

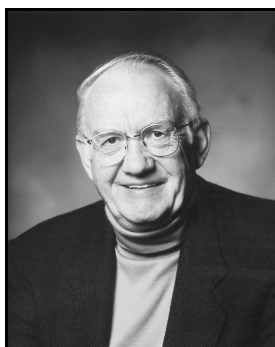
# Ryan Center News

Volume 2

Fall 2004

## Gordon Fee & Michael Card to Headline Center's 2005 Conference

The Ryan Center for Biblical Studies is pleased to announce that the 2005 Conference to be held April 14-16 will



Dr. Gordon F. Fee

feature two nationally known speakers and authors. Dr. Gordon Fee will be the plenary speaker and Michael Card will sing and teach breakout sessions.

**Dr. Gordon Fee** is professor emeritus at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He has published widely in the field of New Testament Studies. He is the general editor of the widely acclaimed New International Commentary on the New Testament (Fee authored the volumes on Philippians and First Corinthians).

Among other things, he has written

two excellent guides to bible study entitled *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, and *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (both co-written with Douglas Stuart) published by Zondervan, and the highly praised *God's Empowering Presence: The Spirit of God in the Letters of Paul* published by Hendrickson.

Ryan Center director Dr. Ray Van Neste stated, "Gordon Fee is one of the best biblical commentators writing today!"

Dr. Fee is a highly sought conference speaker. He has given the annual New Testament lectures at numerous seminaries and has given the Staley Distinguished

Christian Scholar lectures on many college campuses. An ordained minister, Dr. Fee is well known for his manifest concern for the renewal of the church. Dr. Fee is married and has four married children.

**Michael Card** has become an established and respected figure in Christian music and publishing. In a career that spans 25 years, he has authored or co-authored 9 books, recorded over 20 albums, hosted two radio programs, written for a wide range of magazines including a medical journal and started his own magazine. Card's passion for careful and insightful Bible study can be seen in the lyrics of his songs. Van Neste, Center Director, said, "I remember taking an exam on the letters of Paul during college,



Michael Card

and afterwards while listening to Michael Card's album on Paul I realized that all the questions on my exam were dealt with on that tape!" Center Senior Fellow, Dr. George Guthrie, said, "Michael Card is not an entertainer. He is a minister who models deep reflection on the Word of God as the source of his life and ministry. I am thrilled he is going to be with us."

"Gordon Fee is one  
of the best Biblical  
commentators  
writing today!"

More information on registering for the conference will be forthcoming. Send all inquiries to [bdenker@uu.edu](mailto:bdenker@uu.edu).

## Ryan Center Plans Mission to Ghana

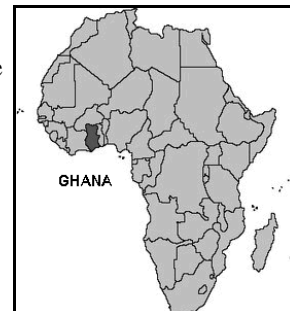
This January the Center will help sponsor its first international venture. Center director, Ray Van Neste, plans to go to Ghana on January 13-24 to lead a seminar on biblical interpretation and exposition for pastors and church leaders.

The planned trip is the result of a request from a Ghanaian pastor who met with Van Neste while in Jackson this summer. The pastor told Van Neste, "We have many who preach emotions, but not many who preach the mind of God. As a result we have many growing in 'church' but not many growing in 'Christ.'" He went on to ask Van Neste to come and provide training for pastors to make sure they draw from the text what it is saying and to apply those truths to the hearts and minds of the

people.

"Our mission statement from the beginning has included, '...throughout the world,' said Van Neste. "This will be our first chance to fulfill the 'throughout the world' clause and hopefully it will be the first of many such endeavors."

Dr. Phil Eyster of Evangelistic Projects International ([www.epiusa.com](http://www.epiusa.com)) arranged the meeting between Van Neste and the Ghanaian pastor and will also coordinate the trip.



## Explorer's Bible Study group to Attend Ryan Center's 2005 Conference

The Ryan Center is pleased to have the Explorer's Bible Study joining us for our next conference. The EBS is an interdenominational ministry with headquarters located 35 miles west

The Explorer's Bible Study has over 120 classes throughout the United States and Puerto Rico with thousands of current and past members.

of Nashville in Dickson, Tennessee. Tom and Nellie Constance founded the Bible study in 1972. Mrs. Constance helped establish and teach a women's *Bible Study Fellowship* (BSF) class for 10

years. During that time, she saw the power and effectiveness of this wonderful study method. There were many members of the class who were traveling over 60 miles each way to attend the Bible Study. These women approached Mrs. Constance and asked if she would be willing to write similar curriculum to have available in their communities. The need for in-depth study materials for use in smaller towns and communities where BSF was not available became the driving force for what would become *Explorer's Bible Study*.

Within 5 years, there were over 60 classes established throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. In 1977, the ministry was formally organized as a non-profit ministry. Today they have over 120 classes with thousands of current and past members who have grown as they stud-

ied, shared, and applied the Word of God to their lives.

The Explorers will hold their National meeting in Jackson on Thursday and Friday prior to the Ryan Center's conference, so their members can attend both events.

**Explorer's Bible Study**  
P.O. Box 425  
Dickson, TN 37056-0425

**Phone:** 615-446-7316  
**Toll Free:** 800-657-2874  
**Fax:** 615-446-7951

[www.explorersbiblestudy.org](http://www.explorersbiblestudy.org)

## Ryan Center Hosts British New Testament Scholar



The Ryan Center for Biblical Studies this past fall sponsored a visit to Union University by Dr. Simon Gathercole, Lecturer in New Testament at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Dr. Gathercole is the author of the recently published *Where is Boasting?* (Eerdmans), a critique of the so-called "New Perspective" on Paul, an increasingly popular view among scholars which significantly reinterprets Paul's writings.

Dr. Gathercole spoke in several classes on a variety of topics from hermeneutics to the life of Christian scholarship. The two key lectures however focused on the New Perspective. In Dr. Van Neste's Pauline Epistles class, Dr. Gathercole summarized the

current state of study for the students introducing them to the key issues in the debate. In an afternoon public lecture Dr. Gathercole again briefly summarized the New Perspective position and then focused on implications of the New Perspective which will be harmful for the church.

Dr. Van

Neste, Center Director said, "It is a

great opportunity to have a scholar of this caliber on campus to speak to our students and to help us, the professors, keep current in key issues of debate. It was especially

helpful to have one of the experts on such a hot topic address the pastoral implications of this debate. This models well our concern here at Union that scholarship is

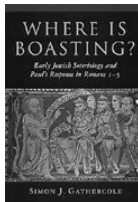
done for the good of the church - that God might be glorified in His church (Eph. 3:21)."

Dr. Gathercole said he was impressed with the level of interest and interaction from Union students. He was also complimentary of the work of the Ryan Center, stating, "The Ryan Center is a fine example of an initiative for

pastors and scholars, with a great library and an excellent environment in which to read and think. Union University is to be congratulated for the idea and drive behind this great resource."

The Ryan Center hopes to continue hosting visits from prominent biblical scholars to enhance the learning of students, professors and area pastors.

"The Ryan Center is a fine example of an initiative for pastors and scholars, with a great library and an excellent environment in which to read and think."



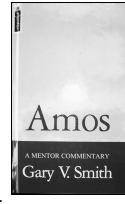
## New Union University Professor Donates to Ryan Center



Dr. Gary V. Smith, new Professor of Old Testament at Union University recently donated 21 books from his personal collection to the Center for Biblical Studies. Most appear on the Center's "Best of the Best" list and are a welcome addition to the collection.



Smith previously served as Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. He recently translated the book of Micah for the Holman Christian Standard Bible. His publications include *Hosea, Amos and Micah* (NIV Application Commentary), *Amos* (Mentor



tary) and *The Prophets as Preachers*. He has contributed to *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, Illustrated Bible Encyclopedia, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, and The Disciple Bible*. The Center is grateful for his generous donation and delighted by his addition to the Union University faculty.

## Ryan Center to Host Dr. Barclay Newman

This fall the Ryan Center will be pleased to host a visit by Dr. Barclay Newman, Union alum and Senior Translations Officer for the American Bible Society. Dr. Newman has done extensive work in Bible translation and has authored *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* and translator's handbooks on Judges, Matthew, John, Acts, Romans, and Jeremiah.

Dr. Newman holds a Ph.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has done further study at Hebrew Union College; the Summer Institute of Lin-

guistics at the University of Oklahoma; and the Hartford Foundation in Connecticut.

He will speak in Greek classes on October 18-19. He will also deliver a lecture at 3:00 pm on the 19th in room 325 in Jennings Hall. The public is invited. Following the lecture there will be a reception in the Ryan Center where Dr. Newman will be inducted

as a Fellow of the Center for Biblical Studies in recognition of his contributions to Biblical studies as a Union alum.

"We want to celebrate the work of one of our own," said Dr. Van Neste, "as well as to introduce to the current generation of students a fine example of one who has gone before them, pursuing academic excellence for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom."

"We want to celebrate the work of one of our own."

## West Tennessee Pastors Give High Praise to Ryan Center



Sandy Willson, senior pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tennessee praised the Center, saying, "I am thrilled with the creation of the Ryan Center for Biblical Studies. It addresses the most important issue of our time: the encouragement of pastors and lay leaders in the study and faithful exposition of God's Word. May God bless and use this strategic ministry."

Grover Gunn, pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Tennessee recently sent out a message to fellow pastors encouraging them to make use of the Ryan Center for Biblical Studies. "It is a comfortable room with available computers and a very nice collection of commentaries and other Bible study tools," wrote Gunn. He recommended to the recipients that they pass along the information to other pastors in a wide variety of denominations.

"It addresses the most important issue of our time."

[www.uu.edu/centers/biblical/bookreviews](http://www.uu.edu/centers/biblical/bookreviews)

## Center's Book Review Web Page Gaining Popularity

Recently the Ryan Center's book review web page has featured reviews by Center Director, Dr. Ray Van Neste and by Union's English Department Chair, Gene Fant.

Now the Center is pleased to announce the addition of numerous reviews by three new contributors. Each one is a highly respected and well published New Testament scholar.

Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner is Professor of New Testament Interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He has contributed reviews relating to Pauline theology, the New Perspective on Paul, and New Testament background, as well as many others.

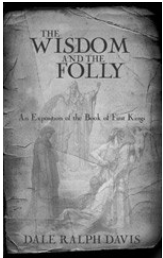
Professor I. Howard Marshall is honorary research professor of New Testament exegesis at the University of Aberdeen in Aberdeen, Scotland where he taught from 1964 to 1999. He is the author of many academic articles and books including commentaries on the Greek text of Luke (NIGTC)

and the Pastoral Epistles (ICC). Professor Marshall is widely considered one of the top evangelical New Testament scholars in the world today. His reviews will be posted soon.

Dr. Simon Gathercole is Lecturer in New Testament at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Gathercole visited the Center this past year (see page 2). He has contributed reviews on a wide range of topics including electronic reference resources, Pauline theology and New Testament backgrounds.

The book review page of the web site has been viewed more than 700 times in a single month recently. The page provides a tremendous service to researchers on the world wide web who need a reliable, evangelical perspective on the quality of books being published today.

## BOOK REVIEW:



### **The Wisdom and the Folly: An Exposition of the Book of First Kings**

by Dale Ralph Davis (Christian Focus Publications, 2002) ISBN: 1857927036

Dr. Ralph Davis, Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS, has provided yet another fine exposition of an Old Testament book (he has previously published expositions of Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel with the same publisher). Davis describes his work in this way: 'As with my previous commentaries, I seek to grasp the theological nerve of the text and cast it in expository form, without being allergic to application' (p.7).

It is apparent that Davis is well informed in the scholarly discussion of First Kings, but his purpose is not to display his learning. Rather, based on a full awareness of the issues in the text, he seeks to expound the text properly incorporating some illustrations and application. In this way Davis provides a model for preaching from First Kings - a task which often appears quite daunting. On the one hand he does not get bogged down in details failing to get to what God is saying in the text

This is a sample book review from our website. The site contains brief reviews (like this one) as well as more detailed reviews. The books reviewed range from more technical studies, to resources for preaching, to Christian living to books for children. Log on for more :

([www.uu.edu/centers/biblical/bookreviews](http://www.uu.edu/centers/biblical/bookreviews))

and what we are to do about it. On the other hand he shows that carefully reading of the text is necessary in order to actually grasp what God is saying rather than reading in whatever we want to find. I especially appreciated his sensitivity to structure and flow of thought as well as his careful connections across the covenants.

I think pastors will find this volume very helpful in the task of preaching (as I have). As always, one should read more than one commentary in sermon preparation. So pick a more technical one to get at some more details and then read this one for help in pulling it all together within a sound theological framework and a heart for God and His people.

Review by  
Dr. Ray Van Neste  
Union University

## Portrait of Former Professor, Bible Translator Donated to Ryan Center

Story by **Tabitha Frizzell**

The last surviving child of the late Dr. Charles B. Williams has commissioned and donated a portrait of her father to Union University, which will hang in the university's R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies.

"Charles Williams was a very prominent person in Southern Baptist life," Dr. Ray Van Neste, assistant professor of Christian Studies and director of the Ryan Center, said.

Williams is best known for the Williams translation of the New Testament, first published in 1937 while he was serving as professor of Greek and ethics at Union. He is also noted as the founding Greek professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Union President David S. Dockery said, "Charles Williams was a highly visible New Testament Scholar in the early years of the 20th Century. His translation of the New Testament remains

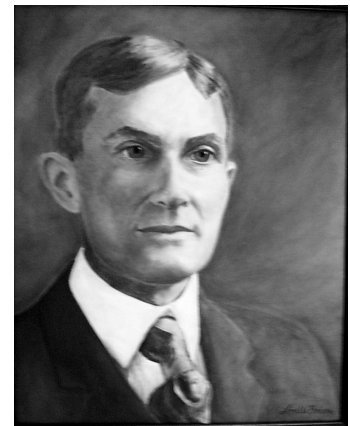
a favorite of many even today. His relationship to Union has been memorialized in a most special way with this wonderful gift from the family members to Union's Ryan Center. The portrait serves as an inspiration for other young New Testament students to give of themselves for this generation in the same way that Dr. Williams did for his in the serious study of God's inspired Word."

Williams' daughter, Charlotte Williams Sprawls of Montreat, N.C., has worked to keep her father's New Testament translation in print. "It is appropriate that present-day and future Union students, as well as past graduates, should know of the importance of his translation for the past 65 years," she said.

Center director, Ray Van Neste expressed a common goal and vision with the work of Williams. "In the preface to his translation," he said, "Dr. Williams stated that his aim was to help the common person to know and understand the Bible, which is exactly the aim of the

Ryan center as we seek to encourage and enable sound biblical interpretation and application today. It is great to be reminded that we are not starting something new but are continuing a grand tradition here at Union."

More information is available on the *Williams New Testament: In the Language of the People* on Sprawls' Web site: [www.sprawls.org/williams](http://www.sprawls.org/williams).



Charles Bray Williams



## Ryan Center's 400 Year-old Geneva Bible Soon to Have Permanent Home

The Ryan Center's 400 year-old copy of the Geneva Bible will soon be on permanent display in an archival grade display case in the Center. The purchase of the 1615 Geneva Bible was made possible by a generous gift from David and Linda Shoaf, friends of the university and members of First Baptist Church Horn Lake, MS.

First printed in 1560 at Geneva, Switzerland, the Geneva Bible was the first Bible to penetrate the English speaking world and be widely used by the common people. Not only was this the first English version to have verse divisions in addition to chapter separations, the Geneva Bible was also the first English Bible to include extensive study notes. According to tradi-

tion, prominent Reformation leaders such as John Knox, Miles Coverdale and William Whittingham were involved in the preparation of the translation and the study notes.

The Geneva Bible served as the primary text for the Puritans and was the only translation of the Bible to accompany the Pilgrims to America, and also served as the work used by Shakespeare in his writings. It remained the Bible of the common people until the mid 1600s when King James, enraged by the study notes which allowed disobedience to tyrannical kings, made ownership of the Geneva Bible a felony and commissioned men to translate his own version of the Bible.

As a centerpiece and model for the R. C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies, Van Neste and his colleagues hope the Geneva Bible will exemplify their mission at Union. The Center strives to focus on the importance of studying and understanding the Bible as crucial in every layperson's life.

The new display case will also periodically house artifact collections as part of an ongoing effort of the Ryan Center to educate and inspire Christians concerning the history of Biblical Studies.

*Portions of this article written by  
Mariann Martin, Class of 2005*

## R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies

(located on Third Floor of  
Jennings Hall)  
Union University  
1050 Union University Drive  
Jackson, TN 38305-9901  
731.661.5579 (telephone)  
731.661.5118 (facsimile)  
rvannest@uu.edu (e-mail)

### Hours:

Tues, Wed, Thurs - 9-5  
Fri - 11:30-4:30

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

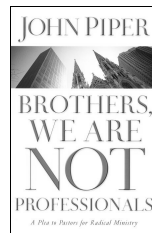
## A Word From the Director...

This past year has been a fruitful one for the Center as you can see from the articles in this newsletter. In our first full year of operation the Center library has been in constant use by students during term time. We have also seen growth of interest in and use by area pastors and church leaders. The word is slowly getting out that the resources of the Center's library are available free of charge to the community. We were very pleased recently to have a significant article on the Center appear in the Jackson Sun.

[www.uu.edu/centers/biblical](http://www.uu.edu/centers/biblical)

The Center's website has undergone a good deal of development, and there is much more work to be done there. In addition to the influx of new reviews (see page 4), we are very

pleased to have two essays from John Piper's *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals* on our website. The book's publisher very graciously gave us permission to post two excellent essays which directly relate to biblical studies: 'Brothers, Let Us Query the Text,' a challenging call to diligence in the study of scripture, and 'Brothers, Bitzer Was a Banker,' a stirring essay on the value of knowing the biblical languages. I encourage you to check out these two essays and to buy the book.



This year we have also been able to expand the hours that the Center is open. Now, in addition to being open Tuesday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, we are also open on Fridays from 11:30 am to 4:30 pm. This

was made possible by the combination of monthly gifts from a small local church and one individual. It only takes \$10 for the Center to be open an extra hour each week. As funds are available we hope to be able to open the Center on Mondays and open it for the entire day on Fridays.

Lastly, the Center exists to serve the Body of Christ. If there is some way we may be of service to you please contact us. If you have feedback on our work (the website, the newsletter, conferences) we would be glad to hear it. And if you know of someone else who would appreciate the work of the Center, let us know and we will be glad to send them the newsletter and information on conferences.

Every blessing,  
Ray Van Neste