

THE PRESIDENT'S MEMORANDUM



August 2018

Dear Friend of RPTS,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ! As the new President of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, I want to update you on the ministry of the Seminary as one of our faithful friends and supporters. As the psalmist says, “All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!” (Ps. 145:10). As one of those works of the Lord, I trust you will join us in giving thanks as you read what He is doing at and through RPTS!

A Summer of Transitions

Not only have I moved into a new office, but almost everyone at RPTS has! President Emeritus Jerry O’Neill may be retired in one sense, but after a well-deserved rest in July, he is back at work half-time in an upstairs office to serve as Academic Dean and work with planned giving. He also acts as a key counselor to me, for which I am thankful. CAO Mark Sampson has moved to the first floor and keeps the daily operations moving smoothly around here. Director of Admissions, Ed Blackwood, moved into my old office to have more room for meeting with prospective, as well as current students, and is working intensely on enrollment for the fall.

One of the most exciting transitions is that Keith Evans now sits across the street in the Willson Center as our new Professor of Biblical Counseling! Keith fits right in with the faculty as he prepares for the Fall and continues in his PhD studies. Sharon Sampson, who assists him, also changed offices to better serve the Counseling Institute and to offer counseling to females in need of help. Dr. George Scipione also stepped back to half-time status and moved offices. He continues his globetrotting with his wife, Eileen, and is even now teaching in Brazil. All of these moves, as well as some others, played a bit of havoc on our phone messaging system, as you might imagine!

Besides all this movement, the summer is hardly a quiet time around RPTS. During the first three weeks of July, we had what you might call the “holy hurricane” as the Theological Foundations for Youth (TFY) arrived. Thirty students heading into their senior year of high school blew in the first week and filled Rutherford Hall’s rooms, attending lectures during the day, then bunking down at night. The second week was like the calm in the eye of the storm as they went out to serve area congregations. Then the winds picked up again as the TFYers returned the third week eager to resume learning. What a joy it is to have these godly young people with us each summer! We also had older students with us for two weeks in August as three Doctor of Ministry classes took place. The number of DMin students has now passed thirty in number(!), so we appointed Executive Assistant Vicki Smith to also assist Dr. C.J. Williams as he oversees this program. At the end of August, we had students arrive to take our one-week intensive Missions class. Then the “real” school year will start in September!

Student and Recent Alumni News

Our students have been on the move as well. A number of them have done summer internships, providing great opportunities to learn under a seasoned pastor and further develop classroom lessons. Several recent graduates have been ordained: Joel Hart at Second RPC of Indianapolis (IN), Bryan Schneider at Sharon RPC (IA), and Gabriel Wingfield at Providence RPC (RI). In addition, we recently hired a local African American pastor and 2018 graduate, Will Baker, to serve part-time as a Community Liaison for RPTS. He will support us to better serve and recruit the minority constituencies that make RPTS such a wonderful reflection of God's kingdom.

Faculty Update

This summer, the RPCNA Synod elected David Whitla to be the new Professor of Church History to begin in the summer of 2019 upon his completion of his PhD studies at Queens University in Belfast, Northern Ireland. We are greatly enthused over this confirmation! Our current faculty stayed busy working, writing, and teaching this summer. In addition to his usual work as the librarian, Prof. Tom Reid is planning with others for future library renovations to make our space more study friendly and aesthetically pleasing. Dr. Rick Gamble, the new Dean of Faculty, visited Switzerland early this summer to lecture at a camp. He also taught a DMin course, and anticipates his second volume of *The Whole Counsel of God* to come out this fall. When Dr. Williams was not advising DMin students and teaching a course for them, he worked on a volume about the Song of Solomon similar to his *The Shadow of Christ in the Book of Job*. I enjoyed some time in Northern Ireland in June with my wife, and preached in three congregations there. My new book *Hitting the Marks* is coming out in September. Dr. Scipione's book *The Battle for the Biblical Family* was recently published as well.

Save the Gables Update

Many of you know that RPTS had an eighteen month, \$3 million dollar comprehensive campaign set to end this summer. Though we have not quite reached our goal and are still waiting on one significant grant request, enough funds and bequests came in to repair four of our largest gables, renovate the basement kitchen and dining hall next year, and replace the slate roof in the near future. We praise God for providing for us! If you would like to contribute to this campaign to work on other gables and needed updates, you still can give toward it. One possible time to consider donating is during our Strike the Match campaign coming October 8-13 this fall.

Inaugurations and Westminster Conference

You are cordially invited to celebrate and learn with us in the next few months! Friday, September 7, at 7:00 p.m. at Memorial Park Church in Pittsburgh will be the night of my inauguration as president. We will welcome dignitaries such as President Calvin Troup of Geneva College, President Joel Beeke of Puritan Reformed Seminary, and keynote speaker President Ligon Duncan of Reformed Theological Seminary. You then can stay overnight and join us for the Westminster Conference the next day, as Drs. Beeke, Duncan, and Michael LeFebvre join me to speak on the subject of preaching. On November 2, at 7:00 p.m. at Memorial Park, we will inaugurate Keith Evans into his professorship as well. You can find more information about each of these events at rpts.edu.

As you can see, the Lord is truly at work at RPTS. Thank you for your support and prayers!

In Christ's Service,



Barry J. York