THE SHEPHERD STUDENT

Earl L. Brown, Jr.

Breath of Breath\(^1\) says Qoheleth,\(^2\) the whole is breath. Not only was Qoheleth wise but he also taught knowledge to the people; he studiously weighed\(^3\) and arranged many proverbs. Qoheleth sought to find delightful words,\(^4\) and to write true words with precision.\(^5\) The words of the sages are like prods, and the collected sayings are like firmly fixed nails; they are given by one shepherd\(^6\) Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. There is no end to the making of many books, and much study is wearisome to the body.\(^7\) Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will evaluate every deed, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:8-14 [Brown adaptation of NET Bible\(^8\)]

The text set before us is not only the key to the interpretation of the book, but it accurately coalesces the convergent philosophy of life as a précis of the life of Solomon,\(^9\) as it is paraphrased in the lives of Robert Dick Wilson, Allan MacRae, and Robert W. Anderson.\(^10\)

**Life Transitions: From Solomon to Jesus, From David’s Son to David’s Greater Son**

Solomon was the Old Covenant prototype for the masterful Shepherd Student. Unlike Solomon, however, Jesus learned in his earthly human nature, obedience “through the things which he suffered” (Heb 5:8). It is in this capacity that Christ in the New Covenant provides a superior Shepherd and student (see 1 Pet 2:21). The active obedience of Christ merited the passive obedience of Christ upon the cross. His atonement was worthy because He was worthy.

Only a definite atonement of Christ for his people could do proper honor to His name as the Shepherd of the sheep (John 10:11). The dying words of J. Gresham Machen were apt: “The active obedience of Christ, no hope without it.”\(^11\)

**From Palestine to Princeton: From First Century to Twentieth Century**

We travel almost twice the time distance from the last interval, the first century A.D. to the scholarly defense of the faith as it existed at Princeton Theological Seminary.\(^12\) In the tradition of William Henry Green (1825-1900),\(^13\) Robert Dick Wilson
(1856-1930) expressed his educational philosophy as best quoted by his protégé Allan Alexander MacRae (1902-1997):14:

Build solidly. Prepare thoroughly. Never be satisfied with superficial answers. God’s Word can stand the most thorough investigation. Do not shirk the difficult problems but seek to bring the facts to light; for God’s Word and God’s world will never contradict one another.”15

From California to Princeton: From The Bible Institute of Los Angeles to Princeton Theological Seminary

In 1912 Reuben Archer Torrey (1856–1928) became academic dean of Biola, which was founded in 1908. Dr. Torrey was a mentor to many. Briefly, we contrast two of his protégés.

Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895-1960) at seventeen enrolled at Biola, the year Torrey became academic dean.17 The young impressionable Barnhouse quickly emulated his mentor, to the chagrin of Dr. Torrey. Barnhouse became so bombastic with regard to dispensational truth, that when he enrolled at Princeton in 1915, as a junior in his first theology class with Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921), in bibliology, he engaged his professor in the intricacies of dispensational premillennialism.18

When Allan MacRae enrolled at Biola in 1925, Dr. Torrey impressed upon this young protégé to unlearn the bad example of Barnhouse, who had blemished the reputation of the fledgling institute.19 MacRae, much more disciplined than Barnhouse, never relied upon a bombastic personality to intimidate by means of strength of personality. His hard work paid off. In two years he earned two degrees, the Th.B. from the seminary and an M.A. from the University of Princeton.20

From Philadelphia to Coral Ridge and Dallas: From the Bible Study Hour to a Dance Instructor and an Insurance Salesman

Donald Grey Barnhouse, commanding Bible teacher with explosive Walter Winchell delivery technique, was highly regarded by two of his converts. The first was Samuel Lewis Johnson, Jr. (1915 - 2004), who was affectionately dubbed “the Barnhouse of the South.”21 The second was D. James Kennedy (b. 1930).22 Both Johnson, who was originally by trade an insurance agent, and Kennedy, who was an Arthur Murray dance instructor, were originally natives of the South.23 Both men became ministers of the gospel, one a seminary professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, the other a chancellor of Knox Theological Seminary.24 These men, like Torrey and MacRae, were to become “men who mastered one Book,” who mastered other books as conduits to channel people back to the Bible.25
From Princeton to Philadelphia and to Tacoma: From the Reorganization of Princeton to the Reorganizations of FTS

Allan Alexander MacRae was unassuming and unpretentious, yet in many ways was the embodiment of Old Princeton after its reorganization in 1929. He was greatly misunderstood by his friends at Westminster for his resignation from its faculty in the spring of 1937. He found great solace in his friendship with James Oliver Buswell, Jr. (1895-1976), which later became strained due to the first reorganization of Faith Theological Seminary in Elkins Park in 1956. MacRae would find solace in a former student, John W. Murray (1913-1996).

Nineteen years elapsed, from 1937 to 1956, before the first reorganization of Faith Seminary. Unexpectedly, the next reorganization would come some fourteen years later. The great solace Dr. MacRae found in his friendship with Dr. John W. Murray would sustain him in the task of the founding of Biblical Theological Seminary.

Twelve years after 1971, another crisis developed at Faith Theological Seminary. This time the man, Dr. John Allen Battle, Jr., had to turn to a former student of Dr. MacRae’s, Dr. Robert W. Anderson and the Tacoma church, to establish a Bible Presbyterian seminary on the West Coast, originally intended to complement the work of FTS in Philadelphia. This new seminary became Western Reformed Seminary of Tacoma, Washington.

The same characteristic of being unassuming and unpretentious would characterize the life of Dr. Robert W. Anderson. His love of history and zeal for both the Reformed faith and the premillennial return of Christ demonstrated on numerous occasions his depth of knowledge of one Book buttressed with that of many other books.

Life Translations: MacRae’s Approach and Robert W. Anderson: Ultimate destination, The Shepherd Student in Translation for the Twenty-first Century

Robert W. Anderson, much like his mentor Dr. MacRae, absorbed the spirit of Old Princeton. Dr. Anderson is as acutely and keenly aware that life, not only history, consists of objective realities, subjective assessments, and providential arrangements.

One has to keep straight current application of life to personages, in their placement of events in movements enacting various settings in time with clarity, charity, and brevity. Robert Anderson excels in this.

Dr. Anderson, now as a father in the Bible Presbyterian Church, demonstrates that “for the faith and by faith” was not merely the advertising slogan of Dr. McIntire’s replicated in the next century. He demonstrates one who consistently, constantly and concisely appreciates the mustering of biblical musar. Robert W. Anderson, with
cunning skill as a hunter, in his analytical skill strips off the camouflage of liberal reconstructions with probing acumen and exemplifies a well-trained Christian warrior.38 He continues the MacRae and Princeton tradition: “On essentials unity, on distinctives clarity, but on application of universals, charity.”39

OT 1. Literal meaning, “breath.” is used only 3x in its literal sense of “breath,” and even then to illustrate the breath-like, weightless, insubstantial futility of wickedness (Ps 62:9 [10]; Prov 21:6; Isa 57:13). The other 75 nominal and verbal instances are metaphorical (38 in Ecclesiastes alone). …
2. Metaphor for “temporary.” The remaining 43 instances of hebel refer more to the temporal quality of breath. Only seven of these occur outside of Ecclesiastes, mainly in reference to one’s life. Job himself (Job 7:16), psalmists (Ps 39:5 [6], 6 [7], 11 [12]; 78:33; 144:4), and Eccl (Eccl 6:12; 7:15; 9:9; 11:10) all describe the length of life as temporary and fleeting. Ecclesiastes goes on to enumerate many other aspects of life that are only temporary in nature and value, including personal efforts, joys, and tragedies. Most scholars feel that Ecclesiastes’ conclusion is that all is vain, and in a way that may or may not be due to transience alone.


2 The Hebrew word הָבָל runs the gamut from Preacher, Teacher, Convener, Collator, etc. The basic idea is one who collects. One can readily see how the idea is developed in the various English words. See NIDOTTE, s.v. “Theology of Ecclesiastes,” by Daniel. C. Fredericks: (H7738) qoholeth, convener (H7738). Note the lengthy discussion of הָבָל in note one in the NET System Bible 2nd Beta Edition.

3This translation is adopted from the NET System Bible 2nd Beta Edition.


6 For this writer the identity of the one shepherd is none other than the good, great, and chief shepherd of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. John 10:11; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 5:4.

7 There is a two-fold exhortation. (1) Strictly adhere to the sayings of the shepherd. Consult other sages but exclusively build your life upon the words of the one Shepherd. (2) Much study is wearisome to the body. After careful study we concede the translation Net Bible but disagree that it is an either or situation of emphasis as the study notes suggest.

8 On many points I concur with the Net Bible but I do bear the final responsibility in adapting some of the rendering. I have changed the translation of הָבָל from the loaded “meaningless” to a more neutral rendering of “breath.” See the NET System Bible 2nd Beta Edition, Eccl 1:2, note 7.


14 Although Oswald Thompson Allis (1880-1973) is generally regarded as the successor to Robert Dick Wilson (see: Bible Interpreters of the Twentieth Century, 22-130, and the article by D. G. Hart in both the Dictionary of Christianity in America and the Dictionary of The Presbyterian & Reformed Tradition in America), recent evidence has come to light from the MacRae papers at Covenant Theological Seminary which leads one to suspect that Dr. Wilson had a closer relationship with Allan A. MacRae than with Dr. Allis. On page two of a two page letter, presumably written by Dr. MacRae to his parents, dated 10/14/30, Allan MacRae wrote that Mrs. Wilson, as executrix of Dr. Wilson’s will, invited Allan MacRae to assume the task to oversee the manuscripts that Dr. Wilson had written. This document can be found:


15 Robert Dick Wilson, “Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?” (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times, 10th printing, 1922), preface. In addition to this dictum Dr. MacRae also believed in two other dictums that I have not been able to trace to either R. D. Wilson, or to R. A. Torrey: “When the plain sense of Scripture makes sense, seek no other sense.” David L. Cooper: “Always interpret the obscure in light of the clear and have not been able to trace to either R. D. Wilson, or to R. A. Torrey: “When the plain sense of Scripture printing, 1922), preface. In addition to this dictum Dr. MacRae also believed in two other dictums that I build upon the explicitly clear, the sufficiently near; avoid the insufficiently clear and the obscure, reduce speculation to a modicum.”


19 Ibid. At the time Biola had only been in existence some seven years. Students coming from Bible institutes were beginning to obtain a reputation for themselves as being individuals who came to seminary to teach and not to learn. Unfortunately, young Donald Barnhouse fit the stereotype.


23 Ibid. for the information on S. Lewis Johnson and D. James Kennedy.

24 Ibid.

25 George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism in American Culture (New York; Oxford University Press, 1980), 129-130, cited in Earl L. Brown Jr., “Christianity and Culture,” pp. 4-5 (quote concerned R. A. Torrey and James M. Gray, and this author applied it to Barnhouse). This application could equally be made of Dr. Allan A. MacRae and Dr. Robert W. Anderson.

26 Those who knew Allan A. MacRae would defend that statement but understand that he would be the first to deny it. After the 1956 division in the Bible Presbyterian Church, as long as Dr. MacRae was still associated with Dr. McIntire, McIntire still retained a degree of credibility with the world outside the confines of the Twentieth Century Reformation Movement. Once Dr. MacRae and his associates were found to be outside the pale of the movement, Dr. McIntire never quite enjoyed the same degree of credibility that he once enjoyed being associated with Dr. Allan A. MacRae. In McIntire’s mind, as in others’, MacRae was the tie back to Old Princeton.

27 The MacRae resignation from Westminster Theological Seminary on Sunday, April 25, 1937, was indeed a sad but necessary move on the part of Dr. MacRae. The resignation has been criticized as being precipitous. See: Edwin H. Rian, The Presbyterian Conflict (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940), 212-214 (pagination identical in the 1992 reprint by The Committee of The Historian of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church). In an interview with Dr. MacRae, spring 1978, Dr. MacRae stated that he had sent all relevant correspondence to the seminary, and to the newspapers, but for some reason the mail had been delayed that Monday, and the newspapers received his resignation before the seminary officially did. MacRae’s remarks addressed legitimate concerns about the public perceptions of Westminster Theological Seminary at that time. MacRae felt that it was morally duplicitous to raise funds for the seminary from premillennial sources and have some premillennial board members, but have that viewpoint unmercyifully criticized both in the classrooms and in print by professors of the seminary. The item that pushed MacRae over the edge was an article by Dr. Kuiper: R. B. Kuiper, “A Plea for Peace,” Presbyterian Guardian 4 (24 April, 1937):20. For a most helpful discussion of the matter see R. Todd Mangum, “The Falling Out Between Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology,” (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; Dallas Theological Seminary, May 2001), 107-109.

A further perspective is in order. Princeton under the tutelage of Charles Hodge moved from theological instruction from Turretin to his own notes and Systematic Theology. Princeton went from a no future millennial emphasis to a postmillennial one. Charles Erdman was the only premillennial professor at Princeton, teaching practical theology. Beginning in 1930 there was a new resurgence felt in the theological world concerning this old position but recently coined “amillennialism,” which was felt at Westminster. The new militant resurgence of “amillennialism,” in order to reestablish its credibility, vociferously and vituperatively attacked both premillennarians who were making outlandish claims, and dispensational
premillenarians, whose system was perceived as being out of harmony with the Westminster Standards. What appeared to be the demise of postmillennialism and the false confidence premillennialists imbibed was soon shaken by the influx of insurgent amillennialism, as it had been dubbed enthusiastically by Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920).

MacRae felt that he did not want to be a token premillennialist, with the exception of Paul Wolley who taught church history. Wolley did not see the attack on dispensationalism as one on premillennialism. MacRae felt that in the final analysis that no form of premillennialism would eventually be acceptable to “the Dutch school.” His warm friendship with professor John Murray (1898-1975) became somewhat strained. However, over the years they remained cordial. Dr. MacRae had an enduring friendship with Dr. John Hamilton Skilton (1906-1998). It was common knowledge that Dr. MacRae felt that Dr. VanTil’s apologetics was “dangerous.”

28 I call these upheavals reorganizations because they resemble the reorganization of Princeton Theological Seminary, which caused it to become something other than what the institution was originally intended to be. In 1956 Dr. MacRae had to build almost from scratch a new faculty at Faith Seminary, largely due to the mass exodus of faculty to the newly founded Covenant College and Seminary. The essential core with the exceptions of Drs. Alfred Winfield Eppard (1906-1977) and Albert Franklin Faucette (1900–1995) helped Dr. MacRae start Biblical School of Theology, now Biblical Theological Seminary since 1977. Faith Theological Seminary divided again in 1976. Those leaving then founded the American Presbyterian Church. For more information on the American Presbyterian Church site, see http://www.amprpress.com/. Faith Seminary had to be reconstituted again after the founding of Western Reformed Seminary in 1982-1983.

29 Although events developed over a period of time, the straw that broke the camel’s back occurred within the time period of 24 hours, on May 25, 1971. In the spring of 1971, Dr. Murray contacted Dr. MacRae for consultation in the possibility and feasibility of founding a Bible Institute. Dr. Jack Murray founded a Christian organization in each room in his house in Abington. Tension was great the academic year of 1970-71. Pressures placed upon the administration by the President of the Board of Directors, Dr. Carl McIntire, were keenly felt by the president of the faculty, Dr. Allan A. MacRae. When MacRae drove from Western Pennsylvania, he heard Dr. McIntire’s Twentieth Century Reformation Hour broadcast and his announcement that Dr. Gary Cohen was leaving the seminary to become a curator of a Christian museum which Dr. McIntire was going to establish at the Cape Canaveral Bible Conference. Without prior consent of all parties involved it appeared that Dr. McIntire wanted to be able at whim to move faculty into any independent agency at his beck and call.

30 The night of commencement May 25, 1971, proved equally disastrous. At the commencement Dr. McIntire announced three things not even discussed in the afternoon board meeting: (1) Dr. MacRae was going to retire, which was news to Dr. MacRae; (2) Faith Seminary was going to relocate to Cape May, another decision without any prior consultation; and (3) Faith Seminary was going to start to charge tuition, something unheard of in its history to that time, again without prior consultation. Only the third proposal ever materialized. Dr MacRae and most of the faculty felt that they could no longer serve in an institution which was being conducted in such a manner. Dr. MacRae accepted Dr. Murray’s invitation to start a school, but instead of a Bible Institute it would be a theological seminary. For Dr. McIntire’s interpretation of the founding of Biblical Theological Seminary, see: Faith Theological Seminary: Training Leaders for the Twentieth Century Reformation Movement (1971), 16, and Faith Theological Seminary 1937-1977 (1977), 40. Note his already evident and verifiable reconstruction of the “facts” between 1971 and 1977, p. 28. Contrast these materials with the written transcript of Dr. McIntire’s address at the commencement in 1971, p. 6. Materials exonerating Dr. MacRae include: 1) Allan A. MacRae, “Report to The Board of Directors of Faith Theological Seminary, May 25, 1971, p. 13, and an untitled, seriatim rebuttal of Dr. McIntire’s first booklet; it is unsigned but the style of the document betrays Dr. MacRae’s hand.
Similar distortions transpired with the beginning of Western Reformed Seminary with ensuing events leading up to the schism of 1984. Drs. Battle and Anderson are of the similar MacRae mind-set to forgive rather than further circularize the church.

Western Reformed Seminary was originally conceived as a West Coast seminary that would complement the work of Faith Theological Seminary in the East in training Bible Presbyterian ministers. For the history of Western Reformed Seminary, see: http://www.wrs.edu. WRS stands proudly in the theological line of tradition of Princeton, Westminster, Faith, Covenant, and Biblical Seminaries.

The most striking example of Dr. Anderson’s preaching ability under duress was when he preached at the funeral of Dr. Carl McIntire. Although during the schism of 1984, which took place in the Tacoma Church, Dr. McIntire proved to be extremely untrustworthy, the spirit of Christian love genuinely poured forth from Dr. Anderson at Dr. McIntire’s funeral on 26 March, 2001; see http://www.bpc.org/resources/mcintire/rwanderson.

Other examples of Dr. Anderson’s sermons found in print from Synod minutes include: “Christ Lifted Up,” Outline of a Communion Meditation, Minutes of the 49th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, August 1-6, Nashville, Tenn., 1985, 54-55; the following minutes are available on the internet from the Bible Presbyterian General Synod web site: http://www.bpc.org/synod/index.html “Revelation 3:3b,” (Minutes of the 60th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, August 5-10, Cincinnati, Ohio 1996, 86-91); “Abraham Leaving Ur of the Chaldees: Facing A New World,” (Minutes of the 64th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, August 3-8, Cincinnati, Ohio 2000, III 7-11); “Christ The King over His Church (Matthew 28:19-20.)” (Minutes of the 68th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, August 5-10, Cincinnati, Ohio, 2004, IV. 20-24).


Interpretation and History: Essays in Honor of Allan A. MacRae, ed. by R. Laird Harris, Swee-Hwa Quek, and J. Robert Vannoy (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1986); s.v. Thomas Vernon Taylor, “Church History Revisited,” pp. 253-271. Taylor’s observations about MacRae’s philosophy of teaching church history can be seen in the person of Dr. Robert W. Anderson.

Rev. Carl McIntire, as a proud 1931 alumnus of that institution, originally advertised Westminster Theological Seminary as: “For the Faith and by Faith” prior to the inception of Faith Theological Seminary (interview with Allan A. MacRae, spring 1978). This motto was then applied to Faith Theological Seminary. Dr. Anderson is a true “son of the movement” in the sense in which it was originally conceived by Dr. McIntire, but not to the perversions to which it had beenfallen by a vocal minority in the student body of FTS in 1971. The original concept of “Twentieth Century Reformation,” as conceived by Rev. Carl C. McIntire in his first and only theoretical work on the concept meant a simple basic concept. According to McIntire, the Twentieth Century Reformation was “to redeem the word Christian” from the Liberal abuse of the concept; Carl Curtis McIntire, Twentieth Century Reformation (1st ed.; Collingswood, N.J: Christian Beacon Press, 1944, 2nd ed., 1945, 3rd rev. ed., 1946), pp. 3-10 in all three editions. Dr Robert W. Anderson has strived in excellence to be foremost a Christian gentleman who has adhered to Niagara Fundamentalism in Reformed and Presbyterian form. Unlike some of his detractors he organized both car caravans for protest meetings and also for evangelistic meetings with equal fervor.
Rupertus Meldenius (1627) paraphrased the thought of Augustine thusly: “In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, in all things charity.”