

June 30, 2020

Dear Bebo, Roger, members of the Shepherding and Advisory Committee, and fathers and brothers of the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley (PMV):

Thank you so much for the honor and privilege of working for the Lord in PMV with you. By your call and permission, I serve PMV as Chancellor/CEO and John E. Richard's Professor of Systematic & Historical Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary. September 1 of this year will mark the beginning of my 8th year as Chancellor of RTS. June 1 was the beginning of my 31st year teaching for RTS. August will mark the beginning of my 31st year of PCA ordination; the 36th since my licensure. RTS is entering our 55th year of ministry this fall. We have been blessed by God at RTS, even in the midst of the current upheavals in our country and world. I want to share with you briefly about both my labors and God's favor to us at RTS, as a part of my annual report to PMV.

COVID-19 has been disruptive of my normal travel schedule since March, but I still continue to serve congregations in PMV and the PCA, preaching, doing interviews, podcasts, and leading prayer meetings online and (a few) in person during these months. I serve as PMV's representative on the PCA GA Nominations Committee, and have actively participated in that important work (Fred Greco was this year's chairman, and did an amazing job). During 2019-2020, I have attended numerous PCA (and other NAPARC) presbytery and GA/Synod meetings (often as a representative of the PCA), but all this summer's major denominational gatherings have been cancelled, postponed or moved online.

This past year I regularly preached in numerous PCA and other reformed churches. I continue to preach on average about three of four Sundays per month, and regularly speak at special services (conferences and the like). Most of my preaching is in the PCA. When I am not preaching somewhere, I am worshipping at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS under the able ministry of my pastor, David Strain. I have had a couple of books published: *When Pain is Real and God Seems Silent* (Crossway) and *Does God Care How We Worship?* (P&R). I'm working on a brief commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and I contributed to the forthcoming RTS volume on *Covenant Theology* (Crossway, October, 2020, DV).

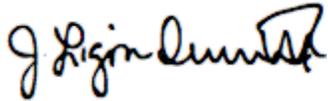
I teach a full load of theology courses at RTS, in addition to my other duties as Chancellor. This is by conviction that my calling is primarily to teach and preach the Word. I have taught at RTS Jackson, Washington, and New York City regularly for the last three years. In January, I taught "Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies" at RTS New York City, as well as a DMin course at RTS Charlotte. During the spring semester I taught "Covenant Theology" at RTS Jackson. This summer I am teaching "Theology of the Westminster Standards" to 24 students from all over the RTS system via a "Zoom classroom." There are students from five continents in the class.

Beginning on June 1, I am also serving as the Acting President of RTS Jackson, with Guy Richardson retiring from that position (but remaining on the faculty, and continuing to serve as the Director of the RTS MAC program system-wide). We will begin a search for a new President in due course. Also of interest to the Presbytery will be that RTS's QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) will be (for the next six years) focusing on making sure the Westminster Standards are thoroughly woven into the DNA of the entire RTS curriculum and that students gain a mastery of them.

My wife, Anne, is actively involved in the women's ministry program at First Presbyterian Church and is volunteering with the RTS Jackson Women's Fellowship. Our daughter, Sarah Kennedy, is teaching Middle School in Greenville, SC. She is at Brian Habig's church, Downtown Presbyterian (PCA) in Greenville. Our son Jennings is a rising junior at Mississippi State University (studying English, History, Philosophy and Religion) in the Shackhous Honors College. He is serving on the worship team at Grace PCA, Starkville (where Seth Starkey is now pastor) and is again working as a summer intern with the youth ministry at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson. Incidentally, he is currently leading a weeknight book study of C.S. Lewis's **Mere Christianity** and a number of children of ministers in our presbytery are attending!

I would humbly request that the presbytery continue my service laboring out of bounds of presbytery at RTS.

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Ligon Dunlap". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".