



Speakers at the Puritan Reformed Conference, "The Beauty and Glory of the Holy Spirit," held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in August: Mr. Malcolm Watts, Dr. Bill VanDoodewaard, Dr. Joel Beeke, Dr. Michael Barrett, Dr. Geoffrey Thomas, Mr. John Thackway, and Dr. Gerald Bilkes.

## PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE

As we seek to minister to students outside the denomination, one of the difficulties is the lack of knowledge many have of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America and Geneva Reformed Seminary. I've often thought that GRS and the FPCNA are among the best kept secrets in North America. We need to pray for the Lord to open more and more doors for our churches and for the seminary. I truly believe that our denomination can have a vital ministry in these crucial days. In August, I participated in a Bible conference at Puritan Reformed Seminary, one of our sister institutions in ARTS. I believe the Lord used this in a wonderful way to introduce the denomination and seminary to those who knew nothing about us before. It was a blessed time as I was able to minister alongside some men that I found to be genuinely pious, indeed some spiritual giants who love the Lord and are devoted to His kingdom.

In order to solicit your prayers, I want to tell you of a major project in the works that will give some exposure to our denomination. Some Free Presbyterian ministers are

currently involved in a project of Reformation Heritage Books to produce a study Bible using the text of the KJV with special attention to directives for personal and family worship. Dr. Joel Beeke is the general editor, I am the Old Testament editor, and Dr. Gerald Bilkes is the New Testament editor. Several FP ministers from North America and Ulster are also among the contributors. I am doing the Minor Prophets, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Ecclesiastes myself. The project is an awesome task, but it has the potential of being the most significant contribution any of us will make in our ministries. So I'm asking for your prayers, and I would also ask for your financial support since this will be an expensive project. The contributors are not being paid except to receive a couple free copies of the Bible when it is published. The donations are needed for the production and printing. You can contact me if you would like to help in this vital project.

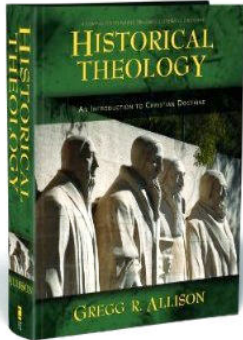
Another term in the seminary has begun and is now almost over. Our enrollment this **(continued on page 3)**

# PASTOR'S RESOURCES

Inside GRS

2

November 2011



Allison, Gregg. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 778 pages. \$44.99.

Believers enjoy a rich theological tradition that extends beyond the limits of our own individual experience, local church life, and denominational affiliation. There is continuity between the faith of believers in A.D. 211 and the faith of believers in A.D. 2011. The more familiar we are with the expression of the faith as it has developed in the history of the church, the better we will be able to articulate our own faith today. Historical awareness broadens our view, which is beneficial in life and in ministry. Because of this, pastors ought to be familiar with historical theology. Gregg Allison, professor of Christian Theology Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, has served the visible, universal church well with his work, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*.

Allison defines historical theology as “the study of the interpretation of Scripture and the formation of doctrine by the church of the past.” As a committed Protestant, Allison balances the importance of historical theology (or, tradition) with the unyielding devotion to the believer’s ultimate authority, Scripture. Historical theology serves the minister in many ways. Allison lists eight benefits of historical theology for the church (pp. 24-29):

1. Historical theology helps the church to distinguish orthodoxy from heresy.
2. Historical theology provides sound biblical interpretation and theological formulations.
3. Historical theology presents stellar examples of faith, love, courage, hope, obedience, and mercy.
4. Historical theology protects against the individualism that is rampant today.
5. Historical theology not only helps the church understand the historical development of its beliefs, but

6. Historical theology encourages the church to focus on the essentials.
7. Historical theology gives the church hope by providing assurance that Jesus is fulfilling His promise to His people.
8. Historical theology teaches the church of today to enjoy a sense of belonging to the church of the past.

Throughout the book, each of these benefits is manifest. The benefits, taken as a whole, remind me of Jaroslav Pelikan’s famous statement: “Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. And, I suppose I should add, it is traditionalism that gives tradition such a bad name.” Historical theology brings ministers today face to face with the church’s rich tradition, while at the same time reminding us that traditionalism—while it is often dear to our hearts—is not always worth keeping.

The format of Allison’s work is helpful to the reader as well. Rather than organizing his material chronologically—moving from the early church to the medieval to the Reformation and so on—Allison organizes the work topically. Once the topic is addressed, it is then treated chronologically. The table of contents looks more like that of a work on systematic theology than it does a usual church history book. This format aids the minister who would like to see quickly how a particular doctrine developed. One reason Allison chose this format was that his work is a companion volume to Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

Allison’s work is a helpful resource for the minister today that provides an up-to-date resource of historical theology from a conservative, Protestant perspective. He allows the men of the past church to speak for themselves, introducing pastors today to the giants of the faith. While not every theological controversy can be treated equally in one volume, the major turning points of theological understanding are addressed. Any pastor desiring to have a helpful overview of historical theology in one volume would do well to have this one. The greater understanding of and appreciation for theology and historical awareness an under-shepherd has, the better his flock will be.

—Charles M. Barrett, Professor of Church History and Systematic Theology

Congratulations to Hock Chin Lee, who completed the Master of Divinity degree in June 2011.

(continued from page 1) year is the same as last year but new students are scheduled to begin in the winter term. There are some promising prospects for next fall as well. As we teach each class, we are setting it up for online presentation. We have a new program this year that enables us to have an insert of the lecturer on the screen in addition to all of the content data. We believe that this will enhance the format by adding a new component to the video part of the class. So continue to pray that the Lord will raise up students and bless the ministry of the seminary. Remember that we have introduced a new course of study—the Master of Religious Education—designed for non-ministerial students; it is open to both men and women. We hope that elders in particular will take advantage of at least part of the program.

I want to take this opportunity to update you on our status with the Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries (ARTS). We have been a member of the organization for five years, and I am currently serving as its chairman. This September we were scheduled for our five-year visit. This required a detailed self-study of the operation of the seminary, and then a team from other member schools visited campus for a thorough examination of the program. After looking at our documents, interviewing students, alumni, staff, faculty, seminary committee members, and grilling me, the team was well satisfied and has recommended that we be granted ten-year membership. This is an answer to prayer. Among other benefits, membership in the organization helps to establish us as a bona fide institution for purposes of matriculating foreign students. Obviously this is crucial since we must be able to serve our Canadian churches. In addition, having outside accountabilities for the academic program helps to insure that the level of education we are now offering is outstanding.

—Michael P. V. Barrett, President

### The President's Itinerary

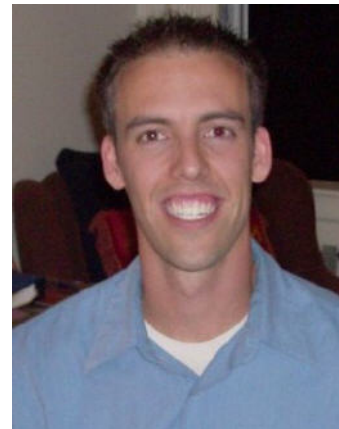
Oct. 30	Cleveland Park Bible Church, Spartanburg, SC
Nov. 13	Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Belleville, MI
Jan. TBA	Trinity Free Presbyterian Church, Trinity, AL
Feb. 13-15	AACCS Annual Conference, Chandler, AZ
Mar. 7	Seminary Recruitment Days, Clearwater, FL
Mar. 16-18	Bible Community Church, Mentor, OH
Apr. 22-27	Hebron Free Presbyterian Church, Balleymoney, NI
May 14-18	Presbytery Meeting & Ministers' Week of Prayer, Toronto Free Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Canada
May 28-29	Meeting of Young Conservatives, Minneapolis, MN

# GRADUATE INTERVIEW

## From the Inside Out: An interview with GRS graduate Micah McCormick

**Inside: Tell us something about yourself.**

MM: I grew up in Greenville, South Carolina. My dad is an associate pastor in town at Heritage Bible Church. From a very young age, I heard the gospel from parents, school teachers, church workers, and friends. At about the age of 4 or 5 ... the Holy Spirit convicted my heart with the truth of the things I had been taught



and I knew I was a sinner and needed Christ. I repented, asked God's forgiveness, and turned to Christ in faith. I rejoice in the work God did for me and in me. Still, my confidence isn't in that decision but in the Savior who right now stands to make intercession for me. Praise God that the one who "is believing on the Son has everlasting life" (John 3:36).

**Inside: When did you graduate from GRS?**

MM: I graduated from GRS in 2006 with a Master of Divinity degree.

**Inside: How did you come to be a student at GRS?**

MM: When I was finishing up college I began considering a number of different seminaries, all of which I'm sure would have been beneficial to me in different ways. But at the end of the day GRS stood out to me. First, I have personal friends and mentors in my life who commended the school and/or its faculty. Second, attending GRS allowed me to stay in Greenville and be involved with my church, eventually helping with a church plant (Emmanuel Bible Church). Third, I love the simplicity of the GRS curriculum and the emphasis on doctrine, languages, and preaching. Fourth, and very importantly, I love the seminary's heart to rehearse the gospel and apply the gospel. I prayed about this decision and sought counsel from a number of people (including my father), and at the end of the day the Lord brought me to GRS—for which I'm very grateful!

**Inside: What is the most important thing (or two things) you learned in the seminary?**

MM: Wow, that's tough. I would say number one, always preach to your people the imputed righteousness of Christ. If our hope

is in ourselves we are utterly lost, but there is great freedom in grasping Christ by faith. Second, love Scripture! God's Word should be the fountain of everything we believe and feel and think and do as believers.

**Inside: What was it like being a non-Free Presbyterian in a Free Presbyterian seminary?**

MM: I found the environment at GRS to non-Free Presbyterian students to be very warm and inviting. I appreciate the fact that the Free Church is willing to articulate and stand behind all of its distinctives while at the same time not bulldozing students who don't agree with every particular (for example I'm not convinced that presbyterian church government is the best form of church government, but perhaps one day I will see the light!). I'm so grateful that the Free Church was willing to open its arms and embrace a non-Free Church student like myself. I formed friendships with Free Church people that exist to this day.

**Inside: After graduating from GRS, you went on to do further study.**

MM: Yes, I did. I ended up going to Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, to do a ThM and PhD in systematic theology. In some ways it was different from GRS (it's a much larger school and Southern is unashamedly Baptist). But in many other ways it was very similar to GRS (love for the gospel and for Scripture as the ultimate authority).

**Inside: How did the time you spent at GRS help to prepare you for those studies?**

MM: I felt extremely well prepared by GRS. Again, a strength of the GRS curriculum is that it provides such a helpful foundation to build on. I didn't feel behind the curve at all compared to students in my program who did an MDiv at SBT'S or somewhere else. In fact, I even remember one occasion when I was talking to a student who did an MDiv at a seminary that shall remain nameless. He was excited about a class he was in where they were discussing an aspect of Martin Luther's theology, and he got stuck searching for a phrase. I finished his sentence, and he said, "How did you know that?" I said, "I learned it in one of my church history classes at GRS."

**Inside: What is next for you?**

MM: I'm pretty wide open right now but, Lord willing, I would love to be working in vocational ministry in some way—probably not as a senior pastor right now but perhaps as an associate pastor, teacher, or missionary.

**Inside: How would you like us to pray for you?**

MM: Please pray that God would be kind to bring me to the place that He would have for me. I remember often at GRS praying with the other men that God would prepare a people and a place for us and that is still my prayer. Please also pray that I will continue to find my satisfaction and hope in Christ more than anything else, even more than a "successful" ministry.

## Alumni News

Alumni News: GRS alumni are invited to send in their news (weddings, births, relocations, etc.) for publication. Send news to [genevareformed@freepres.org](mailto:genevareformed@freepres.org) or GRS, 1207 Haywood Rd., Greenville, SC 29615.

**Class of 2007**

Derrick and Lydia Bowman welcomed a new son, Machen Lee, on July 18, 2011.

**Class of 2008**

Vincente Alcivar is serving as a chaplain at Fort Benning, Georgia.



SEPARATED UNTO THE GOSPEL

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