

The Message and Dr. Eugene Peterson

1 Corinthians 1:26 -29

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Eugene H. Peterson, author of *The Message*, was ordained in the **United Presbyterian Church, USA**, in 1958. It was the "Northern" split of the Presbyterian church. In 1983, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was formed as a result of reunion between the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (PCUS), the so-called "southern branch," and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (UPCUSA), the so-called "northern branch." The split was due to the civil war and the "North and South." [1](#)

Further data on **The Presbyterian Church (USA)** acknowledges it as being the largest Presbyterian body and "can therefore lay claim to being the mainstream Presb body."

"...From the 1960s on, the PCUSA has found its numbers in decline. Controversies over the 1983 merger led to a loss of about 800,000 members. The church, however, remains the largest body of the Ref and Presb tradition in the USA....The PCUSA is **strongly ecumenical** in outlook. **Its predecessors were founding members** of both the **World Council of Churches** and of the **World Alliance of Reformed Churches**. In 1997 agreement was reached with the **Evangelical Lutheran Church** in America to have full communion and an exchange of ministers....." [2](#)

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an ecumenical fellowship of churches, now 347 in more than 120 countries in all continents from virtually all christian traditions, whose goal is to unite all denominations that claim 'Christianity.' [3](#)

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) is a fellowship of 75 million Reformed Christians in 218 churches in 107 countries. Its member churches are Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed and United churches with claimed roots

in the 16th-century Reformation led by John Calvin, John Knox and others. The Alliance is from the 1970 union of Presbyterian and Congregational fellowships. Many WARC member churches also belong to the ecumenical World Council of Churches (WCC). 4

ENI or the Ecumenical News International, which is based at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland, reports on ecumenical happenings worldwide. As stated on their website, the joint sponsors of ENI are the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Conference of European Churches, which also have their headquarters at the Ecumenical Centre.

Eugene Peterson is on the editorial council for *Theology Today*, along with several others including, catholic **Richard John Neuhaus**, of the Institute on Religion and Public Life, New York, New York. Richard Neuhaus was Co- writer of the ecumenical [Evangelicals and Catholics Together](#). Being ecumenical is no surprise, given Eugene Peterson's background as a pentecostal but also with roots in the Presbyterian Church, as noted above, which was integral in the forming of the ecumenical World Council of Churches. 5

Mr. Peterson is a member of the ecumenical theHighCalling.org, and on September 29, 2005, *The High Calling of Our Daily Work* began to provide a daily prayer and reflection by Eugene Peterson. The HighCalling organization is a repository of ecumenical writers. He is also a member of the ecumenical Chrysostom Society, and an endorser of Richard Foster's Renovaré and his writings, was on their Board of Reference and was a contributor and New Testament editor of *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible*, a project launched by Renovaré founder Richard Foster and his associate Dallas Willard. Some of Mr. Peterson's contributions are found on the Renovaré website where various Readings are provided from the edition released in 2005. Mr. Peterson is an advocate of the contemplative spirituality and contemplative prayer movements.

Eugene Peterson was also a participant for other ecumenical ventures. One Initiative and document signed originally in 1994, put forward by the *Evangelical Environmental Network & Creation Care Magazine*, was called, *An Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation*, and included an amazing number of well known individuals, such as:

- Dr. Anthony Campolo, Professor of Sociology, Eastern College
- Dr. Loren Cunningham, President, Youth With A Mission
- Dr. Ted Engstrom, President Emeritus, World Vision
- Dr. Richard Foster, President, Renovaré
- Dr. Richard Mouw, President, Fuller Theological Seminary

Mr. David Neff, Executive Editor, *Christianity Today*
Dr. Ronald Sider, President, Evangelicals for Social Action
Mr. Mike Yaconelli, Senior Editor, *The Door Magazine*
...Dr. Eugene Peterson, Professor, Regent College [5b](#)

Another of the *Evangelical Environmental Network*' initiatives is called *Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action* which was signed/endorsed by over 85 leaders, including **Rick Warren**, **Rev. Dr. Leith Anderson**, Former President, National Association of Evangelicals (NAE); **Commissioner W. Todd Bassett**, National Commander, The Salvation Army; **Gary P. Bergel**, President, Intercessors for America; **Bishop Wellington Boone**, The Father's House & Wellington Boone Ministries, **Rev. Dr. Paul Cedar**, Chair, Mission America Coalition; **Rev. Dr. Jack Hayford**, President, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, **David Neff**, Editor, *Christianity Today*; and many others.

Dr. Eugene Peterson

Although Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message*, has no PhD and therefore holds no doctorate, he is promoted in many speaking engagements as Dr. Eugene Peterson.

For example in October 2002, he was a speaker at Salt Lake Theological Seminary's 12th Annual Pastor's Conference, which involved leadership from 47 churches. Reported as, "...They were challenged by **Dr. Eugene Peterson**...As a gifted and creative communicator, Eugene Peterson imparts new perspectives and fresh insights to familiar Biblical truths..." [6](#)

In Calgary, Alberta, and Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, "Dr. Eugene Peterson" was also heralded in October 2001 and delivered a series of lectures in Christian Spirituality at CTS in Regina. [7](#)

As mentioned previously, the biography at TheHighCalling.org, where his daily devotionals can be obtained and where he is a member author, states:

Eugene Peterson

"The Reverend **Dr. Eugene H. Peterson** writes full time from his home in Montana. A pastor for most of his life, he is professor emeritus of spiritual theology, Regent College (Canada) and Translator of *The Message*." [8](#)

In fact, at Regent College, a Bible college in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, where he taught for over 5 years and is Professor Emeritus of Spiritual Theology, his

lectures and tapes and so on continue to this day to be referenced as being those of Dr. Eugene Peterson.

When referring to the online biography in 2003/2004 for Eugene Peterson at NavPress, publisher of *The Message*, which did not include mention of a doctorate that this writer could see and never referenced him as a doctor within the academic credentials listed, the following information was determined.

It states:

- B.A. in philosophy from Seattle Pacific University
- S.T.B. from New York Theological Seminary
- **M.A. in Semitic Languages** from Johns Hopkins University
- D.H.L. (honoris causa) from Seattle Pacific University

The S.T.B. from New York Theological Seminary, is a bachelors in sacred theology. That is the similar topic or focus for which Eugene Peterson became "Professor of Spiritual Theology" at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada.

Nowhere in any of the official NavPress information or in his credentials is there any specific documentation of where Mr. Peterson became proficient in Greek or Biblical Greek (Koine Greek), Septuagintal Greek, or being coherent in any other language other than Hebrew, although it is obviously implied.

The questions that should be answered: Does Eugene Peterson have any degrees in Greek? and What Semitic or other languages is he fluent in?

BA, STB, MA & Honorary Degrees

Seattle Pacific BA & Honorary

Along with Eugene Peterson's B.A. in philosophy from Seattle Pacific University, the honorary doctorate received from Seattle Pacific in 1986, is called an honorary doctorate of humane letters, which appears to be a fairly common honorary doctorate bestowed upon selected individuals from many universities and seminaries. Honorary doctorate of humane letters has nothing to do with language proficiency in Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek.

Although likely changed in content over the years, Seattle Pacific discusses a BA in philosophy on their website, stating, "It tends to increase one's self-knowledge." and :

"...In general, to devote oneself to philosophical studies is to adopt a way of life that involves looking beneath the surface of things, becoming more aware of (a) the assumptions humans tend to make (especially one's own assumptions!), (b) the strengths and weaknesses of various systems of belief, and (c) the connections between disparate fields of thought such as science, morality, and religion...." 9

BA From New York Theological Seminary

It has been noted that Eugene Peterson received a bachelor of sacred theology from New York Theological Seminary (1954-1956), and according to NavPress website information, he also taught "biblical languages and English Bible" there from 1959-1960, 10 after attending Johns Hopkins University (1957-1958), which is where the biography stated he obtained his Masters in Semitic Languages.

According to information on the New York Theological Seminary website, and correspondence with Dale Irvin, Academic Dean at NYTS, the Biblical Seminary, as it was originally called, had this history:

"...Biblical Seminary was founded in 1901 by W.W. White as the Bible Training School in Monclair, NJ. It moved to New York City shortly after that and became Biblical Seminary in the 1920s. The board changed the name of the Seminary again in 1967, this time to New York Theological Seminary. Until 1976 we were located at 49th and Lexington, but the Seminary sold this building and began renting space from **Marble Collegiate Church** at 29th and 5th Ave. In 2002 we moved to Morningside Heights in Manhattan where we are now located.." 11

Marble Collegiate Church is none other than the late Norman Vincent Peale's church. For More on the ecumenical New York Theological Seminary and Norman Vincent Peale please [click here](#).

From one interview, we see that Eugene Peterson's goal was not to obtain a PhD in **Semitic Languages**, which is what is stated for his Masters, but, rather, he was working towards a PhD in **Semitic Studies**. From 'The best life' Eugene Peterson commented on pastoral ministry,

"IN THE EARLY 1960s, Eugene Peterson was planning to finish a Ph.D. in **Semitic studies** while he worked as an associate pastor at a Presbyterian church in White Plains, New York. He already had **degrees in the field from the Biblical Theological Seminary in New York** (now New York Theological Seminary) and from Johns Hopkins. But the academic career was put on hold: Peterson decided that his real vocation was to be a pastor. In 1962 he was called to plant a new congregation in Bel Air, Maryland, near Baltimore....(He was raised in a Pentecostal family..." 12

We know that the two bachelor degrees were not language focused, as one was for philosophy and the other was for sacred theology, and neither were for Semitic Studies or Semitic Languages. Prior to returning to teach at New York Seminary in 1959, Peterson attended Johns Hopkins University, which, according to NavPress, is where he obtained an M.A. in **Semitic Languages**, not Semitic Studies as stated above. Perusing various universities, those can be two distinct courses, with different emphasis.

MA from Johns Hopkins

A query to Johns Hopkins concerning the requirements of an M.A. in Semitic Languages was sent and has never been responded to.

However, a perusal from their Near Eastern Studies department revealed the following general information at Johns Hopkins, which does not specifically address the requirements to obtain an M.A. in Semitic Languages. Eugene Peterson attended from 1957-1958:

Department of Near Eastern Studies
Johns Hopkins University

Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

Students working full-time toward the **Ph.D. may expect to do three to four years of course work**, after which comprehensive examinations must be written before work on the dissertation begins. The examinations cover a student's major and minor fields of concentration. After passing these examinations, the student, in consultation with the faculty, prepares a dissertation proposal for faculty consideration and then proceeds to write the dissertation. **An ability to read scholarly French and German is necessary, and an examination in one of these must be passed within the first semester** of residence at Hopkins. The examination in the other may be delayed not more than one year. **Some command of Greek and Latin is necessary to pursue biblical studies.**

Requirements for the M.A. Degree

If a Ph.D. student wants to receive the M.A. degree, he/she can request it at any time after one full year of study and after passing the examination in one modern foreign language. In unusual cases, entering students may be admitted as candidates for the M.A. In these cases an examination for the Master's degree will cover basic knowledge in the student's field of specialization. [13](#)

What this writer found of most interest is in the list of languages that are presented above, but also under the section of Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Philology: Concentration in Hebrew Bible. The Major Language: Biblical Hebrew; Required Minor Languages: Akkadian or Egyptian, Aramaic, Ugaritic, Historical Hebrew Grammar; Optional Languages: Coptic, Rabbinic Hebrew, Syriac. [14](#)

A perusal of other universities offering Masters or PhD's in either Semitic Studies or Semitic Languages revealed a rigorous course load over several years, with knowledge of various languages similar to the above, including knowledge of French and German. Obtaining a Masters in either field was no guarantee of being accepted to the respective PhD course.

Language Knowledge Clarification

There is no mention in any of Eugene Peterson's various interviews or biographies of knowing or having studied any of the above mentioned languages other than the mention of Hebrew and the M.A. in Semitic Languages. The questions to clarify the language issue were put to NavPress several times, and yet specific language information was not clearly answered.

In an interview Eugene Peterson stated:

"...I did my graduate school training in Semitic languages. So technically I know more about Hebrew, but I've been reading Greek for thirty-five years and feel equally at home with Greek. But there is a real sense of at homeness that is coming to fruition as I work through the Old Testament..." [15](#)

Being that academic credentials are being put forth to provide credibility and it is said Mr. Peterson is more than familiar with Greek, with *The Message* advertised as being faithful to the *original* Greek and *original* Hebrew, and endorsed by many in leadership, this needs clarifying. Indeed, one would need to be well studied in Greek in order to translate a new Bible version or paraphrase his opinion of God's Word from the *original* manuscripts. Full knowledge of Koine Greek, Aramaic, and Biblical Hebrew are also needed, and, depending on the manuscript sources, Latin and Septuagintal Greek as well.

Correspondence With NavPress About Languages

To clarify this issue, this writer first contacted the publisher of *The Message*, NavPress on December 18, 2003, and asked whether Eugene Peterson was in fact a Dr. and if so, what was he a doctor of.

The responses from their representative at that time, and whose credentials were, "Rights Assistant, NavPress Publishing" and also included dialogue forwarded from Eugene Peterson's editor, included the following statements.

Q "...As I have been reading various articles about The Message and information on Mr Peterson, I noticed that some people refer to him as Dr. Peterson, but I don't actually see that in the promo of that Bible. Are people misinformed or adding Dr out of respect?

NavPress " He doesn't have a PhD but he has 3 honorary doctorates from Seattle Pacific University, Messiah and Northwestern." 16

However, in 2005, it is noted that *The Message Bible* catalogue, available from the NavPress Website, and which promotes *The Message* as a Bible translation, stated,

"**Dr. Peterson** spent over two years to create his **lively translation** of the New Testament called *The Message*..." 17

Further correspondence in 2003 stated:

Q: In the bio you [NavPress] referred me to on your site, I don't understand where that [Dr.] comes from. It states:

- B.A. in philosophy from Seattle Pacific University
- S.T.B. from New York Theological Seminary
- M.A. in Semitic Languages from Johns Hopkins University
- D.H.L. (honoris causa) from Seattle Pacific University

Q: What is a S.T.B. from New York Theological Seminary , and when was that.

NavPress: "S.T.B. is a bachelors in sacred theology-- I don't know what year that was."

Q: Also, what years did Mr. Peterson teach there?

NavPress: He taught there in 1959-1960 or 1961.

Q: What years was Mr. Peterson at Johns Hopkins?

NavPress: 1957-1958

Q: What is a D.H.L. (honoris causa) from Seattle Pacific University,

NavPress: It is the honorary doctorate

and when was that "accomplished." around 1986

Q: When did he obtain his BA in philosophy at Seattle?

NavPress: 1953

Q: NavPress states in the bio that in January of 1993 he became professor of spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. How long was he there?

NavPress: 5 and a half years. 18

This writer again contacted NavPress on January 2, 2004.

Question: "...I'm still reading up on The Message and I was wondering if you could please tell me where and when Eugene Peterson learned Greek. It's not actually in his bio or any interviews I've read. **Where and when did he actually take Greek as a subject, and which Greek? Does he have any degrees in Greek?** It says in the bio that Mr Peterson has a **Masters in Semitic languages.** I might as well also ask **what Semitic or other languages he is fluent in?...**"

NavPress: [January 5, 2004] "

Hello. Good questions! The next time we talk with Mr. Peterson, we will ask him your questions about his knowledge of Greek. However, it may be a few weeks before we talk with him and can let you know. Thanks for your patience!

My Response: [January 5, 2004]

"...Thank you very much for the quick response. **I am a little surprised and puzzled that the information isn't documented or known immediately, being that translation/paraphrase of The Message hinges on Mr. Peterson's knowledge of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic, from the original manuscripts.** I do very much look forward to having the questions answered and really appreciate that you and NavPress will take the time to ask Mr. Peterson the various specific questions, and provide me with the answers. Looking forward to hearing from you in a few weeks." 19

After a four month wait, a response finally came from NavPress, May 6, 2004:

We forwarded your question on to our editorial team. (sorry for the delay) Here is the response.

...

Eugene Peterson did **most of his language study at Biblical Seminary** in New York in the mid-50s. He later taught Greek and Hebrew there. His other language study was at Johns Hopkins University where he studied **under Albright**, the Semitics scholar and archaeologist, and **did most of the work on a Ph.D. before being drawn into the pastorate**. He started a church near Baltimore and served the one church his whole ministry.

Unlike most seminary graduates he kept up on the languages and endeavored to translate the OT (Hebrew) and NT (Greek) every year of his active ministry.

Sincerely

Stephen Board

Editorial Team [20](#)

As a reminder, the time spent at New York Theological Seminary which was originally called Biblical Seminary, was for a bachelor of sacred theology obtained from 1954-1956, and he also taught there 1959-1960, after attending Johns Hopkins University in 1957-1958. That Johns Hopkins stint was presumably where he learned most of his Hebrew and semitic language skills, but according to the email from Eugene Peterson's editor, he learned his language skills prior to that time, that is, while getting his bachelors of sacred theology over a two year period. Dale Irvin, Academic Dean at NYTS, could not provide the information regarding what that entailed although he thought it was similar to what later became the bachelor of divinity or similar.

However further research provided this information, which also refers to the bachelor of sacred theology time frame from 1954-1956, which does not actually state how much time was spent studying languages, i.e. one class for each language for 3 months or similar.

"Eugene Peterson's mother was a Pentecostal preacher, and her son started out his career as a scholar of Greek and Hebrew at New York Theological Seminary and an associate pastor at a Presbyterian church in White Plains, N.Y." [21](#).

The questions remain. **Does Eugene Peterson have any degrees in Greek? Koine Greek? and What Semitic or other languages is he fluent in or have degrees in?**

These questions are incredibly relevant and require a precise statement because readers are being asked to trust explicitly that there is more than competent knowledge of Koine Greek, Aramaic and Biblical Hebrew. Being a qualified translator of God's Word is not for those with basic or even a working knowledge. In fact, most language experts have language degrees which they state clearly because it would then validate their expertise or lack thereof.

Professor and Dr. at Regent College

In January of 1993 Eugene Peterson became professor of spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, and taught there for five and a half years. He continues as professor emeritus of spiritual theology at Regent College. To clarify why Regent College would promote and sell his audio tapes as from Dr. Eugene Peterson, this writer contacted Regent College.

Through the email dialogue which took place also on December 18, 2003, the query was initially sent to the President's office of Regent College but, got turned over to the Dean's assistant. The following questions were basically unable to be answered satisfactorily.

Q: ...I also have noticed that his teachings are still used for various courses at Regent. Some people refer to him as Eugene Peterson, Rev. Eugene Peterson and also Dr. Peterson. I notice in your course information that you promote him as Dr. Eugene Peterson. Could you please tell me what he is a Dr of and when that was accomplished?

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Regent : You are correct in all of your salutations. Dr. Peterson was a Professor of Spiritual Theology during his time at Regent College from 1992-1998. [22](#)

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Q: ...In his bio with NavPress, there is no mention of his having obtained a Doctorate via any Seminary, and that's reading it this week. Could you please clarify what his doctorate is in and where and when he obtained his Doctorate? ...
[23](#)

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Regent : Dr. Peterson has been recognized with an 'Honoris Degree' from Messiah College in 1997. He has obtained various degrees not necessarily based in Theology. ...[24](#)

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Q: ...Having "various degrees" and having one or more "honorary doctorates" is not the same as having a scholarly Doctorate in anything. Obtaining an actual Doctorate takes several years at a minimum.

...According to his bio on Navpress, these are his credentials.

"In addition to being ordained in the Presbyterian Church, in 1958, Eugene holds the following academic degrees:

- B.A. in philosophy from Seattle Pacific University
- S.T.B. from New York Theological Seminary
- M.A. in Semitic Languages from Johns Hopkins University
- D.H.L. (honoris causa) from Seattle Pacific University

Just to clarify.

I am asking Regent College, ...What is he specifically a Doctor in, when did he obtain said Doctorate and from where...²⁵

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Regent: The information that you have made reference to is the same as what I have in Dr. Peterson's c.v. I'm sorry that I am unable to help you further since the people who were involved with hiring Dr. Peterson are no longer at Regent College." ²⁶

It should be noted that one does not have to have a PhD in order to be a teaching professor, at least in subsequently reading information from other universities and seminaries. Many assistants to professors for several years or those with Masters in a particular field may become Professors, depending on the school qualifications. It should also be stated that many who receive honorary doctorates claim the title of Doctor. Honorary doctorates are granted on a regular basis at some institutions.

Worldly Credentials Versus God's Wisdom

The problem is, the doctorate or PhD does not exist in any field according to NavPress, publisher of Eugene Peterson's *The Message*, as of December 18, 2003. Two Bachelor of Arts and a Masters degree, in unique fields do not make a Doctorate. Obtaining an actual Doctorate in most fields, takes several years at a minimum and requires other academic prerequisites.

That is not to say that one needs to obtain credentials in order to be scholarly, knowledgeable or able to put forth sound ideas. On the contrary, in Christ, our wisdom and knowledge comes from Him, and does not need the approval of academics to be accurate or sound.

It needs to be made clear that having letters behind ones name does not make one a better scholar, than one who does not. Nor does it mean one has wisdom acceptable to God, or those thoughts are more important than another's thoughts or ideas. While it behooves us to study to show ourselves approved, we are to value God's evaluation over mans. What matters is whether what we know, what we teach and believe is acceptable to God.

Job 28:28 "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

Psalm 37:30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. 31 The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

2 Corinthians 3:18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. 21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;

Eugene Peterson , Teacher

Regent College

As recorded above, Eugene Peterson became professor of spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, and taught there for five years and a half years. He continues as professor emeritus of spiritual theology at Regent College

It needs to be understood that Regent College is a provincially accredited Bible College and is in a working partnership with the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada. According to UBC, Regent College is an international graduate school of Christian studies. According to their information, it is an autonomous body, trans-denominational in character and evangelical and Biblical in basis. The College has formal affiliation with the university, and is fully accredited with the [Association of Theological Schools](#) in the USA and Canada.

Offering many courses, we see that along with the various studies that those involved in Regent College are in fact, ecumenical.

"Regent College offers a program in Anglican Studies...Those interested in Anglican ordination are able to take a Master of Divinity degree at Regent which prepares them for ministry in the Anglican Communion worldwide...

Regent has partnered with Wycliffe Hall, a permanent private hall of Oxford University, in an exchange program. Regent students who meet the Oxford entrance requirements are able to do two terms of their Master of Divinity degree in Oxford, and Wycliffe students are able to come to study at Regent College.

...regular Anglican worship is held at the College during the academic terms. Anglican ordinands are mentored by the Rev. Dr. Harry S.D. Robinson and the Rev. Dr. Neil Mancor, who serve as Anglican chaplains. The **Rev. Dr. J.I. Packer** is the director of the program. ..." 27

"The Baptist Studies program is offered in conjunction with the Master of Divinity degree to provide theological preparation for students intending to enter pastoral ministry through the Baptist Union of Western Canada (BUWC)....

The Baptist Studies program is offered with the cooperation of faculty from Carey Theological College, including Dr. Barbara Mutch and Dr. Brian Stelck. Dr. Mark Davies is coordinator of the program, and as such is a fully participating member of the Regent College faculty. In addition to specific courses within the Baptist Studies program, these three professors also teach a range of Applied Theology courses at Regent, primarily within the MDiv curriculum." 28

J.I Packer, who also endorsed *The Message*, is best known by some with his involvement with the signing of [Evangelicals and Catholics Together](#), For more on Professor J.I. Packer (Anglican) ; See also : [Institute for Global Engagement & Eastern College](#); [Jay Grimstead](#)

In their Continuing Studies program, we see the promotion of Eugene Peterson's teachings, as well as those of J.I. Packer.

AUDIO CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

Students can complete up to one-third of a Regent program (DipCS, MCS or MDiv) through audio courses .29

Jesus and Prayer

Eugene Peterson

Tell it Slant: Parables as Spiritual Direction

Eugene Peterson

Soulcraft: Spiritual Formation	Eugene Peterson
Systematic Theology Overview	Alister McGrath
Systematic Theology A: God, Communication and Communion	J.I. Packer
Systematic Theology B: Man, Sin and Grace	J.I. Packer

Another example of the ecumenical nature of Regent is Gordon Fee, who is Professor Emeritus of New Testament Studies at Regent, and is Assemblies of God which means Pentecostal. He also endorsed *The Message* .

Teacher at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

In October 2005, Eugene Peterson attended Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary to give the Parchman Endowed Lectures Oct. 18-20 and it was reported that:

"Rev. Dr. Eugene Peterson is an ordained Presbyterian minister", [who] "holds degrees from Seattle Pacific University, New York Theological Seminary, Johns Hopkins University **and Messiah College**, and **has taught at** New York Theological Seminary, Towson State University, St. Mary's Seminary, **Pittsburgh Theological Seminary** and Regent **College.**" [30](#)

According to one website, regarding when Peterson wrote *The Message*, "In 1991 after 29 years at Christ Our King, he felt God was calling him to devote more time to writing and teaching. He spent **one year at Pittsburgh Seminary as writer-in-residence**. Much of his work on *The Message* took place during that year as well as the following summer and fall. In January of 1993 he became professor of spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia." [31](#)

Pittsburgh Seminary is Pittsburgh Theological Seminary which was formed in 1959 by the consolidation of Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary of the United Presbyterian Church of North America and Western Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. [32](#)

In the *Special Events and Lectures* information in their Pittsburgh Theological Seminary catalog for 2005-2006, we find the following list of names as lecturers:

"THE J. HUBERT HENDERSON CONFERENCE ON CHURCH AND MINISTRY

This lecture honors the pastor of 35 years at the Wallace Memorial Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. **Martin Marty**, **Frederick Buechner**, Lewis B. Smedes, Sydney and Robert McAfee Brown, Bruce Larson, **Eugene Peterson**, Gustavo Gutierrez, **Madeleine L'Engle**, Letty Russell, Alister E. McGrath, Wayne Muller, Mark Noll, and Robert Wuthnow have been lecturers in the series." 33

Martin Marty has been on Renovarés Board of Reference. He was a speaker at the Howard Butt/Billy Graham Layman's Leadership Institutes in the 1970's. He was also a member of the 1978, Howard Butt sponsored Congress of the Laity which will be discussed later. Frederick Buechner endorsed *The Message*, is a speaker and supporter of Laity Lodge, a project of Howard E. Butt, which is also connected with TheHighCalling.org, which posts Eugene Peterson's devotionals.

Honorary Doctorate from Messiah College

The honorary doctor of sacred theology from Messiah College in 1997, was an honor that was also bestowed on Dr. Tony Campolo, in 1998. Tony Campolo is a kingdom now proponent who also teaches that we are 'divine' and other fallacies and is discussed in the articles: [Good Fruit From Evil Trees:Part I](#) ; [Renovaré & The Christian Mystic](#) ; [Institute for Global Engagement & Eastern College](#); [World Vision Global Education](#). He also endorsed *The Message*.

A query was sent to Messiah College to confirm whether the above report is simply a mistake in the write-up stating that Eugene Peterson received a degree from Messiah College and rather it was meaning the honorary doctorate of sacred theology from 1997. To date, there has been no response.

According to their information, "Messiah College is a Christian college of the liberal and applied arts and sciences. The College is committed to an embracing evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian Church..." 34

Messiah College, which is just outside of Philadelphia, is also the world home base for the MJAA or [Messianic Jewish Alliance of America](#). That is where the [yearly MJAA](#) gathering takes place. The ecumenical [Toward Jerusalem II](#) updates recounted how MJAA leadership were part of the Promise Keeper's Pastors and Leadership Conference in Phoenix Arizona, in 2003. *The Message* was distributed to all attendees of that conference by NavPress. Recent information reveals the influx of *The Message* use in many evangelical churches may be partly due to that promotion.

Honorary Doctorate from North Park Theological Seminary

Eugene Peterson received an unspecified honorary doctorate from the ecumenical North Park Theological Seminary in 2002, and also gave their commencement address. North Park Theological Seminary is the Evangelical Covenant Church's sole graduate theological school. The Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America was the original founding denomination which became Evangelical Covenant Church. According to their website information, "The Covenant's ministry is strongly influenced by North Park, and the Seminary's faculty provide a distinctive resource for the Covenant." The Covenant beliefs endorse and propagate the full equality of women and men in all leadership positions within the church, and in 1976 began ordaining women to the ministry.

According to the biography in the North Park Theological Seminary write-up in 2002,

"...During the ceremony, honorary doctorates will be awarded to retired Covenant pastor and professor Donald H. Madvig and author and retired pastor Eugene H. Peterson. Peterson, whose paraphrase *The Message*, breathes new life into the Bible, will also present the Commencement address, "Salvation Watching." ..."

"Peterson has a bachelor of arts from Seattle Pacific University, a bachelor of sacred theology from New York Theological Seminary, and a master of arts in semitic languages from Johns Hopkins University. He also received an honorary doctor of humane letters from Seattle Pacific University and an honorary doctor of sacred theology from Messiah College"

"He has taught at New York Theological Seminary, Towson State University, **St. Mary's Seminary**, and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. In addition to serving as pastor of Towson Presbyterian Church in Maryland and White Plains Presbyterian Church in New York, Peterson, who was ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA in 1958, also served as founding pastor of Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland." [35](#)

Adjunct Professor at St. Mary's Seminary

Eugene Peterson was **adjunct professor** at **St. Mary's Seminary**, Baltimore, Maryland, which is the first Catholic seminary established in the United States. It is owned and operated by the Sulpician Fathers, who are diocesan priests dedicated to the continued formation of priests for the Catholic church.

St. Mary's Seminary

Founded in 1791, St. Mary's Seminary & University in Baltimore is the first Catholic seminary established in the United States. For over two hundred years,

St. Mary's has been owned and operated by the Sulpician Fathers [36](#), a community of diocesan priests dedicated to the formation of priests.

In 1805, St. Mary's was chartered as a civil university in Maryland, and in 1822, Pope Pius VII established the seminary the country's first ecclesiastical (pontifical) faculty with the right to grant degrees in the name of the Holy See. The seminary continues to offer the pontifical STB and STL degrees for all qualified students....

Inside the main doors stands the marble statue of Mary known as the Sedes Sapientiae, Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, patroness of the seminary. ..." [37](#)

The Ecumenical Institute Evening School

The Ecumenical Institute of Theology is St. Mary's evening graduate program offering studies in theology for persons of all religious traditions. Here St. Mary's seminarians are able to take occasional evening courses and meet lay men and women studying theology to serve their various churches...." [38](#).

Center For Continuing Formation Conference Center

...St. Mary's Seminary and University is literally the birthplace of seminary formation in the United States. Embodying the values of the Sulpician tradition, St. Mary's offers the very best programs possible in preparing the next generation of diocesan priests." [39](#)

St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute of Theology:

"...emerged in 1967 when a small group of clergy and laity decided that part-time graduate study in theology open to men and women of all faiths ought to be made available in Baltimore. Included in that founding group was **Dr. W. F. Albright**, the world-renowned professor of **Near Eastern Studies** at The Johns Hopkins University. St. Mary's Seminary, with the encouragement of its then president, Rev. John F. Dede, S.S., agreed that the Ecumenical Institute would complement St. Mary's mission as part of its response to the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council" [40](#)

Dr W.F. Albright was the noted scholar mentioned in an email from NavPress in May 2005, which stated concerning Eugene Peterson, "His other language study was at Johns Hopkins University where he studied under **Albright**, the Semitics scholar and archaeologist, and did most of the work on a Ph.D. " That time was actually from 1957-1958, which seems a very short time to obtain a Masters plus 'most of the work on a Ph.D'. That information may be mistaken as the one interview with Eugene Peterson pointed out that Peterson, "IN THE EARLY

1960's was planning to finish a Ph.D. in Semitic studies ..." Most Masters and Ph.D's take several years minimum according to various individuals with masters or doctorates. Time and age have a way of fading events of our lives and their timing, and this writer would be the first to declare that point.

1 Corinthians 2:5

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.