

ARPTalk (23)

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September 8, 2009



ARPTalk(23.1)

LETTERS AND THINGS

(23.1.1)

Carolinas New Church Community

By Dr. James T. Corbitt

EDITOR'S REMARKS: Too often the Editor of *ARPTalk* reports on controversies in the ARP Church. Actually, there is much that is right and going well in the ARP Church. The Editor is delighted to print the report below by Dr. James T. Corbitt, the former Director of Outreach North America. Dr. Corbitt reports on some of the things that are being done to promote church planting in the ARP Church.

The Carolinas New Church Community held their quarterly meeting in Charlotte, NC, on August 21 & September 1. This is a meeting of those involved in new church plants in First, Second and Catawba Presbyteries. The purpose is to provide a time for help and encouragement for new churches in the Carolinas.

The meetings involve “sharing our lives, supporting each other, renewing our vision, praying Kingdom prayers together, and learning together.” All of these purposes were achieved at this meeting. It was an excellent time together and was beneficial for all those involved.

Our church planters were able to share what was happening at their church plant and to ask questions about some of their concerns. They also had significant prayer times through out the meeting.

In addition, there were two teaching sessions. The first was on developing community. It was designed to better inform all attending on the process of building Christian Community groups. It was very helpful in presenting the various methods that need to be employed in these endeavors.

The second session was on preaching. It was presented by Dr. R. J. Gore of Erskine Seminary. He did an outstanding job of showing how preaching has changed over the centuries. He then explained the current culture and how to reach people through Gospel-centered preaching following the example of how Christ preached. His lecture was very relevant and applicable to church planting today.

The meeting was outstanding. There was real fellowship and encouragement for the church planters and potential church planters who attended. The next meeting of the Carolinas New Church Community will be in November.

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ERSKINE COLLEGE'S RANKING CONTINUES TO FALL

Where Have the Liberal Arts Gone?

As reported in the last issue of *ARPTalk* ("Is Erskine's Ranking Tanking?"), Erskine College and Seminary did not do so well in the purely quantitative rankings of *StateUniversity.com*. Well, the rankings of *US News and World Report*, which include peer assessments, are now out. No doubt we will soon hear from the Erskine administration that Erskine is ranked #3 by *US News*. But is a number #3 ranking something that Erskine wants to celebrate?

Like last year, Erskine is identified as and listed among "Baccalaureate Colleges (South)." According to *US News*, baccalaureate schools "focus on undergraduate education but grant fewer than half their degrees in liberal arts disciplines." [Editor's emphasis] It would seem that the Erskine College PR department's touting of Erskine's focus on liberal arts education is less than candid with prospective students and their parents. Courses in the liberal arts are in the minority of offerings. As a result, Erskine College is primarily a baccalaureate college. The liberal arts program is subsidiary. If the aim of a college is to be a baccalaureate college and the college is ranked as a baccalaureate college, that is commendable. A baccalaureate ranking, however, is not how Erskine advertises itself. Irrespective of the perceptions of the faculty, the administration of President Ruble has focused heavily on/put a lot of money into athletics rather than academics. (Recall the hoopla last year about football!) Such a focus is not going to make it possible for Erskine College to be ranked as a liberal arts college any time soon.

Before the "Ruble days," Erskine College was a liberal arts college—what most among the faculty would consider a more prestigious ranking. This "top" baccalaureate ranking is a part of the legacy of retiring President Randy Ruble. What a disappointment this must be for "Olde Erskinites" who would prefer to be classed with Presbyterian College, Davidson College, and Furman University—schools ranked much higher than Erskine College. Any crowing over this new baccalaureate identification and ranking would be like Clemson University's rejoicing over dropping from NCAA Division 1-A

to the level of the NAIA and then bragging about it! Surely Erskine alums cannot be pleased with a diminish classification and reduced ranking. Surely they would prefer to share the more prestigious ranking enjoyed by Presbyterian College, Davidson College, and Furman University.

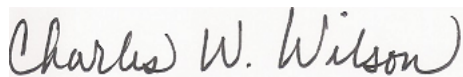
Even Erskine's # 3 ranking comes with a couple of "flies in the perfume." The first fly is the #3 ranking itself. This is a drop from last year, when Erskine College was ranked #2.

The second fly is the schools with which Erskine College is ranked: #1 Ouachita Baptist University, #2 John Brown University, and #4 Covenant College. Those Christian colleges and universities are consciously seeking to integrate faith and learning in all the arenas of life. Once again, it is no secret that some on the Erskine College faculty are on record as saying that a truly academic institution cannot integrate faith and learning. Yet those schools, with which Erskine is now ranked, teach Intelligent Design and/or Creationism as alternatives to macro-evolutionary cosmology. Consider their enrollments: Ouachita Baptist University – 1493; John Brown University – 2017; Covenant College – 1073. Erskine, on the other hand, has only 864 enrolled. In order to claim that 864, the seminary's approximately 260 students must be added to the college's approximately 600!

In short, Erskine College has DROPPED from a liberal arts classification to a baccalaureate classification and lost ranking. Will Erskine tout this drop and loss as an achievement? It will be interesting to see how President Ruble and his staff will spin this tumble!

The Editor of ARPTalk will keep you informed!

These are my thoughts,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles W. Wilson". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Charles W. Wilson

[~Scroll down for ARPTalk\(23.3\)~](#)

ARP Talk(23.3)

ERSKINE PR: NOT EVERY ERSKINE PROFESSOR IS A CHRISTIAN

According to the *Manual of Authorities and Duties* of the ARP Church, administrators and professors at Erskine College and Seminary are required to affirm a statement of evangelical faith. However, when it comes to Erskine College and Seminary, we in the ARP Church have learned that what is stated, expected, directed, and desired at Synod is not necessarily what happens in Due West.

In the latest issue of *Inside Erskine* (Summer 2009), the following letter from an incoming student [name withheld] is printed on the back of the front cover page:

I chose Erskine College because I love the liberal arts model for education, the Christ-centered foundation (though I know that this won't mean everyone, students or professors, is a Christian), the intimate class size, the campus (who needs a metropolis when they have beautiful countryside) and the dorms. God's incredible provision through scholarship, which is allowing me to come to Erskine, is just "my cup running over."

The Editor believes this student to be a bright and intelligent young person—a credit to the student's family and church, and the Editor is certain the student is going to be an asset to the Erskine College student body and campus life. The problem with the letter is what the student inadvertently writes about the Erskine College faculty: "I chose Erskine College because I love the liberal arts model for education, the Christ-centered foundation (though I know that this won't mean everyone, students or professors, is a Christian) [Editor's emphases]. . . ."

This is not a problem for the student, but it is a serious matter for the people who oversee the production of *Inside Erskine*. This magazine is under the oversight of Mr. Woody O'Cain (Vice President for Enrollment) and his staff. Did they read what the student wrote? How could they have missed it? What would possess them to allow such a statement to be printed? This statement says that some Erskine College professors are not "Christians," let alone evangelicals. Has not the General Synod directed that all Erskine

administrators and faculty give evidence of evangelical Christian faith, and has not the board adopted that policy?

Is there not enough controversy stirring about Erskine College? What could have happened here?

One. Perhaps a decision was made that held that this is what the student wrote, so it will not be altered, nor will the student be contacted regarding the matter's factualness. That is not good! Are these people unaware of all that has taken place recently? Do they have no sensitivity to recent criticisms and ARP Church court actions? Why did they not consult with the student and correct the student's perception? To allow such a statement as this to be printed in *Inside Erskine* reflects not on the student but reveals the incompetence of those charged with the magazine's production. The buck stops at Mr. O'Cain's desk. Mr. O'Cain was present at this year's meeting of the General Synod. He is very aware of the sentiments of the ARP Church.

Two. Perhaps a decision was made that held that the student had correctly perceived reality and that the part about professors not being Christian should stand. Whoa! That would validate a plethora of criticisms that have been made about Erskine College from both inside and outside the Erskine community. Are they now coming out with the truth? Indeed, this is what many in the ARP Church have suspected for years!

Three. Perhaps a decision was made by Mr. O'Cain and his staff to poke the ARP Church in the eye. President Ruble stated at the Wednesday evening "Question and Answer Session" at this year's meeting of the General Synod that many Erskine people, in and out of Due West, have encouraged him to lead Erskine College to become independent of the ARP Church. Was Mr. O'Cain one of those who advised Dr. Ruble to lead the college out of the ARP Church? One wonders, is Mr. O'Can and his staff poking the ARP Church in the eye, ignoring President Ruble, and attempting to lead Erskine College to independency and hoping that others will follow them?

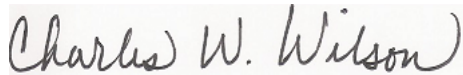
So, what do you think? The Editor wants to believe the first option. The Editor wants to believe that this is nothing more than incompetence and ineptitude running rampant. One wonders if this *faux pas* will be corrected in the next issue of *Inside Erskine*. It should be! If the statement is incorrect, *Inside Erskine* has wrongly

questioned the Christianity of the Erskine College faculty, and, if the statement is not corrected, people will assume it is true. The Editor is willing to give room in *ARPTalk* for an explanation and correction regarding this matter.

Interesting, the baccalaureate schools that Erskine College is ranked with do not usually suffer with questions about the evangelical faith of their professors. That would be unthinkable at those schools!

Yes, the PR work of Mr. O’Cain is a part of the legacy of retiring President Randy Ruble—the “Furmanization” Erskine College! “Furmanization”? It is the leading of a denominational college to withdraw of its denomination.

These are my thoughts,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles W. Wilson". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Charles W. Wilson

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ARP Talk (23.4)

**THE CULTURE OF INTIMIDATION
CONTINUES UNABATED
AT ERSKINE COLLEGE**

On Monday, September 1, 2009, the Student Life Assistants (SLAs) met for their orientation. The administration sent a Seminary faculty member who serves as the school's Anti-discrimination Coordinator [name withheld] to explain the institution's new policy on discrimination and harassment. Indeed, discrimination and harassment are important matters and Erskine must have policies for dealing with such misbehavior. However, in the wake of last year's events, the Erskine administration has apparently decided to use this policy as an instrument for suppressing student dissent.

The following policy was distributed with commentary by the faculty member:

The policy:

**ERSKINE COLLEGE AND ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
NON-DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL HARRASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT
POLICIES**

A. DEFINITIONS

1. Definition of Discrimination

Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability Erskine does not discriminate against any of the protected categories of individuals in the administration of its policies, programs or activities, and this policy applies to admission policies, scholarships and loan programs, employment practices, athletic programs and other school-administered programs except where required by specific religious tenets held by the institution.

Discrimination which is prohibited includes discrimination based on:

- Title IX of the Education Act of 1972 and its implementing regulations,**
- Titles VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,**
- Sections 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,**

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990,
- The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967, and other federal, state and local laws and regulations.
 - Examples: A candidate is denied access to prestige scholarship competition because, although she is Indian, her dress and appearance appear Muslim. A coed school offers athletics only for males. A qualified candidate is denied promotion because he/she looks too young or too old. A worker finds a voodoo doll, complete with pins and dressed to look like the worker, at the workspace. **A student makes repeated malicious, half true, bad faith statements about a professor in a blog or on Facebook or to the Dean of Faculty** [Editor's emphasis].

The faculty member's commentary:

Shockingly, it was reported that the faculty member, referencing the last example of harassment ("A student makes repeated malicious, half true, bad faith statements about a professor in a blog or on Facebook or to the Dean of Faculty"), made this commentary on the matter at Erskine College: "As was the case at this school" (Editor's emphasis).

Wow! As was what case? Since 2006 there have been numerous complaints and allegations by students that the Erskine administration has created a "culture of intimidation." The Minister and His Work Committee of Second Presbytery of the ARP Church even substantiated these charges! It was the Minister and His Work Committee of Second Presbytery that employed the phrase "culture of intimidation." What were these Erskine administrators thinking when they wrote and distributed this new policy? Such a policy as this did not appear out of thin air. This policy comes from the highest level—from the cabinet and out of President Randy Ruble's office. Also, what were they thinking when the Erskine administrators sent a faculty member to act as a political Oberführer?

"As was the case with this school." Where? Specifics please! What charges of harassment were filed? Where were these charges adjudicated? What were the names of the individuals involved? Who was exonerated? Who was convicted of harassment?

According to the “Erskine College and Erskine Theological Seminary Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policies,” the faculty member’s commentary, “As was the case with this school,” could be construed as a form of harassment. Indeed, such a policy will have a chilling effect on student expression and the faculty member contextualized the policy so as to make sure that the students got the point. The students’ freedom of speech has been trampled on without due process. And did you know that the Southern Association of Colleges (SAC) is very concerned about the infringement of students’ academic freedom and freedom of speech? What would happen if SAC were asked about this?

Indeed, this new policy is clearly aimed at suppressing the sort of student activities that took place last year. As all in ARPdom are painfully aware, all sorts of accusations, complaints, and protests were made last year by students. As a matter of fact, the concerns of the students were taken to the General Synod level and the General Synod took those concerns seriously and voted to form an Investigatory Commission to investigate matters at Erskine College and Seminary.

For some time now, President Ruble has protested that, last year, students did not take their concerns to him or members of the administration or the board. Well, in truth, some concerns were taken to him and members of the administration and the board and nothing was done. One thing is certain now, with this new policy. No student is going to take anything to President Ruble or a member of the administration or faculty or a member of the board. The students have been told, “Shut up!” The Erskine administration has greatly distanced itself and the faculty from the students and created and insured an adversarial relation between students and the administration and faculty. Yes, the “culture of intimidation” continues unabated in Due West.

The Editor is just a little bit weary of the worn out phrases of “malicious half true” and “bad faith statements.” This is Erskine code language for true statements that are inconvenient and/or embarrassing to the Erskine administration and faculty. The Editor is aware of much of what has been written. As all who read *ARPTalk* know, many of the students’ letters and essays were printed in *ARPTalk*. Listen, when a professor says XYZ and a student reports that the professor said XYZ, in what dimension of reality, other than the Orwellian Erskine “bubble” (where, it seems, down is up, wrong is right, and telling the truth is “harassment and discrimination”), is

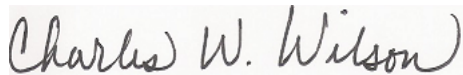
that a half-truth or a bad-faith statement? The Editor is prepared to say that the charges of harassment are not to be leveled at students because they have been so bold as to point out inconvenient truths. Rather, the charges of harassment are to be leveled at Erskine College administrators and faculty members who have for so long covered up the fact that they are systematically circumventing and obstructing the mission of Erskine College as a distinctively Christian liberal arts college and are now seeking to keep students from saying the obvious—the truth. THE STUDENTS' CRITICISMS MAY BE INCONVENIENT FOR THE ERSKINE ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY MEMBERS, BUT THAT IS NOT HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION. Once again, the administration of President Ruble has reached a new low in the fine art of disingenuousness.

Such intimidation is not only wrong, it is unwise as it leaves Erskine College open to litigation. Knowing the feisty nature of students, does anyone think that some students will not take this as a challenge? Does anyone believe that students are not on the Internet checking out what their legal options are? There are organizations such as the *Foundation for Individual Rights in Education* (FIRE) (<http://www.thefire.org/>) that will be quite happy to help Erskine students who are intimidated in this way. One wonders if a student has already contacted FIRE. This has the potential to get very messy. The Editor hopes that members of the board will address this matter at the next meeting of the board in October. One hopes that October is not too late. The sooner this is dealt with, the better!

Recall how during the 2009 meeting of the General Synod that Erskine students addressed the General Synod and asked that General Synod intervene and pass a resolution instructing the board to direct the Erskine administration to cease and desist in acts of intimidation. Students had even been threatened with arrest for expressing their opinions against the administration. Speaking for the students, 2009 Erskine graduate Mr. Josh Grimm spoke of the students' need for protection. A motion that would have effectively protected the students was introduced but defeated when ARP minister and former board member, Rev. Doug Petersen, contended that such a motion was not needed. After all, he reasoned, members of the administration were present and hearing what was being said. "These are good people," he said. He asked the General Synod to give the administration another chance. Well, those administrators who were present at the meet of the General Synod (Ruble, Gaston, Agnew, O'Cain, etc.) must have been deaf. Sadly, the administration

has been given another chance and once again the Erskine administration has broken the trust of the General Synod with this newest discrimination and harassment policy. Judging from this new policy, the students do need protection from what seems to have become a paranoid administration. This too is the legacy of President Randy Ruble—the legacy of a shameful “culture of intimidation.”

These are my thoughts,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles W. Wilson". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Charles W. Wilson

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ARP Talk(23.5)

ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY DECLINING

Is Erskine Theological Seminary (ETS) growing or declining? According to an article in *The Layman Online*, "Non-ARP students driving Erskine Seminary's growth" (by Edward Terry, posted August 19, 2009, <http://www.layman.org/News.aspx?article=26270>), ETS is growing by reaching out to non-ARPs. Well, what is new? Only a few of us "old guys" in the ARP Church can remember when ETS had more ARP students than non-ARP students. The better question is this: Is ETS declining?

According to the article, Executive Vice President H. Neely Gaston stated the following: (1) ETS is a seminary of 450 students; (2) ETS has to reach out for students from other denominations because the ARP Church is not large enough to sustain the seminary with students; and (3) students have to take calls from churches in other Presbyterian denominations because there are not enough opportunities in the ARP Church.

As with so much at ETS, one needs to check the facts. What are some of the facts regarding ETS (and they are not that hard to find)?

- How large is the ETS student body?
Dr. Gaston says 450. *US News and World Report* reported 864 students for both the college and ETS (above, *ARPTalk(23.2)*, and *StateUniversity.com* reports 924 for both institutions (http://www.stateuniversity.com/universities/SC/Erskine_College_and_Seminary.html). The Erskine College website reports a student body of 600 for Erskine College only. So what is the student body of ETS, 450 according to Vice President Gaston or 864 less 600 which is 264 according to *US News and World Report* or 924 less 600, which is 324 according to *StateUniversity.com*? Who knows! Perhaps Dr. Gaston's number includes every person taking and auditing a course in both the traditional program and the online program. The question that is important is this: What is the FTE (full-time equivalent)?

- **What is the FTE?**

According to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) website, the FTE for ETS in 1998-1999 was **211** (see tables at <http://www.ats.edu/Resources/Publications/Documents/FactBook/1998-99.pdf>). According to the ATS website, the ETS FTE in 08-09 was **169** students (see table at <http://www.ats.edu/Resources/Publications/Documents/AnnualDataTables/2008-09AnnualDataTables.pdf>). According to ATS tables, there has been an FTE DECLINE of **42** students in the last ten years. The FTE is what makes or breaks an educational institution—the FTE is where the money is! It is always nice to have part-time students and one-course students, but the FTE is the “brass ring.”

A closer look at the ATS figures for the most recent ten-year period similarly fails to substantiate Dr. Gaston’s claims of “growth.” The Editor is emphasizing ATS figures because the Association of Theological Schools is the accrediting agency for ETS and a failure to report accurately is likely to have serious consequences for the institution. We cannot judge and often cannot make sense of the “rosy scenario” numbers ETS provides to the ARP Church.

The figures below are the figures reported to ATS for the years indicated.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Headcount</u>	<u>FTE</u>
1998-1999	381	211
1999-2000	366	194
2000-2001	370	196
2001-2002	361	194.6
2002-2003	356	195
2003-2004	321	188.9
2004-2005	361	203
2005-2006	323	176
2006-2007	326	201
2007-2008	345	260
2008-2009	298	169

Currently we hear of tuition “fire sales,” cancelled classes, and empty halls at ETS. This does not look good. But let us not miss the big picture. With the exception of the year 2007-2008, the Gaston years at ETS (2003-2009, with Dr. Gaston in complete

control of the school from 2006 on) have been characterized by slow decline.

Even the apparent blip in numbers for 2007-2008 may be open to a question of accuracy of reporting. This was a period of great administrative dislocation at ETS after the Registrar and Financial Aid Director filed grievances against Dr. Gaston for abusive behavior and then resigned, and we wonder if there was anybody on the staff at that time who knew how to compute the numbers properly. The Editor is told that chaos prevailed in those days in the administrative office. Once again, who knows about the numbers!

- **What has been the ARP and PC(USA) enrollment in the M.Div. program in the past ten years?**
Those who are acquainted with seminary education know that the premier program in a seminary is the M.Div. program. The M.Div. program is why a seminary exists. The M.Div. program is the program that produces new ministers. The author of the article in *The Layman* gives the impression that there has been a sizeable drop in ARP students at ETS and a substantial increase of PC(USA) students. However, consider the statistics: PC(USA) students in the M.Div. program in 1997 was **10** and PC(USA) students in the M.Div. program in 2007 was **9**; (2) ARP students in the M.Div. program in 1997 was **19** and ARP students in the M.Div. program in 2007 was **18**. These numbers indicate that essentially there has been no change in either ARP students or PC(USA) students in ten years. So, where is the growth under Dr. Gaston's leadership?
- **What of Dr. Gaston's complaint regarding no opportunities in the ARP Church?**
Dr. H. Neely Gaston, Executive Vice President of ETS, complains that ETS graduates are not getting calls in the ARP Church. But is the real problem the ARP Church or ETS? Honestly, the ARP Church is small, but there is more to the story. Qualified graduates of schools like Reformed Theological Seminary seem to do pretty well in receiving calls to ARP churches. One obvious problem is that ETS graduates are often ill prepared to preach. This is a nearly universal criticism throughout the ARP Church. Besides, look at the ETS program in preaching. It is pitiful! Dr. Gaston could not be bothered to employ a qualified homileitian. Instead, he hired PCUSA historian Dr. Michael Bush. And when Dr. Bush proved to be less than stellar as a teacher of preachers, Drs.

Gaston and Ruble bumped him upstairs to the post of Vice President for Development! No, the Editor is not making this up!


Second, most ETS graduates are not prepared to do what the ARP Church needs. The great need in the ARP Church is church planting. ETS graduates are not trained to plant churches. There is no program for developing church planters at ETS. One would think that such a program would be a high priority for Dr. Gaston and that he would set up a church-planting program in order to respond to the need of the ARP Church. To find such a program, a student has to attend Reformed Theological Seminary or Covenant Theological Seminary. Somehow Dr. Gaston has overlooked the obvious in the ARP Church as he has reached out to all the non-ARPs. Oh, and is not the ARP Church the owner of the land on which ETS sits and the major financial contributor to ETS?

- **From whence cometh the ETS growth in students and money?**
Apart from the online program, it seems that the ETS growth has come from the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program that has been super fueled by the US Army Chaplain program. That is very good for the present; however, that program is put up for bid every few years. If the financial stability of ETS is dependent on an Army contract and ETS loses the contract in the bidding process, the loss of that large amount of money could endanger/destroy the financial viability of ETS. Without the \$200,000 annually from the US Army, ETS would be laying off employees right now. This should be frightening to the ETS administration!
- **What of ARP xenophobia?**
According to *The Layman* article, Executive Vice President Gaston said "that a small minority of ARP members don't want to see students or faculty from any other denominations in the seminary." That is a charge of xenophobia! It seems that Dr. Gaston believes that there is a xenophobic minority in the ARP Church! The Editor knows the ARP Church well and wonders who these xenophobes are, this "small minority." Does this "small minority" consist of the more than 60% of the General Synod who voted to strengthen the ARP Church's position on the inerrancy of Scripture in 2008, and who then voted to establish an Investigatory Commission on Erskine College and Seminary in 2009? As disingenuous as Dr. Gaston is with numbers, he is just as disingenuous with that statement. The controversy over ETS has not been that some of the faculty members are Baptist,

PC(USA), or even Methodist. The controversy has been over only two PC(USA) professors (Drs. Richard Burnett and Michael Bush), not because they are PC(USA), but because they are openly and aggressively, in and out of the classroom, pushing a Barthian theological agenda and refuse to take a stand for the inerrancy of the Bible. Drs. Burnett and Bush are not the only PC(USA) faculty members at ETS, and nothing has been said about those faculty members. Indeed, both Drs. Burnett and Bush were recruited in order to reach a new, more liberal, or non-inerrancy, constituency among the disaffected in the PC(USA). The hiring of Drs. Burnett and Bush has led to controversy and dissension in the ARP Church to the point that the General Synod has appointed an Investigatory Commission to look into matters at ETS. The narrow focus of Dr. Gaston in attempting to reach out to the disaffected in the PC(USA) and ignoring his brethren in the ARP Church has distanced and alienated ETS from the ARP Church. Dr. Gaston has earned himself the distrust of the ARP Church. And it is not as though Dr. Gaston did not know the perilous nature of the direction he took. Many in the ARP Church attempted to warn him. Yes, reach out to the PC(USA), the Baptists, the Methodists, and others, but forget not the needs and sensibilities of the ARP Church. Also, do not jeopardize the theological integrity of the ARP Church, and above all, stand firm on the authority of Scripture. But that is precisely what Dr. Gaston has not done. These are the unwise actions of Dr. Gaston! Why has Dr. Gaston been so foolish as to create such a painful controversy? All this energy for what!

At a banquet last winter in Columbia, SC, President Randy Ruble made it very clear to his audience that Dr. Gaston was his man for ETS. Well, the legacy of retiring President Randy Ruble is a seminary in theological confusion and on the verge of numerical and financial decline, headed by an Executive Vice President who is at odds with the ARP Church.

These are my thoughts,



Charles W. Wilson

~Thank you for reading ARPTalk(22)~