One School One Book
One Revision

Many of you might remember the library announcing Lauren Winner's Real Sex for our fall 2006 One School One Book selection. That choice has been delayed, but rest assured that ee will dive into her book in the fall of 2007, when she is slated to join us for a Meet the Author event.

In the mean time, the library is thrilled to partner with student affairs in the promotion of this year's selection. Eugene Peterson's Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading.

Consistent with our hope that the One School One Book initiative would cultivate greater community life at the seminary through sustained and varied corporate reflection on a common book, Eugene Peterson's work is an excellent choice for our second annual program. Ideally, the book will become part of the background noise of campus life, and with a title like Eat This Book, how could it not?

Stay tuned for details on this campus-wide program. In the mean time, we hope the following book description from Amazon might whet your literary appetite. :-) 

Eugene Peterson is convinced that the way we read the Bible is as important as that we read it. Do we read the Bible for information about God and salvation, for principles and "truths" that we can use to live better? Or do we read it in order to listen to God and respond in prayer and obedience?

The second part of Peterson’s momentous five-volume work on spiritual theology, Eat This Book challenges us to read the Scriptures on their own terms, as God’s revelation, and to live them as we read them. With warmth and wisdom Peterson offers greatly needed, down-to-earth counsel on spiritual reading, in these pages he draws readers into a fascinating conversation on the nature of language, the ancient practice of lectio divina, and the role of Scripture translations; included here is the "inside story" behind Peterson’s own popular Bible translation, The Message.

Countering the widespread practice of using the Bible for self-serving purposes, Peterson here serves readers with a nourishing entrée into the formative, life-changing art of spiritual reading.

Christian’s life of love and obedience, Luther is always fun to read. Luther’s Bondage of the Will is also a favorite.

John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion

Need I explain? Every Christian minister (Reformed or otherwise) should read Calvin. He is perhaps the master of “pastoral dogmatics” – theology done in a manner that is full-bloodedly biblical and pastoral in its aim. This book shaped me early on in my theological career and is a font of wisdom to which I repeatedly return. Also, buy and read Calvin’s commentaries.

N. T. Wright, Christian Origins and the Question of God (currently 3 volumes); The Climax of the Covenant

Wright is one of the most influential and controversial figures writing today. Though I don’t buy a lot of what he says about covenant, the Law of Moses, and justification, Wright nevertheless helps us think about the congruities between redemptive history/covenant theology and the Bible’s overarching literary form, i.e., narrative. His chapters related to Trinity and Christology in Climax are very helpful as well. Wright is a gifted writer and a provocative thinker who opens the door to fresh biblical insights – even when you disagree with him.

Geerhardus Vos, Biblical Theology; Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation

Again, need I explain? Vos is the father of modern redemptive historical hermeneutics. He was also very well-versed in Reformed dogmatics, which gives his biblical theological work a depth and a balance that his heirs have not always been able to replicate.

Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Volume IV, parts 1-3

While I disagree with Barth on a number of topics (e.g., inspiration, election, Reformed Scholasticism), he is to my mind the greatest theologian of the 20th century and one from whom I always learn something.

What’s the Faculty Reading? Introducing Dr. Scott Swain

My favorite reads:

Augustine, The Trinity

This is the classic text on the crown jewel of Christian doctrine. The entire book is Augustine’s prayerful quest for understanding in response to the summons issued in Psalm 105:4: “seek his face always.”

Martin Luther, The Freedom of a Christian

This book represents one of the best short pieces on the relationship between Christ’s finished work of salvation and the
Volume IV of the CD is his “Doctrine of Reconciliation” (Person and Work of Christ, Sin, Ecclesiology). Most evangelicals never get this far into the CD due to frustrations with Barth’s doctrines of Scripture, election, etc., but Volume 4’s sections on Christology are some of the most splendid paragraphs ever written on the doctrine. It takes a lot of patience and commitment to read Barth. But such labor holds the promise of bearing glorious fruit.

Henri de Lubac
*Scripture in the Tradition*

This is a compressed version of de Lubac’s magisterial *Medieval Exegesis*, 4 Volumes. This book helpfully debunks a number of modern myths about medieval biblical interpretation and introduces us to some of the major doctrinal themes that have shaped the church’s interpretation of Scripture.

Herman Bavinck
*Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 3*

This is the most recently translated volume out of a projected 4 volumes. Bavinck is a master of Reformed systematic theology, conversant with Scripture, the great tradition of Christian theology, and Reformed confessions and dogmatics. He almost never disappoints on any topic. Teaser: Bavinck concludes his discussion of “covenant” in this volume by addressing the relationship between “election” and “covenant” and making some (to my mind) sane suggestions for how we might understand covenant membership for those who are “elect” and those who are not. Every volume of Bavinck’s *Reformed Dogmatics* should be on your bookshelf!

Herbert McCabe
*God Matters*

McCabe is a relatively unknown British Roman Catholic theologian. He was one of the translators of the critical edition of Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae*. McCabe is a joy to read (one is reminded of Chesterton’s wit and turn of phrase). He addresses some of the knottiest theological topics with utter clarity. His chapters on creation, human freedom, the involvement of God in the world, and the incarnation are some of the best short treatments of those topics available.

Most recent reads:

Gregg Strawbridge, ed., *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*

This is probably the most up to date case for infant baptism. This volume addresses objections to infant baptism quite well. Reportedly, this book has been instrumental in at least one conversion to the Reformed position on infant baptism.

Richard Muller, *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, Vols. 3 & 4*

Two volumes, one word: magisterial.

Kevin Vanhoozer
*The Drama of Doctrine*

This is Vanhoozer’s (long awaited) book on “theological method.” Vanhoozer tackles topics like: the relationship between Scripture and tradition, theology and hermeneutics, doctrine and practice, etc. He addresses the aforementioned topics with the thesis that the “dramatic” metaphor is both (1) appropriate to the Bible’s subject matter and purpose and (2) helpful for illuminating various methodological problem areas in theology. I’m using this book in Senior Seminar this summer.

Francesca Aran Murphy
*The Comedy of Revelation*

Murphy argues that the Bible as a book should be classified under the genre of “dramatic comedy,” which is a statement more about the overarching logic and flow of Scripture (the biblical “worldview,” if you will) than it is about the Bible’s literary form. This book complements Reformed theology’s emphasis upon redemptive historical hermeneutics by drawing out some of the more metaphysical implications of the “shape” of biblical revelation. This book is a recommended read, but not necessarily a recommended buy (T & T Clark monographs are quite pricy).

Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry is a theologian-poet-farmer (!) whose poetry is available in a number of formats. I’ve only recently gotten into his poetry but am finding it a refreshing alternative (think Sabbath!) to the type of literature that I read most, i.e., academic prose. Try, for example, his “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front,” wherein Berry coins the (now somewhat famous) phrase: “practice resurrection.” Berry will sometimes annoy the Republican in you. But annoyance can be therapeutic.

Diarmid MacCulloch
*Thomas Cranmer*

This is the definitive biography of the English Reformer. It demonstrates, among other things, that the mature Cranmer had come to distinctly “Reformed” (as opposed to Lutheran or Roman Catholic) positions on a number of topics like predestination, the Lord’s Supper, etc. Read biographies!

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**Timeline Trek**

*Courtesy of Christian History*

http://www.christiantoday.com/history/features/twic/index.html

September 6, 1620: With 101 colonists and 48 crew members aboard, the Mayflower sails from Plymouth, England. Thirty-five colonists board ship, Separatists from Leiden, Holland, and later known as the Pilgrims.

September 8, 1636: Massachusetts Puritans found Harvard College, America’s first higher education institution, a mere six years after arriving from England. They founded the college to train future ministers.

September 14, 258: Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, is beheaded during the persecution under Roman Emperor Valerian.

September 14, 1741: George Frederick Handel finishes composing “The Messiah,” begun only 24 days earlier.

September 15, 1648: The British Parliament approves the Larger and the Shorter Catechisms, now used by Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Baptist congregations, are approved by the British Parliament.

September 15, 1963: In a racially motivated attack, the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, was bombed, killing four girls. The sermon that day was “The Love That Forgivest,” based on Matthew 5:43-44.

September 19, 1955: Mission Aviation pilot Nate Saint spots the Auca villages in the Amazon jungle. The Auca massacred him and his companions on January 6, 1956.

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**Library Hours**

The fall semester library schedule will be as follows:

- Monday–Thursday: 8 a.m.–10 p.m.
- Friday: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
- Saturday: 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Times may vary during breaks and holidays. Call the library (x217) with any questions.