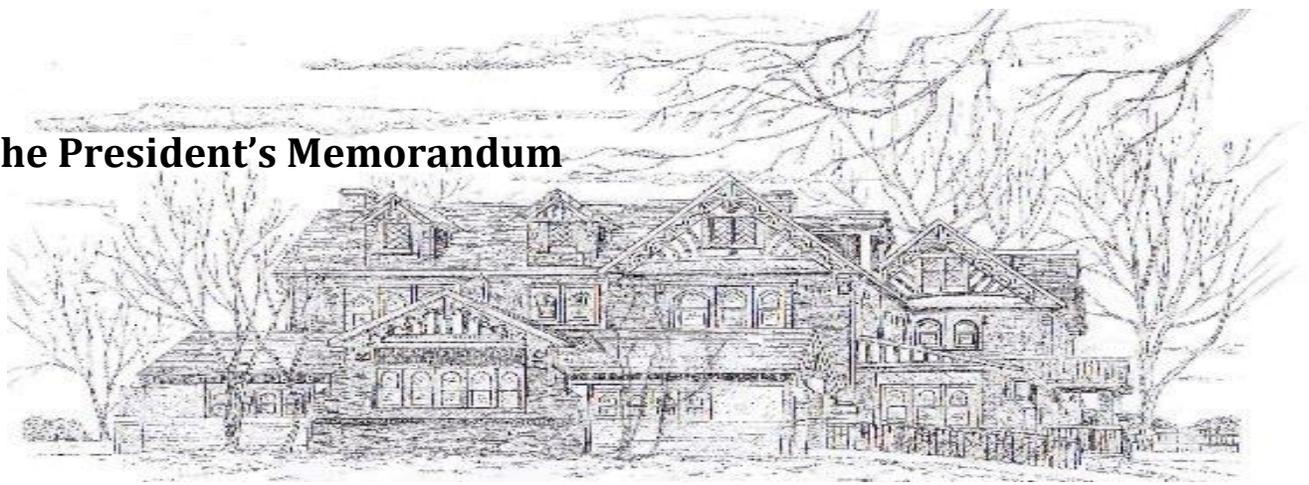


# The President's Memorandum



September 2020

Dear Friend of RPTS,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ! As we enter the fall months and the season of harvest, we should be reminded as we see ripening fields that there is a great spiritual harvest the Lord is bringing in. The psalmist reminds us in Psalm 67:5-6 that we should seek God's blessing to this end: "Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us." Thank you for helping RPTS train workers to go out into all the world to bring that harvest in!

## Student News

As RPTS has the primary aim of training men for pastoral ministry, seeing our graduates receive calls and answer them gives us great joy. In our sponsoring denomination, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, empty pulpits are being filled and mission needs are being met by our recent graduates. Some examples: Garrett Mann ('20) is now in Lisbon, NY; Wesley Trace Turner ('20) was ordained recently at Grace RPC in State College, PA; Andrew Battiato ('19) is preparing toward doing mission work among Muslims in Asia; Gary McNamee ('20) will head toward a mission church in Columbia, MS; several East Asian students finally were able to return, despite travel restrictions, to pick up their labors in their homeland; and Zachary Smith ('19) has finally received the passports his family needed to go to South Sudan. We thank the Lord that He continues to expand His kingdom.

As the new academic year approaches, we are further thankful. Student families are arriving and occupying the apartments around the campus. During the first week of September, we had over thirty people join us either on campus or online for an intensive **Church Planting Course**. Having people back in the building after nearly six months of quiet was such a blessing to the staff and faculty!

As I walk alongside seminary students trying to go to school, care for their families, work jobs outside class, etc., I have wanted to find ways to help them receive support. As they train for a life of service in God's kingdom, we hope they can go forth without inhibitive school debt. To that end, we have created the Support Our Students (S.O.S) Tuition Relief Program. Those who want to encourage a student can simply send in a payment for their tuition bill and it will be credited to them. If anyone reading this letter has a student they would like to support or has further questions, please contact Mark Sampson at [msampson@rpts.edu](mailto:msampson@rpts.edu).

## Faculty Updates

We are excited that Dr. Jeff Stivason has now officially joined us this summer as the Professor of New Testament Studies! Jeff will assume the New Testament courses this year and then the Greek courses next year, Lord willing. Dr. Jack Kinneer will continue to teach Greek this year until he retires in 2021.

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In a recent faculty meeting, it was encouraging to hear of professors working on publication projects. Jeff is working on a volume on B.B. Warfield. Dr. Rick Gamble has returned after a half year sabbatical, and has nearly completed his third and final volume of *The Whole Counsel of God*, which we eagerly await. Dr. David Whitla has sent off his doctoral work on Archibald Johnston of Wariston for hopeful publication. Dr. C. J. Williams will take a sabbatical beginning in December, and hopes to produce another volume on the *Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament*. Professor Keith Evans is progressing well in his doctoral studies and publishing articles in different places. All six full-time professors will be presenting papers on sanctification at this year's Westminster Conference and publishing articles in the *Reformed Presbyterian Theological Journal*.

### **Further Transitions**

In addition to Dr. Stivason, we have had several significant transitions this summer. Jordan Feagley is now the Head Librarian, following Tom Reid's retirement. Recent graduate Stephen Mulder is assisting Jordan in the library while he seeks a pastoral call. Kim Backensto, who has served faithfully in administration and development for a quarter of a century, is retiring (though she will do some project work for us). In her place we added part-time workers Rachael Nye earlier this spring and June Whitla recently.

### **Applied Theology for the Church**

Although our main purpose remains to train pastors and workers to go out in service to Christ, one of the desires we have is to take our resources and help those already serving the church. In addition to materials we already have available, we are offering other significant resources in this area of our ministry. Several of the participants in the **Church Planting Course** noted above were pastors and elders in the field, with some of them taking advantage of a **Pastoral Church Planting Program** that will offer mentoring and a reading group as a follow-up to the class. We also have a **Ruling Elders Program** which consists of five of our seminary courses that will help those serving their local churches grow in their shepherding abilities. A **Sharpening Your Greek** cohort offers men wanting to brush up on their Greek skills monthly time with a professor to dig more deeply into a New Testament book. You can go to the Resources tab on our website to find out more information.

### **Strike the Match**

We are nearing an important time for us, as our largest annual fundraising campaign approaches. During the **Strike the Match** campaign from October 12-17, any donation given to us will receive a 50% match because of some gracious friends of RPTS. This matching donation means every \$100 given becomes \$150! This campaign helps finance our annual budget greatly. So please consider sending a gift by check, calling us at (412) 731-6000 to use a credit card, or using our website at [rpts.edu/give](http://rpts.edu/give) and clicking on "Strike the Match" button.

As I conclude this memorandum, I want to remind you of what Jesus told us about the harvest. "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:37-38). I see and hear of needs in churches and opportunities that exist but there are not enough workers available. Please keep praying with us that the Lord would raise up many more workers, be pleased to send them to RPTS for training, and then keep sending them out to the ends of the earth so multitudes of people can praise His name!

In Christ's Service,



Barry J. York