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PASTOR-SCHOLAR STEVE TUELL WRITES BOOKS ON CREATION AND THE PROPHETS

“Particularly pleased to be back in the classroom” and to teaching after his sabbatical last academic year, Hebrew prophets expert the Rev. Dr. Steve Tuell, James A. Kelso Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament, is, at the same time, moving forward with his ambitious research and writing on various Old Testament themes and topics. Having last year completed one article on Habakkuk 3 and another on Ezekiel for two edited volumes, his two larger projects are well underway: a book on Creation for the Westminster John Knox series “Interpretation: Resources for Preaching and Teaching,” and a second book for Fortress Press to be titled “The Prophets: Introducing Israel’s Prophetic Writings.”

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Ordained in the United Methodist Church, Steve is co-authoring the second book with scholar-colleagues Stephen Cook (Virginia Theological Seminary [Episcopal]) and John Strong (Missouri State University). To date, they have submitted three chapters to the publisher. “We’ve been circulating chapters to one another and sharing our notes and recommendations,” he notes about this collaborative volume. “In addition to expansions to the work of Drs. Cook and Strong, I have completed Jonah [Steve’s submitted chapter], Nahum, and Haggai, am working on Daniel, have outlined Isaiah, and will write expansions and additional sections for our introductory chapter,” Steve notes. They anticipate the book’s publication sometime next year.

But wait . . . there’s more! Actually, Steve had planned his primary sabbatical project to consist in completing his book on Creation—a topic on which he’s been teaching for a long time. That project “hit a snag,” Steve says, “when I finally realized, to my frustration and dismay, that the approved outline was more topical than exegetical.” He explains: “I’m at my core a bottom-up thinker—a text-based scholar who looks at the Hebrew prophets from the standpoint of their historical context, then figures out how to teach and preach from the material they’ve left us.” So Steve proposed to the publisher a new structure for his book—one that begins with the textual material. He now plans to complete the manuscript by December of 2020.

“First I’m discussing Scripture’s Creation accounts as representing three distinct views of God, the world, and the means of Creation. I begin with the texts describing God as Warrior and Creation as primordial conflict, while relating these ideas back to their ancient Near Eastern counterparts and forward to their transformation in apocalypse. Next I move to texts involving God as King and Creation via command and decree, again discussing ancient Near Eastern counterpart texts. The final exegetical chapter will consider God as Potter and Creation as handicraft and the related traditions that emphasize land and place.” Steve will follow up these chapters with “topical chapters that consider the implications of these three biblical traditions for the ways we do theology, science, and ethics.”

In addition to pursuing his own publication projects, Steve serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* and regularly preaches and teaches throughout greater Pittsburgh in churches and other venues, including the Allegheny County Jail. A pastor-scholar indeed.

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