

ACADEM CUS™

Quarterly Newsletter of the Ph.D./Th.M. Program of SEBTS

Volume 11, Issue 2

A call to serious Christian scholarship is a call to "take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ." Paul's words call us toward a wholehearted devotion to Christ – not just with our hearts but with our minds as well. It is a call to think Christianly. As we enter this new century we need more than just novel ideas and new delivery systems; we need distinctly Christian thinking, or as T. S. Eliot puts it, "to think in Christian categories." This means being able to see life and learning from a Christian vantage point; it means thinking with the mind of Christ.

The beginning place for a call to serious Christian scholarship points us to a unity of knowledge, a seamless whole because "in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:15-18), for a true knowledge flows from the One Creator to His one creation. Thus, specific bodies of knowledge relate to each other not just because scholars work together in community, not just because interdisciplinary work broadens our knowledge, but because all truth has its source in God, composing a single universe of

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Cor. 10:5)

knowledge.

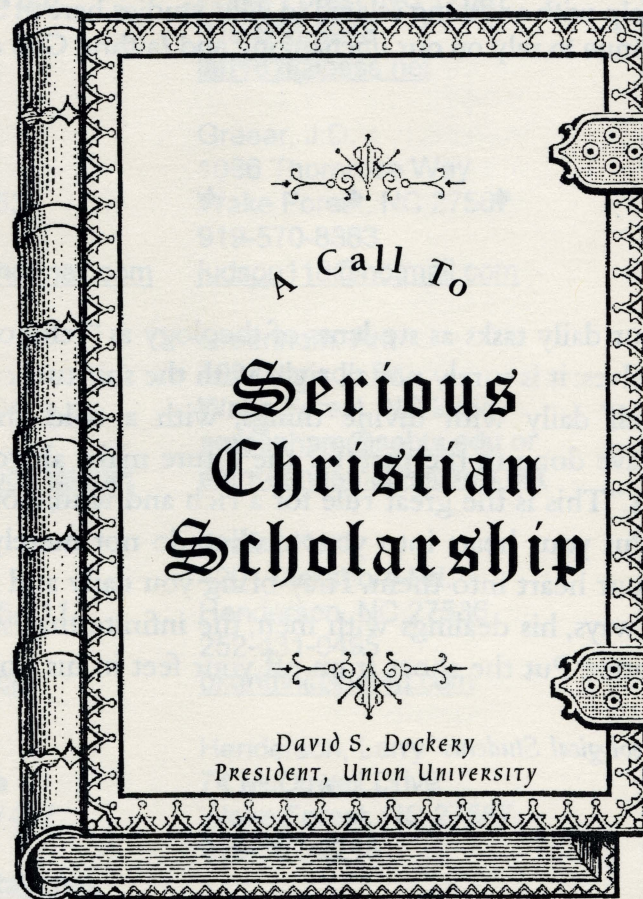
Christian scholarship calls for us to integrate faith thoroughly

the development and construction of a convictional world and life view by which we can see, learn and interpret the world from the perspective of God's revelation to us.

Serious scholarship – often mentioned in cliché terms such as "the search for knowledge" and "the quest for truth" – must not be described carelessly or flippantly. When we speak of scholarship from a Christian perspective we speak of more than scholarship done by Christians. Rather we speak of a passion for learning based on the supposition that all truth is God's truth. Thus, as Christian scholars related together in a learning community, we are to seek to take every thought captive to Christ.

It is not just the apostle Paul who gives us guidance on the subject of Christian scholarship. Justin and Irenaeus were probably the first in post-apostolic times to articulate the need for faith-informed scholarship. In third-century Alexandria, both Clement and Origen instructed their converts not only in doctrine but in science, literature and philosophy. In the fifth

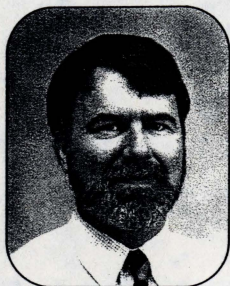
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with our research within our various disciplines. Drawing on the long Christian tradition to do so, we can begin to restore coherence to learning. This will help move us toward

• A Word from the Director

by Andreas J. Köstenberger



Awash in fall festivals, falling leaves, and assignments, our state of things continues to be busy. The recent accreditation visit yielded the (initially disappointing) outcome that the Ph.D. program will for the time being continue on preliminary status until faculty and library resources are beefed up. In the long run, however, these additions will result in a stronger and better program. For the record, let me stress that the Ph.D. program did not lose its accreditation or "fail to pass" accreditation. The program continues to be accredited, and we have every expectation that the preliminary status will eventually be converted into a permanent one.

Thanks to all of you who took time out of your busy schedules to join us at the recent fall picnic. No one's schedule was busier than Keith Griffin's, who mourned the passing of his mother-in-law and exhibited at the North Carolina State Fair at that time. I am grateful to him and his wife Pam for their wonderful support of many aspects of our program. Let me remind you, too, that Mrs. Hellard in our Ph.D./Th.M. office stands ready to assist you if you need help with anything related to your studies here at SEBTS. In these days of ferment and uncertainty, let us continue to rely on our unchanging and faithful God and serve him with commitment and distinction.



Do you prosecute your daily tasks as students of theology as "religious exercises"? If you do not, look to yourselves: it is surely not all right with the spiritual condition of that man who can busy himself daily with divine things, with a cold and impassive heart... Whatever you may have done in the past, for the future make all your theological studies "religious exercises." This is the great rule for a rich and wholesome religious life in a theological student. Put your heart into your studies; do not merely occupy your mind with them, but put your heart into them. They bring you daily and hourly into the very presence of God; his ways, his dealings with men, the infinite majesty of his Being form their very subject-matter. Put the shoes from off your feet in his holy presence.

The Religious Life of Theological Students
Benjamin B. Warfield
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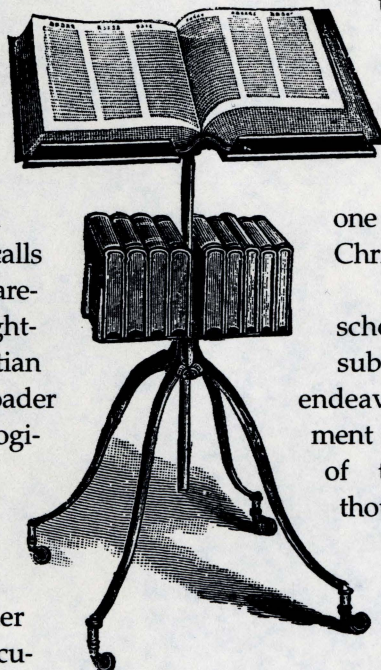
scholarship... Continued from page 1

century, Augustine penned in *On Christian Doctrine* the thought that every true and good Christian should understand that wherever we may find truth it is the Lord's.

This legacy may be traced across the centuries and in almost every culture, for wherever the Gospel has been received, the academy and Christian scholarship have followed. This legacy can be traced through Bernard, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Melancthon, Edwards, Kuyper, and, in this century, numerous others.

A call to serious Christian scholarship simultaneously affirms our love for God and our love for study, the place of devotion and the place of research, the priority of affirming and passing on the great Christian traditions and the significance of honest exploration, reflection, struggle, curiosity, and intellectual inquiry. These matters are in tension, but not in contradiction and are framed by a faith-informed commitment.

Christian scholarship is not just piety added to secular thinking, nor is it merely research that takes place in a Christian environment. The Christian intellectual tradition calls for rigorous thinking, careful research, and thoughtful publication. Christian scholarship is far broader than biblical and theological studies, though the disciplines help provide the framework for serious intellectual wrestling with other areas across the curricu-



lum such as literary, philosophical, scientific, historical, technological and social issues.

A Christian worldview provides the framework for Christian scholarship in any and every field. This worldview, which grows out of the exhortation to take every thought captive to Christ, begins with the affirmation of God as Creator and Redeemer, for the dominating principle of Christian scholarship is not merely soteriological but is cosmological as well. We thus recognize the sovereignty of the triune God over the whole cosmos, in all spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible.

In the large majority of our institutions it is teaching that is rightly prized and prioritized, but we also need a complementary place for Christian scholarship. Rightly understood, Christian scholarship is not contrary to either faithful teaching or Christian piety. Christian scholarship provides a foundation for new discovery and creative teaching, as well as the framework for passing on the unified truth essential to the advancement of Christianity.

Teaching, worldview formation and spiritual formation must serve one another in the cause of Christian scholarship.

Ultimately, Christian scholarship must surely subordinate all other endeavors to the improvement of the mind in pursuit of truth, taking every thought captive to Jesus Christ. At three places in the Book of 2 Corinthians, Paul reminds us that we

cannot presume that our thinking is Christ-centered (see 2 Cor. 3:14; 4:4; 11:3). Thus, in 2 Corinthians 10:5 he calls for all our thinking to be liberated by coming under the Lordship of Christ.

So now, like in the days of the Corinthian scholarship is not just piety added to secular thinking, nor is it merely research that takes place in a Christian environment.

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Dr. David S. Dockery is president of Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. Previously he served as vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He holds a doctorate from the University of Texas - Arlington, a master of arts from Texas Christian University and a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author or editor of 18 books and has contributed to 20 others.

• Announcements

Core Reading List – The updated Ph.D. Core Reading List for Theological Studies is now available in the Graduate Studies Office.

Course Change – 2475 - Seminar in Theology of Evangelism by Dr. Solc has been cancelled. Those who are signed up for this class need to go to the Registrar's Office as soon as possible to select an alternative seminar for the spring semester.

Job Opportunities – Are you wondering where God would have you serve Him as you finish your program here at SEBTS? Take time to look through the Job Opportunities file located on the bulletin board in the Graduate Studies Office. A special "thank you" to Dr. David Black for his involvement in beginning this ministry to all of our graduate students.

Congratulations to the students who have passed major milestones in their programs since the last Academicus:

Comprehensive Exams:

Matthew Queen
Jon Smith
J. D. Greear
David Sims

Prospectus Approvals:

Jason Botts – Th.M.
David Jones – Ph.D.

Graduate Studies Committee Meetings:

- November 30
- February 8
- March 1 (Admissions)
- March 8
- April 5
- April 26
- May 17

(All items students wish to present to the committee, such as a prospectus, must be turned in to the Graduate Studies Office at least one week prior to the scheduled committee meeting to be placed on the agenda.)



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