

The Significance of Westminster Theological Seminary Today

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Forty years for me at Westminster Theological Seminary, two as student and 38 as professor: that generates memories. How reliable are they? Paul Woolley reviewed Wilbur Smith's *Before I Forget* and found Smith's memories so different from his own that he had to conclude: before he forgot? But he already had! Have I? And are my memories the important ones? I've told my students that when the roll is called up yonder they'll learn who the really important people in the history of the church are, and it's not going to be the ones they learned about in class. What did happen when that remarkable church planter came to WTS and not to Princeton because he heard me speak in chapel on the glory of Christ? What in the world did I say? What about the hundreds of times when suddenly the light went on in class? What was happening? That went on in all the other classes, at least as much as in mine; I wish I could give you every one of those hidden stories.

I dedicate this with enthusiasm to Grace Mullen, WTS archivist and keeper and lover of the heritage. I wanted to know what Machen really knew about liberalism among Presbyterian missionaries in China. She found for me the correspondence with Arie Kok, a Dutch diplomat in China at the time. She also found the correspondence of Machen with Robert E. Speer and with Clarence Macartney. There were many more. The greatest help she gave me was for Carl McIntire's funeral in Collingswood. He had been leader of the group of students that came from Princeton to the new WTS bringing at least 50 with him, graduating with our class of 1931. I thought I should be WTS rep at the funeral. It was painful. One hoary head after another lamented that with Carl gone, who would carry on The Cause? The testifier just before me recounted how Carl had changed his life forever: he had almost gone to WTS till Carl redirected him to Faith. Grace had equipped me well with Machen's letter to the Atlantic City Session: he regretted that he couldn't come to preach for them, but he was so glad that they had Carl as pastor, one of the most balanced of all WTS graduates. I just read that and gave it to son C. T. I thank you Grace, for working so hard at keeping our flame.

My model is Woolley's 1977 book, *The Significance of J. Gresham Machen Today*. His memories with Machen went back 45 years; that's where I learned of the Drake Hotel rice pudding. But there are also sections of pure Paul Woolley himself and his own understanding of the issues of the Gospel and life, which encourage me to do that myself. His little book is a blessed reminder of the powerful work of the Lord in his heart and life. I borrow from his title and call this: *The Significance of Westminster Seminary Today*. I borrow from his style too. First he talked about what happened and then how it all fit into God's grand design for his people. I try that too: first how it happened, and then looking back at it all how it made a beautiful picture of the Lord's kind design for us. He loved Westminster and believed that what we held dear was to the glory of God. I do too.

Pete Lillback gave me near the end of my time at Westminster the magnificent gift of my Festschrift, *Practical Calvinism*, abbreviated here as just PC. Many colleagues from back then tell how they saw the same things that I did. I think Pete would agree: why don't you just look at it and get the whole picture?

My personal memories are similar to Woolley's, but they are not always as joyous as his. I experienced pain and disappointment because my expectations were high. Why were our boundaries that narrow, with no room for Karen Jobes? Or for Joe Brown? With Christ our Mediator of all the Lord's blessings, our heritage of Gospel understanding, with those amazing faculty colleagues and students—why wouldn't I expect everything? I tell Dick Gaffin that saying already/not yet doesn't quite work, since people remember the last thing you say. What if we say of WTS: not yet but by God's grace so much already? I thank my Father in deep gratitude for WTS and the privilege and joy of my forty years.

I was a student in Wheaton College from 1950-1954. Trev White, the young pastor who led me to Christ when I was 13 took me to breakfast as he was leaving Washington, Iowa and said: go to Wheaton. To which I answered: sure, where is it? There my theological life began, especially under the direction of three Faith Theological Seminary graduates (Wheaton was pre-mil then). Sam Schultz taught me respect for Scripture, especially the OT, as the reliable word of God; Larry Manross encouraged me in my entrance

into the OPC, and toward WTS and away from Faith; best of all Ken Kantzer taught me the heart of biblical and Reformed theology and introduced me critically to Van Til, and above all to Machen. When Buswell's Systematic Theology appeared I was amazed that I knew it all already—from Kantzer! He told me who the truly great evangelical scholars were: J. Oliver Buswell Jr., Allan MacRae, John Murray, Cornelius Van Til and Gordon Clark. I saw the bittersweet: all five had been on Machen's team, but they couldn't manage to play together. Also at Wheaton I found Edwin Rian's *Presbyterian Conflict*; someone had helpfully noted therein that Rian had subsequently repented and returned to the Presbyterian Church, with the reference in the Christian Century. (*Presbyterian Conflict* was the popular apology for Westminster and the OPC, fitting Rian's role as promoter and fund-raiser. When the dream of a Christian university collapsed apparently because of disagreement over how broad or narrow the Reformed commitment should be, Rian returned to the parent Presbyterian church in the early 1940's. When I got to know him years later he was a fund-raiser for Princeton Seminary!)

The Korean War was on and it seemed it would last a long time, so that it would work for me first to go to seminary and then be a chaplain. The 4-D draft classification applied to two groups: the mentally unfit and theological students. To qualify (for the second) I needed to be under care of presbytery and pre-enrolled in seminary. I came under care of the Presbyterian Church USA Presbytery of Iowa City and pre-enrolled at Princeton Theological Seminary, welcomed by distant relative Howell Roberts as admissions officer. But reading Machen was getting through to me. Why should I go to a place where the Bible was not respected and the Gospel unclear? Fuller Seminary was solid on Scripture then and its all-star faculty, some trained at WTS, was very attractive. But Van Til came as a recruiter to Wheaton and was brilliant and fervent. Young's OT Introduction was solidly helpful on the authority of the OT. Murray's writings were few then but very compelling. And I wanted to be Reformed. The Fuller option was ending. San Anselmo seminary got the General Assembly to compel the evangelical Presbyterian professors at Fuller to transfer to the LA presbytery—so that they could be denied reception!! (aren't Presbyterians devious?). [See GA minutes re LA Memorial from 1952 on, with the final report written brilliantly and tyrannically by Trinterud the church historian at McCormick]. So why shouldn't I just go to the best after all? I dutifully requested my presbytery to permit my attendance at WTS, pleading that there I would learn how to subscribe to their Westminster Standards. That request was rejected by a vote of 37 to 1, with the primary argument being my protection, as the only WTS grad they knew was driving a bread truck.

Lawrence Eyres was a WTS recruiter and my pastor at the welcoming Westchester IL Orthodox Presbyterian Church. As I was taken under care by the OPC at Waterloo IA, I spoiled the moment by requesting approval for WTS, as I'd learned from my previous presbytery. Everyone laughed uproariously so I began my reputation in the OPC as a joker who shouldn't be taken seriously. The admissions relative at Princeton informed me that I was exchanging my warm Welsh piety for cold barren orthodoxy.

I arrived in fall 1954 by car with Wheaton roommate Bob Schroeder and we couldn't find the place. The WTS sign was hidden under the ivy on the wall. Calvary OPC eventually worked as a marker. (My class attempted later to give the seminary a readable sign, but the faculty rejected that and asked us to buy them a tape recorder). John Guret had this story: no one in Glenside could tell him where WTS was, not even the police; but then he went into a "public house" and the bartender knew. As we entered campus Walter Stull smoking his rancid pipe greeted us—Wheaton was a long way off. But Paul Woolley had also stayed late, to welcome us into temporary rooms.

Classes were different. Young knew 28 languages and knew how to learn them too: just pick up the text and start reading. We were asked to do likewise, and read chapter after chapter in Hebrew without a clue of what the words meant. We later entered second year with Kline, who checked us out in 10 minutes, shook his head mournfully and started over with us at the beginning. Young's Prophets had much about liberal "prophetism" but no Ezekiel. Stonehouse's Gospels covered 19th century German NT criticism with only a week and a half at the end for the gospels themselves. (On Bultmann he was simply brilliant, as I learned later when studying with Käsemann). But why were we doing this piecemeal Bible defense when we had Van Til's big picture? He read his syllabus aloud for us and answered questions by repeating what he had just said, word for word. I think his conclusions were deeply correct and supremely to the point—but I had to provide the basis for them myself.

I was expecting exams from college days, being asked to ‘evaluate’ or ‘compare and contrast.’ But John Murray just wanted straightforward biblical truth. My classmate and later colleague Harvie Conn had a photographic memory, so he gave him not only the highest grades but also appreciative remarks on his ‘felicitous style,’ meaning Murray’s own. After a Murray lecture we looked up the words in the Unabridged, frequently finding the notation ‘archaic’ or ‘Scoticism’ and once hitting the jackpot of ‘archaic Scoticism.’ I still don’t know the difference between ‘pravity’ and just plain ‘depravity.’ His lecture pace was crafted to be just fast enough to let you get all the words down without bothering you to think. Once I thought I heard too many negatives in a convoluted sentence, tried to interrupt, was shaken off—so after class asked whether I’d heard it right; two weeks later he told us to change our notes. He was different, and I think clearly the star of that great faculty. Today I read and re-read his Romans commentary: what respect Murray had for the nuances of the very words of God, what grasp of the whole of the Bible.

The faculty youngsters, Ed Clowney and Meredith Kline, were exciting. They shared a table in the library, so when Clowney was working on archaeology to illustrate the Bible (his tower of Babel sermons) he could push something across the table to Kline and get him going on the Hittite treaties. Kline opened our eyes to taking seriously the Near-eastern setting of the Bible and then coming out with a stronger than ever conviction of its authority. Jay Adams and I later agreed that by far the most brilliant man at WTS was Clowney. He was a master of the history of thought, could put his finger unerringly on Jesus Christ in the Bible, and combined deep piety with practical insights into pastoral ministry. I preached my first sermon ever for him at one o’clock, not a good time for him after an evening of classes at Union Seminary NY. He dropped off but encouraged me by saying how good it was that I had just kept on preaching, a skill he was sure I was going to need. Then he listed the good things in my sermon, paused, and then let me know that a rabbi could have preached it. Those words I reflect upon daily and have become the beating heart of my WTS heritage.

Paul Woolley became my mentor. Tasked with virtually all administrative duties, always up-to-date on every book worth reading, how did he find time to reach out to students with gospel love? Church history is not at the heart of knowing the Bible, but his dealing with the complexities of church life was eminently worthwhile. I learned that Puritanism was the best ever, but that there were gems everywhere in every age in Christ’s church.

Our ‘religious life’ was complex. Invitations to student prayer meetings seemed to come always from the guys from ‘Peniel,’ a Bible conference in upstate New York. Peniel leader Miss Beers drove onto campus and was hit by an international student circling Machen Hall while learning to drive. She jumped out to run over to hug and pray with him! But we knew the OPC was troubled over Peniel’s views of ‘guidance.’ (What I heard then was that this is the right kind of guidance, not the Peniel kind: if you get calls from two churches, pick the one with the earliest postmark. Did I hear that right? It was hard enough to get one call). Why did I avoid their prayer meetings? Today we know who has become the greatest and most beloved of our WTS students of the 50’s: Richard Lovelace, a thoroughgoing Peniel man. He distills Puritanism and Edwards, and joins Jack Miller among the top gurus of our New Life churches. But I didn’t see that then.

My WTS did the job that needed to be done then, and better than anyone else. We learned a solid honor for Scripture. We learned the scope and depth of the Gospel called the Reformed faith. We learned about the godly linkage of hard work and fervent faith. I had made the right choice. But we didn’t learn church planting. We didn’t learn about “philosophy of ministry”—did such a thing exist then? When Paul Kooistra began at Covenant TS he told the faculty they were there to train pastors, not professors like themselves; could the WTS of my day have understood that? The tight linkage then of WTS to the OPC may have influenced us to be unnecessarily narrow. As you read John Frame’s “Machen’s Warrior Children,” can you distinguish Gospel clarity from “movementism?” We puzzled over these things. (http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/2003Machen.htm). Local OPC churches were welcoming and supportive, but very small and apparently not growing. Were they looking backward or ahead? Were too many of us thinking of academic careers?

In 1966, ten years after my graduation I returned, this time to the faculty, to join Woolley in church history and to help Murray in theology. How did that happen? I know more qualified candidates. But at that

time the department chairman alone was responsible for faculty recruiting and PW picked me. (I was never interviewed, neither by faculty nor board. When my tenure appointment was coming up so was Jay's; but since he would be off speaking in Wisconsin, the board decided that the fair thing was not to interview either of us). That was a transitional time, as older faculty were leaving. Stonehouse had died, Young would die in my first year, and Murray and Van Til were retiring. The new faculty had not known Machen and eaten rice pudding at the Drake Hotel with him, and had not been defrocked by the Presbyterian Church. The constituency had concerns about our reliability since we had not been tested under fire as they had. Norman Shepherd and Dick Gaffin narrowly preceded me (but I helped evaluate Dick's dissertation), Jay Adams came at the same time, and Bob Strimple and John Frame were just a few years away.

The biggest change was when WTS installed its first president, Ed Clowney, in the fall of 1966, after he had been acting president for the preceding year. Princeton Seminary had done well without a president, and after nominal president Patton, received President Stevenson in the 1920's, whose values differed from those of the majority of the faculty and who was seen as having sold out old Princeton. In reaction to that experience WTS faculty thought of itself as an old Princeton 'Society of Fellows,' taking responsibility for all seminary affairs without needing a president. That meant weekly Saturday faculty meetings, from 9am to about 3, without lunch break or any other break. For such a small group the meetings were strangely formal, following Roberts Rules assiduously, including references to 'the previous speaker.' Woolley presided correctly and efficiently while simultaneously reading his NY Times. The patriarchs sat around the long table in what is now the conference room, under watchful eyes from the portrait of Robert Dick Wilson who never shirked difficult questions. The juniors sat behind them against the wall, where Bob Knudsen had conveniently stashed his detective stories. I got flack for appearing in a turtleneck, also for addressing God as 'you' in my first prayer. How does a Society of Fellows function alongside a president? Now that was a 'difficult question.' In my two previous teaching jobs, faculty meetings had meant times when the president made announcements and stirring speeches. But at WTS it meant time to tell the president again that he was overreaching his authority. Ed's long face would get longer and he would leave, returning in a few minutes; once he didn't come back. That was very painful for me.

I see Ed as a remarkable man and scholar and president, patiently and courageously bringing the school to where we needed to be, with a much broader sphere of constituency and ministry. What a recruiter he was, with Skip Ryan his driver. What a glorious year that was when two schools tied for first place with new students: Harvard (including Bill Edgar) and Bob Jones (including Ray Dillard and Moises Silva). He brought new faces on the board, many from outside the OPC. He found new money. The older faculty had had payday without checks and I appreciated that I was always paid on time, though with borrowed money. Did Ed sell out WTS for filthy Southern lucre? Of course not, and he didn't get enough either. (I began at \$6600 yearly, up \$100 from my former Wheaton job).

Those of us with families didn't appreciate those Saturday meetings. (For recreation the Society didn't go bowling but remained seated for another hour of Geneva investment club). We really did have a half-hour debate on ham vs. chicken for commencement dinner. Jay Adams thought the faculty deliberately took up so much trivia so it would never have time to tackle important things; we never asked what effective ministry was like and what we should therefore be doing to prepare our students. Soon Jay moved to change the calendar to move those meetings to late Tuesday afternoons, and we got acquainted with our children again. At lunchtime we had sat behind our doors brown-bagging it. But Jay and I invaded the library staff lunchroom together, originally to get our part of the OPC Form of Government done (that was FOG, with subcommittee SMOG dealing with stylistic matters). Others joined us and soon the juniors were there together, swapping pickles and theology. (Read Strimple in my PC Festschrift). I was chairman of the faculty athletic committee and suddenly there was the new Biblical Seminary in Hatfield in our back yard, our obvious opponent. About 1956 Covenant Seminary began from the Faith faculty, those who came to identify more with their soon-to-be RPCES denomination than with Carl McIntire. Alan MacRae, the academic heart of Faith, took a few more years to leave and become a founder of Biblical. Woolley and Van Til were invited to the opening banquet at Biblical; PW asked me to drive CVT since PW's conscience wouldn't allow him to go—what was he saying about my conscience? We beat Biblical decisively in softball on our home field. The highlight was Jay lumbering around third with the Biblical catcher blocking

the plate; he came in nouthetically and their catcher was out cold for 10 minutes. They had us over for volleyball—but they had a gym and played 2-man all winter. We read a volleyball manual on the way over and were beaten 16 straight games until we just quit.

The patriarchs were the cores of the place, but the juniors were more interesting. I was closest to Jay and Bob Strimple. Our three families spent much time together. Lenny Woolley began handing over the Wives Club to my Lynn, who moved that group ahead in thinking about what being a pastor's wife looked like. We juniors were revolutionaries. Jay talked about the pivotal role of application in preaching! He believed that totally depraved people have the Holy Spirit and that there was solid biblical hope for their change! He began CCEF, the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation. John Bettler went along to Jay's center in NJ, and on the way home said: you can't talk to people that way. An hour later he moved to: I can't talk to people that way. (CCEF offered itself to WTS and was turned down because of liability insurance issues; later WTS offered to take over CCEF and was turned down; the resolution of CCEF training leading to WTS degrees has worked). Strimple was a first-class theologian and fielded questions too! His Atheism course was the most stimulating of all we offered. Plus he was an amazing dean, just the right wingman for Ed. The new administration worked after all.

Was Calvinistic philosophy more important than training pastors? There was a new surge of students thinking so. Was Reformed natural theology more vital than the Bible? The Kuyper Club flourished. But we got them out of Practical Theology, which they loudly despised as much too non-theoretical. Hence much of the impetus for the new MAR degree, theology without PT; doing that gave us a much more placid atmosphere but was it a denial of our Log College heritage? The new Toronto Institute gave them more than we could and they went north—and we exhaled. Look at the Walsh/Keesmaat Colossians commentary and decide.

Should we revive the Ph. D. program? The accreditors told us we needed to do two things: move downtown next to U. Penn so our students would have broader exposure to advanced academic work; and have two faculties, one for Ph. D. students and another for M. Div. We knew better and rejected both. Did we hire a Ph. D. faculty and hope people could learn from them about being pastors? I had heard at New College Edinburgh of the way they used to do things: find a great pastor, put him on the payroll and tell him to report after he had his doctorate. The Scots thought it was easier to make a professor out of a pastor than the other way around. We thought biblical learning was so important that we had to be sure our students were well equipped in interpreting the Bible for our post-Christian world. Did we make the right decision?

I had brought baggage from Wheaton. Frank Breisch, WTS grad and our beloved pastor at Bethel OPC, was in trouble because of his views on the Sabbath, those of the Heidelberg Catechism but not of the Westminster Confession. I had supported him in presbytery, which had made room for Frank, but now there was a Complaint to General Assembly. Frank and his ministry were very precious to me. He preached to half of the Wheaton students on campus on Sunday. He was the only evangelical on the Wheaton Human Relations Council, making room for blacks north of the Northwestern tracks. He opened the Bible in deep and moving ways. I struggled with Bavinck in the middle of the night for my theology classes—and then again and again heard Frank make the same points better on Sunday. He opened the love of Christ to us; whenever I think of the Lord as 'kind,' I know it comes from Frank. He began a Westminster Lectureship at Wheaton so the College could get to know us better, and also did WTS recruiting at area colleges. Knowing his gifts from the OPC Christian Education committee, Ed thought of him for WTS. If he had listened to Ed and taken the call of the Glenside OPC and taught preaching on the side, how would that have worked out? Now Frank and I were due at the OPC General Assembly. My case was airtight and naive. Of course Warfield had said the Reformed faith was where all our Confessions agree and of course the Westminster Standards were out of step with all the others. That was the airtight part. But to take on the Sabbath in a church convinced that the liberal slippery slope had begun with not taking all the details of the Confession seriously? What was I thinking? At GA I heard about the cancer at WTS and it felt personal and not benign. GA sent the Complaint to a study committee that reported 10 years later, when GA upheld the Complaint. (Frank moved to the CRC. Some OPC folks let their classis know what they were getting, and classis let them know that they actually did love their Heidelberg Catechism including what it says about the Lord's Day).

When PW retired I became Church History chairman with the task of filling those big shoes. My choice was Harold O. J. 'Joe' Brown with whom I had worked in Switzerland with IFES. But he had written an obit of Karl Barth that spoke of the sun shining at the funeral. He appreciated the writings of Harry Blamires. So Van Til was against him and that was the end of that. I was painfully learning WTS boundaries. (I had thought the 31K words of the Westminster Standards were enough; but agreeing with Van Til was just as big). I went then enthusiastically to Bob Godfrey. We had glorious and humorous years of working together. His only fault was he left for Escondido.

Thinking of Frank and Joe, I had to ask: did I belong? I courted Kantzer, now dean at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. My interview there went well. I asked, what does pre-mil mean? Don't worry about it. When you say we believe and are then born again, what does that mean? Don't worry about it. But there was the final question from the president, side by side with me in the men's room: where was I on infant baptism? I told him I knew the Free Church recognized both options and that I could do justice to pro and con. He told me that regardless of what their doctrinal statement said TEDS wanted con taught. The letter from Kantzer was kind but said: they appreciated my doctrinal positions but were concerned I held them too strongly. How could anyone possibly see me that way? Was I too broad to be at WTS and too narrow to be an evangelical? I stayed. Shortly after that I, with Gaffin and Strimple, made full professor.

After years of my teaching tiny Th. M. classes Woolley offered me Medieval Church, where he said I could do the least harm. I struggled with late medieval congruism, that though we didn't deserve grace it was appropriate for God to give it to us. The Reformers had fought that vigorously to protect the graciousness of the Gospel. But hadn't the Puritans and Edwards said something very similar? W. G. T. Shedd certainly had. So what should I teach? What's the Gospel? Bavinck came through once again in the middle of the night and told me loud and clear: what Shedd said is terrible. 'Just As I Am' became my medieval theme song. That two-hour course covering 850 years became a yearly joy time to point my students to the beauty of the Reformation Gospel against the dark past. When Woolley retired I took over his Modern Age, the grand finale of everything. Students told me that they now understood what the whole curriculum was about. Modern was one big forum: tell me guys, how would you have done that one better? We learned so much together, and I came to value more and more what my colleagues had given them.

The 1970's were full. Hardest was the 7-year Norman Shepherd justification controversy. (Palmer Robertson's booklet has the details). Norman's basic question seemed to be: isn't saving faith also obedient? Well, of course. Doesn't the Bible and Confession tell us there is no justification without sanctification? But Norman was going deeper and further than that, and I couldn't always follow just where. He questioned the imputation of the active obedience of Christ as being the righteousness that God requires. I think he believed stressing imputed righteousness subtracts from the meaningfulness of our own righteousness. (I was sure that couldn't be right). The issues of recent years around the theology of N. T. Wright, the Presbyterian Church in America's Federal Vision and the OPC's Kinnaird case, all keep reminding people that Norman was there first. Recent GA negative judgments on the above from PCA and OPC seem to address Shepherd issues too. The WTS Board finally removed Norman from the WTS faculty. Was it because: he was heretical; he was not a competent teacher capable of expressing himself clearly; or it was expedient? The answer is 'all of the above,' with board members voting for different reasons. The fallout was immense. Because of perceived OPC incompetence in evaluating Norman, the PCA had its doubts about its theological integrity so that natural union was aborted, probably for decades). Escondido came to be seen as more theologically reliable than Philadelphia, with its more conservative stances on separation and worship and confessionalism seen as laudably consistent with its anti-Shepherd roots. In Philadelphia WTS governance became much more like other institutions, with president and board in charge. Before Norman the board rubber-stamped faculty proposals, but no more. (After the original WTS board of veteran pastors had resigned over Machen's new Independent Board strategy, they were replaced with novice alumni deferring to their revered mentors). When the WTS faculty was unable to resolve the Shepherd situation, the board with amazement recognized its own responsibility, and it's been a true governing board ever since.

Where was I in this? As its chairman I needed to be scrupulously neutral to navigate the faculty through such divisive waters. Now I wish I'd at least asked my questions: Norman, why is it so important

that we distance ourselves from Lutherans and dispensationalists? Can't we do justice to their legitimate concerns? Do you really want us to buy into this Van Til thing, the loneliness of the Reformed faith? Or a better one: we know how to think about faith, recognizing that it's extraspective (it's never faith in itself but always directed to Jesus Christ, the one in whom we trust); can't we think about obedience the same way, not in terms of what I do but that I do it to follow Christ? Would something like "extraspective obedience" work? Could it look like this: I hold on tightly to Christ in the midst of my half-hearted inconsistent obedience to his direction, in a constant life of repentance, soul-searching, Christ-seeking and Christ-finding. Isn't that where our creeds are going when they tell us that God accepts our works as righteous for the sake of Christ? Would that have helped? The tension between God's grace and our own responsibility to obey, his work and our work, seemed terribly hard to overcome. We thought much about the covenant: God will be our God IF we are faithful to him; IF we are not he will destroy us. That big IF is the condition of the covenant. Of course the condition of the New Covenant is still faithfulness, but whose? Is it the faithfulness and righteousness of Christ? Or is it ours? Were we dealing with things mutually exclusive? Or could they come together? I'm not remembering a middle way being on the table. I was listening very hard. Church history helped some—Reformed people have struggled before to pull these things together. Should we be New Side people stressing faith or Old Side folks stressing obedience? Again the answer has to be a YES. I see that as the glory of the Reformed faith: taking account of the whole Bible is much more important than a neat package bought at the much too great price of a truncated Scripture. Read symphonic Vern and John Frame, and read them again and again. But that's in hindsight. We worked hard and prayed hard, but the results of all that work weren't that clear or helpful.

J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil, financial angel of Billy Graham and Christianity Today, was working to save his Presbyterian Church USA and believed the key was supporting evangelical seminaries. He asked George Fuller to buy declining Johnson C. Smith Seminary so he could turn it around, but that didn't work out. He paid the salaries of Stuart Babbage and Philip Hughes to bring them to Columbia TS near Atlanta. When Temple spun off its Conwell seminary to become a state school he bought it, put Babbage and Hughes there and moved it to Gordon Seminary, buying them their new campus. (Philip didn't go and stayed with us in Philadelphia). Pew thought WTS with its Ph. D. program could train faculty for the denominational seminaries. WTS would train the Princeton faculty?? That's the way I heard it. Then he offered us a beautiful RC campus at Los Gatos near San Francisco and we were intrigued. We'd be right next to radical Berkeley: you're only as good as your toughest opponent pushes you to be and we wanted to try (but we wondered if our children could survive). Ed's frugal nature flourished: we could fill in the swimming pool for more parking. I figured the chapel would work: all we'd need to do was to replace one panel of stained glass, putting an ambiguous goatee on what had been Mary. But strange things happened, as Ed changed signals after the huddle. We went to California in 1980, but only some of us; we went not to radical San Fran but to conservative Dutch dairy country Escondido; 'we' became 'us and them' as WTS CA became a totally independent and 'different' school. Our amazing faculty, assembled with so much prayer and wisdom, sent off Frame, Godfrey and Strimple; later Escondido picked up Adams and Clowney too. I was Left Behind.

I became chairman of the faculty, being re-elected annually for some 25 years. I recognized folks by their first names! We set up a committee to handle trivia, clearly labeled the Committee of Three. During the Shepherd years I called people to order for intemperate language, something new: not the language but its suppression. Jack Miller asked for faculty meetings to begin with a time of prayer. That was defeated by one vote, because of some sphere-sovereignty stuff on academy and church. But when Sam Logan became dean, he bundled lunch before meetings with prayer, and to that there was no objection. In faculty meetings I was able to direct prayer breaks at crucial moments. We did new things. The African-American community in Philadelphia asked our help and Ed gave it. A local Bible institute had passed a rule against inter-racial dating (there was none) and they knew they needed a new place to train their leaders. Suddenly there were 60 black pastors getting crash courses with us on Saturday. I once asked a pastor at the WMI (Westminster Ministerial Institute) how he managed to work full-time as a mailman and also lead a flourishing congregation of 400: when do you prepare your sermons? He chuckled: doc, now you be careful what you teach us today, because it's going to be preached in 50 churches tomorrow. Their WMI

commencement was more exciting than our usual, with male and female clergy dancing around the platform. The WMI led to CUTS headed by Bill Krispin, with a tie to Geneva College. (Historians have yet to notice that the first integration sit-in was held by WTS faculty in the 1940's with R. B. Kuiper leading; WTS student Eugene Callendar had been refused service at a Germantown diner and R. B. led the faculty sit-in until it surrendered; read our Herb Oliver, just a little later: *No Flesh Shall Glory*).

Ed began our first branch campus in Miami. We took the seminary to people already in ministry! We worked and prayed hard with all those Spanish River interns in the old Coast Guard base. Can you imagine spending hours in class with the same guys every day, followed by long evenings of conversation and prayer? Immersion, fellowship, team-building! Read Alan Lee's biased account of my teaching in PC. After that beach story the rain came and I ventured to take my grubby bunch for shelter to the fashionable Richard Nixon/Bebe Robozo church. They didn't call security but gave us cake and days later a substantial donation. Jim Hurley was our resident academic leader, and Harry Reeder, now of the board, the brightest star of that wonderful bunch.

The classrooms were getting smaller as the enrollment soared. Was it the "Jesus people coming out of nowhere?" Those amazing new students, with zeal and joy and interest in buying coffee for Faculty, couldn't reliably find their way around in the Bible—but they came to us because they knew what we believed. WTS had never really been into buildings. (In my student days I barely left Machen Hall: I slept there, ate there, went to class there. The 8:30 bell would wake me up and I'd be in class promptly at 8:40; when it was exam time the first third of the daily class notes would be startlingly fresh and new). Can anyone imagine that today's registrar's office was once our chapel? I had taught a packed class in what is now the president's office. A foot ahead of me was Greg Bahnsen, a great defender of the faith eager to go on the attack, with sidemen Roger Wagner and Dennis Johnson. Bahnsen in front, the blackboard inches behind—so after class I took off my jacket to knock off the chalk from the blackboard, where Bahnsen and Co. had verbally shoved me. I supervised Greg's Th. M. thesis, which showed that the early New England legislatures had made much use of the OT. Does that mean it was a good idea? The classroom solution became Van Til Hall, which we built for future expansion. But the classrooms were immediately full with over 90 students in each, and soon classes so big that they had to be held in the chapel, Bob Godfrey with 140 in Ancient Church! Pew money with the Pew architect did the job. Somehow the planned skylights for the chapel didn't materialize and it was pitch dark inside until you turned on the lights. The greatest tragedy was the new faculty lounge, now mailroom. While it was a good place for Van Til to stretch out to nap, that closely-knit junior faculty from the library staff room just wouldn't take the long hike and reverted to solo lunches.

It was time for a new president, with Ed retiring after 19 years and leaving at 65, telling us all to retire at that age too. I became chairman of the presidential search committee. But the board had not yet clarified: president of Philadelphia only, or also of Escondido? It was hard to recruit candidates after they asked me: president of what? All I could say was: the Board's working on that. The Board elected George Fuller in 1982. He was startled by the financial condition of the seminary and worked hard to remedy that. Perhaps at one time donors had just given without asking questions—but now they wanted to know if we agreed with their agendas for the school. Had Ed been expanding too aggressively? George's task was to consolidate and keep us going. He did it, in very difficult conditions, not the least the financial fallout from Shepherd. He needed to close our Miami campus. His chapel messages pointed us vigorously to Christ, and his leadership was thoroughly realistic. We could not do all we wanted to do, and it was good to know that. The Lord raised him up for us at the right time. His dean was Sam Logan. Sam had been one of my earliest students. We remember together my meeting with Sam and Sue on a Saturday when the snow was so bad Ed couldn't make it. I exhorted Sam: join our faculty, come here and help us. And he did! Ed had been exhilarated to learn that Sam had turned OPC and available to us. He served in a variety of administrative offices culminating in Dean. He carried out Ed's mandate: go to Scotland and get Sinclair Ferguson and don't come back without him. Sam was the cheerleader in a hard time, whose cheers were based on faith-filled joy in Christ. Rick Gamble joined me in church history after Bob, another solid teammate. (When I got the itch to apply for the opening in theology, he was my only supporter; later he made that move himself. Sam advised me that systematic theology was for someone systematic).

With much ongoing prayer Jack Miller of the Practical Theology faculty began New Life Church in Jenkintown. I became his ecclesiastical helper—while he took his students to preach on street corners I was explaining to presbytery how OPC we were, as young people from other churches began coming to us, as we began our own World Harvest Mission board for short-term mission trips to Uganda when the OPC board wasn't able to do that, and as we adopted a name which others thought meant that we judged other churches to be dead. Jack was 'enthusiastic' in the old Whitefield sense, crying more in the pulpit than 100 other preachers put together. He could recruit, getting 10 hours a week each for the church from his 20-man Evangelism class; he got student Dick Kaufman to do the heaviest lifting. Dick thought inviting his Glenside neighbors over for dinner ought to be a way of sharing Christ, and during his student days 70 came to faith. NL made a difference at WTS too, with its focus on the Gospel in the believer's life and the joy of being a son. I was there when Jack found in his Greek NT what the text astonishingly said: he won't leave you an orphan. Read Murray on Adoption as the pinnacle of all the gifts we have in Christ, and then Archibald Alexander, the first Princeton professor, about godliness in *Thoughts on Religious Experience*. Then you're ready for Jack, especially *Heart of a Servant Leader* and *A Faith Worth Sharing*, and listen to the familiar beat of a Reformed heart. Add CCEF people Powlison and Welch as Jack's elders, and wasn't that a church? (See Yenchko/Lutz in my PC). I became associate pastor there, the first time in my life I had done anything more for the church than be a supply preacher. It made a great difference in my heart and my teaching. We became the largest congregation in the OPC and began four daughter churches. How does Westminster connect with the churches it services? Why hadn't we become a denominational seminary? Machen's independent missions board had been fulfilled in OPC and Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod denominational boards. Covenant Theological Seminary was RPCES so why weren't we? The assumed answer was: we minister to the body of Christ, to many denominations. The numbers for our students were for many years: 40 different countries, 80 different denominations. But still, 'the pluriformity of the church' is ambiguous; is that a biblical attribute or a weasel-word for schismatic? (This church down by Chester had on the signboard: 'E Presbyterian Church (unaffiliated),' for which the bulletin gave the explanation: 'it is with the Bible Presbyterian Church that we are unaffiliated.') For decades it was from the OPC that WTS was independent. It was assumed that new faculty from other churches would join it. (Once a faculty motion to inquire about John Bettler's attendance at an independent church was defeated only when I as chairman voted to make a tie). Was that changing? Could OPC people at New Life and WTS find a more natural identity in the Presbyterian Church in America? What difference could that make? Weren't we all on the same page? Theologically of course we were—and what else is there? Could it be a 'philosophy of ministry?' The OPC seemed to prioritize theological precision and the PCA effective ministry. To me the Stonehouse-edited *Presbyterian Guardian* had been unnecessarily provocative and it wasn't surprising that at the very beginning the people who became Bible Presbyterians didn't feel welcome (they weren't guiltless either). The 1940's Clark case sent the message that agreeing with CVT was the new orthodoxy. Had the revolution devoured its children? I think it was green graduates with little pastoral experience being egged on by a WTS faculty who couldn't tell the difference between theological consistency and the priorities of the church. That original faculty, whom I truly honored for so much, was the same bunch that had aborted the original vision of the seminary of revitalizing the PCUSA by following Machen and his Independent Board. That heritage was very important to OPC people.

But the PCA came from the 'Southern Presbyterian Church' with its tradition of diversity, and so more open to evangelicals than the northern church had been, and its PCA founders had worked together in ministry for years. They were more than ex-theological students; they were fellow evangelists and pastors. Is there a dichotomy between theologians and pastors? There shouldn't be. Could they learn from each other? Could the OPC have contributed as much to the PCA as the Bible Presbyterian successors, the RPCES, did? I think so. Church union negotiations in the 70's and 80's had been encouraging. People came to repent and forgive each other for the harsh words and hearts of the 30's, when the Bible Presbyterians had given up on the OPC, founding Faith Seminary to represent the 'American Presbyterian' heritage. That active reconciliation was far more important than church union, but union would have been a good symbol of mutual respect and love. The 1986 OPC GA vote, with Strimple moderator, put an abrupt end to that, 53% in favor when a 2/3 vote was required. I had become Ed's successor in union leadership and had

dismally failed. (Read Barker in *PC*). The day after that vote the OPC sent me to the PCA GA, which gave me five minutes to explain what we'd done. The best I could do was: 'the OPC still loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.' Laughing on the outside, crying on the inside. (When I described that tragic ending in *Modern* the next year my voice broke). WTS New Life people and others moved toward the PCA by themselves, following Ed who had moved earlier. I joined them with New Life, with sadness and joy. One Saturday morning I was dismissed by the OPC and that afternoon received by the PCA. The OPC issue that morning was an adulterous minister; the PCA issue that afternoon was an adulterous missionary. The PCA motion was not as well crafted, but the time of prayer afterwards was moving, culminating in praying for our own wives and sinful hearts. I was welcomed to my new presbytery by being put on the reconciliation committee and the Holy Spirit did a marvelous work! Just recently the man and wife and I hugged again. Now we were independent with both OPC and PCA! Was that doubly irregular? (Presbyterians work with a three-value logic, right, wrong and irregular. Irregular means when it's so hard to do it right you end up doing the best you can. Should we have first united all the evangelical churches in the world and then become their seminary?). I see that increasing ministry to the broader PCA as part of the fulfillment of the greater vision of Ed Clowney.

Then in 1991 came President Sam Logan! He saw the need for retrenchment and consolidation as ending, and the time for vigorous prayerful moving ahead as come. He led us in working through ATS accreditation, involved himself in the process in other schools, and thereby helped us learn what a modern seminary needed to do. He knew what was happening in church and culture. He built many new bridges. He was EPC Revidivus. Sam brought us into the world of the 'strategic plan.' (Who were we and what was the most important thing to be doing right now? Wasn't that what Jay had missed back then?) He gave us faculty retreats with croquet; well, the new juniors were off doing something more convivial. We brought in leaders from without to nudge us. I had been elected to the PCA MTW, their mission board, and had been deeply moved there by the leadership of Paul Kooistra. We invited him to come to us and he reminded us vigorously that it was all about students. I began to show up at 8 for my 8:30 classes and had engaging conversations with my commuter students who had to come early because of traffic. Did a student want a signature? That's a two-minute job. But what if I asked, how are things going for you now? That could be much more, and I could feel the smile of Kooistra and the blessing of Jesus.

Will Barker became Dean. When he was the editor of the *Presbyterian Journal*, I began writing for him my Practical Calvinism articles. He was encouraging and helpful, and accepted all of them! When the Journal folded (not because of my articles, he said) he asked me if I knew of openings. I didn't, but then Rick Gamble decided to move on, and Will came to interview. It was Vern's prayer that moved his heart to come to us. He wanted finally just to teach and write but Sam prevailed on him to be Dean and we had another great leadership team, the best ever I think. Will had godly experience and could help out the floundering and fussing new juniors. That was especially important because in the modern fund-raising world Sam had to be away so much. What must that be like? Deep pockets people want accountability. What would it be like to be at Princeton with the largest endowment in the country, bigger than Harvard's? Would it be good just to be able to follow your vision, without having to accommodate so much? Or could that be corrupting? The percentage of WTS alumni who contribute is about that of the alumni of all the other seminaries, about 15%. Not many churches put us in their budgets. So PTL enthusiastically for deep pockets. Most of us want quick returns, like raising support for the missionary who'll be on the field in six months. But to give to a seminary who'll take 3 or 4 years to train someone, who'll then need another 5 years mentoring to be effective—now that's long-term investment and deep pockets folks value that.

The 'role of women' has become the issue. The church has been thinking in new ways. Women vote in congregational meetings (previously only "heads of households" did), calling pastors and electing elders. Pulpit search committees included them. Women moved their prayer meetings to evenings, accommodating men who wanted to pray too. We all want our daughters to have more options besides nurse, secretary or teacher. What if a woman was called to a life of ministry? Should she go to med school and become a medical missionary? Or should she go to seminary? There were women students at WTS from the beginning. (But when new-convert Kantzer needed his Ruth to explain theology to him, they saw Faith TS offering a more welcoming place for her than WTS, and that made the difference). Since the usual

program included required preaching courses, women couldn't be in the B. D. program and were non-degree 'special' students. But when WTS began offering other degrees, including degrees in counseling and the Ph. D., more came to us. As far as I know Faculty were welcoming and supportive, but some male students were not—and we did not tell them to leave. The first course in preaching became 'Gospel Communication' and women could do that. (Once Campus Crusade picked us for its January Northeast training center, as we edged out Gordon. When a Crusade woman stood to speak, Ed told her: remember if you start to preach I'll leave; she responded: if you do I'll cry). We had clarified our objectives in order of priority: training pastors; training teachers; training men and women for other ministry. Should taking that broader focus into account affect our governance? Did the Board need women members to direct wisely a school that trained women for ministry? The Middle State accreditors thought so, and told us to 'show cause' why we shouldn't lose our accreditation because we had no women on the Board! We needed accreditation because WTS is an international ministry serving students from everywhere, but if we weren't accredited they couldn't get visas. I enjoyed accreditation visits (the administration did all the work; Bob Strimple said their report was his publication for the year). One distinguished visitor was slow crossing Willow Grove Avenue to talk to CCEF and a truck just about got him; he urged us to implement a safer way to cross (a tunnel?). A librarian was shocked at how full our library always was with everyone reading books all the time; he was sure the reason was the inadequacy of our recreational facilities. My happiest time was with a seminary president accreditor, who asked me as faculty chairman to explain to him how both president and faculty could be so powerful. His light went on: you mean you trust each other! But now show cause! The seminary constitution said that the Board should be made up of a certain proportion of ministers (half, I think) and the others not. Does that look like a place for women? I thought so, and I believe Sam thought so. But when the ultimatum came, it seemed to me that the Board scurried to change 'non-ministers' to 'ruling elders.' Ultimately a brilliant constitutional attorney, William Bentley Ball, argued our case and we compromised: they could accept our exclusively male-church-officer qualification for the Board if we made room for non-ecclesiastics including women on Board committees, but without vote. Ball's case was religious freedom, which worked well in those Reagan years of big talk against big government. Did we really tell the world that our religious principles mandated that we not have women on the Board? It sounded that way to me. At a minimum that seems to me to be a serious over-statement; and it borders on a sexist natural theology, going far beyond the Word of God. We made a full page in USA Today, with a mug shot of a scowling Sam.

What about women faculty? Sam asked the faculty for counsel and its response was overwhelmingly favorable. Edna Greenway was elected to a post in Christian education and then went with Roger as he moved to Calvin TS, so she never took it up. More controversial to some was the call of Karen Jobs to a position in Old Testament. (Is Christian education women's work?) The faculty by 13 to 1 approved her nomination. Then just before the board meeting which would consider it, Sam withdrew his support, pleading budget difficulties, while Karen went on to a brilliant career at the Wheaton Graduate School. (This was the time of the disastrous New Era scam, as many ministries, WTS among them, saw their funds placed with New Era vanishing into thin air. Ultimately there was about a 90% recovery, but things seemed very dark for very long). But as at the same time two men were being added to the administration I was still not convinced. I will be overwhelmingly grateful always for Sam and his leadership; he brought us along into a more effective place than we had ever been—but what in the world was happening then? (Our cousins at CCEF began adding remarkable women to their Board, and for many years Jayne Clark served full-time on their counseling and teaching staff. CCEF set the pace). The OPC Presbytery of NJ conducted an ecclesiastical trial of Harvie for advocating the ordination of women. (He and Sam taught the 'role of women' course for years). Because of his eyesight I drove him for about ten trips. Presbytery proceeded very thoroughly and found him not guilty. He had raised long-overdue questions, but Harv didn't give answers till he was ready. That was his way.

Harvie was my classmate and I always loved the man. Our families got into the tradition of Thanksgiving dinner together for many years. Our daughter Jessica had long talks with him every college break. He did an amazing thing in his early days with us teaching apologetics: he somehow got a bunch of very bright unbelievers to attend his evening classes and to present their problems with the Gospel! For

years he was the only one of us with anything like an international reputation and ministry. He was creative and stimulating, and sometimes impatient with our slowness to catch on! I think his *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds* best portrays our grand vision: to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ we contextualize vigorously, but we work against selling out the faith to syncretism and unbelief. I was with him the day before he died, struggling to say the right thing. The best I could do was: Harv, soon you'll be walking not by faith but by sight. He said: I can hardly wait. He was buried in his bib overalls.

Bob Strimple's minority report supporting the ordination of women deacons in the 1988 OPC GA minutes is comprehensive and cogent, and is decisively superior to Warfield's similar argument (http://OPC.org/GA/women_in_office.html#APPENDIX). But 'minority' means he lost. Clowney picked it up approvingly but briefly in his *The Church*. That masterful piece of Strimple exegesis is being pondered everywhere. I think the "role of women in the church" continues to be of major importance. PCA leaders have concluded that 'the role of women' is the #1 issue before the church today. Churches now leaving the PCUSA are going to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and ECO because they offer greater opportunities for women ministry. (Our beloved Bethel Church in Wheaton experienced a massive exodus into Immanuel EPC). I keep hearing the words of Carolyn Custis James: the church is like someone with a stroke; half the body is paralyzed. Is para-church ministry for women a good stopgap solution? But all para ministries even if necessary point to the failure of the church, don't they? Is the new focus on 'Women's Ministries' the answer? It seems cumbersome to me, creating within the church a parallel universe. But in our already/not yet world, perhaps stopgap is what we should expect? Oh, do I sound like Harv now, all questions and few answers?

As I think of WTS now we did many things very well. Lives are being changed throughout the world because of the training we gave. But in our two major challenges, defining the Gospel in the Shepherd controversy and showing the way for women's ministry, we didn't do well. Does it help to know everyone else isn't either? Is it just my pride that makes we wish we had done better? Later years aren't as clear for me as the earlier. I had become a patriarch myself, rejoicing over the juniors but not nearly as close to them as I would have liked to have been. Will and I had been a wonderful team in Church History. I knew he was younger than I and was sure I'd retire just before he did, and leave him to recruit our successors. But he made the first move, and suddenly I needed to do another search. They were so many good candidates, more than ever. Joined by help from Sam and Bill and Pete, Will and I picked Carl Trueman as the most promising. He is unusually eloquent and powerful in the classroom. He writes much and well. Now he is Dean, filling Will's old slot. A Chinese-American group helped us hire Jeff Jue, one of Carl's doctoral students, and he has been a good choice too. I announced my retirement for 2004. Will and I became professors emeritus.

Then my Lynn died on March 26, 2003, a day after my seventieth birthday, 30 days after her diagnosis with pancreatic cancer, and just after a very special trip we had made to London. Back then in 1966 she had regretfully but cheerfully left her many friends in Wheaton to come to WTS, had been an enthusiastic sponsor and welcomer in the old Wives' Club and then Women of Westminster, and especially had encouraged me when things were hard. (It would take me at least another 100 pages to describe the blessings she brought me for our 43 years together). After her death I taught another year, hopefully doing well in class but otherwise in a daze. I learned with amazement that Sam was in serious trouble with some of the Faculty. I didn't understand it then and still don't now. The Board committee mandated reconciliation, but that didn't happen and Sam was gone. They interviewed us all, but somehow the Faculty didn't consider a motion of confidence in the president, and I regret very much that I didn't make that motion. Sam remained over a year as Chancellor. This Westminster part of my life ended at Commencement 2004. Everyone was very appreciative and kind, but it was all over. I read my free Westminster Theological Journal now with much enlightenment and happiness. (This erudite journal was my first introduction to the thinking of the Seminary back in 1950; it stretches and encourage me). I revert to alumnus and get invited to meetings. The bookstore gives me faculty discount. When in town I park in faculty space. I care deeply about this amazing school.

Peter Lillback became the fourth president. Pete had been a doctoral student of mine. Of my 45 Ph. D. students I rank him easily in the top two, along with Joel Beeke, president of Puritan and Reformed

Seminary in Grand Rapids. We made the ‘Lillback rule’ for Pete, limiting Ph. D. dissertation length to 400 pages after he turned in 750. He is hard-working and has built a solid PCA church on the Philadelphia Main Line. He has pulled together the Gospel and American patriotism very well, against the current of today’s evangelical thought. He has written solidly and convincingly on the origins of the heart of our theology, the covenant. How can he direct WTS and do so many other things too? Well, he just does. He honored me by asking me to lead in prayer at his inauguration.

Our retirement plan for Lynn and me was to move to the foothills of the Rockies at Fort Collins, across the road from daughter Professor Jessica. (My old fantasy had been fulfilled: someone would call on the phone and ask for Dr. Davis, and I would say: which one?) But after her diagnosis of imminent death Lynn said to me: don’t go to Colorado alone, and I didn’t. I was ready to be by myself the rest of my life. But in November 2003 I met again former student Carol Peitz (back row on the left, usually late), a grand encourager. We married in February 2005 and have moved to Vancouver BC to assist in training people in the Grace Vancouver church plant. WTS is over and it’s time to move on. But what did it all mean?

I wrote all that in 2009, surprised I could remember so much. After Vancouver Carol and I moved to Dallas for five years to work in Redeemer Seminary and then returned to Glenside PA three years ago, near my sons Erik and Marc. Now in 2017 I review my memories. During my time on Faculty we had added to what the original Faculty had done, so while we continued to show how liberal use of the Bible gave a very small moralistic message, we moved on to make clear what the Word *did* teach. Especially Dick Gaffin in his *Acts and Paul* led us in that new beginning. Ed Clowney showed us Jesus Christ throughout the Word. Jay Adams, David Powlison, Ed Welch and John Bettler taught us more and more the *How* of godly living. We changed *Homiletics* into *Biblical Interpretation* and welcomed women into the grand world of deeper biblical understanding. We helped students from many non-Reformed backgrounds see the marvelous grace of the gospel. We did that doctoral program, training many remarkable leaders, many of whom became our friendly competitors at other schools. Ed and George and Sam led us into broader and better ministry to serve the body of Christ in many lands and places, again after the model of old Princeton. Funding was not easy, but we did so many bigger and better things together. I am glad I could have a part.

That was worth doing, and wise, and godly, and blessed. We did more than show that “the dead German” critics were wrong, we sought to bring the power and grace of the whole gospel. What could go wrong with that? So much, a lot. Yes, we all need to be alert.

Remember how Jonathan Edwards did the same application thing, on a grand scale? Religious affections! But then how all his followers got stuck in their feelings *about* Jesus, not with Jesus himself? So JE was the granddaddy of Unitarianism? But it wasn’t really his fault if his students got his message wrong. Orderly transition isn’t enough, we had to be sure WTS still was where it was originally, proclaiming loudly against dead Germans and all the rest. It was! We built on that, but we built.

Truth has to be “in order to goodness,” that’s clear. It has to make a difference in hearts and lives—but truth itself has to be still there. Many WTS teachers have now been let go, is that why? Did their teaching truly threaten gospel truth? If it did, we can only be grateful that they’re gone. If not, then the cultural and personal relevance of our faith seems to have been deeply damaged. Must we now learn how to rebuild?

Those are hard questions, but vital to our faith. How can we put truth and cultural/personal relevance together? With John Murray’s hard-working godly help, we are all relearning the riches of the Word’s blessed teaching on “union with Christ.” Before we found it too easy to focus on this or that gift that Jesus gives us, justification and then sanctification and adoption. It’s our union with Christ that now opens our eyes so much wider, to begin to see that it is *Jesus himself* that the Lord gives us. “*First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and is of no value for us . . . This, then, is the true knowledge of Christ, if we receive him as offered by the Father: namely, clothed with his gospel.*” Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.1.1, as used by Sinclair Ferguson in his *The Whole Christ*, 54-55.

That’s how truth and relevance/application come together: it is Christ himself, not outside us or separated from us, who is our complete salvation. Not separated from us, but given to us. There is the godly

foundation from which the Word as our “means of grace” comes. We always built on a sturdy commitment to God’s Word as the ground for all else, sure that it was “inerrant.” We followed the grand vision of the Evangelical Theological Society: “the Bible is without error in whatever it intends to teach.” That was our way ahead, as we sought to learn from the Word itself how it shows us the Lord. But it wasn’t enough to have that formula, we had to learn how to use it. I honor Ray Dillard’s diligent work with Chronicles and how he opened our eyes to what it was all about. The Kings story about David seems more complete, he did many good things but then there was Bathsheba. But Chronicles just leaves out that downside, how can that be? Ray saw there a pointer to the greater David ahead, the Lord Jesus. Compare Scripture with Scripture and what do you have? Not a lowest common denominator—but biblical richness! Before that Meredith Kline had shown us the similarity between biblical covenant and Hittite treaties. Why are there two tablets of the Law? One for commands 1-4 and the other for 5-10? That’s what we have in our pictures on the wall. But the Hittites showed us that there’s a copy of all 10 for King God and another for vassal us, that’s why there are two. So both God and his people will be clear in their hearts what their relationship is and will be! Especially helpful to me has been Dan McCartney’s “third way”: <http://www.bible-researcher.com/mccartney1.html> He shows us how to look at the Word in all the ways we can, both as culturally relevant and as always pointing to Jesus. I find that beautifully helpful, but it seems WTS now opposes that, is it because it thinks that to look at the culture by itself distracts from the look at Jesus? (To do both at the same time takes more peripheral vision than I can muster, so I follow Dan and do it one at a time). Doug Green’s agreeing with Dan’s way seems to be that which led to his “retirement”: <https://students.wts.edu/stayinformed/view.html?id=1794> See for yourself his two articles there and show us all his problems, if you can.

In that area of Christianity and culture, WTS has also discontinued its urban program, so remarkably begun by Harvie Conn and Manny Ortiz. The CCEF counseling people have also been removed from Faculty. This suggests again the new direction of the school, that it now sees little need for probing “application” of the truth. That safeguards the objectivity of the faith, but is the price too high? Or is our personal union with Christ a wide enough base for both God’s truth and the needs of our hearts?

Union is theologically grand, but we need also to foster our personal obedience and trust in our Savior. God calls us to encourage and help each other: *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* Ephesians 4:31-32 ESV

Wait a minute, without strong righteous slander how can we possibly protect the faith in this hostile and evil world? We can do real conversation, that’s how. I could teach you about the *mythical* side of the Bible, and 1% of the audience, tops, would know what I was saying and that they could still trust me. But the rest would revisit everything I’d ever said before and scratch it out. Should I do *meta-narrative*, is that better? Up to 2% now, some improvement. But why not say *really big picture* instead? That works, it’s about something in the Word that goes beyond some limited time and space, and we can go on talking. Try to be clear, and if some one else isn’t, ask some questions. (I know, that’s what is supposed to happen in my habitat, the classroom—but it happens a lot among folks who have ever been in classrooms). Don’t tolerate foolishness or unbelief, of course not, but do real conversation too.

I’ve been around, hearing what I just said makes me nervous too. Unbelief is sneaky, Satan is arch-sneak, a lot of liberals are too. They use words with their own definitions without telling you, so some conversations need to be especially rigorous. No problem, just make sure what they and you are talking about. Here’s my sad story: my learned New Testament prof Ernst Käsemann was teaching us about the ascension of Jesus and how it never happened. So some students sent him a telegram (is that how you ask questions in Germany?), asking then why do we celebrate Ascension Day? I was disappointed in his answer, it was all about how the Nazis always had someone monitoring his sermons, how when his unit in Russia was being replaced he was always transferred into the one coming in, how hard his years in Russian POW camps had been. So I despised that sneaky answer where he was telling us to trust him with his unbelief. What does suffering have to do with unbelief? But why didn’t I ever pray for him? I didn’t at all. His answer was irrelevant but personal, wasn’t it? I’m a slow learner, but all of us have to learn godliness, not slander.

Yes, there are bad answers out there. Yes, it's the people who talk the loudest about relevance who are the sneakiest. Yes, God's people have been fooled so often, it's high-time we do better. Yes to all that. But Double-Yes: we are called and given the Spirit to do everything God's way.

Where WTS is now confuses me and saddens me. It doesn't seem to fit those years of unity and love to each other and to our students. My questions to them haven't helped much, the answers were sparse, was I too threatening? Is it time for the first team to come in and do better than I did? Maybe, maybe not. But it is time for the church of Jesus to give somehow the people what they need, "all of what they need for life and godliness." Give them gospel truth and gospel How. Give them big Jesus, with all his many blessings.

Is our church aging? Does what we talk about seem meaningless to those millennials who used to belong? Hear the Lord's wake-up, now be clearer and fuller in truth *and* life. Pray for all of us, that we reach out boldly and wisely to all those who have no idea what being with Jesus is all about. Pray too that WTS again shows us the way.

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