

May 2022

Dear Friends,

On the day I am writing this letter, I had a unique opportunity to share the three primary commitments we make to the church and our students at RPTS. We strive to provide our students with theological grounding, devotional piety and practical training. In partnership with the Center for Urban Biblical Ministries (an undergraduate program of Geneva College hosted in our building), we hosted a lunch for several pastors in the urban Pittsburgh area. Let me share with you what I explained to our guests along with a few illustrative anecdotes.

***Theological Grounding*** – We tell our students that we are “happy Reformed Presbyterians” at RPTS. In other words, we joyfully hold to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *RPCNA Testimony* by living within our doctrinal commitments and professing them unashamedly. As students often come to us from different churches and denominations, our professors teach our standards but seek to do so in a loving, non-proselytizing manner.

We are seeing ongoing reformation of heart and practice as a result. An entering student, a local worship leader in a non-denominational church, wrote a winsome paper on exclusive psalmody and recently posted a beautiful rendition of himself singing Psalm 46 on social media. A student from Nicaragua is excitedly embracing the doctrines he is learning and wants to return home to bring reformational truth and practices to his home congregation. Sometimes the changes bring wrestlings. One student, who is planting a Baptist church, has become Reformed Presbyterian in his convictions and is seeking the Lord’s will on how to graciously transition to the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

***Devotional Piety*** – Life in Rutherford Hall is worshipful! Each class day we have a chapel service where professors, guest preachers, and students open the Word. This daily time of singing God’s praises, praying for His kingdom, and hearing His Word is the “glue” that deepens the Spirit’s bonds in our community. Prayer is vital to us at RPTS. Classes often start with devotions or prayer. On Tuesday afternoons in my office, we meet to pray for the ministry of RPTS; on Friday mornings students have led an initiative to pray for one another’s preaching. There’s prayer before lunch as we eat and fellowship together and there’s private prayer in the offices of our professors as they meet with students to bring both burdens and joys to the Lord.

I love hearing our students sharing about the Lord’s sanctifying work in their hearts as a result. One student asked to meet with me, confessed some heart issues, then expressed a desire for our professors to disciple him. Similarly, another graduating student recently testified publicly about how professors’ care for him helped him through troubling times; He is looking forward to a year-long internship under an experienced pastor.

***Practical Training*** – Seminaries should not only ground men in theology but prepare them to evangelize, counsel, preach, teach, and defend the faith. RPTS works hard to make our training practical. Dr. Gamble teaches apologetics and then assigns students to have an encounter with unbelievers. Adjunct professor Ed Blackwood has students knocking on doors,

producing short videos, leading Bible studies, and conducting outreach services in our chapel for our evangelism class. Professor Evans not only instructs on counseling, but also has students counseling cases provided by local churches. Dr. Whitla has students prepare and then deliver lessons in his "Dynamics of Teaching" course. This quarter I instructed students in preaching an evangelistic message from Isaiah and then had them preach where non-Christians were present.

We rejoice over the development and fruit we see! One student has childhood friends wanting to continue the online evangelistic Bible study they began this quarter. Unbelievers have come to our chapel to hear the gospel preached. Local university students have been challenged with the claims of the Christian faith. Men have gone out to engage in street preaching together.

As we make these three commitments to our students and the churches that send them to us, we want our students to know, love, and be willing to serve Christ far more when they leave RPTS than when they first came. By God's grace, we continue to see that happen!

Yet we could not do this kingdom work without your support. Whether for the first time or the thousandth, please consider sending a gift to RPTS via the information below. Your partnership in this kingdom venture ensures we can continue to send out students who know what they believe, love the One they believe, and serve Him well.

Thank you for reading, praying, and giving!

In Christ's Love and Service,

  
Barry J. York  
President

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Enclosure