

from the president's desk

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On October 15 I had the privilege of preaching at the 300th anniversary of the Rehoboth Presbyterian Church on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Founded by Francis Makemie, a Presbyterian from Northern Ireland who came to the colonies in the late seventeenth century to organize small congregations of Presbyterians, Quakers, and other "dissenters" from the Anglican Church, the Rehoboth church is the oldest Presbyterian church in continual use for worship in the nation.



Photo: Jon Roemer

Three hundred years later, the commissioners to the 217th General Assembly met in Birmingham, Alabama, in June as the descendants within the family of Reformed faith of Christians. In their prayerful deliberations and actions, described in this issue of *inSpire*, these Presbyterians were called to carry on the witness of the first Presbyterians on these shores.

As the first theological institution established by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (1812), Princeton Seminary, too, is called to serve the church with the courage and commitment of its founders. We began our 195th academic year this fall with an entering M.Div. class of 132 students, and 28 new international students from fifteen countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, the largest number of international students to attend PTS in recent years. Professor Gordon Graham, the Henry Luce III Professor of Philosophy and the Arts, gave the convocation address on "The Philosophy of the Seminary." He called us all to remember that the human mind is a glorious gift from God, a gift that must never be taken for granted, but which must be cared for and enjoyed. I invite you to read Dr. Graham's address on our web site, and also to read his article about the relationship of theology and the arts, found in this issue.

As the church's and the Seminary's roots go deep into the soil of this nation's beginnings, so our branches must reach wide, to peoples and churches around the world, to embrace the world with the hope of Christ. This issue of *inSpire* concludes with the moving words of our graduate Paul Haidostian, president of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon, whose institution and nation have endured violence and now a fragile ceasefire. Paul writes: "Amidst the uncertainties of the present and the future, I celebrate our faith in a God who sustains us in everything. This is our belief, our experience, and our hope for the future."

Yours sincerely,

Iain R. Torrance