

Ryan Center News

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R. C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies Now Open

On April 4, 2003 the R. C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies officially opened its doors. The Center was originally conceived by Dr. George Guthrie, Chairman of the Department of Christian Studies at Union University. He envisioned an "ideal pastor's library" which would contain only the best of the best works available in the field of Biblical study and research. The Ryan Center is the fulfillment of that vision. Nearly 600 newly acquired volumes compose what the Center deems the "best of the best" in the field of Biblical Studies.

The Center is currently open year-round on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00am to 5:00pm. The goal is to be open Monday through Friday once sufficient funding is available.

The Center is named for Bro. R. C. Ryan whose generous donation made possible the physical space in which the Center is housed. (See web-site for more information on R.C. Ryan.)

The Center is designed to be used by local area pas-

tors and lay-leaders in addition to students and faculty at the university. The majority of the funding comes from individual, private donations.



Center director Dr. Ray Van Neste speaks with Lee Tankersley, pastor of Cornerstone Community Church in Jackson, TN.

Ryan Center Houses 1615 Geneva Bible

Old and worn, with a non-descript musty cover and brittle pages, the 1615 edition of the Geneva Bible is in excellent condition considering the fact that it has been read for almost 400 years. The bible was purchased in Scotland with funds donated by David and Linda Shoaf, friends of the university and members of First Baptist Church Horn Lake, MS.

Visit the Center's web-site for a streaming audio recording of Geneva bible expert Dr. Carl Trueman.
www.uu.edu/centers/biblical

This centuries-old volume serves as a centerpiece and model for the Ryan Center and exemplifies the Center's mission. "Just as the Geneva Bible facilitated the spread of God's word to the common people 400 years ago, today Union's Center for Biblical Studies encourages the study and use of the Bible," explained Van

Neste. "Many people do not use or really try to understand the Bible; our mission is to provide resources to the community for better understanding of the Scriptures."



Dr. Ray Van Neste holds the Center's 400 year old Geneva Bible

Ryan Center's First Bi-Annual Conference: "The Power and the Promise of the Word"

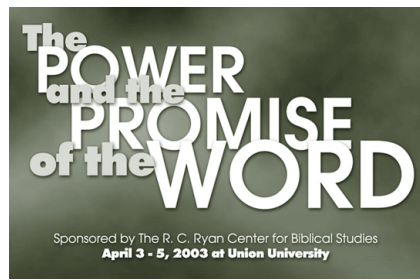
The R. C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies at Union University hosted its inaugural conference, themed "The Power and the Promise of the Word" April 3-5. Featured speakers for the conference included Daniel I. Block, Robert Smith Jr., Grant R. Osborne and Sanders Lane Willson. Dr. Willson, senior minister at Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis, spoke on "The Divine Power of Christian Preaching." He said he is disappointed by the lack of distinct Christian teaching in sermons he hears on radio and television. He encouraged ministers to work harder at presenting scriptural messages. "To mine the jewels of God's word takes time," he said. "In the end, it is worth it."

According to Willson, ministers must provide an example of teaching built on the context and structure of the scriptures. "You are not only teaching a truth," he said. "You are teaching a method of discerning truth."

Daniel Block, associate dean at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, sought to

persuade both ministers and the laity to begin with the Scriptures rather than prepared materials. "There is no substitute for doing your own work," he said. "By doing this, we learn more than reading four commentaries." According to Block, "This is not just an academic exercise; this is a divine command."

Union's own Dr. George Guthrie delivered a series of lectures designed to introduce the many tools and resources for Biblical studies. **Complete audio and video recordings of all of the conference sessions are available.** If you are interested, contact Brian Denker, bdenker@uu.edu, or call at 731.661.5579



Combined Publisher's Donations Top \$10,000.00

Many publishing houses have graciously donated all of the volumes which the Center for Biblical Studies requested from them. Currently the grand total of book donations equals \$10,459.00. We have re-

ceived large donations from Eerdmans, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Zondervan, Baker Book House, Crossway Books, Broadman and Holman, Tyndale Publishers, Soli Deo Gloria, Presbyterian & Re-

formed, and The Center for Church Reform. The Ryan Center is also thankful for the full support we are receiving from Kregel Publishers.

Center Web Site Is Excellent Research Tool: www.uu.edu/centers/biblical

The Ryan Center has put together an excellent web-site as part of Union University's main location on the world wide web. One of the most exciting features is the "Bible Study Helps" page which provides links to many of the best Biblical studies sites on the web.

The site also contains the Center's complete "Best of the Best" list which can be an invaluable resource for pastors and Sunday school teachers who are trying to decide which books to purchase for their own libraries.

The most popular feature

on the web site is the Book Review page. Here professors have posted their insights and opinions on a number of important books.

Updates are regularly being added to the site in order to provide vital information on all that the Center has to offer.

Meet the Staff of the Ryan Center



Dr. Ray Van Neste serves as the Director of the Center for Biblical Studies. He has a Ph.D. in New Testament from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland and is

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies at Union University.

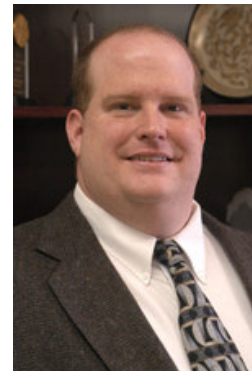
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Dr. George Guthrie serves as Senior Fellow of the Center. He is the Department Chair and Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible at Union University. He has a Ph.D. in New Testament from Southwest-

ern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a well published author in Biblical Studies.

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Brian Denker serves as the director's assistant for the Center for Biblical Studies. He received the Master of Divinity degree from Southern Seminary.

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Local Area Ministers Using Ryan Center for Study

A minister at Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson, Tennessee, Ben Mandrell has many positive comments, "The Center is quickly becoming my favorite place to go and prepare my messages. As a young minister, I do not have a vast supply of commentaries and resources so it has been a true blessing to go to the center and have it all at my fingertips. It is

small enough that I can find everything I am looking for, yet large enough to have everything I need.

I am thankful to have stumbled upon it." Lee Tankersley, pastor of Cornerstone Community Church, states, "The Center has

proved to be a useful resource in providing commentaries, theological journals, and other Biblical

materials in an atmosphere where a pastor is able to equip himself and labor in rightly dividing the word of truth."

*"The Ryan Center for Biblical Studies is quickly becoming my favorite place to go and prepare my messages."
-Ben Mandrell*

Ryan Center Soon to Publish "Best of the Best" List

Hundreds of individual commentary volumes are available for purchase these days, but what are the four or five best commentaries on each book of the Bible? This question has been answered by the faculty of Union University's Department of Christian Studies. The Ryan Center has produced a list of the profes-

sor's recommendations. The list is essentially a "pastor's ideal reference library." The Center's web-site contains the list and soon the Center will publish a catalog of these recommendations. The catalog will be available at Jackson's LifeWay Book Store and from the Center directly.

"What are the four or five best commentaries on each book of the Bible?"



Union University
1050 Union University Drive
Jackson, TN 38305

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 608
Jackson, TN

Nearly 400 people each month
access our web-page at:

www.uu.edu/centers/biblical

Here you can listen to an audio
recording of Dr. Van Neste's
vision for the Center!

Upcoming Center Events and Offerings

- Once donations make it possible, a multi-part video series will be produced by the Ryan Center. The videos will contain lessons from Dr. George Guthrie on how to study the Bible. The series will be useful for churches and small groups who want to provide an inspiring introduction to the many tools and procedures useful in gleaning all of the good fruit the Bible has to offer.
- Local pastors have requested that the Center provide a "pastor's forum," a series of meetings in which area church leaders can meet together to discuss difficult theological issues related to pastoral duties. For more information contact Ray Van Neste at 731-661-5532 (rvannest@uu.edu).

A Word From Our Senior Fellow...

When the Apostle Paul traveled to Berea on his second missionary trip, he found people who "were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, *for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily . . .*" These people, of course, were not yet believers, but they accepted Christ soon after. The Center for Biblical Studies was born out of a conviction that study of God's Word is foundational not only for a person's understanding of the Gospel, but also for each believer's walk with God, and for each church's ministry. Our hope and prayer is that we can help raise up a generation who will receive "the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily." We ask you to pray and work with us to that end. Thank you for your interest in the Center.

-George H. Guthrie, Senior Fellow

Special projects of the Center depend on individual, private donations.
For more information contact Dr. Ray Van Neste at 731-661-5532 (rvannest@uu.edu)