



ALL FOR JESUS

A CELEBRATION OF
THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



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MENTOR





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PREFACE

Fifty years ago, a small, brand-new Christian college relocated to a twenty-acre parcel of land in the countryside of west St. Louis County, Missouri. The founder of the college was a man of great vision, passion, and determination. When he led the college to this new location, migrating from Pasadena, California, he decided that he would start a seminary as well. After all, his fledgling denomination, newly formed that year, would need ministers. But his vision for that new seminary included not merely the production of ministers and missionaries for the church. Rather, his desire was that everything that the seminary would teach and do would be for Jesus' glory. This determination was expressed in the selection of the seminary hymn, sung at every convocation and commencement since 1956: "All for Jesus." And so, Robert G. Rayburn helped to found Covenant Theological Seminary, along with Covenant College, to train ministers for the (then) Bible Presbyterian Church, Columbus Synod.

A lot has changed since that founding year. The college moved from its St. Louis location to a former resort hotel property near Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1964. The denomination that the seminary served would change its name (to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church), merge with another denomination (to form the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod), and then join and be received by still another denomination (the Presbyterian Church in America). Dr. Rayburn stepped down as president in 1977 and has been succeeded by three other men. And yet, with all that has changed, two things have remained at the center of what Covenant Seminary is about: we train gospel ministers for the church, and we seek to do it "all for Jesus."



The primary purpose for this collection of essays is to celebrate the fifty-year anniversary of Covenant Theological Seminary. However, the faculty did not desire simply to highlight current research areas, press certain ideological perspectives, or stir the pot on the latest theological fancies. Rather, we especially wanted to highlight the *Christ-centered* focus of our mission and callings at Covenant Seminary. This does not mean that some of these essays are not challenging; indeed, several of them stimulate serious thoughtful reflection. Nor does this mean that other essays do not seek to advance theological or exegetical discussion. What it does mean is that the majority of these essays seek to set forward a common understanding of the Seminary's mission as we seek "to train servants of the Triune God to walk with God, to interpret and communicate God's Word, and to lead God's people." And that common understanding is summed up in the words *Christ-centered*.

Therefore, the essays in this book shine the light on what it means to be Christ-centered from a variety of perspectives stemming from our colleagues' unique disciplines. For some, to be Christ-centered means having a grace-shaped approach to Scripture that enables Bible students and Christian preachers to read all of Scripture as teaching us something about the human predicament and the divine character. For others, to be Christ-centered represents a rallying-cry for entering into disciplines that have become profoundly secular – such as psychology, communication theory, the arts, or education – in order to bring the Christian gospel to bear. For still others, to be Christ-centered calls us to deal sensitively with distant cultures or forgotten pasts, seeking to understand that which is foreign to us with great sensitivity and graciousness in order to learn what God's calling to our contemporary age might be. And yet, each of these essays reveals a great desire and determination that what we do and think and write would be "all for Jesus."

There is another purpose, though, for these essays. Unbeknownst to three of our colleagues, these essays represent a kind of *Festschrift* for them as well. For, in the two-year period between 2006 and 2008, Lord willing, Robert I. Vasholz, David Clyde Jones, and David B. Calhoun will be celebrating significant anniversaries as well: in 2006, Vasholz turns seventy years old and will have served the seminary for over thirty years as an administrator and faculty member; in 2007, Jones will celebrate his seventieth birthday and forty years of teaching at the seminary; in 2008, having celebrated his seventieth birthday the year before, Calhoun will have maintained over forty-five years of association with the seminary, first as a student and then as a faculty member for over thirty years. We cannot imagine Covenant Seminary without these three men; they represent exactly what we mean when we talk about being Christ-centered. We join our voices to honor our fathers and brothers for their lifetime of service to the seminary and the church.

Dr. Robert I. Vasholz, professor of Old Testament, was born on September 27, 1936, in Kansas City, Missouri, to Jewish parents, Mr. and

Mrs. Frank Vasholz. Through the witness of neighbors, the Vasholz family turned to Jesus as God's Messiah and began attending Bible chapels in the Kansas City area. When it came time for college, Vasholz decided to attend Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. While at college, he met a Louisiana girl, Julia Martin; they were married on June 15, 1963, and they later had a daughter, Rachel Kay. Vasholz stayed at the university and received the Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and Bachelor of Divinity degrees. After leaving Bob Jones, the Vasholz family came to St. Louis so that Bob could study at Covenant Seminary; in 1967, he received the Master of Theology degree for his thesis, "The Quotations and Allusions to the Pentateuch in the Old Testament." In 1972, he came back to the seminary to serve as director of admissions, assistant dean of students, and instructor of Hebrew. After being appointed to the faculty in 1975, he received a Master of Arts degree from St. Louis University and a Doctor of Theology degree from the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) the following year. He has written a number of books, including *Hebrew Exercises: A Programmed Approach* (1981); *Data for the Sigla of the BHS* (1983); *The Old Testament Canon in the Old Testament Church* (1990); *Pillars of the Kingdom* (1997); and a forthcoming commentary on Leviticus.

Dr. David Clyde Jones, professor of systematic theology and ethics, was born on July 26, 1937, to Mr. and Mrs. J. Clyde Jones in Greenville, South Carolina. After graduating from Bryan College with his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1959, he attended Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. There he came under the influence of John Murray; generations of Covenant Seminary students have learned to love Murray through Jones' teaching ministry. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1962 and stayed on for two more years of study, graduating with the Master of Theology degree in 1964. Certainly, those two years of study were made more bearable because he married the former Sue Ellen Bilderback on June 17, 1962; the Joneses would have two sons, Mark David and Keith Andrew. After two years of pastoral ministry in the West Indies, the Joneses came to St. Louis so that David could join the faculty of Covenant Seminary in 1967. During his tenure at the seminary, he not only taught systematic theology and ethics to generations of students, but also received his Th.D. degree from Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis in 1970, served as dean of faculty at Covenant from 1978 to 1988, and authored a widely praised textbook on ethics, *Biblical Christian Ethics* (1994). In addition, Jones has been a churchman: he served as moderator of the General Synod for the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod in 1978; served on a number of General Assembly study committees on ethical issues; and continues to serve his church through a wide-ranging preaching ministry and presbytery involvement.

Dr. David B. Calhoun, professor of church history, was born to Mr. and Mrs. David H. Callhoun in Flat Rock, Kentucky, on November 9, 1937. His

father was a part-time pastor, serving churches throughout South Carolina. When it was time for college, Calhoun's choice was between Bob Jones University and Columbia Bible College; he decided to attend Columbia in 1955. He graduated with the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1959 and then decided to attend Covenant Theological Seminary that same year. After graduating from the Seminary, he decided to stay to pursue a Master of Theology degree, which he received in 1963 for his thesis, "The Ceremonial Law in the Psalms." He taught for four years at Columbia Bible College, and then served as principal at Jamaica Bible College for another four years. In 1972, he received a Master of Theology degree in New Testament from Princeton Theological Seminary, after which he served for four years as the coordinator for Ministries in Action (MIA), also in Jamaica. While there, he helped to co-author MIA's plan for church growth and also helped to develop a number of the early training materials for the PCA's Mission to the World agency. After receiving his Ph.D. degree in church history at Princeton Theological Seminary, Calhoun came back to his alma mater to teach in 1978. He has written a number of books, including a two-volume history of Princeton Seminary (1994, 1996); major local church histories for First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, South Carolina (1995), First Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia (2004), and Independent Presbyterian Church, Savannah, Georgia (2005); and *Grace Abounding: The Life, Books, and Influence of John Bunyan* (2005).

It is our prayer that these essays will serve to honor our three fathers and brothers, as well as to celebrate this momentous anniversary in the life of Covenant Theological Seminary.¹ Above all, it is our prayer that this effort will be received by our Triune God as having been "all for Jesus." This project would not have been brought to completion without a number of people working together with a high degree of commitment and competence. In particular, we would like to thank our faculty colleagues, all of whom participated in and supported this project with their encouragement, prayers, and attention to deadlines. The real burden of the project was borne by our outstanding copyeditors, Beth Ann Patton, Rebecca Rine, Jim Pakala, and especially, Rick Matt. Rick's careful attention to detail, ready service, and yeoman's effort greatly improved every single essay. We are grateful as well for the support of the seminary's administration, especially Bryan Chapell and David Wicker. We are thankful to Willie MacKenzie and Christian Focus Publications for their gracious willingness to work with us on this project. And above all, we are grateful to all of the faculty, trustees, and supporters of Covenant Seminary throughout its fifty-year history: for they have helped us to fulfill our mission of living, thinking, writing, and teaching "all for Jesus."

Robert A. Peterson and Sean Michael Lucas

1. See Appendix A for complete bibliographies of Professors Vasholz, Jones, and Calhoun.