



Western



**Renewal,
Revival &
Reformation**

**Strengthening
the Ugandan
Church**

**A New Beginning
with God**

Letter from the President



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God's Work Done God's Way; A Classical Strategy for Spiritual Renewal

There is a lot of disappointment and frustration with the evangelical church today.

That disillusionment causes some believers to opt out of church life, in essence rejecting congregational involvement and instead embarking upon an individual quest for spirituality. Sadly, however, they forfeit en route the indispensable contributions made by Christian community to both personal growth and missional impact.

Others instead try to re-imagine or re-engineer the church, in effect redesigning it to fit better with the tastes and values of contemporary culture. Too often, however, the church that results ends up looking more like a slightly-baptized reflection of that culture rather than the distinctive (and often counter-cultural) community intended by God.

So rather than rejecting or re-imagining the church, we believe a much more biblically faithful--and therefore more fruitful--response is to pursue the renewal of the church when and where such renewal is needed. And it is always needed one way or another, for we never fully arrive at perfection this side of heaven. During some seasons, however, that renewal is especially needed because the church has fallen far short of what God desires it to be. While we can happily point to some encouraging exceptions of congregational vitality, most would agree that we live in such an age today (especially in places like North America, Europe, and Australia).

In pursuing that renewal, however, we must avoid the temptation to use worldly methods to do God's work. For sooner or later, the short-sightedness of following gimmicks and trendy fads becomes apparent, and the supernatural dynamic of ministry is obscured if not forfeited altogether.

So we want Western students to be grounded in a classical strategy for spiritual renewal. "Classical" does not mean old or antiquated, but something whose value has stood the test of time. In other words, it is our best understanding of what God's work done God's way looks like regardless of geographical or generational setting.

This issue of Western Magazine focuses on that process of renewal through reformation and revival.

Academic Dean Marc Cortez helps us by carefully defining these terms in his feature article. Current student Brian LePort builds on this article by differentiating the approaches to revival found in Jonathan Edwards and Charles Finney. A sidebar article on the Portland revival of 1905 illustrates the community-transforming impact of a spiritual awakening. Focusing on the reformation side, current D.Miss. student Julius Twongyeirwe is interviewed to demonstrate how he is seeking to bring biblical reformation to the Ugandan church. In addition, because reformation necessarily involves change, faculty member Ron Marrs describes how biblical change can be best pursued in a congregational context. Recommended resources for additional reading on these themes are also offered, along with some news items from Western's campuses.

It is our prayer that as a result of this issue you will have both a better understanding of the nature of, and need for, biblical renewal in the church, and that you will join us as we prayerfully work towards biblical reformation while prayerfully seeking from the Lord the gift of biblical revival.

Your co-laborer in Christ,

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RENEWAL, REVIVAL *AND* REFORMATION

THE THREE R'S OF TRANSFORMATION

By Marc Cortez



Sawdust on the floor. Benches once neatly arrayed, now pushed hastily aside, tracing a chaotic maze through the crowd of people swaying and dancing under the high-peaked tent. Light streaming from the tent's door into the warm summer evening where more people wait for a small taste of what's happening within. Taut ropes quivering as thousands of feet stomp to the music.

Revival has come to town.

At least, it looks like a revival. Sawdust? Check. Big crowd? Check. Dancing and singing? Check. All we need now is some preaching, confessing, and maybe a little fainting. Then we'll be all set.

After all, that's what a revival is. Right?

OUR REVIVAL ROOTS

Evangelicalism has always had a deep concern for the transformation of individual Christians and the Church itself. Drawing on currents already present in pietism and among the Puritans, early evangelicals like Jonathan Edwards, the Wesley brothers, and George Whitefield feared for a Christianity that seemed to have lost its vitality. People were just going through the motions. They attended church, took communion, and read their Bibles. But there was no life. No change. No transformation. People, churches, and entire communities went on about their business, everyday lives untouched by the Gospel.

And that can't be. Jesus promised that his people would be filled with the Spirit, ambassadors of the Gospel, harbingers of his Kingdom. We are supposed to be God's image bearers in the world, manifesting his glory everywhere. We're supposed to be different.

Something was wrong.

So these early evangelicals prayed, preached, worked, and hoped for something more. Real change. Their desire was that God would come and transform His people so that they would live in the world as He intended. They sought revival.

This quest for revival extended into subsequent centuries. The First Great Awakening gave way to the Second, Third, and even Fourth Great Awakenings, every generation praying for God's empowering presence to renew His people for more vital living and more faithful ministry in the world. This emphasis on "renewal through revival" is part of the DNA of evangelicalism.

TWO KEY QUESTIONS

But, despite this general agreement, evangelicalism has struggled to understand exactly what this means. And we've had a particularly difficult time answering two fundamental questions:

Is revival lasting or temporary? Some evangelicals focus on the fact that we live in a broken world. And, in this fallen existence, we will always encounter times of sustained, spiritual dryness. The best we can hope is that God will occasionally pour out His Spirit onto our dry ground, allowing the plants to sprout and the flowers to bloom for a time, before the dry heat of the desert returns.

But other evangelicals see revival as more lasting. For them, the promise of real change isn't fleeting. Rather than seeing revival as a sudden rainstorm, they picture it as a spring continually flowing up from the ground to sustain new life in an otherwise barren land.

Is revival "miraculous" or "natural?" A related question has to do with the source of true revival. Now, we have to be a little careful here because all evangelicals agree that true revival is "miraculous" in the sense that ultimately it comes from God. No one argues that revival is something we simply produce on our own.

But evangelicals do disagree on exactly how to understand the relationship between the divine and the human in producing revival.

For many evangelicals, revival is a miracle along the same lines as bringing someone back from the dead. The dead person doesn't contribute much to the process. So renewing them to life must be a gift from the outside. Others can pray, pleading with God to offer the gift. But in the end, renewal is a miraculous gift.

Others evangelicals agree that revival is a gift, but they prefer a different analogy. For them, revival is more like a plant growing in your garden. The fact that the plant exists and grows at all is a gift from God. But to make the plant grow, the gardener needs to work hard: cultivating, planting, weeding, feeding, and watering. And, under normal circumstances, God will not withhold the miraculous gift of life when His people carry out these tasks faithfully.

Different answers to these two questions will give you very different pictures of revival. Is revival temporary and "supernatural," like the raising of Lazarus? Or is revival sustained and "natural," like a farmer growing crops? And, of course, we could also combine the options and argue for something that is sustained and supernatural (like the New England Patriots) or temporary and natural (like any plant I've ever tried to grow).

THE THREE R's

I think that a lot of the confusion comes from the fact that we're using one term, revival, to describe at least three different things. So it may help if we make some important distinctions.

Renewal. Nothing is more pathetic than a child's toy when the batteries are running low: it slows down; the already annoying music turns into a mind-numbing warble; and the lights flicker erratically like a firefly with a bad fuse. I think we all feel like that at times. We get run down spiritually, emotionally, physically, and even missionally, needing to be reminded and renewed so we can be reengaged in what the Gospel is all about. We sometimes need to have the "joy of your salvation" restored (Ps. 51:12) so God can continue the process of renewing us in His image (2 Cor. 4:16). Praise God for rechargeable batteries.

Renewal refers to the revitalization of God's people for faithful life and ministry. And, in this way, it's distinct from rebirth, which is a word that we should reserve for the beginning of one's Christian journey. But renewal shares one common characteristic with rebirth: it's a gift. A battery does not recharge itself, and life does not arise on its own. Renewal, as the overall process of revitalizing God's people, always comes as a gift of God's grace.

Reformation. Even though renewal is always a gift, God's people have long recognized the importance of working faithfully to address our imperfections and weaknesses. That's reformation: the ongoing practice of bringing every aspect of life and ministry into greater conformity with the Gospel. And whether it's Paul calling for reform in the Corinthian church, the early church working toward reform in a series of worldwide councils, the medieval church with its many reform movements, or the Protestant Reformation itself, reform efforts have always been with us.

WHENCE COMETH RENEWAL?

Jonathan Edwards vs. Charles Finney



By Brian LePort

When we speak of the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, it is inevitable that we must ask what role we have in bringing change. Do humans have free will or are we predetermined to "choose" according to our nature? In other words,

can humans choose to participate in the work of the Holy Spirit or must the Spirit override our wills in order for us to do the will of God? Similarly, is there a different answer for Christians than for non-Christians?

This has been a frequently debated topic. We could discuss Augustine and Pelagius or Luther and Erasmus as examples, but here we will summarize the differences between Jonathan Edwards and Charles Finney. Why? Because both of these Christian leaders have greatly shaped, in one way or another, how most American Christians (and those globally who have been influenced by American Christianity) think about this subject. That influence, however, has resulted in two significantly different understandings of the dynamics of spiritual renewal.

In *Freedom of the Will* (1754) Edwards argued that human nature and moral choice were inextricably connected. Our choices thus reflect the dominant inclinations of our nature. Because our nature is powerfully inclined to survival, we naturally choose to do the kinds of things needed to survive (e.g., eat and drink). But choosing to do things contrary to natural impulses will meet powerful—and in some cases, insurmountable—resistance. In Edwards' words, "If it be so that the will is always determined by the strongest motive, then it must always have an inability . . . to act otherwise than it does; it not being possible, in any case, that the will should, at present, go against the motive which it has now, all things considered, the greatest strength and advantage to excite and induce it." When it comes to loving God, Edwards argued, our corrupt nature makes it impossible for us to choose to do so by our

own will. This means the Spirit must first intervene, and regenerate us, before we can "choose" to love God.

On the other hand, Charles Finney argued that God has given humans "the powers of moral agency." These powers allow humans to "see the evidence, and to believe" without any additional divine assistance. If this were not so, Finney asserted, then "God is an infinite tyrant" because He dictates who can and who cannot be holy (see Mark A. Noll, *America's God*, p. 307). Similarly, Finney felt that human agents are indispensably involved in persuading unbelievers to see the evidence supporting the truth of the Gospel and to respond logically to it.

This difference in perspective naturally led to two different understandings of revival. For Edwards, the primary dynamic behind revival is God's sovereignty. He grants it if and when He wills; believers at most can only pray and prepare for it (and even those activities are typically seen as dependent upon God's initiative and empowering). For Finney, however, revival can be produced in the same way that a farmer produces a crop; use the right seed, give it good soil and water, and soon the desired result will occur.

That emphasis upon the human use of proper means to produce a revival is known by many as "revivalism" and has shaped much of the current evangelical emphasis on ministry methodology and technique.

This debate continues today. What brings reformation, revival and renewal? What is the role of the Holy Spirit and what is our role as human agents in gospel proclamation and spiritual renewal? Western's faculty is much more sympathetic to the approach of Edwards than to that of Finney, while recognizing that an exaggerated view of sovereignty can lead to an unbiblical passivism. How you answer these questions will determine a great deal about how you do ministry.

Because, of course, reformation didn't end in the sixteenth century. It continues today as God's people labor to address their flawed attempts at faithfulness.

Does this mean that reformation stands at odds with renewal? By no means. The gospel of grace entails neither quietism nor passivism. We are called to action. Reformation by itself cannot produce renewal any more than going to church alone can produce sanctification. But they are both expressions of Christian faithfulness that God uses in the process of growing and renewing his people.

Revival. If "reformation" is the active and ongoing process by which God's people seek to live faithfully in light of the gospel, then we can reserve the term revival for those more special occasions in which God uniquely empowers a particular group of people for gospel-centered living.

Throughout the Old Testament, we can see God's Spirit at work rejuvenating His people and drawing them to Himself again

(e.g. Exod. 4:29-31; 1 Sam. 7:1-4; 2 Chron. 15:1-5; 29-31; Ezra 5-6). And, of course, we can't forget about Pentecost, the remarkable outpouring of the Spirit in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy to indwell and empower God's people for Gospel ministry. Revival.

And God hasn't stopped reviving His people. Whether we're talking about a Great Awakening that sweeps across an entire country, or a special work of God in a particular congregation, revival renews God's people for carrying out God's purposes in God's world.

GROUNDING IN THE GOSPEL

So, returning to the two questions I asked above, are we talking about something that is lasting or temporary, supernatural or natural? Yes, we are. Renewal is all of the above.

CHECKING OUR HEARTS IN A SEASON OF CHANGE



By Ron Marrs

What is it like to be an interim pastor at a church which is one hundred and thirty years old, with a long history of quality ministry, but currently in need of renewal? What is it like to be an outsider coming in with 25 years of pastoral experience in one church, but with no experience leading a church where more than half of the congregation was at least 60 years old? Both questions describe my situation when Western Seminary graciously released me from some of my weekly hours so I could serve on the pastoral staff at Hinson Memorial Baptist Church in Portland.

When Hinson's senior pastor left in the summer of 2008 for another ministry position, my son was the church's youth pastor. My seminary colleagues, Drs. Todd Miles, Jan Verbruggen, and Jim Sweeney were on the elder board. Throughout that fall, I began to sense that maybe I could also be of help in working with the elders and staff during this time of transition. All involved agreed, so I became the interim executive pastor in January of 2009.

There were difficult decisions to be made, but I had a great partnership with the elder chairman, Chuck Charnquist. We had to cut thousands of dollars from the budget. We had to release a long time staff member and reduce the hours of others. But the staff accepted these changes with grace and we found favor with the congregation.

I would like to say that I had some noble vision to make great advances with the church. Instead, I was hoping that at least I could be a stabilizing factor and

also contribute to the wise selection of future pastor(s). (Truth be told, there were also times when I was just hoping that I wouldn't mess things up!). I am delighted that God subsequently provided Dr. Michael Lawrence to be the new senior pastor and Geoff Chang to be an associate pastor.

In June of 2010 I preached a sermon on change just prior to the arrival of Pastors Lawrence and Chang. Because I knew further change would be both necessary and inevitable, I asked the congregation to check their hearts. "Check your heart when your response to change is anger and remember that 'man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires' (James 1:20). Check your heart when your reaction to change is despair and remember God's goodness (Psalm 103:1-5). Check your heart when your reaction to change is fear and remember that God's perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:17, 18)." Since preaching that sermon, there have indeed been a number of changes made, but I believe the church overall has responded well to them. God has been good to help us in this process of corporate renewal.

I am excited to continue as part of the renewal process at Hinson, now as a member of the elder board. My ongoing prayer is that I can individually reflect Western's mission through this role by being a catalyst and resource for spiritual transformation. But transformation by definition requires change, and change is often difficult for those asked to experience it. So I urge all of us to check our hearts so we too might respond to divinely-mandated change in a God-honoring way.

1905 PORTLAND REVIVAL

"Envision a typical busy workday in the Rose City's downtown core suddenly coming to a halt at midday. Thousands of employees and customers alike stream out of Nordstrom, NikeTown, the KOIN Center, and hundreds of other businesses and make their way to the Keller or Schnitzer auditoriums or any number of other venues. They go with a single-minded purpose. To spend time hearing about Jesus Christ. To listen to His Word. To devote their hearts to God. Sound improbable or impossible? Change the names of the businesses and the meeting locations to what they were 100 years ago, and you have a true story that took place in Portland, Oregon in 1905."

That is how John Fortmeyer, publisher of Christian News Northwest, began his article commemorating the 100th anniversary of the last major Portland-area revival. Fortmeyer interviewed a local woman who showed him some amazing articles from newspapers of that era. For example, the front page story for the Friday, March 31, 1905 edition of the Oregon Journal described over 10,000 people singing hymns at midnight, calling it "a unique night of Portland's history...a shaking up such as the town had never known before."

An editorial on the same page described such events as "the most impressive evidence of the strength, unity and aggressiveness of Christianity in Portland

that could possibly have been given..." and agreed that "the city is in the throes of a religious upheaval such as it has never known in all its history."

Many link this revival to the awakening that originated in Wales and soon spread to at least five continents. As is typical with genuine revivals, not only were thousands genuinely converted to Christ but an enhanced sense of God's presence was also experienced by much of the surrounding community.

Historian J. Edwin Orr records that 240 major stores in Portland signed an agreement to close from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day to enable people to attend prayer meetings. Thus, typical commerce was halted in the city as thousands crowded into four of the city's largest auditoriums for worship and prayer. These quickly became filled to capacity, so scores more stood outside. This widespread prayer not only accompanied the revival, it also preceded it. It is estimated that at least 100 local prayer meetings were held in Portland prior to the awakening, asking God to send the same blessing to the Northwest that others were experiencing in different locales around the world. He answered that prayer, and from that fact we should be encouraged to ask Him to do so once again for the communities in which we live.

And what holds it all together is the gospel. Overemphasize reformation and we'll approach the church and the Christian life as a task that must be accomplished, a goal we can achieve if we just work hard enough. Down that road lie pride, frustration, and eventually exhaustion.

Overemphasize revival and we'll approach the Christian life as something that can only be truly lived during times of heightened excitement, passion, and felt empowerment, something that must be continually stirred up and sought after. And down that road lie pride, frustration, and eventually exhaustion.

Two different roads. Same tragic end.

The Gospel rejects both approaches because it recognizes that true renewal is always a gift of God, but it is one that involves His empowering Spirit and our faithful response. In the end, sustained transformation, both personal and corporate, involves our renewal through both reformation and revival. ■



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Bringing Biblical Solutions to the Ugandan Church's Missional Challenge: An Interview with Julius Twongyeirwe

How did you first come to follow Christ?

At the passing of my mother in 1980, I struggled to understand how a loving God could allow such a painful loss. After months of trauma, a possibly helpful idea came to mind: if I convinced myself there is no God, then I would have no one to blame for my mother's death.

So I embraced atheism and sought to stamp out religion whenever and wherever I could. On one occasion, a group of six of us set out to

I imagine it was difficult leaving your family and ministry colleagues to come back to the States.

It is indeed difficult in that I am away from my family at a time when we are raising teenagers. It is also difficult for me because I am away from our young Berea Church. And it is difficult in that the central activities of Proclamation Task (PT) and Uganda Evangelical Mission Agency (UEMA) slow down a bit during my absence.

I am also involved in cross-cultural missionary training through Uganda Evangelical Mission Agency, to help Ugandans play their God-assigned role in the global mission. Through this, we train and deploy local missionaries and rally their sending churches to support their work in the mission field.

Congruently, as a team of facilitators, we also train lay preachers for Bible exposition through Langham Preaching (LP), and I teach in

practice, the gap between orthodoxy and orthopraxy in Uganda is of great concern.

It is true that the entire Christian world will find that narrowing the gap between what we confess and how we conduct life is a process as we progressively seek to close the gap between the hearing and doing of God's Word (James 1:22). The biblical standard that John sets for Christians (1 John 2:6) is that whoever claims to live in Him (Christ)



disrupt an evangelistic crusade in Kampala. For clearly spiritual reasons, our plans were unsuccessful. Our group permanently disbanded that same day, and one week later (February 27, 1985) I dedicated my life to Christ.

Yet I was joyfully released by my family and ministry partners to come back to the States for this training, as they too saw this opportunity as timely for the challenges of ministry that we face, as well as the opportunities now at hand for revival and reformation.

some theological and Bible schools in order to breed a new cadre of Bible handlers who demonstrate to the world that when the Bible is taught and preached correctly, God's voice is heard and lives are transformed in palpable ways to the glory of God.

must walk as Jesus did. Thus, those who profess Christ demonstrate the sincerity of their faith by pursuing Christ-likeness. This is a high but non-negotiable standard, in which the fruit of one's life should be consistent with one's professed faith; even if not perfectly, at least by positive progress in the right direction.

You've just returned to Western to pursue a Doctor of Missiology degree. How will that additional training and degree enhance your future ministry?

Coming from ministry into training, and with a view to return to ministry, narrows my focus. My line of inquiry is aimed at "bringing biblical solutions to the church's missional challenge" in Uganda. My hope is that my research and discoveries will benefit many like-minded gospel workers in that country. In addition, my doctoral program will further enhance my teaching and training efforts in Uganda, including the pioneering of the Proclamation Task Training Center where we hope to equip and standardize other trainers of pastors and missionaries.

Describe your current ministry in Uganda (what roles are you fulfilling, what are the ministries that you are helping to lead, and what are you seeking to accomplish?).

I am deeply involved in pastoral training through the Proclamation Task. Through an average of 17 trips each year, we are able to reach and train up to 600 pastors in various regions. Other centralized training events include regular "training of trainers," which focuses on 120 pastor-teachers in order to multiply instructors. We help establish Bible schools in these regions in order to keep the training work going and to assist pastors and their churches to become healthy and effective.

I also serve as the pastor at Berea Baptist Church in Kampala, a church we planted to demonstrate to others that a thoroughly biblical approach to ministry does indeed produce God-honoring fruit.

How do you see the themes of reformation and revival relating to the Ugandan church?

Despite a rapidly growing Christian presence, the country scarcely demonstrates a corresponding Christian impact. In a country that claims to be 85.2% Christian, this enigma reflects a growing church that exhibits social and behavioral traits that are far below Gospel standards, and even anti-biblical in some cases. While we should not expect perfection in matching Christian claims with Christian

In applying this, Uganda presents to us a paradoxical situation in which 135 years of active Christian mission has yielded a vast Christian presence (at least as evidenced by its institutional activity and professed faith), while that same society is engulfed by widespread social injustice, unprecedented corruption, disease, wars, social unrest, economic hardships, and a tumult of political leadership crises. Christian workers have described this circumstance (which is common in Sub-Saharan Africa) with the expression, "Christianity in Africa is one mile long and only an inch deep."

This challenge also comes with numerous opportunities for the Gospel. Reformation can take deep roots in Uganda if we carry

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Spiritual Motivation... Theological Perspective... Evangelistic Passion... Social Zeal... Insightful Counsel... Forward-Looking Leadership...

These are just a few of the daunting expectations of a man called to the pastoral office.

The Spurgeon Fellowship (TSF) is a fraternity of men in ministry devoted to seeking the wisdom of classical pastoral theology for contemporary church ministry. Desiring to see churches in the Pacific Northwest renew their faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ and reaffirm a stalwart commitment to grounding all ministry practices in the Scriptures, it is our prayer that TSF may, by means of Word and Spirit, contribute to the reformation and revival of local congregations.

Drawing upon the gifts of experienced practitioners and theologians, TSF aims to enhance the personal character and professional competency of pastors. We have been honored to host pastors and professors such as Dr. Don Carson, Dr. R. Kent Hughes, Dr. Robert Smith, Jr., Dr. Jerry Bridges, and Dr. Sidney Greidanus. We are looking forward to visits from Pastor Alex Strauch and Dr. Alistair Begg in the coming year. Several of them have addressed the task of preaching, and others have focused on matters of pastoral theology.

Founded by Dr. Art Azurdia in September 2006, TSF is sponsored by Western Seminary in partnership with Trinity Church. Art serves as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at Western Seminary and Senior Minister of Word and Worship at Trinity Church.

Four times per year (September, November, January and March), 250 vocational pastors and lay leaders join together in Portland, Oregon on Tuesdays from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm. A team of seminary students and church members volunteer their time to welcome and serve the pastors while they are with us. Everything is provided free of charge, including lunch.

In November 2009, we were afforded the opportunity to launch a second expression of TSF in Wenatchee, Washington. Cooperating



Art Azurdia, founder of The Spurgeon Fellowship

with Grace Covenant Church, Pastor Josh McPherson provides leadership and oversight for TSF in Wenatchee. About 40 pastors in central Washington meet three times per year (November, January, and March) on a Thursday from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm.

It has been exciting to observe the relationships that have developed among pastors by virtue of their involvement in TSF. Countless friendships have been forged and a true sense of camaraderie distinguishes the relationships among pastors. All pastors and elders are more than welcome to join us at TSF in Johnson Chapel on the campus of Western Seminary. The remaining meetings for this sixth season include:

January 10th Alex Strauch
March 6th Phil Swann

It is our prayer that this fellowship will serve the Church of Jesus Christ by proving to be a ministry of great benefit to pastors and churches in the Pacific Northwest. ■

From Hopelessness to a Life Transformed

Western Seminary Master of Divinity student Greg Triplett is at the heart of a new movement of God among college students in Northern California. As Campus Crusade for Christ's campus director at California State University, Sacramento, Triplett is leading an effort to address students' spiritual, relational, emotional and practical needs through the power of the gospel and mentoring.

Just over a year ago, Triplett and another Campus Crusade staff couple started the first staff-supported campus ministry at "Sac State" in fifteen years. While campus ministry trends suggest that they would have just a handful of students involved at this early stage, Triplett has been delighted to see God at work to quickly gather a young but growing group of committed men and women. Their first weekly meetings of the year had upwards of 80 students in attendance, with 14 committed student leaders.

"It was quite amazing to walk onto the campus and see how much of an expressed desire there was to be involved," Triplett said. "Juniors and seniors walked up to us and said, 'I've been looking for this the whole time I've been here.'"

The students' needs are many. Like students on any American university campus, they are searching for connection with peers, character development, academic support and growing in basic life skills. Others may need help in overcoming socio-economic obstacles. "We deal with a lot of students who have a lot of brokenness," he said.

He paused and considered one student in particular who has overcome a great deal of personal pain and is now experiencing gospel-centered transformation.

"Mario came to Christ in the spring," Triplett recalled. "He was one of those students who should be a statistic. He grew up in a rough part of Oakland, never knew his father, his mother died of AIDS, and he was raised by an alcoholic aunt. By God's grace he ended up at Sac State."

Even though he wasn't a Christian, Mario had been casually affiliated with a church in Oakland. A member of that church contacted Triplett with Mario's contact information and suggested that they meet.

"When I first met him, he was in a place of desperation and despair," Triplett remembered. "He was depressed. He was suicidal. He had no hope." Triplett shared the gospel with Mario, who immediately responded.

"Pretty quickly, his life began to change," Triplett said. "I love this story because of how quickly the kingdom of God takes root in a heart that is broken and has nowhere else to turn but Christ."

Triplett started mentoring Mario, meeting with him weekly to discuss the Bible, faith and basic life skills. Mario started attending church with Triplett and his wife. Mario participated in a short-term mission trip last summer with Campus Crusade, where he learned how to share his faith and more fully live out of the power of the Holy Spirit. He has now been baptized and is considering a career in ministry.

For Triplett's relationship with Mario reflects his ministry approach, which he explains by quoting 1 Thessalonians 2:8, "We were happy to share with you not only the gospel, but our lives as well."

Triplett entered Western's Master of Divinity program during the summer of 2010, and is already experiencing the benefit of seminary equipping in his life and ministry. "It's making a huge difference," he said of his studies. "I have loved the program in terms of a couple of things. One, there is a real consideration to really balance the intellectual and 'heart side,' and I've really appreciated that. Two, there's a real attention to asking, 'How does this practically impact the people we're ministering to?' After ten years in ministry, I'm taking a few huge leaps in terms of the level of training, equipping and challenging. I'm getting outside perspective and different views."

In the spirit of partnership, Triplett asked that we share his email address with Western magazine readers. If you are connected to a church in the Sacramento area, if you know of a Sac State student who might benefit from contact from the campus ministry team, or if you would simply like to connect with Greg as a colleague in ministry, he invites you to contact him at Greg.Triplett@uscm.org. ■



Ministry in Action

For over 25 years Western Seminary's San Jose Campus has helped change the world, one graduate at a time. On the list below you will get a small glimpse of both the breadth and depth of the creative ways God is using these men and women.

Joel Richards *Master of Arts in Exegetical Theology - 1992*
Currently serving as Senior Pastor at La Loma Grace and volunteering as a police chaplain.

Susan Ellis *Master of Arts in General Ministry - 1994*
Currently serving as a missionary in Poland with Josiah Venture, a youth training organization. Serving since 1995, she trains and coaches youth leaders in JV's leadership training programs and she travels around the country leading conferences for girls and discipleship workshops.

Stuart Armstrong *Master of Arts in General Ministry - 1997*
Currently volunteering at Bayside Church's career coaching workshop, which has helped almost two hundred people find jobs this year. Stuart also consults and coaches pastors and churches.

Winnis Chiang *Master of Arts in Marital, Family and Child Counseling - 1998*
Currently serving in private practice. Winnis is the founder of Parenting-ABC.com, which helps Mandarin- and Cantonese-speaking high-tech Christian parents towards a healthy relationship with their children. As a pastor's wife, Winnis works with her husband (a M.Div. graduate of Western Seminary) all over the world.

Jerry Wong *Master of Divinity in General Ministry - 1999*
Currently serving as the pastor at Maranatha Bible Church in San Ramon, California. Jerry is also planting Hope Bible Church in San Francisco, California, pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree, and volunteers at two neighborhood middle schools.

Wilson Wong *Master of Arts in Exegetical Theology - 1999*
Currently serving as Senior Pastor at Chinese for Christ Berkeley Church. Wilson also serves as a retreat and conference speaker and author.

Rachel Mack *Master of Arts in Marital, Child and Family Counseling - 2000*
Currently serving as a High School Counselor in Millbrae, California. Rachel also serves in both women's and children's ministry at Sunset Church in San Francisco, California.

David A. Rohrbach *Master of Arts in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling - 2000*
Currently serving as Clinic Director of Community Presbyterian Counseling Center and as a Marriage and Family Counselor.

Dr. Robert Hellam *Master of Divinity in General Ministry - 2000*
Currently serving as Vice Principal and Teacher at Monterey Bay Christian Middle School. Robert also serves as Associate Pastor at Church of the Oaks and as a Chaplain in the California State Military Reserve.

Jen Yip *Master of Arts in Marital and Family Therapy - 2001*
Now living in China, Jen passed the Chinese counselor's exam and is licensed by the Chinese government. She has started a counseling service and ministry and just finished writing her first booklet on forgiveness and healing.

Steve Boutry *Master of Arts in Specialized Ministry - 2005*
Currently serving as the Director of Campus Ministry at Sojourn Collegiate Ministry. Steve also teaches regularly at Reunion Christian Church in Boston, Massachusetts.

Bree Grant *Master of Arts in Marital and Family Therapy - 2006*
Currently serving as the Program Manager for an outpatient counseling/alternative education school program at Youth Services, which is a part of the Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center.

Ed Applegate *Master of Divinity (Expositional Ministry) - 2006*
Currently serving as the Pastor of Spiritual Formation at Crossroads Grace Community Church, California representative for the Small Group Network and Synergy Small Group Conference organizer.

Dr. Scott Ramsey *Master of Arts in Specialized Ministry - 2007*
Currently serving as the Pastor of Spiritual Development at Yosemite Church in Merced, California. Steve also serves as a community hospice chaplain.


Jennie Warner *Master of Arts in Marital and Family Therapy - 2007*
Currently serving as a counselor at Catholic Charities. Jennie is the founding member of Therapists Embracing Religious Freedom, a group of mental health professionals and clients who have come together to ensure that religious liberty is respected in the counseling room.

Daniel Fong *Master of Arts in Marital and Family Therapy (Addiction Studies) - 2008*
Currently serving as a Clinical Social Worker at Citywide Case Management at UCSF. Daniel also ministers to married couples affiliated with Chinese Family for Christ.

Sandra Payne *Master of Arts in Marital and Family Therapy - 2009*
Currently serving as Associate Director at EMQ Familiesfirst.

Clement Wong *Master of Divinity (Pastoral Ministry) - 2010*
Currently serving as English Congregation Pastor at Silicon Valley Alliance Church in Milpitas, California.

Cathy Stambaugh *Master of Arts in Specialized Ministry (Pastoral Care to Women) - 2010*
Currently serving as Director of Group Ministries and Lecturer at BWGI Ministries. Cathy also serves as an Aphasis facilitator.

Andrew Au *Master of Divinity - 2010*
Currently serving as a hospital chaplain at Kaiser Permanente. Andrew is also planning to soon become a church pastor, in addition to his chaplain role. 

forward an approach of ministry that takes into account our cultural core and traditional beliefs when pursuing true biblical discipleship. Ugandans are open to the Gospel and conversions are common through evangelistic efforts. But the contextual framework for biblical discipleship requires more than a mere notional assent to historic Christian truth. The gospel call in Uganda must also emphasize other relational and experiential facets of the gospel such as "regeneration into newness" (as opposed to religious niceness), "reconciliation to God and man" and related biblical mandates.

This fresh agenda is now needed to effect change beyond the superficial level. We need to bring the fullness of God's truth within the thought patterns and indigenous path of Ugandan reasoning to affect that country's cultural core. Perhaps we can no longer apply terms such as nominalism or syncretism to describe the weakness of Christianity in Uganda. Instead, we are asking whether its "Christianity" is actually its own culture!

Therefore, we need a recovery of true biblical discipleship that aims at personal transformation rather than merely serving as a replacement culture. I believe that with such an effort among pastor-teachers, bathed in fervent prayer, reformation in the Ugandan church can become an unstoppable phenomenon. But we must rethink salvation and truth relationally, not just propositionally.

What circumstances led to your increased concern about global mission and Ugandan churches?

Of the 26 years I have walked with Christ, I have been in pastoral ministry for 17 of them. I initially became a pastor by default, with the main qualification being that there was no one available for that task and I was willing to try. I had no prior training. This haphazard entrance into pastoral ministry did not allow me to think, talk, or pray much beyond the four walls of my sanctuary with respect to what God was doing world-wide (and whether I actually had a part in it). At that time, my main goal was to become a better shepherd and help more pastors to be effective. That would suffice, I thought!

In 2004 God brought me to Western Seminary for the Master of Divinity degree. And for that period I was exposed to the "entire world as my parish," borrowing John Wesley's expression. The studies, interactions, and relationships all echoed to me in unison, "You are a Gospel worker in your generation for the redemption of the entire world!" Until then, I had not viewed ministry with such an expansive scope.

Feeling restless to apply this new insight, I returned to Uganda in 2006 and worked together with other Christian leaders through the Evangelical Fellowship of Uganda (EFU) to arouse the entire Christian community about the global missional responsibility that we as Ugandans had neglected. Subsequent to this, UEMA was formed and launched in July 2007 to "facilitate strategic Christian mission initiatives and harmonize them to transform Uganda and the world."

What is the story behind planting Berea Baptist Church which you pastor?

Seeking to ground pastor-teachers in biblical distinctives for ministry has been my ministry focus for the last 11 years. But along the way, some fellow Christian leaders who heard my often-critical message and call to biblical standards of preaching and spiritual leadership challenged me to provide a visible demonstration. No one could point to a church that modeled those values. So they challenged me to start one from scratch and show how such a church is planted and nurtured.

In November 2007, my wife and I were commissioned by our former church (Agape Baptist Church), to go and plant Berea Baptist church. We now have a healthy church-base from which we can encourage reformation and revival. This also gives us another platform on which we can train other pastor-teachers in Uganda. I am able to remain in the pastoral loop as I equip other pastors and affirm, through practice, how God will bless a ministry that desires to be biblical above all else.


How has your past training at Western Seminary helped you in your current ministry?

My training at Western Seminary helped a great deal in organizing my effort to think biblically in diverse ministry contexts. As I mentioned earlier, it was advantageous for me to bring ministry experience to this training. The training was diagnostic in finding remedies for problems identified in my ministry, and it also prepared me for a new thrust in applying a better theological and theoretical understanding to my work.

In addition, the training gave me a better structure for instruction as a trainer of pastor-teachers and missionaries, enabling me to think not just as a passionate preacher but also as an organized teacher. As a result, I have been able to write several curricula for Bible schools and to help instructors develop their course syllabi in better and more applicable ways.

Furthermore, my time at Western Seminary five years ago laid a good base for partnerships, as God moved hearts to share in our work. Five of my fellow students became a prayer group to uphold our ministry to God as a way of preserving the bonds of fellowship in service. These later became the initial PT-USA Board members.

How can we best pray for you and our brothers and sisters in Uganda?

Pray that, while many love the Lord, their hunger for His word may develop into an unstoppable drive to study the Bible for increased literacy in the church. And pray that as the Bible takes its rightful place in these lives and churches, their pastors may practice expository preaching so that their flock may be more capable in discerning truth from error in pursuing an authentically Christian spirituality. 

PERSONAL RENEWAL

A NEW BEGINNING WITH GOD

For twenty years I drove a 1969 Mercury Cougar. It was a beautiful car with classic lines. The bucket seats, stick shift and 351 engine made it a pretty sporty car for a preacher. When I bought the car, it was only six months old and had been driven just 3,000 miles. The engine rumbled quietly until I pressed the gas pedal to the floor. Then that car took off like a wildcat. It was fast!

But after a year of driving my Cougar, I began to notice that it was not as responsive to the accelerator. It did not have the pick-up or the power the car had when it was new. I realized that my Cougar was due for a tune-up.

I took it to a friend who was a backyard mechanic. We went to the parts shop and bought new spark plugs, points, condenser, and rotor. He installed the new parts as I watched and learned. Next, he timed the engine and adjusted the carburetor.

Then, we took it for a ride. Vavoom! It didn't take but a minute for me to realize that the tune-up had revived my engine! It had the pick-up and power I enjoyed when the car was new.



FACULTY COLUMN



By Carl Laney

I believe that God's people have something in common with cars. In order to keep them operating at maximum power for the Lord and His kingdom, they need regular "spiritual tune-ups." We call this process "renewal."

One aspect of this renewal is described by the word "revive" in the Hebrew Bible. The term means "to live" or "to give life" and is used both of restoring a ruined city whose walls have been burned by fire and of restoring life to the dying or the dead. The word is used frequently in the Psalms of "reviving" the spiritual lives of God's people.

The Psalmist prays:

"Revive me according to Thy Word" (119:25).

"Revive me through thy righteousness" (119:40).

"Revive me according to thy loyal-love" (119:88).

The Lord is apparently pleased to answer such prayers. In Isaiah 57:15, God declares:

"I dwell on a high and holy place,
And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit,
In order to revive the spirit of the lowly
And to revive the heart of the contrite."

This reviving has been described as "nothing less than a new beginning of obedience to God." If this is true, then God's people frequently need it, particularly if they fall into serious sin. We see a prime example of this in the life of King David after his adultery with Bathsheba.

Second Samuel 11 records a sad and sordid story in the life of David. While his army was off at war, David was back in Jerusalem with time on his hands. One night while gazing down on Jerusalem from the roof of his palace, he saw a woman bathing. Although it was dark, David could see by the light of the night sky that she was a beautiful woman. Instead of turning from this temptation, David yielded to his own lust.

He inquired about the woman and learned that her name was Bathsheba and that her husband, Uriah, served in his army. It was not too late for David to say "no" to sin and turn from his temptation. But instead, he invited Bathsheba to his palace and had sexual relations with her.

Later, when David learned that Bathsheba was pregnant, he attempted to cover up his sin. When this failed, he had his faithful soldier, Uriah, killed on the battlefield. He then married Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.

God was not pleased with what David had done. Second Samuel 12 records how David was confronted and convicted about his sin. This

chapter illustrates five steps to spiritual renewal in the life of a believer.

Commission (2 Sam. 12:1)

The first step in David's renewal took place when God raised up and commissioned the prophet Nathan to confront David with his sin. God frequently uses another believer to help us get back on the right path when we have fallen into sin. When a brother or sister is struggling with sin and being deceived by the Devil, we must be willing to be God's instrument to encourage renewal and restoration.

Confrontation (2 Sam. 12:2-8)

The second step in David's revival was when Nathan confronted David with his sin. Nathan lived in an oriental culture where a face-to-face confrontation would have been difficult. And so Nathan used an indirect approach. Nathan told the story of a rich man who had many flocks and herds, but he took the lamb of a very poor man and slaughtered it to feed his guest. David was quick to recognize that a great injustice had been done! When Nathan applied the parable to David, the king realized that he was the one who had done a grave injustice to Uriah and Bathsheba. David had complained that the rich man in the story had shown no compassion. In reality, David was the one who had shown no compassion on Uriah!

Commandment (2 Sam. 12:9-10)

In the third step of David's spiritual revival we see how Nathan pointed out that David's actions had violated the Word of God. David was guilty of coveting, adultery and murder. In bringing the Word of God before David, the Lord provides a helpful pattern for those situations in which we must confront others. It doesn't matter what we think about a person's actions. What matters is what God says about them.

Consequences (2 Sam. 12:11)

The fourth step in renewing the spiritual life of David was to share with him the consequences of his sin. Nathan's predictions of the consequences of David's sin were literally fulfilled in the years that followed. David's two sons, Amnon (13:38-39) and Absalom (18:15), died violent deaths. Tamar, David's daughter, was raped by her brother, Amnon (13:1-14). Absalom rebelled against his father and publicly appropriated David's royal concubines (16:22). In all this David experienced a biblical principle known as "the law of the harvest." David sowed the seeds of sin and immorality, and he reaped a harvest of sin and immorality in his own family.

Confession (2 Sam. 12:12:13)

Although David sinned in a grievous way against the Lord, his heart was sensitive to Nathan's rebuke. David immediately confessed his sin. Confession of sin is the fifth step in personal renewal. And God


CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

immediately forgave him. The more complete, poetic version may be found in Ps. 51. David recognized that there can be no reviving of the spiritual life of a believer without confession of sin.

Confession is more than saying “I’m sorry.” And confession is more than the regret and remorse over the consequences of sin. The word “confess” literally means to “say the same thing.” When we confess our sins we must “say the same thing” as God says about our sins. We must agree with Him that our actions are sinful and hurtful. And we must commit ourselves to turning from our sin.

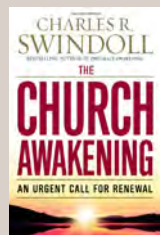
God’s forgiveness led to the restoration of David’s spiritual vitality. I have come to believe that most Christians need such restoration on a regular basis.

In his seminar, “The Seven Laws of the Learner,” Bruce Wilkinson points out that significant advances in spiritual growth usually occur in the life of a believer as a result of one of two things. The first is when the Christian becomes convicted of some known sin, confesses it to the Lord, and begins taking steps to restore personal godliness. The second factor is when a believer freshly pursues a serious seeking after God.

The essence of renewal is a revitalized relationship with God. As such, it is not just a single event, but a continuing experience. Spiritual renewal re-establishes our relationship with God as our highest priority, which in turn results in renewed and vital fellowship between God and His people. May that be the focus of our desires and prayers! 

Recommended Resources on Reformation and Revival

The Church Awakening: An Urgent Call for Renewal



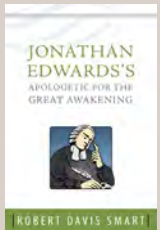
By Charles R. Swindoll (FaithWords, 2010)
This book is a very accessible and practical call for the contemporary church to return to biblical priorities in mission and methodology. Swindoll does a fine job illustrating how easily the church can compromise faithfulness to God by seeking to accommodate (even with good intentions) cultural tastes and trends.

True Revival



By John H. Armstrong (Harvest House, 2001)
Armstrong offers a well-balanced description of genuine revival in an irenic but discerning manner. As such, it is a wonderful introduction to biblical awakenings and helps separate the wheat from the chaff. While this book appears to be no longer in print, used copies are available on-line (an earlier version is entitled When God Moves).

Jonathan Edwards’ Apologetic for the Great Awakening



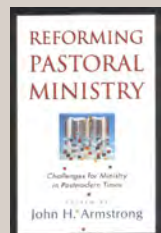
By Robert Davis Smart (Reformation Heritage, 2011)
After reading Armstrong, this just-released volume is a great next step in learning more about authentic revival by analyzing how Edwards skillfully defended the Great Awakening against critics from both the left and the right. Not a “late night” read, but this well-researched book will richly repay the serious student.

When God Comes to Church: A Biblical Model for Revival Today



By Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr. (Baker, 2000)
Endorsed by reputable scholars like J.I. Packer and Bryan Chapell, Ortlund’s book is a perceptive critique of “churchianity” and whets one’s appetite for a genuine, transforming encounter with God Himself that does not bypass biblical truth but is instead built upon it.

Reforming Pastoral Ministry: Challenges for Ministry in Postmodern Times



Edited by John Armstrong (Crossway, 2001).
With contributions from (among others) Western trustee Kent Hughes, faculty member Art Azurdia, and alumnus David Hegg, this book seeks to base the breadth of pastoral ministry more faithfully on biblical mandates and patterns. Each author brings the helpful perspective of a reflective practitioner who is well-seasoned in thinking theologically about ministry goals and methods. While out-of-print, happily a Kindle version is still available.

Toward a Classic Strategy for Evangelical Renewal

Also, the most recent version of the document written by Western’s faculty entitled, “Toward a Classic Strategy for Evangelical Renewal” can be found on Western’s website at:
<http://www.westernseminary.edu/News/WSNews/Toward%20a%20Classic%20Strategy%20for%20Evangelical%20Renewal.pdf>.

The Cost of Theological Education for our Next Generation of Leaders



Greg Moon


For those of us who are charged with raising gift income for Western Seminary, it is surprising to hear a common thread coming from many of our conversations. These conversations are with current donors, both individuals and churches; prospective new donors; alumni; and marketplace

leaders. Understanding the cost of graduate school and the seminary’s choice to not charge students the full cost of their education is not clear. The fact is, the seminary does not charge any student what it costs us to deliver their training.

The following factors are why we don’t charge “full price”:

- The typical student brings \$24,000 in undergraduate loan debt to graduate school and will pay an average of \$33,000 to complete their master’s degree.
- If we were to charge students the full cost of their education, one of three things would happen: they would elect to not further pursue graduate training; they would take the long route – sometimes taking up to ten years to complete their degree; or they would assume the debt and hope for the best.
- Western, as an institution, has chosen a philosophy of working to not encumber students with suffocating debt as they head into ministry positions that are often low paying and time intensive.

We currently subsidize tuition for every student at an average of twenty percent, but are raising only an average of thirteen percent in gift income. So every student receives an \$8,000 - \$9,000 tuition reduction, not counting any grants or scholarships he or she receives. For a \$5.8 to \$6 million dollar budget (optimum budget size for financial stability) the gap is between \$400,000 to \$500,000 annually.

Renewal of individuals and churches has a much better chance if we have well-trained, gospel-centered leaders in all ministry contexts. Please prayerfully consider including Western Seminary in your personal giving and if you already support the Seminary financially, please consider your ability to stretch a little further to ensure that quality theological education is available for our next generation of Christian leaders. 

20%
THE SEMINARY FUND
Gift income needed

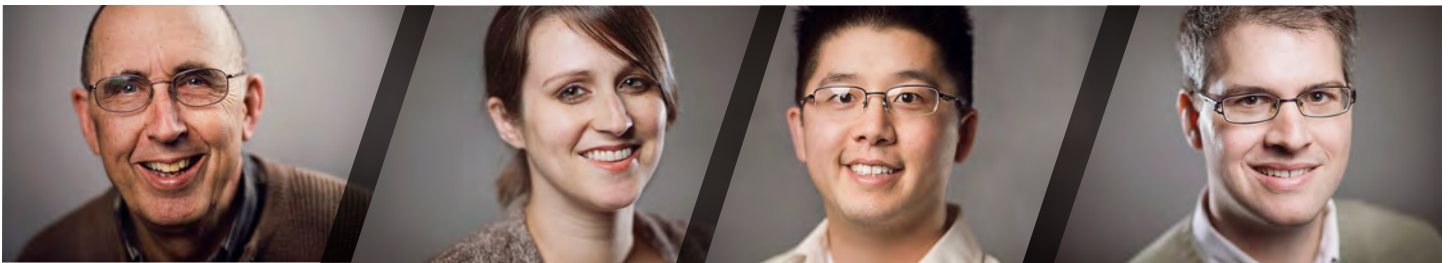
80%
Tuition Charged to Students



WESTERN SEMINARY

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Portland, OR 97215

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Upcoming Events

The faculty and staff of Western Seminary appreciate your partnership and prayers for these upcoming events. If you would like to join us for any of these activities, please contact Julia Seal at 503.517.1816.

January 11, 12 and 19

Discover Coaching at Portland, San Jose and Sacramento Campuses

Discover Coaching is a short introduction to coaching and to Western Seminary's approach to coach training. Come and learn more about coaching, how you might start coaching those around you, and whether additional coach training is right for you.

San Jose 1/11/12

Sacramento 1/12/12

Portland 1/19/12

January 23, 28 and February 11

San Jose Campus Connection

Come visit our new campus location. If you are interested in attending seminary (or know someone who is), come to Campus Connection and discover how Western Seminary trains men and women to serve effectively in a variety of ministry contexts.

February 2

Sacramento Campus Connection

Campus Connection is an informational event for those who long to advance the gospel in a variety of ministry contexts. Meet faculty and staff, hear other student's stories, and learn more about Western Seminary's distinctive education training.

January 10 and March 6

The Spurgeon Fellowship

Join us on the Portland campus as Pastor Alex Strauch shares on January 10. Both an author and elder at Littleton Bible Chapel, he will address How to Cultivate Love in the Local Church. On March 16 Phil Swann, pastor at Llanelli Free Evangelical Church in Wales, United Kingdom, will teach about Preaching in the Storm.

February 23

Sacramento Alumni Connection

All Western Seminary alumni in the Sacramento area are welcome! Alumni Connect will help us learn how our unique ministry roles complement and support each other. Whether you're a counselor, coach, spiritual director, pastor or lay leader, come ready to network, listen and share your ideas on how we can strategically serve our peers, churches and communities.