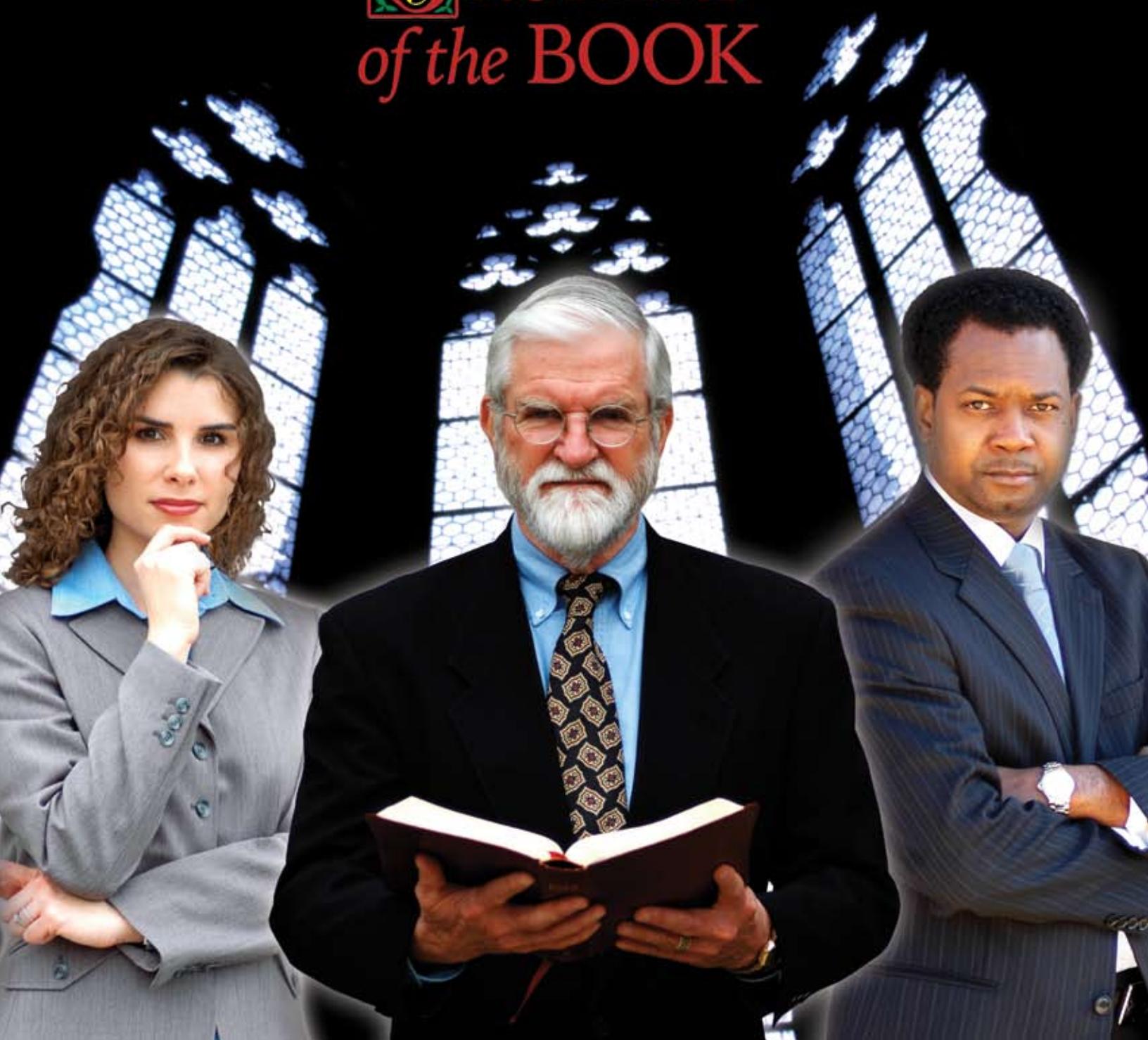


JOURNAL

of BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL  2006

BROKERS *of the* BOOK





JOURNAL

of BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL + 2006

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Between Two Paintings

Several times each year, I have the privilege of meeting with prospective students who visit Beeson Divinity School to sit in classes, worship in chapel and meet other students as part of their vocational discernment. I enjoy giving these special guests a tour of my office as a way of introducing them to our school.

I have lots of personal memorabilia on display—favorite family photos, my certificate of ordination, graduate school diplomas and the like. There is a display of recent books by our prolific Beeson faculty, bronze castings of Lottie Moon and William Carey, a beautiful Renaissance print that shows St. Augustine at prayer with a gaggle of demons nipping at his heels, and a Martin Luther bobbing doll I received as a gift from a special friend.



▲ William Tyndale, translator of the Bible into English, points to a copy of the Scriptures in this ancient painting that hangs on one wall of Dean George's office.

All these items are important to me, but I place special focus on two paintings that are mounted at opposite ends of my office. One shows William Tyndale, translator of the Bible into English, looking straight ahead with piercing brown eyes while he holds the Bible in one hand and points to it with his other. Tyndale translated the Bible into vigorous English from the best Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of his day, and most of his renderings were carried over into the King James Version in 1611. Tyndale did much of his work on the run, dodging spies and agents of Henry VIII, who tried to stop his illegal project of giving the Bible to the people in the common tongue. In 1535, Tyndale was arrested and imprisoned near Brussels, and, in the following year, he was strangled and burned at the stake, crying out, it is said, "Oh God, open the King of England's eyes!"

On the opposite wall, just above my desk, hangs a copy of Matthias Grünewald's famous depiction of the crucifixion, originally painted for a hospice at Isenheim. Grünewald was an early Reformation painter from the Rhineland who may possibly have embraced the message of Luther near the end of his life. Mel Gibson could have been inspired by such a painting, for it shows Jesus in the throes of his dying agony on the cross with his fingers outstretched like spikes into the darkness that surrounded Calvary. Just to the right of the cross stands John the Baptist with an open Bible in one hand, pointing with the other to the tortured figure of Christ. In faded red letters behind John are the Latin words: *Illum oportet crescere, me autem minue*, "He must increase, while I must decrease" (John 3:30).

I then ask the students to turn around and look once more at the portrait of Tyndale pointing to the Bible, the written Word of God—and once again to the image of Grünewald's John, with his long, bony finger pointing toward Christ on the cross. This, I say, is what we are to be about as believers, as ministers of the gospel, as a theological school committed to the mission of preparing God-



▲ In Matthias Grünewald's famous depiction of the crucifixion, John the Baptist, with an open Bible in one hand, points his long bony finger toward Christ on the cross.

called men and women for service in the church of Jesus Christ. All our work, our preaching, teaching, pastoral care, evangelism, worship, our witness in the public arena on behalf of "the least of these," all that we do, all that we are called to do, takes place in the theological space between these two paintings, these two pointings.

There is no dichotomy between Christ and the Bible, the book and the cross. We study the Bible seriously not merely as an academic discipline (though it is that, too) but as an inspired message of the God who revealed himself in personal self-disclosure to prophets and apostles of old, and who still, through his Holy Spirit, illuminates hearts and minds humbly submitted to him. The Bible is precious because it points us to Jesus Christ, God's Incarnate Son, the Living Lord whom we worship, adore and serve. †

Timothy George



BROKERS of the BOOK

Lessons from Luther for Pastors Today

by John Piper

REIKO OBERMAN, whose biography was most helpful to me, said, “What is new in Luther is the notion of absolute obedience to the Scriptures against any authorities, be they popes or councils.” That’s what’s new. Luther, in 1539, commenting on Psalm 119, wrote, “In this Psalm, David always says that he will speak, think, talk, hear, read, day and night, constantly, but about nothing else than God’s word and commandments, for God wants to give you his Spirit only through the external word.”

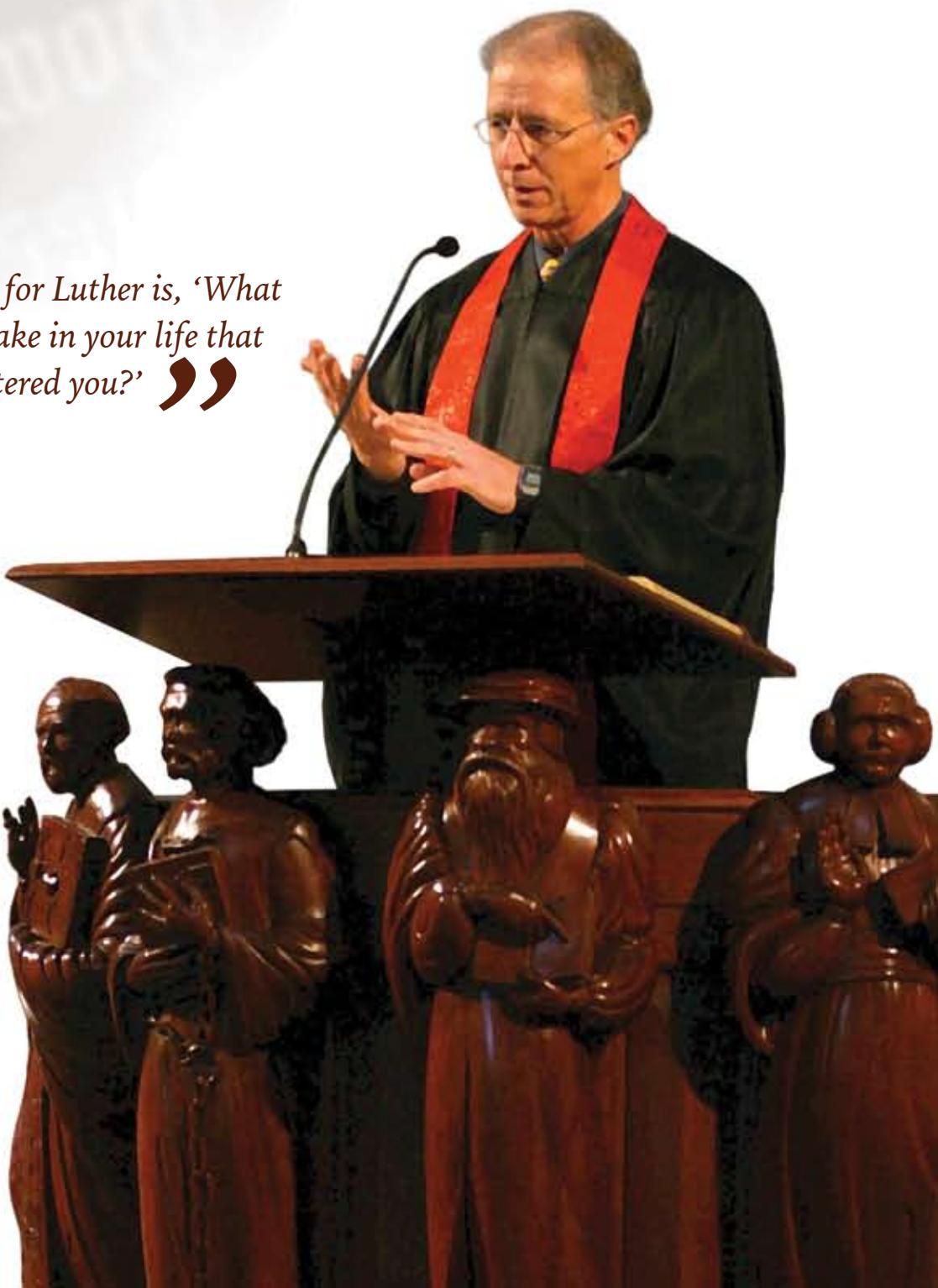
It’s a remarkable phrase for Luther, and it becomes very crucial. The external word means we have a book. God speaks to us through a book, an external, objective, grammatical set of sentences in Hebrew. The book. The immense implication for pastoral ministry for Luther and us is that pastors are essentially brokers of the Word of God in a book. It is transmitted in a book. We are readers; we are teachers of what’s in a book. We are proclaimers of what’s in a book. We mediate the living Christ

through the written Word. We avail ourselves of the Holy Spirit for understanding the written Word. We transform lives by means of the Spirit through the written Word. We are a book people, and that book took on extraordinary proportions in the Reformation, for which we should be deeply grateful. So my question for Luther is, “What difference did it make in your life that this book so mastered you?”

continued on page 5

“My question for Luther is, ‘What difference did it make in your life that this book so mastered you?’”

Each October, Beeson Divinity School hosts the Reformation Heritage Lectures. The guest lecturer in 2005 was Dr. John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A portion of his lecture on Martin Luther is excerpted here. For an audio recording of the complete lecture series, please contact the Beeson Media Center at (205) 726-4098 or rowillis@samford.edu.



“David always says that he will speak, think, talk, hear, read, day and night...”



I had indeed been captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the epistle to the Romans. But up till then it was a single word in Chapter 1:17. In it, the righteousness of God is revealed that had stood in my way. For I hated that word, righteousness of God, which according to custom, use, of all the teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically, regarding the formal or active righteousness, as they called it, with which God is righteous and punishes the unrighteous sinner, and thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience. Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted. At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words. Namely, in it righteousness of God is revealed as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.' And there I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning. The righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel. Namely, the paths of righteousness with which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.' And here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered into Paradise itself through open gates. Here a totally other face of the entire Scriptures showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through all the Scriptures from memory, and I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word, righteousness of God. And thus, that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to Paradise.

Martin Luther

◀ A Powerful Presence: In a series of murals depicting Christian holy days in Beeson's Hodges Chapel, Luther is seen posting his 95 Theses in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. The camera's lens also captures a glimpse of Luther in the chapel dome above.

continued from page 3

I think that experience and how he entered Paradise governed his handling the Bible for the rest of his life. I have six marks or characteristics of Luther at study, studying his Bible. What did he do, and what can we learn? I want to learn from this man. I want to be inspired for the last chapter of my life so that I don't slack off. So many pastors begin to carve ducks in their basement because it has just gotten old. I pray that I will burn to understand that place in Hebrews, that place in Ecclesiastes, give myself to it and then open it for life, as a door to Paradise for my people 'til I die. I hope I never close it. So I want to learn. I want to be inspired here by Martin Luther.

▮ **Luther came to elevate the biblical text.** For Luther, the Bible was *so elevated* far above commentaries, theologies and the Fathers that he gave himself to it above all things. I know from experience, and I know from observation, pastors do not study their Bibles. They read Piper and other such books, which is a colossal mistake. Read and study your Bibles. You don't know your Bibles yet. Could you give an exposition of Ezekiel? Could you give an exposition of Ecclesiastes?

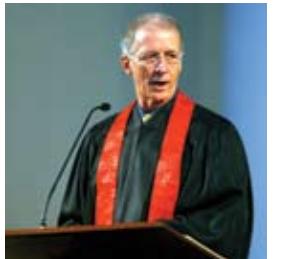
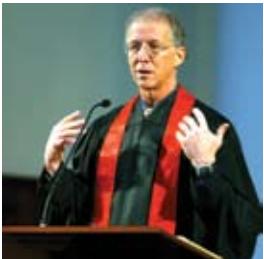
▮ **This radical focus on the text of Scripture led him to an intense and serious grappling with the very words.** He said, "I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring what he wanted to know, what he wanted to say." In the summer of 1526, he was lecturing on Ecclesiastes, and he wrote this: "Solomon the preacher is giving me a hard time, as though he begrudging anyone lecturing on him. But he must yield."

Do you go to the text like that, like Jacob and the angel? I won't let you go until you yield. You've got to preach on Sunday and it's Friday, and you don't get it yet; you will wrestle like Jacob, or you will be a storyteller. Lazy storyteller. It must yield. It's your work; it's your job. You will beat importunately on that text.

▮ **Therefore, he gave himself to Greek and Hebrew with tremendous diligence.** The original languages for Luther were the gateway to Paradise. I am now going to encourage you not to make light of Greek and Hebrew. Luther spoke against the backdrop of a thousand years of darkness. He said, "It is certain that unless the languages remain, [and he means Greek and Hebrew], the gospel must finally perish. . . .Without languages, we could not have received the gospel. Languages are the scabbard that contains the sword of the Spirit. If we neglect the literature, then we shall eventually lose the gospel."

Before I leave this point, just one word of encouragement for those of you who are far along in the ministry and do not have the languages, and don't see the opportunity to go back. I'll be 60 in January, and if I didn't have the languages right now, I think it would be a wise thing to ask for a sabbatical and go study Hebrew. At

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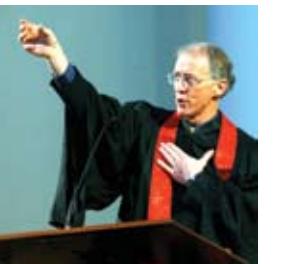
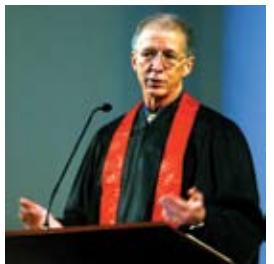
“ I have six marks or characteristics of Luther at study, studying his Bible. ”

...constantly, but about nothing else than God's word and commandments...

continued from page 5

age 60, I believe that. So if you're 40 and discouraged, just think of a 20-year project to get it back.

WHe worked now on this very wording in Greek and Hebrew with extraordinary diligence in spite of tremendous obstacles. He makes pygmies of us all. This is the great danger of having heroes, right? Like Spurgeon or Calvin or Luther or Edwards—they make pygmies of us all. You can be paralyzed by these guys. Well, try to get beyond that, because they are worthy if we take them for who they are. We are not Luther; nobody in this room will ever be close to a Luther or a Calvin. But the question is, can we be inspired by them to work hard to really work hard, and give an account someday to the king that we did our best with his Word? Or are we slothful and casual about it as though nothing really great is at stake?



“ Trial and suffering are key to understanding the Bible. Let this encourage you. ”

...for God wants to give you his Spirit only through the external word.”

VTemptation and affliction are the hermeneutical touchstones of his labor.

In other words, we handle the Bible and come to know it by the hermeneutical key of suffering. He got this from Psalm 119, as you know. Here are the key verses that he was so shaped by in his thinking. Psalm 119:67. “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep thy word.” In verse 71, “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn thy statutes. That was so key for Luther. “It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn.” Oh! How he wanted to learn what Paul meant, so bring it on, Pope and Devil.

Trial and suffering are key to understanding the Bible. Let this encourage you. We read these guys, and we think they are beyond extraordinary human power and never struggled with the things I struggled with. But Luther did, and it made him a theologian. Those sufferings, those trials, those blank days, those seasons when you want to sit down in the grass between the garage and the back door and just say, “I just can't move another step.” They make a theologian of you. Just don't quit.

VPrayer and reverent dependence on the all-sufficiency of God.

Luther writes, “That the Holy Scriptures cannot be penetrated by study and talent is most certain. Therefore your first duty is to begin to pray and to pray to this effect: that if it please God to accomplish something for his glory, not for yours or any other person's, He very graciously grants you a true understanding of his words. For no master of the divine words exists except the author of these words, as he says, ‘they shall all be taught of God,’ John 6:45. You must therefore completely despair of your own industry and ability and rely solely on the inspiration of the Spirit.” He did not walk away from his Bible. He means, bathe your study in prayer.

“You should completely despair of your own sense of reason,” Luther says, “for by these you will not obtain the goal. Rather kneel down in your private little room and with sincere humility and earnestness, pray God through his dear Son graciously to grant you his Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide you and give you understanding.” Amen. ✝

► Man Between God and the Devil: One of 16 witnesses painted among a cloud of heavenly hosts in the Hodges Chapel dome, a stern Luther stands holding a German Bible while a demon (lower right) recoils from him and the power of God's Word.



at BEESON

Faculty Conferences and Publications



Bunch Fuller Gignilliat

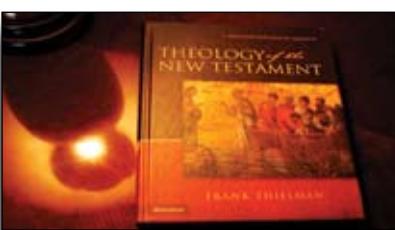
House Humphreys Thielman

In addition to their commitment to both ministry and teaching, Beeson faculty regularly publish works and participate in conferences in their respective fields. Congratulations to the following:

Wilton Bunch published the following articles: "Changing Moral Judgment in Divinity Students" in the *Journal of Moral Education* (September 2005); "Editorial Response to Parts 1 and 2 of the FDA IDE Study of Lumbar Total Disc Replacement with the Charite Artificial Disc vs. Lumbar Fusion" in *Spine* (July 2005) with Michael Zindrick and Mark Lorenz; and "Conflict-of-Interest: The Need for Rules" *SpineLine* (Jan–Feb 2006). Bunch's work in the field of ethics draws upon his background as a physician and retired medical school dean. He is also an ordained Episcopal priest.

Thomas Fuller presented a paper, "Assessing Student Competency," at the biennial meeting of the Evangelical Association of Theological Field Educators [EATFE], meeting at Dallas Theological Seminary, on January 20–21. He has also been invited to lead a workshop on the same topic at next year's meeting of the Association for Theological Field Education [ATE]. The content of these presentations is slated to appear as a chapter in a new textbook on contextual education, scheduled for release mid-2007.

Mark Gignilliat presented a paper on Karl Barth's reading of Isaiah 53 at Society for Biblical Literature's 2005 annual meeting in Philadelphia. He also has two publications forthcoming: his dissertation, *Paul and Isaiah's Servants*, and an article, "Who is Isaiah's Servant?" in the *Scottish Journal of Theology*.



Frank Thielman published *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Zondervan) in August 2005. ▲

Tal Prince Helps Weave a Tapestry of Hope



TAL PRINCE, alumnus and director of external relations at Beeson Divinity School, felt a strong pull on his life to pastor a church, but not just any church. He dreamed of leading a congregation especially for individuals in recovery from addictions. Prince is a self-confessed sex and porn addict in recovery. In the spring of 2005, he was introduced to others who shared his vision, and during the ensuing months, Tapestry of Hope was birthed.

Prince is fond of saying, "We've all got stuff." He also recognizes that the style and focus of Tapestry will not appeal to all people. Nevertheless, he is determined to lead a church that has room for anyone who wants to experience transformation through transparency. This happens, according to Prince, in a safe place where people are received as Jesus received people—as they are, not as they should be.

Tapestry worships at 5 p.m. on Sundays. Find out more at www.tapestryofhope.com.

◀ Tal Prince speaks to a camera in the production of a DVD to promote Tapestry of Hope.



Bailey Speaks at Consecration

In April of 2005, Beeson Divinity School honored the legacy of noted African American preacher E. K. Bailey with a series of programs featuring sermons by Timothy George, Robert Smith, and James Earl Massey. The late Dr. Bailey was founding and senior pastor of Concord Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. His widow, Dr. Sheila Bailey (right), who serves as president of E. K. Bailey ministries, returned to Beeson in December 2005 to offer the sermon for the service of consecration. Their daughter, Cokeisha, is pursuing her master of divinity degree at Beeson.



Sydney Park Appointed to Beeson Faculty

Dr. Mi Young "Sydney" Park (left) will begin fall 2006 as assistant professor of divinity (New Testament). She received her Ph.D. in 2004 from University of Aberdeen. Her doctoral thesis provides an exegetical and theological examination of the concept of submission in the Epistle to the Philippians, and interacts with feminist and postmodern feminist theology. She comes from Crown College in St. Bonifacius, Minnesota, where she taught New Testament. She also served as children/youth/young adult minister in Korean American churches in Illinois, Texas and Washington for 11 years. We welcome Dr. Park to Beeson.

Shelton Named Beeson Alumnus of the Year

THE Reverend S. Wayne Shelton (left) is pictured with Dean Timothy George following the presentation of the 2005 Distinguished Alumnus Award. Shelton is pastor of New Temple Baptist Church in Dora, Alabama. He also serves as an instructor in the Sulphur Springs Institute of the Extension Division. Shelton graduated from Florida Baptist Theological College with a bachelor of theology degree. In 1993, he received his master of divinity degree at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, and is completing his doctor of ministry degree at Reformed Theological Seminary. Shelton has over 17 years pastoral experience, having served churches in Alabama, Florida and Georgia. He and his wife, Michelle, have three daughters.



Dorsett Installed as Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism During Spring Convocation

As part of the opening convocation for the spring semester, Dr. Lyle Dorsett (right) was installed as the Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism.



Cliff Barrows (left), long-time music director and worship leader with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, was the guest preacher. Dorsett recently published an article titled "C. S. Lewis and the Cowley Fathers" in *Cowley: Society of Saint John the Evangelist* Vol 32, Number 1, Winter 2006, and had a book titled *E. E. Bounds: A Man of Prayer* produced by Hovel Audio, Inc.

“Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.”

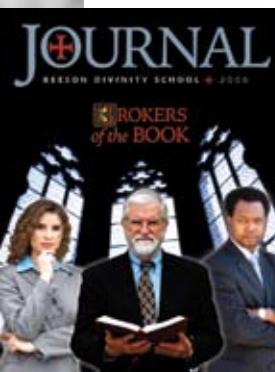
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI



▲ Partners in Ministry: Frank Thielman (left) and Allen Ross (right) offer special prayers of blessing on Lyle and Mary Dorsett.

Training Brokers of the Book

AT Beeson Divinity School, a strong foundation in basic theological disciplines is essential and is reflected in the curriculum. Nearly one-third of the requirements for the Master of Divinity program is devoted to the study of the Bible and the languages in which it is written. It is often in preaching class, however, that students begin to learn how they are called to be stewards of what they have studied; "Brokers," as John Piper said in his Reformation Heritage Lecture on Martin Luther, "of the Book." (See page 2.)



Beeson Journal asked three members of the Beeson community to reflect on what this calling means to them. **Faculty member Lyle Dorsett**, who holds the Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism, points to his partnership with his wife, Mary, in her work in Mexico as a model for the practical application of lessons learned in the classroom.

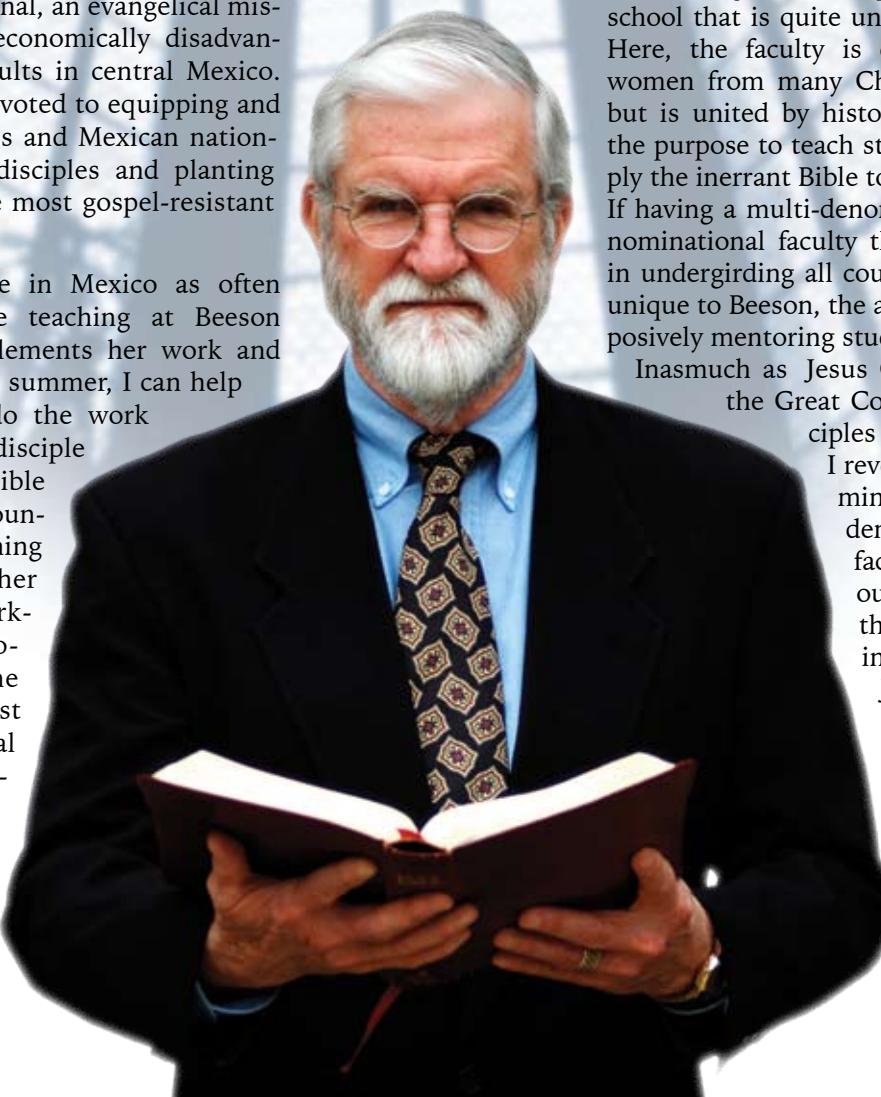
Third-year M.Div. student Mary Splawn is a native of Cowpens, South Carolina. After college she served as a missionary with the International Mission Board in Mexico City, Mexico, for two years as a missionary kid teacher. She moved to Birmingham to attend Beeson with her husband, Wayne, who is also pursuing an M.Div. degree. Mary recounts her preparation for her first sermons in preaching class.

Reginald Calvert (M.Div. '05) has been the pastor of New Jerusalem Baptist Church in Bessemer, Alabama, for seven years. He is married to Karla. Before he graduated from Beeson, he was chosen as the outstanding student preacher by the preaching faculty and delivered the sermon for the final regular worship service of the semester. On his recent visit back to campus, the Reverend Calvert reflected on how his studies at Beeson shaped his preaching ministry.

Dr. Lyle Dorsett in His Own Words

MY wife, Mary, and I have a keen sense that we are called to make disciples and help train this generation to fulfill the Great Commission in the United States and abroad. Indeed, Mary serves as general director of Christ for Children International, an evangelical mission to socially and economically disadvantaged children and adults in central Mexico. Much of her time is devoted to equipping and mentoring missionaries and Mexican nationals who are making disciples and planting churches in one of the most gospel-resistant states in Mexico.

Although I cannot be in Mexico as often as Mary, my full-time teaching at Beeson Divinity School complements her work and vice versa. During the summer, I can help train her people to do the work of evangelism and disciple making, using the Bible as our theological foundation and our training manual. On the other hand, Mary, her workers and their day-to-day realities remind me that what I teach must be applicable in the real world. There is nothing like being around people who are on the field and doing



the hard work to remind me that everything I teach must finally get out of the academic ivory tower and down on the dusty roads of real life.

Beeson Divinity School is a splendid environment for me to serve the Lord. Dean George is the designer and implementer of a graduate school that is quite unique in North America. Here, the faculty is comprised of men and women from many Christian denominations, but is united by historic evangelicalism with the purpose to teach students to learn and apply the inerrant Bible to all of life and ministry. If having a multi-denominational and interdenominational faculty that is uncompromising in undergirding all courses in Scripture is not unique to Beeson, the added dimension of purposefully mentoring students is indeed atypical.

Inasmuch as Jesus Christ calls us through the Great Commission to make disciples and not mere converts, I revel in our school's determination to keep the student body small so that we faculty can get to know our students and mentor them in the way we are instructed by the Lord

Jesus Christ. Here, I can practice as well as lecture on our Master's plan of evangelism and disciple-making as revealed in the New Testament.

Preach the word: *be ready in season and out of season...for the time will come when the people will not endure sound doctrine.* 2 Timothy 4:2-3, NIV

Mary Splawn on Learning How to Preach

I WAS extremely nervous about taking my first preaching class at Beeson. We preached one sermon that semester, but we didn't get to pick our texts. Rather, Dr. Smith sent a fishbowl around the classroom, and each piece of paper had a text and a date on it. I drew the text Joel 1:15 (The Day of the Lord), and I was assigned to the first day for preaching. I couldn't believe it! Immediately, I began to enlist people to pray for my preparation and presentation. I read and reread the passage to try to understand God's message to the Israelites and God's message to the people today. I read commentaries and I did exegetical work to understand the passage more clearly. I met with Dr. Smith several times to discuss the progress of the sermon. He continually encouraged me and he helped me to stay focused.

Before I preached in front of my class, I went to our preaching lab and preached to the empty pews. I preached in the mirror and to my family and friends. Wayne, my husband, helped me discern what was



unclear in the message. I arranged, rearranged, scratched out, added and rewrote the message several times. The night before I preached, I had trouble sleeping. Finally, the day arrived for me to deliver a message on Joel 1:15. That morning, I truly felt God's presence. I wasn't a bit nervous, and I was able to speak slowly and clearly. After I finished preaching, I felt so relieved that it was over, but I was excited about the next sermon I would preach.

Each of my classmates had to write a critique of the sermon. The comments were very helpful in showing me how I can preach more effectively. Dr. Smith also met with me to watch the video of my sermon. He affirmed me and gave me feedback that would help me improve the message.

Wayne and I are praying about what the Lord has prepared for us in ministry. We are trusting that the Lord will open doors. I am very interested in the organizational side of ministry, and I love to teach. Currently, I am an intern with the student ministry at Shades Crest Baptist Church. †

Reginald Calvert from Hearing to Seeing

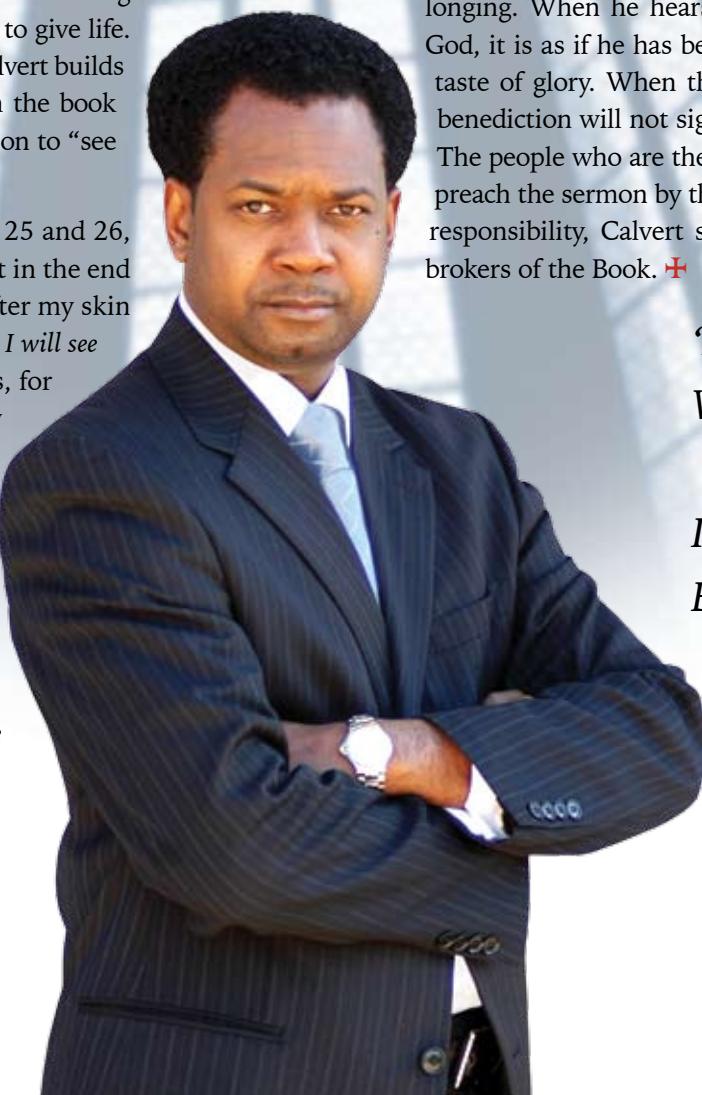
ACKNOWLEDGING that the work of the homiletician is forever a learning and growing process, the Reverend Reginald Calvert sees his task as one that will move the hearer to a place of commitment and holy living. He is the handler of a Living Word—words that flow through him to give life. Citing passages in the book of Job, Calvert builds his sermons on a model drawn from the book of Job designed to lead his congregation to “see God in the text.”

Job confesses in Chapter 19, Verses 25 and 26, “I know my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh *I will see God.*” This is a promise, Calvert says, for the convert. It is a present reality (my Redeemer lives) with a future hope (I will see God).

Calvert is not content to leave his hearers here. Turning to Chapter 42, he calls attention to Job’s contrite response in Verse 5 when God finally answers him, “*My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have*

seen you.” This, he says, motivates him to give his people a “greater burning to see God before they truly see God.”

Job knows he will see God in the eschaton, but in chapter 42, there is more than an eschatological longing. When he hears the very, living words of God, it is as if he has been given a glimpse, a foretaste of glory. When this happens in church, the benediction will not signal the end of the sermon. The people who are the church will go out and re-preach the sermon by the way they live. This is the responsibility, Calvert says, for all those who are brokers of the Book. †



*“A WORD is dead
When it is said,”
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day.*

Emily Dickinson

BEESON PASTORS SCHOOL

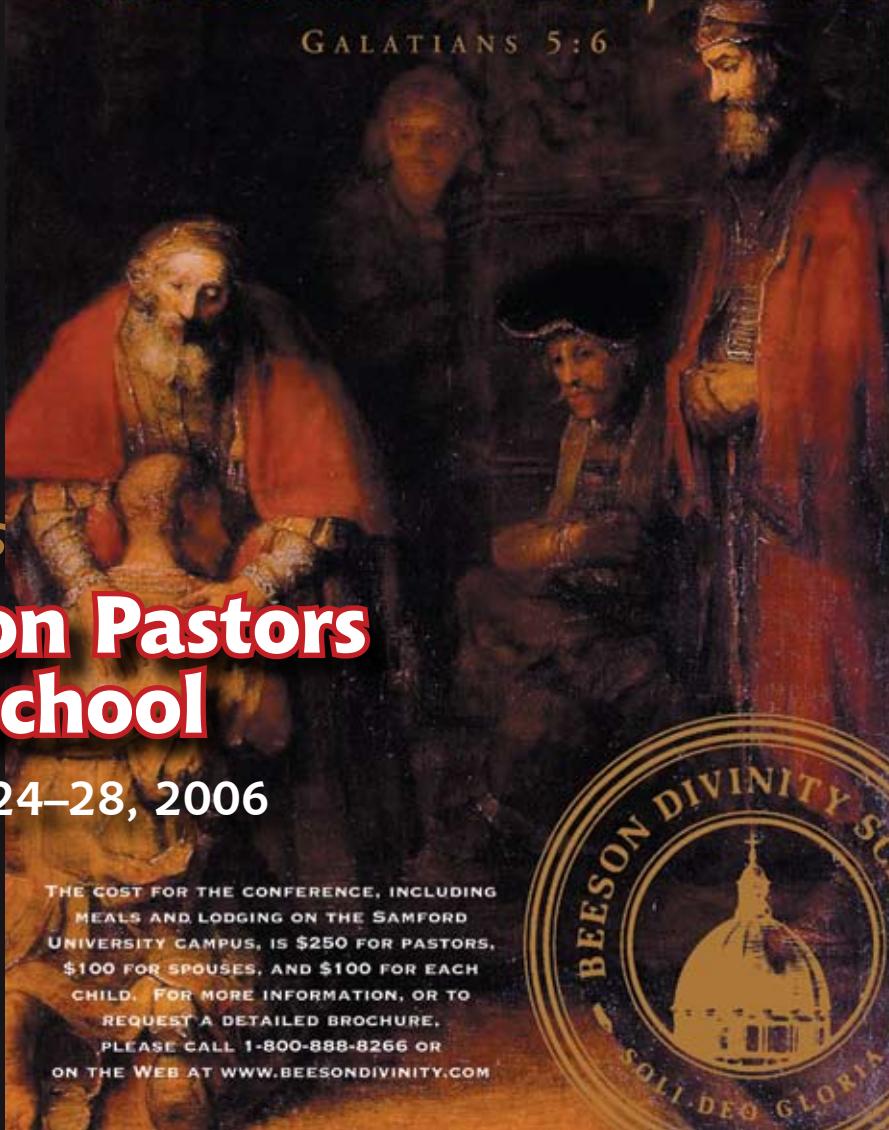
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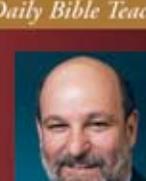
ERWIN LUTZER



TIMOTHY GEORGE



RALPH WEST



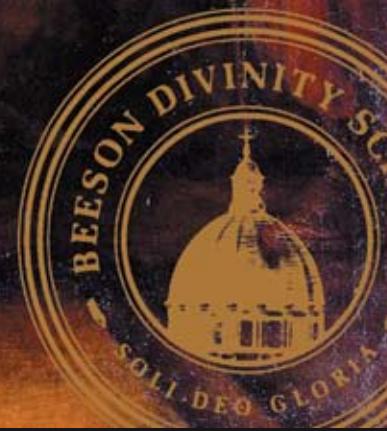
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