

In Memoriam

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**In Memoriam for Dr. Harry Reeder**

Derrick Brite

On May 18, 2023, after spending a lifetime devoted to serving Christ and His church, Dr. Harry Reeder was called to receive his eternal reward. The impact of his sudden home-going is still being felt all across the evangelical landscape. Harry was a uniquely gifted man who poured his whole self into everything that he did. He was a man who, following after the example set by the Apostle Paul, worked harder than everyone, yet did so by the grace of God working in him (1 Cor. 15:10).

Though he was a sought-after conference speaker, Harry cared most about serving his local congregation, Briarwood Presbyterian Church. For over twenty years, Lord's Day after Lord's Day, he modeled faithful Bible expositions and passionate calls for discipleship. His preaching was memorable, and the love and passion that he had for biblical and theological truth was contagious. His ability to alliterate or turn a phrase was legendary, coining many "Harryisms" that would become mantras to many. In fact, I believe I have quoted "on mission, on message, and in ministry" a few dozen times myself since his passing.

Perhaps the only rival gift to his preaching was his natural ability at being a disciple-maker. Harry spent countless hours investing in men at every stage of their ministry career, pouring out every ounce of wisdom he had. I was fortunate enough to experience this first-hand, as I sat in his office on the edge of my seat, while he seamlessly transitioned from alliterated point to alliterated point, answering all the questions I had, and some I did not have.

More than being an effective minister, Harry was a kind and gracious Christian man. I remember the first time I met him, and I addressed him as "Dr. Reeder." He quickly corrected me, saying, "Please don't call me doctor. I'm not even good enough to be a nurse!" But he *was* a doctor – a doctor of souls – skillfully working on the men and women that the great heavenly Physician had placed in his care, from his own sheep at Briarwood, to students, men and women in the denomination, and even men incarcerated at Bibb County Correctional Facility.

It is in light of this that the first edition of the *Birmingham Theological Journal* is dedicated to Dr. Harry Reeder. Within the pages of this journal, you will find articles written by men and women who were shaped by his ministry in one way or another. This includes students, pastors, and even inmates. Much like Harry, the *Birmingham Theological Journal* is devoted to the glory of God and to help Christ's church be "on mission, on message, and in ministry."