

A Call to Action **by Nathan Frazier**

This strategy has to do with my conviction that the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church has the great potential to be an organization that is Kingdom focused and Gospel loving. This is a call for the ARP and its agencies to define itself in biblical, confessional, and historic Presbyterian terms.

You cannot outslug the Erskine family! It will protect itself. Erskine administration prides itself on standing up to the ‘ARP Ayatollas’ who they feel have no business in the educational sphere. Erskine College and Seminary Administrators have a protectionist instinct. They will not hire from without very often, and historically have hired from within when they feel threatened by either the Board of Trustees or the ARP General Synod. Erskine Administrators labor to inform their faculty and staff who’s against them in order to keep things in house. Erskine loves autonomy more than accountability. Therefore, Erskine Administrators have to be out-politicked—but done so in a fair, rational, and Christian manner.

Erskine is like a diseased person. Sure, you can nit-pick and have a spat over this and that. Or you can ‘attempt’ to starve Erskine of its financial resources from the ARP Synod or individual churches. However, Erskine will still survive—and possibly be glad to have the albatross of the ARP Synod removed from its neck. Erskine is one of the oldest Colleges (if not the oldest) in South Carolina. It is respected by Christians of varying denominations, and secularists as well. Its ‘bread and butter’ have been recently in the sciences. Its endowments (however shaky they might appear in the current economic situation) and its long-standing reputation, will ALWAYS be enough to keep it sputtering along. The State would bail Erskine out if things became too bleak financially. Historically, exchanging jabs with Erskine’s administration over ‘issues’ such as alcohol, distribution of prophylactics, a disorderly faculty member, and even the misuse of funds, have never remedied the problems at Erskine. In fact, such arguments probably have only served to further animosity toward establishing any sort of Evangelical-Reformed identity! The Erskine Board of Trustees and Administration have always outlasted the critics—and plan to do so again. One former Erskine Vice President (Monty Wooley) once told me, ‘every ten years or so, the ARP ministers get all up tight over one thing or the other. The reality is that Erskine is not the ARP, and ministers don’t understand Erskine.’ Perhaps, this is the problem; it also sheds much light on the solution! The plan of the Erskine elite is to weather the storm. No matter how many investigations are inflicted on Erskine College and Seminary Administrators, they will withstand the torments and they know it. Thus, Erskine problems can be summarized succinctly: Erskine’s Administrators and Board of Trustees have a problem with the ARP Synod demanding (reasonable accountability).

The problem at Erskine College and Seminary is that it is diseased by its leadership. Erskine will never hire people on its own and from the outside that do not match the DNA structure of its own diseased system. Look at Erskine’s track record of hiring. With the exception of Don Weatherman and Ralph J. Gore, who has come from the outside? Who has been hired, rather than internally promoted to lead the institution. Both Weatherman and Gore have left Erskine’s Administrative leadership after severe difficulties and even under questionable circumstances. Both men, who are ARPs, did outstanding work for the ARP Church and sought to uphold its standards. The recent appointment of the new Vice President of Student services is a remarkable demonstration of Erskine ‘protectionism’. Instead of conducting an ‘honest’ search for an ARP or someone even outside of Due West, Randy Ruble promoted Robin Agnew to the position. Robin is an outstanding person. She is not an ARP, nor would claim to be an evangelical. Another example is the appointment of Dr. Michel Bush, former professor of Homiletics, to the Seminary’s administration. We can applaud Rev. Neely Gaston for removing Dr. Bush an

ordained PCUSA minister--who had legal issues surrounding a DUI charge--but decried his ungodly decision to appoint him, a PCUSA minister to Erskine's leadership.

What is wrong with the ARP for not demanding of the Erskine Board of Trustees and Administration, to mirror institutions such as Covenant College, Covenant Seminary, Geneva College, Pittsburgh Reformed Presbyterian Seminary, RTS, or Westminster Seminary? Erskine's policy of hiring 'a small handful' of Evangelical and Reformed Christian professors has historically, at least, placated the ARP Synod in the short-term. However, Erskine's Administration knows, has known that this is all that's needed to keep the ARPs off their backs. Are we content with having less than a kingdom-minded vision for Erskine, that we will once again sell ourselves short with having 'a few good guys' teaching the future ministers, elders, deacons, and WOCs of our denomination?

Erskine as an institution, quite frankly, views itself as independent—even if it takes the Lord's money from the denomination and 'claims' a missions/visions statement from it. Many institutions are like Erskine in this regard. The institution sees itself as bigger than the Church and separate from the Church. Amazingly, Presbyterian College, Rhodes College, Warren Wilson College, and Lees-McCrae College all have this type of relationship with their denomination—the PCUSA. If we believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be the answer for the ills of our society, the only hope in this world, should we not insist on intervening in an institution that bears our name. Should we not insist that our faculty and staff carry out the standards of our evangelical faith and standards.

The biggest problem for the ARP's Evangelical-wing and the greatest ally to Erskine administrators is the ARP itself. The pusillanimity of ARP ministers is best illustrated by their most common reference about Erskine—'oh well, that's Erskine'. Why should a guy who graduated from UNC and did his pastoral training at RTS care about Erskine College and Seminary. His children are going to UNC. For sure, he was informed by other Evangelicals, or his former ARP/PCA minister that Erskine was liberal and not good for pastoral training--so it's only natural that he will recommend RTS to those sensing a call to seminary. But why are ARP ministers and its congregations not concerned for Erskine? Is it not our responsibility? Is Erskine too far from salvaging anything at all? It is this attitude that the Erskine Administration and Board of Trustees rely on to get them through conflicts over accountability. So I plead with you men of the commission with Gospel and credentialed by the ARP Church: Stop being lulled to sleep with the constant rhetoric of Erskine's Administration. Stop believing that Erskine is unsalvageable. Stop believing that Erskine has no potential. Grasp a vision for the place as an educational refuge for your children, as a training ground for your brothers, as a place that values the standards of the ARP Church and the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

There is no intention here of scaring people with Erskine's corruptions. Most ARPs who did not even attend Erskine can give you a run-down. Besides, such negativity has only served to convince people that Erskine is incurable and useless to the denomination. However, instead of only diagnosing problems—I recommend some healing agents. You have got to make the case why Erskine College and Seminary's doctrinal health is vital to the denomination. Paul Koistra and Bryan Chapell convinced the PCA's ministers and congregants that Covenant College and Covenant Theological Seminary were worth the investments. They cleaned house at Covenant Seminary, not because of liberalism, but because of in-bred and lack of vision. There were some scholars at Covenant Seminary, but there weren't men with pastors' hearts and convictions for the practicalities of day to day ministry. Covenant Seminary needed a strong Evangelical and Reformed faculty. It took a few years to assemble the outstanding people they now employ as faculty. The PCA's success in missions, college ministry (RUF) and church planting is rooted in their commitment to Covenant College and Covenant Theological Seminary. RTS is a proxy seminary for the PCA as well. Thank the Lord for RTS! Where would the ARP be without (its) conservative seminary? RTS and Covenant do not retain professors who refuse to speak with

clarity on issues of biblical authority and Confessional adherence. Why should we? Why should we retain Dr. Randy Ruble and Rev. Neely Gaston who have made hires antithetical to the cause of the ARP? The reality is that Dr. Ruble and Rev. Gaston are culpable, but not as much as the ministers of the ARP.

The time is now, to take hold of what the Lord has given to us—and make good of it! We need Erskine and Erskine needs the ARP. A vision needs to be cast. Responsible, godly leaders who uphold the doctrinal standards of our denomination are the first step—will we be leaders or continue to let Erskine slide by and defame the name of the ARP Synod.

Some practical steps to action.

Arguments need to be multi-faceted and multi-leveled. The thing that Erskine Administrators have thrived on for years is autonomy from the denomination! Don't let them continue it.

1. Demand Accountable leadership from the Board of Trustees. It astounds me that BoT members are informed of what Erskine College and Seminary will do, or have already done. Erskine's administrators function in complete autonomy. They hire from within, they answer to no one but themselves, and they tell the BoT how its all been kept in-house. Ask the BoT to resign. BoT should only be people who have a credible profession of faith from an Evangelical denomination. OPC, PCA, ARP, RPCNA,

2. Ecclesiastical/Judicial Movements: You need to draw up charges from two or more presbyteries to investigate past and present administrators' hiring of Seminary faculty who espouse 'anything less than biblical inerrancy'. Ruble, Carson and Gaston have each forcedly hired people who could not be ordained in the ARP because of their opposing views on scripture: Ruble = Merwyn Johnson, Carson = Richard Burnett, Gaston = Michael Bush. Each of these men hold the same theological positions. Why the insistence on having faculty members espouse positions against the bible's authority? If a minister, session, and/or congregation of an ARP church hired/called a person who did not espouse biblical inerrancy, that minister and his session would be brought up on charges.

There needs to be a call for an ARP ministerial and elder 'Board of Directors' to oversee Gaston and Ruble. RTS, Westminster and Covenant Seminaries have such a system in place. It can function in unison with the BoT of Erskine College, but be concerned with doctrine, ministerial education, and the respectability of the Seminary. This makes Administrators accountable to someone other than the 3 days of intentional chaos you call 'Synod'. A majority group cannot manage an institution. There needs to be real people, qualified people, on the ground to do this. Ruble, Carson, Gaston and past Erskine administrators survive because the Synod cannot function as a manager of Erskine. These 'leaders' know this weakness very well, and have taken advantage of the ARP Synod's ignorance for far too many years.

Ecumenicity and Confessional Fidelity Erskine College and Seminary have far too long ceased to promote the imperatives of a biblically based, and confessional Reformed educational institution. Erskine College is impotent in acquiring professors in both arts and sciences who profess faith in Jesus Christ. A comparison needs to be done between Covenant College of faculty mission statements.

Erskine Theological Seminary fails to promote the prerogatives of a denomination which strongly include maintaining biblical inerrancy and the *Westminster* Symbols and training its ministers to uphold them in a practical way. How does a seminary which strives to appeal to non-evangelical denominations by hiring faculty whose confessional and belief standards are in accord with non-evangelical denominations rather than the ARP Synod advance the mission of the ARP. Are we recruiting students from these non-evangelical denominations? If so, is this not a disingenuous and clandestine movement toward these other denominations? Or, is it simply that Erskine has so little confidence in the ARP Synod's abilities to cultivate from its own flocks men capable of teaching and training ministers.

For years, the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition has educated its ministers through other ordained ministers. Can we really expect, from the majority of Erskine Seminary faculty and College Bible departments who have no ministry experience or ordination credentials to know how to prepare men for ministry. Can we sincerely expect those who do not adhere to Biblical inerrancy and our historic Presbyterian creed of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* to sufficiently train our students and to advance the cause of the ARP Synod? If we believe that professors who advocate theological distinctives that are contrary to the ARP's own, then would it not be more prudent financially, to place our students in institutions that take our own confessional standards and the bible as seriously as we do? Erskine Seminary first priority must be about training godly men for ministry within the ARP Church and secondarily—without sacrificing our theological Standards—promote the kingdom of Christ in the lives of students from other denominations that are not evangelical. All faculty members, must be committed to the ARP Church. Why would anyone want to work for something they do not believe in?

Mission Statements and Denominational Standards must match: How can the educational agency of the ARP Church change or manipulate their mission statement and faculty statements on biblical and confessional authority? If a minister of an ARP Church decided to promote New Perth as adhering to the Scots Confession instead of the WCF or the bible as 'containing the philosophical virtues of God's divine presence' instead of the 'bible is the word of God inspired infallible inerrant', then charges would be drawn up. Neely and the faculty of Erskine Seminary changed the key documents. Neely should be brought up on charges for this.

Financial Responsibility means Accountability: We must live by the principle that Erskine's money is the Lord's money. If the economic times are so tough, then sacrifices need to be made. Count the number of VP and Deans and look at their salaries. Erskine has more VPs than schools 3 times their size. I would be willing to bet the salaries are as well. Look at schools Erskine's size, the endowment figures, and the administrative structure, and compare costs. This is an area ripe for investigation. It is not too much for the ARP to demand that Neely, Ruble, Bush, Agnew, and others each take a pay cut in honour of their beloved institution. Making under \$100,000 each, 'on a temporary basis' would be a very, very good thing. Anyone over the age of retirement should also be asked to consider early retirement for the benefit of the College and Seminary. One reason, Covenant and RTS have money, is that they keep their profs salaries less than ministers' and maintain relatively young faculties and staffs.

Statistics do matter—in the business world, statistics do matter. Look at every licentiate/student of theology under the care of all ARP presbyteries since RJ. resigned. Find out which ones attend Erskine and which do not. All the students that do not attend ETS, need to be interviewed as to why they did not attend the denominational seminary. Also, Erskine Seminary has very comfy endowments—in comparison to most evangelical seminaries. ARPs have been able to attend without tuition costs—this is a great thing. However, find out if ARP endowments for seminary students—that were intended to promote the welfare of the ARP Church—are paying for PCUSA, UMC, or Mormon students' tuition fees. Also, find out what full-time enrollment numbers really

are. This is public information through the accreditation agencies of Erksine! Compare them over the years. These can be found at:

***The Commission on Colleges of the
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)**

1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033-4097
404.679.4501

***The Association of Theological Schools
in the United States and Canada (ATS)**

10 Summit Park Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15275-1103
412.788.6505

Miscellany/Advice: There needs to be the formation of a society for ‘Concerned’ Erskine Seminary Students. They need a separate web blog—they need to call for the immediate resignation of leaders, and the hiring of solid Confessionally Reformed Evangelicals. They need to call for new parameters of denominational accountability, and new goals for Erskine with the denomination’s growth as its focus! It needs to be positive and upbeat about the gospel’s advancement through ETS. It needs to not criticize hair-splitting theology (puritans on worship), or current ARP Profs. In fact, ARP profs need to be commended and encouraged through it. They need to be seen as the heroes, and the Administration as the villains. All other faculty can be fair game. An example of a topic to write about would be: A comparison/contrast of ETS faculty course syllabi with RTS, Covenant, and Westminster faculty syllabi. Richard Burnett uses Donald Bloesch (Barthian) as his primary textbooks for systematic theology. Ironically, Robert Peterson at Covenant uses an ARP minister’s text on the Holy Spirit (Sinclair Ferguson).

The arguments against the current Erskine College and Seminary situation need to be handled as spiritual issues that affect the whole denomination. If Erskine is out of step, so is the denomination. If Erskine College has Professors who advocate anything contrary to the mission statement, the denomination is responsible. If Erskine Seminary has Professors (and Administrators) who advocate anything contrary to the Standards of the ARP, then the ARP is duplicitous in its public witness as a Reformed and Evangelical denomination. When Synod meets, men need to be strategically placed to call for a time of repentance and prayer for the sins of ministers who have failed to do their duty in holding Erskine College and Seminary accountable. Dirty politics must cease. Men need to stand up and call for repentance on this all-to-common ARP occurrence. It would be wise for those concerned for the cause of renewed and Reformed Erskine to lead this charge.

Force the hiring of Christian Faculty and Staff If you infect the institution with something that eats the disease itself, you will make serious inroads. Take Paul Patrick for example. He worked Dr. Jay out of a job (or rather into and admin promotion). Paul’s work among the students is significant! It encourages the Christian kids to be antagonistic toward the nominal Christian atmosphere promoted by the Erskine Student Services. Paul’s work has an infective quality to it. It makes those students demand more, Evangelical accountability, and scholarship from Erskine. Hiring faculty to do the same, commissioned to do the same in both College and Seminary, will have the same effect.

It amazes me that money has come to Erskine to fund PCUSA chairs! ARP money rarely comes to Erskine to fund a chair. Perhaps, its time that those ARPs who care, actually do respond!

Strategy: Force an endowed chair on Erskine’s BoT and administration. Name it very specifically as an Evangelical-Reformed Chair of xxxxx . Thus, ‘The Wilbur Blakely-Pressley

and Arthur Patrick-Hunt chair of classical Reformed, Evangelical, Confessional ARP Theology'. 'The J.Gresham Machen Chair of Church History' does not cut it. It must be directly offensive to the Barthian constituency! Within that endowed chair you specifically list the courses that must be offered on annual and bi-annual bases. So, the 'Chair' in historical theology must teach a course on ARP history and theology, 2 general overview courses as required in the current ETS curriculum, and the more debatable courses on Barth, Contemporary theology. This takes those contentious courses that Burnett, and company, teach and places them in the hands of a critical Confessional, Evangelical and OUT of the hands of a true Barthian.

Thirdly, the Funding of 'Chairs' at Erskine College and Seminary should be very specific in its qualifications. Fund a 'Chair' and attach with it that a professor who holds that chair possess these qualifications:

- (a) Must be an ordained minister in the ARP Church.
- (b) Possesses ministry experience
- (c) Demonstrates scholarly acumen in his field
- (d) Receives tenure only from the hands of the ARP synod and that tenure is conditioned upon subscription to the Standards of the ARPC. When that subscription is jeopardized dismissal is guaranteed.
- (e) Appears before a committee, and is hired by the ARP Synod, upon recommendation of Erskine's current policies.

And last but no the least,

- (f) Required to annually write critical paper(s) of current trends facing the Evangelical Church for both scholarly journals and the wider Evangelicals that directly advance the principles and standards of the ARP Church!

Once you have funded such 'Chairs', all other similar positions that can become redundant through budget revisions. In other words, if Richard Burnett's endowment was only \$100,000 as you say, then the College and Seminary's annual budget is picking up what the interest on that Chair isn't able to fund! But, if you have a 1-million endowment that does not count against the annual college and seminary budget...budda-bing budda boom...you have a position that creates budgetary problems.

Fund three (3)chairs, one at a time or all at once: ARP Historical Theology, and Apologetics/Systematic Theology, Bible. See if the current BoT and admin. refuses the deal. When you have a candidate who possesses the above qualifications and is forced on Erskine College and Seminary and they turn the chair down, then you have a legitimate quarrel.

If you have 3 posts filled with Reformed, Evangelical, Confessional ARPs, who also are actively recruiting ARPs and PCA students don't you think the few current Reformed, Evangelicals on faculty might get a batch of courage to speak out, and the Barthian faculty (of which there are a few, but are very dominant voices!) will simply wear out of the 'fundamentalists' attacks and uphill slog? Even if they don't, the type of students that will be attracted will at least mirror the days when ONE (1)Reformed, Evangelical (RJ Gore) both handled the administration and teaching responsibilities that attracted some 65 ARP students, 25 calvinistic Baptist Students and 9 PCA Students while still attracting the Evangelical Methodists, and AMEs. People trusted Erskine because RJ was Reformed and Evangelical and seemed to be a voice!

The folks who run Erskine College and Seminary are experts at handling the same old tactics you consistently wage against them. However, they are financially short-sighted for not seeing the reality of what is needed. Why go to Erskine Seminary if you can go for FREE to Princeton, Austin, Richmond, and Louisville (where you have a better or at least same quality of faculty in Richard Burnett and Michael Bush and company).

If you have a core of Evangelical, Reformed Confessional, ARP subscriptionists who actively recruit PCA and ARP students and actually work within the denomination, you will see numbers go up. The denomination will have a voice in the institution because its profs have to answer to Presbyteries and the Synod. Those ARPs already on faculty who always seem to remain neutral will feel pressured to be accountable as well.

Finally,

Demand a practical seminary with Profs and Admin connected with the real needs of ministry preparation. For example compare Covenant, the PCA's denominational Seminary's faculty statement with Erskine, the seminary of the ARP.

Covenant Theological Seminary's Faculty Distinctives---- Can be found at: <http://www.covenantseminary.edu/learn/ourfaculty/>

Through a pastoral approach to Reformed academic study and a deep understanding of God's grace permeating their own lives, professors cultivate a learning environment that allows you to wrestle with honest questions about faith and life. Simultaneously, they help you discern why the academic knowledge they impart is relevant for real-life ministry.

Understanding of Grace

Students at Covenant Seminary often comment on the harmony that exists among the faculty. Simply put, they "get" grace. Beyond the gift of salvation, they understand how it motivates sanctification and sustains holiness—and this affects how they teach and live. At Covenant Seminary, we seek to live in light of the truth that God delights in us solely on the basis of the perfect righteousness of Jesus, and it is by unmerited favor that we enter into relationship with him.

"Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

2 Corinthians 3:4-6

Unity Among Themselves

We believe that if faculty relate to one another on a professional level only, the effect would be destructive. Therefore, the faculty consistently spends time together as a whole and in smaller groups in formal and informal settings. This produces a group of educators who delight to be together and learn from one another—even when challenges arise. Their unity is strengthened through academic and social gatherings where they also renew their friendships.

Activities include:

- Weekly faculty meetings
- Collaboration on publications and various ongoing ministry service commitments
- Social events that include professors' families and are hosted by various faculty members
- Faculty retreats and colloquia
- Biweekly chapel services
- Team-taught courses (e.g., the MDiv required Covenant Theology)

Through a profound understanding of God's grace extended to each of them, our faculty

of pastor-scholars emulate the gospel in their unity. This respect for and enjoyment of one another brings a unity that translates into the classroom and stretches beyond through opportunities that bring them together.

Scholarship for the Church

Faculty members are committed to the academic disciplines of research and writing.

Alongside a commitment to train pastors, our faculty remain committed to the highest-quality scholarship with the goal of expanding the influence of the church. They often make edifying a broad base of believers the goal of their efforts. While they do write for university presses and academic conferences, in keeping with our mission of training pastors, the focus of their scholarship is to write books that edify the church. Therefore they often take the best insights from their critical scholarship and translate them into accessible works that benefit and encourage laypeople. Many also minister abroad, taking Reformed theological training to Christians in other countries.

Scholarship Contributions

- Nearly 20% of the contributors on the forthcoming ESV Study Bible are current or former Covenant Seminary professors or students. (This is by far the most significant percentage associated with one school.)
- Professors frequently produce commentaries for pastors.
- Our professors regularly write books on church practices, the heritage of the church and critical issues facing the church.

A Pastoral Approach

- One of Covenant Seminary's greatest strengths is its faculty of pastor-scholars—highly qualified teachers and scholars who also possess considerable experience in ministry and a pastoral approach to training for ministry. They care deeply for students and take as many opportunities as possible to encourage and mentor them—especially through weekly Covenant Groups that focus on sharing and prayer. They all keep office hours that are not academic-focused, and several consistently go beyond their hours. Some find creative ways of expanding their time with students. One, for example, uses office hours to go lunch with students. Another spent more than 200 hours during the semester in one-on-one meetings with students. As much as possible, professors give of themselves to nurture and encourage future church leaders.

Where as Erskine Seminary's Faculty statement leaves little to be desired and is argumentative, indeed defensive and erudite almost to be careful in what is said of the faculty...the seminary of the PCA doesn't have to be. —it can be found at: <http://www.erskineseminary.org/WhoWeAre.html>

Erskine Theological Seminary is committed to the truthfulness, authority, and centrality of the Bible. We affirm “the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the written Word of God, the only perfect rule of faith and practice.” (This statement comes from the ARP Form of Government [V.C.1:a (3)]. The ARP Church issued a more extensive statement about Scripture in 1979, which included the following assertions: “The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God without error in all that it teaches” [Minutes of the General Synod, 1979, p. 23]. “We believe that the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to us through the Holy Scripture which is the Word of God written. While we do not have the original autographs as evidence, we believe on faith that God's Word in its entirety was accurately recorded by the original writers through divine inspiration and reliably transmitted to us” [Minutes of the General Synod, 1979, p. 76].) We seek to

be faithful to the Bible by examining the Scriptures in the original languages, interpreting the Biblical texts faithfully, and applying the teachings of Scripture to all aspects of human life and to all people, both inside and outside the Church. The Bible holds the preeminent and central place in all facets of Erskine Seminary's scholarship, teaching, and worship.

Erskine Theological Seminary is committed to the Reformed Tradition. We believe that the tradition of Biblical interpretation, theology, and Christian practice stemming from the Calvinistic wing of the Protestant Reformation is faithful to Scripture, and that this tradition can speak truthfully and powerfully to the contemporary world. As a part of this commitment, Erskine Seminary seeks to be faithful to the doctrinal standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. Two-thirds of all faculty members are required to be members of denominations that subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith or some other Reformed Confession, with the goal being that a majority of faculty members be Associate Reformed Presbyterians.

Erskine Theological Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We believe that faculty members, staff and students from non-Reformed denominations are an important part of our community, and we respect the diversity of denominational distinctives and doctrinal stances as we seek to prepare candidates for ministry. Similarly, we recognize that men and women from a variety of ethnic, economic, geographical, and cultural backgrounds have important contributions to make to the task of theological education. We are convinced that the varied perspectives represented in the Erskine community help enable all of us to see more clearly the multi-faceted diamond which is the universal Church. At the same time, we affirm that our common ground is more fundamental than our differences, and we seek to explore that common ground by providing a core curriculum to all students, a curriculum that includes the traditional emphases on the Bible, theology, Church history, and ministerial functions.

Erskine Theological Seminary is committed to the needs and spiritual growth of its students. We seek to create an educational climate that brings about growth in Christian character and fosters the spiritual formation of students, faculty, and staff. We believe that collegiality is an important mark of such a climate, and we seek to foster close relationships within the community by restricting classes to small enrollment, by ensuring easy student access to faculty, and by worshiping together regularly. Moreover, we recognize that there are many students for whom traditional theological education would not be a viable option, and we seek to meet the needs of these students by providing a program of distributive education that includes courses taught both at off-campus sites and through distance education.

Erskine Theological Seminary is committed to its role as a resource for the whole Christian Church. We seek to minister to the broader Church by providing a program of continuing education (conferences, seminars, and special lectures) addressing the needs of both clergy and laity in the Church. Our faculty and staff members seek to be engaged fully in the Church's life and activities through teaching and serving ministries in their own and other churches, denominations, and missions agencies. Our faculty members also seek to advance the Gospel by contributing at a scholarly level to the Church's discussions about theology, history, culture, and ministry.
