



GRACE COMMUNION SEMINARY

# GCS NEWS

A Newsletter for Students and Alumni of Grace Communion Seminary

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## President's Letter



Dear GCS students, alumni, and faculty,

I have been in or related to schools all my life, by being a student myself, ministering to students in the university, teaching in or administering a seminary. So, for me the new year begins in a real way with fall semester. While I hate to admit it, summer is coming to an end. But what lies ahead is the beginning of our next academic term, the new year. And I do look forward to it!

Every year, some GCS students graduate, but we have a ceremony only about every three years when we gather for our international conference. Last year in August at our international conference at Orlando, we had a graduation ceremony for 40 of our students. That was a proud moment of joyful celebration. Not just immediate family members, but hundreds of GCI members from around the world were able to join in. If you weren't there you can see the video of it here. [Graduation Ceremony](#)

But we don't rest on our laurels, and we always welcome new students. GCI is committed to support and train its members, interns, leaders, elders and pastors. Life is always a challenge. Being a church that remains faithful to Jesus Christ in our current cultural context is not easy. GCS is a key part of our denomination's strategy to prepare us all to meet the challenges before us. By providing a range of resources, in person and online, we seek to build up a faith that seeks understanding, a hope that comes from beyond our immediate circumstances, and a love that lives out of the very love and life of the Triune God through our eternal mediator, Jesus Christ.

Some of the issues we face personally, as individual congregations or fellowships and in our civic lives, require significant wisdom and consideration. The courses GCS offers provide a supportive context in which to engage in a disciplined and extended conversation about concerns and issues that require background and the interweaving of a considerable amount of information: biblical, theological and practical. The classroom also involves bringing other voices from the past and present who can contribute to our learning and enable us to give a reason for our hope in Jesus Christ and in his coming rule and reign. Be sure to read the report from our Dean of Faculty, Michael Morrison, that outlines some of the new developments of GCS including the proposed addition of the M.Div. degree and several new courses.

As perhaps you are aware, one of our long-time faculty, Dr. John McKenna, passed away this year. He will be very much missed. Besides helping GCI navigate some of the early years of the changes in our theology, John brought to the several courses he taught for GCS a wealth of knowledge from the fields of biblical studies, theology and physics. This included the theological understanding of Thomas F. Torrance (1913-2007), the theology of John Philoponos of Alexandria in the sixth century, and the philosophy of science expounded by Michael Polanyi (1891-1976). John represented how God provides his church with people who have particular gifts to uniquely enrich its life and enable ongoing faithful ministry for our times.

As we look towards this coming semester and the range of courses offered, we give thanks for a successful transition of our offices and

*President's Letter cont.*

library to the new GCI home office in Charlotte, North Carolina. Thanks to all in Glendora who helped pack it all up and to those in Charlotte who unpacked and set it all up again in our very comfortable and useful building. This facility also includes a wonderful conference room in which we can (and already have) hosted GCS courses.

Also, we said goodbye to our Registrar, Jillian Caranto. She and her new husband, Steven Morrison, who was part of our information technology team in Glendora, have remained in Southern California. Jillian helped welcome and train our new Registrar, Georgia McKinnon, who has already been on the job

for the summer semester. Georgia and her husband Lance with their four children moved from Atlanta to Charlotte to serve the seminary and also the churches in the area. We are grateful to have Georgia in the office ready to serve all our students, new, continuing and graduating, and alumni.

Our Dean of Faculty, Michael Morrison; Registrar, Georgia McKinnon; and I are all anticipating the new semester and look forward to serving you, along with all our faculty members, in order to “equip the saints for the work of ministry.”

Grace and peace in Jesus Christ,

— *Dr. Gary Deddo, President*



*Dr. Morrison helps reshelve the GCS library*

## New Courses in the Works



GCS plans to have a new course in spring 2019: TH515 Seminar in Theological Ethics, taught by Gary Deddo. This course

will be in a seminar format: after two introductory lectures, students will present papers in class that will become the platform for discussing various ethical issues from a theological foundation.

Spring 2019 will also see the revised version of CM505 Women and Men in Ministry. In previous iterations of the course, the focus of the course was to show that it is biblically and theologically appropriate for women to serve in pastoral and other ministry roles. We seem to have accomplished that purpose, and the focus of this course will shift to women and men working together as equals even though there are different tendencies in the way men and women think and work.

Spring 2019 may also see the debut of a new course on forming and leading Bible study groups. This will be a ministry course taught by Gary and Cathy Deddo. Students will learn the skills needed to prepare for and lead Bible studies that foster fellowship, spiritual maturity and a vision for service, outreach and mission. There will be written lectures, video sessions, and several textbooks.

— *Dr. Michael Morrison, Dean of Faculty*



*The new home office of Grace Communion International and Grace Communion Seminary*



We had our onsite visit from DEAC, our accrediting agency, on July 10. All documents have been provided for our Change of Location, and we are waiting for final approval after they meet in January of 2019. We are in the process of completing the paperwork for SARA, which will allow us to have students from all 50 states.

— *Dr. Russell Duke, Liaison Officer*

# Fall 2018 – From the Registrar



Registration for our Fall Semester opened on Monday, August 27 and runs through September 10. The following classes are offered:

Hermeneutics, Introductory Biblical Greek, Church History: The First Millennium, Pastoral Leadership, Christian Counseling, Experiencing the Trinity, The Gospels, and The Spirit, the Church and Eschatology. If fewer than five students enroll in a class, it may be canceled at the discretion of the instructor. We encourage you to register early so

that we may know as soon as possible if a class will meet this minimum. An email has been sent to all current students with further details and the registration link.

Our classes on average require 12 hours of study per week, including reading and written assignments. I am happy to assist with any questions you may have about the classes offered, your personal course of study, or any issues you may have with registration or the website.

Do you know of anyone interested in taking classes with GCS? Please

share your experiences with them, and direct them to our website to find an application, a course schedule and much more helpful information. I am happy to answer any questions from potential students as well. Just give me a call at 980-495-3950.

It is our prayer that the classes you take at GCS are a blessing to you personally and in your ministry. If I can be of service to you in any way, don't hesitate to let me know.

— Georgia McKinnon, Registrar

## New GCS Logo

You probably noticed on the front page of this newsletter that GCS is sporting a new logo. In an attempt to remain visually connected with GCI's new branding we created a new horizontal and vertical logo.



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The new GCS logo incorporates the GCI logo circle and cross with an added triangle element that gives it some distinction. The color scheme and fonts are the same as GCI branding. By adding the triangle element the logo conveys our trinitarian foundation with the cross serving as the center. This is intended to reflect Jesus as the center of the center, revealing who God is and who all creation is in relationship to him. It reflects the seminary's commitment to be "informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith."

There is also a subtle message about WCG's transformation that came by

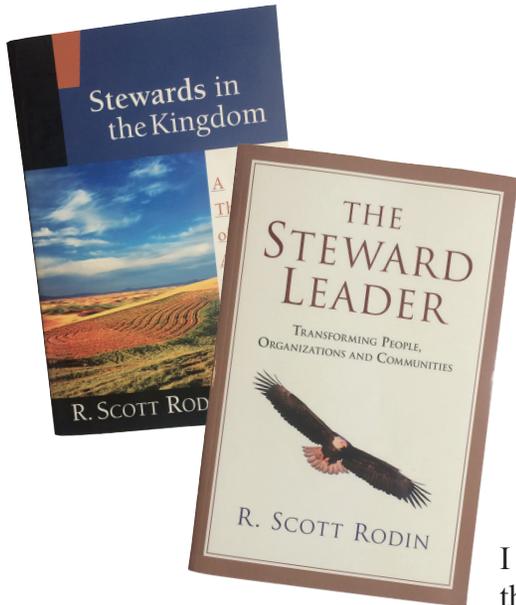
theological renewal and doctrinal repentance as we came to be informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith. Our former emblem was a circle with an upside-down triangle element inside. The new GCS logo serves as a reminder that as we remain focused on Jesus as the center, we are transformed, turned inside out and right side up. This is subtle, but a reminder to remain faithful to Jesus as the center in our mission of "Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry."



**Donations are appreciated to support international and pastoral scholarships. Please give as you are able to Grace Communion Seminary by mail to 3120 Whitehall Park Drive, Charlotte, NC 28278 or donate online at [gcs.edu/donate](http://gcs.edu/donate).**

# NEW GCS Library Acquisition

Earlier this summer, GCS ordered a few new books for our library. One of the books caught my eye, and before I placed it on the shelf, I took the time to read it. Let me tell you about it! It's called *Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life in All Its Fullness*. It is written by R. Scott Rodin, who spent over fifteen years in professional fundraising, and holds a Ph.D. in systematic theology from the University of Aberdeen, studying under James Torrance. So how does professional fundraising tie in with a systematic theology degree? That is



one of the questions I considered as I picked up this book. I anticipated learning about fundraising and generous giving, but I quickly realized this was much deeper – a call to being a steward as a child in the kingdom of God is life encompassing, and life changing. Rodin ties in being a steward to Christian ethics and shows how this is a participation in the life of Christ – true doxology!

## Who may benefit from reading this book?

- Church pastors, who may have questions about how to approach giving in their congregation in a vital, non-legalistic way.
- Leaders (in churches and businesses alike) who may want more insight on managing their responsibilities.
- Lay members who want to more faithfully participate in the triune life.

I leave you with the synopsis from the back cover.

*Too often we think stewardship concerns only the money we give to the church. But in the image of the steward, the Bible offers a perspective on our entire relationship with God. Here we have a full and fresh picture of being Jesus' disciples and living life in all its fullness.*

*R. Scott Rodin unpacks what it means for us to be stewards in the kingdom of the triune God of grace. This theology of the abundant life, which encompasses all aspects of our world, our life and our possessions, begins, appropriately, with the very being of our gracious Creator God. From there Rodin dismantles the myth of the two kingdoms, one that is under God's control and one that is not. In so doing he crafts a portrait of faithful stewards who live as God's children in the one reality that is marked by death behind us and life ahead.*

— Georgia McKinnon, Registrar

## GCS Library

Did you know that GCS has a library of over 4,000 books? These books are available for GCS students and faculty to check out. All you need to do is let me know which book you would like to borrow, and I will ship it to you. A book list can be found on our website. Books can be checked out for up to four weeks and can be renewed unless another student has requested the title. A catalog of our books can be found on our website, in the Public Information page. Books

will be shipped to students at no charge via media mail in the US and the books are returned at the student's expense. International shipping is the responsibility of the student and must be arranged in advance. For full details about our GCS library, please see page 65 of our Academic Catalog found on the homepage of our website.

— Georgia McKinnon, Registrar



GCS Board member Pat Shaw and her husband Eric in the GCS library on a recent visit to the Home Office.



# What Are Our Plans for a M.Div.?

Several students have asked about our plans for offering a M.Div. degree. We always emphasize that we cannot guarantee that we will ever offer a M.Div. However, our survey of alumni and current students shows that there is sufficient interest in this degree, and so we intend to go forward with our plans. There are two major hurdles for this degree:

## 1. Courses.

We felt that we needed to add three courses to our line-up.

a. Since ethics is one of the biggest topics in church and society, we felt that the M.Div. should include a course in ethics. To address this need, Gary Deddo will offer a course in theological ethics in spring 2019. He will use a seminar format the first time, but the course will be developed into a regular course with lectures in future years. Either version will be acceptable for the M.Div., and both are open to students in any of our degree programs.

b. In other seminaries, M.Div. degrees include courses in “field education,” in which academic coursework is integrated with the students’ pastoral work (which we hope is happening in most of our courses anyway). We are thinking of a series of three 2-unit courses. Students would engage in theological reflection on their pastoral work, and pastoral reflection on their academic work.

c. The capstone course for the degree would again involve the

integration of the students’ academic work into their ministry work. Students may take a retrospective look at their GCS courses, and create an annotated portfolio showing how specific papers or courses are relevant to their pastoral work. We need to work out the details on this. The final paper will describe the student’s theology of ministry (e.g., what a pastor should be in relationship to God, the congregation, and society as a whole), and a self-analysis of the student’s strengths and weaknesses in that role.

## 2. Accreditor approval.

Before we can officially advertise the M.Div., include it in our Catalog, or award any degrees, we must receive approval from our accrediting agency, the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC). Before they can approve it, we have to give them the details of the program, and they can select a couple of courses for more detailed scrutiny. They use an outside expert to see if our program is at an appropriate academic level and comparable to what other seminaries offer. We cannot guarantee that they will approve what we have planned.

### When will this happen?

If we work out the details on field ed and the capstone, we can submit the program to DEAC this fall, and it may take six months for them to approve the program or ask for modifications.

### What can students do in the meantime?

They can take courses needed for the degree. If DEAC approves the degree program, those courses will be counted toward the degree. If DEAC

does not approve the program, well, we hope that the student learned something useful from them anyway. We can also point the student to another seminary that is likely (no guarantees!) to accept these courses toward meeting the requirements for entry into a D.Min. program.

### What courses will be needed?

Tentatively, we plan to require:

- a. six theology courses (TH501, 502, 503, ethics, and two electives),
- b. five biblical studies courses (Hermeneutics, the Gospels, the Epistles, at least one Old Testament course, and one elective),
- c. two church history courses,
- d. seven ministry courses (CM501, 503, 504, 510 and 511, plus two electives)
- e. one elective from anywhere in the curriculum
- f. six units of field education
- g. one capstone course

It is a considerable number of courses – a total of 72 units. Units earned in a previous GCS degree will count toward the total. So if you are interested in furthering your GCS education, we advise you to look over your current transcript, see what requirements you have already fulfilled, and then give priority to taking other required courses. If all goes well, we can publicly advertise the M.Div. in 2019, announce a five-year renewal of accreditation in 2020, and celebrate the first M.Div. degree perhaps in 2022.

— *Dr. Michael Morrison,*  
*Dean of Faculty*



## In Memorium: Dr. John McKenna (10/30/1935 – 5/23/2018)

Dr. John McKenna passed from this life into the next one on May 23, 2018, after a life of joy in Christ shared with his wife Mickey. Dr. McKenna served faithfully in his ministry of teaching since coming to Christ in his adult years. He graduated from Princeton University in 1957 with an AB in Physical Chemistry, then completed his Master of Divinity (1979) and his Doctor of Philosophy degrees (1987) at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena. He published his dissertation in 1998: *The Setting in Life for "THE ARBITER" of John Philoponos*. He taught for 23 years (1993-2016) as adjunct professor at Azusa Pacific Graduate School of Theology, where leaders in GCI came to know him.

In 1996 Dr. McKenna moved from Pasadena to Big Sandy, Texas, to become the Chair of the Theology

Department at Ambassador University, where he helped many students learn orthodox Christianity at a time of major changes in church doctrine. When Ambassador University closed in 1997, the McKennas moved back to South Pasadena, where Dr. McKenna served as Senior Editor of GCI publications, becoming Special Assistant to President Tkach in matters of theology in 2001. He was instrumental in introducing GCI leaders to the teachings of Dr. Thomas F. Torrance and Torrance's resourcing of Early Church Fathers on Incarnational Trinitarian theology, which has become foundational to the teachings of the church and seminary. Through the years Dr. McKenna became a personal friend of Dr. Tkach and Dr. Feazell.

In 2003 Dr. McKenna assisted in the development of Grace Communion Seminary, and he started teaching courses on Old Testament studies and on theology and science in the teachings of Thomas Torrance in 2005. He retired from fulltime work in GCI in 2009 and continued teaching and serving part-time on the Board of GCS through 2018.

Dr. McKenna's teachings are summed up in his book *The Great AMEN of the Great I-AM*, which was published by Wipf & Stock in 2008. He submitted much of his work accumulated over many years to GCS, which holds notes on his reflections on articles by his mentor Thomas Torrance, and which will be available to students at the GCS library.

Dr. McKenna was well-loved by his students and fellow professors. I attended many curriculum committee meetings with him, all of which began with informal theology discussions that grew out of his passion for knowing God and living in Christ. He reflected often about his years at Fuller Seminary as a seminarian, Special Assistant to the President of Fuller, and as a faculty member. Most of our discussions brought us back to his relationship with Thomas Torrance and focused on Trinitarian perspectives in Christ. We will miss his incredible contributions as we continue the work he so loved.

— Russell Duke, Liaison Officer

## On the Horizon...

GCS will be participating in a Virtual Recruitment Fair on September 13. This gives us an opportunity to present our information about what we offer to a targeted group of people who are interested in enrolling in

graduate-level seminary study. If you know of anyone who is considering seminary, please encourage them to sign up at this link and visit us during the Virtual Fair on September 13.



[www.careereco.com/events/seminary](http://www.careereco.com/events/seminary)