

REFLECTIONS ON JOHN MACARTHUR

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As the Board vice-chairman of Los Angeles Baptist College, it was my duty to set up interviews in our search for a new president. Little did I know when I set up a meeting in December 1984 with a nearby pastor that I would be meeting, not only the next president of our college, but also a man who would profoundly change my life. It was the first time I met John MacArthur and I was amazed during the interview to see his commitment to truth, his love of Scripture, and his desire to serve God selflessly. It was an easy decision to ask him to become the President of the college which soon would be called The Master's College. The next year followed with the founding of The Master's Seminary. It is amazing to ponder all that God has done in the last 25 years through the leadership of John MacArthur, a unique servant of the Lord.

Growing up in a Christ-centered home and attending a church faithful to Scripture, I always assumed I had been taught well and knew the Bible. As I joined Grace Community and sat under the teaching and preaching of John, it did not take me long to realize that I was embarking on a journey that would open a whole new level of understanding of Scripture. John had a unique gift of analyzing the Word and then clearly communicating it so that the meaning of Scripture just leapt from its pages. As I have been a member of Grace Community Church and served with John over the past 26 years at The Master's College and The Master's Seminary, I have been able to get an inside view of the man, his family, his leadership style, and his personal integrity. This man of God is real, genuine, humble, and consistent in his faith and walk with Christ.

This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of John as the President of The Master's Seminary. The Board of the seminary meets three times a year and this past October Bob Provost dedicated a chapel service to review the past 25 years of the seminary and to recount how God has so incredibly blessed it. The message was not only a cause for celebration in remembering how God had guided us through the years, but it was also a reminder of the serious stewardship responsibility that John has in leading the seminary. Today there are over 1,100 men in ministry around the world who received their training here at The Master's Seminary.

I remember so clearly how John began to talk to me in the summer of 1985 about his desire to start a seminary for men to prepare them for the ministry. I agreed with him that having a seminary focused on expository preaching was greatly needed, but I don't think he needed my encouragement –

he was well on his way in following God's leading to start The Master's Seminary.

What stands out in the history of the seminary is the amazing quality of leadership and godly scholarship God brought here under John's presidency. God led extraordinary men here who were leaders in their own right, yet were humble servants who shared John's passion for Scripture and preaching that focused on verse-by-verse exposition. I have watched these men serve faithfully year after year and they are a credit to the Lord they serve. As I travel in my own ministry, Stewardship Services Foundation, I now meet men in churches all around the world who graduated from The Master's Seminary and speak in glowing terms of the special education they received in this place. Not only were they given the academic training that they needed, but they were impacted by the lives and godliness of the men who taught them. Over and over I hear these pastors say that they owe all that they are to The Master's Seminary.

John's leadership at the seminary has been extraordinary – his love of preaching, his commitment to Scripture both are the driving force that is felt by every man who has ever attended. John gives himself to the students and does all he can to help prepare them for effective ministry. He is the catalyst that provides the burning desire to elevate Scripture above all else. He excites the students with the privilege of preaching the Word, yet reminds them soberly of their duty to be men of integrity and faithfulness in every area of their lives.

My personal friendship with John has placed me in a unique position to see him in the good times and the bad. I have watched him face huge financial challenges with great trust in his Lord, and then watched him rejoice as God miraculously provided. I have watched John when he is relaxed and away from ministry, either traveling, playing golf, or spending time with his family. He is always the same – his mind is always on Scripture and his personal integrity and faithful daily walk with Christ is as real as it gets. I have watched him now for 26 years and never once have been disappointed – his life, his teaching, his faithfulness have impacted my life more than anything else has. What a privilege I have enjoyed!

John MacArthur not only founded The Master's Seminary, but he has also given it life for these past 25 years. It has been my privilege to be along for the ride and I am continually amazed at what God is doing through the work of this ministry. "To God be the glory, great things He has done."