

# JOURNAL

of BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL ✝ 2007

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.  
Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord...

Ephesians 5:19 NIV

Living  
with the  
Psalms





# JOURNAL

BEESON DIVINITY SCHOOL + 2007

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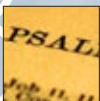
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# To the Ut

Several years ago, my son Christian and I, along with our friend David Riker, a Beeson alumnus from Brazil, made a pilgrimage to some of the historic sites of Celtic Christianity. Beginning at the northern tip of Scotland, we visited the holy island of Iona, a beacon of faith across the centuries since Columba first preached the message of Christ there in 563. We then crossed the Irish Sea to Dublin, and from there made our way to Skellig Michael, "the steep rock of Michael," some eight miles from the coast of the Waterville Peninsula in County Kerry. Skellig Michael was the first piece of Europe Charles Lindbergh saw when he made his famous solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927. But more than a millennium before Lindbergh saw Skellig Michael, it had become a fortress of faith for a community of Celtic monks. On a ledge 700 feet above sea level, they built their beehive huts, rock igloos, which can still be seen today. Here they defied howling winds and raging seas to forge a unique community of prayer and devotion to Jesus Christ. At the heart of their worship was the chanting of the Psalms.

The Celtic monks of Iona and Skellig Michael were counter-cultural Christians. Forsaking the comforts of a settled life, they became radical disciples of Jesus carrying the message of his love and grace to the extreme edges of the world, to the uttermost. The early monks of Egypt had found solitude in the desert, but the sea was the desert of the Celts. They sought out the remote islands and rocky crags at the ocean's edge not to escape from the world, but to do battle with the spiritual forces of darkness and to prepare themselves to carry the message of Christ to those who had never heard it.

Today Celtic Christianity has become synonymous with pop spirituality, the New Age movement, ecofeminism, and other fads that fill the shelves of many bookstores. Such is a betrayal of the heritage of the early Celtic monks. St. Patrick, the pioneer of Irish Christianity, was a contemporary of St. Augustine and shared with him an unswerving commitment to the Holy Trinity, the doctrines of grace, and the disciplines of the Christian life.

Beeson is affiliated with the National Association of Evangelicals and is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

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# tttermost

He converted the Irish tribes of his day from the worship of idols and the objects of nature, turning them from “the cult of the sun to that of the true sun who is Christ,” as he put it in his Confession (60). Patrick was no Augustine in terms of formal education, but his theology, like that of the great Doctor of Grace, is saturated with Scripture. There are more than 70 biblical citations found in his brief works.

Several years ago, Thomas Cahill wrote a best-selling book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. An even better theme might be “how the Celts saved Christianity.” From Iona, Columba and his successors fanned out across Scotland, England, and the continent of Europe. Armed with pocket-size editions of the Bible, meticulously copied by hand, they proclaimed the Good News of Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection, and the promise of his coming again in glory. In the wake of their missionary work, many churches, monasteries and Christian communities were founded and these in turn became centers of evangelism and Christian learning.

Evangelicals can celebrate with joy the rediscovery of the gospel and the renewal of biblical faith that took place in the Reformation of the 16th century. But, we should also remember that the Lord has never left himself without a witness and that the Word of God was alive and powerful even in the darkest times. Without St. Patrick there may well have been no John Knox.

In his book, *Sacred Travels*, Christian George captures the spirit of Celtic Christianity in this way: “Like Charles Lindbergh’s flight across the Atlantic, pilgrimage invites us to take risks. While God might not move the mountain (or the ocean), he will certainly give us grace to climb it (or swim it). No matter how hard life hits, how deeply it cuts or how low it takes us, we can be confident that God has given us a map in the form of the Holy Scriptures, a guide in the Holy Spirit, and the promise that he will never leave us or forsake us. With these treasures hidden in our hearts, we can continue up the stream. Dangers may confront us and demons may attack us, but the God who has brought us this far will not forsake us now. Whether our pilgrimages lead through dangerous oceans or peaceful streams, the trip is worth the trouble and will mash up a couch-potato spirituality.” ✝

*Timothy George*



▲ Dean George got a taste of the harsh natural elements monks faced on Skellig Michael nearly 1500 years ago.



## Christ

with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me;  
 Christ within me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me;  
 Christ to right of me, Christ to left of me;  
 Christ in my lying, Christ in my sitting, Christ in my rising;  
 Christ in the heart of all who think of me,  
 Christ on the tongue of all who speak of me,  
 Christ in the eye of all who see me,  
 Christ in the ear of all who hear me.

—SAINT PATRICK

◀ After nearly 15 centuries, a weather-worn Celtic cross still stands at Skellig Michael on the harsh, craggy Irish coast. Behind it is one of the dome-shaped igloos in which devout Christian monks lived and from which they lived out their calling.

# Balm for a Tr

## Luther and Psalm 46

by Frank A. James

**M**

ARTIN LUTHER'S HYMN "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" was birthed from despair.

Luther probably composed his great hymn during 1527, one of the most difficult years of his life.

As the Reformation progressed, his burdens of responsibility gave rise to deep seated anxiety. Despair began to haunt Luther and eventually took a toll on his health. In April 1527, he was unable to finish his sermon because of a dizzy spell. In July of that same year he was forced to take to his bed, where physical and spiritual battles tortured his body and soul. Luther thought he was dying:

"I spent more than a week in death and hell. My entire body was in pain and I still tremble. Completely abandoned by Christ, I labored under the vacillations and storms of desperation and blasphemy against God."

To make matters worse, the black plague struck Wittenberg with devastating force in 1527. Many citizens and clergy fled, but not Luther

■ **Frank A. James** is president of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Fla. He became a familiar face in the national media in December 2006 as an eloquent spokesman for his family during the search for his brother, Kelly James, who died tragically during a climb on Mt. Hood in Oregon. James delivered the following sermon on a visit to Beeson Divinity School in October, and we pray that he and his family will continue to experience God's comfort, which he proclaimed to us so beautifully.



*Continued on page 4*



# Doubled Soul



and his beloved Katie. They remained and cared for the sick. Their bravery almost cost them the life of their one-year-old son Hans, who contracted the disease but miraculously survived. These were the trials that gave the following words deeper meaning:

Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also—

Surrounded by death and struggling with his own depression, Luther turned to Psalm 46. In the midst of these troubles he found a balm for his soul and inspiration for his powerful hymn.

What was it in this psalm that turned Luther's discouragement into confidence?

**Have We Got Troubles?**

One does not have to ponder Psalm 46 very long before understanding that it is centered on the tribulations of God's people. More pointedly, this psalm is about how God relates to his people when they are in trouble.

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble (v.1).

The basic question addressed in this psalm is how should God's people react when trouble strikes?

The psalmist identifies two kinds of trouble in this world that cause distress. First, there are *natural calamities* that are beyond our control. There are times when "mountains fall" (v. 2) and "waters roar and foam" (v. 3). This is the rather violent imagery of earthquakes and perhaps hurricanes. Second, the psalmist also speaks of *man-made troubles* that are the result of sinful behavior. The psalm refers to "kingdoms falling" and to "nations in an uproar," "war," and military weapons like "bows, spears and shields" (vv. 6-9). There may even be an allusion to Jerusalem under siege (vv. 4-6).

*How are God's people to cope with these troubles?*

When God's people face any kind of trouble—whether natural or man-made—the psalmist provides three wisdom principles to encourage God's people.

**1. Remember what God has done in the past.**

When Christians find themselves in trouble,

Let goods and kindred go,  
This mortal life also—





what are they to do? In times of trouble, the psalmist admonishes us to “Come and see what the Lord has done” (v. 8). In other words, remember what the Lord has done in your life.

When faced with a trial, one of the best things we can do is remember that the Lord has already done a miracle in each of our lives: he has raised us from spiritual death and given us life. The stories of Paul and Augustine are very encouraging. The Apostle Paul was a kind of religious terrorist who was transformed by an encounter with the risen Christ. Augustine was a profligate turned saint as he read the words of Scripture.

I have a friend from my seminary days who was radically transformed from a life of petty crime into one of the godliest men I have ever known. When he faces trouble (and he is facing real trouble these days since his wife’s cancer has returned) he remembers what the Lord has already done in his life, and is encouraged.

I learn from verse 8 that if he can save my soul then surely I can trust him with my troubles.

## 2. Remember who God is.

The psalmist provides another encouragement. We are to remember who God is. “Be still and

know that I am God,” says the psalmist (v. 10).

This psalm clearly stresses God’s sovereignty and omnipotence. The God of this psalm “lifts his voice and the earth melts.” This same God “makes wars to cease” and “breaks the bow and shatters the spear” (v. 9). In his famous hymn, Luther seems to gravitate to God’s sovereignty and omnipotence when he writes:

A mighty fortress is our God;  
a bulwark never failing.

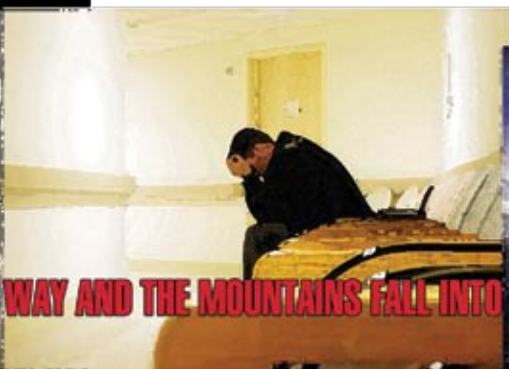
But there is another divine attribute that suffuses every word of this psalm and is essential for God’s people in times of trouble. We must remember that our God is the Faithful One, the covenant-keeping God. He has a ferocious commitment to his people and he will come to their aid, whether their troubles are beyond their control, or whether they are self inflicted. His commitment is bigger than our troubles.

If God is that strong; if he rules over all; if he is that faithful, then surely I can trust him with my troubles.

## 3. Remember that he is with us.

The final principle is vitally important when we face troubles. We are to remember that God is

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.



THE EARTH GIVE WAY AND THE MOUNTAINS FALL INTO THE HEART OF THE SEA, THOUGH ITS WATERS ROAR AND FOAM...

with us. The psalmist asserts this in the very first verse: God is “an ever present help in trouble.” And then, to make this point emphatically, he repeats it as a kind of chorus in verses 7 and 11: “The Lord God Almighty is with us.”

What does it mean to say “God is with us”? It does not mean that we will experience no pain, no heartache, no disappointment and no failure. The psalmist is not offering us a trouble-free life. It does mean that God is with us *in* the trouble. Look carefully at the first verse: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help *in* trouble.” In the first stanza Luther’s famous hymn recognized this truth:

A Mighty Fortress is our God,  
A bulwark never failing;  
Our Helper He amid the flood

God’s presence means that he rules over the chaos, the brokenness, and the messiness of our lives by entering into the trouble with us. He is not remote or removed from our troubles—he is in it with us. Therein lies our comfort.

There is an interesting spiritual phenomenon at work in our trials. It sounds strange at first, but times of trouble do not drive us *away* from God, but instead *draw* us to him. Through our troubles we learn a fundamental truth—

there is no other place to turn. Our troubles inevitably drive us to our knees where he teaches us to trust him—even if we don’t understand him.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the anticipation of Christ in this psalm. Recall that Jesus is called “Immanuel,” which means “God with us.” The incarnation was the supreme expression of God with us in trouble. Notice that Christ does not take the trouble away, but that he ministers to us *in* our troubles.

If God is with us, then surely I can trust him with my troubles.

## Conclusion

In the year when Luther composed his famous hymn, church authorities wanted to kill him, the Turks were threatening the eastern borders of Germany, and on the western border France had declared war. It was such a troubled time that Luther thought the end of the world was near.

Today we are engaged in a war with terrorism; we sit on the precipice of war in the Middle East; the North Koreans have nuclear weapons; genocide is taking place in Sudan; and Christians are persecuted in Indonesia and

Our Helper  
He amid the  
flood.





in China. As in Luther's day, these are troubled times.

We are also beset with our own personal problems. I don't have to know you personally to know that many of you are struggling in your marriages, others are fighting illness and financial pressures, and still others are battling addictions of different descriptions. Some of the problems we face are self-inflicted and some are beyond our control. Whatever the case may be, read Psalm 46 and remember:

What God has done in the past.  
Who God is.  
God is with us.

The same Luther who in 1527 was so depressed that he was on the brink of blasphemy against God found in Psalm 46 a balm for his soul and could therefore declare:

"We sing this psalm to the praise of God, because God is with us, and powerfully and miraculously preserves and defends his church and his world, against all fanatical spirits, against the gates of hell, against the implacable hatred of the devil and against all the assaults of the world, the flesh and sin." ✝

*Semper Reformanda*

## A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Martin Luther, 1529  
Translated by Frederick H. Hedge, 1853

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;  
our helper he amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;  
his craft and pow'r are great; and armed with cruel hate,  
on earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;  
were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he,  
Lord Sabaoth his name, from age to age the same,  
and he must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,  
we will not fear, for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.  
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him;  
his rage we can endure, for lo! his doom is sure;  
one little word shall fell him.

That Word above all earthly pow'rs, no thanks to them, abideth;  
the Spirit and the gifts are ours through him who with us sideth.  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;  
the body they may kill: God's truth abideth still;  
his kingdom is forever.

God's  
truth  
abideth  
still...



The Book of Psalms is much more than the hymn book of ancient Israel's temple. It is a collection of meditations, prayers, praises, hymns, liturgies, doxologies and prophecies. The Hebrew title "Praises" may not indicate the rich variety of contents, but it does express the essence of the Psalms. From beginning to end, the emphasis on praise is present in one form or another, even in the deepest laments or troubled meditations on this life. This is appropriate because praise is the measure of a healthy spiritual life, demonstrating that there is an active prayer life, an enjoyment of God's benefits, and a living hope. Christians can learn a great deal from the psalmists about the spiritual life, and believers using the psalms in the light of the fulfillment in Christ, will have an even richer understanding of them.

### Spiritual Growth

Because the Psalms are not merely reflections of an individual writer's thoughts, but part of the Word of God, they necessarily will be effective. To gain the most from them, we must use them correctly. **First, we should read them slowly and carefully, taking time to think about each line.** We must read them prayerfully, or better yet, pray them as if they were our own

# Living through the Psalms

by Allen

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a great d  
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■ **Allen P. Ross** is professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Beeson Divinity School. For a more detailed discussion of these ideas, see his work *Recalling the Hope of Glory* (Kregel, 2006). Also recommended: C. Westermann, *The Praise of God in the Psalms* (Knox, 1965); B. W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths* (Westminster, 1983); S. L. Jaki, *Praying the Psalms* (Eerdmans, 2001); and C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958).





# Learning from the Psalms

by P. Ross

we can learn  
a great deal from  
the psalmists about  
our spiritual life.

words. The difficulties and concerns expressed by the psalmists are akin to our own. Likewise, the kinds of deliverances and answers they received, we also receive. This is the glory of the Psalter. We should read them in a good modern version, but a version that does not destroy the poetry. We need both a clear understanding of the text and the beauty of the poetry, for God chose to reveal himself in that way.

**Second, we must study the Psalms thoroughly and completely,** not just a verse here or there. This includes understanding the different types of Psalms, their tones and structures, the culture from which they came, and determining how they fit within the full revelation of God.

**Third, we need to memorize Psalms.** The psalmists themselves set the precedent; they hid these words in their hearts to meditate on them in the night or in the day (119:11; 63:6). If their minds were filled with these poems they were filled with thoughts of God.

**Fourth, we need to meditate on the Psalms (1:2).** The procedure is straightforward: study a Psalm until you understand it, memorize it, turn it into a topic of discussion with God in your prayers, and finally talk to yourself about it, essentially preaching its message to yourself (42:5,11; 43:5).

## Learning from the Psalms

By studying the Psalms for spiritual growth, we discover a number of things that will improve our prayers and praises. For example, in the Prayer Song (Lament), the psalmist will have a section of confidence after the lament. In the Prayer Song he will affirm his faith or describe

the LORD in ways designed to build his faith in the face of the dilemma (3:3; 5:4-8; 22:3-5, 9-10). Prayer should never dwell on the problem without adding such a spiritual perspective. Also, after the psalmist presents the actual prayer for God to hear and answer, he will include what is called a vow of praise (51:13-17; 66:13-15). In it a promise is made to praise God, sometimes in the very words that will be used, like a rehearsal of the praise to be given.

The praise psalms are also instructive. Praise was not an option, but a required spiritual service. To receive benefits from God and not praise him publicly is a sin. The spiritual life of our worship has lost much of its vitality because we no longer do this. We should be teaching people how to do it, and even modeling it for them. Praise must be restored to our worship if we are to build up true community life and reverse the trend of doctrinal ignorance.

This is so important because these hymns and praises are filled with doctrinal truths. They focus on the person and works of God and not on the experiences of the writer alone (40:1-5; 46; 113). The hymns especially could have been used as creeds (111). When people recited or sang psalms like this, they were expressing their faith correctly and profoundly. Consequently, their words would edify others and instruct them in their journey (32:9-11; 34:8-10).

When an Israelite went to the sanctuary to praise the LORD, he brought a sacrifice for a communal meal (66:15; 22:26-29). There was a price required to offer praise, for the evidence of gratitude is generosity. It still is. We are

instructed to offer the sacrifice of praise with generosity (Heb. 13:15; 16).

### Using the Psalms in Worship

The Psalms can be used in many other ways as well. We could vary our public reading, which is often in unison or responsively, by having different parts read by different people (someone reading the complaint, another responding with the confidence, a chorus reading the refrain). The Psalms could be read antiphonally or dramatically, especially when the Psalm is liturgical (118:1-4, 19-28; or 132:6-8).

**The Psalms should be given better place in our musical praise.** Musical arrangements of Psalms provide an entire song of Scripture. Choral evensongs offer a wonderful variation from the routine order of worship. Musical productions like Bernstein's Psalms can be profoundly moving.

In order for all this to work and for the spiritual life to develop generally, **we must give more attention to the regular exposition of the Psalms.** By this I mean a detailed exposition of the whole psalm with a clear declaration of its timeless theological theme and how that harmonizes with the full revelation of Scripture. In such an exposition, the entire sermon would focus on the main theme of the passage, harmonize with the tone of the Psalm, explain the imagery and draw on the conclusions that the psalmist intended for the application. Over the years many people have grown to love the Psalms, have learned some of them and have even prayed them. When a minister can open them up in exposition, the spiritual life of the people will be greatly strengthened. ✚

Praise must be restored to our worship if we are to build up true community life and reverse the trend of doctrinal ignorance.



# At Beeson

## Divinity Student Writes Spurgeon Biography



Samford divinity student **Christian George** is the author of *Charles Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Christian Focus Publications).

The biography of the 19th century Englishman who was one of the best-known preachers in London, Europe and the world was released in the U.S. and the United Kingdom in 2006.

George is pursuing a master of divinity degree at Samford's Beeson Divinity School, where he is president of the student body. He is a 2003 Samford graduate.

"Charles Spurgeon has long been a hero of mine," said George. "His hunger for evangelism, his creative handling of the Word of God, and his ability to preach with earthy words brought many to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. I wrote this book because I wanted teenagers to rediscover the preacher who has long been titled the prince of preachers," said George.

The pocket paperback will be available at the Cokesbury Bookstore at Beeson Divinity School, and LifeWay Christian Stores. George is also the author of a second book, *Sacred Travels: Recovering the Ancient Practice of Pilgrimage*, released by InterVarsity Press in December, 2006.

## Jacobs Honored with Pollock Award



C.S. Lewis biographer **Dr. Alan Jacobs** received the 2006 John Pollock Award for Christian Biography.

The award, presented annually by Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, recognizes Jacobs' book, *The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis*, as the most distinguished Christian biography of the past year.

Jacobs, professor of English at Wheaton College in Illinois, is also the author of *Shaming the Devil: Essays in Truth-telling*, *A Theology of Reading: the Hermeneutics of Love*, *A Visit to Vanity*

*Fair and Other Moral Essays*, *Bad to the Bone: A Cultural History of Original Sin*, and the forthcoming *Life Genres: Persons in Narrative Theology*.

An Alabama native who grew up in Birmingham, Jacobs is a 1980 graduate of the University of Alabama. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.

The Pollock Award is named for the British author of more than 30 books on religion, the majority of them biographies of Christian leaders. Beeson Divinity School established the award in 2001.

## Spring 2007 Lecture Series

### William E. Conger, Jr. Lectures on Biblical Preaching

**Cleophus LaRue**, Francis Landey Patton Associate Professor of Preaching, Princeton Theological Seminary, Feb. 20-22, 2007

### Biblical Studies Lectures

**Darrell Bock**, Research Professor of New Testament, Dallas Theological Seminary, April 17-19, 2007

## Lance Preaches at Convocation

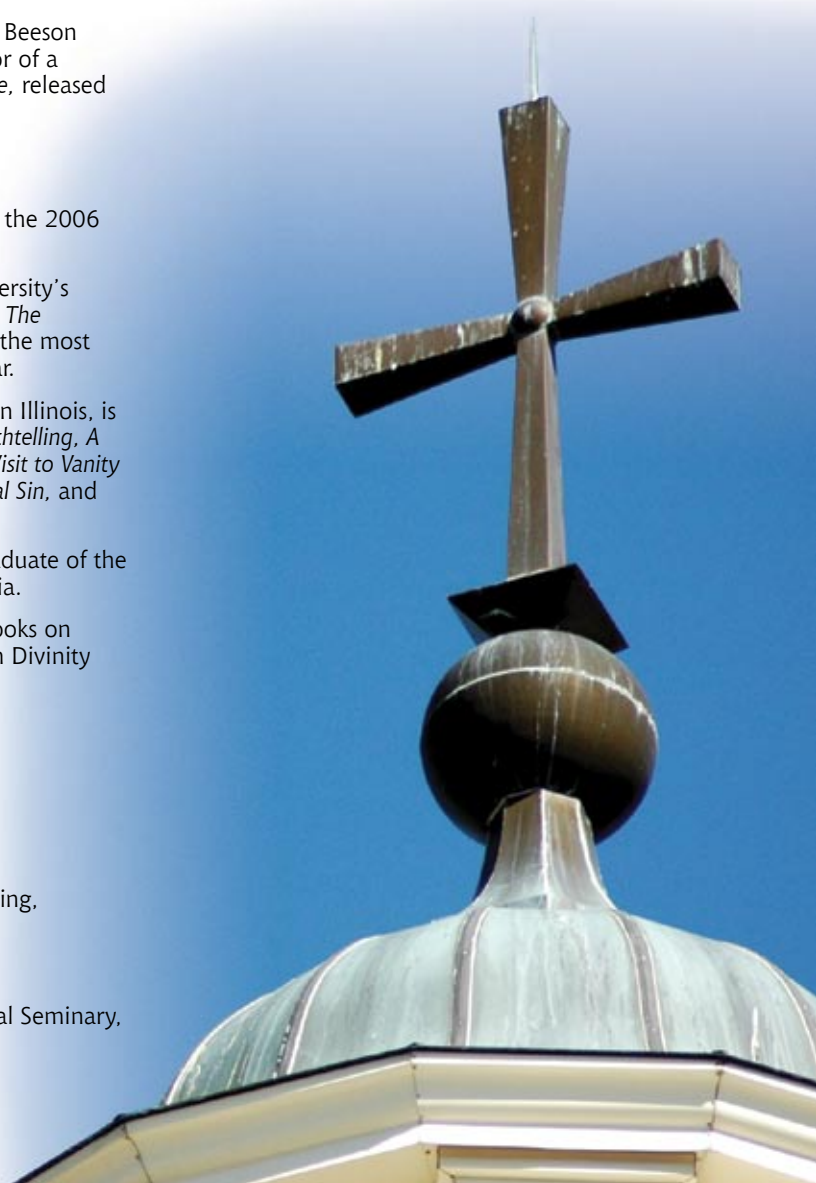


**Dr. Rick Lance**, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, delivered the sermon at the Opening Convocation for the fall semester on Sept. 5, 2006. Beeson Divinity School welcomed 37 students in its entering class.

## Westmoreland Recognized



As part of the Inauguration festivities, Beeson Divinity School recognized Samford University's 18th president, **Dr. Andrew Westmoreland**, during the Reformation Heritage Lectures. Dr. Westmoreland assumed the presidency in June 2006, and the service of investiture was held on Nov. 2, 2006.



# Theologizer J.I.

by Mary Wimberley

**M**ore than 350 friends and admirers of J. I. Packer celebrated the famed theologian, writer and scholar's 80th year during a three-day conference sponsored by Samford University's Beeson Divinity School Sept. 25-27, 2006.

As participants from 19 states and Canada honored Packer's many decades as a "theologizer," they also considered the current and future status of evangelicalism.

According to Beeson dean Timothy George, the purpose of the "J.I. Packer and the Evangelical Future" conference was to honor Packer, who turned 80 on July 22, and also to consider what evangelical Christians can learn from his life and work.

Professor of theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, Packer is the author of the modern theological classic, *Knowing God*, and other writings that have established him as a theological voice for the evangelical movement.

Presenters addressed the program's theme with talks on various aspects of evangelical theology and worship services filled with praise and singing.

On the topic of Packer, Puritans and Postmoderns, Charles W. Colson noted that the three themes are drawn together by truth, of which Packer is one of the great defenders.

"The orthodoxy of the preaching of the Puritans is in jeopardy today because truth is in jeopardy," said Colson, board chairman of Prison Fellowship ministry, which he helped found after serving prison time for Watergate-related charges in the 1970s.

Although post modern culture says there is no such thing as truth, Colson said, "Truth is truth. Every religion makes a truth claim. They may all be wrong, but they can't all be right.

"The problem is not just in culture, but in our church, where we've stopped taking truth seriously. The church must understand that if we don't take truth seriously, we don't take God seriously," said Colson, author of the international best seller *Born Again* and 21 other books.



Richard John Neuhaus

After two days of presentations by such thought leaders as Mark E. Dever, David Neff, D. Bruce Hindmarsh, Edith M. Humphrey, Richard John Neuhaus and James Earl Massey, Packer expressed appreciation for the conference title, but humbly noted that "the future of evangelicalism is the important thing, not J.I. Packer."

His sense of vocation has been steady since soon after his spiritual conversion in his native England in 1944, said Packer, who realized early on that he was called to be a shepherd. A half-century of seminary teaching and writing has followed.

The self-described "adult catechist," said that he laments today's gap between "ABC books" and technical theology books that would assist the adult believer to master being a mature Christian.

Noting that all Christians are called to be lifelong learners, Packer predicted that adult catechism in evangelical circles will return in the next generation. "People have been hungry for this for a long time," said Packer, referencing the "amazingly wide ministry" of his book.

He said he seeks to shape Christians whose lives are marked by doxology, humility and intensity.

"In the Christian life, we're called to race. I don't want to see a Christian trodding where he should

**J.I. Packer**  
the Evangelical  
Future



# Packer Celebrated

be racing. Sloth is one of the great enemies of Christianity of our time,” said Packer.

“I’ve tried to remind people that we are on a journey. Ultimately, we leave this world for a more glorious one. I hope my material will help people to live usefully and face death gracefully,” he said.

Regarding evangelicalism and the future, Packer warned that those who lose memory become short-sighted as they look to the future. Some people, he noted, have lost their memory about evangelicalism.

In a concluding session, George noted that while there were stirrings of evangelical renewal at about the time Packer’s career began, the effort was not of a substantial nature.

Now, however, observed George, “Evangelicalism has moved from the margins to the mainstream.”

Evangelicalism needs to speak with greater clarity to the great tradition, said George, always keeping the cross at the heart of things and maintaining Christian witness in the culture.

“God has called us to bear witness in a culture that in many ways has forgotten its roots,” said George, who urged consideration of Packer’s personal qualities of integrity, charity and humility.

At the concluding worship service, George presented Packer with a collection of 200 notes sent by bishops, missionaries, clergy and lay persons from around the world. Contributors included evangelist Billy Graham, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Uganda Henry Luke Orombi and Anglican theologian John R. W. Stott.

Registrants at the conference included longtime Packer fans such as Paul Lloyd, who traveled from his home in Rapid City, S.D.

“Registration was a surprise birthday present from

my wife, Lynn,” said Lloyd, whose admiration for Packer goes back to his days as a Beeson divinity student in 1993.

“When I graduated, I asked Dean George for a list of books he would take to a desert island. His suggestions included anything by J.I. Packer,” said Lloyd.

“I have been reading Packer ever since.” ✝

◀ Dean George presents Dr. Packer with a collection of over 200 letters sent by bishops, missionaries, clergy and lay persons from around the world.



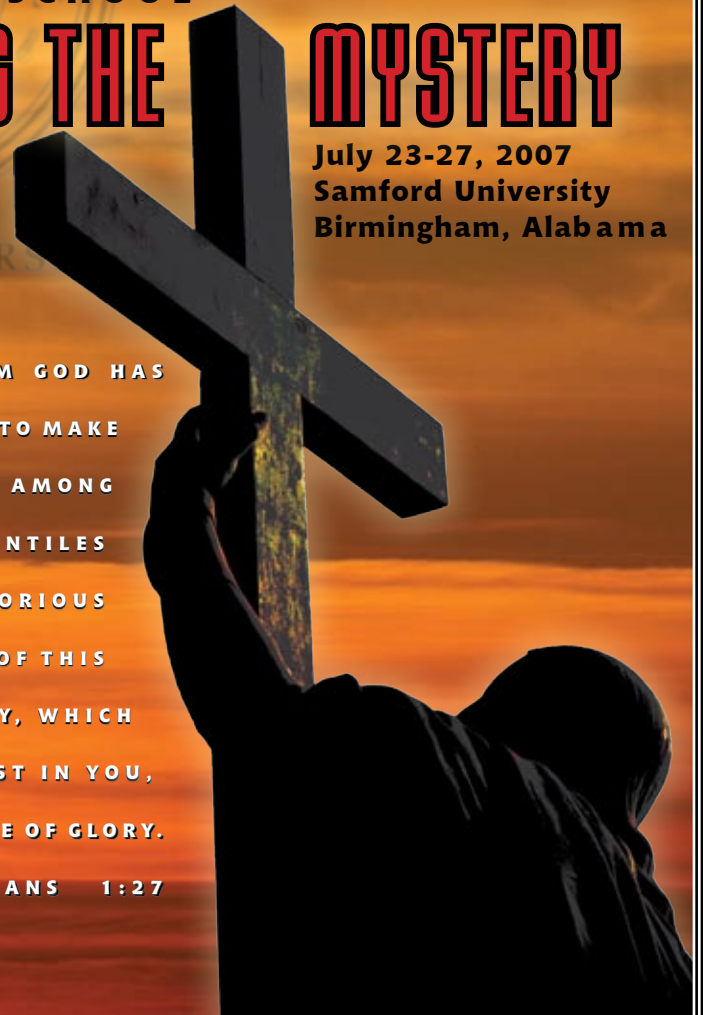
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