

“Holding fast
the faithful word”

Contents

Welcome	4
A Historic City-Centre Location	7
Foundational Commitments	15
Statement of Purpose	17
Academic Programmes	23
Faculty	27
Admissions and Financial Information	33
Appendix - Statement on Creation	37

Welcome

The Christian ministry is the most rewarding but also the most demanding vocation. To be called to preach is truly momentous for the men concerned, for the Church and for the world. Faithful preaching and teaching of Scripture is essential to the health of the Church (2 Timothy 2:2, Ephesians 4:11-12). The gifts are sovereignly given by the Holy Spirit. Yet men who are called by God know they will need the best preparation they can possibly get, not merely in terms of high academic standards but even more so in terms of doctrinal orthodoxy, Christian character and effective practical training. The question is, where to get such preparation? Students now have a new option to consider in Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary (WPTS), Newcastle.

WPTS exists to train men for ministry in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition. Our standards are *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Our vision as a seminary is outward looking and we desire to train men for the ministry who will be involved in planting churches. We believe such a focus is in line with the true mission of the Church, which is expressed in our Lord's words "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). Men should be equipped to build the Church through

the ordinary means of grace: prayer, the ministry of the Word, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

In all of this we believe that the fruit of the Spirit must be evident in the lives of our students. Our students must be committed to serving in the local Church just as our faculty are all serving ministers. Moreover experiential Calvinism, combining head and heart, is one of our core commitments. If therefore you are looking for a seminary that combines rigorous Reformed orthodoxy with robust practical piety then WPTS could be the place for you. We are eager to hear from men who have a sense of calling from God to preach and the support of their churches to undertake training for the ministry. If you believe this could be you, then please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Rev. Dr. William M. Schweitzer
Dean and Professor of Systematic Theology

Graduate Testimonial

Nathan Hilton

I am truly thankful to the Lord for my time of study with WPTS. I could not have continued to serve my family and local church were it not for the flexible programmes offered at the seminary. I began my studies whilst working as a nurse and was able to build the study schedule around shifts and family commitments. As I moved nearer to completion, I left nursing work to serve in the local church and study full time. The combination of service at a local church level, and academic study, has helped me to maintain a gospel perspective on all that I have learned and done. Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (GPTS) provides excellent online courses, and having local courses in Newcastle has allowed me to enjoy the collegial aspects of 'on-site' learning. Through the support of Gateshead Presbyterian Church, GPTS, and WPTS, I have been awarded an MDiv.

Studying under men like Dr Schweitzer has given me the unique opportunity to serve within an actual church plant, and begin work on a future church plant. We have seen encouraging growth in our outreach study in Sunderland, the second most populous city in the north-east of England. With the help of God we will shortly see another Evangelical Presbyterian worshipping community in the North East of England, alongside the congregations in Durham, Hexham and Tyneside.





All Saints Church by Kathy Calvert

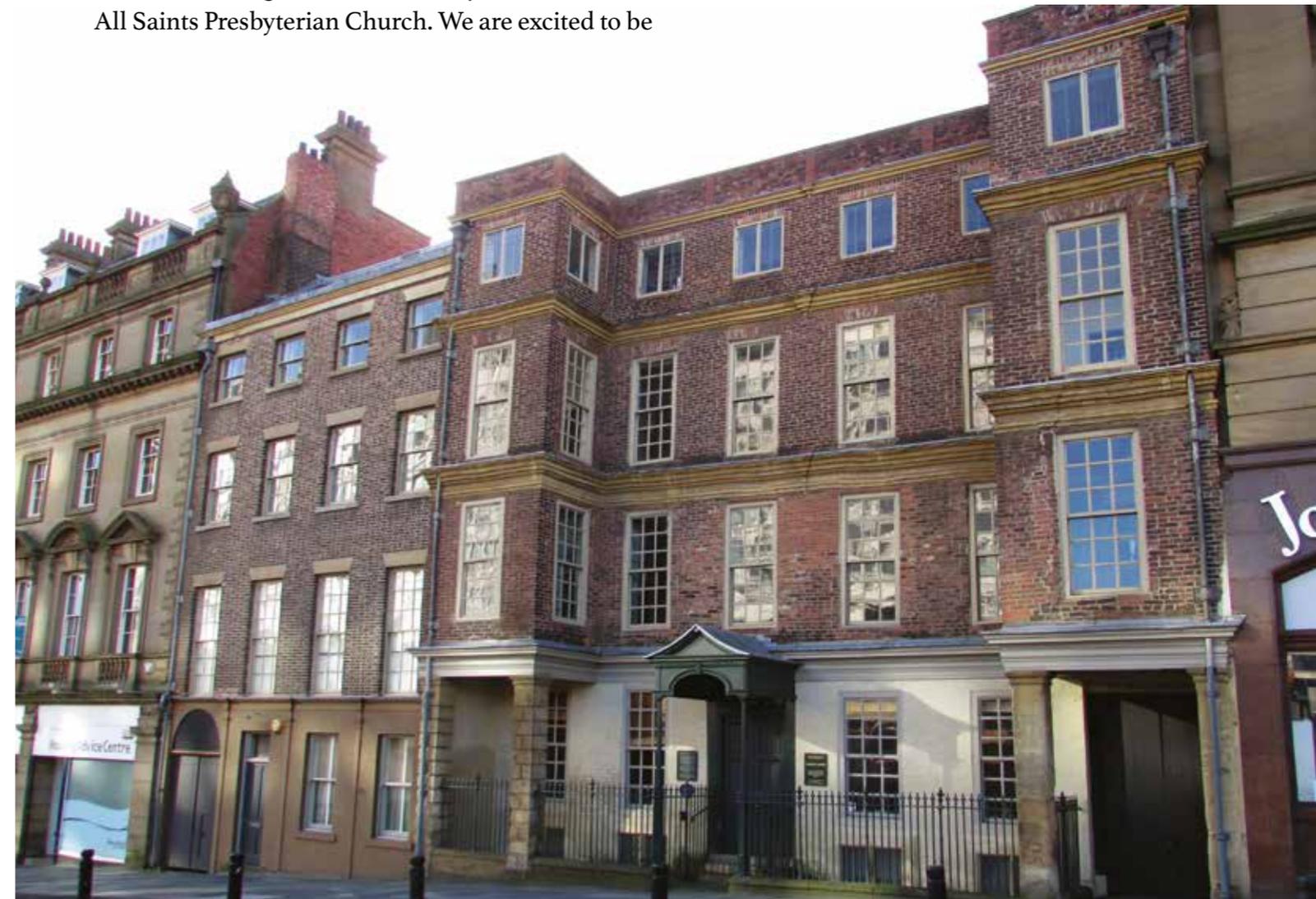
A Historic City-Centre Location

WPTS is located in the centre of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. We presently occupy a floor in Alderman Fenwick House, Pilgrim Street, a beautiful 17th century building.

From autumn 2019 we will be located, God willing, in All Saints Church, an eighteenth century elliptical Church building which will shortly be the home of All Saints Presbyterian Church. We are excited to be

based in Newcastle, a city which once was a centre of Presbyterianism in the North of England. Our prayer is that God will bless our work as a seminary so that Newcastle and the North of England will once again be known for faithful biblical preaching.

Alderman Fenwick's House by Andrew Curtis



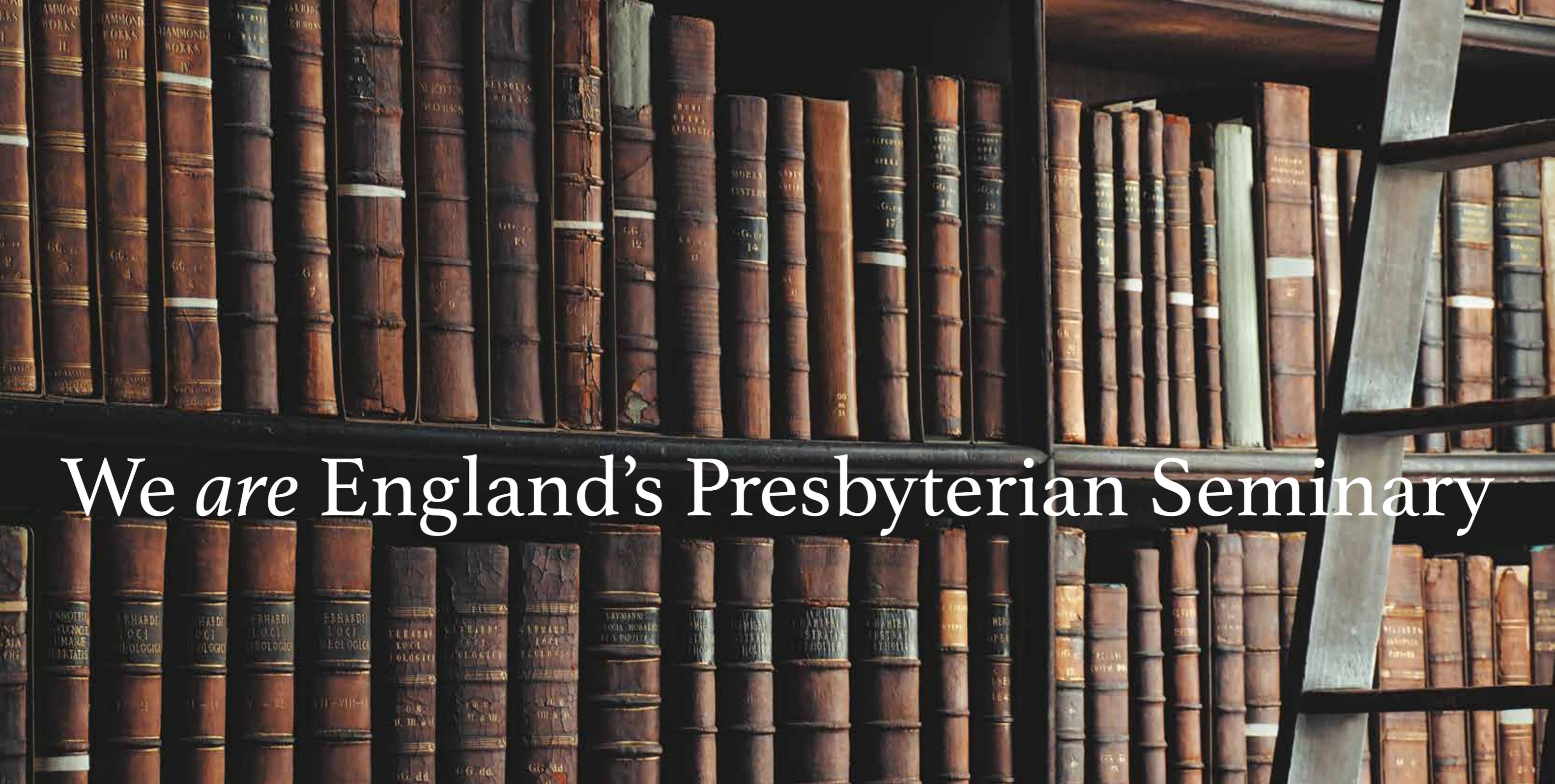


The Quayside in Newcastle featuring the spire of All Saints Church -
(Quayside cityscape from pixabay. pixabay.com/photos/england-newcastle-bridges-2847828)

Being located in Newcastle, the Seminary is also surrounded by beautiful countryside to the North, South and West. The Northumberland National Park is on our doorstep. Hadrian's Wall remains of special historic interest. There is plenty to do featuring fantastic walks, beeches, historic buildings, sporting events and the rich cultural tapestry of North East England.

Hadrian's Wall. Photo by Benjamin Mitchell.





We are England's Presbyterian Seminary

Library

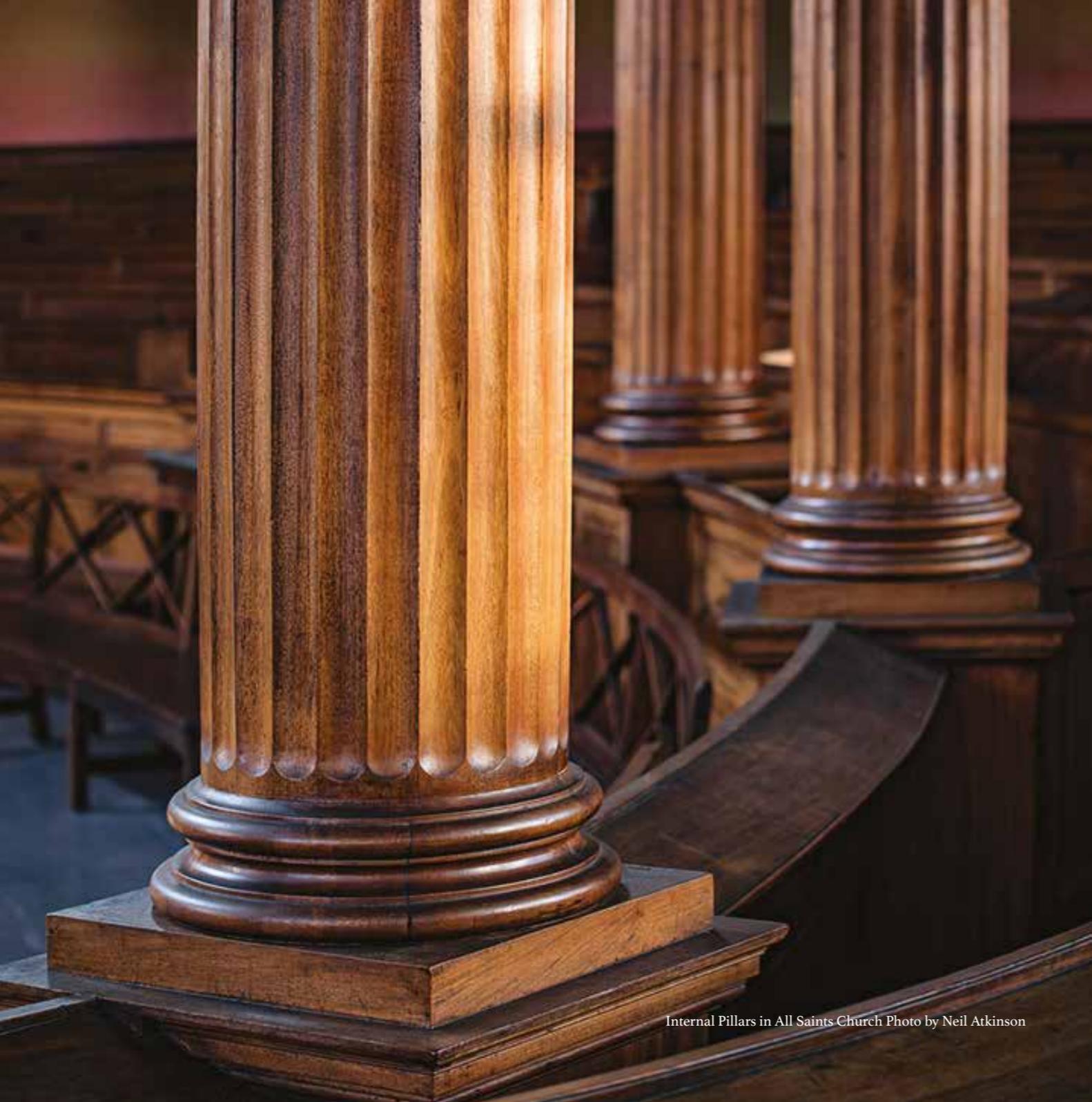


As a new seminary, our library is a work in progress. We are committed to providing excellent library facilities for our students, and believe in the importance of studying the original sources and learning from the insight of theologians past and present. At the moment, we have nearly 10,000 volumes, but we are aiming to grow our collection to at least 30,000 in the medium term. We also have

electronic resources available giving students access to the best possible theological resources. We would like to be a specialist resource for Presbyterianism in England.

If you would like to help in this effort, whether by donating books or providing financial support, we would love to hear from you.





Internal Pillars in All Saints Church Photo by Neil Atkinson

Foundational Commitments

The health of the Church depends on ministers who are competent and faithful in the handling of Scripture. We therefore seek to train men who are wholeheartedly committed to the Scriptures and to the Confessional standards of the Church. We long to see Churches planted, revitalised and strengthened that are robustly biblical and confessional. In order to attain this goal, WPTS adheres to the following foundational commitments

- **Scripture** – We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as originally given, are God’s Spirit-inspired and inerrant words. They are the only infallible rule of faith and practice for the Church. With this commitment, we seek to train men in the original Hebrew and Greek languages of Scripture so that they may read God’s word as originally given. In addition students are taught how to make sound judgments about the original text of the Scriptures. Sound rules of biblical interpretation are also taught as foundational to all study in WPTS.
- **Westminster Standards** – We believe that faith must be confessed publicly and that historic confessions of the Church are immensely valuable for doing so. We therefore joyfully adhere to the Westminster standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism and the

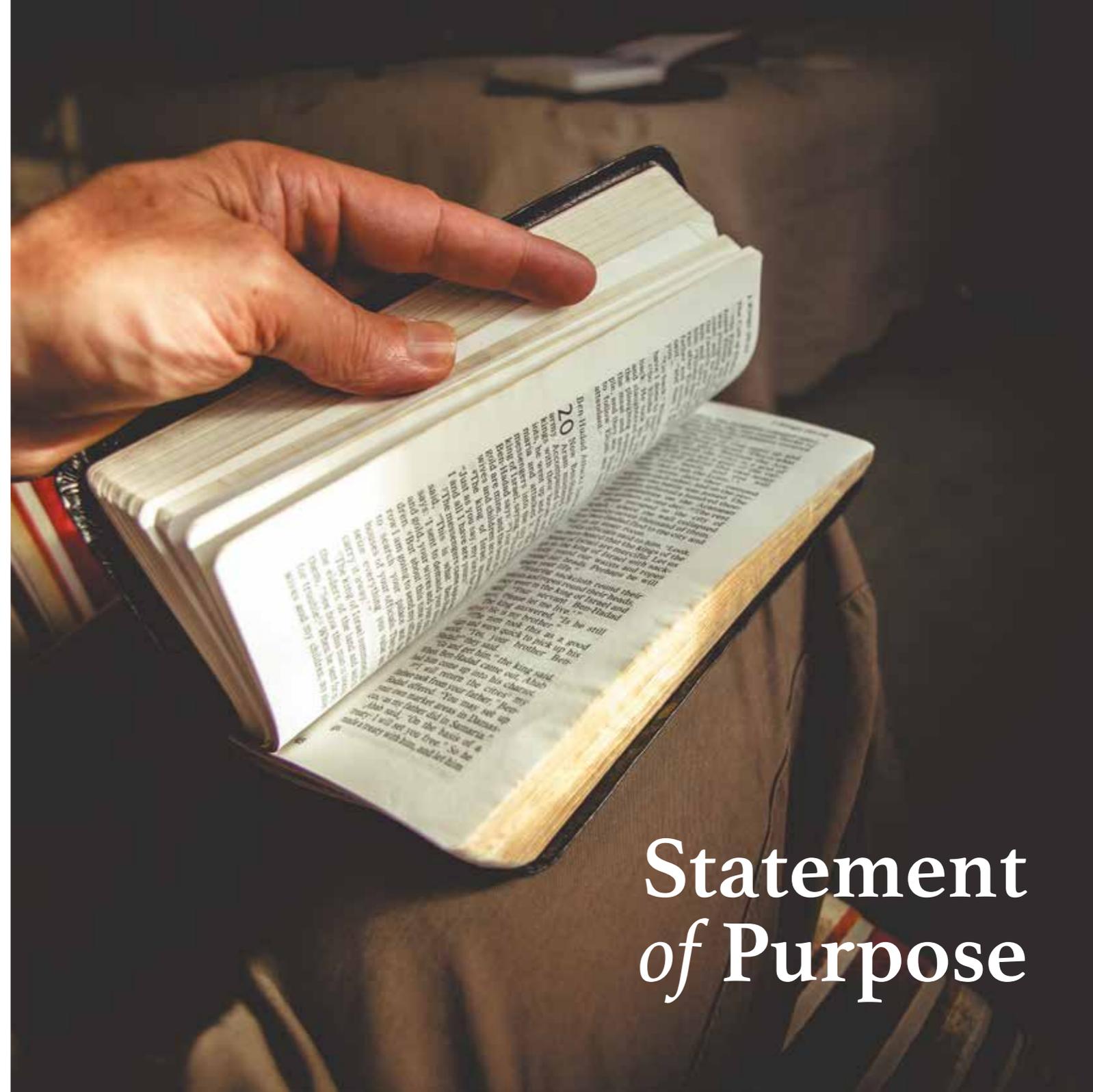
Shorter Catechism). Our faculty annually reaffirm their commitment to these standards. We most certainly welcome men from other denominations who have the support of their elders. These, however, must understand that they will be taught from the perspective of the Westminster Standards. In addition the faculty also affirm their commitment to teaching a biblical view of Creation in six twenty-four hour days, as taught in the Westminster Standards (see Appendix).

- **Experiential Calvinism** – The great twentieth-century Presbyterian theologian John Murray called on seminaries to promote an intelligent piety. Jonathan Edwards argued that true religion consists in genuine affections as well as true doctrine. Our aim at WPTS is therefore to promote instruction that expands the mind, warms the heart and speaks to the conscience. We aim to be as orthodox doctrinally as finite human minds can be and yet as holy as saved sinners can be. It is hoped that this intelligent piety will be displayed in loving and joyful Christian living which displays the fruit of the Spirit.

- **Presbyterianism** – We believe that Presbyterianism is the biblical form of Church government and is necessary for the well-being but not the being of the Church. We are the only Presbyterian Seminary in England. Students from other backgrounds are welcome, but must understand that teaching in the Seminary comes from a Presbyterian perspective. The faculty are all teaching elders in conservative Presbyterian denominations.

• **Ordinary means of grace** – The mission of the Church is to make disciples and teach them to obey all that God has commanded. The means that God has given for accomplishing this are the ‘ordinary means of grace,’ namely the word of God, the sacraments and prayer. These means may be considered weak or foolish in the world’s eyes. Yet with God’s Spirit they are powerful for building the Church. We therefore aim to produce ministers who will focus their time and attention on these means. Such men will labour with compassion, perseverance and full dependence upon God.

• **Regulative Worship** - Scripture teaches us how to worship God. Passages like Deuteronomy 12 tell us not to imitate the world around us, nor to invent new ways of worshipping him. Rather, we should worship the living God as He has instructed us in His Word. (This is called the *regulative principle*, and is in contrast with the normative principle.) Hence we train our men to lead the congregation in praise, prayer and preaching.



Statement of Purpose

Statement of Purpose

Our purpose at WPTS is summed up in the words of Titus 1:9. We seek to train men to fulfil the biblical role for a church leader: “holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

“Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught ...”

Elders need to have been taught the Word. But

knowledge of the Word is not enough. Church leaders are called to *hold fast* to the Word, knowing it to be trustworthy. At WPTS, through rigorous study of Holy Scripture, our faculty seek to inspire confidence in its inspiration, inerrancy, authority, sufficiency and perspicuity. Students for the ministry will be trained to become proficient in the original Hebrew and Greek languages of the Old and New Testaments. Similarly, we believe in rigorously training men in the right system of theology as

revealed in Scripture and set out in the Westminster Standards. Yet this thorough training is to the end that our men might more and more experience and be fortified by God’s grace themselves.

“that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort ...”

To exhort (*parakaleo* / παρακαλέω) means to encourage, or make an earnest appeal. Both are necessary. In the ministry of the Word, we need to hear the earnest appeal of the gospel, as well as be encouraged and strengthened by sound doctrine. Our prayer is that WPTS will produce preachers who know God, know his Word and know how to apply his Word. Such preaching will distinguish between the believer and unbeliever. The latter will, by God’s Spirit working, be convicted of their sin and turn to Christ, finding God’s grace. Believers, meanwhile, will be strengthened by grace and indeed “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

“and convict those who contradict.”

This is not a call for argumentative or polemical leaders. Rather, we need able men who are willing to uphold the truth and refute error – not proudly, but humbly and lovingly.

Academy Model

We are committed to ministers identifying other potential ministers in a local church context. We

therefore pursue an Academy model of instruction. In particular we see ourselves as closely linked to the local church. We believe that having academic accreditation from a University may bring pressures to bear on our curriculum that would be detrimental to maintaining the doctrinal faithfulness which we desire. Like our parent institution, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, we aim to provide a curriculum of equal or higher quality than those offered by University programmes. We consider that recognition of our training by the Church is the ultimate accreditation we need.

Practically, this also means that all our students are expected to be in membership of a local church. It is in the local church that they will primarily learn to use the tools provided by their theological training. It is also the responsibility of the Eldership of their respective congregations to look out for the spiritual and practical welfare of our students. That is not to say that WPTS will not play an essential role in the spiritual and personal development of our students. It is rather to recognise that the proper authority for our students’ pastoral oversight resides in the Church. In summary, we aim to produce men who are theologically astute, biblically literate and practically godly. They will be men who know the times and can apply God’s word to every area of life in a Spirit-empowered way. Such men will also be pastors with a love for the people of God and a desire to reach those as yet on the outside.





Training Church planting ministers for England and Europe

In line with our identity as 'England's Presbyterian Seminary' our mission is to train Church planting ministers for England and Europe. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where WPTS is located, was once a capital for Presbyterianism in England. We therefore prayerfully desire to see Westminster Confession congregations established throughout England, not least in the North. As such we have strong connections to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales. Our faculty are all teaching elders in this or

other conservative Presbyterian denominations. In addition the EPCEW has missionary congregations in Germany and Sweden and hopes to shortly plant a congregation in Switzerland with a graduate of our seminary.

As a Seminary we very much hope that we can contribute to reformation and revival in England and beyond. We recognise that there are other faithful churches engaged in strategic witness in towns and villages where there is little gospel witness. We want to serve the wider Church by producing graduates who can work toward the revitalisation and encouragement of such congregations.



Student Testimonial

Florian Weicken

When I sensed a calling for the ministry, I was looking for a confessional seminary that would give me a solid foundation for the future. The Reformed and Presbyterian teaching I received at the Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary was indeed eye-opening. It answered so many questions that I had on Scripture and Theology. If you are interested in scriptural depth and theological precision, I would wholeheartedly recommend this seminary.



Academic
Programmes

Academic Programmes

The Divinity Programme

We recognise that men presenting themselves for study at WPTS will come, by God's providence, with differing life experiences, backgrounds and gifts. For this reason we offer candidates the opportunity both to do the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) or Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) programme. The courses we offer include core modules that are compulsory for ministerial candidates and various electives that enable greater specialisation in areas that particularly interest students. We cover exegetical

theology, including study of Greek and Hebrew, historical theology, systematic theology, applied theology and apologetics. The full catalogue of our courses can be found on our website at wpts.org.uk/study.

Master of Divinity

The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) is a professional degree programme for the student who holds a B.A. or its equivalent and whose primary career goals are focused on the pastoral ministry. It can be completed in four years of full-time study or six years through part-time study.

Bachelor of Divinity

The Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) is a degree program for the student who, for whatever reason, does not hold a B.A. or its equivalent. We usually restrict this option to men who are over 30 years old. This is in recognition of the fact that men who have attained this age often have more family responsibilities that would make the completion of a prior undergraduate degree difficult. We do, however, have discretion to consider other suitable candidates for study on the B.D. programme. The course requirements of the B.D. program are identical to the M.Div. and can be completed in four years of full-time study or six years part-time.

Westminster School of Theology

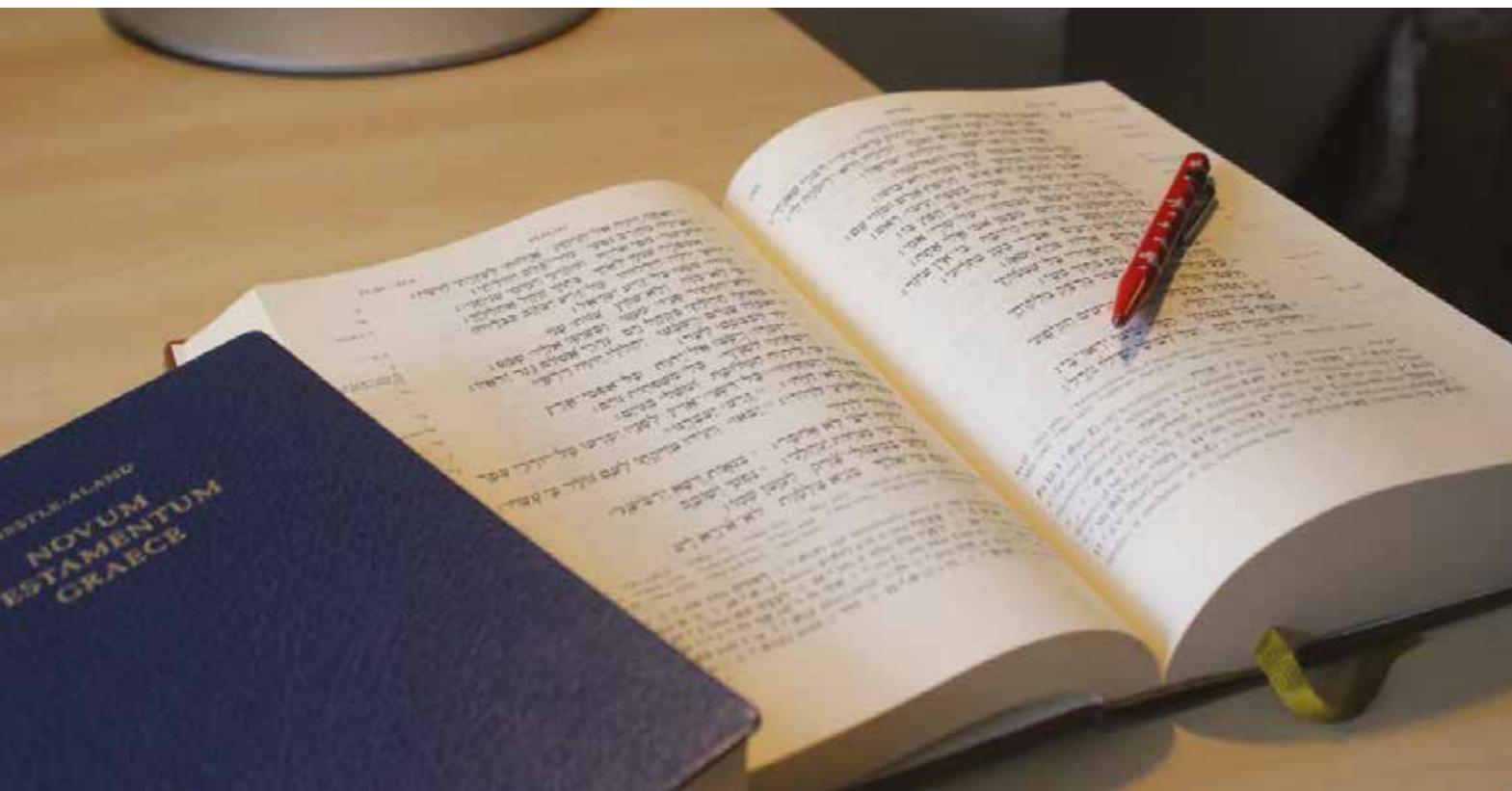
In addition to these options for men training for ministry, we are developing Westminster School of Theology which we plan to launch during the 2019-2020 academic year. If you are a Christian man or woman and wish to deepen your knowledge of God and his word then you are welcome to join this course. We will have modules on basics of Biblical interpretation and systematic theology. Whether you preach, teach children, home school or just desire to dig deeper then this course is for you. If

you are exploring God's call to preach or be involved in church leadership then Westminster School of Theology could serve as a good taster for our M.Div and B.D. options.

We will offer the course over two semesters on a monthly basis. It is anticipated the course will run on Saturday morning from 0900-1200 and will consist of two or three sessions with time built in for fellowship and discussion. Keep an eye out for further publicity, costs and details later this year at wpts.org.uk.

Sabbaticals

We are happy to host sabbaticals for ministers at WPTS. Those visiting the seminary on sabbatical are welcome to audit lectures and to undertake some guided study mentored by members of our faculty. Our faculty and staff have expertise in Biblical Studies, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, Applied Theology and the History and Theology of Mission. All are pastors themselves and recognise the value of pastors having time out to study and be refreshed. We are completely flexible as to how sabbatical study can be undertaken. Please contact Gary McKee, gary.mckee@wpts.org.uk if you are interested in basing your sabbatical at WPTS.





Student Testimonial

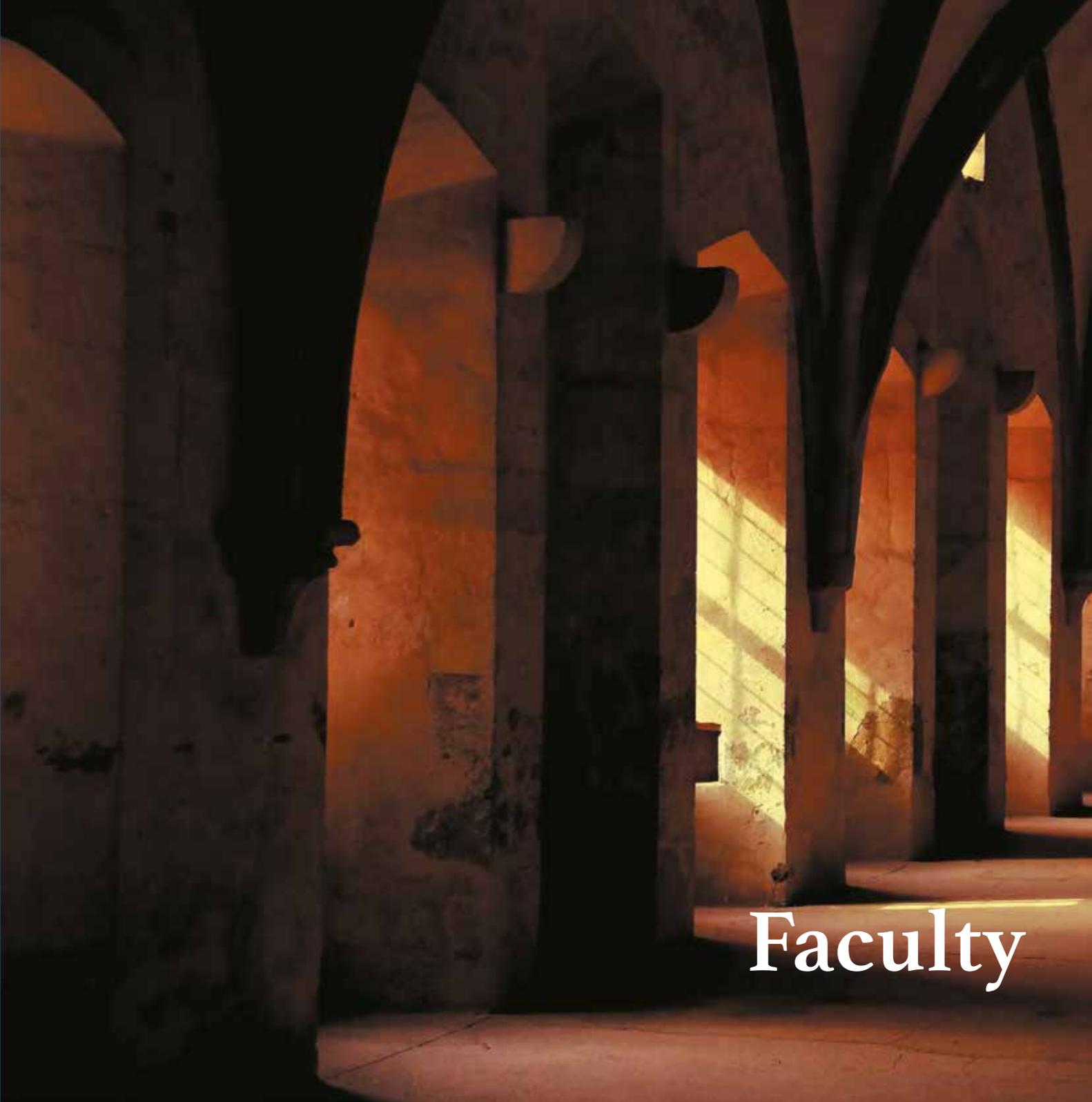
Benjamin Mitchell

I chose to study at Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary for a number of reasons.

First the need: Five hundred years have passed since the Reformation and yet only c.1% of the population of the United Kingdom are evangelical Christians. We could choose almost any major city in the UK and plant the only Presbyterian Church there.

Second: the ethos and standard of the tuition. I found the five commitments of the seminary immensely attractive, especially the emphasis on the 'ordinary' means of grace ministry which adheres to the Regulative principle of worship.

Furthermore the faculty are godly, wise, and zealous men with many years of experience in the pastoral ministry. Their reliance on the Scriptures, Westminster standards, and trusted theologians emanates through their tuition. They expect and instil high academic standards from their students but also piety and a love for God and the flock of Christ. It was this combination, amongst others, that made it easy to enrol in this excellent seminary.



Faculty

Faculty



Revd Dr Kevin Bidwell
Adjunct Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology

Revd Dr Kevin J. Bidwell (BSc, University of Birmingham; MTh and PhD, University of

Wales, Trinity Saint David) is the founding minister of Sheffield Presbyterian Church (Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales). He also serves as a visiting lecturer in Systematic Theology at London Seminary and was chairman of the Yorkshire Reformed Ministerial Fraternal (2012-2015) and moderator of the EPCEW (2014-2015).

Selected Publications

'The Church as the Image of the Trinity': A Critical Evaluation of Miroslav Volf's Ecclesial Model (Wipf and Stock, 2011)

"Losing the Dance: Is the 'Divine Dance' a Good Explanation of the Trinity?" in *Engaging with Keller* (Evangelical Press, 2013)

The Westminster Standards in Modern English (general editor) (Evangelical Press, 2018)



Revd Dr Ian Hamilton
Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology

Revd Dr Ian Hamilton (BA, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow; BD, University of Edinburgh; MPhil,

University of Edinburgh, 1980; DD: GPTS) was from 1999-2016 the minister of Cambridge Presbyterian Church, (Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales). He also serves on the governing board of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and the Banner of Truth Trust. He is also Editor of the *Banner of Truth* Magazine. Dr Hamilton lectures occasionally at other UK seminaries such as Edinburgh Theological Seminary and London Seminary.

Selected Publications

The Erosion of Calvinist Orthodoxy (Christian Focus, 2010)

The Letters of John (Banner of Truth, 2008)

The Faith Shaped Life (Banner of Truth, 2013)

IVP Dictionary of Theology (contributor) (IVP, 1988)

The Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (contributor) (IVP, 1990)

Confessing Our Hope (contributor) (Southern Presbyterian Press, 2004)

Women Elders in the Kirk (contributor) (Christian Focus, 1995)

Sanctification, Growing in Grace (contributor) (Southern Presbyterian Press, 2001)

Calvin, Theologian and Reformer (contributor) (Reformation Heritage, 2012)



Revd Richard Holst
Adjunct Professor of New Testament Exegesis and Biblical Theology

Richard H. Holst (BA, University of Wales, Bangor; Dip Soc, PGCE and MPhil, University

of Wales, Cardiff) was the founding minister of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Cardiff (Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales) until his retirement in 2007, thereafter serving as the interim pastor of First Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Sunnyvale, CA (2011-12). Revd Holst was visiting lecturer in Pauline Studies and New Testament Exegesis at the Wales Evangelical School of Theology until his retirement in 2011. He also serves as chairman of the International Conference of Reformed Churches.

Selected Publications

"Covenant and Christology in Selected Pauline Writings" (University of Wales, 1995)

"Timothy Keller's Hermeneutic: an example for the church to follow?" in *Engaging with Keller* (Evangelical Press, 2013)

"The Meaning of 'Abraham Believed God' in Romans 4.3" (Westminster Theological Journal, 59.2, 1997).



Revd Dr Peter Naylor
Adjunct Professor of Old Testament Exegesis and Biblical Theology

Revd Dr Peter Naylor (BA, University of Wales, Cardiff; DPhil, Oxford University) is

the founding minister of Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Cardiff (Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales). He previously served at Ely Presbyterian Church, Cardiff, Wales. He taught Old Testament Exegesis at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven (1987-1990) and Old Testament and Ecclesiology at Wales Evangelical School of Theology (1999-2010). Since 2001 Dr Naylor has served as the Recording Secretary of the International Conference of Reformed Churches. He is also the editor of the EPCEW's magazine, the *Presbyterian Network*.

Selected Publications

The Language of Covenant: A Structural Analysis of the Semantic Field of Berit in Biblical Hebrew, with Particular Reference to the Book of Genesis (Oxford University DPhil, 1980).

"Numbers," *The New Bible Commentary (21st century edition)* (IVP 1994).

"The Church's Mission: Sent to 'Do Justice' in the World?" in *Engaging with Keller* (Evangelical Press, 2013).



Revd Dr William Schweitzer
Dean and Professor of Systematic Theology

Revd Dr William M. Schweitzer (BA, University of Rochester; BTh, Free Church of Scotland College; MTh and PhD,

Edinburgh University) is the founding minister of Gateshead Presbyterian Church (Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales). He previously served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps and as tutor at Edinburgh University.

Selected Publications

God is a Communicative Being: Divine Communicativeness and Harmony in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards (T&T Clark, 2012)
Engaging with Keller: Thinking Through the Theology of a Popular Evangelical (Evangelical Press, 2013) (Editor)
Jonathan Edwards for the Church: The Ministry and the Means of Grace (Evangelical Press, 2015) (Editor)
“Rage Against the Machine: Jonathan Edwards vs. the God of Deism” (Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology)
“An Uncommon Union: Understanding Jonathan Edwards’ Experimental Calvinism” (Puritan Reformed Theological Journal)
“Re-Thinking the ‘Problem of Evil’” (Banner of Truth)
“Is the Insider Movement Really That Bad?” (Reformation 21)

Staff



Revd Dr Gary McKee
Director of Advancement and Administration

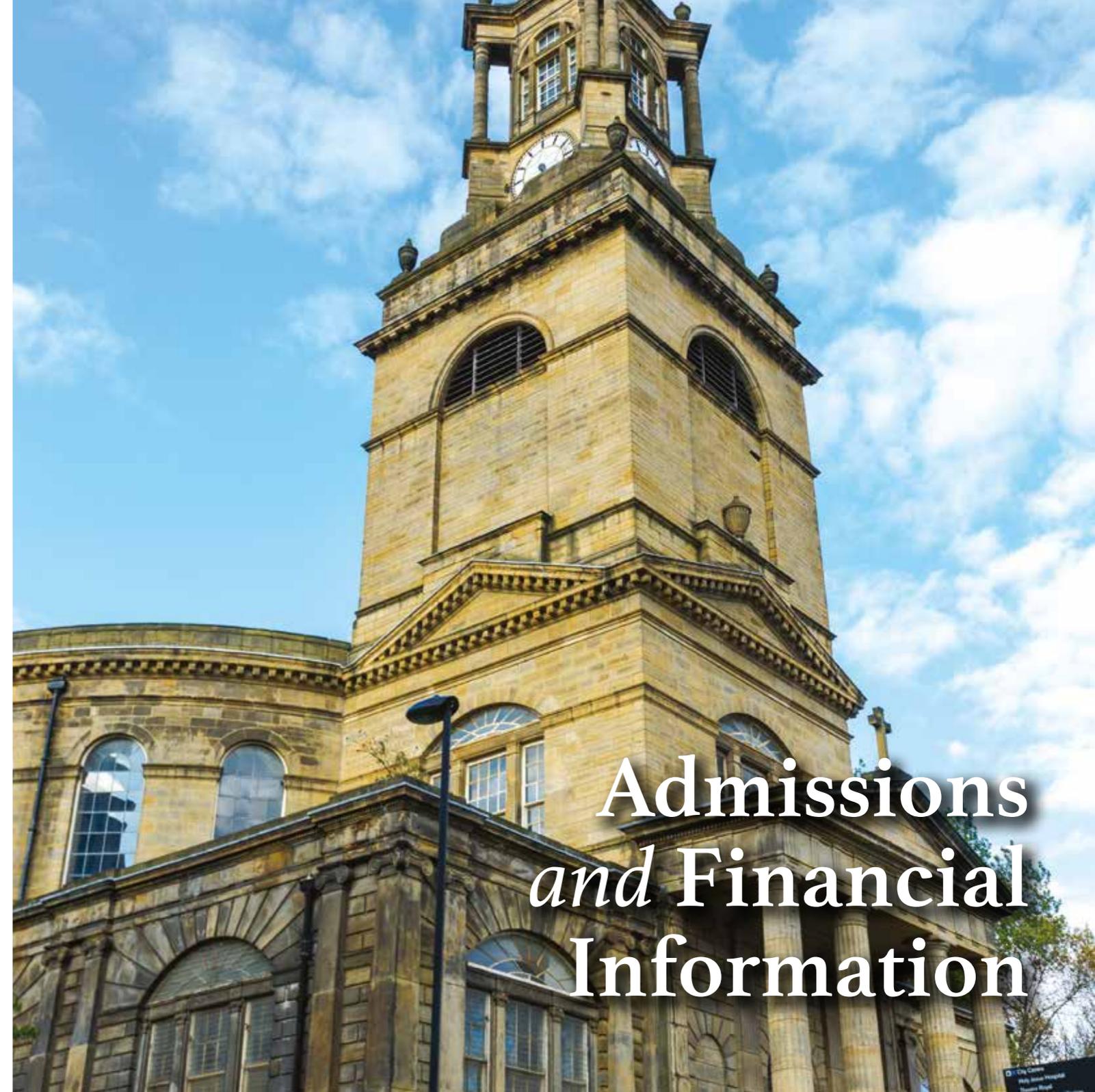
Revd Dr Gary McKee (BSSc and PhD in Geography, Queens University Belfast; BA in Theological Studies, WEST; PGCHE Leeds

Trinity and PhD Theology and Missiology, Leeds University) was formerly the minister at Sunderland Free Church and has recently completed his doctoral studies in Mission Studies at Leeds. Gary is heading the organisational administration, teaching schedules, publicity and recruitment. He has taught Christology at WEST, lectured on the Teesside School of Christian Studies course and on Systematic Theology and New Testament at Leeds Trinity University.



Mr Paul Austin
Librarian

Mr Paul Austin (BA in Music and German, Durham University; MA in Music, Nottingham University; MSc in Information and Library Studies, University of Strathclyde and MDiv, Mid-America Reformed Seminary) has been for many years a missionary deacon of Durham Presbyterian Church serving with O. Palmer Robertson as the librarian and instructor of Greek and music at African Bible University, Uganda. Paul is leading the charge to implement a new digital cataloging system, grow the library towards its goal of 25,000 volumes and secure access to online journal services.



Admissions *and* Financial Information

Admissions and Financial Information

Application process

The Seminary's present capacity means that we currently only accept applications for M.Div and B.D. from men who wish to train for the ministry. Based on careful consideration of scriptural teaching, our conviction is that the offices of Elder and Deacon are to be occupied only by men. However, Westminster School of Theology is open to men and women. In any event, all are welcome to use our library facilities, to attend our public lectures and avail themselves of our online resources at wpts.org.uk

Men applying to the Seminary for any of the degrees must present: 1) a completed CV, cover letter and application form for GPTS (paper or online), with academic and/or employment references, and church references along with the application fee; and 2) transcripts of all previous college and seminary work (if applicable). Applicants for all Master's degrees must hold a B.A., other Bachelor's degree, or in the case of foreign students, an equivalent degree. If an applicant's background seems deficient in one or more areas, he may be required to take foundational courses to compensate for the deficiency. In extraordinary circumstances, men who seek to prepare for the ministry, but who have not attained a B.A. degree, may be admitted to the

Seminary to study for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.).

International students

Students for whom English is not the first language must pass a TOEFL examination with the following scores in order to apply for admission: paper based (570-575); computer based (230); and Internet (88-89). We also accept IELTS with a score of 6.5 or above.

We welcome applications from EU Citizens and others who do not require a visa to study in the UK. However due to Home Office Regulations we cannot presently offer Tier 4 sponsorship for those who require a visa. International students who require a visa may want to consider applying to our sister institution Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in South Carolina, USA, who have permission from the US government to teach international students.

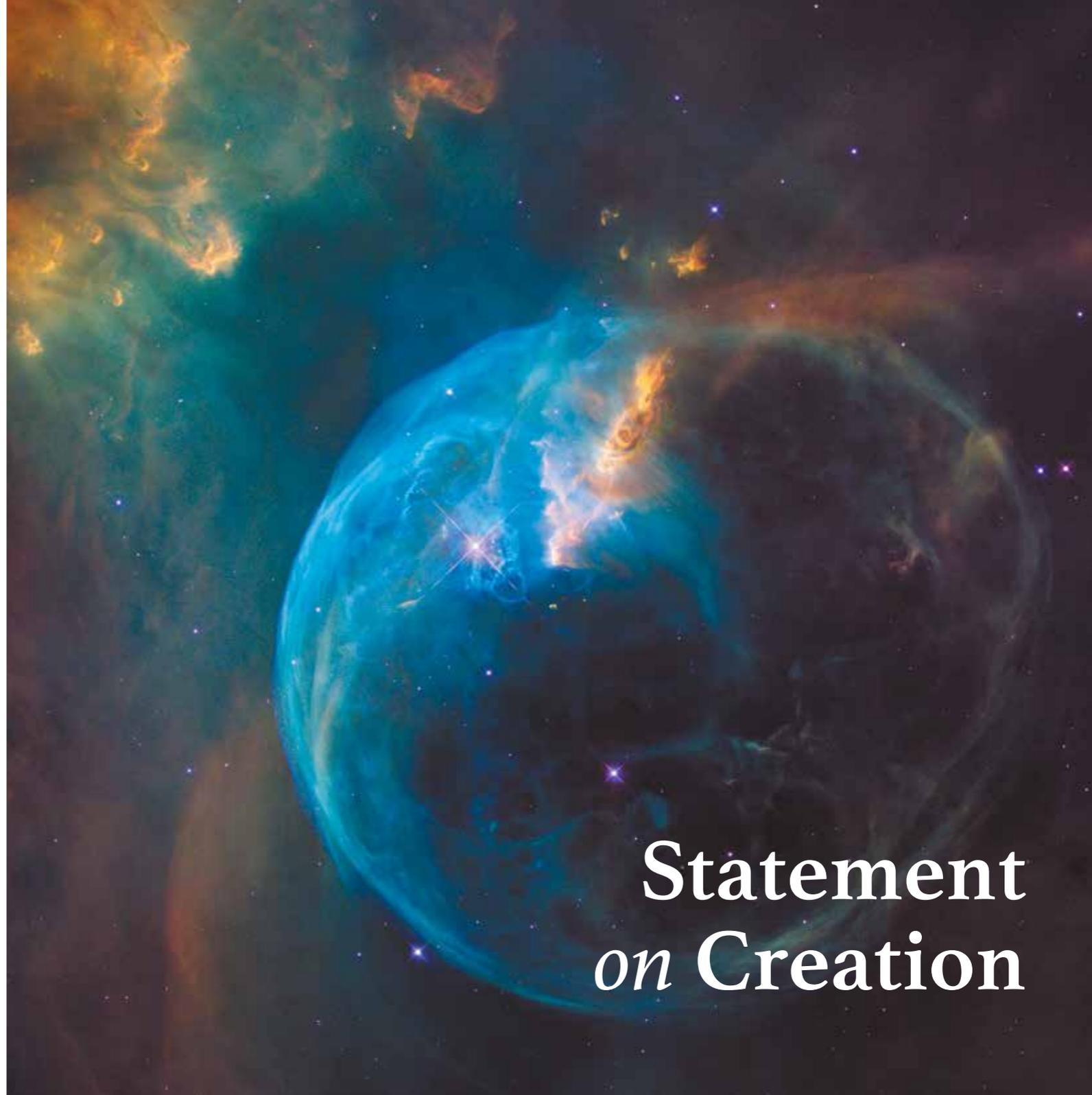
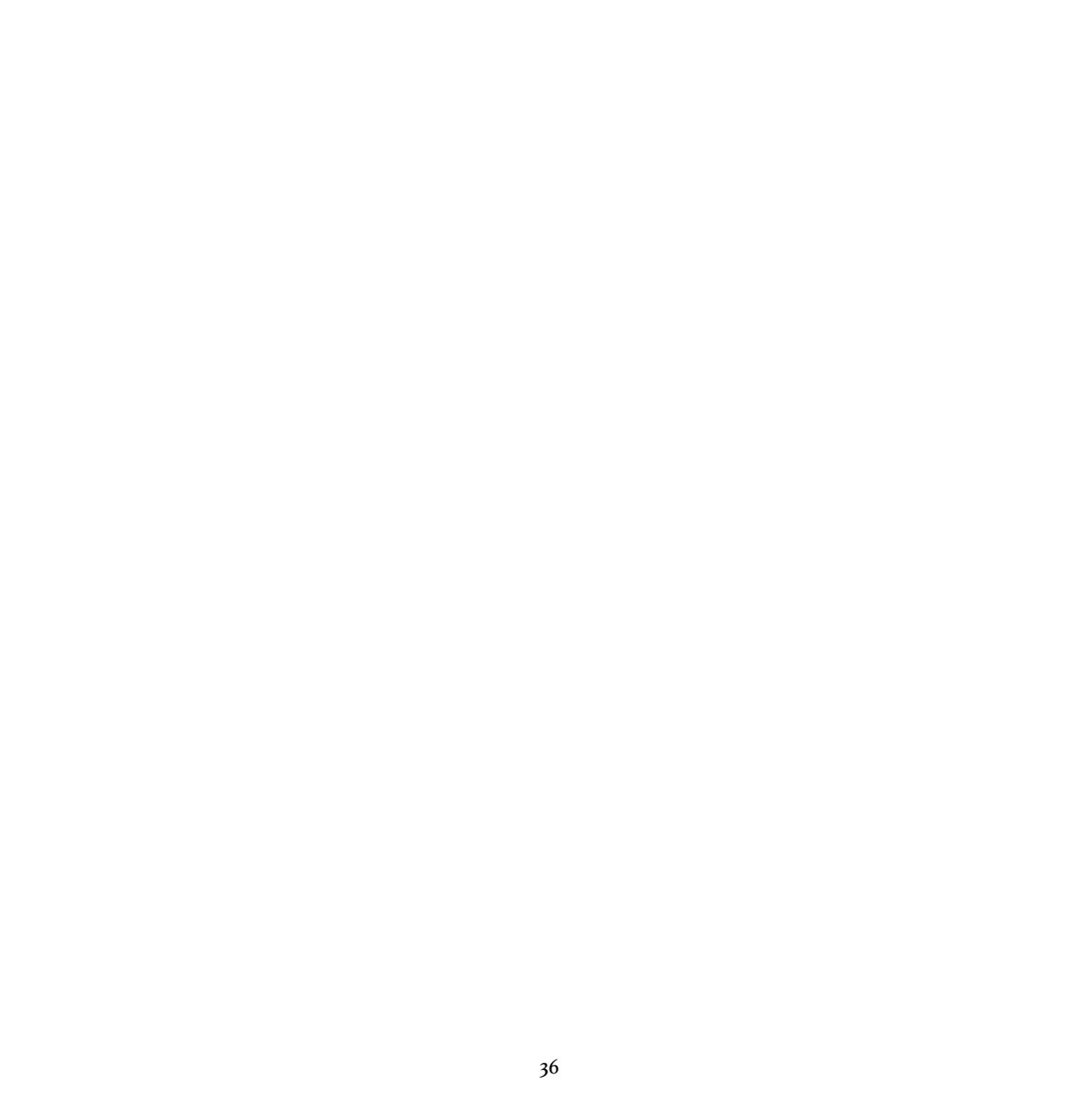
The denomination to which WPTS most closely affiliates, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales, has a small number of Tier 2 or Tier 5 Religious Worker Visas. It may therefore be possible to recruit church workers for specific mission purposes to work alongside local congregations. These could then benefit from doing some study at WPTS.

Internships

Thanks to the generosity of anonymous donors, we are able to offer 3-4 paid internships in any intake cycle. These internships provide opportunities to serve in a local congregation of the EPCEW. For other students who wish to be members and serve in a local EPCEW congregation, we will cover the fees.

Fees

We welcome applications from men in other churches also who wish to continue their service in these churches. For men in this situation we offer competitive fees of £4500 per annum. Such students will need to satisfy us of their ability to pay the fees and support themselves during their studies. Evidence of backing from their local churches and other agencies will be sought.



Statement *on* Creation

Appendix - Statement on Creation

We the faculty of Westminster Presbyterian Theological Seminary wish to acknowledge publicly our view on creation so that the churches and individuals supporting the Seminary may know what to expect from classroom instruction and faculty writing. In so doing, we note the following as preliminaries:

1. the issue of creation has long been considered a fundamental Christian belief, one that distinguishes Christianity from other religions;
2. this particular doctrine has been subject to prolonged attack since the mid-19th century, but continues to be critical for orthodoxy;
3. although the history of belief on this subject is clear, some fine and notable theologians from our communions have held differing views on this subject; and
4. that as a Seminary we are obligated not to teach contrary to the Westminster Standards. The Westminster Standards may be changed by the church courts, but, in our view, the seminaries ought not to be teaching contrary to those Standards, so that when there are changes they will occur as a result of the church's mature deliberation and not in a defacto manner.

Thus, we offer our view on the subject of creation as a seminary that serves a number of Reformed

denominations, holding to the historic Reformed confessions.

- We believe that God's Word is not only inerrant, but that it is also clear to the learned and unlearned alike; thus, we affirm that when God reveals his mind—on creation or any other matter—he is quite capable of making his thoughts known in ordinary language that does not require extraordinary hermeneutical manoeuvres for interpretation.
- Accordingly, we believe that when God revealed his creation as *ex nihilo* and by the power of his word, and when he surrounded the six days of creation with such phrases as “the first day . . . the nth day” and “evening” and “morning”—all phrases which would have been understood in their normal sense by Hebrews in the second millennium BC—that God himself intended to convey that the work of his creation spanned six ordinary days, followed by a seventh and non-continuous day which also spanned 24 hours like the other six days.
- We believe that an accurate study of OT texts does not support the gap theory, the framework hypothesis, the analogical theory, or the day-age view. Indeed, we find the OT creation texts to be interpreted as normal days, and no passage demands that **Genesis 1-2** be re-engineered to yield other interpretations. The long history of rabbinical commentary, the very dating of time by the Hebrew calendar, and orthodox Jewish thought so understands these texts to embrace only days of ordinary length.

- The NT church and Scriptures offered no revisions of this view, and nowhere do those texts themselves advocate framework or day-age views. We certainly believe that if the wording of **Genesis 1-2** required clarification or modification away from the normal meaning of the Hebrew terms, God would so indicate in the text itself, as well as in NT treatments of **Genesis 1-2**.
- The earliest post-canonical commentaries either advocated a 24-hour view of the days (e.g., Basil, Ambrose) or followed Augustine in a somewhat platonic scheme. Augustine's view, however, was that creation occurred instantaneously, and he nowhere enunciated a day-age view or a framework hypothesis.
- Until the Protestant Reformation, only two views were propagated: (1) the Augustinian view (followed by Anselm and John Colet) and (2) the literal 24-hour view (espoused by Aquinas, Lombard, and others).
- The magisterial Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Beza) adopted a uniform view, that of 24 hours, and overtly repudiated the Augustinian view.
- Prior to the Westminster Assembly, the leading Puritans (Ainsworth, Ames, Perkins) and others repudiated the Augustinian view and taught a sequential, normal day view.
- The Westminster Assembly divines either felt no need to comment on the length of days—so clearly was it established—or if they commented, they uniformly (either explicitly or implicitly) adopted

the 24 hour view. With 60-80 divines normally attending sessions, at least 20 of the divines who did comment in other published writings indicate that they only understood the creation days to be 24-hour days (or ordinary days), and none have been found who espoused a contrary view. Specifically, there were no divines who wrote advocating a day-age view or a framework view. We continue to esteem them not only as confessional authors but also as faithful exegetes. We deny that certain scientific theories are so certain as to compel us to reinterpret Scripture on this matter.

- Following the Westminster Assembly, the testimony of the American Reformed tradition (e.g., J. Edwards) followed the tradition of Ussher/Perkins/Ames/The Westminster Divines on this question. No debate about this subject arises until after 1800, as the winds of various European views began to circulate.
- By the mid-nineteenth century, certain leading Presbyterians (C. Hodge, A. A. Hodge, and later Shedd and Warfield) began to conform their exegesis to the ascendant science of the day. We believe that this was a strategic and hermeneutical mistake, as well as a departure from the meaning of terms in the Westminster Standards.
- Other leading Presbyterians (such as Thornwell, Dabney and Girardeau) however, simultaneously resisted efforts to broaden the church on this point, as is documented in the Woodrow trial and decisions.

- Early in the twentieth century, numerous evangelicals – and some seminaries – became overly concessive to a secular cosmology, departing from the historic view expressed in the Westminster standards on this subject.

- Some of us, at earlier times, were willing – due to love of the brethren and respect for esteemed teachers – to declare that the meaning of confessional language on this question was vague. We are no longer able in good conscience to do so. Both the normal meaning of the confessional phrases and the original intent as verified by other writings of the divines is now abundantly clear, with no evidence to the contrary.

- Even the secular confidence in earlier cosmologies is declining in some areas.

- Therefore, we declare our view shares the exegesis of the Westminster divines that led them to affirm that God created all things “in the space of six days” by the word of his power. We also believe that this clear meaning of confessional language should be taught in our churches and pulpits, and that departures from it should be properly safeguarded.

- Accordingly, we reject the following contemporary notions:

1. that **John 5:17** teaches a continuing seventh day of creation;
2. that violent death entered the cosmos before the fall;

3. that ordinary providence was the only way that God governed and sustained the creation during the six days of creation;

4. that extraordinary literary sensitivities must be ascribed to pre-1800 audiences; and

5. that Scripture is unclear in its use of “evening and morning” attached to the days of creation.

We admit that some Christians have been too lax on this subject, and others have been too narrow. Hence, we hope to enunciate in this statement a moderate, historic, and biblical position. Even should other fine men differ with us on this subject, we hereby announce our intent to remain faithful to the teaching of the Westminster Standards and other Reformed confessions of faith on this subject.

To God alone be glory.