now became natural, what had been difficult now became easy, what had been a burden now became a joy—because at last I had got together what I was thinking and what I was feeling and what I was doing. In that moment I experienced a kind of grace, and it was beautiful.⁶

Preaching is both cranial and cardiological; it involves head and heart, fact and feeling. It is important to proclaim, "Thus saith the Lord." This is the prophetic signature of one sent from God. However, one cannot proclaim, "Thus saith the Lord," until that person knows "what saith the Lord." Once again, Watson gives preachers a much-needed and refreshing word which calls for the remarriage of the substance of the text and the style or delivery of the message:

It comes to us when we get together truth thought, truth felt and truth done. We've got to know the Book; that comes first. And we've got to know what the Book says, follow in Christ's steps. But we can know truth and even do it and still be awkward, inadequate, graceless, until we get the feel of it. That is when we need to remember that it is not meant to be a solo dance. Christ wants us, his church, his clumsy bride, to try it with him. To begin with, we often feel more inadequate than ever when we do that, because we are so awkward

and he is so full of grace. Then it happens, in our preaching as in our Christian living. We share in his grace. All the Book says comes alive, and, when we preach it, what used to be contrived now becomes natural, what used to be a labor now becomes spontaneous, what used to be a burden now becomes a blessing, what used to be law now becomes the gospel. Why? Because we are learning the meaning of grace; because now God's truth, thought, felt, and done, is embracing us in the dance—the Truth that stood before Pilate but that Pilate never recognized, because Pilate thought truth was a proposition not a person, a diagram not a dancer.⁷

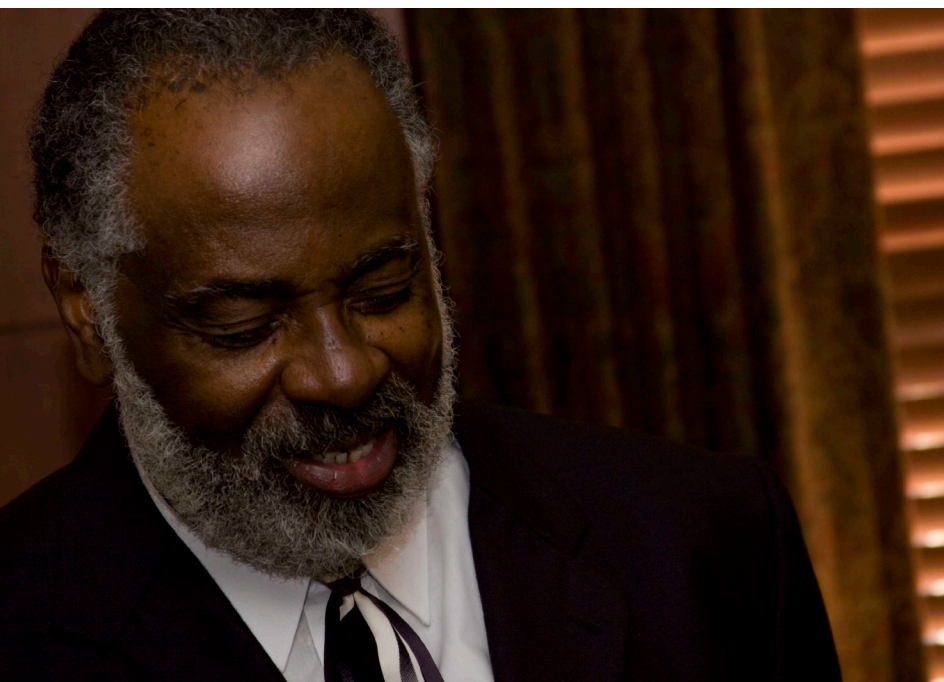
If preachers doxologically dance as they escort the hearers into the presence of God for the purpose of transformation, they must relinquish their solo sermons and dance with the Savior. The One who is full of both grace and truth will teach us to dance doxologically as we escort exegetically. We are invited to follow in His steps.⁸ "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."⁹✝

✝ The preacher who handles the Word must first be touched by that same Word.

✝ The One who is full of both grace and truth will teach us to dance doxologically as we escort exegetically.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gerhard von Rad. *Biblical Interpretations in Preaching*. Translated by John Steely. (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1977), 12.
2. Dorothy L. Sayers. "The Greatest Drama Ever Staged," *Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), 1.
3. Acts 2:42.
4. Jude 3, NIV.
5. Ian Pitt-Watson, *A Primer for Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 102.
6. *Ibid.*, 102-103.
7. *Ibid.*, 103.
8. I Peter 2:21.
9. John 1:14, NIV.





Walking with John Chrysostom

John's nickname, Chrysostom, means "golden mouth," but no one called him that in his lifetime. He was given that honorary title 150 years after his death, but from the beginning of his ministry people were enthralled with his preaching.

John studied classical rhetoric. He was drilled in grammar and syntax, tutored in the Greek classics (Demosthenes, Plato, Homer), and trained to memorize long passages. John pursued the finest education in liberal arts available and he excelled in all the communication techniques of his day. And, then, at the age of 18, he rebelled. He dismissed his studies as "ostentatious verbiage" and fell in love with the Bible.¹

After his baptism in 368, he chose a life of seclusion. He became passionately devoted to a rigorous and demanding asceticism. He learned large portions of the Old and New Testaments by heart. He went for long periods without sleep and food. He refused to lay down, day or night, for the better part of two years. Sleep deprivation and constant standing were meant to enhance continuous communion with God. Since it was improper for a slave to lie down in the presence of his master, John's thinking went, it was wrong for Christ's servant to lie down before his Lord. Not surprisingly, this severe self-mortification ruined his health. Monasticism radicalized his life and ministry. Even though he became the fourth century's greatest preacher as senior pastor at Antioch and then archbishop of Constantinople, John's heart and soul never left the wilderness cave.

A Biblical Preacher

John sought a literal, straight-forward, and historical interpretation of the text instead of an allegorical and figurative interpretation. Years of secular training in rhetoric and wilderness training in the Scriptures produced a powerful preacher. He could hold an audience spellbound, preaching extemporaneously with intensity and depth.

People had never heard preaching like this before.² John's style was forceful, immediate, and compelling, a product of both his internal makeup and the external conditions of his setting. Worshipers did not sit in pews; they stood and walked around. The audience was in perpetual motion and John had to keep their attention. He was the people's theologian, exhorting his hearers to take his message home with them and repeat it over dinner. He made the whole counsel of God come alive.³ We have more than 600 of John's sermons and 200 letters. His sermon series on the Book of Acts is the only surviving commentary on that book from

the first 1,000 years of the church.⁴

For twelve years (386-397) John preached against the pagan decadence of Antioch, the wealthy capital city of Syria. He juxtaposed the truth of the gospel with the lifestyle of his parishioners. John weighed in on a host of issues from greed to gluttony. He refused to leave sin undefined. John's biblical rationale was solid: "For all you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). John preached against gourmet cooking and architectural ostentation. He took on women's fashions and the race track. If John were alive today would he preach against NASCAR or the NFL? Would he make wealthy worshipers squirm as he defended the cause of the poor? John's insistence on pressing for obedience in a culture so similar to ours in its addiction to sports and entertainment makes me wonder how we should preach today. Would we dare to preach like John?

The People's Theologian

John is well known for expounding and defending the biblical truth of the incarnation of God in Christ. He was thoroughly Trinitarian. He attacked Arianism, the heretical perspective that used Jesus' humanity to deny the essential oneness of the Son with the Father in the Godhead. His powerful grasp of theological truth and his impact on Christian thought in his own day and through the centuries is difficult to exaggerate, but his legacy is marred by his distorted understanding of the priesthood, the sacraments, sexuality and marriage, women, and the Jews. He defended the incarnation, but he had trouble grasping a biblical theology of the person and the relationship of body and soul.

In some respects, John's high view of the priesthood was too high. Sacerdotalism and asceticism added to the burden of the office. John's vision of pastoral ministry would have

been helped by understanding the priesthood of all believers. If he had grasped a theology of the gifts of the Spirit and every member ministry, some of the pressure he felt would have been lifted. He would have been better off including women in ministry and resting in the truth that there is only one mediator between

+ People had never heard preaching like this before. John's style was forceful, immediate, and compelling...

God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus. His interpretation of the Mass meant that the priest played an essential role in the salvation of his congregation. He believed that "only by means of these holy hands, I mean the hands of the priest," who lift up the body and blood of Christ, are people saved.⁵ John's view that "the consecrated priest ought to be as pure as if he were standing in the heavens themselves...." put enormous pressure on the priest.⁶

With that said, many of John's concerns about the challenges and temptations facing pastors were well-founded and they remain true for us today. John was fearful: "I know my own soul, how feeble and puny it is: I know the magnitude of this ministry, and the great difficulty of the work; for more stormy billows vex the soul of the priest than the gales that disturb the sea."⁷

Prophet Pastor

John's countercultural message and his passion for Christ worked well in Antioch, a pagan, pluralistic city. But his reputation for outstanding preaching got him into trouble. In 397, he was literally kidnapped by armed guards, escorted 800 miles to Constantinople and forcibly consecrated as archbishop. The emperor's chief advisor, Eutropias, thought the church in the capital city ought to have the best orator in Christianity.⁸



▲ Chrysostom's legacy has been captured in numerous paintings, icons, and other relics. This example hangs in Beeson's Global Center.

▲ Doug Webster is professor of preaching and pastoral theology at Beeson Divinity School. Prior to coming to Beeson he was the senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church of San Diego (1993-2007). He has also taught at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Canada, and served churches in Toronto, Bloomington, Indiana, and Denver, Colorado.

This sermon was delivered at Beeson Divinity School in the fall of 2007 as part of the "Walking with the Saints" series. To hear an audio recording of this and other archived sermons please visit www.beesondivinity.com/archives.

John accepted this twist of political fate as the providence of God. He believed he was being called to deliver his message of renewal and reform at the very center of religious and secular power. But if anyone thought that success and privilege would mellow John, they were wrong. In spite of the pressure to become a political super-pastor, John dug in his heels and drove home his message against money, sex, and

who hungers and thirsts for righteousness. The devil robbed Job of everything but could not rob Job of his virtue. Cain took Abel's life, but could not take away his greater gain. No! Not even the devil and death can destroy those who live sober and vigilant lives.

Only those who injure themselves are injured. "Those who do not injure themselves become stronger," wrote John, "even if they receive innumerable blows; but they who betray themselves, even if there is no one to harass them, fall of themselves, and collapse and perish."¹¹ Self-betrayal is the danger, littleness of soul the problem.

The best preachers are those who preach first to themselves and then to others. The herald hears the Word in the soul before it is spoken in the sanctuary. This was true of John. His "prison epistles" are free from lament and bitterness. He modeled the spiritual direction he sought to give.

John's own life was the unspoken metaphor behind the message. He was the hidden parable in the proclamation. The messenger and the message were one. He was the illustration illuminating the text. The "end" in "faithfulness to the end" may be a long way off, but it is the only end worth pursuing. I agree with my brother, Saint John, the golden mouth and stalwart contender for the faith, when he writes, "Let us then, I encourage you, be sober and vigilant at all times, and let us endure all painful things bravely that we may obtain those everlasting and pure blessings in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and power, now and ever throughout all ages. Amen.✝"

FOOTNOTES

1. J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 16.
2. *Ibid.*, 58.
3. *Ibid.*, 60.
4. Kevin Miller, "Did You Know?" *Christian History*, issue 44, 1994, 3.
5. Chrysostom, "On the Priesthood," op. cit. vol. 9, bk. 3, sec. 5, 47.
6. Chrysostom, op. cit. vol. 9, bk. 3, sec. 4, 46.
7. Chrysostom, op. cit. vol. 9, bk. 3, sec. 8, 49.
8. Robert Krupp, "Golden Tongue and Iron Will," *Christian History*, op. cit. 8.
9. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1988), 317-318.
10. Chrysostom, "To Prove That No One", op. cit. 272.
11. *Ibid.*, 280.

✝ The best preachers are those who preach first to themselves and then to others.

power. He preached and lived like a prophet. He had a passion for the poor and he made a habit of offending ecclesiastical dignitaries. He made sure funds given for the poor got to the poor. He set up a leper colony next door to an upscale neighborhood. John preached with passion, exposed corruption, and made enemies. He preached against the high and mighty, and in due course they determined to bring him down. No matter how good the preaching may be, implying that the emperor's wife is a "Jezebel" jeopardizes the preacher. By 404, John was driven into exile and by 407 he was dead.⁹

Resilient Saint

John was arrested and deported, exiled to Cucusos, a remote mountainous town in Armenia. In fragile health, he suffered through a seventy-day journey, lying on a litter pulled by a mule. The trip nearly killed him. Destitute and abandoned, he suffered loneliness and inactivity. Everything had been taken from him— health, church, friends, ministry, and preaching. Everything, but the one thing— the truth that this exhausted fifty-six year old prophet pastor never tired of repeating either in lecture or by letter— his devotion to Christ.

Faced with every reason to quit and with every excuse to become bitter, John contended that "no one who is wronged is wronged by another, but experiences this injury at his or her own hands."¹⁰ In other words, nothing can ruin our virtue or destroy our soul that is not self-inflicted. John argued that poverty cannot bankrupt the soul. Malignancy cannot malign the character. The lack of health care cannot destroy a healthy soul. Famine cannot starve one



▲ Chrysostom's likeness is carved into the pulpit in Beeson's Hodges Chapel.

Shattering Expectations:

Christianity Abounds in Global South, Europe

According to Philip Jenkins, professor of history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University, Christianity is becoming a "thoroughly globalized international phenomenon that tramples all of the boundaries and distinctions that we're used to."

Jenkins lectured at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School March 11 and 12, covering a variety of topics related to global Christianity, including "Reading the Bible in the Global South," "The Future of Christianity," "Is Christianity Dead in Europe?" and "The Lost History of Global Christianity."

Well-known for books like *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South*, *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis* and *The Lost History of Christianity*, Jenkins assured listeners that Christianity is far from dead; in fact, it is thriving in unexpected places among unexpected people. Christianity and the message of the Bible resonates with people in the Global South, the nations of Africa, Latin and Central America, and most of Asia.

"Part of the reason Christianity is growing so rapidly is that it describes a world they recognize," Jenkins said. "They don't have to go very far in their country or very far in their ancestries to see those things [events in the Old Testament] going on: blood sacrifices, polygamy, tribalism and nomadic life."

The culture and social setting of the Global South closely resembles that of the Bible and early Christianity, allowing many people to readily accept Christianity. "Ninety percent of the argument [for Christianity] is made," Jenkins said.

According to Jenkins, when people in the Global South read the parable of the lost coin in Luke 15, they identify with the widow who has lost her money. "Of course a woman with a lost coin will look for it, because otherwise, she can't feed her children," Jenkins said.

Further, famine regularly strikes the Global South, and the Bible delivers a message of hope for the hungry. "Have you ever stopped to consider how much of the Bible is about food?" Jenkins asked. "Imagine reading the Magnificat [Luke 1:47-55]. It will be an amazing time when everyone will have enough food."

The use of wisdom literature in the Bible also ties in with African and Asian cultures. Both cultures rely heavily on proverbs, and when they read biblical books like James or Proverbs, they are on familiar ground.

The same things that enliven the Bible in the Global South can kill it in other areas. "Cultures that are far removed from the biblical culture run the risk of reading the Bible as fiction,"



▲ Philip Jenkins is professor of history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University.

✝ [Christianity] is thriving in unexpected places among unexpected people.

Jenkins said. But reading the Bible through the eyes of the impoverished and famine-stricken people in the Global South "provides a way to see whole new ways of reading, whole new styles of reading, and whole new books to be read in a new way." ✝



◀ **About the Writer:** Leslie Ann Jones graduated from Mississippi State in 2004 with degrees in journalism and religion and completed her M.Div. at Beeson in December 2008. She and her husband, Dennis, live in Iuka, Miss., where they are active members of Iuka Baptist Church. She is pursuing a ministry of writing and teaching following her recent graduation and wrote this piece for *The Global Center*.

Calvert, Stetzer Named 2009 Distinguished Alumni

Reginald Calvert (M.Div., 2005).



Calvert is pastor of New Jerusalem Baptist Church in Bessemer, Ala., where he has served for almost ten years along with his wife Karla who is an integral part of his ministry. Calvert serves as an assistant dean of the Mount Pilgrim District Congress of Christian Education, and as a certified instructor in the Mount Pilgrim Congress of Christian Education and the Certificate of Progress Program espoused by the Department of Christian Education of the National Baptist Convention U.S.A.'s Sunday School Publishing Board. He has lectured, taught, and preached at conferences sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. He received the Most Outstanding Student Preacher Award when he graduated from Beeson in December 2005. Calvert will be honored February 24 in conjunction with the William E. Conger, Jr. Lectures on Biblical Preaching.

Ed Stetzer (D.Min., 1998).



Stetzer (B.S., Shorter College and M.Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) serves as the Director of Lifeway Research and as Lifeway's Missiologist in Residence. He has planted churches in New York, Pennsylvania, and Georgia and transitioned declining churches in Indiana and Georgia, and has trained pastors and church planters on five continents. He has written several books, including: *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (2003), *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church* (with Elmer Towns, 2004), *Strategic Outreach* (with Eric Ramsey, 2005), *Breaking the Missional Code* (with David Putman, 2006), *Planting Missional Churches* (2006), *Comeback Churches* (with Mike Dodson, 2007), and *11 Innovations in the Local Church* (with Elmer Towns and Warren Bird, 2007). Stetzer will be honored in chapel and will meet with students in Ministry Leadership Development classes in the spring of 2009.

Alumni Spotlight

In August 2000, two Beeson alumni, **Chad Norris** (M.Div., 2000) and **Dave Rhodes** (M.Div., 2000), followed a holy hunch to start a resource ministry named Wayfarer in Upstate South Carolina. The name was inspired by the autobiography of Helmut Thelicke, which Chad and Dave studied with Dr. Robert Smith at Beeson. The inspiration and transformation that came out of that doctrinal preaching class helped to birth a ministry that is now home to four Beeson alumni.

In 2004, God brought Chris Brooks (M.Div., 2004) to Wayfarer, as he sought to continue the experience he had at Beeson: living in a theological community where learning is a top priority. Joining the staff as a speaker and resident poet, Chris became a creative voice in all Wayfarer does.

God continued to bless and grow Wayfarer, and in 2008 Beeson alumna **Dawn Sherrill** (M.Div., 1999) joined the team. Having had that same transformational experience in



▲ Beeson alums serving together through Wayfarer Ministries are (left to right): Chris Brooks, Dave Rhodes, Dawn Sherrill, and Chad Norris.

Dr. Smith's Doctrinal Preaching class, it was exciting for Dawn to finally join the ministry she saw birthed at Beeson eight years earlier.

To awaken lives and lead believers to rediscover Christ, Wayfarer designs, develops, and delivers collisions of creativity, content, and theology across several platforms: written materials, spoken messages, video productions, animation, program development, and consultation.

One such collision is a weekly meeting of twenty-somethings in Greenville, S.C. called Engage. Engage is an intersection of teaching, worship, and community that enables people from different churches, denominations, and backgrounds to engage God with their hearts, souls, minds, and hands. Following the national release of their six-week DVD based curriculum with Thomas Nelson called *Domino Effect*, Wayfarer also partnered with Anderson University to host the first Wayfarer Camp in June of 2008.

As God continues to lead, the whole Wayfarer community is thankful to Beeson, where God allowed Chad, Dave, Chris, and Dawn to learn together, be inspired together, and eventually to serve together, extending Beeson's learning community far beyond Birmingham, and hopefully to the ends of the earth.

To learn more about Wayfarer or get in touch with Chad, Dave, Chris, or Dawn, visit www.wayfarer.tv.

Founded in 2003 by **Lynn Bledsoe** (M.Div., 2002) and **Mary Porter** (M.Div., 1992), Ruth and Naomi Senior Outreach (RNSO) provides pastoral care to older adults who fall outside the parameters of traditional congregational life. Its vision is that no older adult live or die in desolation. Its mission is to bring the gift of presence to isolated older adults through spiritual companionship and music. In addition to the standard tools of ministry, the two chaplains make use of specialized music, companion animals, and a cadre of volunteers. Both women play the Celtic harp and are certified music practitioners (graduates of the Music for Healing and Transition Program).

Ruth and Naomi Senior Outreach is an ecumenical outreach, which began as a ministry of First Presbyterian Church Birmingham and became an independent non-profit in

2006. Multiple volunteer opportunities are available, including training for musicians to learn the art of playing palliative music at the bedside for veterans at the VAMC. Please visit the website at www.ruthandnaomi.org.



▲ Lynn Bledsoe



▲ Mary Porter

Updates

Vitaliy Bak (M.Div. 2003) was awarded the Beeson Pastor Fellowship from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky. The fellowship, provided through the generosity of our own benefactor Ralph Waldo Beeson, enables Vitaliy to participate in a residential Doctor of Ministry program focusing on Christian leadership and preaching.

Lark Ball, (M.Div. with emphasis in church music, 2004), assistant minister of music at White Rock Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Penn., has completed her first year of D.Min. studies at Beeson. She was named Master of Divinity Distinguished Alumna for 2008.

Andy Byers (M.Div. 2001) has been appointed to serve as the college pastor at Mountain Brook Community Church, a position that also involves leading University Christian Fellowship (UCF). Since graduating from Beeson, Andy had served as a campus minister at Gardner-Webb University, and most recently as an interim pastor in Durham, N.C., while completing a Master of Theology degree at Duke Divinity School. Andy and his wife, Miranda, have returned to Birmingham with their three young children: Brynn, Hayden, and Cavan.

Byers succeeds Beeson alumnus Joel Brooks (M.Div. 1999). Brooks, who began UCF and served as its director for nine years, resigned from his position with the collegiate ministry to focus his efforts on his role as pastor of the newly formed Redeemer Community Church in the Crestwood community of Birmingham. Joel and his wife, Lauren, have three daughters: Caroline, Natalie, and Georgia.

The Georgia Baptist Convention recently recognized Northside Baptist Church of Newnan, Ga., for having one of the 100 fastest growing Sunday School programs in the state. Brian Carroll (M.Div. 2005) is Northside's pastor and has served there since his graduation from Beeson.

Ernie Carroll (M.Div. 1990), Director of Missions with Alabama's Friendship Baptist Association, recently released *A Season in Baghdad: Confessions of a Combat Chaplain*. The book chronicles Carroll's tenure of service in Iraq with the U.S. Army National Guard while his son, Nathan, competed on a state championship high school football team in Oneonta, Ala.



It can be purchased in Samford's bookstore or through online retailers.

Brian Cosby (M.Div. 2007) accepted a call to Carriage Lane Presbyterian Church (PCA) of Peachtree City, Ga., to serve as Youth Pastor.

Jim Dewey (M.Div. 2007) completed training at the U.S. Naval Chaplain's School in Newport, R.I. in August before reporting to Camp Lejeune, N.C. to serve as the U.S. Marine Corps Chaplain for the Radio Battalion. Shortly after his arrival at Camp Lejeune he was deployed to Iraq; his wife Aubrey remains in Birmingham.

Brandon Fredenburg (M.Div. 1993) has recently been appointed Assistant Dean of the College of Biblical Studies and Behavioral Sciences at Lubbock Christian University. In addition to his administrative duties Brandon teaches courses on the book of Romans to both undergraduate and graduate students, first and third year Greek classes, and some courses in Christian spiritual formation. He came to LCU in 2000 from Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tenn., where he taught biblical studies courses for four years. Brandon received his Ph.D. in Biblical Interpretation in 2003 in a joint program between the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology. Since leaving Beeson and Birmingham, he and his wife Beverly have also been blessed with three children: John, Jennifer, and Joshua.

Bill Goodwin (M.Div. 2000) was elected moderator of the Coosa River Baptist Association. He has been a pastor in the CRBA since 2002 serving Lincoln Baptist Church, Lincoln, Ala. He and his wife Sharon have two children: Rebekah and Thomas.

Clay Hallmark (M.Div. 1992) was unanimously re-elected to serve a second term as First Vice-President of the Arkansas Baptist Convention at their annual meeting in October. Clay is the Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church, Marion, Ark.

Susan Pace Hamill (M.T.S. 2002) spent the spring 2008 semester as a Scholar in Residence at Beeson. Susan, who was on sabbatical from her post as Professor of Law at the University of Alabama, recently published *As Certain as Death: A Fifty-State Survey of State and Local Tax Laws*. She earned her M.T.S. from Beeson during her last sabbatical, and the thesis she wrote in her coursework led to a major initiative to reform tax policy in Alabama.

Derrick Hammond (M.Div./M.B.A. 2006) serves as the Church Business Administrator at the First Calvary Baptist Church of Durham, N.C. In July 2008, he was ordained in the American Baptist Church, USA. He was also recently recognized as a model mentor for an internship program at Duke University.

Ryan Hankins (M.Div. 2003) serves as Executive Director of M-Power Ministries, a faith-based social services

organization that has served Birmingham's urban community since 1997. Hankins began his position at M-Power in 2004, shortly after completing his coursework at Beeson. He and his wife, Meredith, are the parents of one daughter, Audry, and are members of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church.

Justin Hardin, (M.Div. 2001), has joined the staff at Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford, as Tutor in New Testament Studies. Justin completed his Ph.D. in New Testament studies at University of Cambridge, and had served as Assistant Professor of Religion at Oklahoma Baptist University since 2005.

Bob Hatfield (D.Min. 2001), adjunct Beeson faculty member and former worship coordinator for Hodges Chapel services, was recognized in 2008 for thirty years of service as Minister of Music at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.

Connie Hedges (M.Div. 1997) has been serving as chaplain to the inmates at the North Central Juvenile Correctional Facility in Logansport, Ind. since March 2000. In May 2007, she completed a D.Min. in Ministry Renewal from the Anderson University School of Theology. For the past two years, Connie has taught philosophy courses for Ivy Tech Community College at campuses in Logansport and Kokomo, Ind.

Randy Hemphill (M.Div. 2000) and his wife Melody are currently leading a ministry in Birmingham, Ala., called Marriage Encounter. They lead marriage retreats and provide one-on-one spiritual direction for couples.

Tom Howe (M.Div. 1998), Pastor of Birdville Baptist Church, Haltom City, Tex., was recently awarded his Doctor of Ministry degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Robby Hyché (M.Div. 2008) accepted a call to serve as Minister to Single Adults at First Baptist Church Trussville, Ala. In his new position, Hyché will work beside two other Beeson alumni: Blake Kersey (M.Div. 2005), who serves as Minister to Children, and Clayton Speed (M.Div. 2007), who serves as Minister of Administration and Minister to Young Adults.

Tracy Jessup (M.Div. 1994) successfully defended his doctoral dissertation, "Presidential

Leadership at a Historically Baptist College: A Frame Analysis," at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and received his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership. Tracy, Assistant Dean of Students and Minister to the University at Gardner-Webb University, also reviewed Duane Litfin's book, *Conceiving the Christian College*, in the April-June 2008 issue of *Christian Higher Education*.

Earl Johnson (M.Div. 2002) is the founding pastor of Christ Community Church in Huntsville, Ala.

Beanie Ketcham (M.T.S. 2005) and Sherri Spurling (M.T.S. 2002) participated in an outreach effort at a softball tournament sponsored by three Birmingham area churches. Sherri, Minister to College Students and Single Adults at Brookwood Baptist Church, sang during one of the services while Beanie, head softball coach at Samford, shared a message targeted especially to the ball players.

Eric F. Mason (M.Div. 1994), Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Judson University, recently published 'You are a Priest Forever': *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Brill, 2008). The book, which is featured in the *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* series, is an expanded and revised version of his Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Notre Dame. It is available for purchase through the publisher or online retailers.

Meredith May (M.Div. 2007) recently moved to Yorktown, Va., to join the staff of Water's Edge Church as the Director of Preschoolers and Kids.

Maxie Miller, (M.Div. 1995), Director of the African-American Ministries Division of the Florida Baptist Convention (FBC), led the Bible Study at the FBC's 2008 Senior Adult Conclave at the Lake Yale Conference Center in Leesburg, Fla.

Philip Nation (M.Div. 1994) assumed the role of Editor-in-Chief in the Leadership and Adult Publishing division of LifeWay Christian Resources in October. Along with his wife Angie and their two sons, Philip has been living in Cumming, Ga., where he served as the founding pastor of Lake Ridge Church.

Patricia Outlaw (D.Min. 2002), Beeson alumna and Associate Professor of Divinity, taught a Bible study at the 48th Quadrennial Session of the African Methodist Episcopal Church's General Conference.

David Parks (M.Div. 1997) returned from the United States to Malaysia in the summer of 2008 just in time to host twelve Samford students. The group, led by Brian Keen (M.Div. 2008), worked alongside Parks to engage in meaningful conversations and build relationships with college students and young adults throughout Kuala Lumpur. Beeson student Lindsay Harrison also joined the team from Samford and worked toward fulfilling her cross-cultural ministry immersion requirement while on the trip. Parks and his family have been serving in Malaysia for three

years.

Maria Demeshkina Peek (M.T.S. 1998) directed and produced the documentary film *Searching Generation: The Spiritual Life of Twenty-Somethings*, which was released by Auroris Media on June 30, 2008. Featured in the documentary are a number of interviews with influential Christian writers, speakers, and musicians, including Lauren Winner, Erwin McManus, Derek Webb and Brian McLaren.

Tal Prince (M.Div. 2001), Beeson's Director of External Relations and pastor of Tapestry of Hope, continues his ministry of educating and equipping Christians to respond to those in their congregations and communities who are impacted by pornography, sexual misconduct, addictions, and other difficult issues. He now hosts a weekly radio show, *Tal Prince Live*, which is broadcast on Sirius Satellite Radio Sunday evenings at 8:00 p.m. CST.

Tracy Pursel (M.T.S. 2006) spent six weeks over the summer of 2008 in Nepal. She worked with an NGO-sponsored orphanage helping to provide medical care for orphans with burn injuries. Tracy also worked at Bir hospital, the country's largest and oldest medical facility, which is run by the Nepali government. She also supported the work of the Missionaries of Charity, the order founded by Mother Teresa.

Michael Rodgers (M.Div. 2007) has been appointed adjunct professor of religion and philosophy at Mercer University in Macon, Ga. He teaches such classes as Old and New Testament Survey, Ethics, and Church History to undergraduate students.

Awon Shanglai (M.Div. 2004) has returned to her home village in northeast India to serve on the ministry team of Kasom Khullen Baptist Church. Her main responsibilities of service are Christian education and pastoral care. Kasom Khullen is a small village in the state of Manipur, which borders Burma.

Mary Frady Splawn (M.Div. 2006) and Wayne Splawn (M.Div. 2007) returned to Birmingham to serve at Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Wayne will focus his ministry efforts on high school and college students, while Mary will serve middle school students. Additionally, Mary will oversee the church's

Beeson Brevia

Padilla Joins Biblical Studies Faculty

Osvaldo Padilla joined the faculty as assistant professor in fall 2008; he teaches New Testament. Previously, he taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He also served as pastor of a Hispanic congregation in the Chicago area. In addition, he served as a juvenile counselor for the 19th District Court of Lake County, Ill. Padilla has written articles and reviews and is the author of *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts: Historiography, Theology, and Poetics*. His research interests include Luke-Acts, Matthew, 1 Peter, suffering and mission, ancient and modern historiography, and the Greek of the New Testament in the context of Hellenistic Greek.



▲ Osvaldo Padilla (right) signs the Confession of Faith as Frank Thielman looks on.

Faculty and Staff Begin Fall Semester with Annual Retreat

The faculty and staff of Beeson Divinity School gathered for their annual retreat at the 4-H Conference Center in Columbiana, Ala., in August. Greg Waybright (pictured back row, far left), senior pastor at Lake Avenue Church in Pasadena, Calif., was the guest speaker. From 1995 to 2007 Waybright served as president of Trinity International University in Deerfield, Ill.



Stuart Gives 2008 Biblical Studies Lectures

Old Testament scholar Douglas K. Stuart presented the 2008 Biblical Studies Lectures in April. Stuart, professor of Old Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Mass., spoke on the theme "Old Testament Laws and Jesus' Teaching."

Stuart's specialties include Assyrian and Babylonian languages and literature, and the cultures of the ancient Near East. He has written nine books on Old Testament themes. He is a pastor as well as a professor, and is currently senior pastor of First Church Congregational of Boxford, Mass.

The Biblical Studies lecture series is one of three annual lectureships sponsored by Beeson.



Jones Receives Biblical Languages Award

Leslie Ann Jones was presented with the 2008 W. M. Todd Biblical Languages Award. This cash award is given annually to a student at Beeson Divinity School in honor of the Reverend William M. Todd, who served as a pastor for many years and was much appreciated by his congregation for



▲ The Rev. Todd (right) presents the 2008 award to Leslie Ann Jones.

his emphasis on biblical preaching. This award is in keeping with Beeson's commitment to biblical preaching that is linked closely to the original text of scripture. The recipient is chosen for his or her work in the study of biblical languages and is intended to encourage that student to proceed as far as possible in the study of Greek and Hebrew.

Jones graduated from Mississippi State in 2004 with degrees in journalism and religion. She and her husband, Dennis, live in Iuka, Miss., where they are active members of Iuka Baptist Church. She plans to begin a writing and teaching ministry when she graduates from Beeson.



Dockery Reflects on Christian Community in Convo Address

David Dockery, president of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., was the guest preacher for the Fall 2008 Convocation. Drawing from Romans 12:19-21, he challenged the Beeson community to demonstrate the distinctive marks Christian hospitality. To listen to his sermon go to www.beesondivinity.com/downloads.

Dockery (center) is pictured with Beeson Dean Timothy George (left) and Samford President Andrew Westmoreland (right).

Global Center News

Christian Art Displayed in Global Center

As part of recent renovations to the Global Center, Director Kurt Selles is purchasing Christian art from around the world to display. Recent acquisitions include works by Asian artists Hanna Varghese (Malaysia), He Qi (China), Wisnu Sasongko (Indonesia), Naylini Jayasuriya (Sri Lanka), and Sawai Chinnawong (Thailand). More information on these artists and their work is available through the Overseas Ministries Study Center, where each has served as artist in residence. Visit www.omsc.org/art.html.



▲ "They Who Hear Follow" Naylini Jayasuriya Sri Lanka, Mixed media on cloth

Global Center Hosts Kenyan Pastors

Four pastors from Kenya and their Alabama hosts learned from each other during a summer program sponsored by the Global Center. The divinity school partnered with Samford's Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence and Vestavia Hills Baptist Church to hold the three-week program. The goal was to provide reciprocal learning opportunities between the institutions and the pastors, and to explore the diversity of perspectives and commonality of faith.

During their Birmingham stay, the Kenyans visited sites related to their specific areas of interest and service, including prisons and AIDS network ministries. They also preached at Birmingham area churches and attended Beeson's Pastors School.

The Kenyan visitors were Richard Owiti Kogola, lay pastor and former civil servant and educator; Paul Mbogo, pastor of a Baptist church in Thunguma village;

Benson Mwangangi, a prison chaplain and director of a theological seminary in Nyandarua; and Josphat Thiori, pastor of Mutathi-ni Baptist church and head of the training department of Baptist AIDS Response Agency.

The four were chosen through their association with the Institute for Quality Christian Leadership in Africa, a program founded by Kenya native Samson Mathangani.

Mathangani is a graduate of Beeson and a member of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church.



▶ Pictured left to right: Benson Mwangangi, a prison chaplain and director of a theological seminary in Nyandarua; Richard Owiti Kogola, lay pastor and former civil servant and educator; Paul Mbogo, pastor of a Baptist church in Thunguma village; and Josphat Thiori, pastor of Mutathi-ni Baptist church and head of the training department of Baptist Aids Response Agency.

2009 Upcoming Events

February 10. Spring Preview Day for prospective students. To register go to www.beesondivinity.com/previewday or call toll-free 1-877-575-0595.

The 17th Annual CONGER LECTURES on BIBLICAL PREACHING

Beeson Divinity School of Samford University

FEBRUARY 24-26, 2009

February 24-26. William E. Conger Jr. Lectures on Biblical Preaching with Charles T. Carter, Robert Smith Jr., and Doug Webster.

March 12. Presentation of Pollock Award for Christian Biography to Jonathan Aitken for *John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace*.

April 14-16. Biblical Studies Lectures with Craig L. Blomberg.

April 18. Ministry Enrichment Training: Prepare/Enrich Workshop led by Langston Haygood.

July 20-24. Beeson Pastors School with Frank James, Bryan Gunn, Robert Smith Jr., Will Willimon, and Doug Stuart.

September 28-30. "The Will to Believe and the Need for Creed: Evangelicals and the Nicene Faith."

October 27-29. Reformation Heritage Lectures with Scott M. Manetsch.

Some events may require registration and/or fees to participate. Call 1-800-888-8266 for more information or visit www.beesondivinity.com.

Services of Commencement and Consecration Combined

For the first time, the commencement exercises for Beeson Divinity School were held separately from ceremonies for other Samford graduates. After 18 years of holding spring graduation exercises in downtown Birmingham, Samford has moved all graduation programs back to campus, with the undergraduates and the professional schools having their own services. Beeson has combined graduation with its annual service of consecration in Hodges Chapel.

▶ Carolyn McKinstry (pictured right) receives her diploma for the master of divinity degree in May 2008 from Samford President Andrew Westmoreland. McKinstry is a lifelong member of Birmingham's historic Sixteenth Street Baptist Church and president of the Board of Directors for The Sixteenth Street Foundation. She led a service on September 15 to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the church bombing.



'The Will to Believe and the Need for Creed: Evangelicals and the Nicene Faith' Conference Set for September 28-30, 2009

Several years before his death Jaroslav Pelikan published an essay on "The Will to Believe and the Need for Creed," which has been selected as the theme for a forthcoming conference at Beeson Divinity School. Pelikan stressed both the confessional and unifying purposes of the creeds as an expression of Christian belief and identity, and this is the basic aim of the conference as well. Plenary speakers will include Alister McGrath, Timothy George, and Bishop John Rucyahana of Rwanda. Also scheduled to speak are Beth Newman, Matt Pinson, and David P. Nelson, along with Beeson faculty

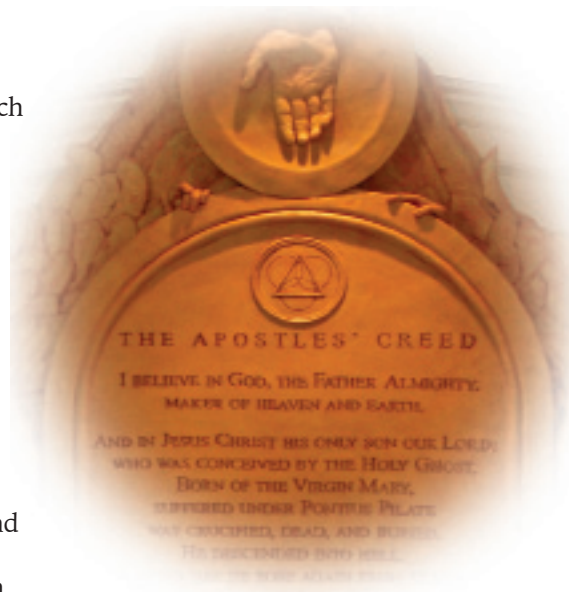
members Steve Harmon, Mark DeVine, and Carl Beckwith.

The conference is open to theologians, pastors, and all Christians concerned with how to present "faith once delivered to the saints" in an age of increasing syncretism and radical pluralism. The conference will deal with a variety of topics including the significance of the Nicene faith for pastoral work, evangelical worship, the

The Will to Believe AND THE Need FOR Creed Evangelicals and the Nicene Faith

September 28-30, 2009

emerging churches, biblical exegesis and vital expressions of orthodox Christian faith around the globe.



▶ Detail of a cast relief of the Apostles' Creed. The relief, which hangs in the rear of Hodges Chapel, contains the entire Creed. These ancient words are repeated multiplied millions of times over each week as Christ-followers across the world attest verbally to their faith and beliefs.



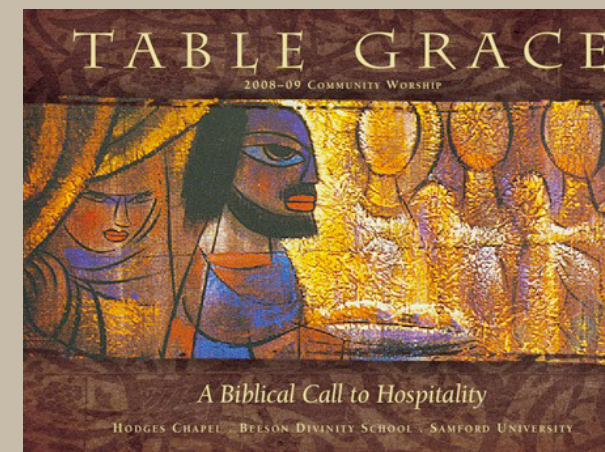
▶ Pictured here (left), Bierman leads a praise team composed of Beeson students and staff.

Bierman Named New Worship Coordinator

Richard Bierman, worship pastor for St. Peter's Anglican Church in Mountain Brook, Ala., was named the worship coordinator for Beeson's weekly chapel services. In addition to serving as an accompanist on both piano and organ and enlisting musicians, Bierman assists in the planning of each week's service.

Hospitality Continues as Theme for 2009 Community Worship

This year's theme for community worship is "Table Grace: A Biblical Call to Hospitality." It is an invitation to ponder one of the greatest themes of the biblical story—hospitality. Beeson professor Dr. Doug Webster, who teaches preaching and pastoral theology, suggested the theme from his work on a series of Lenten sermons he preached several years ago at the First Presbyterian Church of San Diego. The spring semester will begin with Dean Timothy George preaching on "Midnight Hospitality" from Luke 11:1—13. Webster will conclude the series on April 21 with "Table Recognition" from Luke 24:1—38. Both of these services will include Holy Communion. A complete schedule of preachers and topics for 2009 and downloads of previous sermons in the



series are available at www.beesondivinity.com/tablegrace.

Services are held each Tuesday during the academic year at 11:00 a.m. in Hodges Chapel and are open to the public. If you would like to receive the devotional guide published to accompany the sermon series, please contact Bridget Rose at (205) 726-2229 or bcrose@samford.edu.

Oxford, Cambridge Publish Two Books by Beeson Faculty

Two faculty members published major monographs with Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press in October 2008.

Carl L. Beckwith had a monograph, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity: From "De Fide" to "De Trinitate,"* published by Oxford as part of its Oxford Early Christian Studies series. The book traces the evolution of the bishop and theologian Hilary and his work *De Trinitate*, which was important in understanding the continuing debates over Trinitarian matters in the mid- to late-fourth century.

At Beeson since 2007, Beckwith teaches church history and historical theology

Oswaldo Padilla's *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts: Poetics, Theology and Historiography* was published by Cambridge as part of its Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series. The book takes an original approach to Luke and his work by concentrating on the speeches of outsiders, unlike previous studies that dealt

primarily with insiders, or members of the early Christian church.

Padilla, who joined the Beeson faculty in the fall of 2008, teaches New Testament.

"These two publications within the same month represent a major achievement for these two fine scholars," said Beeson Dean Timothy George.

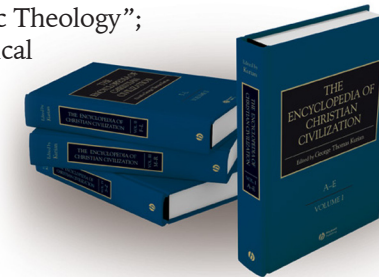
Other recent and forthcoming faculty publications include:

Mark DeVine, "Open Theism: Roots, Realities, and Reckonings," *Theology for Ministry: Contemporary Movements in American Christianity* 3.1 (2008), 47 -57.

Norfleete Day, Frank Thielman, and Timothy George each contributed to *Theology in the Service of the Church: Essays Presented to Fisher H. Humphreys* (Mercer University Press, 2008). The book was edited by Timothy George and Eric Mason.

Mark Gignilliat, *Karl Barth and the Fifth Gospel: Barth's Theological Exegesis of Isaiah*, Barth Studies Series (Ashgate, forthcoming 2009); "Allegorically Speaking: The Theological Significance of Paul's Allegorical Appeal in Galatians 4:21-5:1," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 2.1 (Spring 2008): 135-146; and "Who is Isaiah's Servant? Narrative Identity and Theological Potential," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61 (2008): 125-136.

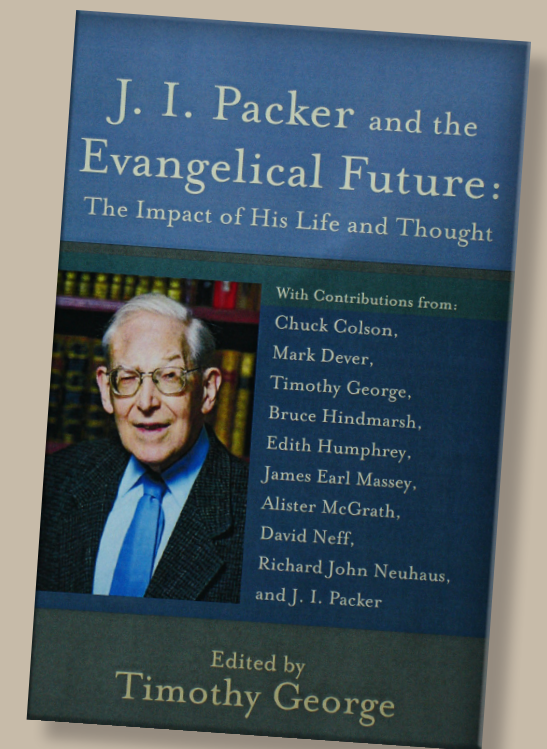
Steve Harmon, "Clement of Alexandria"; "Desert Fathers"; "Dogmatic Theology"; "Gregory of Nyssa"; "Liturgical Theology"; "Patristics"; and "Universalism" in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization*, edited by George Thomas Kurian (Blackwell Publishers, 2008).



Ken Mathews, *Leviticus* in the Preaching the Word series edited by R. Kent Hughes (Crossway Books, 2008).

Patricia Outlaw, "God the Father and Prayer," in *Giving Ourselves to Prayer: An Acts 6:4 Primer for Ministry*, edited by Dan Crawford (Prayer Shop Publishers, 2008), 31-36.

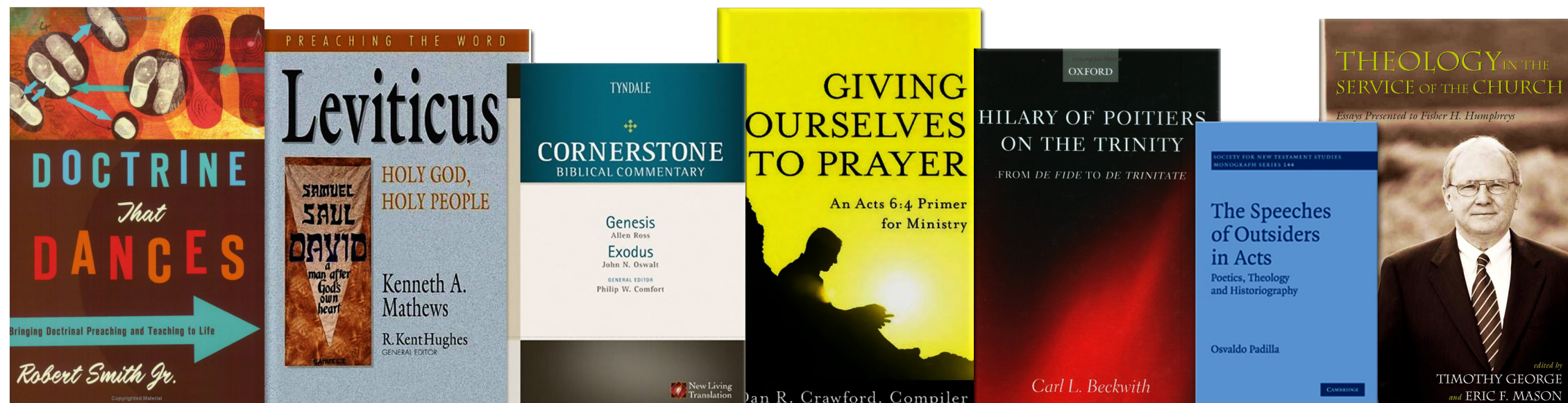
Allen P. Ross, "Genesis" in *Genesis, Exodus of the Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Tyndale, 2008); and "Proverbs" in *Proverbs - Isaiah of The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, rev. ed. (Zondervan, 2008).



Noted Evangelicals Interact with a Theological Giant

J. I. Packer is one of the most significant evangelical theologians of the last one hundred years. In this new book, a team of leading scholars—including Chuck Colson, Mark Dever, Beeson Dean Timothy George, Bruce Hindmarsh, Edith Humphrey, James Earl Massey, Alister McGrath, David Neff, and Richard John Neuhaus—assesses Packer's impact on evangelicalism over the past half century and asks what more we can learn from him about ministry and the evangelical future. J. I. Packer himself offers a response and reflection. The book also includes a full bibliography of Packer's writings, which is the most comprehensive listing of his writings in print.

This collection of essays grew out of lectures presented at Beeson Divinity School in 2006 at a conference celebrating the life and legacy of J. I. Packer. It is edited by Timothy George and is the third volume in Baker Academic's Beeson Divinity Studies series. The book is scheduled for release in August 2009.



From Start to Finish

Beeson prepares pastors. We prepare them while they're here. And we continue to prepare them for the rest of their ministry. We do so because we understand the rigors pastors face day in and day out. We also understand that routine and ritual can rob pastors of the joy of ministry. So each year, we offer opportunities for pastors to refresh their spirits and rediscover their purpose and passion in ministry. From start to finish, Beeson is all about preparing pastors.

Opportunities for Pastors in 2009

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For more information, please visit us online at
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