

Columbia Theological Seminary

413 Students
28 Faculty

Degrees Offered

Master of Divinity
Master of Arts in Theological Studies
Master of Theology
Doctor of Ministry
Doctor of Educational Ministry
Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Care
and Counseling



Joint Degrees Offered

Master of Divinity/Master of Science
in Urban Policy Studies, a dual degree
program with Georgia State University.

Special Programs

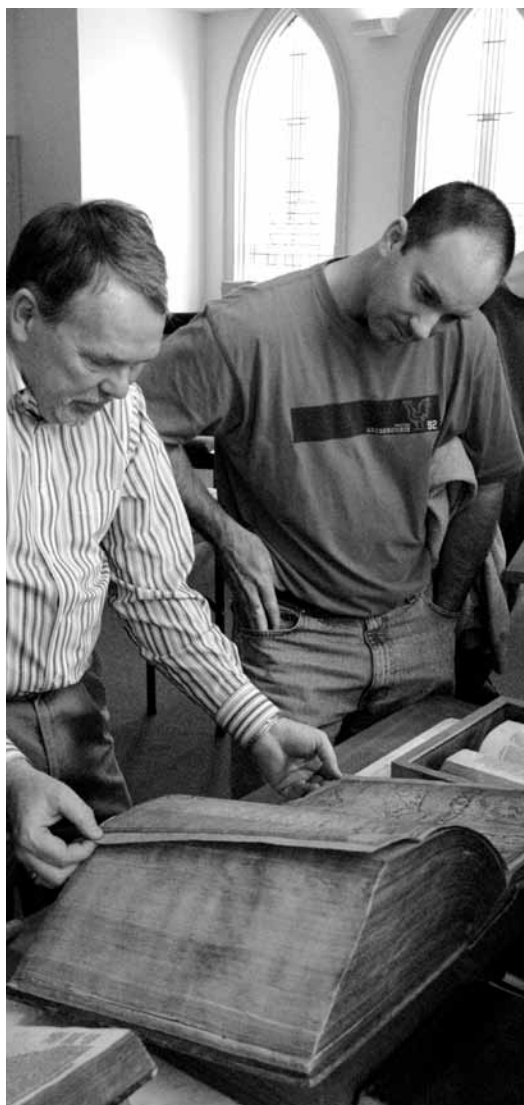
Evening/weekend Master
of Divinity classes
Center for Lifelong Learning,
offering courses and other educational
opportunities for church professionals
and lay leaders

Mission

Columbia Theological Seminary is
an educational institution of the
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and a
community of theological inquiry and
formation for ministry in the service
of the church of Jesus Christ.

Partnerships

Cross-registration and library
privileges at Atlanta-area
universities





Columbia Theological Seminary is an educational institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is a community focused on theological inquiry and ministry formation in the service of the church of Jesus Christ. Its mission is to educate women and men for leadership in ordained and lay ministries through graduate degree and continuing education programs. In addition, the seminary strives to provide theological resources for the denomination, the ecumenical church, and persons with a variety of theological concerns.

Before seminary, I served for thirteen years as music director in a medium-size church. It was this ministry that shaped my faith and brought me and my family to Atlanta, to a culture far removed from my mountain home.

All my life, it seems I've been torn between cultures. As a defensive lineman on my high school football team, five minutes before halftime I would change into my drum major outfit to lead the marching band. As a jazz musician, I defended backbeat and bebop to my classically trained college piano professor. I've defended my military service to pacifist friends, explained my liberal tendencies to conservative friends, and insisted to traditional friends that the engagement of contemporary culture is necessary and critical to the formation of Christian faith. When I left Colorado for seminary, I thought I could finally choose one path, one culture. I would study to be a pastor, and if that meant giving up music—something I had done professionally for twenty-four years—I could do that.

As a symbolic, grand gesture of turning my back on music, I donated my baby grand piano to my church.

However, at Columbia, I was encouraged to reexamine this binary choice between music and ministry. By participating in chapel worship services, I began to see how I might be able to quote Calvin and Chris Rice, Ignatius and Isaac Watts, and not be corrupted.

However, I didn't really begin to integrate my musical and theological selves until one Sunday

when my friend Michael Morgan, Columbia's seminary musician, invited me to play at Central Presbyterian Church in Atlanta. Right after a beautiful service of traditional and contemporary music, God clubbed me over the head with a 2-by-4. Well, not literally a 2-by-4, but rather, the unexpected generosity of a couple in that church, who felt led by God to offer me, a complete stranger, their grand piano, which had been their wedding gift to each other years before.

It was a gift so precious and so complex that I am still unable to comprehend what it really means. But this gift helped me accept who I am: a musician, a student of theology, but above all, a child of God, shaped and molded by God, for God's purposes. The professors at Columbia have helped continue this process, challenging me to expand my understanding of God's mysterious plan for us all. God wants not just that little part that thinks about theology, or that preaches, or that reads the Bible, or that goes to church on Sunday. God wants every bit of us, including those parts that hope, fail, cry, laugh, sing, shout, despair, rage, regret, and even play jazz piano.

God took something that I felt strongly I should abandon, and put it back in front of me, saying, "David, I gave this to you, so who are you to throw it away?"

At Columbia, God surrounded me with a community that cares enough to kick me out of my comfort zone, while giving me a safe place to make the journey to ministry.

—David Hawkins, MDiv, 2009