



Towers

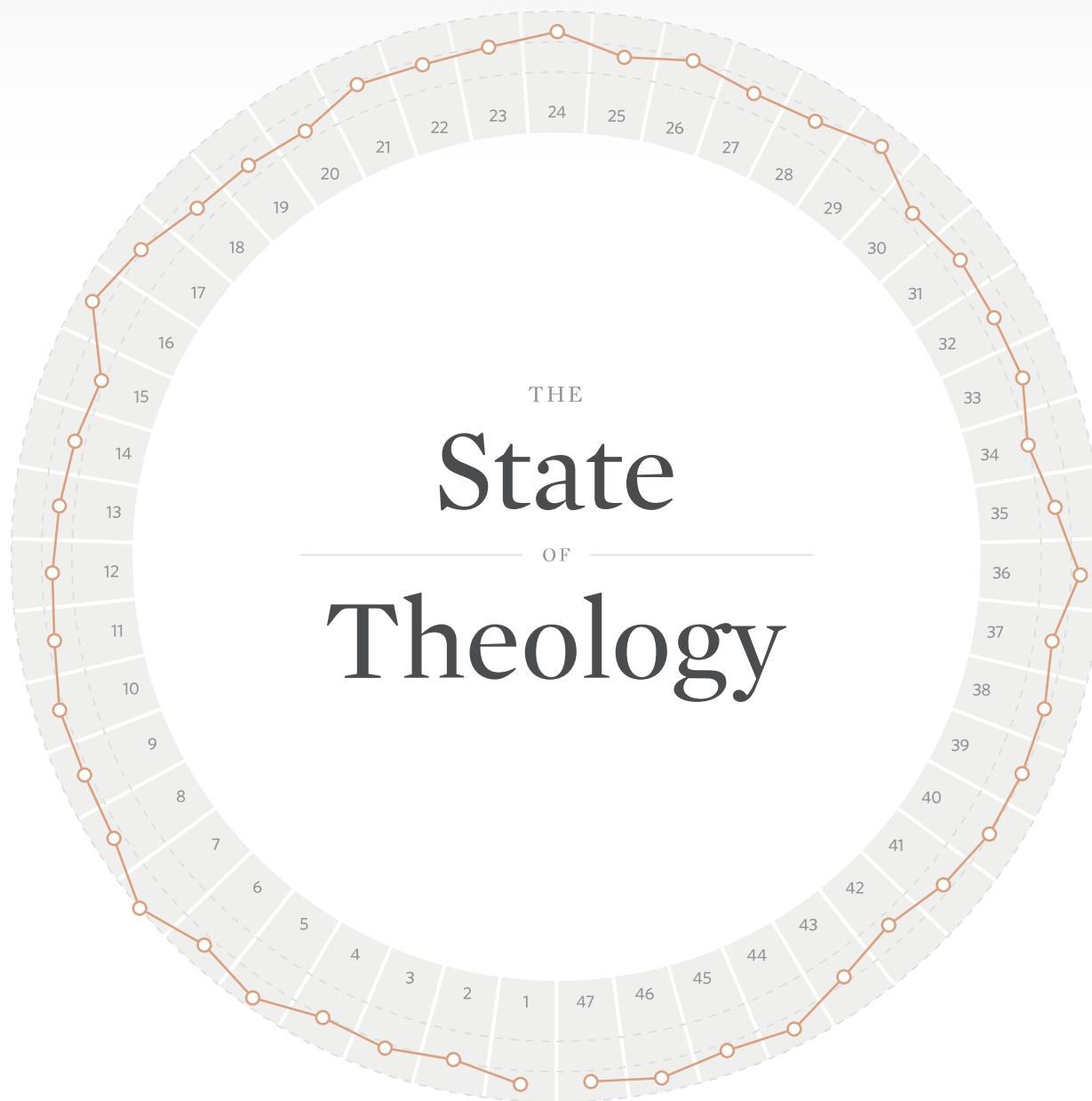
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Renew your Mind.

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Luther's timely discovery of a merciful God

Church history professor Michael A.G. Haykin takes you to a critical moment for Christianity. For a German monk, it was decades of spiritual struggle in the making.



FROM THE EDITOR

You know about the Reformation. You probably know a lot. Seeing as you're a student at SBTS, you've already had your faith shaped by one of the central eras in church

history. Perhaps you're picking up this issue of *Towers* and thinking: *What else could possibly be said about the Reformation?*

Consider this: When Luther mailed his 95 Theses to the Archbishop of Mainz on October 31, 1517, he had little notion he was anything more than a theology professor engaging in an academic debate. For him and the other leaders of the Reformation — Calvin, Zwingli, Beza, Melancthon — this era was not a watershed moment in church history.

Theological giants though they were, they were also real people — equal parts made in the image of God, deeply broken by sin, and redeemed by Jesus' blood just like we are.

I hope this issue helps put you in their shoes. Imagine standing on trial at an imperial assembly, as Luther was at the Diet of Worms. Imagine the institution to which you dedicated your life holding a council to decide whether you were In or Out.

What would you say?

05

Mohler on knowledge

Mohler kicked off the new academic year by arguing Christ is not only the source of spiritual and theological knowledge, but all human knowledge in the Fall 2017 Convocation.

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Plummer invites you to retool your Greek

New Testament professor Robert L. Plummer has been helping Southern students learn Greek for 15 years. Now he spends much of his time helping them retain it.

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Luther vs. Erasmus?

Luther disagreed with the theology of Desiderius Erasmus, yet he and the entire Reformation benefited enormously from his translation work.

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Fall Festival 2017

Relive the fireworks and funnel cakes from this year's circus-themed Fall Festival.

Our mission is to use our time, resources, and talents to tell the Southern story in an accurate, timely, and creative manner to the glory of God.

Newslog



Professor Douglas K. Blount to lead new apologetics program

By Andrew J.W. Smith

Academic institutions have long paired apologetics with classical disciplines like philosophy and history, but the defense of the Christian faith requires the apologist to prove not only why Christianity is true, but also why it should be believed. The goal of Christian apologetics should not merely be the assent of the mind, but the confession of the heart, said Adam W. Greenway, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

“We want leaders and teachers in our churches to be able to tell people not just how to become a Christian, but why they should become a Christian,” Greenway said.

Toward that end, seminary leadership has consolidated two distinct apologetics programs into a single Master of Divinity degree in apologetics for the 2017-2018 academic year. While Southern used to have separate apologetics concentrations, the institution now offers a single apologetics program under the Billy Graham School.

The program sits in the new Department of Apologetics and World Religions in the Billy Graham School, with Douglas K. Blount serving as its chair. Blount has been teaching apologetics at SBTS since 2015.

The program will include a master of arts (apologetics), which is Southern Seminary’s second academic M.A. degree. A second academic M.A. (Islamic Studies) is also available.



Southern Seminary leadership and faculty endorse Nashville Statement

By SBTS Communications

Leaders from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary recently signed the Nashville Statement, a new affirmation of biblical principles on gender and sexuality, published by The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, August 29.

“This statement, more than anything else, serves to make a very clear, gospel-centered declaration of God’s purpose in creating human beings in his image as male and female,” said R. Albert Mohler Jr., Southern Seminary president in an endorsement of the Nashville Statement. “And through the affirmations and denials it serves the purpose of clarifying these truths in an age in which confusion reigns.”

Denny Burk, president of CMBW and professor at Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Seminary, hopes the statement accomplishes this amidst a culture increasingly antagonistic toward the gospel.

“The aim of The Nashville Statement is to shine a light into the darkness – to declare the goodness of God’s design in our sexuality and in creating us as male and female,” Burk said.

More information about the Nashville Statement is available at nashvillestatement.com.



Mohler reaches eight seasons of his daily podcast with record numbers

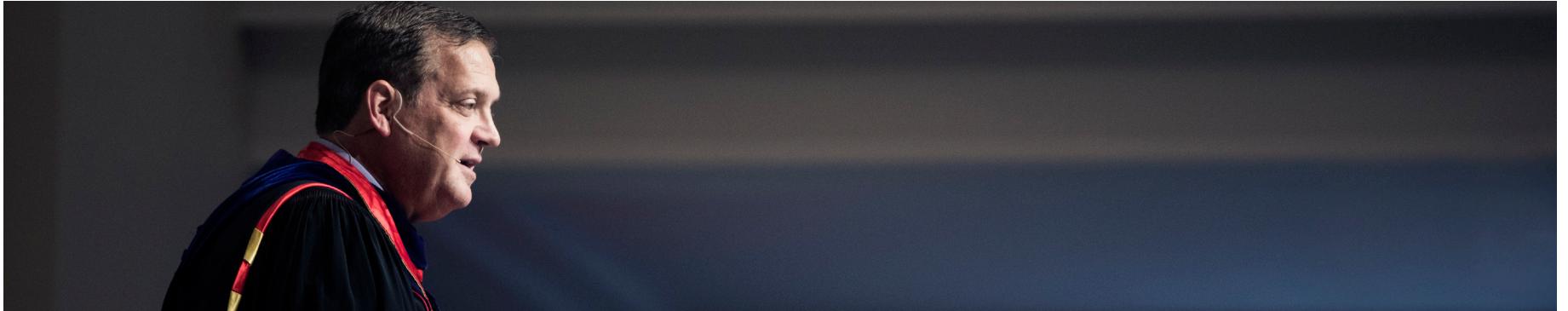
By RuthAnne Irvin and Zachary Ball

Since Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. launched The Briefing in 2010, people have downloaded the podcast more than 27,028,453 times. From the beginning, Mohler wanted to present cultural and religious issues in a way that benefits Christians as they strive to better understand the world around them. He believes The Briefing, now in its eighth season, accomplishes this, in part, as he helps Christians navigate cultural questions from a biblical worldview.

As the eighth season of The Briefing begins this fall, Mohler’s goal for the podcast remains the same: To discuss news in a way that challenges Christians’ thinking and brings clarity to world events.

“This is not a part of some grand strategy to take over the digital world. This is a strategy to try to help Christians think through the issues of the day and to develop patterns and the discipline of thinking that are rigorously Christian and relentlessly biblical,” Mohler said. “I hope we get better and better over time. I hope that it is more useful. I hope that we learn over time how to be more helpful and more faithful in this.”

More information about The Briefing is available at albertmohler.com/thebriefing.



Knowledge of Christ is the center of true education, says Mohler at Southern Seminary's fall convocation

By Andrew J.W. Smith

There is no true education when Jesus Christ is not recognized as the center of all learning, said R. Albert Mohler Jr. at his August 29 convocation address for the 2017-2018 academic year at Southern Seminary.

Preaching from Colossians 1:13-23 in an address titled “And in Him All Things Hold Together: Jesus Christ as Beginning and End of Knowledge,” Mohler said that Jesus Christ is not only the source of a “coherent” Christian faith, but the source of all coherence.

In a scientific age that places comprehensive authority on scientific knowledge, physicists even pursue a “unified field theory” to explain everything about the natural world. But according to the apostle Paul, only Jesus Christ

explains all reality. Christ therefore should be the centerpiece of all higher education, Mohler said.

While Mohler admitted that non-Christians can certainly know true things and observe the created order in all its complexity, they cannot understand how everything “holds together,” in the words of Colossians 1, without knowing the Incarnate Son.

“You can know true things without knowing the Truth,” Mohler said. “You can know that two plus two equals four, but only if you know that in him all things hold together do you understand why two plus two equals four.”

He argued that since knowledge of Christ is the basis of all human knowledge, then Christ must be taught in every

academic discipline — not just in theology or biblical studies. An institution’s curriculum should be built on theological and Christological foundations, with the ultimate goal not just mental acknowledgment, but worship.

Prior to Mohler’s convocation address, three professors who were elected to the faculty during the spring trustee meeting signed the Abstract of Principles, the seminary’s confession of faith. R. Scott Connell, associate professor of music and worship leadership at Boyce College; Charles T. Lewis Jr., associate professor of church music and worship at Southern Seminary; and Brian K. Payne, associate professor of Christian theology and expository preaching at Boyce, became signees No. 258, 259, and 260 of the Abstract.



Professors urge deeper racial diversity in American churches

By Andrew J.W. Smith

True racial diversity goes beyond simply having African Americans present in majority white congregations, and must include giving minority members leadership roles in the local church, said Southern Seminary and Boyce College professors at a panel arranged by ONE, September 6 at Southern Seminary.

The panel included Kevin Jones, assistant professor of teacher education at Boyce College, and Jarvis J. Williams, associate professor of New Testament interpretation. Jones and Williams discussed their recent book, *Removing the Stain of Racism from the Southern Baptist Convention*, and answered questions on how the church should handle matters of race. The panel also included Matthew J. Hall, dean of Boyce College, and Curtis Woods, associate executive

director for convention relations for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, both of whom contributed chapters to the book.

“Often, when predominately white churches pursue a multi-ethnic church, what many mean is that they want black and brown faces, but not black and brown voices,” Williams said.

“They want black and brown people in the seats of their churches, but they don’t want black and brown people to have any leverage, privilege, and power. So I would exhort leaders of predominately white churches: If you want to engage in serious gospel reconciliation and multiethnic work, you must not approach the black and brown body from a posture of helping those people assimilate into your culture.”



SBTS hosts 14th annual Heritage Golf Classic

By SBTS Communications

Southern Seminary hosted its 14th annual Heritage Golf Classic, August 28 at Big Spring Country Club in Louisville, Kentucky. Each year, the Southern community gathers with friends and sponsors to support the seminary. This year, 27 teams with 108 golfers participated in the Classic, and more than 40 sponsors raised approximately \$180,000, the largest amount of money collected through the Heritage Classic in the seminary's history. Steve Bachman, Thomas Barnes, Ryan Smith, and Neil Webster won the classic. Major sponsors of the event included Marvin and Nancy St. John, Bachman Auto Group, and Sodexo.

Next year, Southern Seminary will celebrate the 15th annual Heritage Golf Classic on August 20 at Big Spring Country Club.

More information about Southern Seminary events is available at sbts.edu/events.



The Southern Exchange reopens after renovations, continuing more than a decade of service to SBTS students

By RuthAnne Irvin

Southern Seminary students and their families celebrated the grand opening of The Southern Exchange, Sept. 6, after several months of facility renovations. The Southern Exchange, previously known as The Attic, underwent rebranding before its grand opening.

What is now called The Southern Exchange first opened in 1996 in a small utility closet on the main floor of Fuller Hall as a clothes closet for students. It operated from the utility closet for several years before it proved too small for the donations. From there, it grew into its current basement location.

In the late 1990s, Mary Mohler, first lady of Southern Seminary, joined the small group of volunteers and began to help organize and facilitate operations for The Attic, and has worked with the ministry consistently since. She is excited about the renovations and rebranding, and she

said she appreciates those who made the reopening possible. "What a joy it is to see this ministry return. We are excited to be back in our much improved space," she said recently. "It takes so many of us working together to make The Southern Exchange a success. We are indebted to our donors and volunteers."

Many of those volunteers, including Betty Boone, enjoy serving on campus, which she has done every Thursday since the late 1990s. Boone plans to continue serving at The Southern Exchange and said she enjoys "Seeing how the students react to it and how they seem to appreciate it. Getting to meet some of our students is just wonderful."

The Southern Exchange takes donations of gently used clothing and household items, which donors can drop off at the Fuller Hall location. The Southern Exchange is open Tuesday through Friday from 2 to 5 p.m.



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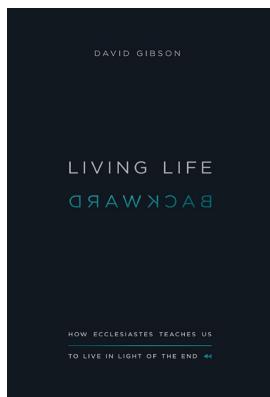


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Book Reviews



(Crossway 2017, \$17.99)

Living Life Backward

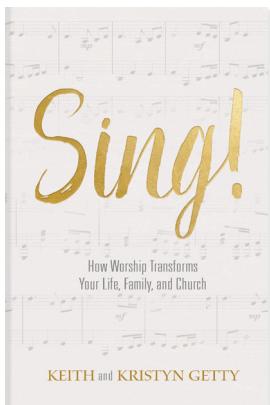
David Gibson Review by Sean Corser

What do you get when you blend commentary of one of Scripture's most complex books (Ecclesiastes) with practical and biblical applications for everyday living? *Living Life Backward* by David Gibson.

Gibson begins each chapter with the passage of Ecclesiastes to be examined, then follows with the message of the chapter, and concludes with a set of questions to be examined. Gibson writes that the message of Ecclesiastes should not only be understood, but applied.

Similar to the style of Ecclesiastes, Gibson uses many illustrations and metaphors to further drive home the message of the preacher. He writes: "There is a wonderful richness to the poetry that is worth lingering over."

Gibson, using a firm understanding of the Preacher and the intention of his writing, unfolds the story of Ecclesiastes in a short yet compelling manner. But, as with the Preacher, Gibson intends for *Living Life Backwards* to be read with the hope of answering the question "How then should we live?"



(B&H 2017, \$12.99)

Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family, and Church

Keith and Kristyn Getty Review By Miles Morrison

Keith and Kristyn Getty's *Sing! How Worship Transforms Your Life, Family and Church* is part theological primer and part practical guidebook for the fundamental role of singing in the life of the believer. The Gettys start with the biblical foundation for singing and then work toward giving applicable advice for how to lead our churches and homes to do this well. Their hope is that "as you wake each day, and as you walk through your day, we pray that the lyrics and melodies of your faith will ring around the spaces where you live your life."

The Gettys point to God's design in creation as an emphasis for the important place of singing in our lives, "when we sing God's praise, we join with the tune of the cosmos." Singing even has an embedding effect on our hearts, so that our songs "reach the inner corridors of our soul in a way that other things cannot." Ultimately, the Gettys' primary aim is "that you would sing truth and sing it as though it is true" and it's this narrowed focus that sets *Sing!* apart from other similar worship leadership books. "God has formed our hearts to be moved with depth of feeling and a whole range of emotion as the melody-carried truths of who God is and whose we are sink in," they write.



(City Aight Music, \$9.90 on iTunes)

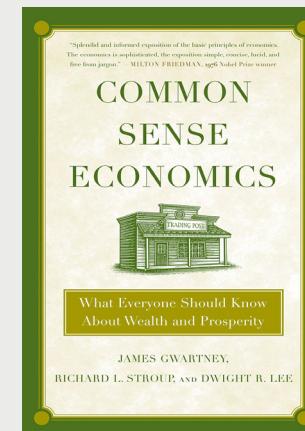
Only a Holy God

City Aight Review by Matt Damico

Last December, Australian group City Aight released their album, "Only a Holy God." The group has a sound that may remind listeners of another, larger Australian church known for its music, but that should not be cause for pause. These songs are theologically rich, poetically satisfying, and musically enjoyable and accessible.

Some highlights include "Christ Is Mine Forevermore," a beautiful modern hymn that searches the idea of pain and suffering in the Christian life with a simple melody and a soaring refrain at the end. The album's title track – with a question-and-answer structure akin to Sovereign Grace's "Behold Our God" – is the most anthemic song of the bunch, with a melody both singable and climactic.

"Only a Holy God" is an excellent and well-executed collection of congregational songs. For churches looking for music that combines a contemporary sound with robust, trustworthy lyrics, this album has a number of songs to offer.



Common Sense Economics: What Everyone Should Know About Wealth and Prosperity

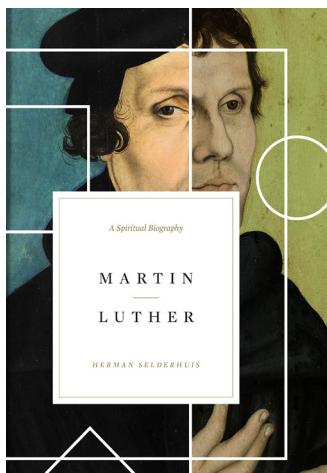
(St. Martin's Press, 2016)

James D. Gwarney, Richard L. Stoup,
and Dwight R. Lee

"I find that students have a limited knowledge of the way economics works. This book explains what happens both in the finances of churches and the debates of politics. It shows what resources are doing, how to help people, how economic decisions create incentives and disincentives — all these practical things about economics are helpfully explored in the work."



ROBERT L. PLUMMER
Professor of New Testament
Interpretation



Luther: A Spiritual Biography

Herman Selderhuis

Review by Gabriel Reyes-Ordeix

“Luther was a problem.” These are the first words to the new spiritual biography of the German reformer by Herman Selderhuis. A contemporary reformer said of him, “This is how God gave him to us, and this is how we will have to use him.” Luther’s work in the gospel and his legacy of Protestantism were never separated from his unique persona, lack of self control and obstinate drive at times, but they by no means got in the way of God’s plan for the church through the reformer’s ministry.

Selderhuis’s work presents the life of Luther divided in 10 chronological stages—from a “soul snatching Devil”—fearing childhood to

a monastic life prompted by St. Anna’s help; from a Romans-heavy tenure in Wittenberg to becoming the embodiment of a disputation against the Catholic Church in the very same place years later; and from a German Bible-translation pioneer to getting married to a former nun.

After the 95 Theses, in a threatening situation between the Catholic Church and those who identified with the reformer, his response was that “People should stop using my name, and instead of calling themselves Lutheran, they should be willing to be called Christian. What is Luther? The doctrine is not mine. And I have not been crucified for anybody. ... How could I, a bag full of maggots, come to the point that people, the children of Christ, call themselves after my unwholesome name?”

In spite of his temperament, frequent lack of humility and quick exasperation, it is the

common opinion that Luther is to be thanked for the church’s return to the Word. John Calvin, in agreement with this, wrote, “We must, and we will take him the way he is, because it was Luther who gave the gospel back to us.” Furthermore, he says that if everyone were to call Luther a devil, even then he would have honored him as a unique servant of God.

Luther was convinced that he had not sought the role of reformer. Rather, he presented himself as “Without being aware of it, God pushed me into working with the gospel. ... The wisdom of God is greater than that of people. He simply blinded me as you would put blinders on a horse who must run on a racetrack. ... I told him in my little cell that if he wanted to play a game with me, he should do that for himself. ... He has powerfully heard this prayer.”

(Crossway 2017, \$30.00)

Greek For Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving New Testament Greek

Robert L. Plummer and Benjamin L. Merkle

Review by Annie Corser

In seminary culture, most students are intimidated at the task of mastering the biblical languages. It takes hours of memorizing vocabulary, paradigms, and the exceptions to the rules. However, for a Christian, the goal of learning Greek and Hebrew is to be able to read Scripture in its original language without needing to rely on outside commentaries or dictionaries. *Greek For Life* has this goal in mind and provides readers with practical tools to, as its title says, help someone “learn, retain, and revive” their New Testament Greek.

“The study of Greek is not an end in itself,” the authors write. “The goal of learning Greek is first and foremost born out of a desire to behold unhindered the grandest sight: God himself.”

From the first page the authors set up the goal of learning Greek as “to know the God who has revealed himself through his Word.” One could argue that is the same goal of their book: To point readers to have a greater passion and

understanding of God. Secondary goals are to encourage readers to be faithful in their ministries and to recognize the privilege of learning Greek. Each chapter is filled with testimonials and quotes from students and historical figures in order to act as cheerleaders and encouragers for readers not sure if working on their Greek is worth it.

Studying Greek takes discipline and commitment. This book combines teaching experience and research about habits and tips for better studying methods. While it is practical in nature, it provides support through facts and experiences. Plummer and Merkle recommend a self-assessment for each reader — including tracking habits and internet use.

“Perhaps one of the benefits of assessing our time is to cause us to face up to what we really love,” the authors write. “We say we wish we had more time to read the Bible and pray, but it is what we actually do that shows what we want to do.”

In a culture of instant gratification and information overload, it is easy to blame our distraction on outside forces, but each reader makes a choice about how to use each minute of each day. With this in mind, readers are encouraged to take specific steps to battle distraction including “unfollowing persons or feeds” that do not discuss matters of eternal value and “install a software program or smartphone app”

that allows you to control and monitor your internet use. Such apps include Moment, Freedom (for iPhone), and Cheeky, Quality Time, and Focus Lock (for Android).

In addition to fighting distractions, the book also provides tips for better review strategies. Among them includes the advice to use as many senses as possible while review. This includes our eyesight as we read, our hearing as we speak and listen to vocab words, our hands as we write, and even singing.

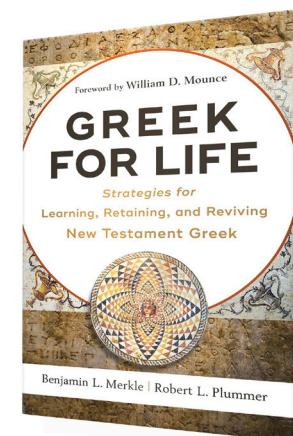
A major help for those retaining and reviving their Greek is to have a community to study with, challenge them, and to hold them accountable in setting attainable goals and working toward them.

“God created us to live in community. How foolish we are to attempt life or ministry alone, or to think that we can persevere in Greek by ourselves,” they write.

For readers seeking to “revive” their Greek, the authors point them back to understanding why they should work to recover their Greek. This vision casting points back to the main goal of learning Greek: to know God.

“Shame and regret do not provide lasting motivation, so take those emotions to the Lord in prayer,” they write. “Be infected with a burning passion to be as close as possible to the Spirit-inspired words of the apostles.”

(Baker Academic 2017, \$19.99)



“Perhaps one of the benefits of assessing our time is to cause us to face up to what we really love. We say we wish we had more time to read the Bible and pray, but it is what we actually do that shows what we want to do.”



For the long haul

ROBERT PLUMMER PROVIDES TOOLS FOR USING GREEK FOR LIFE IN HIS NEW BOOK

By Annie Corser

EDITOR'S NOTE: Below, Robert L. Plummer, professor of New Testament interpretation, talks with *Towers* writer Annie Corser about his new book, *Greek for Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving New Testament Greek*.

AC: How did this book come about?

RP: This book, like most books I've written, was not necessarily planned. My good friend Ben Merkle who started the Ph.D. program here with me in 1997, asked me specifically, "Would you like to co-write this book with me?" So it's not something I really had on the radar, but we both love teaching Greek. We started teaching Greek together in 1997 as Ph.D. students. We love seeing students ignited with the passion for learning Greek. We like to make it fun. So it just seems like whenever Ben asks me to do

something with him, it's hard to turn down. So we did it, and it's a little different from other books I've written. It's very conversational. It very much reads more like a magazine or a newspaper. My most recent description of it to try to explain it to people quickly is it's like your life coach for the Greek language. So you may be taking a class, you may be studying Greek on your own with a textbook, but you sort of need someone to come in, your wingman, your life coach, who's going to say, "Okay, this is how you can learn this quickly, these are the

things that are going to distract you. Here's how you stay in it for life. Don't forget this is important. Here's a devotional. Knowing Greek really matters. Here's an inspiring quote from John Calvin. Here's what John Piper has to say. Here's from a student five years ago." We also included a chapter for those who have left Greek and have abandoned it. It includes inspiring stories of Dan Wallace and how he got encephalitis and forgot all of his Greek and had to relearn Greek from his own textbook as he was teaching it. A lot of pastors I run into are ashamed

that they got so busy that some of their knowledge of Greek or much of it has slipped, and they don't want that to be the case, but they don't really know how to get back. So this book is intended for the beginning student to really learn how to learn it and keep it. It's intended for the current student because we even have a chapter on what to do in your summer and winter breaks to make sure you don't lose it and you progress. It is for the graduate who either wants to stay in it and is at a good place now, or (more frequently) has moved away and is trying to bring it back.

AC: You said pastors you talked to are ashamed of losing their Greek, how do you see that shame affect them?

RP: I'm a Greek professor, so when I meet our graduates 10 years later, I'll sometimes say kindly, "Are you staying in the Greek text?" or something like that. Or people, through the Daily Dose of Greek, people I've never met will email me and say, "I graduated from seminary and I took Greek, but I got so busy in pastoral ministry I let it slide and I didn't know how to get it back. But I found this and I just do a little every day and I've been doing it two or three years, and I can read Greek. I'm so excited. It wasn't a waste!" I think part of it is when people first go into pastoral ministry, they're often overwhelmed by the new lifestyle, preparing weekly messages and getting to know the people. So the tyranny of the urgent takes over and if they haven't developed good habits, they sometimes lose what they really value. We live in a distracted society, and the book speaks about how our brains are wired to respond to new information, so with people there's this sort of self-reinforcing neurological loop, where people get into checking Facebook and looking at Instagram or these kinds of things and really wasting a lot of time that they don't realize. Part of the book is looking at some of this research and thinking about how to bring structure into your life to choose to do the things you value most for the long haul.

AC: Do you notice current students also battle that same guilt and shame?

RP: It's less common because they have the assistance of external structures. They have the structure of classes and the structure of curriculum that often is guiding them through, but you do sometimes find students who allow the demands of other classes crowd out their Greek and Hebrew

habits, and I tell students it really doesn't take that much. Honestly, if you're in Greek five or 10 minutes a day, you can maintain a really good working knowledge. But for the same reason people can't floss their teeth regularly or exercise regularly, I think quite honestly a lot of this has more to do with habit and distraction than knowledge of Greek, so that's why much of the book deals with how to develop habits, how to avoid distractions, and how to think critically about how we're spending our time. With the limited time we have, how do we use that effectively?

“I hope the book helps people, ignites them with a passion for lifelong reading of the Greek New Testament. That includes increased skills, ease in learning, inspiring stories, vision for where they want to go and how to get there.”

AC: How important are communities of accountability and how can students pursue that?

RP: I think that's very important. Obviously, the model we are given in Scripture is that we should not forsake assembling of ourselves together. The author of Hebrews says we should join together regularly in fellowship, and Jesus founded the church through his apostles. The vision we have for the Christian life is a vision of community, and I think that's true academically as well. We need other people. We help pull each other along. This is why people pay a lot of money for personal trainers: They can't exercise like they

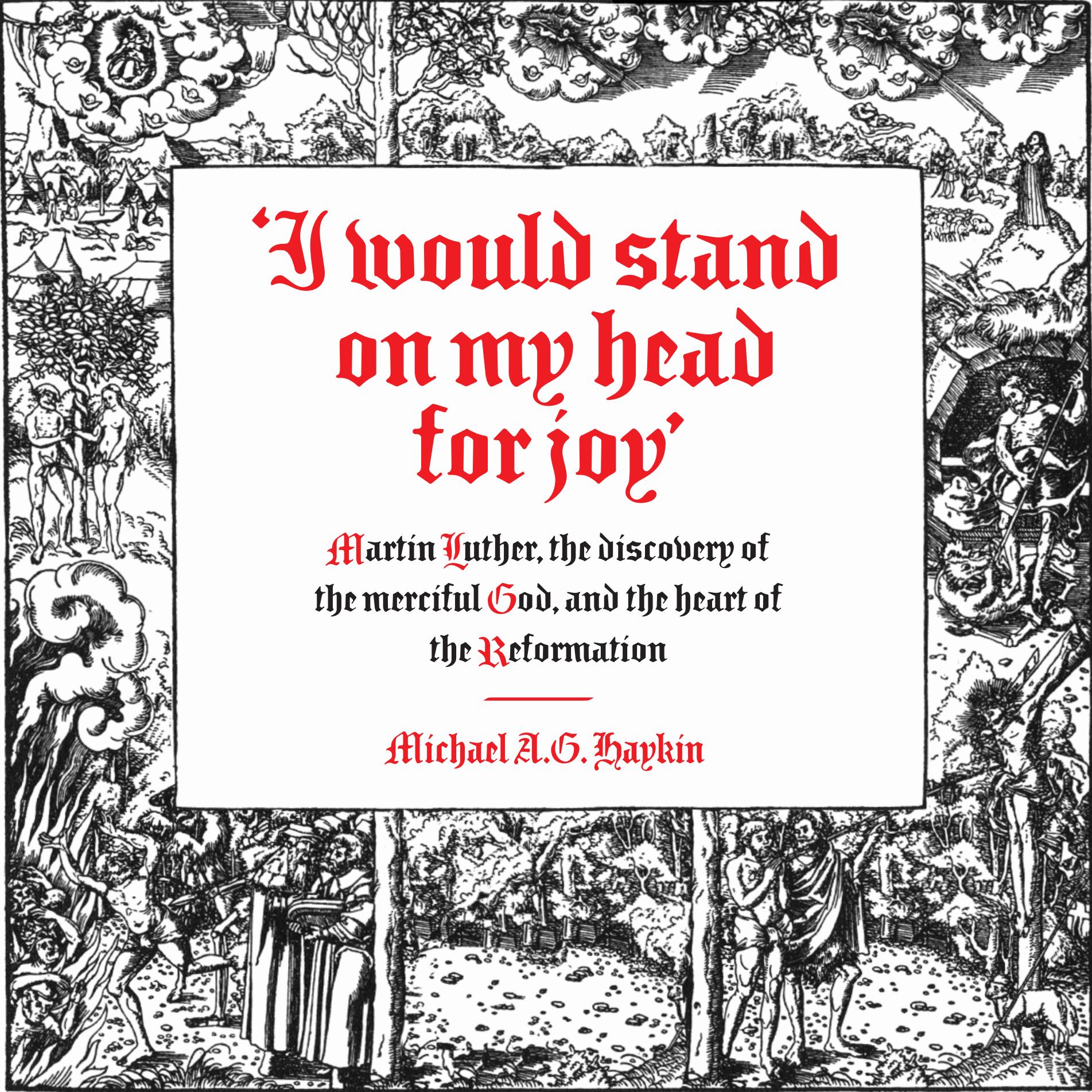
want on their own. They need someone to help them. Why do people join exercise classes? Why do people find Bible studies so beneficial? Not only for the accountability but also for the insights from other people. It's never been easier to have these communities digitally, electronically, remotely. There are Facebook groups mentioned in the book. There's Daily Dose of Greek. There are other means of remaining in fellowship with people even if you're on the other side of the world where you're kept in Greek together, you're journeying together, but obviously here on campus, there are student reading groups. I think few people can succeed in the long run of staying in their Greek and Hebrew unless they have some way of journeying with others through that.

AC: What do you hope readers take away from this book?

RP: I hope the book helps people, ignites them with a passion for lifelong reading of the Greek New Testament. That includes increased skills, ease in learning, inspiring stories, vision for where they want to go and how to get there, so again, like a personal trainer for an exercise program, this is your personal trainer for Greek. You may know, "Well, I'd like to be in shape, I'd like to go to the gym. Why don't I do it?" So this is a book that says, "Hey, let's get you where you need to be with Greek for the trajectory of the rest of your ministry."

AC: What is the purpose of the quotes?

RP: In my own study of Greek, I've always found quotes from historical figures, and not only for Greek but almost anything, to be enduring in my memory. So when Martin Luther talks about the value of the languages, or Calvin, or Wesley, there's a richness and a depth to their perspective. So for years I've collected these, and I know other people who have collected these quotes. We got a big file from Peter Gentry that he had collected and some from other friends. I asked former students to give feedback on what was helpful, so you'll see a few of them in there. So I think it's just surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. We also included devotionals at the end of each chapter where there's a text and the purpose of that is to say, "Hey, knowing the Greek and studying the text really makes a difference." It's a constant reminder that this is worth doing, because you can't engage in theological questions at the deepest level until you're looking at the original text.



**'I would stand
on my head
for joy'**

**Martin Luther, the discovery of
the merciful God, and the heart of
the Reformation**

Michael A.G. Haykin



n the late 1880s, the church historian Philip Schaff (1819–1893) noted that the “Reformation was a republication of primitive Christianity, and the inauguration of modern Christianity. This makes it, next to the Apostolic age, the most important and interesting portion of church history.”¹ And central to the Reformation in its beginnings is its pathfinder, namely, Martin Luther (1483–1546). One might well ask why Luther, in particular, is seen as the central figure of the Reformation when there are other good choices available — Huldreich Zwingli, for example, or John Calvin. It was Luther’ rediscovery of a central doctrine of the New Testament, justification by faith alone, that sparked the Reformation. Although this doctrine had not been totally lost in the Middle Ages — French pre-Reformer Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples (1455–1536) was preaching it before Luther — it was Luther’s experience that gripped the hearts and minds of a generation. Luther rightly viewed the obscurity into which this key doctrine had fallen in the Middle Ages as having had detrimental effects on the health of the church of his day. For Luther, justification by faith alone is “the principal doctrine of Christianity” and its opposite — the idea that one can be approved by God on the basis of one’s faith and good works — is the “fundamental principle” of the world and the devil.² “Whoever departs from the article of justification,” Luther plainly said, “does not know God.”³ And as he concluded more than 20 years after this experience of rediscovering the truth of justification by faith alone: “if this article [of justification] stands, the church stands, if it falls, the church falls.”⁴

‘Walled around with the terror and horror of sudden death’: Luther’s early experience

There were various voices raised in protest at the spiritual darkness caused by the loss of the doctrine of justification by faith alone — John Wycliffe (c.1330-1384) and the Lollards, for example, or Jan Hus (d.1415) and the Hussites — but a lasting Reformation did not occur until Martin Luther was raised up as a pathfinder of reform in the second decade of the 16th century.

Luther was born in Saxony in 1483, the eldest son of a fairly successful businessman, Hans Luther, who was the owner of several mine shafts and copper smelts. Hans wanted a better life for his son than he had. So he sent him, when he was of age, to Erfurt University, where Martin graduated with a M.A. in 1505. His father encouraged him to go on to get a master’s degree in law, but on July 2, 1505, Martin had an experience that changed the entire course of not only his own personal story, but also the history of the Church. He had been home for the summer and was returning to Erfurt on foot, when, about half a mile from the city gates of Erfurt a storm broke. In the words of John M. Todd:

Thunder clouds had built up, and suddenly the lightning flashed, a bolt striking right beside Martin who was knocked to the ground, though unhurt, in terror he shouted out: “Beloved St Anne! I will become a monk.” St. Anne was the patron saint of miners; Martin had heard prayers to her throughout his childhood perhaps more than to any other saint. ...In later years he described himself at the moment when the lightning struck as “walled around with the terror and horror of sudden death.”⁵

Twelve days later, on July 17, 1505, Luther knocked at the gate of the Augustinian order in Erfurt and asked to be accepted into their monastic ranks. When he later told his father Hans of his decision, his father was quite angry that his son was not continuing with his studies.

He asked Martin, “Do you not know that it is commanded to honour father and mother?” Luther’s response was that his terror in the thunderstorm and St. Anne’s saving him from death had led him to become a monk. “I hope it was not the devil!” his father replied.⁶

‘I would stand on my head for joy’: Luther’s search for a gracious God

And so Luther became a monk, a member of the Order of Augustinian Eremites, one of the strictest monastic orders in Europe. He entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt to find spiritual peace and salvation. But for nearly 10 years genuine peace eluded Luther. He feared God might have predestined him to destruction. He often imagined Christ sitting in judgement over him at the Last Day. In fact, at Wittenberg, where Luther was now studying, there was a stone carving of Christ as Judge with two swords coming out of his mouth. Because of its terrible severity, Luther could not bear to look at this image, and would hurry past it on his way to daily prayer shielding his eyes with his hand.

To find peace with God, Luther zealously confessed every sin he could think of. He would confess every day, sometimes up to six hours a day. Luther had been taught that the moment the priest whispered in the confessional “I now absolve thee,” all of his sins were forgiven. But Luther was never certain that he had been fully forgiven. Always present was the fear: *Have I confessed every sin?* Then came a discovery even more distressing to Luther—there are sins which people commit that are not even known to them. But how could these be confessed if they were not known? Luther re-doubled his efforts and threw himself into all-night vigils, great bouts of fasting — all to find forgiveness and peace with God. As he once said:

I was indeed a pious monk and kept the rules of my order so strictly that I can say: If ever a monk gained heaven through monkery, it should have been I. All my monastic brethren who knew me will testify to this. I would have martyred myself to death with fasting, praying, reading, and other good works had I remained a monk much longer.⁷

Luther sought to find peace with God through such works, but he was troubled by an overpowering fear of God’s judgement:

...My conscience could never achieve certainty but was always in doubt and said: “You have not done this correctly. You were not contrite enough. You omitted this in your confession.” Therefore the longer I tried to heal my uncertain, weak, and troubled conscience with human traditions, the more uncertain, weak, and troubled I continually made it.⁸



In plainer language Luther later stated: “If I could believe that God was not angry with me, I would stand on my head for joy.”⁹

‘A passive righteousness’: Luther’s discovery of a merciful God

By 1514, Luther obtained a doctorate and had been installed as professor of biblical theology at the relatively young University of Wittenberg. During that year, the academic year 1514–1515,¹⁰ he was teaching a course on the Psalms. In his lectures and studies he came to Psalm 71, and was struck by the psalmist’s cry in verse two, “Deliver me in your righteousness, and cause me to escape.” Now, for Luther, the righteousness of God spoke of God’s awesome holiness and his judgment of sinners, not deliverance. Mystified by the psalmist’s language, Luther decided to study what the Scriptures have to say about this phrase, “the righteousness of God.” He was led, in God’s providence, to Romans 1:16–17: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” Here is Luther’s testimony:

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I turned to... the following words: “In it [the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’” There I began to understand the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous live through a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: The righteousness of God which is revealed by the gospel, is a passive righteousness with which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates.¹¹

Now what was Luther’s discovery? Namely this: The righteousness of God mentioned in Romans 1:16–17 is not an attribute of God, but that righteousness, namely the righteousness of Christ that he achieved in totally fulfilling the law of God, which God imputes to the person who puts his or her trust (*fiducia*) in Christ. And it is on this basis of this imputed righteousness that God declares such a person to be righteous. In other words, the decisive discovery of the Reformation was “Christ our righteousness.”¹² Prior to this experience Luther knew that he could never obtain the righteousness that God demanded in his law, and that one day he would be bound to face the withering wrath of God. By this experience, though, Luther realized that salvation was not at all a matter of his attaining the perfect standard of righteousness which God demanded, but simply, by faith, relying upon Christ’s righteousness. Christ alone among men and women has never sinned; he alone has lived a life of perfect righteousness, and he alone has perfectly fulfilled the law and its righteous demands.¹³

What makes this discovery so powerful is that 500 years later, in a very different world culturally, politically, and technologically, we find ourselves needing the same saving grace, for we, like, Luther, are sinners in need of a merciful God.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Repr. Eerdmans Publishing, 1980), VII, Preface.

² Stephen Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1988), 4.

³ Cited R. C. Sproul, “Introduction” to Francis Turretin, *Justification*, trans. George Musgrave Giger and ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (P&R Publishing, 2004), viii.

⁴ Cited Philip H. Eveson, *The Great Exchange: Justification by faith alone in the light of recent thought* (Day One Publications, 1996), 174.

⁵ John M. Todd, *Luther. A Life* (Hamish Hamilton, 1982), 25–26.

⁶ Hans J. Hillerbrand, *The Reformation*. A narrative history related by contemporary observers and participants (Repr. Baker Book House, 1978), 24.

⁷ Hillerbrand, *Reformation*, 24.

⁸ Cited Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and Church’s Faith*, 7.

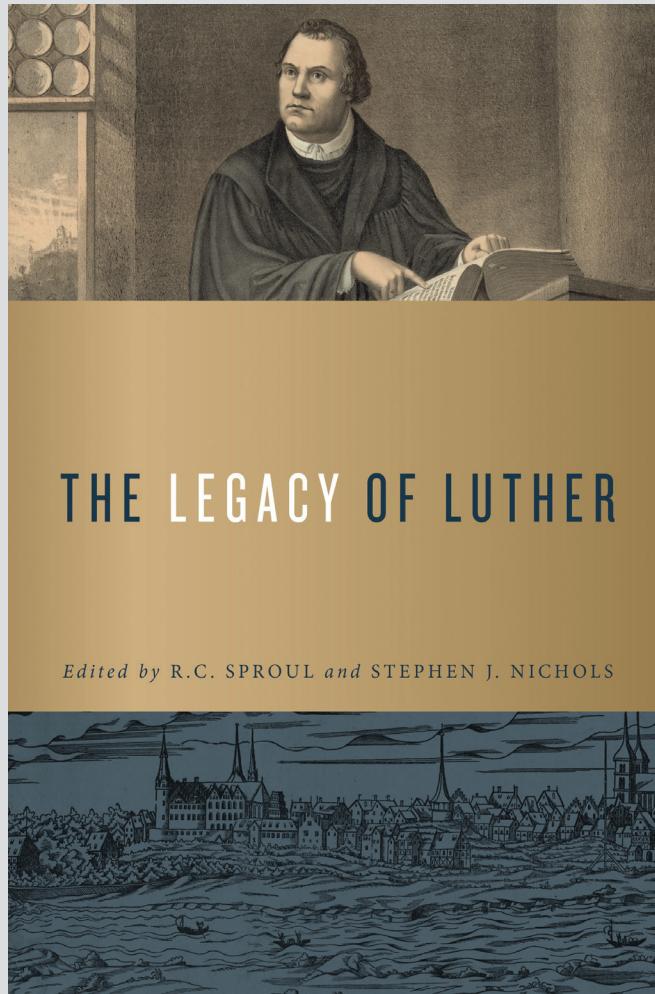
⁹ Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (Doubleday, 1992), 315.

¹⁰ There are some scholars who date this discovery a few years later.

¹¹ Cited Todd, *Luther*, 77–78.

¹² Alan Torrance, “Justification” in Adrian Hastings, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 363.

¹³ See, for instance, 2 Corinthians 5:21.



MEET MARTIN LUTHER

He was the most influential man of his day. The movement that began with his posting of the Ninety-Five Theses reshaped Europe, redirected Christian history, and recovered the truth of God's Word. Five hundred years later, what is Luther's legacy? In this volume, R.C. Sproul, Stephen J. Nichols, and thirteen other scholars and pastors examine his life, teaching, and enduring influence. Meet Martin Luther, the audacious Reformer who, out of love for the truth and the desire to bring it to light, set the world ablaze.

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Questions you've always wanted to ask about the Reformers

with
Shawn D. Wright



The primary Reformers — Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli — all lived during the same time period and were certainly aware of the Reformation movement. How did they view each other?

Luther's antagonism toward Zwingli is quite well-known. At the Marburg Colloquy in 1529, the goal was to unite the Lutherans and the newer Zwinglians, the group that would become known as the Reformed tradition. Luther and Zwingli had been corresponding about the Lord's Supper for about three years at that point, so they generally knew where each other stood. Luther ended up not even being willing to call Zwingli a brother in the faith. For Luther, he thought Zwingli was unwilling to take Scripture at face value — especially the words of Jesus: "This is my body; this is my blood." Luther thought Zwingli was no different than the Catholics in this regard — who had been

sitting in judgement over Scripture with their traditions and not, in Luther's view, listening to the clear words of Scripture.

Zwingli seems to have been hurt by that interaction with Luther more than Luther was with Zwingli. It seems from the evidence that Zwingli was more willing than Luther was to move toward Luther theologically and try to come to an agreement. But Zwingli denied that he had ever been led to his Reformation understanding by Luther, he said his was an independent discovery from his own reading of Erasmus' Greek New Testament.

Calvin was much younger than both of them, but he had great respect for Luther and considered him a father in the faith.

Did Calvin and Luther ever meet in person?

No, they did not. Luther (1483-1546) was older than Calvin (1509-1564). Thus, Luther was a first-generation Reformer

and Calvin a second-generation leader. Calvin did meet with friends of Luther and he developed a good relationship with Philip Melanchthon, who was Luther's younger, contemporary disciple and the one who led the development of Lutheranism after Luther's death.

It was through Melanchthon that Calvin was connected relationally to Luther. Calvin met Melanchthon at the behest of Martin Bucer, the pastor of Strasbourg, who encouraged Calvin to attend colloquies between different groups — Protestant and Catholic.

We look back on this period as the capital-R Reformation, but these were real people experiencing a challenging, real-life situation. From their perspective, there was no cemented "Reformation" period, they were just trying to be

faithful to Scripture. So how did Luther view the many forms this movement took after 1517?

To understand Luther, you have to understand that he was quite an anomaly. Luther loved paradoxes in theology, and I think Luther himself is paradoxical. By nature, he was incredibly conservative and did not want to change anything that did not absolutely have to be changed. We know that because he called the order of worship the Mass and kept the liturgy exactly the same as it had been received from Catholicism, except for changing a word here or there that he thought was essential to the gospel.

So, Luther did not set out to start a new movement, but was very much like a number of predecessors of his who wanted to reform the Catholic church. What he saw that was unique, of course, was that the church needed to be reformed not only in her morals, but also in her doctrine. He thought there were several who preceded

him — especially Augustine — who had the faith at least generally right.

So, when Luther wrote the 95 Theses in 1517, he was not writing as a Protestant; he was writing as someone hoping to reform the church from within. Even in 1520, when he wrote his famous work *The Freedom of the Christian*, he was hopeful because he addressed Pope Leo X with a letter offering, basically, a final olive branch, hoping that the pope will agree to be reconciled. I don't think Luther ever wanted to start a new movement. But, of course, when he was excommunicated by the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* and outlawed at the Diet of Worms because of his Protestantism, the die was cast.

As for his view of Protestantism, such as it was, Luther became frustrated with people like Andreas Karlstadt, Zwingli to a certain degree, and certainly the radical Reformers like the Anabaptists. Luther called them, in his language, the *Schwärmer*, these people who just swarmed around and caused problems, always talking and proclaiming their views but never willing to be taught.

For Luther, these people had too quickly turned away both from Scripture and the tradition of the church, which he feared would cause the laypeople (who did not have access to Scripture) all kinds of personal problems because of how different the Protestant church seemed from the Catholic church. You see Luther's conservatism in his doctrine of the Lord's Supper and baptism — where he is as close to being Catholic as you possibly could be without being Catholic.

We often look back on Luther as a loose cannon, an iconoclast, a “wild boar in the vineyard” who was trying to overturn the conventions of his time. But that's not fully accurate, is it?

No, he is actually very conservative. The key for Luther was that he was troubled by his own conscience. That's a theme running through all his writings. He was driven by an incessant need to be assured of his salvation, to know that on the last day he would be received by the Lord into heaven. That is where his conservatism was able to become progressive.

There were some who had come before

him who said bits and pieces of what Luther said, but he was the one who put it together in a cogent way — arguing that one is justified not by works, but by faith in Christ, and that faith unites us with all the benefits of Christ. That's where Luther was unable to be simply a conservative Catholic. He was unwilling to remain within the Catholic Church when the church refused to uphold this doctrine.



Luther did not set out to start a new movement, but was very much like a number of predecessors of his who wanted to reform the Catholic Church. What he saw that was unique, however, was that the church needed to be reformed not only in its morals, but also in its doctrine.

Much has been written about Luther's anti-Jewish writings, which were employed (perhaps illegitimately) in Nazi propaganda before World War II. The situation is similar to Calvin's Servetus controversy: a very prominent black mark on the character of a man revered by the Protestant church. What do we do with that part of Luther's legacy?

First of all, history — especially church history — is not authoritative, because every person we can possibly study in the history of the church except our Lord is affected by sin. They therefore sin, just as we do, in ways of which they are unaware. One of the values of history is that we can see — perhaps in a clearer way than we can observe it in our contemporaries — the way that their culture, time, and thought forms affected their Christian living. Hopefully we can then turn the gaze upon ourselves and, if we are wise and humble and slow, be able to learn something from them.

At the beginning of Luther's Reformation discovery, he apparently assumed that, now that the gospel had been clearly presented and the promised Messiah had been clearly proclaimed, there would be a massive influx of Jews converting to Christianity. Toward the end of his life, after that didn't happen, I think Luther's primary motivation for what he wrote about Jewish people was an eschatological one — he was frustrated that the clarion call of the gospel had not been accepted by the Jews. That's when he makes some of his grievous statements.

Combined with the fact that toward the end of his life, Luther was pretty sick, some scholars have suggested that Luther's ailments may have affected his outlook on life. He was also frustrated with the way he felt like the Lutheran churches had not grasped the teachings of the Protestant church. So, he was pretty disenchanted with a lot of groups. Of course, I would in no way want to defend what he said about any of those groups, but I think that gives us a little bit of understanding as to why he said those things.

As far as evaluating what he said, I would simply say: He was wrong! But I think he was wrong on a number of other things as well. Again — if we approach history with a humble desire to learn as opposed to looking only for heroes who will always be right, we will benefit more. History is not just those wearing white hats and black hats; there are a lot of gray hats. We have to apply biblical wisdom and humility as we seek to learn from those who have gone before us.

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From Pulaski County to Podolsk, Russia:

MELISSA TUCKER FEELS MOST AT HOME WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

By RuthAnne Irvin

Most of the time, when you hear about someone joining a college faculty, it's a thoroughly happy occasion. For Melissa Tucker, though, it was mixed with tragedy.

Tucker's mother died after battling cancer for several years. The loss of her mother brought her home. As Tucker prayed about moving, she said she "began asking God where I could go in Kentucky and teach from a biblical worldview, get into an elementary classroom, go on mission trips, and train teachers." Boyce College was the answer to those prayers, she said.

Before she started kindergarten, Melissa Tucker knew she wanted to work in a classroom someday. She grew up in Pulaski County, Kentucky, and attended Nancy Elementary School. From first to fourth grade, Tucker learned from several teachers who influenced and encouraged her dream of teaching.

Today, with more than 15 years of teaching experience, Tucker enjoys spending time in both the college and elementary school classroom, investing in students' minds and hearts.

"I love it when they ask a question and I don't know the answer and we have to figure it out together. I think those make the best teaching moments," she said in a recent interview.

Throughout high school, Tucker's dream to teach never waned. She graduated and moved to Virginia to attend Liberty University. After three and a half years of college, Tucker moved back to Pulaski County to complete her student teaching at Nancy Elementary. While working in the Pulaski County school system, she developed a systematic writing curriculum for schools to implement in classrooms, providing a new opportunity for students to learn how to write both creatively but also with structure and guidelines, something the school system



had never done before.

In addition to teaching, Tucker knew she wanted to spend time serving overseas, so she began praying about opportunities to travel and serve. While teaching at Nancy Elementary, a friend called her to ask about her interest in moving to Podolsk, Russia, because they needed a teacher to join their team. Tucker approached her superintendent about the opportunity to leave Nancy Elementary for the year, and what her job would look like when she returned. The superintendent gave her leave, committing to hold her job for when she returned to Kentucky.

Once in Podolsk, Tucker worked with a small church, starting a women's ministry, children's ministry, and watched as the church grew from less than five families

to more than 60. In addition to working with the church, Tucker found opportunities to teach within the school system in Podolsk. During this time, village priests interviewed potential teachers for their local primary schools before they allowed Americans into classrooms. When she interviewed with the priest, he told Tucker to come teach, but also told her that the village school did not provide their own books.

Because she moved with a missions team, Tucker stored more than 30 Bibles in her apartment. She told the priest she had books to use to teach students English, and took children's Bibles into the local school and taught 11th and 12th grade students English.

After her year in the local school, though,

the priest asked Tucker not to return because her methods of teaching included Scripture and sharing the gospel with students, and at that point her team returned to the United States. Tucker returned to Pulaski County to teach for another year, but spent most of her time trying to figure out how to return to Russia. Around the end of the school year, Hinkson Christian Academy called Tucker about a teaching position in a fourth grade classroom - her favorite grade. Hinkson Christian Academy is an English-language primary and secondary school in Moscow, Russia. Tucker interviewed for the job over the phone, accepted it, and went another time to talk with her superintendent, who granted her another year in Russia while keeping her teaching position at Nancy Elementary. This allowed Tucker to move to Russia again with the security of a job when she returned a year later.

"I can see how the Lord has used every step of the way to lead me to this place," she said.

Tucker believes her training in the classroom, on the mission field, and as a professor prepared her to join the Boyce College faculty in a pivotal time for the Teacher Education Program. Teachers need to love teaching, she said, and "The best teachers in higher education for education are teachers who really want to be back in the classroom. That's my heart's desire," she said. "But I can do that here and I can do that in a larger fashion than I could before."

Teaching at Boyce allows Tucker to combine her passion for teaching, missions, and training teachers into one job that she loves.

"It's a job that everyday I sit back and think, 'I can't believe I get to be in this place at this time doing this work,'" she said. "And everyday God reminds me that as long as I lean on him, he's going to allow me to keep doing the things that are my heart's desire."

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT

Luther, Erasmus, and the textual legacy of the Reformation

By Adam Winters



Soon after Martin Luther made public his 95 Theses in 1517, he found a sympathetic ear in Desiderius Erasmus, perhaps the most notable scholar of the Renaissance who made a monumental contribution to biblical studies with his various publication of the Greek New Testament. Erasmus took the initiative in defending the validity of Luther's position by advising others not to attempt to exterminate Luther, but to hear him out in a civilized manner. Although Luther and Erasmus never met face to face, the relationship between the two men became increasingly tense as the Reformation that Luther had set in motion threatened to divide all of Christendom and European nations. In the 1519 letter to Albert of Brandenburg, Erasmus wrote, "I was sorry that Luther's books were published; and when some or other of his writings first came into view, I made every effort to prevent their publication, chiefly because I feared a disturbance might result from them."¹

Luther, heavily influenced by the theology of Augustine, was disturbed by Erasmus' apparent skepticism as to whether Romans 5:12 supported the doctrine of original sin. In a letter to Johann Lang in March of 1517, Luther's expressed his distrust of Erasmus

spirituality: "The human prevails more than the divine in him."² Their differences ultimately culminated in fierce literary combat when Luther endeavored to eviscerate Erasmus's theological arguments for the doctrine of human free will in his definitive work *The Bondage of the Will* (1525). In his frustration with Erasmus, Luther famously declared, "Erasmus is an eel. Only Christ can grab him."³

Nevertheless, Luther also benefited from the labors of Erasmus's textual output. After the Diet of Worms in 1521, Luther spent about three months translating the New Testament into German using Erasmus's second edition of Greek New Testament as his basis.

Erasmus's first edition of the Greek New Testament, titled *Novum Instrumentum*, saw publication in February of 1516, with the biblical text rendered in dual columns of both Greek and Latin. Some of his translation decisions were controversial for diverging from the Latin Vulgate, particularly the exclusion of a direct Trinitarian reference in 1 John 5:7-8 (commonly known as the Johannine Comma), the aforementioned rendering of Romans 5:12, and his paradigm-shifting verbal choice in Matthew 4:17 as "Repent" (rather than "Do penance."⁴ The publication of the first

edition of his *Annotations on the New Testament* came the following month, a justification for his translation that identified the errors in the Vulgate and appealed to multiple Church Fathers such as Ambrose, Augustine, Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome. Erasmus prepared four more revised editions of the Greek New Testament, which were published under the altered title of *Novum Testamentum* in 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535.⁵

Southern Seminary is privileged to own authentic copies of Erasmus's 1522 *Novum Testamentum* (third edition) and the corresponding volume of his *Annotations*, both volumes having been previously owned by the seminary's founder James Petigru Boyce. The 1522 edition is notable for Erasmus's reinsertion of the Johannine Comma despite reservations as to its original authenticity. William Tyndale used this edition as the basis for translating the New Testament into English in 1526, and it subsequently guided the translations of both the Geneva Bible and the King James Version.

Eels are known for being slippery, but both 1522 Erasmus volumes are available for viewing upon request in the Archives and Special Collections on the second floor of the James P. Boyce Centennial Library.

FOOTNOTES

¹J. Bronowski and Bruce Mazlish, *The Western Intellectual Tradition: From Leonardo to Hegel* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1960), 71; Erasmus, "Letter to Albert of Brandenburg," in *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus*, ed. John C. Olin (New York: Fordham University Press, 1975), 137.

²Charles Trinkaus, "Introduction" to *Collected Works of Erasmus: Controversies*, Volume 76, ed. Charles Trinkaus, trans. Peter Macardle and Clarence H. Miller (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999), xxvi.

³E. Gordon Rupp, "The Erasmus Enigma," in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, ed. E. Gordon Rupp and Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 2.

⁴*Collected Works of Erasmus: Annotations on Romans*, Volume 56, ed. Robert Sider, trans. John Payne (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1994), 137-163; Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 139; *Collected Works of Erasmus: Paraphrase on Matthew*, Volume 45, ed. Robert Sider, trans. Dean Simpson (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2008), 79.

⁵Albert Rabil, Jr., *Erasmus and the New Testament: The Mind of a Christian Humanist* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1972), 92.

Theology Forum

WHAT IS AN UNDER-APPRECIATED LEGACY OF THE REFORMATION? ANSWERED BY SHAWN D. WRIGHT

The **priesthood of all believers** and the doctrine of vocation, or calling, is one of the most under-appreciated theological legacies of the Reformation. That doctrine overturned centuries of medieval Catholic separation of the clergy from the laypeople.

The Reformers taught that God's calling on an individual Christian is significant. In other words, a Christian can honor the Lord and be just as approved by him when they change a dirty diaper or plow a field as they are when they prepare a sermon. The Reformation taught us that, if you are a serious Christian who loves Jesus, you can honor him equally when you labor as a business owner, serve as a stay-at-home mom, or work as a bricklayer. It really does not matter. God's calling (Latin: *vocatio*) is different for different people. But each one is significant and should be done joyfully in faith to the Lord's glory.

For a long period of time in the Catholic church, when the church received the Eucharist, the laity had only been given the bread and not the wine. The Catholic church spoke of

giving Communion in only one kind, because both the flesh and blood of Christ were contained in the bread, so the laypeople didn't need the cup.

The practical reason for that was there were a lot of times over the centuries when the chalice of wine was dropped during the Communion service, so it was just easier not to do that. With Luther and those following him, all of the sudden the laity who had not been given the cup for centuries were able to receive both the bread and the wine — which had the earth-shattering effect of reminding them that they were not different in their standing in Christ than the clergy.

The divide between the clergy and the laity had existed for centuries and been propagated in all sorts of ways: The clergy dressed differently,

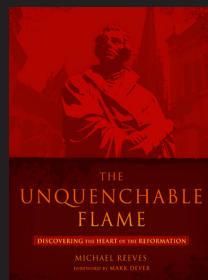
they were supposed to know Latin (a language the common people did not speak), they said the Mass in Latin, sometimes with their backs to the people in the pews. All of the sudden, Luther and Calvin said, "No — it's significant for you to love Christ and seek to honor him in whatever your calling is, and the Lord is as pleased with you as he is pleased with the pastor preaching or the theologian writing a systematic theology."

They could now hear sermons in their own language, receive both the bread and wine during Communion, and be instructed that God cared deeply about the nitty-gritty of their lives. The Reformation doctrine of Christian vocation may have been one of the most innovative and important teachings propagated by the Reformers.

CRITICAL TO THE LIFE OF ANY SEMINARY IS HEALTHY THEOLOGICAL CONVERSATION AMONG ITS STUDENT BODY. TO THAT END, THE STAFF AT TOWERS WILL REGULARLY SET ASIDE A SECTION OF THE ISSUE FOR A SHORT CONVERSATION ON A THEOLOGICAL TOPIC WITH FACULTY OF SOUTHERN SEMINARY. IF YOU HAVE ANY BURNING QUESTIONS FOR A PROFESSOR, EMAIL TOWERS@SBTS.EDU AND WE WILL TRY TO GET IT ANSWERED IN A FUTURE ISSUE.

One book about the Reformation

MAYBE YOU'RE READING THIS ISSUE OF TOWERS ON, SAY, OCTOBER 24. YOU HAVE A WEEK TO READ SOMETHING INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING AND SPIRITUALLY ENCOURAGING ON THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION BEFORE THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY ON OCTOBER 31. BUT WHAT TO PULL OFF THE SHELF? SHAWN WRIGHT HAS YOU COVERED.



MICHAEL REEVES,
*THE UNQUENCHABLE
FLAME*

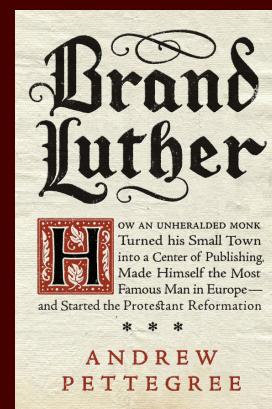
"Incredibly readable. Reeves gets to the heart of the Reformation, which was Luther's question: 'How do I know that I will be going to heaven?'"

A Way-Too-Short Book Excerpt

FROM *BRAND LUTHER*, BY ANDREW PETTEGREE

"In 1519 Luther took a crucial initiative to bring to Wittenberg an experienced printer who could keep up with the demand for his work, and from that point on he took a leading role in direction production within the city. Most important, he took pains that his own precious, original writings were spread around the growing number of print shops to ensure that they all remained viable.

This is a crucial part of the story of Luther's Reformation, and it is one not often told. It was not just about the sheer volume of demand for Luther's work, though this was also impressive. It was also the



case that, working with his printers, Luther transformed the look of the book. In this he had the crucial support of Lucas Cranach, court painter in Wittenberg and a significant force in the book industry as well. His designs clothed Luther's works in a new and distinctive livery, immediately recognizable on a crowded bookstall. The result was the development of a form of book that was itself a powerful representative of the movement — bold, clear, and recognizably distinct from what had gone before. This was Brand Luther, and its success lay at the heart of the tumultuous events that convulsed his homeland in the years after 1517. It lies at the heart of Luther's success, and of the transforming impact of the Reformation."

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Questions? Contact James MacDonald
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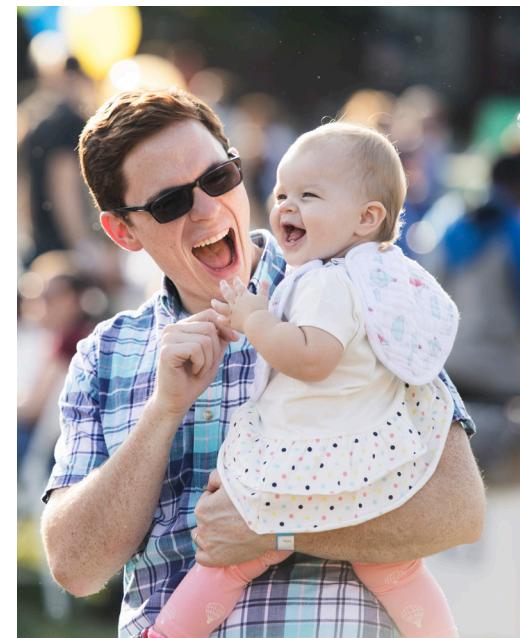


A
SOUTHERN
• 2017 •
CIRCUS
FALL FESTIVAL

Fall Festival 2017

PHOTOS BY EMIL HANDKE, ALI MARSH & FREDDY SINHARAU

Nearly 8,000 students, staff, and their families from Southern Seminary filled the campus for the 2017 Fall Festival — this year themed “A Southern Circus.” The campus came alive with the sites, sounds, and tastes of a true circus, with clowns on stilts, “strongmen” and acrobats wandering through the crowd, a merry-go-round, iconic carnival games, and a circus-themed fireworks finale. The once-a-year event represents the seminary’s investment in hundreds of families in the Southern community preparing for ministry.



VOICES FROM THE CROWD



Kimberly DeBruyn Milton

Another fun Fall Festival in the books!

[#sbtsfallfestival](#)
[#southerncircus](#)
[#goodtoseefriends](#)
[#heartstillachesforthosewhohavemoved](#)
[#youknowwhoyouare](#)



Amanda Stofer

Wonderful time at Southern's Fall Festival!!

[#SouthernCircus](#)



Danielle Crotts

Our campus turned into a beautiful circus last night for Fall Festival. I thought running an inflatable slide was just as fun as walking around my amazing school with some amazing friends! [#southerncircus](#)

[#lifeatboyce](#) [#sbtsfallfestival](#)



CirqueLouis

Our performers looked amazing tonight at [#SouthernCircus!](#) We are so proud of them.

October 2017

SEMINARY CLINIC HOURS

Staff, students, and their immediate family members are provided a health maintenance program through the clinic, located on the second floor of the campus center, Honeycutt 213.

Monday-Friday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

More information and price listings are on the clinic website, sbts.edu/clinic.

MORNING CHILDCARE

Parents can drop off their children at the Health and Rec Center (second floor of Honeycutt) for morning childcare up to three days per week, 9 a.m. – noon, per federal law. The cost is \$10 per child, ages 6 weeks – 10 years.

SBTS LIST

SBTS Student Life, Campus Technology, and Communications are excited to bring you SBTS List, which allows students and student spouses within the seminary community to market items and services in a safe environment. Think Craigslist, but exclusive to the SBTS community. You must have either a student or faculty/staff email address or be the spouse of a student in order to create a profile and buy/sell items on SBTS List. Register at sbtslist.com.

SEWING CLASS

A sewing class led by Barbara Gentry is open for anyone connected to the seminary. The class meets in Fuller 34 every Monday from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER

10

TUESDAY
HERITAGE WEEK

HB CHARLES JR.
ALUMNI MEMORIAL CHAPEL

11

WEDNESDAY
R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.
BROADUS CHAPEL

12

THURSDAY
HERITAGE WEEK >

R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.
ALUMNI MEMORIAL CHAPEL

13

FRIDAY
SBTS PREVIEW DAY

BOYCE COLLEGE FALL PARTY

17

TUESDAY
MICHAEL POHLMAN
ALUMNI MEMORIAL CHAPEL

19

THURSDAY
RYAN FULLERTON
ALUMNI MEMORIAL CHAPEL

20

FRIDAY
BOYCE COLLEGE PREVIEW DAY
AND FRIDAY NIGHT FIRES

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

24

TUESDAY
R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.
ALUMNI MEMORIAL CHAPEL

26

THURSDAY
JIM HAMILTON
ALUMNI MEMORIAL CHAPEL

27

FRIDAY
CHURCH PLANTING 101

31

TUESDAY
HERE WE STAND:
THE REFORMATION AT
500 CONFERENCE
HELD THROUGH NOV. 2

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18

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Mahaney



Duncan



DeYoung

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3

Questions

– with –



ROD DREHER

Author of *The Benedict Option*
and senior editor at *The American Conservative*

1

What is one argument you make in *The Benedict Option* that has been broadly misunderstood or misrepresented in media coverage?

Oh, this one is as easy as it is frustrating: People thinking that I'm calling for Christians to head for the hills and build compounds to hide out from the world. The book doesn't say that at all, but you'd be surprised to see how many people criticize the book for saying that, even though they haven't read the thing. It's just forehead-slapping stuff.

What we believers today have to do is to live in this post-Christian world in such a way that we develop the inner strength to suffer anything before betraying God. That requires us to live with a certain distance from the mainstream. If we are going to be salt and light to the world, we cannot allow ourselves to be assimilated to its ways.

2

What was your favorite Louisville restaurant during your visit?

Jack Fry's. Do they have any other restaurants in Louisville? None that I care to know about. Though I can't miss the opportunity to say how much I enjoyed eating at the Louisville branch of the Tex-Mex chain Chuy's.

Boyce College professor Denny Burk took me there for green chile enchiladas. They were hot as blazes, and delicious. I especially enjoyed how poor professor Burk had to order a glass of milk to cool off his burning mouth. Bless his heart, that old boy's been out of south Louisiana too long.

3

You spent several years as a film critic for various publications, including the *New York Post*. What movie received the highest praise from you?

The one film that stands out in my mind today is *Fargo*, the 1996 Coen brothers film. It's a fairly violent drama — with elements of pitch-black comedy — about how a ratty little car salesman's attempt to extort his wealthy father-in-law goes very, very wrong. I've seen the movie seven or eight times, and it remains one of my all-time favorites. Aside from being a compelling story, I have been fascinated all these years with what the story has to say about sin. There is something in that film about the mystery of iniquity, but also the heroism of ordinary decent people who just get up and do their jobs. Funny, but I still don't know why *Fargo*, of all the movies I saw as a professional critic, has stuck with me.