

Ryan Center News

Volume 3

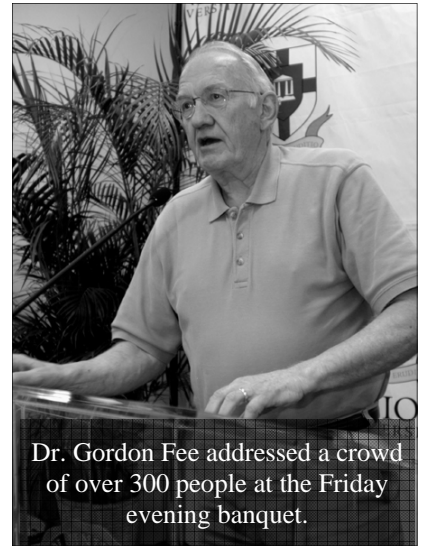
Summer 2005

High Praise for Center's "For All Its Worth" Conference

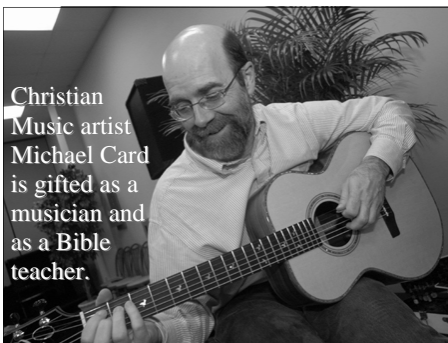
The Ryan Center recently held its bi-annual Bible Study Conference at Union University. The theme was "Reading the Bible for All Its Worth," taken from a book title by the Conference's keynote speaker, Dr. Gordon Fee. Fee gave three addresses which challenged conference attendees to devote more attention to personal Bible

study. Fee was joined by Christian music artist and Bible teacher Michael Card who taught on Biblical laments. Card is well known for his music but has

"I came away with a tremendous respect and appreciation for a school like Union University and its commitment to holding up the Bible as sufficient for all of life."



Dr. Gordon Fee addressed a crowd of over 300 people at the Friday evening banquet.



Christian Music artist Michael Card is gifted as a musician and as a Bible teacher.

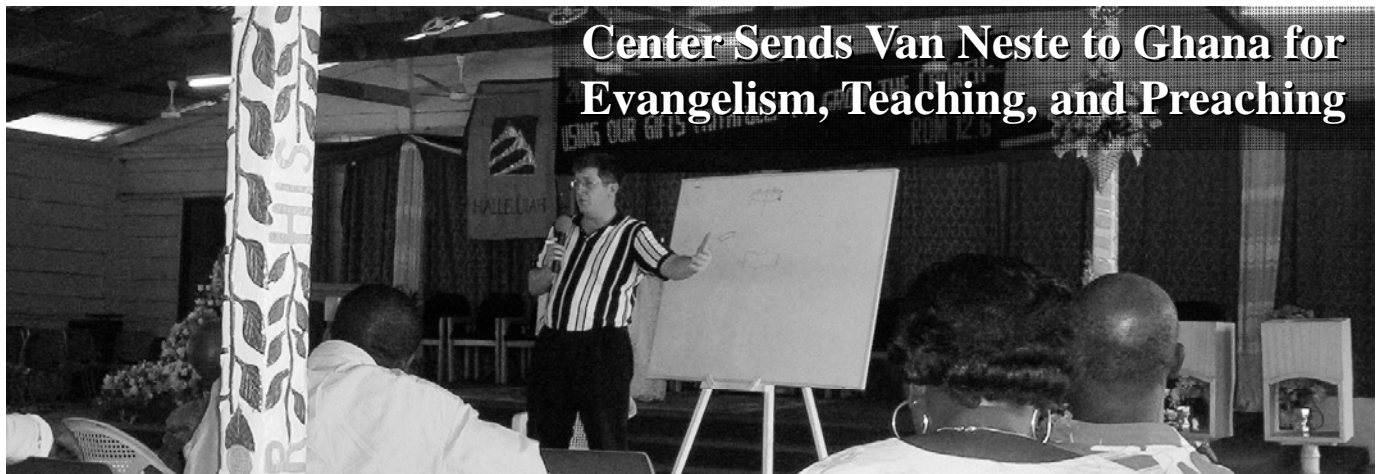
also established himself as a prominent Bible teacher, hosting a radio teaching ministry and speaking at numerous conferences.

Registration for the conference

exceeded many expectations. 305 participants traveled from as far away as Georgia, Louisiana, and Missouri. Large groups came from Columbus, Mississippi and Sikeston, Missouri. One church in

(Continued on page 3)

Center Sends Van Neste to Ghana for Evangelism, Teaching, and Preaching



"The Ryan Center exists to promote thoughtful and disciplined reading, study, interpretation and application of the Bible throughout the world." This purpose statement is taken very seriously at the Ryan Center. We do not say loosely that we hope to do our work "throughout the world." For this reason the center recently helped

sponsor Dr. Ray Van Neste's preaching and teaching trip to the West African country of Ghana. The following story describes how this initiative was able to help the Center fulfill its defining mission "throughout the world."

As Ray Van Neste was teaching a New Testament class on his

recent trip to Ghana, he came to a passage about church government that is often interpreted in many different ways.

Van Neste, assistant professor of Christian Studies at Union University, mentioned briefly the diverse interpretations, but tried to move on to topics he considered more substantial.

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Center Obtains 1708 Copy of Theodore Beza's Greek and Latin New Testament

The Ryan Center has recently acquired a 297 year-old Greek and Latin Bible originally published by Theodore Beza (1519 - 1605). This piece is a great compliment to the Center's artifacts holdings because it was used to translate the New Testament in publications of the Geneva Bible which were produced after 1576. (The centerpiece of the Ryan Center is a 1615 copy of the Geneva Bible.)

Theodore Beza was one of the great theologians of the Reformation, publishing at least 5 different editions of the Greek New Testament in his lifetime. He played an important role in the Protestant Reformation by gathering the best Greek manuscripts available and producing an updated version of the Greek New Testament.



Theodore Beza (1519-1605) was one of the great scholars of the Protestant Reformation.

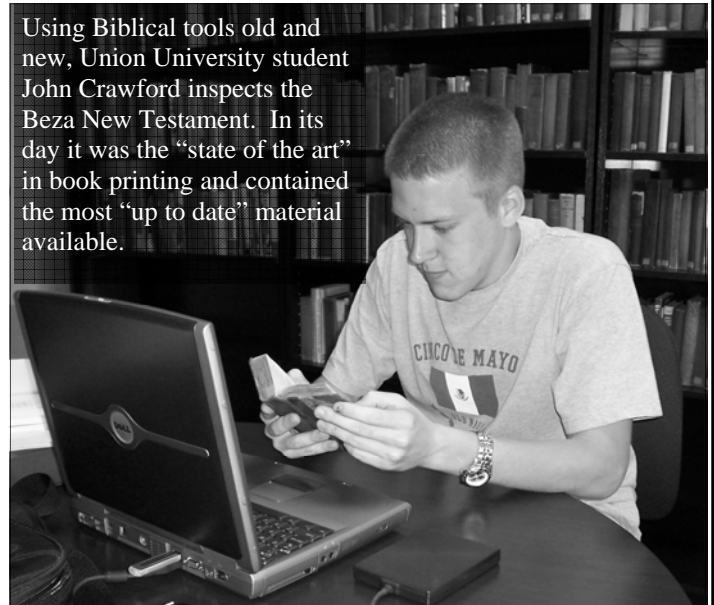


Although showing some signs of wear, the Beza New Testament is in surprisingly good condition for a book that is nearly 300 years old.

Like many Bibles of that day this Beza Bible measures just 3.5" X 5.5". This size made these Bibles easy to carry in one's pocket and easy to conceal from government officials who often banned such items.



Guests of the Ryan Center can enjoy "hands-on" experience with rare historical artifacts.



Using Biblical tools old and new, Union University student John Crawford inspects the Beza New Testament. In its day it was the "state of the art" in book printing and contained the most "up to date" material available.



(Continued from page 1)

Chattanooga, Tennessee sent many of its Sunday school teachers to the conference as part of a church leadership training event.

Some of the most positive feedback from registrants came from those who traveled the greatest distance to attend. One participant wrote, "I was part of the eighteen folks from Concord Baptist Church in Chattanooga. . . I want to tell you first of all that we were so encouraged and equipped by this excellent conference. . . I came away with a tremendous respect and appreciation for a school like Union University and its commitment to holding up the Bible as sufficient for all of life."

Other conference speakers included nationally recognized scholars Dr. Grant Osborne from Trinity International University in Chicago and Dr. Daniel Block from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Various Union University professors also led sessions which covered topics ranging from computer-assisted Bible study to ethical decision making and the Bible.

The Ryan Center plans to present similar conferences at Union University in coming years. The Ryan Center is one of the university's initiatives to

Audio recordings of the conference sessions are available for purchase. Over 300 CD's have been requested already and many more are in production. Those interested in purchasing these CD's may contact Brian Denker at 731-661-5579, bdenker@uu.edu or uu.edu/centers/biblical. Each individual session is \$3 or you can purchase the entire set of 14 sessions for \$35. An mp3 CD-Rom of all 14 sessions is available for \$4. (Remember that mp3 CD's can be played on your computer but they do not play on most CD players.)

(Continued from page 1)

His students, however, wouldn't let him.

"They said, 'We want to obey the Bible exactly, regardless of our traditions. You tell us, as you understand it, exactly what does it say?'" Van Neste said. "I really appreciated that spirit."

That sense of eagerness and devotion to Scripture is what most impressed Van Neste during his trip in January. During his stay in the capital of Accra, Van Neste helped local church leaders in evangelism efforts, and he taught classes for those preparing for the ministry.

Although Ghana is primarily a Christian nation, most of the people there simply nod their heads to Christianity and don't fully embrace its teachings, Van Neste said. The local church leaders communicated to him their need for expository preaching. So, as Van Neste taught young ministers the books

CONFERENCE FEEDBACK...

"I really enjoyed the conference, it has given me more of an excitement about the Old Testament."

"[I enjoyed the] sound Biblical teaching by experienced teachers / authors."

"[The speakers] displayed quality of scholarship combined with depth of devotion to God."

"Thank you so much for bringing these wonderful teachers, given by God to the church."

"[I enjoyed] the in-depth, meaty discussion"

"I thank Union University for hosting this conference. This is my second conference to attend here and it is a pure joy to come to this campus."

"I really appreciated the passion of the speakers. I was challenged by their practical insights."

"I was so very pleased with each of the seminars I attended. Dr. Guthrie was excellent. Brad Green inspired us all. . . And Dr. Fee is a speaker after God's own heart."

of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, he emphasized the importance of biblical preaching.

In addition, Van Neste did some of his own preaching in local churches and communities. The local pastors he worked with arranged to show the "Jesus" film in the evenings in different villages. As they set up a screen outdoors and showed the film, people would gather to watch. Van Neste often had the chance to present the gospel message during breaks in the film, and those who made professions of faith in Christ were introduced to a local pastor and church.

Van Neste said the trip was an encouragement to him, specifically "the vibrancy of the church there, how earnest they were for the Word."

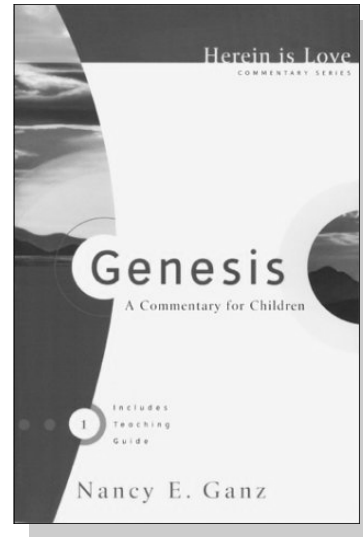
-story by Tim Ellsworth

www.uu.edu/centers/biblical/bookreviews

BOOK REVIEW:

Genesis: A Commentary for Children (Herein is Love Series, Vol. 1)

by Nancy Ganz (Shepherd Press, 2002)
Paperback, 576 pages, ISBN: 0972304606



The folks at Shepherd Press (publishers of Tedd Tripp's parenting material) have provided us with another great resource for children. The author, Nancy Ganz, is the wife of Richard Ganz, who has authored a number of books.

These three volumes are the initial releases in the Herein is Love Commentary Series intended for children. Anyone attempting a commentary for children who is then willing to start not only with Genesis and Exodus but also Leviticus is deserving of our commendation! The books are not typical commentaries but they do take a passage and provide explanation and application while working straight through a book. In narrative portions the stories are summarized and retold with appropriate illustrations. Each lesson also includes references for parallel readings in both testaments and a teacher's guide which includes hints for visual aids, a memory verse, review questions, a prayer, psalms to sing, and an outdoor activity.

In her introduction to the volume on Genesis Mrs. Ganz explains her decision to write these books and how she approaches the task:

"I decided to write this book when I was sitting in the National Arts Centre Theatre in the capital of Canada. The National Ballet Company of Canada was performing The Nutcracker and I was thinking, 'The world takes a silly little story like this and tells it to the children so beautifully and

meaningfully that they remember it for the rest of their lives. The church takes the most beautiful and meaningful story ever told- the salvation of God's people- and somehow turns the most exciting events and amazing facts in all human history into unimaginably boring lessons. How is this possible?' It was that thought in that moment which motivated me to write this book in this way. ...

In this book, in these lessons, I have humbly endeavored to begin this task, the task of telling the children of God's wonders, the task of declaring to them God's righteousness, SALVATION and faithfulness, the task of revealing to them God's Truth, His great Mercy and His steadfast LOVE."

Mrs. Ganz does a good job in keeping before the reader how the entire Bible is the unfolding of God's working in redeeming for Himself a people (in this way it could be helpful to many teaching and preaching to adults!). If you, like so many others, have struggled with the shallowness, blandness and triviality of so much of the material produced for children this may be what you have been looking for. The books are well suited for use in family devotions, Sunday school, or as Bible curriculum in Christian schools.

Ray Van Neste
Union University

Publication by Dockery and Guthrie aids laity in Bible interpretation

The Holman Guide to Interpreting the Bible aims to introduce Christian laypeople to the basics of Bible study and interpretation. In the 100 page guide, co-authors David S. Dockery and George H. Guthrie explain the importance, history and practical steps for interpretation.

David S. Dockery, president of Union University, hopes to impart the reader with “a sense that the Bible will no longer be a mysterious book to them but one they can begin to understand.”

Each person who reads the Bible makes choices of interpretation. “It’s a question of whether they’re doing it well,” said Guthrie, Benjamin

W. Perry Professor of Bible and Senior Fellow of the Ryan Center for Biblical Studies.

Guthrie sees a need for churches to teach members to effectively interpret scripture. “In the church we hold up the Bible as our authority,” he said, “yet we don’t teach people how to study it. We don’t even teach them how to read it well.”

This book complements the mission of the R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies at Union. “It begins to get the vision of the Center outside the walls of the Center itself,” Guthrie said.

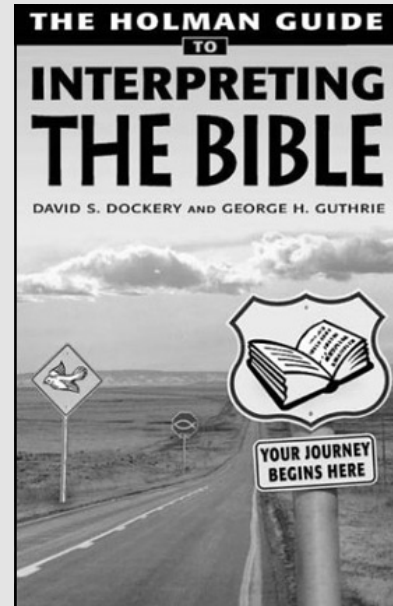
“The ultimate mission of the center is to affect churches all over the United States and even across the world by promoting sound bible study methods and principles of interpretation.”

Because it is intended as an introduction to the basics of interpretation, rather than as a full textbook, the guide is purposefully brief but broad in scope. In providing a context for beginning study, the authors outline the history of biblical interpretation. Dockery explained the needed perspective history provides for readers new to interpretation. “Most people fail to grasp that it is very challenging to jump

back 2000 years into another time, another language, another culture without recognizing that we are standing on the shoulders of dozens of people who have labored hard to help us understand the Bible throughout church history,” he said.

Both authors hope the guide will be a starting point for laypeople to begin deeper study of interpretation methods. Dockery recommended the book as a resource for Sunday school teachers and other leaders who have not taken extensive courses in Bible study methods.

Dockery hopes to impart the reader with “a sense that the Bible will no longer be a mysterious book to them but one they can understand.”



David S. Dockery
President, Union University



George H. Guthrie
Benjamin W. Perry
Professor of Biblical Studies
Union University

R. C. Ryan Center for
BIBLICAL STUDIES

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A Word From the Director...

This has been an exciting year for the Ryan Center. Most of the year has been devoted to the Conference, from planning, preparation, promotion, to the actual event, and wrap up and assessment. It was very encouraging to all of us here for the conference to go so well. It was great to see many of you there. It has been gratifying to hear from many people how the conference benefited and impacted them. In fact, heeding one of the exhortations from Dr. Fee, my local church recently held a special Wednesday night service to read corporately the entirety of 2 Corinthians in preparations for a sermon series through the book to begin the following Sunday. It was a great experience. May the teachings given at the conference continue to bear fruit for years to come.

Many people have asked, in amazement, how such a conference can be held at so low a cost. I think it is appropriate to let you know the three key reasons this could be done. First, as was

mentioned at the conference, Broadman and Holman Publishers graciously covered the expense of the Friday banquet meal. This was a great help and their partnership was invaluable. Second, our breakout speakers (Union professors and our guests) were willing to participate in spite of receiving significantly less (monetarily) than what they would normally receive. They came because they believed in the work. These friends made the conference possible in many ways and deserve our thanks. Third, we decided early on that, even with the first two points mentioned, we would not be able to charge what it would take to cover our expenses and still be accessible to all the people we wanted to reach. We were encouraged to set the registration price higher, but we knew that would begin to restrict who could come, especially when multiple family members would come or when people would also be paying for travel and housing. We were only able to set a

lower price because of money that was donated as the Center began. We decided it was worth it to use some of our "nest egg" to make the conference accessible - and we are glad we did. Of course as we use this money we need to replace it if we are to continue to be able to accomplish the work of the Center and to keep it accessible. If you would like to play a part in enabling the Center to continue its work and to keep it accessible, feel free to contact us at the numbers or email given. Soon there will be a new page on our website detailing some of the things we hope to do as we are able (including extending our opening hours, scholarships for conferences, etc.) Checks can be made out to Union University with Ryan Center in the "for" line.

Thank you for your continuing interest in the Ryan Center.

Sincerely,