thought that this was how the Holy Spirit worked. So I challenged the whole idea of preparing set sermons, but I did the work. When it came time to preach my sermon in class, I criticized everything the seminary was trying to do. I called it the wisdom of man, but of course, had the wisdom of God. I said, "I want more talk about John Calvin than I do about Jesus Christ." This wasn't really true, but I was trying to make a point.

Dr. Spear called me into his office, and I basically called him a demon possessed Pharisee. Well, I was called before a special meeting of all the professors to give an account of my actions. I basically played "Mr. Repentance," and told them what they wanted to hear. I was really not repentant, but I figured that this was not my battle; I would tell them what they wanted to hear and live to fight another day. I would straighten them out yet!

When I took the cotton out of my ears and put it in my mouth, I learned something! I found that I did not know everything, and in fact was mistaken about many things. I heard the teaching of my professors and saw their godly lives lived out before me. Little by little, my heart of stone was becoming a heart of flesh.

About a year later I went to Dr. Spear in true repentance and confessed my sin and asked forgiveness. Let me say here that this man is the theologian that I respect and admire most in the world. His teaching is clean, concise, and fair. I hope to model my own manner of understanding after his example.

I don't think anyone loves RPTS as much as I. Whenever I give my testimony and tell of the grace of Christ, I tell some of these stories. Going to seminary here has made a profound impact on my life. It has given me a
clearness of insight and thought. It has shown me what questions to ask and how to go about finding the answers. The greatest virtue of RPTS is its love for Jesus Christ and His Word as contained in the Holy Scriptures. That is the centrality of the life here at RPTS. This is what endures unto eternal life.

Attending RPTS is one of the best things that have done in my life. I praise God for His providence. While many seminaries today are succumbing to the secular ideals of society and are not teaching the inerrant, infallible Word of God, RPTS has stood as a light on a hill. I praise God for you, RPTS!

Mike wrote this article in the spring of 1996 as he was preparing to graduate from RPTS. He is currently pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in New Martinsville, W.V.

How I set out to change RPTS, and how God used RPTS to change me.

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—Mike Cara
they say that you are to be careful when you see the light at the end of the tun-
el, because there might be a train behind
that light. The train is heading for me at
breakneck speed as I am now in the process
of candidating for a pastoral call.

After four years of study at RPTS, I press on
into Christ and look forward to the challenges
ahead in the work of ministry and the exten-
sion of the kingdom of Christ to the glory of His
name. It is a bittersweet time. I already miss
RPTS, the work, the service, and the people. Let
me tell you why I praise the Lord for RPTS.

For background, let me say that God was
gracious as He called me in my own unique
"Damascus Road" experience and subsequently
converted me from a Las Vegas mobster to a
preacher of the gospel. From the gutter to glory,
Jesus Christ changed my "million dollar" drug
habit into a desire to serve others. God in His
power took me from the seamy side of the Las
Vegas underground to the top of the Mount of
Olives to proclaim His kingdom.

I would like to share with you a few stories
about how in God's providence I entered RPTS.
After I accepted and received Christ, I eventu-
ally moved back to my hometown of
Steubenville, Ohio, and joined Full Gospel Min-
stries Church. Years later, having grown some
what in the Lord and having favor among men,
I was preaching at a Nazarene church in Florida.
The pastor there felt called to exercise gifts of
healings as he preached. Nazarenes are not
especially "charismatic" in their proclamation of
these types of things, and as a result the pastor
Greg, was somewhat estranged by his peers.

At the time of our meeting, Greg was ques-
tioning his beliefs in this area. I, on the other
hand, had been disciplined by a man, Rocky
Jenkins, who felt very much called to the minis-
try of healing and deliverance. He had trained
me well in these areas, or so I thought. I sat with
Greg that night and we stayed up all night
searching the Scriptures in the area of healing.
I showed him that his misgivings were mis-
guided. That week, during our meetings, the
Lord really did do some wondrous things to
the glory of His name.

Pastor Greg told me that I should consider
enrolling in seminary. Well, my church back-
ground at the time had pretty much instilled
in me a great distrust of formal education as
pertains to the ministry and, in particular, semi-
nary. I had all the clothes in my pocket, and
I lied them at Greg. "Seminary? Why would I
want to go to seminary? I don't need to read
Greek or Hebrew. I need to read in the Holy
Ghost! Seminary, you go in sanctified, and come
out petrified! Whitewashed sepulchers—full of
dead bones!"

Well, God is not mocked. Three months later,
there I was (you guessed it) in seminary.

In the meantime another problem presented
itself. The question was this: where should I
attend? With my church background, I
assumed that it would be a charismatic type
school. I had a friend who had protracted
for years about going to seminary. As a result,
he had many catalogs from schools around
the country. I went over to his house and started
looking through them.

I assumed that I would probably be suited
for places similar to the Assembly of God, but
as I read through the catalogs as to what they
believed, I said, "I don't believe these things"—
pre-tribulation rapture, everyone speaking in
tongues as a sign of the baptism in the Holy
Spirit, women pastors, etc.

Another friend of mine, Don, who is a prag-
matis, said: "Mike, don't pretend it's a spiri-
tual decision. It's like getting your driver's
license. Go to the cheapest and closest place."
I
said, "OK, Kevin, what catalogs do you have
for Pittsburgh?"

Well, he had two catalogs. I picked up the
first and looked through it. The first page I
turned to was a summation of a course. It was
a study of Joseph Campbell's The Power of
Myth. I knew this work, and I knew that it
was not Christian. I knew that this seminary
was not for me.

The other catalog was from the Reformed
Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Now, at the
time, I didn't even know that there were dif-
ferent kinds of Presbyterians. In fact, the only
thing that I knew about Presbyterians was what
I had read in the paper two weeks earlier—
that they had opened their national meeting
by calling on Indian spirits. That, of course,
was the "other group."

Well, I decided I would go and check it out
anyway. Upon my arrival at RPTS I quickly
saw a few things that struck me. I thought this
group seemed to be right from the Pilgrim
days, and they hadn't changed much since
then. They sang only the Psalms without
musical instruments—what an odd thing. How-
ever, one thing drew me to them. They
seemed to really be interested in studying the
Word of God. This is what I wanted. So, I
enrolled.

Needless to say, my first year was a difficult
one, not so much for me but for them. I felt
that this was a pretty dead bunch, and I was
going to straighten them out! I challenged and
questioned everything that they were doing.

Let me give you an example. In my first
preaching class we were assigned a particular
text of Scripture to preach in class. I had some
experience in preaching, and with my back-
ground we did not really prepare sermons as
such but just preached extemporaneously. We