

IMPACT

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EXTENDING REGENT'S REACH

A School of Divinity initiative trains local church leaders for maximum community impact

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus tells His 11 apostles, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Yet, that seemingly simple command needs to be obeyed with proper planning and preparation. Regent University’s School of Divinity embraces its role in fulfilling the Great Commission: “We exist to prepare people to serve the world, and the world needs Christ. The church is here to address that need, and we’re here to help the church,” explains Dr. Michael Palmer, dean of the divinity school.

One of the most practical and effective ways Regent is strengthening the body of Christ is through the Church

Education Initiative (CEI): a low-cost certificate program that’s training local pastors and ministers to meet the needs of 21st century congregations.

“The School of Divinity is interested in reaching out to the community—locally, regionally, nationally and internationally,” Palmer says. “CEI extends to the lay people in the churches, so that’s a way of extending the reach of the school.”

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“Our participants are extremely grateful for this wonderful opportunity to be what God has called them to be through prayerful and prudent academic preparation.”

- Bishop W.D. Scott Sr.
Pleasant Grove Baptist Church

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“CEI is a specific partnership with a church and with a church pastor,” explains Dr. James Flynn, program director and associate professor of practical theology. He points out that pastors can customize CEI for their church’s specific needs. They can choose to educate candidates currently serving as leaders or selected members who are ready to accept a bigger role inside the church.

“What’s nice about it is that it’s scalable because the costs are relatively low compared to accredited education,” Flynn says. “The pastor selects class members and custom designs the course so that it’s contextualized for what the church actually needs.”

Palmer adds, “Most people, including those without the immediate ability to go to graduate school, still want to be effective in their church, and pastors want their congregants to get involved.

“So with CEI, we are really reaching out to churches and their pastors and

saying, ‘Look, in this short amount of time—about one year—we can provide some basic educational opportunities that go beyond anything that you could offer in the church, which will prepare your people to be more effective in roles of ministry.’”

Palmer says Regent has tapped into a deeply felt need in the church: “Much

more rigorous than Sunday school, CEI provides services, specialized training and theological education that the pastor can’t. There are a lot of people who are called to minister or called to be active in

their church, but they don’t have divinity degrees.”

Current CEI partners include churches from different denominations in Connecticut, Georgia and Virginia. Flynn sees the program’s doctrinal diversity as consistent with Regent’s wider education approach: “We are an interdenominational, Renewal-oriented seminary, so we’re used to teaching in an environment that is incredibly diverse.



Members of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church learn leadership skills through Regent University’s CEI.



PLEASANT GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH
CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA

“We have a common belief in who the Holy Spirit is and how He ministers today. So rather than teaching from a dogmatic standpoint, we love to raise questions in class and have people think for themselves.”

CEI expenses are low, and most program costs are covered by the partner churches. But Palmer says, “If we had more resources, we would expand the opportunities, and we would work hard to get the infrastructure necessary to bring in more churches.

“We have built intentionally in a deliberate way. We want every interaction with the church to be very hands on, very intimate, very appropriate to the situation in which the people are living, working and worshipping.”

CEI participants see the value in this academic partnership as well. Bishop W.D. Scott Sr. of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Chesapeake, Va., says the program has been well received, supported and appreciated: “Our participants are extremely grateful for this wonderful opportunity to be what God has called them to be through prayerful and prudent

academic preparation. We are elated to be participating with the Regent University CEI partnership.”

Palmer says because Regent can deliver curriculum online, CEI isn’t limited to urban areas, rural areas or even the United States: “We’ve had discussions with the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) about transferring this model to CBN China to help work with pastors in the officially endorsed church there.”

While the School of Divinity wants CEI to impact more churches, Palmer warns it’s not a one-size-fits-all initiative: “Our danger here is not that we’re growing too slowly, but that this has the potential to outstrip our capability to provide the quality that we want to provide. We’re not running something that’s just intended to generate thousands of opportunities. When we enter into a relationship with a church, we are really committing ourselves for a year to provide a very conversational, hands-on, intimate experience.” ❀

To learn more about the School of Divinity and the Church Education Initiative, visit www.regent.edu/divinity or call 800.723.6162.

Politically Speaking

Virginia's attorney general delivers a strong message to his ELS audience



A crowd of more than 500 greeted Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli with a standing ovation at the Executive Leadership Series (ELS) luncheon on February 23. Cuccinelli has been at the forefront of the conservative battle against the federal health care law, filing suit just minutes after President Barack Obama signed the controversial bill on March 23, 2010.

In his opening comments to the business, political and religious leaders assembled, Cuccinelli praised Regent for its commitment to liberty: “For everybody who is or wishes to be free, Regent University is and has been a steadfast ally for freedom.”

Cuccinelli's speech, entitled “Keeping the Federal Government in Check,” focused on the danger of what he called “this ever-expanding power of the federal government.” Virginia's attorney general spoke at length about the Founding Fathers' commitment to fundamental principles: “While the founders pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to protect and defend—and really establish in this country—these ‘First Principles,’ we've often taken them for granted as a country, as individuals.

And we've become complacent that government is going to solve all our problems.

“We've asked government to do more for us, and all the government asked for in return is just a little bit more of our liberty—our freedom. So now, we no longer have a federal government of limited powers. I'm grateful, though, that in the last few years ... people have finally started to wake up. They're pushing back. They're demanding accountability, and the yardstick of that accountability is the Constitution. That is a conscious decision by many Virginians, by many Americans.”

Jeffrey Brauch, dean of Regent University's School of Law, says having Cuccinelli on campus was a great opportunity for students and faculty to interact with one of the top legal leaders in Virginia: “It's encouraging today to see issues of separation of powers and federalism being talked about again at the highest level, and Attorney General Cuccinelli is one of the people leading that discussion.

“He's not only working on matters important to the state, but they are of enormous magnitude in the life of our country today. Constitutional law is a significant focus of Regent's School of Law. We believe it is essential to understand what the framers of the Constitution intended.”

In an *Impact* interview after his speech, Cuccinelli praised Regent as a faith-focused institution that appreciates the “First Principles” and serves as a counterweight to political correctness: “I'm glad that it's in Virginia. I'm proud of that fact. We have some other good institutions here, but when you combine all of those elements, it's rare.” ❀

To purchase a table, season tickets or to sponsor Regent University's Executive Leadership Series, call 757.352.4141 or visit www.regent.edu/els.



the Gospel Truth

Regent's Pentecostalism & Prosperity Symposium examines the socio-economic effects of Renewal Christianity

The “prosperity gospel” has become a controversial term among Christians over the past half century. Yet most Biblical scholars agree that, good or bad, it has fueled the worldwide growth of Renewal Christianity.

“It is pretty well documented that the fastest-growing trends in Christianity around the world probably in the past 30 years are what we call ‘Renewal types’ of Christianity,” says Regent School of Divinity professor Dr. Amos Yong, co-organizer of Regent’s Pentecostalism & Prosperity Symposium, which took place in February. “It’s also increasingly the case that the Renewal churches conform to what we call ‘the prosperity gospel.’”

Designed as a dialogue between religious scholars and students, the event included case studies of Renewal movements across Asia, Africa and Latin America and looked at the prosperity message’s political, social and economic effects on local and global levels.

Co-sponsored by Regent University’s School of Divinity and School of Undergraduate Studies, the symposium’s panel of experts represented such prestigious institutions as Harvard Divinity School, the University of Richmond, Lee University, Davidson College and others.

“Given the expansion of Renewal Christianity throughout the world, the global financial turmoil and the almost universal human desire for prosperity, this symposium addresses some key questions

that Christians should consider,” says Dr. Gerson Moreno-Riaño, dean of the School of Undergraduate Studies.

Yong, who is also director of Regent’s Ph.D. in Renewal Studies Program, explains, “In terms of global Christianity, many of us may have a history of viewing televangelists and hearing about the scandals associated with the prosperity gospel. But, around the world, the shape of the prosperity gospel, in many instances, sounds quite a bit different.

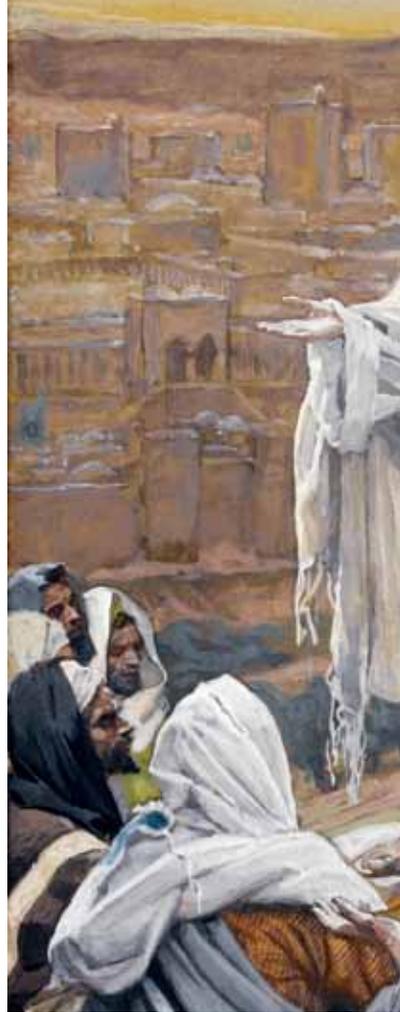
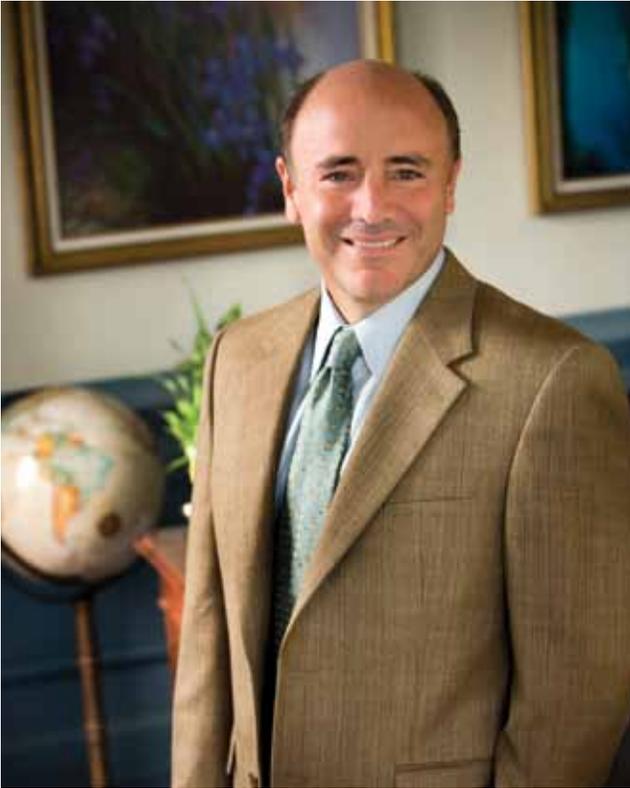
“So we thought that this symposium was important to study the different shapes, forms and sounds—how they manifest themselves in different countries and regions that are under different economic conditions.”

Assistant professor of religious studies and symposium co-organizer Dr. Katy Attanasi says the event will result in a book to be published in 2012: “We hope the detailed analysis presented provides people with knowledge they didn’t have before.

“We are excited for our students to be in conversations with these scholars. Regent University has been a flagship in the study of the Renewal movement, so it is very appropriate for the symposium to be here.” ✿

For more information about the Schools of Divinity and Undergraduate Studies, call Regent University at 800.373.5504 or visit www.regent.edu.

A Message From the President



Dear Friends,

Regent University understands the importance and impact of the local church. That is why our School of Divinity launched its Church Education Initiative, why we custom design programs that will prepare emerging leaders to serve both in their local churches and in their communities. The training is rigorous, the academic standards high—as are all Regent classes—but we are committed to preparing Christian leaders to change the world, whether across the Atlantic or across the street. It is your continued support that allows us to fulfill our mission, and we are deeply grateful for the vital role you play.

Sincerely,

Carlos Campo, Ph.D.



www.regent.edu/impact

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An Artist of Vision

You may not have heard of James Tissot, but the 19th century French artist had a significant impact on the way many people “see” Jesus. After the Lord appeared to Tissot in a vision, the artist spent 10 years painting 365 illustrations called *The Life of Christ*. In their first-ever partnership, Regent University and the Chrysler Museum of Art are bringing more than 120 of Tissot’s paintings from the collection of the Brooklyn Museum to Norfolk, Va. Found in many early 20th century Bibles, his works not only shape modern ideas of our Savior’s physical appearance, but they influence how people (including Hollywood directors Cecil B. DeMille, Mel Gibson and Steven Spielberg) envision many Old and New Testament events.

James Tissot: The Life of Christ is organized by the Brooklyn Museum and is made possible, in part, by a generous award from the National Endowment for the Arts. Local presentation is made possible through the generous support of anonymous friends of the Chrysler Museum, Regent University and The Christian Broadcasting Network. For more information on the stunning *James Tissot: The Life of Christ* exhibit, which runs March 23 to June 5, visit www.chrysler.org.

SCHOLARSHIP GIVING

In these challenging economic times, scholarships are essential to helping men and women answer God’s call to attend Regent University. Your support can remove financial obstacles for deserving students. For a list of university-wide, school-specific and named scholarships, please visit www.regent.edu/give/scholarships or call 800.335.4409, and give your best gift today!

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SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

By the Numbers

1,719

students have graduated from the School of Divinity since its founding in 1982.

500+

lives have been touched through the divinity school’s Center for Worship in the past year.

73

percent of divinity graduates currently serve in active ministry.

49

divinity students have traveled to Ghana and Europe this year to serve and share the gospel.

34

countries are represented by School of Divinity graduates.