

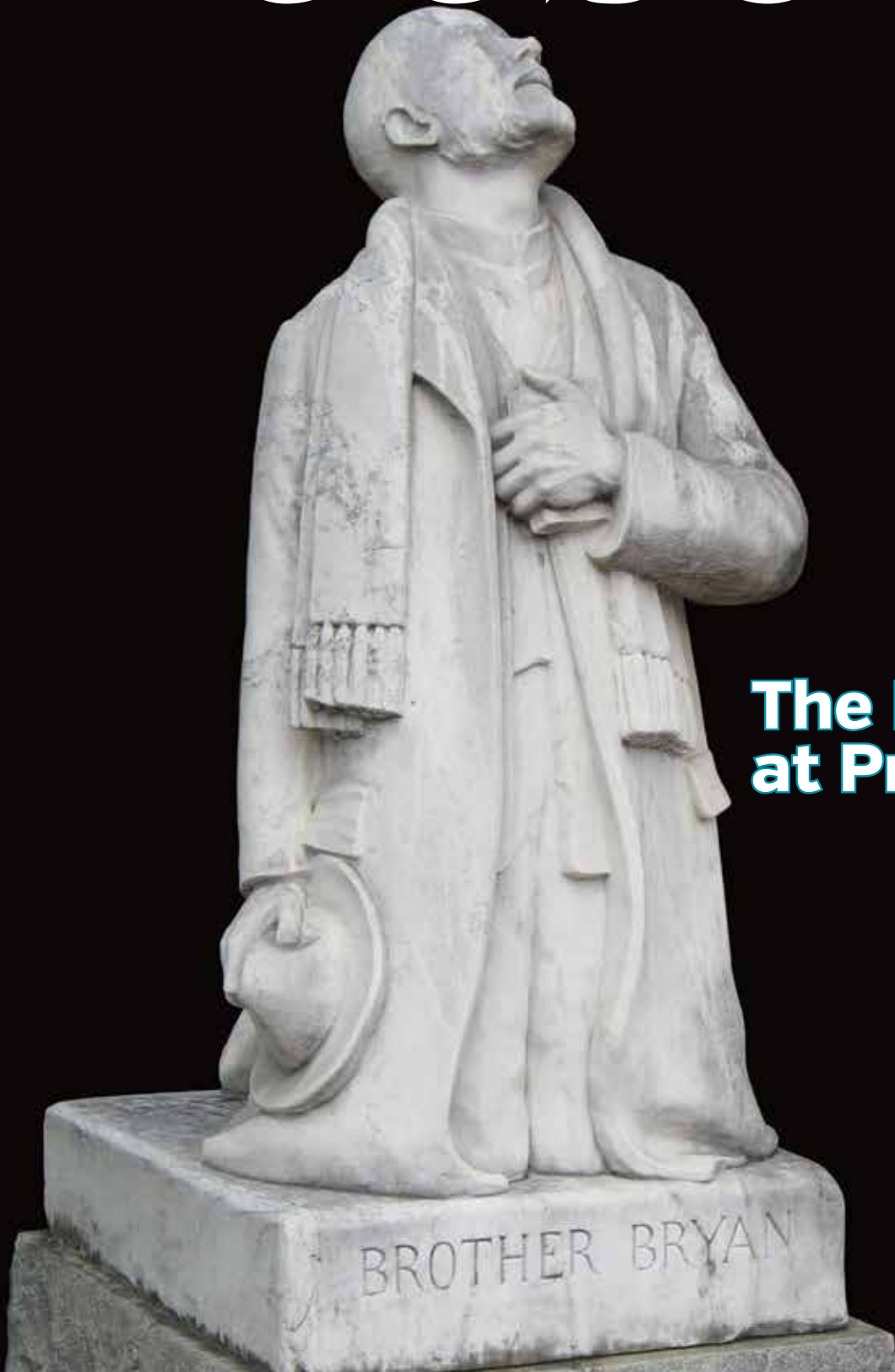
The Devoted Life



An Unlikely Ministry

Beeson

2015



**The Pastor
at Prayer**

Beeson

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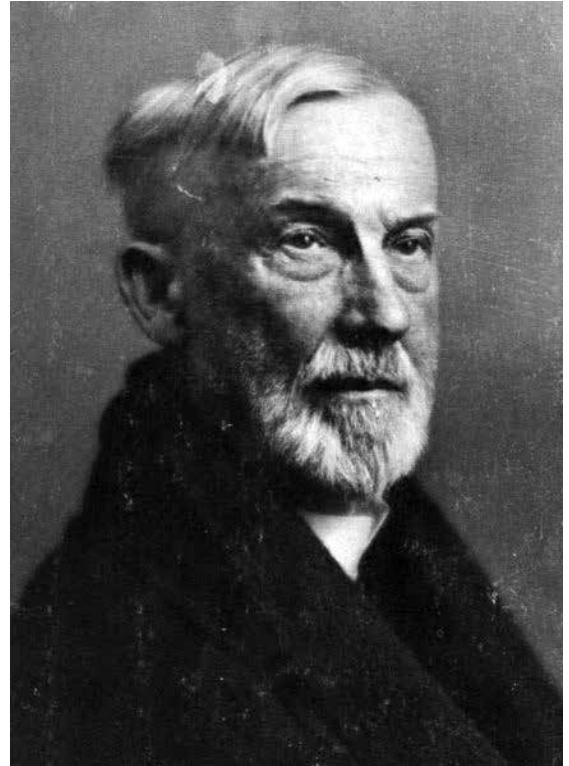
by Jake Hanson

Cover photo: Statue of "Brother Bryan" from 5 Points South in Birmingham. James Alexander Bryan (1863-1941) served for decades as the pastor of Birmingham's Third Presbyterian Church. Bryan was an early civil rights activist and was well-known for caring for the poor and homeless.

Fire and Prayer

By Timothy George

Birmingham is a post-Civil War city founded in 1871 in response to the discovery of one of the world's richest mineral deposits of iron, coal and limestone. The abundance of these raw materials soon led to a thriving steel industry, and Birmingham became the "Pittsburgh of the South." In the early twentieth century, the leaders of Birmingham commissioned a statue of Vulcan, the Roman god of fire and the forge, to represent the city at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Today Vulcan stands 56-feet tall high atop Red Mountain, an iconic symbol of Birmingham's history. Colossus-like, Vulcan is the largest cast-iron statue in the world and daily welcomes thousands of visitors from near and far.



▲ James Alexander Bryan

But Birmingham is also known for another statue, the one depicted on the cover of this issue of *Beeson* magazine. It is not the image of a Roman deity standing tall and proud, looking upward at the sky with a spear in his hand. No, this statue depicts an older man, shoulders slumping, hat in hand, kneeling in prayer. The man is James Alexander Bryan, known affectionately to everyone as "Brother Bryan," who served for more than fifty years as pastor of Birmingham's Third Presbyterian Church. Catherine Marshall once referred to him as "the patron saint of Birmingham." If anyone ever deserved that title, it was surely he.

Though he was well trained at Princeton Theological Seminary, Brother Bryan was not known for heady sermons or church politics. Brother Bryan was dearly loved as the tender shepherd of the entire city. He ministered to everyone who crossed his path, rich and poor, the mighty and the meek. He reached out to students, nurses and factory workers. He was the unofficial chaplain to the fire and police departments. But his heart went out especially to the poor, the destitute, the jobless, the hungry, the lonely, the lost. In the spirit of Francis of Assisi, Brother Bryan connected with

those on the margins of society. In an era of segregation and Jim Crow laws, Brother Bryan was an apostle of racial reconciliation. He treated everyone with dignity and respect, infinitely dear and precious in the sight of the heavenly Father.

What was the secret of Brother Bryan's ministry? By all accounts, it was the fact that his life was saturated with the spirit and practice of prayer. Hunter B. Blakely, whose book, *Religion in Shoes*, tells the story of Bryan's life, reports that "Let us pray" were the words most frequently upon the lips of this beloved

pastor. “No man has ever believed more implicitly in prayer than he, and never were prayers more unconventional. Prayer seems to him as natural as for a man to breathe the air. Why not, he would reason, for is God not the most real thing in the universe?”

Brother Bryan was a promiscuous pray-er who prayed with thousands in hospitals, prisons and halfway houses. He prayed with countless others at weddings and funerals, over the telephone, on the sidewalk, in the mills and factories of the city, and in his pastor’s study, which was known as Birmingham’s “confessional.” It was said that “the fragrance of his prayer life permeated the whole city.” His prayers were often short and to the point, but they were more than pious platitudes. He knew that prayer was a vital component of what St. Paul called “the full armor of God” (Eph. 6:11). Every prayer

involved spiritual combat, and one of his most characteristic prayers was this one: “O Lord, help us to fight the devil!”

One of the most interesting prayer stories from Brother Bryan’s life came from one Thursday night when he was walking home alone after dark. Suddenly, a man jumped out of an alley, pushed a gun into his face, and said, “Hands up.” Brother Bryan complied as the man rifled through his pockets, taking his watch and the little cash he had on him. When the robbery was done and before the thief could depart, he heard the minister say, “Brother, let us pray.” As Brother Bryan prayed, the thief lowered his gun and placed the watch and stolen money back into the hands of his victim.

Brother Bryan died in 1941, but his legacy still lives on in many ways: in the church he served, which is

still a dynamic center of Christian witness and where recent Beeson alum Hunter Twitty serves as pastoral assistant; in Brother Bryan Mission, where another Beeson graduate, Brian Keen, along with others, reaches out in Jesus’ name to homeless and displaced persons in Birmingham; in the silent witness to the power of prayer seen in the statue of Brother Bryan, well placed for all to see at a busy intersection “where cross the crowded ways of life.”

What does the god of fire have to do with the man of prayer? In the Bible fire and prayer belong together, as when the prophet Elijah prayed and fire fell from heaven on Mount Carmel, as when the distraught disciples prayed in the Upper Room and Pentecostal fire set the place ablaze. At Beeson Divinity School we do our work in the context of such prayer. In classrooms and corridors, in Hodges Chapel and our intercessory prayer room, over lunch in the student commons and gathered for communion around the Table of the Lord. Our alumni all over the world carry on the ministry of prayer as well as the ministry of preaching. Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses—including Brother Bryan—we live in the confidence that, in the words of James, “the effectual fervent, fiery prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 4:16, KJV). †

Timothy George is the founding dean of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University



◀ Third Presbyterian Church

The Devoted Life

A Reformation Approach

By Gerald Bray

The student of Reformation attitudes toward devotional life and commitment is almost bound to concentrate on the church, the ministry, and the sacraments—the public face of the Christian community rather than the private spirituality of its individual members.

Apart from the obvious fact that public worship is much easier to trace than private devotions are, there is a reasonable degree of certainty that what was done in the church was common to a variety of people and not a personal eccentricity of which some record happens to have survived.

It was assumed that if the words were right, the Holy Spirit would be at work, even if it could be surmised that many people would be drifting off during the prayers.

But beyond the nature and limitations of the evidence available, it is also true that the Reformers were more preoccupied with the church as a whole than with particular believers, unless the latter were causing trouble for some reason. Much of their time was spent organizing the common life of the church by producing forms of worship, catechisms, and even schools where children were taught exactly the same thing. In any given country where a local church had a monopoly, there was more religious uniformity after the Reformation than there had been before. England offers a classic example of this. Not only did the church impose a Book of Common Prayer on its congregations,

which was to become a hallmark of classical Anglicanism, but Thomas Cranmer, the original architect of the whole project, actually justified this to those required to use the book he produced for them:

Whereas heretofore there hath been great diversity in saying and singing in churches within this realm; some following Salisbury use, some Hereford use, and some the use of Bangor, some of York, some of Lincoln; now from henceforth all the whole realm shall have but one use.

Religious orders that promoted their own forms of spirituality were dissolved, and itinerant preaching like that

of the medieval friars was forbidden. The worship of God was understood to be a corporate activity, not merely in each congregation but across the church as a whole. It was assumed that if the words were right, the Holy Spirit would be at work, even if it could be surmised that many people would be drifting off during the prayers, some would not understand them, and a few might even be quietly objecting to them as they were read. The Reformers naturally deplored such things, but individual laxity or recalcitrance did not affect the validity of the prayers themselves, because they did not depend on the subjective attitudes of the worshipers. Even those who wanted change, as the Puritans did, usually thought in corporate terms—they wanted each congregation to decide how it would worship, not each member of it. What might happen if people were left to their own devices was recorded with some exasperation by Richard Baxter:

Old Mr Ashe hath often told us that this was the mind of the old Nonconformists, and that he hath often heard some weak ministers so disorderly in prayer, especially in baptism and the Lord's Supper, that he could have wished that they would rather use the Common Prayer.

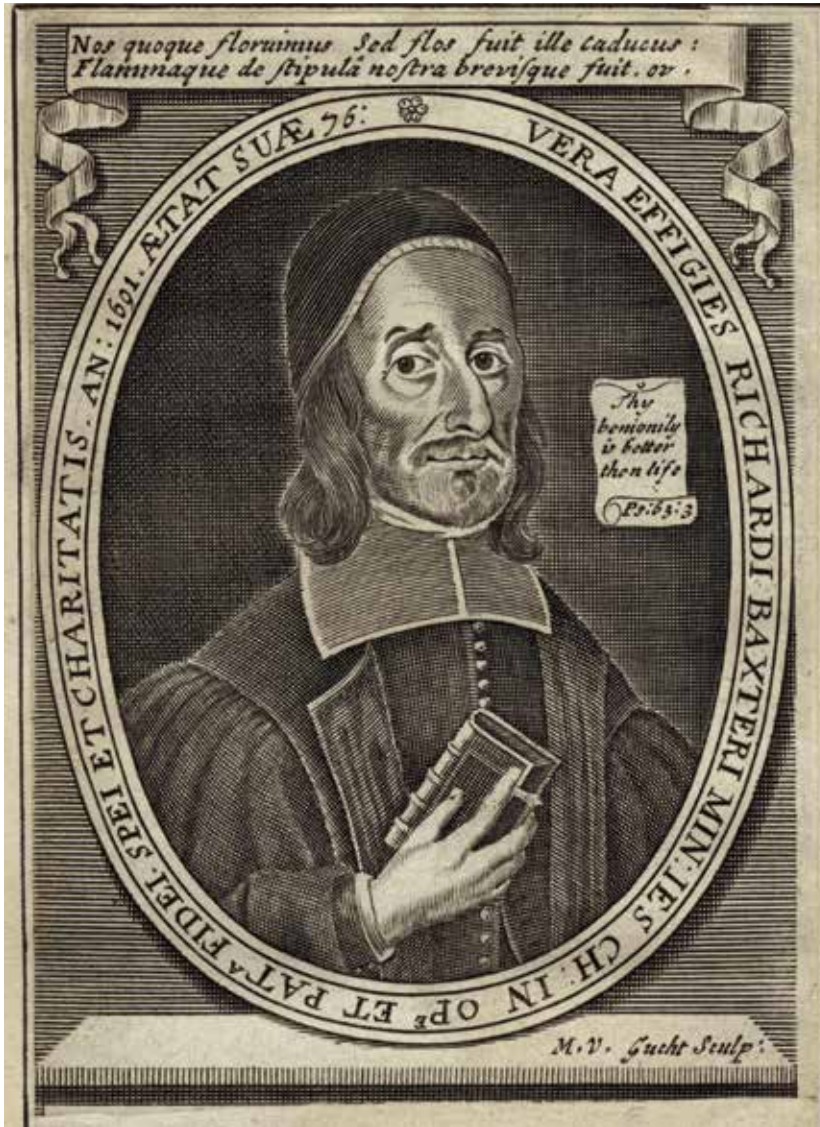
Having said that, there was something about Protestant worship that demanded individual commitment. The worshiper could not just sit or stand quietly while the minister recited prayers, even if they were no longer in a foreign language. He was expected to participate by joining in the responses at least, and sometimes there might even be opportunities to sing along with the choir. The service was conducted in the language of the people, and the all-important sermon was meant to instruct and challenge everyone present. Church services were like school lessons, and the forms adopted for conducting them were



▲ Thomas Cranmer



▲ Richard Sibbes



▲ Richard Baxter

© National Portrait Gallery, London

intended for popular instruction. What the Reformers wanted was not individual expression in the modern sense but personal commitment to a common faith and pattern of worship.

Private devotion was not forbidden, but it was not much encouraged either. Before the Reformation, private masses had been common, and had often been celebrated in people's houses. Side chapels had altars and facilities for private prayer, and people were encouraged to light candles before statues and so on. All that was swept away by the Reformation. Family devotions were encouraged, but they too were corporate, led by the head of the house with everyone else joining in as appropriate. Private Bible study was not high on anyone's agenda, the

main reason being the fear of heresy. If people were allowed to read the Scriptures for themselves, without the proper pastoral guidance, there was no telling what they might come up with, and it must be said that the appearance of outlandish sects in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lends credence to this fear. There was also a strong conviction that the Holy Spirit would speak only in

and through the Scriptures, and their interpretation was (of course) in the hands of the ministers of the Word. Richard Sibbes put it well when he wrote,

There must be a Spirit in me, as there is a Spirit in the Scripture, before I can see anything. . . . The breath of the Spirit in us is suitable to the Spirit's breathing in the Scriptures; the same Spirit doth

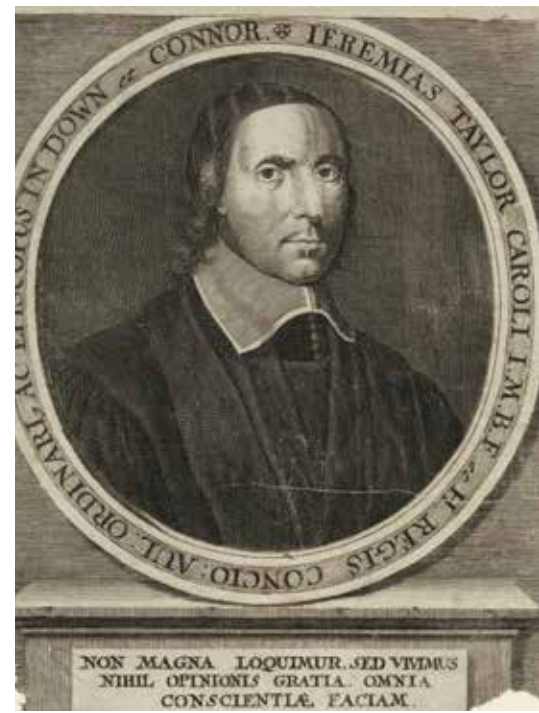
What the Reformers wanted was not individual expression in the modern sense but personal commitment to a common faith and pattern of worship.



▲ James II



▲ Charles I



▲ Jeremy Taylor

not breathe contrary motions. . . . As the spirits in the arteries quicken the blood in the veins, so the Spirit of God goes along with the Word, and makes it work.

An anonymous "A. M." also wrote,

I did wonderfully esteem and value the Scriptures; and my heart was wonderfully set against those that pretend to revelations without, or not agreeable to or against the Scriptures.

Individuals were encouraged to meditate on the biblical text that had formed the substance of the week's sermon and apply it to their lives, but that was the private extension of an essentially public activity and quite unlike what we think of as Bible study today.

One imaginative solution to the problem of Dissent in England was to export it, which the government actually did, albeit on a limited scale.

This pattern did not begin to change until the later seventeenth century, when several factors combined to make greater concentration on the individual Christian's devotional life more attractive. One of them was political. The Reformers and their opponents were prominent figures in church and society, whose views influenced secular rulers and led to revolts and wars that were more or less endemic in much of central Europe until 1648. In that year, the great powers finally agreed to take religion out of international politics and to let each state decide its own form of confession and worship. The result was that most countries ended up with a carefully regulated state church that

was supposed to embrace the entire population. Where that was not possible, one of two things happened. Either the state excluded its minorities (as in France, where Protestants were eventually forced to convert to Catholicism or go into exile), or the state broke up into smaller units, which is what happened in Germany.

The British Isles presented a more complex picture, in that following a civil war between "Anglicans" who supported the king and "Puritans" who backed parliament (1642–1649) and the failure of a Puritan based "commonwealth" (1649–1660), the restored monarchy tried to impose a settlement according to which everyone would be comprehended in a broad Anglican church. The result was that a substantial number of English Puritans left the established church and became "Dissenters," Scotland went into low-level but fairly constant revolt, and Ireland contained so many disparate elements that it scarcely knew which way to turn. One imaginative solution to the problem of Dissent in England was to export it, which the government actually did, albeit on a limited scale. William Penn (1644–1718), a Quaker, was given land in what became Pennsylvania, where he was allowed to offer religious toleration to anyone who wanted it. John Locke (1632–1704) was commissioned to draw up a constitution for the Carolinas, in which religious toleration was made a fundamental principle for the first time, though it did not last long in practice. Other American colonies were already in Puritan hands, with the curious result that what was considered Dissent in the mother country was actually the state church in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

In 1688, there occurred an event known today as the “glorious revolution,” in which the English parliament ejected the Catholic King James II (1685–1688) and claimed supremacy for itself in government. It then settled the Anglican (episcopal) church in England, persuaded the Irish parliament to do the same in Ireland, and allowed the Scottish parliament to establish a Presbyterian church in that country. In England, a limited toleration was granted to Dissenters but not to Catholics, and the same applied to Ireland, though Catholics (who formed the vast majority of the population there) were tolerated more often than not. As long as people paid lip service to the state church, no one enquired too deeply about their private beliefs. Officially, however, the established churches were expected to stick to the theology of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion (in England and Ireland) and the Westminster Confession (in Scotland). Theology as taught in the universities became the exposition of these and other classic texts (like the ancient creeds), to which everyone who held office in church, state, or education had to subscribe.

This was a clear victory for the state, which had long been trying to achieve something of this kind. As far back as December 1628, when theological disputes were raging in England, King Charles I had issued a declaration demanding assent to the Thirty-nine Articles and had this to say about any speculation beyond them:

We will, that all further curious search be laid aside, and these disputes shut up in God’s promises, as they be generally set forth to us in the Holy Scriptures, and the general meaning of the Articles of the Church of England according to them. And . . . if any public reader in either of our universities, or any head or master of a college, or any other person respectively in either of them, shall affix any new sense to any Article, or shall publicly read, determine, or hold any public disputation, or . . . shall preach or print anything either way, other than is already established . . . he, or they the offenders, shall be liable to our displeasure . . . and we will see there shall be due execution upon them.

What had been impossible for the king to maintain in the 1630s, when theological questions dominated political discourse, became the norm thirty years later, when such questions had been effectively removed from the public arena. Many people went along with this development quite sincerely, particularly in England, where opposition to the Puritans had been strong in Oxford, and among the upper classes there was a flowering of what became known as “latitudinarianism.” This was a kind of liberalism that allowed a wide range of theological interpretations (something that the ambiguities of many of the Articles of Religion did little to discourage) and tended

to foster moralism instead of spirituality in the Puritan sense. Two men who represented the new mood were Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667) and William Law (1686–1761), whose books of spiritual devotion have survived the test of time and are still in print today.

Taylor was a long-standing opponent of Puritanism and had been imprisoned during the commonwealth period, when his most famous works were written. After the restoration, he became a bishop in Ireland and a pillar of the new establishment. William Law was less fortunate. Having started off as a supporter of the king, he found himself unable to accept the succession of the Protestant George I (1714–1727) to the throne instead of the Stuart pretender, and so had to leave his university post and live in semi-seclusion for the rest of his life. It was then that he wrote his greatest works, including *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, which was to have a great impact on John and Charles Wesley. The fact that both of these men were able to publish freely although they were open opponents of the regime in power shows how far things had changed since the sixteenth century, when neither would have been allowed such liberty and both might easily have been put to death for their opinions. What they recommended was a pattern of spiritual discipline not unlike that of medieval Catholicism, though modified and updated to meet later circumstances. Neither showed any inclination to convert to Rome, but both believed that something important was missing in the spiritual life of their times and they sought to supply what was lacking. The result was perilously close to legalism, into which those who took their advice often fell, but it should be remembered that their original intentions were quite different. What they wanted was a revival of individual piety, an application of spiritual principles to daily life, and it was this, more than the particular form that it took, that appealed to a generation that wanted the consolations of religion that neither the arid theological disputes of the universities nor the enthusiastic disorder (as they saw it) of the Puritans could give them. †

As long as people paid lip service to the state church, no one enquired too deeply about their private beliefs.

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When I Am the Pastor

By Darrell Cook

Seminary students preparing for ministry might keep a file folder entitled “When I am the pastor.” We are exposed to ideas, listen to sermons and participate in worship. The sobering fact is that one day, when I am the pastor, I will be planning the service, selecting the music and preaching the sermon.

Serving as pastor includes more than leading the worship, however. It includes Christian education, small groups and pastoral care. It includes committee meetings and community involvement. Our parishioners have certain expectations of the pastor, and seminary years are preparation time for that role. While it is easy to get caught up in planning, preaching and pastoral ministry, let me put forth a matter that can easily be neglected. We should be asking, “When I am pastor, how will I lead my congregation to make prayer a priority?”

Let’s consider four aspects of prayer in the life of every pastor.

Praying in the Study

The first sermon you preach will be more important than any paper you wrote. Your first worship service will impact more people than any class project you were assigned. As you prepare your soul to be the servant of the Lord, borrow David’s prayer, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23-24 ESV).

As you prepare a message, pray that you will be a worker who rightly handles the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Charles Spurgeon advised his young students, “Your prayers will be your ablest assistants while your discourses are yet upon the anvil.” Before you enter the service pray these words George Atkins penned two centuries ago:

Brethren, we have met to worship and adore the Lord our God;
Will you pray with all your power, while we try to preach the Word?
All is vain unless the Spirit of the Holy One comes down;
Brethren, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around.

Let me pose an even more urgent question. As a student, is prayer important to you now? Does your prayer life increase the closer you get to mid-term exams or project deadlines? Do you give thanks on the good days and offer petitions on the rough days? Are your prayers a list of needs, problems and wishes? Are they so general that they include “all the world” in a few sentences? Are you waiting until graduation so you will have more time to pray?

Unless you have already resolved to make prayer a priority, it will not happen.

When you arrive as pastor at your new church, prayer may not be at the top of your to-do list. Prayer is always assumed and is seldom controversial. I have never heard of a church that split because of prayer or of a pastor who was dismissed because of prayer. You bring your agenda, and the congregation has its expectations, but prayer may not be at the top of either list. Unless you have already resolved to make prayer a priority, it will not happen. You must decide whether you will be intentional about prayer. You must ask yourself if you will do things differently when you are the pastor. To that end,



▲ Statue in Kelly Ingram Park, Birmingham, Alabama, depicting Revs. N.H. Smith Jr., A.D. King and John T. Porter in 1963

Praying in the Service

In the pulpit, the pastor is on holy ground. Do we pray eloquently or humbly? Do we pray with formal language or conversationally? Do we quote Scripture back to God or recite a list of requests on behalf of the congregation? Is the pastor a worshipper or the leader of worship? Can we expect the pastor to enter the sanctuary spiritually prepared to serve as priest—to represent God to the people and the people to God? The Old Testament is full of prayers of Abraham, Moses and the prophets on behalf of the people. Today our congregations want their pastor to voice their needs to the Father. We can almost hear their request, “Pastor, pray for me.” That is our privilege as we stand before the people. We model how to pray, not by following a formula, but by approaching God on behalf of our brothers and sisters. That is a weighty matter which should not be taken lightly.

The spiritual high mark that day was not a sermon but a prayer.

Spurgeon, while best known for his preaching, set aside time in the Sunday-morning services for lengthy prayers. Saturated in Scripture, they began with adoration of God and moved to specific requests. He prayed for sinners, backsliders and those who opposed the Gospel. He prayed for children, for the Sabbath-school teachers in his congregation and the spread of the Gospel around the world.

Special occasions may call for special prayers. When Solomon the King prayed at the dedication of the temple, he referred to God’s covenant with his people Israel and his father David. He acknowledged that the magnificent building could not contain the God of Israel, but it was the place where the people would assemble to worship Him. The spiritual high mark that day was not a sermon but a prayer. We might ask then, if prayer is that important, is it appropriate to write our prayers? For the sake of clarity, a written prayer is better than a rambling prayer, but it should not be a sermon in disguise.

When you pray you are not practicing for future ministry, you are doing what a believer does for a friend! That is ministry.

There is a danger in praying an eloquent prayer, and Jesus warned us about it: “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward” (Matt. 6:5, ESV). We must beware of our response when we are told after a service, “Pastor, you had a nice prayer.” Such words can encourage us, but they must not be our reward for praying.

Praying in the Crises of Life

When you leave your church and move on to your next duty post, what will be your legacy? A brilliant sermon series, a successful building renovation or an expanded outreach ministry? Any one of these would be a tribute to a dedicated pastor. But what if they remembered you as the pastor who prayed for them and prayed with them? After we pray in the study and pray in the service, we must always be ready to pray with individuals in the crises of life.

When a person calls us in time of crisis, we should be thankful for their trust. For some people, asking for help is a major step so we should proceed carefully. We should pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us as we minister to them. We can expect to see and hear things we cannot repeat. We will be brought into a per-



▲ Statue in Five Points South, Birmingham, Alabama, depicting Rev. James Alexander “Brother” Bryan (1863-1941) at prayer

son’s private space that is marked off by invisible yellow caution tape. The setting may be a hospital room, a funeral parlor, a living room or police station.

Christians are not immune from the “dreadful D’s”—disease, death, depression, divorce, debt and a lot more. When you are the pastor who is invited into that private space, your prayer should be focused, scriptural, well-reasoned, urgent and short. The prayer is not to counsel or teach, but to present

the need to the Father and express confidence in His sovereignty. You are there because someone has said, “Pastor, will you pray for me?” Let them hear you ask the Holy Spirit to help you structure your prayer. Let them hear you petition the Father through Christ our Mediator. Be sure you express confidence in the power of our Risen Lord to hear prayer.

Are pastoral visits in crisis situations a burden or opportunity? Do we view our parishioners as church

members or as brothers and sisters? We pray best for those we love the most. What if you begin to practice that during your seminary years? You can do that when a classmate mentions a concern—a struggle in a course, a sick family member or a difficult relationship. After listening carefully suggest that the two of you pray, right there. Prayer is always better than a prayer request! When you pray you are not practicing for future ministry, you are doing what a believer does for a friend! That is ministry.

Leading My Congregation to Pray

Our goal is not to earn a reputation as prayer warriors (a term not in the Bible) but as people of prayer. Dr. Graham Cole opened a lecture on the theology of prayer by asking, “Is praying as natural as breathing?” This is a worthwhile self-examination question which deserves our consideration. Sadly, we must admit that we do not forget to breathe, but we do forget to pray. We are easily distracted—even while we are praying. In *A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts in Worship*

(1667), Richard Steele warns, “Rovings in prayer make that which is our most reasonable service the most irrational thing in the world. No folly like speaking to one person and thinking of another.” Jesus observed, “These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Matt. 15:8, NKJV).

We lead our congregations to pray when we spend less time on prayer requests and more time praying. We encourage them to pray when we pray with them individually. We model how to pray by the way we pray. When Melchizedek visited Abraham, his blessing took the form of a prayer, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.” There is no record that Abraham had used that language before, but after Melchizedek prayed this way, Abraham used the same descriptive name for the LORD (Gen. 14:19-22). When we pray we may be shaping the prayers of others.

Seminary is the time to ask questions. Pray that the Spirit will prepare you to be a servant who is intentional about prayer. Resolve

now, that when you are the pastor your church will be a house of prayer where you pray for each other and for all the nations.

Soon after going to my present pastorate, I heard stories of the beloved pianist who was in a care facility. When I went to visit her I was cautioned that I would not be able to carry on a conversation. Her son seated me close to her and then introduced me as the new preacher. With little hesitation she spoke her only intelligible words during the visit, “Well then tell him to get with it.” I received her counsel as a word from the Lord. She recently went to be with her Savior, but I believe she would say to each person who wants to learn to pray, “Get with it.” One of the great privileges of Christian ministry is leading the people of God to be people of prayer. ✚

Darrell Cook (M.Div. 2013) is Pastor-in-Residence at Beeson Divinity School. After a career in retail management, Darrell and his wife, Elaine, served as missionaries in South Africa for five years. He is currently the pastor of Dogwood Grove Baptist Church in Adger, Alabama.



Why choose Beeson?

Our faculty/student ratio is 1:7

At Beeson, students learn not only from professors' lectures but from their lives.



An Unlikely Ministry

By Fran Cade



“Seriously Lord?”

This is ridiculous. It makes no sense. Why? What are you thinking?” Those were my thoughts when God called me as a newly-minted seminary graduate into the world of manufacturing.

I am a wife and mother of four. I was a marketing sales rep in my early days and more recently served part-time for eight years on staff at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in downtown Birmingham. When our youngest child was clearly self-sufficient (at least in his own eyes), I began to search for what I would do next. I wanted something to focus on, to throw my energies into.

I love reading and studying the Bible and theology, and I especially enjoy teaching various women’s groups at our church. It was not a big surprise when God led me to apply to grad school at Beeson, though, to be honest, I was crossing my fingers I would not be accepted. The last time I was in a university library and had to prepare a paper with footnotes was a long time ago! Could I really do this?

Four years later I graduated with a Master of Theological Studies having enjoyed every minute of my class time, interactions with other students and studies. I LOVED IT.

My logical expectation was that I would continue teaching in women’s ministries at our church. I said I was willing to go—and wanted to go—wherever and whenever God called. I thought that was true.

Unexpected Calling

In fall 2011, my husband, Catlin, and I had the opportunity to purchase a local flexographic printing company. Neither of us had any manufacturing experience—much less flexographic printing knowledge—but Catlin was very familiar with the company, having served on the advisory board and done tax planning and consulting for the company. Diversified Label Images Inc. was more than twenty-five years old; the company had a consistently good track record and there seemed to be a lot of opportunity for expansion and growth. We bought the company with two other investors. One was the current plant manager who wanted to stay on and continue to run the business. The other investor was a close family friend who happened to be moving to Birmingham and had an extraordinarily successful sales career. Cindy would bring the business in, Frank would produce it, and Catlin would bring financial know-how. I would be involved in the overall management and leadership, serving primarily to establish us as a woman-owned, therefore a minority owned, business. That was the plan.

Right.

I am not a risk taker by nature and the idea of going this far out on a financial limb scared me. During many sleepless nights, I prayed constantly that the “door would close.”

It didn’t.

The actual sales transaction was scheduled for December 9. I was up very early that morning. Catlin and I had to be at the attorney’s office by 7 a.m. to make it to an out-of-town memorial service for his mom who had died earlier in the week. I was praying that desperately brief prayer we all know so well: “Help!”

I picked up a devotional book and read the entry for that day:

Be willing to go out on a limb with Me. If that is where I am leading you, it is the safest place to be. Your desire to live a risk-free life is a form of unbelief. Your longing to live close to Me is at odds with your attempts to minimize risk. You are approaching a crossroads in your journey. In order to follow Me wholeheartedly, you must relinquish your tendency to play it safe. (*Jesus Calling*, Sarah Young)

I said I was willing to go—and wanted to go—wherever and whenever God called. I thought that was true.

It can be enlightening to see that risks are occasions that reveal where our securities lay. Taking these risks can therefore be steps of releasing these illusions of security. I was nailed. A few hours later I was the new president and CEO of Diversified Label Images Inc.

Unanticipated Challenges

Not surprisingly, there were big surprises. Almost immediately, things did not work out as hoped with the plant manager, and he left after four months.

I was all of a sudden drowning in the deep end of learning a new company in a completely unfamiliar industry.

My world had now become a foreign country with a new language, history, structure and culture. We had taken significant financial risk, so there was enormous personal pressure to make this thing work.

There were also the people who depended upon their jobs at this company to support themselves and their families. Jobs were not easy to find.

The challenges of these three years of running a printing company have at many times overwhelmed me. In all areas—equipment, technology, software, personnel, inventory, shipping and finance—more updates and improvements were needed than we anticipated. We had to learn about the flexographic process with its unique tooling, language and raw materials.

I'm thankful that several people who had been with DLI for years stayed on with us through this wild transition. They knew better than I how totally unprepared I was for this challenge, and I will always be so grateful to them for the way they have patiently answered my questions. They hung in there while I

impatiently stumbled, worried and learned, and made more than a few bad decisions. Without their loyalty we would not have made it. Our vice president of sales, though new to the company like us, persevered in phenomenal ways, even during months when sales were so low we wondered if we could survive.



Catlin and I have been fortunate to each have a small prayer group of close friends. They have prayed faithfully and often for us as we have walked this journey. We are grateful beyond words for their prayers! Our own four children and three children-in-law have also been unwavering in their concern, love and support.

Finally, just last year, we found—no, we were given—the two other essential senior leadership team members needed for the company to survive and flourish. Things are very different now. We have moved the entire company into a completely renovated 37,000-square-foot facility in Irondale. We have a strong management team leading 38-plus

people that are working hard to build a solid company together. We are growing even though each day continues to be a roller coaster!

Unforgettable Lessons

I am also beginning to understand what ministry in the workplace is and has the potential to be, which is not what I may have imagined. It's not primarily leading Bible studies at work, or praying with and encouraging employees, although I have had opportunities to do all of that. Ministry in the workplace is a mindset that the work you are doing in the place you are in is God's calling to you as his beloved child. It is living authentically and with integrity. It is not acting out of the belief that your job is to honor God with your good and successful behavior and/or business in order to be right with Him. It is remembering that the Gospel message is one of God's forgiving and complete grace to us all as weak, broken people totally unable to rescue ourselves. This conviction fuels how we walk through each day as well as how we treat others.

Praying to see his hand in the details of my work teaches me more about God's character as well as my own. I recently had to fire an employee, and some of my lower management team strongly disagreed with the decision. They were certain that I was making a mistake. I knew, however, that they did not have all the facts, and it was not prudent for me to give them all of the relevant information. This experience brought home to me that I often view circumstances as negative simply because I do not have the information God has. I believe that God is perhaps not present, or not loving, or not paying attention! Yet, God knows all the details of His divine plan and is steadily and unwaveringly working it out for His good purposes.

The Lord calls whomever, wherever, whenever, to whatever he pleases.



Tim Keller has said that God gives you what you would have asked for if you knew all he knew. If the Lord had indeed told me all he planned to accomplish through this journey in my own life, and the lives of those around me, surely I would say “Oh Yes, Lord. What an amazing plan. Yes!” But He does not tell us the specifics of His plan. There are times we walk in the dark. The very dark.

Ministry in the workplace can be walking through the day reflecting the confidence that God is indeed in that workplace, equipping his people for every occasion. It is trusting God for wisdom and provision, even in the midst of fearful economic times or tough decision making. It is deeply understanding that his will is not about what we see as “success,” but is about the ultimate good he is working. The Lord calls whomever, wherever, whenever, to whatever he pleases. We know from the Scriptures that he is notorious for calling the un-

equipped. We know that his ways are not our ways—indeed sometimes they may seem totally ridiculous!! I know that all too well. And yet I also know that he promises to equip those whom he has called (Hebrews 13:20-21).

The passage that has been with me almost daily since December 2011 is Psalm 86. I especially like the way David begins: “Hear O Lord and answer me, for I am poor and needy.” He goes on to write:

For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. (Psalm 86:10-13)

Our company’s name is Diversified Label Images—DLI. I often imagine those letters stand for the “Dear Lord’s Initiative,” for this was certainly not my idea. It is indeed the Lord’s initiative. It is His work. I still have no idea what He is thinking or what His plans are. Whatever the outcome, I am confident that His purposes are good. And He will complete that which he has begun.

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6 †

Fran Cade [M.T.S. 2009] is president of Diversified Label Images Inc. in Irondale, Alabama. She is mother to four adult children and two grandsons and is a member of the Cathedral Church of the Advent.

Beeson Portrait

Carlea Jordan

By Betsy Childs

Carlea Jordan was a pastor's daughter. The youngest child, she stuck closely by her father's side and especially enjoyed accompanying him on visitations. She loved being at church and in the safe and loving care of her father.

When she graduated from high school in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, she decided to join the Marine Corps. The service took her far from home to Monterey, California. She loved the Marines, but was no fan of the Central West Coast because, as a Florida girl, she found it too cold! After several years in California, Carlea was honorably discharged from the Marines.

When Carlea's father died, her world fell apart. She felt angry at God for taking her daddy. She stopped going to church and drifted further and further from the faith as she lived for herself. Eventually, she moved back home to Florida.

Even after she returned home, Carlea's anger persisted, and she had

no sense of purpose. Her older sister persuaded her to move to Tuskegee, Alabama, and from there she landed in Montgomery where she worked odd jobs. Still angry and at loose ends, one night she finally felt broken. Carlea says, "I fell on my knees, and I prayed, and I repented."

That same night she had a dream about a church, and the name of the church was First Baptist. The next day, she heard an announcement on the radio for a music workshop at First Baptist Church Greater Washington Park. She wrote down the address—in a part of town she had never visited—and went to the church the next Sunday.

Carlea became an active member of First Baptist Church Greater Washington Park and grew in her faith. A man named Ralph had caught her eye that very first Sunday when he got up to sing; they became good friends, though they didn't marry until 6 years later. Ralph challenged Carlea to go to college, an environment where she flourished. Both she and Ralph took jobs in the Montgomery public school system.



Five years into their very happy marriage, Ralph and Carlea were driving to an educators' meeting in Florida when their car was hit on the passenger side, where Ralph was sitting. He seemed to be fine, so they continued on to Panama City.

After they returned home, Ralph went to the doctor, but he still appeared injury free. The next Saturday, they went fishing. Ralph initially stayed in the Jeep while Carlea fished, but when she went back to check on him, she discovered he was vomiting blood. They rushed to the hospital where the doctors admitted Ralph to intensive care and induced a coma.

The car accident had caused Ralph to bleed internally. Carlea waited by Ralph's bedside with friends, praying for his recovery and singing hymns. One night after she and her friends sang "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus," Ralph died.

"The death was so hard, so personal. The death of my daddy was per-

sonal too, but this was my husband. We did everything together. This was my partner for life. And he was gone," Carlea recalls. But in spite of her pain, she was a different person than she had been when she lost her father, and she had a different reaction to Ralph's death. "I didn't run from God because I needed him. I felt like I couldn't breathe without Ralph, but I wouldn't have cared to breathe without God."

Carlea continued on with life. She married again and became a mother. She moved her mother up from Ft. Lauderdale so that she could care for her. It was her mother who told her that she needed to go back to school. "You need to do what God told you to do," she admonished her daughter. Although Carlea had experience as a public school teacher, she now sensed that God could use her teaching gifts in the church.

Carlea applied to Beeson, and at the same time started to go through counseling. Although she

had pressed on after Ralph's death, she had never truly embraced life and challenged herself to achieve the goals God had put in her heart. When she completed her work with her counselor, she felt ready to enroll in Beeson and develop her gift for teaching.

Attending Beeson challenged Carlea. She made the hour and a half drive, each way, four days a week, to come to class. On top of that, she took care of her now ninety-eight-year-old mother and educated her daughter, Carina. She knows she could have found a less challenging program, or one she could have completed online, but she says that choosing Beeson was the right decision for her.

Carlea graduated in December. Life has not been easy for the little girl who loved being in her father's shadow, but God has been faithful to Carlea. The losses in her life have given her a tender dependence on her Heavenly Father, something that will serve her well in ministry. ✝

Beeson Launches Anglican Institute

By Betsy Childs

The Anglican Institute at Beeson Divinity School was launched in October 2014 to foster biblical Anglicanism. Under the leadership of Dr. Graham Cole, Anglican Professor of Divinity, the institute will include the Certificate of Anglican Studies (CAS) program and the Thomas Cranmer Society. Students in the M.Div. or M.A.T.S. degree programs can tailor their course schedules to complete the requirements of the CAS. The first recipient of the CAS was Peter Smith, who completed the M.Div. in December 2013.

The Thomas Cranmer Society is open to divinity students, employees, alumni, members of the Bee-

son Divinity School advisory board and members of Anglican churches that belong to the Beeson League of Churches. The Cranmer Society will nurture fellowship of Anglicans at Beeson Divinity School, lay and ordained, who are committed to biblical Anglicanism and the health of the Anglican Church in its worship, witness and works of mercy. The Cranmer Society will sponsor public lectures, conferences and an annual dinner. Those interested in joining the society should contact Dr. Cole at gcole@samford.edu. ✝

Peter Smith (M.Div. '13) ►
with Dr. Graham Cole



BDS NEWS

Global Center Engages International Students with Chat Club

If you wander into the Global Center on a Friday, you may find it is a noisy place. Beeson's Global Center hosts a biweekly Chat Club, an opportunity for international students to practice conversational English with native English speakers, learning about American culture while teaching others about their own culture.

These international students are part of the English Language Learner Institute (ELLI) at Samford University. Since its start in 2011, the number of students has steadily grown so that the ELLI now welcomes 35-40 students in a given semester. The largest concentration of students are from China, where the ELLI first began establishing relationships to recruit students, but the program is growing to include students from Africa, South America,

Europe and other Asian countries.

The Global Center has been a natural fit for involvement with the ELLI students. Chat Club provides an informal opportunity for international students to practice conversational English and develop friendships with divinity students, faculty and staff. Conversations include everything from sports and holidays to culture and religion. The Global Center's commitment to ELLI is to unconditionally offer English conversations and friendships without any obligation on the part of international students to listen to a presentation of the gospel. Opportunities to share the gospel do inevitably open up, however, sometimes in obvious ways. One international student sat down in front of a divinity student and asked, "Can you introduce me to Jesus?"



▲ Chat Club

Chat Club also allows Beeson students to learn about other cultures while having the chance to engage people of other faiths through conversation and friendships, without ever leaving campus. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, a few international students have decided to follow Christ. Others have heard the gospel presented and seek to learn more. Whether Beeson students are preparing for pastoral, collegiate, cross-cultural ministries or something else, Chat Club provides the kind of exposure many of them will encounter on a frequent basis in the future. ✝

In November 2014, Dean Timothy George delivered a paper at the Vatican on the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism. While in Rome, he also attended the Humanum Conference.

Photo credit:
Servicio Fotografica de "L'O.R."



Student Commons Renovation and Expansion



As Beeson Divinity School moves into its third decade of preparing God-called men and women for ministry, a major need for the facilities of our school is a common area designed for weekly community lunches, small group study spaces, and a central coffee lounge area open to everyone as a place for conversation and interaction. The unfortunate closing of the in-house Cokesbury Bookstore has provided an opportunity to weave this empty space into a larger concept addressing these needs. Thanks to a very generous leading and matching grant promised to Beeson Divinity School by a dedicated

benefactor, we are encouraged that this renovation can be a reality by fall of 2015. Handsome architectural plans have been professionally drawn, and we are on the way to reaching the financial goal necessary to completely cover the costs of this renovation.

If you would like to make a contribution to this renovation project, please send a check payable to Beeson Commons Renovation and mail it to the attention of divinity advancement officer Carolyn Lankford, 800 Lakeshore Drive, Birmingham, AL 35205. ✚

New Staff Members

In 2014, Beeson Divinity School welcomed three new staff members.

Sharon Head

In June, Sharon Head joined the admission office as administrative assistant. Head previously provided support for Community Ministry for Girls Inc. She and her husband are members of Briarwood Presbyterian Church. They have two children in college.



Darrell Cook

In August, Darrell Cook (M.Div. '13) assumed a new position as the BDS pastor-in-residence. Darrell and his wife, Elaine, have been active members of the divinity community for several years. Cook also serves as the minister of Dogwood Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Adger, Alabama.



Christy Averill

Christy Averill (M.Div. '13) joined the Beeson staff as assistant curator and coordinator of alumni relations. Averill is on the ministry team of Mosaic, a local congregation in our area, and engaged to be married to Beeson student Cris Harper.



Wainscot and Watson Named 2015 Distinguished Alums

Justin Wainscott (M.Div. 2005) serves as the pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Tennessee. In addition to his degree from Beeson, he is a graduate of Union University (B.A.) and is pursuing a doctorate from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Anna, have two children. Wainscott writes hymns, poems and theological commentary at his blog Theology in Verse. He has served as a member of the divinity school's alumni advisory board for several years and has been a strong advocate and supporter in recommending prospective students to Beeson.



Dean Timothy George considers Wainscott a model of the kind of pastor Beeson hopes to produce: "Justin Wainscott is many things: a caring shepherd, a wise administrator, a superb student of the Scriptures, a well-respected leader. He is a 'pastor who can preach'—exactly the kind Ralph Beeson wanted us to prepare for the service of the church." Wainscott's award will be presented on March 21 during the Biblical Studies Lectures

Maurice Watson (D.Min. 2006) is the sixth pastor of the historic Metropolitan Baptist Church near Washington, D.C. The church was founded in 1864 by emancipated slaves. Watson graduated from Philander Smith College (B.A.) and Creighton University (M.A.) before earning the doctor of ministry degree from Beeson Divinity School. Watson has served churches in Little Rock, Omaha and Macon before moving to Metropolitan Baptist in 2014. Watson and his wife, Janice, have two daughters.



Of Watson, preaching professor Dr. Robert Smith, Jr. said, "The undisputed reality about Maurice Watson is that preaching is in his D.N.A. He is able to preach the gospel so that Spirit always transcends soil. He's effective because he can adjust his style, but he never adjusts the substance of the gospel." The award will be presented in chapel on April 21. ✝

Alumni Spotlight

Chase Reynolds

Chase (M.Div. 2005) and Kelli Reynolds and their three children live among the Yefta people in a remote part of



▲ Chase Reynolds with Marten, a Yefta man who requested baptism after hearing the story of Pentecost in his own language.

Papua Indonesia. Around one thousand people spread across six villages make up the Yefta tribe. The tribe was unknown to the outside world until 1992. While some Indonesian evangelists have had contact with the Yefta since that time, the Bible has never before been translated into their language.

In fact, until the Reynolds arrived as missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Yefta language had never been written down. Chase and Kelli are learning the Yefta language. As

they learn, they are developing the written language for the first time. This involves discovering and describing the phonology for the different sounds in the language, creating an alphabet to match the sounds, deciphering the grammar of the language and teaching people to read their own language.

Developing the written language and teaching the Yefta people how to read it will take a long time. Rather than delay the good news, the Reynolds have been working on translating salvation history into a series of oral stories. In January 2014, they finished work on seventeen Bible stories from creation to the early church. In addition to audio recordings, members of the tribe have memorized the stories so that they can be told in chronological order, and the Yefta people can now hear the story of salvation in their own language. The tribe held a three-day celebration to mark the coming of the gospel in their language.

Chase's translation team consists of two Yefta believers named Jeri and Sion. Sion has a heart to pastor his people, and translating the Bible verse by verse is great preparation for ministry. Please pray for the Reynolds family and the Yefta believers as they evangelize and disciple their tribe for the glory of God. ✝

Alumni Updates

Wayne Shelton (M.Div. 1993) planted Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Gardendale, Alabama, in fall 2014.



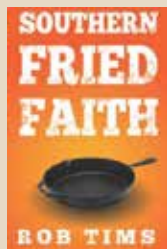
Kevin Mills (M.Div. 1998) published a novel *Chasing Grace* (Mill Town Press, 2013), which is loosely based on the Old Testament prophet Hosea. Mills is the pastor of Northway Church in Macon, Georgia.

Alan Hughes (M.Div. 1999) serves as senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Ardmore, Alabama.

Morris Murray (D.Min. 1999) was called as pastor of The Church on the Hill in Jasper, Alabama. He has previously pastored churches in Alabama, Louisiana and Texas.

Andrew Smith (M.Div. 2000) joined the faculty of The Geneva School, a classical Christian school in Winter Park, Florida. Andrew is the director of the Rhetoric School.

Rob Tims (M.Div. 2000) works at Lifeway Christian Resources on a team that provides customized Bible studies for individual churches. He also is an associate professor for Liberty University Online. Rainer Publishing released Tims's book *Southern Fried Faith: Confusing Christ and Culture in the Bible Belt* in May 2014.



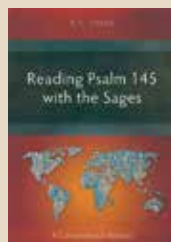
Andrew Byers (M.Div. 2001) received a Ph.D. in New Testament from the University of Durham. He recently accepted a position as Free Church Tutor and Teaching Fellow at Cranmer Hall Theological College, a role that seeks to build strong partnerships with non-Anglican ministerial students in northern England.

Mark Gainey (M.T.S. 2001) began serving as pastor of Lake Martin Baptist Church in Dadeville, Alabama, in July 2013. He is also pursuing a D.Min. degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Jeff Gissing (M.Div. 2002) serves as director of discipleship for First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

After many years of being the director of the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India, **A.K. Lama** (D.Min. 2002)

accepted the position of director of ministers in South Asia through Word of Hope and Back to God Ministries International. Langham Literature published Lama's book *Reading Psalm 145 with the Sages* in 2013.



Robby Plemmons (M.Div. 2002) is pastor of Crosspoint Presbyterian Church, a PCA church plant in Park City, Utah. He also serves as director of Mission Utah, a church-planting network focused on helping launch new churches and RUF campus ministries.

Anna Moseley Gissing (M.T.S. 2003) completed a master of arts in New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Gissing also contributed a chapter to the book, *Let Us Keep the Feast: Living the Church Year at Home* (Doulos, 2014).

Chris DeArman (M.Div. 2003) serves as a campus pastor at Valley Community Baptist Church in Avon, Connecticut. He will be responsible for overseeing ministry at Valley's Bristol campus launching this fall. He joined the staff in July 2013.



Robby Grames (M.Div. 2003) recently began serving as pastor of Colfax Center Presbyterian Church in Grundy County, Iowa.

Melody Maxwell (M.Div. 2003), assistant professor of Christian studies at Howard Payne University, published her doctoral dissertation *The Woman I Am: Southern Baptist Women's Writings, 1906-2006*, in July 2014. Maxwell's work traces the influence of female Southern Baptist editors and writers on their denomination, particularly in the area of missions.



Brian Peterson (M.T.S. 2003) wrote *The Authors of Deuteronomistic History: Locating a Tradition in Ancient Israel* (Fortress 2014). Peterson is a faculty member at Lee University where he teaches Old Testament and Hebrew.

Dave Nelson (M.Div. 2004) is acquisitions editor for Baker Academic and Brazos Press. He is the author of *The Interruptive Word: Eberhard Jüngel on the Sacramental Structure of God's Relation to the World* (T&T Clark, 2013) and the editor of *Indicative of Grace - Imperative of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Eberhard Jüngel on His 80th Birthday* (T&T Clark, 2014).

Charles (Chad) Raith (M.Div. 2004) wrote *Aquinas and Calvin on Romans: God's Justification and Our Participation* (Oxford UP, 2014), a comparative study of commentaries on the first eight chapters of Romans.



Jake Andrews (M.Div. 2005) is pursuing an M.F.A. in fiction at the Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa. He will be a teaching-writing fellow for 2014-2015.

Brian Cosby's (M.Div. 2005) most recent book is *John Flavel: Puritan Life and Thought in Stuart England* (Lexington, 2013). An adaptation of his doctoral thesis, the book aims at recovering the significance and influence Flavel enjoyed

up through the end of the nineteenth century. It is dedicated to Beeson professor Dr. Gerald Bray.

First Baptist Church in Decatur, Alabama, called **Blake Kersey** (M.Div. 2005) to be its senior pastor in August 2014.

Seth Tarrer (M.Div. 2005) and his family returned to Birmingham, Alabama, after serving in Argentina. While based in Birmingham, Tarrer travels several times a year to teach Old Testament at Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico de Colombia in Medellín, Colombia.



Jamie Greening (D.Min. 2006) released his second book, a novel called *The Little Girl Waits*, in May 2014. Previously Jamie pastored First Baptist Church in Port Orchard, Washington, for fourteen years. He lives and writes in the Texas Hill Country.

Derrick Hammond (M.Div. 2006) was installed as the pastor of Oak Valley Baptist Church in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, in 2014. Previously, Derrick was on staff at First Mount Zion Baptist Church in Dumfries, Virginia.

Eric Kennedy (M.Div. 2006) is senior pastor of Ringgold First Baptist Church in Ringgold, Georgia.

Gene Kim (M.Div. 2006) serves as the college and missions minister at Eastmont Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.



Josh Knierim (M.Div. 2006) is the student pastor at Valleydale Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Prior to coming to Valleydale, he served at Bluegrass Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee.



Andrea Woolley (M.Div. 2006) has been co-pastor of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, since 2011. During the summer of 2014 she ran the International Academic Academy, which she began four years ago in partnership with the school district to help struggling elementary-aged refugee students in the Louisville community.

Timothy (M.Div. 2007) and **Cokiesha** (M.Div. 2008) **Bailey** moved to Houston, Texas, in 2014. Timothy is on the pastoral team as the minister of men at The Church Without Walls. Cokiesha continues to minister as a full-time evangelist, author and mentor to women pursuing seminary education.

Joe Dentici (M.Div. 2007) is now the Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) campus minister at Penn State University. Before moving to Pennsylvania, Joe was the RUF campus minister at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Jones Doughton (D.Min. 2007) and **David Mauldin** (D.Min. 2012) served as minister commissioners to the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Doughton is associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Georgia. Mauldin is pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Mobile, Alabama.

Christian George (M.Div. 2007) joined the faculty of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as curator of the C.H. Spurgeon Library and as assistant professor of historical theology.



Balema John Laba (D.Min. 2007) serves with Compassion International as the Christian formation adviser for the Africa region. He is still engaged in church planting and will launch a pastors training institution this coming October in Lome, Togo.



Russell McCrory (M.Div. 2007) recently joined the staff at First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, as the minister to students.

Alan Oliver (M.Div. 2007) is a member of the field staff for the Christian Medical Ministry of Alabama, based in Birmingham.

John Mark Patrick (M.Div. 2007) is associate pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

Fletcher Law (D.Min. 2008) published *Receiving Grace in the Grove: A Story of Faith, Family, Financial Worries...and Some Football at Ole Miss* (Crossbooks, 2013). Law is a pastor at Good News at Noon and a 7th grade social studies teacher.

Justin Nalls (M.Div. 2008) serves as the middle school pastor at Ingleside Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia. Nalls is also working toward a Ph.D. from Spurgeon's College, London.

The Associated Church Press honored **Kristen (Lindsey) Padilla** (M.Div. 2008) with two awards for her written work on human trafficking in *The Alabama Baptist* this past year.



She received an Award of Excellence for reporting and writing in a theme section and an Award of Merit for reporting and writing in in-depth coverage.

Brian Argo (M.Div. 2009) became pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Potsdam, New York, in 2014.

Felicia Cooper (M.Div. 2009) works with children in foster care through the Department of Human Resources in Shelby County. She has been licensed as an evangelist through Providence Christian Ministries and teaches children's church, Sunday School and Bible studies at the church. Cooper is also working toward a master of social work degree through the University of Alabama.



Randy Eaton (D.Min. 2009) became the senior pastor of Cross Community Church in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, in October 2012. In addition to pastoring, Randy also serves as an adjunct professor at the School of Ministry at Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Katy Sexton (M.T.S. 2009) works at Mountain Brook Community Church's preschool program and volunteers in the church's children's ministry.

For the past four years, **Michael D. Sharp** (D.Min. 2009) has served as the Christian education director for the Assemblies of God in Alabama. Michael facilitates and resources various discipleship ministries, including Sunday School, small groups and children's ministry.

James Drake (M.Div. 2010) serves as the director for Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru) in South Florida. Previously James served with Cru at the University of Alabama, Birmingham.

Whit Goodwin (M.Div. 2010) is vice president for student life at Houston Baptist University. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. from Azusa Pacific University.

Matt Rusch (M.Div. 2010) was called as a priest associate to the Parish Church of St. Helena's in Beaufort, South Carolina, where he was ordained to the priesthood in 2014.

Cary Hughes (M.Div. 2011) is lead pastor of Grace Community Church in Melbourne, Florida. Previously, Cary was the youth pastor at Berney Points Baptist Church in Birmingham.

Thad Key (M.Div. 2011) is senior pastor of First Baptist Church Chickamauga, Georgia. Timothy George preached at Key's installation service.

Timmy Ray (M.A.T.S 2011) serves as worship pastor at Woodward Avenue Baptist Church in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

Benjamin Smith (M.Div. 2011) left his position as alumni relations officer at Beeson Divinity School to pursue further theological studies at Queens University in Belfast, Ireland.

Matthew Bracey (M.T.S. 2012) serves as registrar at Welch College in Nashville, Tennessee. Bracey is also a faculty member, teaching courses in history, law and theology.

Brian Hinton (M.Div. 2012) is an associate pastor at Hunter Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. Previously, Brian practiced law, most recently with ProAssurance.



Andrew Johnson (M.Div. 2012) is the high school student pastor at Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama.

Prior to Cottage Hill, he served on staff at Shades Mountain Baptist Church as a student pastor.

Drew Phillips (M.Div. 2012) finished a year of chaplain residency at University Hospital in Birmingham, Alabama. Phillips serves as an elder at Brook Highland Community Church where he leads Bible studies and assists in leading worship services.

Austin Baker (M.Div. 2013) serves as the assimilation coordinator in the guest and new member care ministry at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia.

Josh Deeter (M.Div. 2013) is lead pastor at First Church of God in Tallmadge, Ohio.

Steve Hands (M.Div. 2013) is campus pastor of Blanchard Alliance Church in Warrenville, Illinois. Over the next two years he will be pursuing ordination through the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Peter Smith (M.Div. 2013) is assistant pastor of children and youth at St. Peter's Anglican Church in Mountain Brook, Alabama. He was ordained to the priesthood in October 2014.



R.J. Voorhees (M.Div. 2013) serves as college minister at First Baptist Church of Columbia, South Carolina.

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The Prayer That Saved Billy Graham's Ministry

By Jake Hanson



▲ Graham speaks to a crowd of 10,000 in Los Angeles, California, Nov. 1, 1949.

AP Photo

Late one night in August 1949, thirty-year-old Billy Graham was on the verge of giving up his ministry. He was the president of Northwestern Bible College and, as we know him today, an itinerate evangelist. That moonlit evening on the campgrounds of Forest Home Retreat Center in the San Bernardino Mountains of southern California, he paced back and forth with a troubled soul.

Graham's evangelistic ministry was facing its first major opposition, brought on by disgruntled fundamentalists who misunderstood his role as observer at the opening organizational meetings of the liberal-leaning World Council of Churches (WCC). Many did not understand that, as an observer, he did not support the movement, and that he attended with many of the same concerns others had with the new organization. To add fuel to the fire, as Graham held meetings across the United States, he had adopted a model of cooperative evangelism that sought to unite community churches of all denominations. This struck a raw nerve among some fundamentalists who viewed it as further confirmation of his alliance with the WCC and led to instances where opponents of Graham's ministry began trying to shout him down as he preached.

But perhaps even more than the external opposition that he faced, Graham was plagued by an internal theological struggle that shook his confidence in the authority of the Word of God. The doubts were brought on by his close friend and gifted fellow preacher Chuck Templeton, who was growing cynical about the orthodox Christian faith. When they met together over the previous months, Templeton began raising objections to the authority of the Bible which Graham could not fully answer. Templeton mocked what he considered naiveté by telling Graham he was fifty years behind the times. Was he behind the times? Could the Word of God really be trusted? If it couldn't, could he continue to preach the Good News?

These questions swirled in the evangelist's head that evening as he contemplated what he truly believed and what the consequences of those beliefs would be. In the days leading up to that fateful night, he opened his Bible for answers. "Thus sayeth the Lord..." kept leaping off the pages at him as he scanned his Bible, as if his answer was before him.

After agonizing over the issue for several days, and after several hours in prayer on the grounds of the retreat center, he finally made up his mind.

He laid down his Bible on the stump of a tree, knelt down and prayed a prayer. It was not a prayer of meditation or request, but of surrender.

"O God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it for which I have no solution. There are many seeming contradictions." And then, finally, with tears in his eyes, he cried out, "Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word—by faith!"

He got up from his knees with a new sense of confidence, and he felt the presence of the Spirit of God in a way that he had not for months.

It is no coincidence that for months before this humble prayer of surrender, he had faced great frustration as an evangelist. Afterward, beginning just days later at evangelistic meetings in Los Angeles, his ministry took on the conviction and confidence for which he is known today. The meetings, held in a circus tent affectionately dubbed "The Canvas Cathedral," were remarkably successful due in part to news of the conversions of three famous men. First, there was Los Angeles radio legend Stuart Hamblen, who announced on his radio program that he was converted in the meetings, which led to widespread interest and increased attendance.

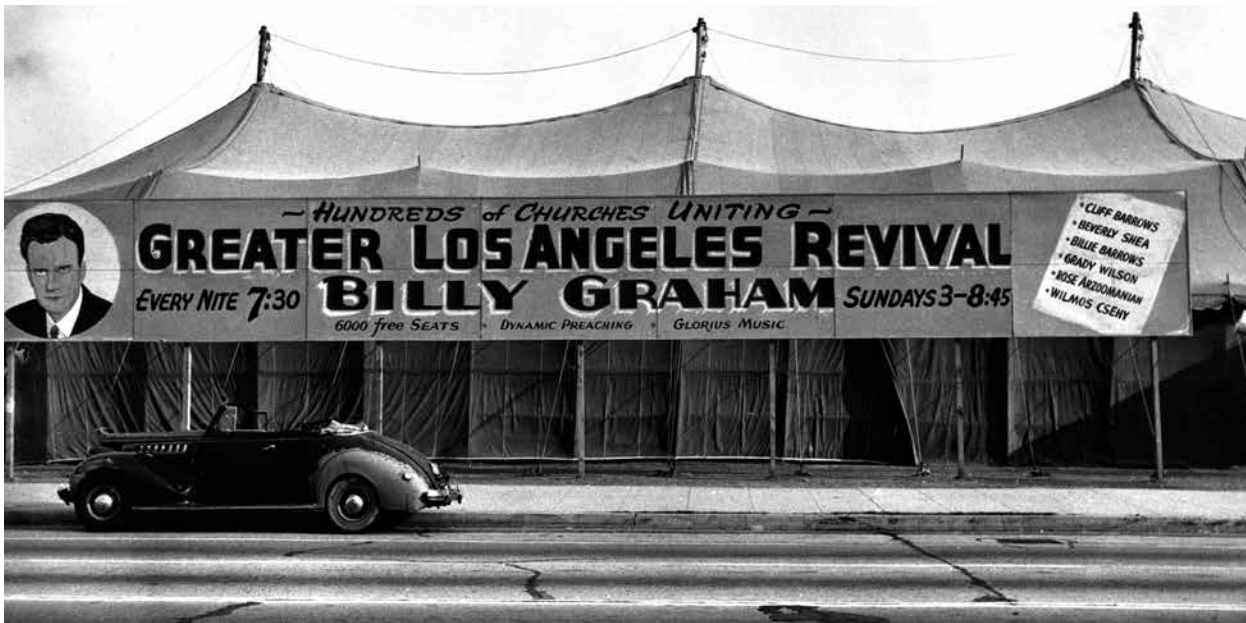
The conversion of Olympian and war hero Louis Zamperini—the subject of Laura Hillenbrand's bestselling biography *Unbroken*—followed. And finally, news spread of the surprising conversion of the notorious Los Angeles mob wiretapper Jim Vaus.

All of the excitement caught the eye of newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst, whose newspapers circulated in cities across the country. Hearst ran articles on the meetings, launching Graham into the national consciousness and giving him a platform from which he preached to millions around the world.

None of this would have happened without the prayer that Graham cried out that evening, surrendering to the Lord and His Word. It was the launching pad of his worldwide evangelistic ministry. It was the prayer that saved the ministry of Billy Graham. †

It was not a prayer of meditation or request, but of surrender.

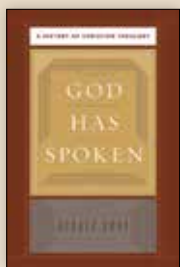
Jake Hanson (M.Div. 2009) is the author of *Igniting the Fire: The Movements and Mentors Who Shaped Billy Graham* (Shiloh Run Press, January 2015).



▲ Los Angeles Revival, 1949

Photo courtesy of Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

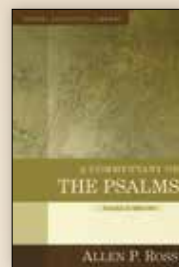
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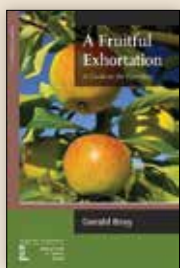
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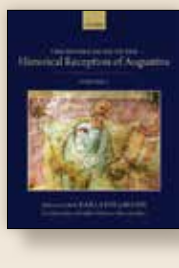
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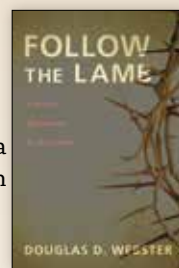
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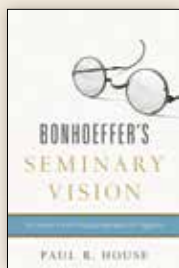
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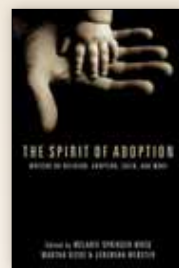
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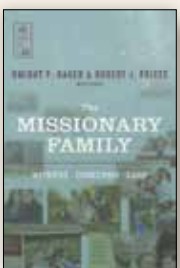
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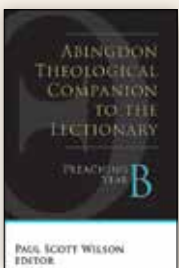
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