

JOURNAL

of BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL ✝ 2008



In a spirit of love and Christian stewardship he gave away all that he possessed...to the glory of God.

Ralph Waldo Beeson

1900 – 1990



Mr. Beeson's founding vision was that Beeson Divinity School would be a place that trains "pastors who can preach."



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Twenty Years of Gratitude

I am not sure why we mark the events of life in terms of decades, except that the Bible does: forty years in the wilderness, seven decades of exile in Babylon, a projected life span of three score years and ten. Even the beast of the Apocalypse has a decade of horns! This year marks the twentieth birthday of Beeson Divinity School. It is a good time to pause and thank the Lord for his sustaining grace and blessing.

In February 1988 the Board of Trustees voted to establish a new graduate school of theology at Samford University. On June 1 of that year, I arrived on campus to organize the work of Beeson Divinity School. I was given a broom closet of an office in Samford Hall. We had no facilities, no faculty, no curriculum, and only the promise of funding yet to come.

I spent most of that first day in prayer asking the Lord to send us the students we would need to begin this new school in the fall. One by one they began to come, out of nowhere it seemed to me, as we advertised only by word of mouth that first summer. In July we hosted our first Beeson Pastors School, which drew several hundred participants. In August we opened our doors to an entering class of thirty-two full-time students. One of those students was Norfleete Day who felt the tug of God on her heart to leave a distinguished career

in library service to pursue the ministry of teaching. Dr. Norfleete Day is now a "veteran" member of our faculty directing our program in spiritual formation.

It is hard to overestimate the influence of Ralph Waldo Beeson on our school. A modest man of few words and old-fashion piety, Ralph Beeson gave us a simply stated but very difficult task – to train "pastors who can preach." He specifically stated that our school should be "Christian, Protestant, evangelical, and interdenominational." Mr. Beeson was no theologian but he knew what he didn't like. In the early days of our school, he would call me and say, "Now Timothy, I want you to keep things orthodox down there!" (Mr. Beeson lived on Shades Mountain and could look down on our campus from his home.)

Mr. Beeson wanted us to be faithful to the Holy Scriptures, the historic Christian faith, and the great heritage of the Reformation. But he wanted this to be done in a non-sectarian way that would foster Christian unity, not exacerbate division. In keeping with that vision, we have sought to be both evangelical and ecumenical. We



Dean Timothy George pictured with his wife Denise on a Reformation Tour of Europe in 2007.



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focus on our unity in Jesus Christ and the truth of the Bible, and salvation by grace alone, while reaching out as widely as we can to all those who share with us these core convictions.

A wise educator once said to me that one needs only two things to build a great theological school. You don't need any money, or buildings, or books, he said. Those are wonderful assets to have, to be sure, and at Beeson we have been blessed with a healthy endowment, attractive facilities, and state of the art learning resources. But the two indispensable items, my friend said, are students who want to learn and teachers who love to teach.

Those thirty-two inaugural students are fast becoming an army of nearly one thousand Beeson graduates who are serving the cause of Christ in every inhabited continent on earth. Nothing gives me greater joy than hearing from our Beeson alums or visiting with them in their ministry settings. They serve in churches

the passion of Richard Baxter. Doug Webster, a superb pastor-theologian, works with Robert Smith, Jr. in the discipline of preaching. Sydney Park makes New Testament Greek and biblical theology come alive in an unforgettable way. Mark Searby brings gentle wisdom and pastoral street-smarts to ministry studies. This coming fall, Mark Devine and Steve Harmon will join our faculty in the area of theology. It is a privilege to have such wonderful colleagues in the building of a community of love and learning.

In many universities the divinity school sits, both literally and symbolically, at the edge of the campus. Beeson is situated in the heart of Samford University, and we have been able to develop this unique model of theological education in an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual respect. President Andy Westmoreland, like his predecessor Thomas E. Corts, has been unstinting in his encouragement and support of Beeson Divinity School. We have also been blessed by generous donors and friends who

“At Beeson we frequently say that ‘above all else, we want our students to be men and women of God...’”

large and small, in inner-city ministries and rural congregations, as chaplains, teachers, counselors, evangelists, missionaries, as church administrators and denominational leaders. I am proud of each of them and all that they are doing to make a difference for Christ in our fragile world.

At Beeson we frequently say that “above all else, we want our students to be men and women of God,” Nothing encourages this outcome more than being taught by professors who are men and women of God. The Beeson faculty is an amazing cadre of scholars who are deeply committed to Jesus Christ and to his church and who pour themselves into the formation of the students God sends our way.

In recent years we have welcomed a number of new colleagues who have come to join us in this work. Lyle Dorsett teaches evangelism in a way that brings together the mind of C. S. Lewis and

have prayed for us and invested in the work that God has called us to do.

In this our twentieth year we own and celebrate the great traditions of faith and commitment which brought Beeson Divinity School into being and on which we still stand. But our interest in this heritage is neither antiquarian nor nostalgic; we are neither keepers of a museum nor chroniclers of “days of past and vanished glory.” We are restless evangelicals and patient revolutionaries. We wish to be faithful shapers of the future under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Our accountability to God requires a responsiveness to the world in which we minister and to the churches we seek to serve. Our future is as bright as the promises of God.✝

Timothy George

Dean's Installation

Words of acceptance by Timothy George as he was installed as Founding Dean of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University, February 21, 1989.

Come to this moment of consecration and commitment with a profound sense of the providence of God which has brought me, and all of us, to this hour. As we entered this service we sang of all the saints in ages past, the apostles and martyrs, the missionaries and monks, the reformers and evangelists, all the saints both known and unknown to us, those who, like Abraham and Sarah, set out not knowing exactly where they were going but sure of the call of God which had impelled them to launch forth into the unknown, destined for that city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Today, on this historic occasion, we come to take our place in this noble company of witnesses and saints. Aware of our own weakness and depravity, we are nonetheless confident that God's overcoming grace and sustaining love is strong enough to see us through whatever obstacles or challenges may lie before us.



I also bring to this service what an old Puritan divine once called “a mixture of terror and joy, of awful reverence and holy pleasure.” I am deeply grateful for the many ties which bind my life with so many of you on this platform and in this service. On this day I give thanks to God for a Christian grandmother, now among the blessed departed, who first told me that Jesus loves me; for a faithful wife and loving children; for a wonderful church which suffered the ministrations of a very green and inexperienced pastor; for teachers and professors who introduced me to new ideas and taught me not to be afraid of them; for pastors who believed in me and prayed for me; for students and colleagues and friends, for all of you I give thanks to God.

We would be less than honest if we did not acknowledge that the Beeson Divinity School is born in a time of great controversy and strife. In times such as these, we desire to relate with integrity and openness to all of God's children and to be, in so far as God may allow us to do so, agents

of reconciliation and peace. In an age of secularism and relativism, we do not declare theological neutrality. Let it be said for all posterity to hear that we stand without reservation for the total truthfulness of Holy Scripture and the great principles of historic Christian orthodoxy. On these essential values we cannot and we will not compromise. But we also know that godly teaching must be complemented by holy living, and so we commit ourselves to the disciplines of the Christian faith, to a life of prayer and worship, to witness and discipleship, and social compassion with justice and peace for every person made in the image of God. In the lingo of contemporary labels, we will be neither a haven for disaffected liberalism nor a bastion of raucous fundamentalism. We will be evangelical but also ecumenical, conservative but not irresponsible, confessional yet interdenominational. Above all, I pray that we might be a school where heart and head go hand in hand, where the love of God and pursuit of truth join forces in the formation of men and women, called by God, empowered by His Holy Spirit, equipped for the ministry of His church, sent forth into the world to bear witness to the grace of God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.

From all of you I beseech your prayers, support and even, as you are prompted to give it, your advice, so that, when all of us here present shall lie in the dust, the work of God's kingdom might still be advanced through the Beeson Divinity School of Samford University. To this end, I offer my gifts and I pledge my life, through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for evermore. Amen.✝

Timothy George

A Mentored Life

by Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr.

E

XACTLY twenty years ago, I received a phone call from a new priest in the Episcopal Church. He had just begun as rector of St. Luke's in Birmingham, Alabama, and he had learned that I was prayerfully pondering a call to full-time ministry. He suggested that serving under him for a few years might give some insight into what the vocation of ministry held for me. I accepted his

invitation, but what I did not know at the time was that I was soon to be blessed with one of the most profound relationships in all of my life—the gift of a mentor in the person of the Reverend Doctor John Claypool. Until his death in September 2005, he remained a dear friend to Beeson Divinity School and a role model for hundreds of young clergy across denominational lines.

Realizing that the gift of my relationship with John coincided with the anniversary of Beeson’s birth, I thought it appropriate to pause and reflect on how crucial such relationships are in the Church today. I have had many mentors in my life—my parents, my wife, various clergy and friends—but few of these relationships have been more significant than this one with John. We see the same type of relationships throughout the Holy Scriptures, where models of the mentored life abound: Moses and Joshua, Naomi and Ruth, Eli and Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and the Twelve Apostles, Paul and Timothy.

When Jesus issued his call to “follow Me” (John 1:43), His followers would have understood our Lord to be bidding them to a life of rabbinical discipleship. In such a life, disciples did not learn to be “Christ-like” in classroom settings,

but by actually sharing life together—meals, travel, fears, joys, worship, prayer, study, tears, laughter. It was through this kind of intimate daily contact that the apostles grew to be the very pillars of the early Church.

In the years I served first as John’s lay assistant, and then later as an associate for several years after seminary, he and I often met several times a week. Rarely did we discuss “the business” of the church; that was reserved for staff meetings. Instead, I was invited to share how all aspects of my life were going—spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical. Eventually, this led to a pattern of meals together, prayer together, and even trips together.

From the beginning of our relationship, John modeled unconditional acceptance and love. As the “chief pastor,” he never lorded his power over me. As my boss, he never once micro-managed. As my friend, he allowed for my failures, but courageously gave me guidance and direction for future endeavors. As my brother in Christ, he always cared for and loved me.

This care and love continued throughout my ministry, both when I was under his supervision and when I left to go on to my first and subsequent calls to parish leadership. John made certain to remember my family and me through phone calls, letters, and on holidays. He was always willing to talk when there had been a rough week or when I faced a personal dilemma. A leading author on leadership, Klaus Bockmuehl, writes in his book *Living by the Gospel* (Helmets & Howard, 1986), “Shepherding

people means to help them grow: it demands thoughtfulness about ‘how to make the other one great’ and it implies nothing less than the act of true friendship for others.” Ultimately, selfless friendship is what the mentored life is all about. Thankfully, that’s exactly what I received from John.

One of the primary traits that made John such an effective mentor was his incredible humility and deep desire to be an instrument of God’s love. One season during our service together, St. Luke’s had just completed a multi-million dollar renovation of its facility. Only months after the completion, a frozen pipe burst during one of the atypical winter storms in the Birmingham area, flooding the building overnight and leaving hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage. By mid-day, the water-logged building was filled with disheartened staff and church members trying to mop up an un-moppable mess. I will never forget how John reacted.

After surveying the damage and making certain the immediate needs were being attended to, he went to a restaurant, purchased pounds of food, carried it back to the church, and personally began to serve lunch to everyone who had volunteered to work. In a matter of hours,

we were all laughing and seeing clearly that relationship meant so much more than bricks and mortar.

Servanthood is the key to being a mentor. How many of us really see our clergy as servants? How many clergy see themselves as servants? To many, the modern pastor seems to be heralded more if he or she is a leader, a visionary, a dynamic preacher and teacher, and a whiz at putting together programming and inspiring building projects. But the first, earnest, true step in ministry begins with a servant who has the abilities to receive as much as give, to encourage the best in others, and to care for them as a shepherd cares for a sheep.

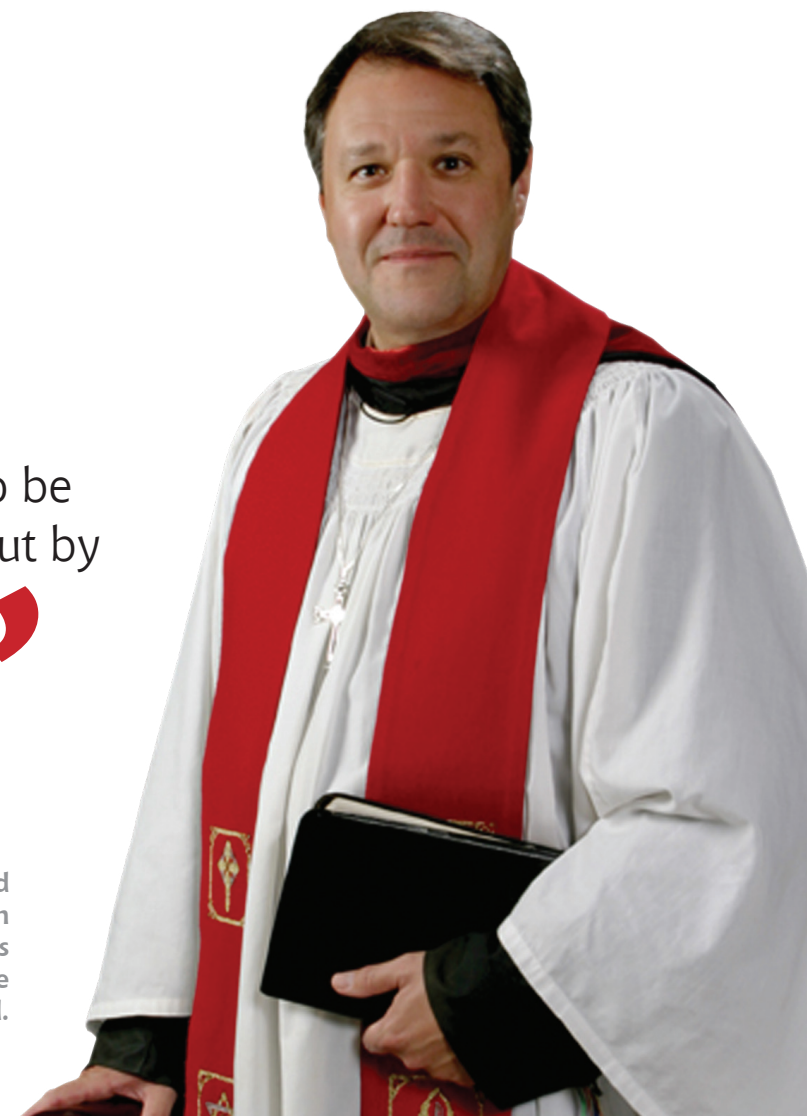
John was such a servant until his passage from this life to the next. In the late summer of 2003,



The Reverend Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr., with his wife Laura and their children, Evie, Luke, and Jones.

“The disciples did not learn to be ‘Christ-like’ in classroom settings, but by actually sharing life together.”

The Reverend Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr. received his Doctor of Ministry at Beeson Divinity School in 1997. In January, he was installed as the fourth rector of St. Martin’s Parish, the largest Episcopal church in the United States. The 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, preached.



my son, who is John's godson, and I visited him in the hospital. When he learned I was coming, he asked if I would bring the Lord's Supper and share it there in his hospital room with the love of his life, Ann. After hugs, updates, and laughter, we prayed and shared. It was one of the most memorable and moving moments in my life to offer the precious Lord's Supper to the man who had offered so much to me over the years. We thought he was well on his way to recovery, but John died a few weeks later. Our visit marked the last time he had received the symbols for the broken Body and poured-out Blood of Jesus.

I earned my Doctor of Ministry from Beeson while I served under John. I remember how he encouraged me to move forward in my theological training, in large part because he knew the

quality of the education, staff, and faculty of Beeson. He also knew that this particular program was not locked in the classroom, but required an ongoing relationship with mentors "in the field," so to speak; this would allow our relationship to continue to deepen.

We rarely hear or read of mutual relationships any more. We seem to laud and magnify the individual and pay homage to "self-made" men and women, rather than recognize the relationships that undergird those successes. I was often baffled by seminarians who so eagerly wished to begin "on their own." There is a wealth of knowledge and experience in those who have gone before us, and if we are willing, we will learn and grow by sitting quietly at the feet of others as so many did at the feet of our Lord. It is crucial in our self-centered world to

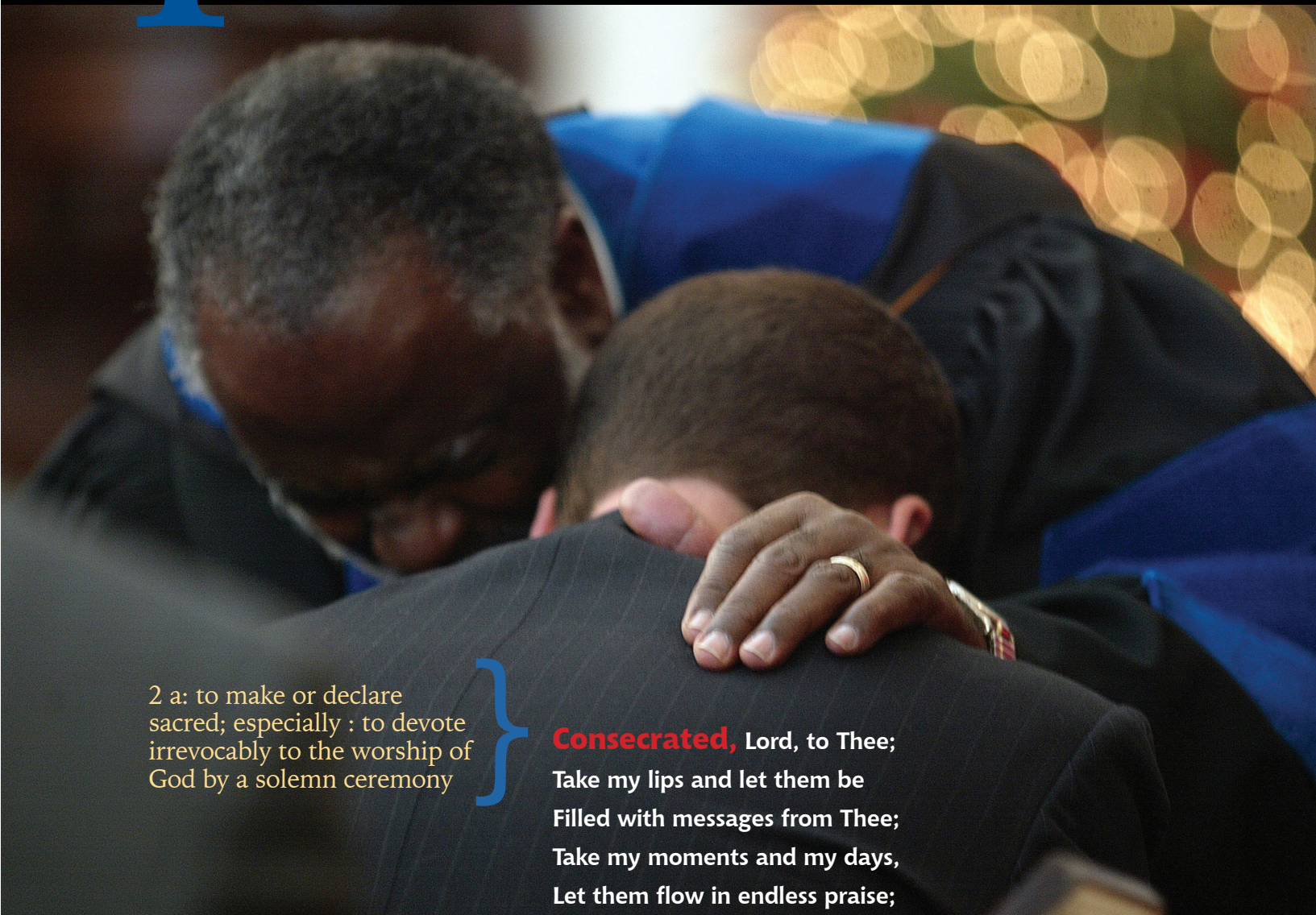
“Ultimately, selfless friendship is what the mentored life is all about.”

live up to the call to humbly share our lives with others, while also being willing to receive the lives shared.

The picture Paul paints of the Church in I Corinthians 12 is a portrait of a body with many mutually dependent parts. Entering the mentored life shows a willingness to clothe oneself with humility (cf. 1 Peter 5:5) in order to build a mutual dependence that provides a foundation for survival when life presents us with the reality of joy and pain, challenge and reward.

In January, I will formally begin my ministry at St. Martin's Parish in Houston, Texas. Many of my mentors will be there by my side—my parents, my bride and children, Ann Claypool, bishops, and other clergy. A great sadness moved over me when I thought that John would not be there to share that moment with me. But then, then, I realized he very much will be present. In many ways, I can honestly say there would be no "me" if it were not for my mentor.✝

Take my life and let it be...



2 a: to make or declare sacred; especially : to devote irrevocably to the worship of God by a solemn ceremony

Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
 Take my lips and let them be
 Filled with messages from Thee;
 Take my moments and my days,
 Let them flow in endless praise;
 Take my intellect and use
 Every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.
 Take my will and make it Thine,
 It shall be no longer mine;
 Take myself and I will be
 Ever, only, all for Thee.

For twenty years now, Beeson Divinity School has been in the business of shaping the ministry of consecrated men and women for the glory of God and the good of people.



Prelude to Preaching the Old Testament: *A Commitment to Conformation*

by Paul R. House

*All scripture is given
by inspiration of God,
and is profitable for
doctrine, for reproof, for
correction, for instruction
in righteousness:*

² TIMOTHY 3:16, KJV



Beeson Divinity School strives to help students become effective preachers, especially expository preachers. By “expository” I mean preachers committed to opening the word of God with the goal of transforming lives. Such preachers believe that “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17 ESV). They explain passages, connect them to the whole of the Bible as needed, and apply them to hearers’ lives. They trust that God’s word itself provides the structure, flow, and primary message for all sermons. They strive to preach through books from both testaments so their people can get the full flavor of God’s revelation. They believe if they preach the Bible’s contents rather than their own ideas their hearers will come to Christ, live for Christ, and share Christ and his commandments with the world (Matthew 28:16-20; John 14:15-31). Full-fledged, wholehearted, and balanced faith and practice will result. The Holy Spirit who moved the biblical writers (2 Peter 1:21) will empower the Bible’s readers (Galatians 2:20) as the word penetrates lives.

Expository Preaching from the Old Testament: Some Struggles

Yet preaching the Old Testament seems to be a perennial struggle even for ministers committed to expository preaching for several understandable reasons. First, some preachers may think that there are vital New Testament passages their congregations ought to learn first—and there is certainly enough to preach in the New Testament to occupy one’s whole ministry. Second, some find it hard to preach from an Old Testament book because they are less familiar with its historical background, its contents, and its connection to the rest of Scripture. Thus,

■ **Paul R. House** is associate dean and professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School. He holds degrees from Southwest Baptist University, University of Missouri-Columbia, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife Heather have one adult daughter, Molly.



when they preach from Old Testament texts they find themselves paraphrasing the passage and offering fairly simple comparisons between the people in the text and their congregation, or trying to state how the text could relate to Jesus' life and work. Third, several Old Testament books are quite long, thus making it difficult to sustain a passage-by-passage series for the amount of time it takes to preach through the entire book. Fourth, it is not easy to find good models for how such preaching ought to be done.

A Needed Correction in Our Perspective

But I believe there is an even more fundamental matter that must be addressed: preachers and hearers must reorient their perspective toward the Old Testament, and indeed the whole of the Bible. In the past I have heard even conservative pastors wonder aloud if expository preaching from the Old Testament is worth the effort, even if all the issues already detailed can be solved.

“Preachers and hearers must reorient their perspective toward the Old Testament.”

The basis of this questioning is that it seems much easier to “apply the New Testament to hearers’ lives” and thus win a hearing. And, preachers have added, is that not what we must do, win a hearing for the word?



I believe preachers must reject this notion of the Bible and application, especially if we want believers to grow in maturity and become equipped for ministry (Colossians 1:24-29). Without this change in perspective expositors could believe quite rightly that the Old Testament is fully trustworthy and thus inerrant, yet not act as if they believe it is useful for Christian living. Indeed, the preacher in this case acts as if the Bible must prove itself before it has the right to be heard. Of course, such a stance conflicts with key passages such as Psalm 19:7-14 and 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2.

A Personal Confession

Like many other teachers, preachers, and commentators, for years I offered rationales for reading, hearing, and studying the Old Testament based on an unwitting acquiescence to this belief. I did so with the good intention, or so I conceived of it, of helping students and parishioners “apply the Bible to their lives.” I

wanted them to benefit from the Old Testament in ways I had appreciated in my own life.

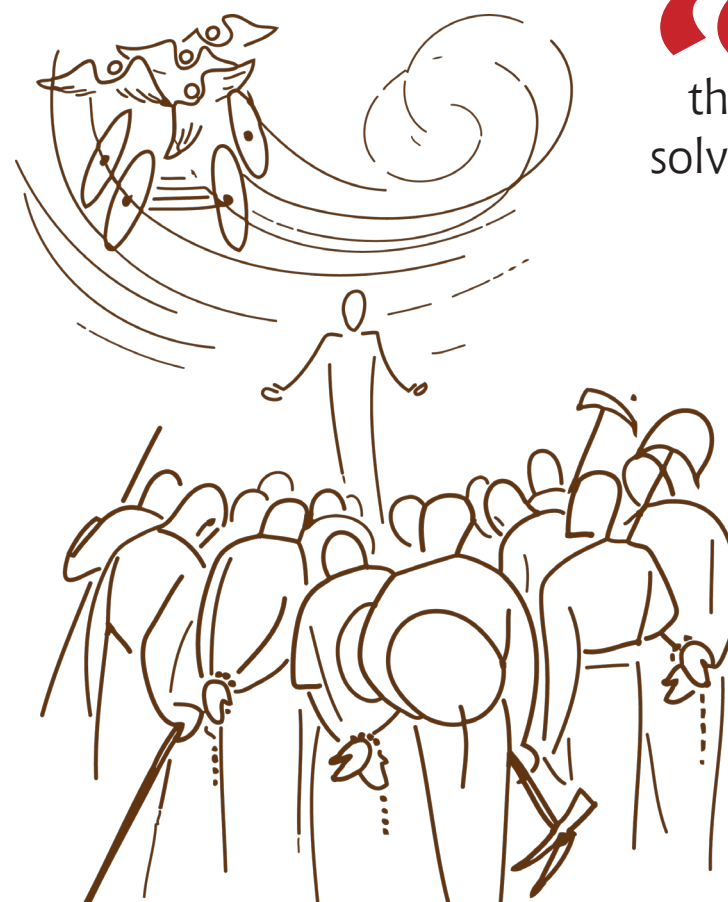
After years of trying to explain why the Old Testament matters for believers, I have come to two basic conclusions. First, New Testament writers do not treat the Old Testament as a problem to be solved. They consider it writing “breathed out by God” that is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16 ESV). Second, the more I repeated and/or dealt with the false problem rather than placing the responsibility on hearers, especially Christian hearers, to obey the Old Testament, the harder I was making it for my students and parishioners to come to terms with the whole word of God. It is true that many Christians seem to believe that the Old Testament must prove itself relevant before

they will hear it, but it is not true that the best way to help them is to act as if their perhaps inadvertent, yet fundamentally erroneous and ultimately rebellious, presupposition is correct. The best way to help them is to replace the incorrect presupposition with correct ones, and then aid them in reading the Bible effectively.

The most important foundational principle to give people is that we, not the Bible, have something to prove. As Christopher Wright has argued, all of us must learn that the Christian life is not a matter of our becoming convinced of the benefits associated with “applying the Bible to our lives.” Rather, we must realize and we must preach the opposite. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we must learn and help others learn to “apply our lives to the Bible.” God and his word comprise the horizon of reality and authority, not our lives and minds. We are required to conform to the Scriptures; they are not required to conform to us.

Conclusion

Without this starting point preachers may be unaware that they are presenting the word of God in a way that leaves hearers thinking they



may pick and choose the parts they consider most valuable, or the parts that a preacher or teacher has redeemed from the ash heap by proving them worthy of consideration. Preachers must see their task as aiding their congregations in the process of applying their lives to the whole Bible. They must lead hearers to ask God in what ways he wishes their lives to matter by obeying his word. In this way they can obey God and learn what Paul means when he writes in 1 Corinthians that the Old Testament was written “for our sake” (9:10), “as examples for us” (10:6), and “for our instruction” (10:11). ✝

“New Testament writers do not treat the Old Testament as a problem to be solved. They consider it writing 'breathed out by God.'”

About the Art...

The art used with this article was created by Annie Vallotton for the Good News Bible and is used courtesy of the American Bible Society. Annie Vallotton is credited with being the most widely published artist in the world.

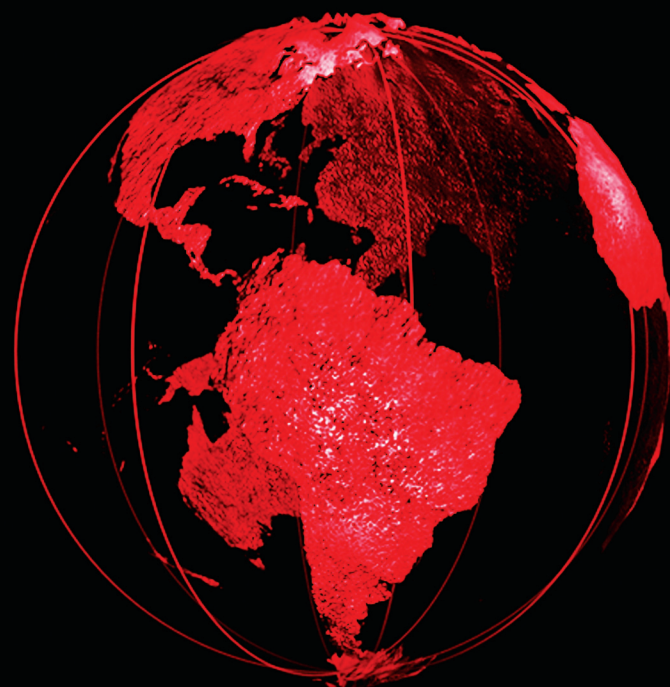


COLORING HIS WORLD WITH LOVE

Beeson Alumni Serve from Nearby to the Far Reaches of the Globe

Cast in bronze on the floor beneath the dome in Hodges Chapel are these words: "This hallowed place is consecrated to the spiritual and intellectual preparation of men and women who will minister in Jesus' name to all peoples to the ends of the earth until the end of time."

They are a reminder to us of the great call we have received to be God's instruments of peace and hope and love in the world as bearers of the Good News. Today there are over 700 students who have passed through our doors and are now serving in various ministries in thirty-six U.S. states and in twenty-two other countries on every inhabited continent.



UNITED STATES

- (36 states)
- Alabama
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- South Carolina
- North Carolina
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- District of Columbia
- Maryland
- Delaware
- Pennsylvania
- New Jersey
- New York
- Connecticut
- Massachusetts
- Maine
- Ohio
- Indiana
- Illinois

- Michigan
- Wisconsin
- Iowa
- Missouri
- Arkansas
- Texas
- Oklahoma
- Kansas
- Nebraska
- South Dakota
- Colorado
- Arizona
- California
- Washington

LATIN AMERICA

- Mexico
- Ecuador
- Costa Rica
- Brazil



EUROPE

- United Kingdom
- Moldova
- Russia
- Belgium
- Turkey

AFRICA

- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Tanzania
- Liberia
- Congo
- Kenya



ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- India
- Nepal
- Malaysia
- Australia
- Japan
- Jordan
- Burma (Myanmar)

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

COLORING HIS WORLD WITH LOVE

"...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

ACTS 1:8, NIV

• **Mike & Ruth (Ra) Vreeland**



Recent M.Div. graduates Mike and Ruth Vreeland plan to return to Ruth's native Burma in 2008. They will travel first to Thailand

for a month in order to earn a TESOL certificate (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), and then they will begin teaching English as well as some theological and biblical courses at Kachin Theological College (KTC), a Baptist seminary in northern Burma (also known as Myanmar). KTC is the second largest seminary in Burma and has been in existence for seventy-five years. Ruth and Mike will also have many opportunities to teach and preach in churches across Burma.

"We plan on staying for roughly a year at first," Ruth writes. "After that we will assess whether God would be calling us to stay on a more permanent basis."

If you would like to know more about their ministry or would like to support them, contact Ruth or Mike at rara@samford.edu or mjvreela@samford.edu.

• **Dennis Aggrey**



Dennis Aggrey (M.Div. 1999) is a church planter in Liberia, West Africa. He has planted five churches among the Lorma, Bassa, Kpelle, and

other groups and is planning three new churches in other areas. Dennis also works with Samaritan's Purse volunteers and acts as a translator for various groups and agencies.

See more photos of Dennis's projects at <http://community.webshots.com/user/dennisaggrey>.

• **Tim Corbin**

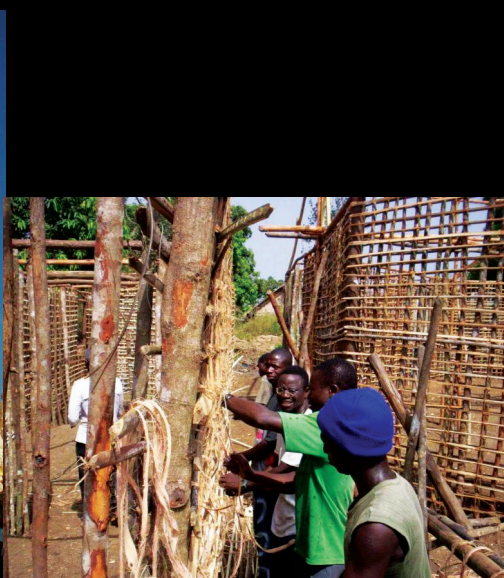


Tim (M.Div. 2005) and Amy Corbin came to Beeson in 2000. Tim enrolled in

the M.Div. program, and Amy worked as an administrative assistant in the dean's office. In 2007 they moved to Seattle, Washington, one of the

most unchurched areas in the U.S. According to their website, the Corbin's goal is to "plant a new church that fosters a culture of authentic Christian community." The church is currently meeting in the Corbin's home as they seek to develop a core group of people who are interested in helping start the Commons. They recently began a special Gathering for women on Tuesday nights and are reaching out to the community through a partnership with Kids Kloset, a community based benevolence agency that helps underprivileged children by providing them with clothing, school clothes, and toiletries. They are looking for groups interested in coming to Seattle to work with them on short term mission projects as well as students who might be interested in an internship.

To learn more about these opportunities and the work Tim and Amy are doing in Seattle, visit their website: www.discoverthecommons.com.



▲ "A procession of monks returns to their monastery on the road between Yangon and Moulmein in Burma; they have just completed their daily collection of alms."

▲ Among the most heavily Buddhist regions in the world, Burma is home to several of Buddhism's holiest sites including the Shwedagon Pagoda. Only 4 to 5% of Burma's population professes Christianity.

▲ Dennis (pictured center) assists with church construction during the Lofa County Evangelism Project.

▲ Children at Peterstown school, Margibi County, Liberia.

▲ Delivering food supplies to orphans in Gbarnga.

▲ Home to major world-wide corporations Microsoft, Boeing, Starbucks and Amazon.com, Seattle has a leading impact on technology, international commerce, music, world religions, and environmental concerns. But as many as 90% of Seattle's residents do not attend church.

At Beeson Today

Denominational leaders, scholars, theologians and “living saints” were among the guests on campus in 2007. Read the latest news about these and other events at Beeson in recent months.



News-worthy

Pastors School Reaches Milestone

Beeson held its twentieth annual Beeson Pastors School in July 2007, making it the first event to mark the celebration of the seminary's twentieth year. Even before the first class entered, the first Pastors School was held in the summer of 1998 to help things "get started," as founding benefactor Ralph Beeson wanted.

About 450 participants attended this year's conference, representing a variety of denominations and locations throughout the U.S. and abroad. Several indicated they had attended all twenty Pastors Schools.

Convocation Opens Semester



Frank Page

Dean Timothy George presided over the twentieth Fall Convocation of Beeson Divinity School on September 4, 2007. Student body president **Grant Taylor** led the community in the renewal of the Inaugural Covenant, which, along with the hymn "For All the Saints," has been a part of all twenty opening convocations. Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, delivered the sermon. Preaching on 1 Samuel 17, Page challenged the students to be "giant killers." Divisiveness, he said, is one of the most dangerous threats to destroy the gospel's witness.

Beeson Honors Two Living Saints

In a tribute to "unsung heroes, saints of God," Beeson Divinity School recognized two longtime Christian mentors for the enduring impact of their lives.

"We all have persons behind the scenes who helped make us who we are," explained Beeson faculty member **Dr. Charles Carter**, who introduced his own mentor, 104-year-old Emil Lang of Birmingham. Lang, who owned a radiator shop, was Carter's Sunday School teacher in 1948 at Calvary Baptist Church in the Fountain Heights area of Birmingham. It was

Dean Timothy George and Dr. Charles Carter stand with their mentors, Rev. Sam D. Sharp (center left) and Emil Lang (center right).

then that the 12-year old Carter committed to the ministry.

Their friendship continued in 1971 when Carter began his 26-year tenure as pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church, where Lang was a deacon and chair of the baptistry committee.

Beeson dean **Dr. Timothy George** saluted his boyhood pastor, the Rev. Sam D. Sharp, who was founding pastor of East 23rd Street Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Rev. Sharp, age 92, was an engineer with Tennessee Valley Authority before being saved and called to the ministry.

"Sam Sharp influenced hundreds who were inspired by him to commit to the ministry," said George, who attended Sharp's church from second through sixth grades. The two have remained close friends ever since. He presented his mentor with a framed print of the chapel dome, which depicts the likenesses of sixteen prominent historical leaders of the Christian faith with its "Great Cloud of Witnesses" mural.

"If I had my way, we'd paint you as number seventeen," George said to Sharp, who was accompanied by his daughter, Pat Lowrance, and grandson, Eddie Lowrance, who serves as minister of music and youth at Riverside Baptist Church in Chattanooga.

Beeson Welcomes New Faculty Members



Two new faculty members were appointed for 2007-2008. **Carl Beckwith** joined the faculty as assistant professor of divinity, teaching in the areas of church history and historical theology. He holds an M.A. in the history of Christian doctrine from Yale University and a Ph.D. in the history of Christian-

ity from the University of Notre Dame. His research interests include the trinitarian and christological thought of the early church fathers, particularly the work of Hilary of Poitiers, the appropriation of patristic thought by the Reformers, and Lutheran theology. Prior to coming to Beeson, Beckwith taught at Thiel College in Greenville, Penn., and the University of Notre Dame. He and his wife, Julie, have two young daughters.



Doug Webster was named professor of divinity teaching in the areas of preaching and pastoral theology. Prior to coming to Beeson he was the senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church of San Diego (1993-2007). He has also taught at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Canada and served churches in Toronto, Bloomington, Indiana, and Denver, Colorado. Webster holds degrees from Wheaton College and University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology. He and his wife Virginia have three adult children.

Searby Named Director of D.Min. Studies and Student Services



Also new to Beeson in 2007 is **Dr. Mark Searby**. In addition to his direction of the doctor of ministry studies program and student services, Searby teaches in the area of ministry leadership and coordinates the faculty/student mentoring program. He served as a pastor of churches in Illinois for twenty-four years and continues to preach regularly. He holds degrees from Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln Christian Seminary, and Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Adams Gives Reformation Heritage Lectures



Gwenfair Walters Adams, associate professor of church history at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, delivered the 2007 Reformation Heritage Lectures. The title of the series was, "Pear Tree, Fig Tree, Lightning Strike, Door: Augustine, Luther, and the Theology-Shaping Power of a Story." You may purchase a complete set of the lectures on audio or video by contacting the Beeson Bookshop (205.726.2286) or you may download selected portions at www.beesondivinity.com/downloads.

2007 Pollock Award Presented to Graham



Stephen A. Graham received the 2007 Pollock Award for his book, *Ordinary Man Extraordinary Mission: The Life and Work of E. Stanley Jones*. The presentation was made by **Dean Timothy George**, and Graham spoke on Jones's evangelistic ministry in India as part of Beeson's chapel series, "Walking with the Saints." The Pollock Award

Renewal of the Inaugural Covenant



Having been led, as we believe, by the providence of God to be a member of this community of faith and learning, and in acknowledgment of the stewardship of this new beginning, we make the following solemn covenant with one another in the presence of the angels and the living God.

We are here because the call of God has come to us from beyond ourselves. We desire to be faithful ministers of the church of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves to diligence in study, devotion in prayer, and holiness of life that we might better serve the Body of Christ.

We pledge to love one another and encourage one another in the disciplines of the Christian life. We confess that we are all learners together in the school of faith. We will be cautious in criticism and prompt in forgiveness.

We believe that personal faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation for all who were, are now, or ever shall be. Therefore, we will seek in word and deed to bear witness of His love and grace to all persons everywhere.

Having in good faith made our covenantal commitments, and with God's help and grace, we therefore pledge to be faithful stewards of time, talents, and opportunities in order that we, in this semester at Beeson Divinity School, might model a lifestyle of service and devotion to the end that God will be glorified in ever increasing measure. 5



is presented annually in recognition of outstanding achievement in Christian biography.

New Website Launched

Beeson entered its twentieth year this fall with a new website. Over the summer, www.beesondivinity.com underwent a complete redesign. Our goal was not only to update the look of the site, but also to increase its usefulness to our constituency groups. Video chapel tours, a greeting from the dean, and downloads of weekly worship services are some of the features that have been added. Please spend some time viewing the site and use the "Contact Us" link to let us know what you think.



Fuller Awarded ATS Grant



Ministry Leadership Development director **Tom Fuller** was awarded a research grant of \$5,000 by the Association of Theological Schools through their Lilly Endowment-funded project on The Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Vocations. His research

will investigate the state of student engagement in graduate theological education, using an adapted version of the National Survey of Student Engagement.

Grace of God Is for Everyone



No one is so far gone that the grace of God cannot reach him or her, the head of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) said at a worship service in September.

"And when anyone comes into the knowledge of God's grace, what a marvelous transformation

is possible," said Dr. Neville Callam, who was elected general secretary of the BWA earlier this year.

Callam's visit to Beeson was the first stop in an eighteen-city North American tour for the Jamaican theologian and minister.

He focused his remarks on the word "grace," which Paul used in the blessing that is believed to end his writings to the people of Corinth.

Paul, said Callam, pronounces a benediction that is both a wish and a prayer. "Paul remembers that grace that has its source in Christ and he prays that the Lord will bestow this gracious favor on the Corinthians," he said.

Callam cited fifth century theologian Augustine's declaration that it is this free grace that enables "wayward travelers" to find their way back home in the arms of the Maker.

Theologian Aquinas, he said, also was seized by the mystery of divine grace, both the "habitual grace of God," which elevates a person to a new order of existence, and the "auxilium," or the disposition to lead the life of discipleship.

"When all is said and done, after we have sought to lead the godly life and have failed, after we have endured the bitter taste of failure in our effort to please God, how reassuring it is that we can rest on the grace of our Lord Jesus," said Callam.

Callam, a Harvard University graduate and specialist in Christian ethics, has been active with BWA since 1985. He was vice president of the organization during 2000-2005.

BWA is the largest Protestant Christian communion in the world with 110 million members.

Festschrift Announced to Honor Humphreys



Dean Timothy George has announced the forthcoming publication of a festschrift to honor **Fisher Humphreys** on the occasion of his retirement. The volume, titled *Theology in the Service of the Church: Essays in Honor of Fisher H. Humphreys*, will be presented in May 2008.

A festschrift is a collection of writings by the honoree's colleagues and is typically published on the occasion of his or her retirement or other celebratory occasion. Humphreys has served as professor of divinity teaching Christian theology at Beeson since 1990. He received the inaugural Beeson Teaching Award in 2003

Faculty Publishing News



Bray Fuller Thielman House Dorsett Gignilliat Smith

Gerald Bray's *Yours Is the Kingdom: A Systematic Theology of the Lord's Prayer* was published by Inter-Varsity Press in the UK in the fall of 2007. Bray is research professor for Samford University and is currently engaged in writing and speaking on a variety of theological issues of particular relevance to the contemporary church.

Tom Fuller, director of Beeson's Ministry Leadership Development program, contributed a chapter titled "How Do We Evaluate Students in Their Field Education?" to *Preparing for Ministry: A Practical Guide to Theological Field Education* (Kregel, 2008).

New Testament professor and Presbyterian chair **Frank Thielman** contributed "Ephesians" to *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., Baker, 2007). He also wrote a chapter on "The Atonement" for *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity* (Inter-Varsity Press/Baker, 2007). The editor was associate dean Paul House (with Scott J. Hafemann). Thielman's *Theology of the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2005) was released in Spanish in 2006 as *Teología del Nuevo Testamento* (Editorial Vida) and has just been released in Portuguese as *Teologia do Novo Testamento* (Shedd Publicações). Beeson alumnus **Edi Bizzerra** oversaw the publication of the Portuguese edition.

In addition to his editorial work on *Central Themes in Biblical Theology* (noted above), **Paul House** contributed a chapter entitled "The Day of the Lord." House also co-authored *How to Understand the Day of the Lord* with Sehoon Jang (Seoul, Korea, 2007) and *Old Testament Survey*, 2nd edition (Broadman and Holman, 2007) with Eric Mitchell.

A Passion for God: The Life of A.W. Tozer by **Lyle Dorsett** is scheduled for release in March 2008 by Moody Publishers. Dorsett also contributed a chapter titled "C.S. Lewis and Joy Davidman: Severe Mercies, Late Romance" to a book edited by Bruce L. Edwards, *C.S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy* (Praeger, 2007). He co-authored this piece with Beeson M.Div. student **Jake Hanson**. Dorsett is Beeson's Billy Graham Chair and Professor of Evangelism.

Assistant professor **Mark Gignilliat** has published his dissertation as *Paul and Isaiah's Servants in the Library of New Testament Studies* series (T&T Clark, 2007). Gignilliat teaches in the areas of Biblical Theology, Old Testament Exegesis and Hebrew. He has an interest in the relationship between the testaments and the relationship between exegesis and Christian dogmatics.

Doctrine That Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life by **Robert Smith, Jr.** will be released by B&H Publishers in early 2008. At Beeson, Smith teaches Christian preaching and other electives in homiletics.

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY 18—21

William E. Conger Jr. Lectures on Biblical Preaching

Featuring William H. Willimon, Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church, and Gardner C. Taylor

MARCH 10-12

Global Center hosts Philip Jenkins, Author and Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies and History, Penn State University

APRIL 15—17

Biblical Studies Lectures

Douglas K. Stuart, Professor of Old Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

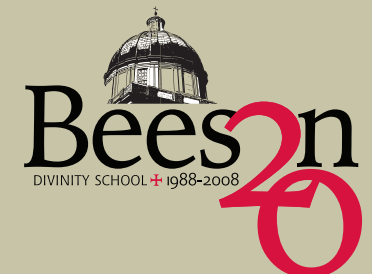
JULY 21—25

Twenty-first Annual Beeson Pastors School

Scheduled preachers include:

- Victor Pentz, Senior Pastor, Peachtree Presbyterian Church, Atlanta
- Bishop J. W. Macklin, Founding Pastor, Glad Tidings Church of God in Christ, Hayward, California
- William Franklin Graham, IV, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

The daily Bible teacher will be Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., President Emeritus & Colman M. Mockler Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts.



Reflections on 20 Years

by Norfleete Day

Change comes to all things, so the saying goes, and that definitely applies to Beeson Divinity School as I look back across the twenty years since its inception. As a member of the first class of Beeson students, I was one of thirty-two students, a small band of would-be scholars, who found ourselves bound together by the new experiences and learning we shared.

Those early days of Beeson Divinity School were quite modest—limited space, three faculty, and two secretaries to accommodate our little group. We were small, but we had purpose and energy and enthusiasm—a band of brothers and sisters excited about this new venture and the privilege to be part of it.

Now, as a faculty member—one of ____, with a student body of 165 masters level students, a magnificent and beautiful building, the school is quite different, and yet in essentials, it is the same. Beeson is still committed to evangelical Christian orthodoxy. It still provides graduate theological education to prepare ministers

“Beeson continues to faithfully fulfill the vision of Ralph Waldo Beeson...”

for service in the Church of Jesus Christ. It still worships the Triune God and encourages the practices of Christian spirituality. Beeson continues to faithfully fulfill the vision of Ralph Waldo Beeson from which this whole endeavor began.



■ **Norfleete Day** (B.A. Samford University; M.L.S., University of Alabama; M.Div., Beeson Divinity School, Samford University; Ph.D., Baylor University) teaches courses at Beeson Divinity School in Hebrew, Greek, New Testament and Spiritual Formation.



Variety Is the Spice of Life...



Early Beeson faculty.

1: the condition of being diverse : variety; especially : the inclusion of diverse people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization

Diversity has distinguished Beeson Divinity School from its beginning. In providing the generous endowment for the School's founding, Mr. Ralph Beeson was unequivocal about the School's being both evangelical and ecumenical.

Today Beeson Divinity School is distinguished by diversity in its range of denominational traditions and variety of ethnic heritage, as well as by diversity in gender and generations. Yes, we're true to Mr. Beeson's heart, but above and beyond that, we're determined to reflect God's heart and the diversity within His kingdom.

