A Growing Institution with Growing Needs

By Dr. Joseph A. Pippa, Jr., President

Last Spring, ten graduates joined the ranks of Greenville Seminary alumni. This Fall 15 new students entered GPTS for the 2012-13 academic year. Four of the recent graduates were awarded Master of Divinity degrees and four were awarded Master of Arts degrees. We also had the privilege of conferring two honorary doctorates (Doctor of Divinity) on men who have been faithful advocates of the Reformed faith for many years. One honorary degree was presented to Richard Phillips, pastor of Cambridge Presbyterian Church (PC(USA)) here in Greenville. The second honorary degree was presented to Ian Hamilton, pastor of Cambridge Presbyterian Church (EPCEW) in England and a Trustee of Greenville Seminary.

The commencement address was given by Dr. Derek Thomas, Minister of Preaching at First Presbyterian Church in Greenville, S.C., delivered the keynote address, exhorting from 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 on the theme “Give Thanks for God’s People” (see story on page 3).

Our enrollment has been increasing, and it is very encouraging to see more and more graduates moving out to serve the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we completed the last academic year, we had much over which to rejoice. We are delighted to see God continuing to expand our missionary influence. We now have graduates serving God in Albania, Brazil, Canada, the Czech Republic, Great Britain, Haiti, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, and Zambia. This new year, we have students either on campus or in our distance learning program from Belgium, Canada, China, Great Britain, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Peru. We have men serving in over twelve denominations and associations and in three countries doing missionary work with the goal of forming national presbyteries.

We are very thankful to the many people God has raised up to support this ministry in prayer and giving. Would you prayerfully consider making a donation to the on-going work of Greenville Seminary? During the first month of our current fiscal year that began July 1, we ran a deficit of nearly $38,000. Donations remain below what was budgeted. Whether or not you are able to send a gift at this time, please pray that the Lord will provide for our needs. We continue to operate on a strict budget, with an increase in operation expenses.

Please also pray that our students and alumni will continue to grow in faithfulness to the Word of God. Please pray for the faculty and trustees of Greenville Seminary as we continue in the ministry of training faithful men to uphold His Word. God uses the prayers and gifts of His people to sustain this work, and we hope that you will participate with us in this joyful in that work, for which we desire to give Him all glory and honor.

We have been able to preach every Sunday night, and will be preaching morning and evening on a number of occasions. Mike was given the opportunity to take part – even take the lead – in counseling and discipleship of members. He said the Faith OPC family welcomed him and his growing family.

“Our experience here has been overwhelmingly positive. God has used this time to deepen in me a love for His Church and to help confirm for me that He is calling me to serve in the Gospel ministry,” he said.

Across the continent, Chris Cashen was given the opportunity to serve as intern to Westminster Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Orange County, California. Chris said Pastor EJL Gorrell, one of the first GPTS graduates, exposed him to many varied pastoral experiences, including pastoral home visits, and provided valuable “real-time” counsel throughout the entire summer. Like Mike, Chris was given opportunities to teach, to lead worship, and to exhort during corporate worship at Westminster OPC, as well as at a retirement home situated next to the church.

Chris noted, “Not only was I able to experience the pastoral ministry from the inside, but my entire family experienced the love and fellowship of the larger body of Christ.”

Other students serving internships this summer were Lowell Ivey, New Jersey; Michael Hutchinson, Wisconsin; Jeremy Logan, North Carolina; Rob Dykes, South Carolina; and Bryan Proudy, Colorado.

Internships are not limited to summertime. Some churches in the Greenville area have made it a practice to use GPTS students for long-term internships. Fellowship Presbyterian Church (PC(USA)) in Greer, S.C., for example, last year extended a full-year internship to Steve Watson, who has been followed by student Stephen Cock when Mr. Watson left. A 2012 graduate, left to take up his new ministry as an Army chaplain and church planter in Germany.

Joshua Sparkman has served for two years as intern at...
GTPS: Self-governance and Accountability

I was with great joy and satisfaction that we recently received an official agreement from Sovereign Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church (PCA) to enter into a Sponsoring Church Court relationship with Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. The Hickory, N.C., church is the first in several years to take this step of commitment to GPTS, bringing the total to 13 churches, presbyteries or denominations. The seminary Board of Trustees is expected to ratify this covenant when it next meets in November.

We are frequently asked about the denominational affiliation of Greenville Seminary, but because of our unique position with regard to the general church we sometimes struggle to answer that question. The terms “non-denominational” and “undenominational” do not properly describe us, since we are committed to and closely aligned with a number of denominations. Sometimes the terms “transdenominational” and “interdenominational” come to mind, but these are not a completely accurate descriptor of our position vis-à-vis the church.

“Independent” is perhaps the least appropriate term to describe us. True, we were founded more than 25 years ago by an ad hoc group of individuals concerned about the future directions of the church and committed to the historic confessions of our commonly held Reformed and Presbyterian doctrine. However, that did not prevent us from being constrained to follow our Lord’s King-der.

For a list of sponsoring church courts and information about this accountability arrangement, see our web site: www.gpts.edu/support/accountability.php.

GPTS is also accredited by the Association of Reformed Theolo- gical Seminaries (ARTS). More info at artsseminaries.org.

GTPS Convocation 2012-13

Greenville Seminary welcomed 15 new students, including several new international students, for the Fall Semester which began on August 20 with orientation and registration. The seminary’s 26th annual Convocation was held on Tuesday, August 21. A reception followed in the seminary’s Student Commons. A welcome dinner for new students was held on Monday evening in the Commons.

This year’s Convocation speaker was Marty Martin, pastor of Fellowship Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Greer, S.C. Pastor Martin, a graduate of Clemson University and Covenant Theological Seminary, recently returned from a three-week mission trip to Brazil, where several GPTS graduates are now ministering.

Rehearsing a long list of spiritual maladies which characterize today’s church, as they have always done, Pastor Martin exhorted students entering into future ministry to faithfully love and guide the flock under their care, even at some personal cost to themselves.

New on-campus students for the 2012-2013 academic year include Santosh Bardhan, M.A., India; Richard Grandahl, M.Div., Florida; Adam Harris, M.Div., South Carolina; and Vernon Veld, M.A., Canada. In addition, two students formally studying through the GPTS distance/mentor program have come to campus as resident students: Tim Marielli of Virginia and Tom Van Maanen of Canada. That brings the new on-campus student contingent to eight.

New students in the distance/mentor program are Roel Ophoff, M.M.R.E., California; Nathan Hofer, M.Div., Minnesota; Kevin Easterd, B.D., Florida; Scott Creel, M.Div., Florida; Joel Montes, M.Div., Texas; Sam Ketcham, M.Div., Georgia; Matt Stiple, M.Div., Georgia; Kelvin Driver, M.Div., Tennessee; and David Setihamo, M.Div., South Africa.

Supporting Our Ministry to International Students

By Kathleen Curto GPTS Registrar

With joy that I report that this past year we have been able to assist three foreign students who otherwise would not have been able to attend Greenville Seminary. The first, Isaac Koko from Nigeria, applied twice to assist three foreign students during his second year. He was accepted for the Spring of 2012 and is eagerly looking forward to his first year in our program.

His home church in Minnesota continues to assist him with his living expenses, and so we have once again agreed to waive his tuition this year in the amount of $4,500.00.

Support has also been given to Santosh Banham of India in the form of tuition waivers. Our last need in the area of foreign student support is to help pay expenses for faculty members to minister in churches overseas that are unable to afford to send their students here. Last summer Dr. Pipa had the opportunity to minister in Belgium and Italy with current Greenville students and alumni. He ministered in Korea and in Australia. He hopes to travel to South Africa and Italy in 2013.

The value of these faculty trips is critical, and we seek $5,500 for this purpose.

Why do we feel constrained to help young men from other nations to come and train the training they desire? What is our confidence as we continue to train men for the gospel ministry? Psalm 46 concludes with an answer to those questions: “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us, The God of Jacob is our refuge. We praise God that Greenville Seminary can have a small part in that work. Thank you for your faithful support, and may God bless you as you consider these needs once again as a part of your giving to our scholarship fund.”

Contact us for information about giving to our International Students Scholarship Fund #4075 administered by the PCA Foundation.

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