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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MBI DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Bryan O’Neal

“God bless the School that D. L. Moody founded; /
Firm may she stand, by foes of truth surrounded! /
Riches of grace bestowed may she never squander, /
Keeping true to God and man her record over
yonder.”¹

These words of the Moody Bible Institute school song serve to bind together generations of students, alumni, faculty, and staff, as well as express a sincere prayer that God would continue to bless, guide, and protect the school that Dwight Lyman Moody founded in 1886. “Standing firm” is fundamentally a matter of remaining true to doctrine and mission, a prayer faithfully answered now for over 130 years.

Our name—Moody Bible Institute—expresses three core components of who we have been, who we are, and who we will be. “Moody” refers to our founder, the great nineteenth-century evangelist, who desired to live a life fully devoted to the service of the gospel and sought to see others equipped to participate

in the work of Christian ministry. “Institute” is an outdated word in some quarters (but not at places like the United States Military Institute or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology); it rightly reflects that we are not a liberal arts college or university, but instead are committed to producing graduates with practical skills to serve the church, whether in vocational or nonvocational roles. And, most importantly, “Bible is our middle name.” The Bible is the heart of the curriculum at Moody and the core of our associated ministries in broadcasting and publishing. Without apology or qualification, we hold the Bible in the highest regard possible as inspired, inerrant, and authoritative. For us, standing firm means persevering in our mission to teach the Scriptures and to equip students, readers, and listeners to “accurately [handle] the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

Every person or organization chooses to present itself to the world in a certain way—we might think about this as the way people develop the “About” section of a social media profile. For a religious organization like Moody Bible Institute, the most important feature of our self-identity and self-presentation is our doctrinal statement. In *Standing Firm* we present afresh the doctrinal identity of Moody Bible Institute.

When walking into a mall or amusement park, most people immediately look for the map that shows the overall layout, and, most importantly, an arrow that reads “You Are Here.” From a doctrinal perspective, this book serves as Moody’s map and the arrow. As we say to our new students when we begin our introductory theology course, “We are Christian, we are Protestant, we are dispensational.”

To call ourselves “Christian” recognizes the historic and invisible unity of the church across space and time, which in its broadest categories includes the Eastern church associated with the various strands of Orthodoxy (Greek Orthodoxy, Russian

Orthodoxy, etc.), as well as the Western church identified with Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. It is worth recognizing that until the so-called “great schism” of 1054,² it is anachronistic to impose backwards our current categories of Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and so on. There was functionally a single visible church, affirming, for the most part, shared theological commitments that continue to form us today—for example, the doctrine of the Trinity and the declaration that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man (two natures in one person).

Recently, we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, which began as an attempt to reform the Western church—and in particular, to reclaim doctrines of the ultimate and unique authority of the Bible and of salvation by the grace of God through faith and not as a result of our own effort. As an attempt to reform the church of its day, the Reformation can hardly be called a success. But the Reformation had an astonishing effect in that it made the Scriptures widely accessible and affirmed a personalization of the Christian faith. And as an institution with “Bible as our middle name” and the equipping of Christian workers in service to the gospel as our defining mission, it should be no surprise that we stand in the Protestant tradition.

It is important to note that when we call ourselves “dispensational,” this too flows out of a foundational commitment to the Scriptures. That is, dispensationalism is not first of all about end-times prophecy or God’s special plans for the Jewish people. Rather, dispensationalism is a commitment to a particular hermeneutic, or way of interpreting Scripture. In overly simple terms, dispensationalism is marked by a straightforward “literalist” reading of the Bible, of course showing appropriate respect for the historical, literary, and grammatical ways the Bible was written. Such a reading then prompts conclusions about the ordering of end-time events, or God’s ongoing

promises to Israel.³ By contrast, a nonliteral or “spiritualized” interpretation of the text might say, for example, that promises made to Israel were fulfilled “spiritually” in the church, and that the Messianic Kingdom is not a literal future 1000-year period, but instead a present reality with Jesus reigning in the hearts of His people.

While we are staking out a space on the map, it would be worthwhile to take up a couple more labels. Sometimes, Moody is called “fundamentalist.” Are we fundamentalist? There is a difference between “cultural fundamentalism” and “theological fundamentalism,” though sometimes they run together, as they have at points in the history of the Institute. Cultural fundamentalism is usually focused on lifestyle questions, which might include prohibitions against alcohol, tobacco, dancing, movie and theater attendance, makeup, women wearing slacks, and the use of musical instruments other than organs and maybe pianos in worship. At Moody, in its history and in the present, there is certainly a range of association with cultural fundamentalism. However, our doctrinal affirmations relate not to cultural fundamentalism, but rather to theological fundamentalism.

The term “The Fundamentals” historically refers to a series of essays and booklets completed in 1915 as a response to the “modernist controversy” of the late 19th century. One of the editors of these publications was R. A. Torrey, the second president of Moody Bible Institute. These fundamentals were an attempt to defend biblical doctrines that were directly under assault by the modernists, or theological liberals, of that time. Central doctrines included:

- The authority and inerrancy of the Bible, as well as a “literalist” reading of Scripture

- A literal creation of Adam and Eve, and literal fall into sin
- The virgin birth of Jesus, and other biblical miracles
- The vicarious penal atonement of Jesus on the cross
- The bodily resurrection of Jesus
- Salvation by grace through faith
- The future bodily return of Jesus

Each of these latter points flows from the first, a commitment to a straightforward reading of the inspired Scriptures. The Moody Doctrinal Statement of 1928 reveals several connections to these fundamental affirmations—as a matter of fact, every one of them is explicitly included. That is no coincidence.

MOVING FORWARD: UNDERSTANDING THE MBI DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

First in the chapters that follow, Gregg Quiggle provides an overview of the history of the doctrinal statement at Moody, beginning with its original formulation in 1928. We will also see how the Statement has been expanded (never contracted) through a series of addenda and footnotes through the intervening decades.

Sanjay Merchant explains Article I of the doctrinal statement, which articulates the central Christian doctrine of the Trinity, or the tri-unity of God. The very earliest Christian creeds affirm the oneness of God, eternally existing in three distinct, divine persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Article II affirms Moody's commitments to the Scriptures. Jonathan Armstrong explains the doctrines of revelation and inspiration, as well as canonicity (how the various books of the

Bible were recognized and collected). Steven Sanchez expresses the correlated commitments of the inerrancy and authority of the Bible as the Word of God to be trusted and obeyed.⁴

The center of the Christian faith is Jesus Himself, and Article III is rich with teaching about the person and work of Jesus. Gerald Peterman addresses the topic of the person of Jesus, discussing the significance of His divine and human natures.

Andrew Schmutzer takes up the material of Article IV—namely, how God has revealed Himself as Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos and everything in it, as well as how mankind has rebelled against God and fallen into sin and judgment. Also explaining Article III, Marcus Johnson explores the saving work of Christ—what Jesus has done and is doing to secure the salvation of those who trust in Him.

Jesus loves the church enough to make her His bride (see Eph. 5), and the church is the topic of the fifth and final article of the Statement. Brian Tucker describes the nature of the church as revealed in Scripture as well as how the Bible distinguishes the church from Israel. John Goodrich summarizes material from throughout the doctrinal statement to describe “future events” (the doctrine of last things, or eschatology).

Connected to these five articles is a series of eight footnotes appended in 2000. The content and significance of each of these notes is explored in the relevant chapters. These notes allowed the Institute to press more specifically into affirmations of biblical inerrancy; the special creation of Adam and Eve, and the rejection of macroevolution; the distinction between the church and Israel; and further details about future events, among other issues.

Theology is seldom done in a vacuum and is most commonly provoked by questions and challenges posed by the culture and context. The rise of the charismatic movement in the West in the latter half of the twentieth century prompted the Institute

to weigh in on the nature and role of the so-called “sign gifts” of the Holy Spirit. Significantly, Moody self-describes as holding to a “nonnormative” position on these sign gifts. This intentionally occupies middle-ground between Pentecostalism (which requires the practice of certain gifts as evidence of salvation or spirituality) and “cessationism” (which denies that certain gifts are ever present in the church today). This expresses Moody’s big-tent, inclusive interdenominationalism and the call for members of the Moody community not to propagate teachings that treat such gifts as “normative,” or indicative of maturity or salvation. Benjamin Wilson explains this addendum and its significance.

Similarly, social changes in the United States, including (among other things) the sexual revolution and the rise of feminism, have required the Institute to distance itself from both chauvinism on the one hand (that is, the claim that there is a difference in value between men and women) and from egalitarianism on the other hand (derived from the word *equal*, the claim that men and women are not only equal in worth and dignity but also potentially in every role in the church, home, or state). Seeking to stake out an explicitly biblical position between these two extremes, Moody also includes a statement on gender roles in ministry.

As Laurie Norris explains, the Moody position denies both chauvinism and egalitarianism. Instead, Moody affirms “complementarianism” (that men and women are equal in worth and dignity but have distinct and complementary roles in church ministry). Worth noting is that the Moody position speaks only to gender roles in ministry, and in no way addresses questions about similar distinctions in the home or state.

Western culture has turned very rapidly in its views and taboos on matters of human sexuality. Whereas once there was a general if not universal public consensus that marriage

was obviously a binary relationship between one man and one woman and that sexual expression was properly restricted to married couples, this consensus rapidly eroded from the late twentieth century onward (sometimes crediting the “sexual revolution,” which began the ’60s), with the acceptance of premarital and extramarital sex, and the affirmation and normalization of a variety of nonheterosexual identities. In order to retain our ability to establish our own community standards and parameters and to offer pastoral counsel to the church, Moody has adopted a statement on human sexuality. While biblical teaching on human sexuality is often controversial and divisive in our times, Michael McDuffee provides compassionate and pastoral counsel about the challenge and consequences of gospel faithfulness in this matter.

While we stand firm on the doctrinal inheritance that has been passed on to us, the church of every age must also be attentive to its own context and be actively prepared to give answers to fresh challenges and questions as they arise. In a closing chapter, John Jelinek considers what affirmations the church and the Institute might helpfully provide in years to come.

While in general Moody has a long history of welcoming a “broad orthodoxy,” it is clear that, in at least some of the points introduced above, Moody has also chosen to affirm some positions that are more specific and detailed. Despite these narrower affirmations, Moody continues to open as large a front door as possible to serve the church, which is to say to serve a variety of local churches and denominations through our ministries of publishing, broadcasting, conferences, and education. While these positions serve to identify our faculty, staff, and board, there are many within the Moody family, including many alumni and current students, who stand in theological and denominational streams much broader than those delineated by certain aspects of our doctrinal statement.

And we are very grateful that this is true. Indeed, the preamble to the doctrinal statement actively celebrates the variety of expression in the universal church: “While Moody’s particular definitions are important to its position, it is readily recognized that they do not define orthodoxy for the whole body of Christ. Moody gladly embraces all who faithfully adhere to the essentials of biblical Christianity as fellow believers and colleagues in Christ’s cause.” And so, while affirming the historical doctrines of the Trinity and resurrection of Jesus are necessary markers of orthodox Christianity, we are happy to extend humble charity to those who hold other positions on things like spiritual gifts and gender roles, to use only two examples, and to celebrate their fruitful co-labor in the gospel through the ages and around the world.

It is our hope that this publication will serve as an encouragement and resource to the universal church and a fresh expression of our ongoing, faithful stewardship of the boundless riches of grace that God has bestowed upon this place and this people for over 130 years. In a culture filled with foes of truth of every sort, by the prayers of the saints and the grace of God, Moody Bible Institute continues to stand firm. May it be so until Jesus comes in glory.

THE HISTORY OF THE MBI DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Gregg Quiggle

THE DOCTRINE OF OUR FOUNDER

Any attempt to describe the theological history of Moody Bible Institute must look back to our namesake, Dwight Lyman Moody. Moody was an evangelist, and his theological commitments were reflected in his evangelistic work. As his son William pointed out, Moody “preferred to devote his energies to evangelistic work, yielding to the denominational churches the function of indoctrinating the Christian faith.”¹ Consequently, Mr. Moody is a very difficult figure to categorize theologically. He was not given to credalism, denominationalism, or theological speculation; rather, he sought to concentrate on practical religion.²

This does not mean Moody had no theological commitments. It does mean Moody’s theological commitments reflected his calling as an evangelist. As early as the 1870s, Moody described the role doctrine played for him in evangelism. He preached several sermons explaining his concept of faith. Specifically, Moody argued saving faith consisted of three parts: knowledge, intellectual assent, and trust. Moody referred to trust as “laying hold.”⁴ In fact, Moody was adamant that sincerity in faith was not sufficient to save. Faith must be grounded in true doctrine. He made this very clear at Northfield in 1899:

People have an idea now that it makes very little difference what a man believes if he is only sincere, if he is only honest in his creed. I have had that question put to me many a time: “Mr. Moody, you don’t think it makes any difference what a man believes if he is only sincere?” I believe that is one of the greatest lies that ever came out of the pit of hell. Why they virtually say you can believe a lie just as well as you can believe the truth, if only you are earnest, you know and stick to it.⁵

Doctrine mattered to Mr. Moody.

Consequently, if you look closely at the life and work of Moody, a basic theological framework emerges. This framework consists of six elements. First, Moody emphasized the love of God. This was a core belief that became, to a degree, a defining doctrine for Moody. Second, Moody was aggressively devoted to a nonsectarian, interdenominational approach to Christianity. This was part of his strategy to promote evangelism among all Christian churches and individuals. It also reflected his concept of love. Third, he demonstrated a deep commitment to the Bible and read it literally. While Moody did not have a highly developed and nuanced doctrine of the Bible, he clearly revered it and sought to make it normative in his life and work. This quote sums it up nicely: “I have one rule about books. I do not read any book, unless it will help me understand the Book.”⁶ Fourth, he held to what can best be described as the basic tenets that typified evangelical revivalists. Specifically, Moody’s basic construct was the “Three Rs”: Ruined by sin, Redeemed by Christ, and Regenerated by the Holy Ghost. These three represent the core of Mr. Moody’s gospel presentation. The final two doctrines, the Holy Spirit’s

role in Christian service and premillennialism, served to distinguish him from earlier generations of revivalists.

THE EARLY DOCTRINAL COMMITMENTS OF MBI: AN INTERDENOMINATIONAL FOCUS

After Mr. Moody's death in 1899, his beliefs served as the template for the doctrinal commitments of the Moody Bible Institute. The Institute mirrored Mr. Moody in its emphasis on evangelism. In fact, from its founding in 1886 to 1899, it was called the "Chicago Evangelistic Society."⁷ Its stated purpose was for the "education and training of Christian workers, including teachers, ministers, missionaries, and musicians who may completely and effectively proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ."⁸

Again reflecting Mr. Moody, the school's doctrine during these years was nondenominational—or better, interdenominational. Like Mr. Moody, the Institute avoided publicly affirming many denominational distinctives, not because those distinctives are unimportant, but because the school's focus was to educate and train evangelistically oriented students who could serve in many denominations and ministries.

Perhaps the strongest indication of the interdenominational nature of the Institute is the fact that the school did not adopt a formal doctrinal statement until 1928. However, that did not mean the school had no theological commitments. The Bible was the core of the curriculum. It was taught extensively and interpreted literally. In fact, the academic catalogue from 1893–1894 states the primary text of all classes is the English Bible. As one reads through the mission statements and stated objectives of the Institute, the influence of Mr. Moody's commitment to the three "R"s is still evident. These three doctrines

that drove Mr. Moody's evangelistic fervor and evangelism guided the Institute in its early days.

THE MBI DOCTRINAL STANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FUNDAMENTALIST/MODERNIST CONTROVERSY

As the Institute moved into the twentieth century, it found itself serving Protestant churches wracked with theological turmoil. A number of denominations and schools were ripped apart. Churches divided along theological lines into what were known as Fundamentalists and Modernists, or Liberals. The Institute began formally aligning with the Fundamentalists.

The formation of Fundamentalism provided the context for the Institute's 1928 doctrinal statement. One pivotal moment for the Fundamentalists was the publication of *The Fundamentals*.⁹ *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to Truth* was a set of ninety essays published between 1910 and 1915 designed to refute liberalism. The second president of the Institute, R. A. Torrey, was one of the editors. James M. Gray, the third president, was a contributor.

Another defining moment for Fundamentalists was J. Gresham Machen's lecture entitled "Christianity or Liberalism," delivered November 3, 1921, before the Ruling Elders Association of Chester Presbytery and published a year later in the *Princeton Theological Review*. In that address, Machen makes the central point that undergirding Christianity is its connection to history. As he puts it, "From the beginning, the Christian gospel, as indeed the name 'gospel' or 'good news' implies, consisted in an account of something that had happened. And from the beginning, the meaning of the happening was set forth; and when the meaning of the happening was set forth then there was Christian doctrine. 'Christ died'—that

is history; ‘Christ died for our sins’—that is doctrine. Without these two elements, joined in an absolutely indissoluble union, there is no Christianity.”¹⁰ Moody has always linked history and theology in our reading of the biblical text.

A third moment was the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925. This trial was over the teaching of evolution in public schools in Tennessee. The trial was broadcast live on WGN radio in Chicago. It was the first time a trial was broadcast, and virtually every major newspaper released daily reports. From one perspective, it could be viewed as a public hearing on the validity of the Bible. With this context in place, let us turn to the development of the Institute’s 1928 statement.

THE PATH TO THE MBI DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The earliest semblance of a doctrinal statement is from 1914. It appears to be both an official and unofficial statement. The Board of Trustees minutes from December 1912 indicate a desire to pursue forming a doctrinal statement. However, in July of 1914, the Board of Trustees determined it was “unnecessary and undesirable” for the Institute to have its own statement at that time. They noted that a statement adopted as a “Conference Testimony” at the International Conference on the Prophetic Scriptures had appeared in some Moody literature. The Board indicated that they saw the statement as representing our “convictions and has our endorsement.”¹¹

In addition to the 1914 statement, it appears the statement developed for the World Council on Christian Fundamentals held in Philadelphia in 1919 was also formative for the development of Moody’s 1928 statement. This 1919 statement became the basis for the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association. The Institute published the statement in their

January 1920 edition of *The Christian Workers Magazine*.¹² On examination, the parallels with the Institute's 1928 statement are obvious.¹³

The 1928 statement was adopted with what appears to be little fanfare. The trustees' minutes record virtually no discussion surrounding the adoption of our statement. One of the most interesting things about the 1928 statement is how short it is. Given the turmoil of the times, the deliberate brevity is telling. It most likely reflected the Institute's commitment to be a nonsectarian, interdenominational school. Both Mr. Moody and the Institute as a whole tried to function in a way that respected denominational commitments—and the Institute still does to this day. The Institute tried to make simple, clear statements of basic Protestant orthodoxy that could be embraced by as many denominations as possible. Indeed, the catalog contains the following statement: "It is readily recognized that they (Moody's 1928 statement) do not define orthodoxy for the whole body of Christ. Moody gladly embraces all who faithfully adhere to the essentials of biblical Christianity as fellow believers and colleagues in Christ's cause."¹⁴

The statement does, however, include distinctives, just as Mr. Moody had distinctives. Mr. Moody's were premillennialism and a unique understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. In the case of the Institute's 1928 statement, the distinctives were premillennialism and pretribulationism. Although these two doctrines are not named as such, their implication was understood. This turn is interesting. It is clear that Mr. Moody taught premillennialism, and it was certainly the dominant position at the school before the 1928 statement. However, as late as 1923, the chairman of the board was publicly stating that premillennialism was not a precondition to speak at chapel or teach on the faculty. The emphasis on premillennialism probably reflects

the impact of the previously mentioned 1926 World's Christian Fundamentalist statement.

The main body of the 1928 MBI statement remained essentially unchanged until 2017. Specifically, the statement regarding the doctrine of the Trinity was clarified. The 1928 statement was changed from “God is a Person who has revealed Himself as a Trinity in unity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three Persons and yet but one God,” to “God is triune, one Being eternally existing in three co-equal Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; these divine Persons, together possessing the same eternal perfections.” The 1928 statement can be read to say God is a person and God is three persons. The change states more clearly God’s unity and the three distinct persons of the Trinity.

Before this modification, several footnotes were added in May 2000 to clarify the 1928 statement during the Stowell presidency. These were the result of a cooperative effort between the Board of Trustees, the administration, and the faculty. The purpose of the footnotes was twofold. First, to show how the 1928 statement could be expressed relative to current concerns. Second, to explain each clarifying position using current language. For example, in Article II, a footnote affirming inerrancy was added in response to challenges raised during the “Battle for the Bible” in the ’70s and ’80s. Another footnote was added to affirm an explicitly dispensational hermeneutic, the distinction between Israel and the church, and an expectation of a pretribulational rapture.

Although not part of the doctrinal statement, other positions with which Moody has historically been identified have been officially supplemented. These are positions the trustees, education administrators, and faculty are expected to hold. Some are simply statements of the classic Christian position. Others are areas in which the Institute recognizes that we serve

and minister with others whose traditions differ on some of these questions. The areas addressed include sign gifts, gender roles in ministry, human sexuality, and inerrancy.

In 1983, addenda clarifying the Institute's position on sign gifts were attached. The statement in part reads, "Moody maintains that there is one baptism of the Holy Spirit that occurs at the time a person is born again, placing that one into the body of Christ. Moody also distinguishes between spiritual gifts distributed to believers to equip them for ministry and the 'sign gifts,' stating sign gifts are . . . not normative for the church today." It concludes, "While this institutional position is not and must not be a test of fellowship with those whose traditions differ, members of this community will not practice or propagate practices at variance with Moody's position."¹⁵

In 2000, a statement clarifying general roles in ministry affirmed the dignity and worth of all believers and the priesthood of all believers. It concludes, "Moody distinguishes between ministry function and church office. While upholding the necessity of mutual respect and affirmation as those subject to the Word of God, Moody understands that the biblical office of elder/pastor in the early church was gender specific. Therefore, it maintains that it is consistent with that understanding of Scripture that those church offices should be limited to the male gender."¹⁶

In the 2013–2014 academic year, faculty endorsed a statement on "Human Sexuality." Initially entitled "Homosexuality and Transgenderism," the statement points out the Institute's commitment to the classic Christian position as it is presented in Scripture. The 2018–2019 Undergraduate Catalogue states,

The first two chapters of Genesis constitute the paradigm and prerequisite for God's creative intent for human

personhood, gender and sexual identity, and sexual intimacy in marriage (Genesis 1:27; 2:24; cf. Matthew 19:4–5).

We affirm that humanity came from the hand of God with only two sexual distinctions, male and female, both bearing the image of God, and emerging from one flesh with the unique physical capacity to reunite as one flesh in complementarity within a marriage. God’s creation design and intent for marriage as expressed in Genesis 2 is therefore exclusively between one man and one woman. Within this monogamous context, intended to be life-long, sexual intimacy is a glorious blessing from God.

Based on biblical theology (cf. Leviticus 18; 1 Corinthians 5–6; and other passages), we conclude that non marital sex, homosexual sex, same-sex romantic relationships, and transgender expressions are deviations from God’s standard, misrepresenting the nature of God Himself. As such, these are wrong under any circumstances in God’s eyes. We affirm the worth and relevance of human gender and sexuality as a distinctive of marriage. Consequently, we consider all other forms of sexual expression sinful, misaligned with God’s purposes.

We affirm God’s love and concern for all of humanity, a concern that compelled Him to offer His Son a ransom for our lives, and we consider His biblically recorded and specifically defined guidelines for sexual practice to be enduring expressions of His love and protection of our human identity (Matthew 19:5–9).

STANDING FIRM

Our expectation is that each member of Moody's community will honor the biblical obligation to surrender one's body to God. Non marital sexual intimacy, homosexual sexual intimacy and same-sex romantic relationships, and gender identification that is incongruent with one's birth sex are all violations of biblical teaching from which Moody derives its community standards. We willingly submit ourselves to these biblical mandates in light of our call to holiness and to self-surrender.¹⁷

For well over a century, the Moody Bible Institute has charted a course that places it firmly in the center of conservative, evangelical Protestantism with an eye to serving as many churches as possible. It has committed itself to encouraging evangelism, teaching the Bible, and providing practical ministry training through all its activities. Should the Lord tarry, we look forward to another century of serving the church by helping equip men and women to proclaim the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.