Hope in the Ruins

Mining the Pastoral Epistles—with spiritual insights on the struggle for Christian faithfulness in cultural upheaval from literary lights such as John Donne, Walker Percy, and Flannery O’Connor, as well as theological and philosophical insights of Miroslav Volf, Charles Taylor, and Jürgen Habermas—Dr. Michael A. Milton offers an analysis of our times and simultaneously helps us to enter the first-century world of Timothy in Ephesus, revealing the eternal truths from St. Paul’s letters, and applying them to our lives as believers in the "Secular Age" today. Each session will include original folk music drawn from Dr. Milton’s recordings. With warm, pastoral, Biblical teaching aimed the head and the heart, accompanied by his Martin D-35 guitar and harmonica supporting reflective lyrics set in folk genre, Milton seeks to explore the spiritual contours of living the Christian life in the midst of a broken humanity.
Session I: Renewed through Sacred Encounter

The setting of first-century Ephesus is explored, as we think through the Secular Age we are now in. Where was Timothy’s hope? And ours? We will see how Paul guides Timothy in taking on the urgent priorities at the Church at Ephesus and in doing so learn how God uses His work in our lives as powerful agents of hope in the world. We will also consider the ideas of theologians and philosophers about where we are as a culture, and where we may be headed. Yet, we will end with the transcendent question that demands an answer of every man in every age.

Session II: Renewed Through Sacred Calling

The hope for transformation for Timothy lay in a mystery unveiled by his mentor, Paul. Each man who would locate his way out of the ruins of a fallen world or a troubled personal life must discover—or re-discover—the surprising priority that St. Paul prescribes.
Session III: Renewed through the Sacred Text
The Pastoral Epistles are a famous destination for occasions such as the ordination of ministers. But what is their message to each of us in our daily walk with the Lord? And what insights are here to sustain the Church in the midst of a collapsing culture and quite possibly in the vortex of a perplexing personal storm?

Session IV: Renewed through the Sacred Mission
Timothy’s troubles at Ephesus were the hidden opportunities for God to advance his mission in the world. Could it be that the days in which we live will be remembered by future generations as exciting opportunities for the kingdom of God? What will be your legacy and mine in our time?
Michael A. Milton, MDiv, MPA, PhD

Michael Anthony Milton is a descendant of one of the settler families from North Carolina. Born in New Orleans to a WWII Naval officer and career seaman, he was orphaned at nine months of age. He was reared by his “Aunt Eva.” His story of prodigal pain and a sacred encounter with the God of grace is told in the Christian Focus book, *What God Starts, God Completes: Help and Hope for Hurting People*. Michael Milton served as a top secret linguist in the Cold War and was a manager for two Fortune 500 companies after his naval service. He completed undergraduate studies in Kansas at MidAmerica Nazarene University (BA). An ordained Presbyterian (PCA) minister Dr. Milton trained for the ministry at Knox Theological Seminary (MDiv), completing his internship under Dr. D. James Kennedy. He earned a PhD (historical theology) from the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David in Lampeter, Wales, UK. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (MPA) in the School of Government. The author of twenty-five books, his latest work is a textbook on pastoral theology, awaiting publication (Christian Focus, 2017). Dr. Milton has composed and recorded five albums of music, including collaborations with fellow Christian artists such as Michael Card and Buddy Greene. Dr. Milton’s record of service to the Church includes founding two congregations (Kansas and Georgia; and a Christian preparatory academy, Overland Park, KS), before assuming the senior pastorate of the historic First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga. He served as President and Chancellor of RTS from 2007-2014. He has served on numerous boards, including the Board of Directors of the PCA. Dr. Milton has been a U.S. Army Chaplain since 1992. He presently serves in his final assignment before retirement, Command Chaplain, U.S. Military Intelligence reserve command, DC. He was elected to the James H. Ragsdale Chair of Missions at Erskine Seminary in 2015. He is the president of Faith for Living, a NC nonprofit, and the D. James Kennedy Institute. He teaches several disciplines in theology, as well as economics, public service, and public policy at several colleges and seminaries. Dr. Milton is a board certified pastoral counselor and chaplain. He is a speaker through ISI Speakers Bureau. Dr. and Mrs. (Mae) Milton have eight adult children, "scattered and settled" from New Jersey to Florida to Louisiana. Their son, the youngest of the family, John Michael, attends UNC Chapel Hill. Mike and Mae are avid rosarians and tend Mr. Lincoln, Barbara Bush, Queen Elizabeth II, Billy Graham, and several other colorful "celebrities” at “Rosewood,” their home in Matthews. Michael Milton's life verse is Philippians 1:6.

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