

Princeton Seminary PhD Student Named Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellow

Dongho Han selected for the nation's largest, most prestigious award for PhD candidates in the humanities and social sciences

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*Dr. Robert C. Dykstra,
Charlotte W. Newcombe
Professor of Pastoral Theology*

[Seminary](#) PhD student Dongho Han was named a 2026 Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellow. He is one of just 20 PhD candidates selected for the fellowship, the nation's largest and most prestigious award for PhD candidates in the humanities and social sciences who are addressing questions of religion, ethics, morals, or values.

Started in 1981, the Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship has funded over 1,400 Fellows. The \$31,000 award supports PhD students during their final year of writing.

"I am deeply grateful to the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation for this fellowship," said Han. "It is a

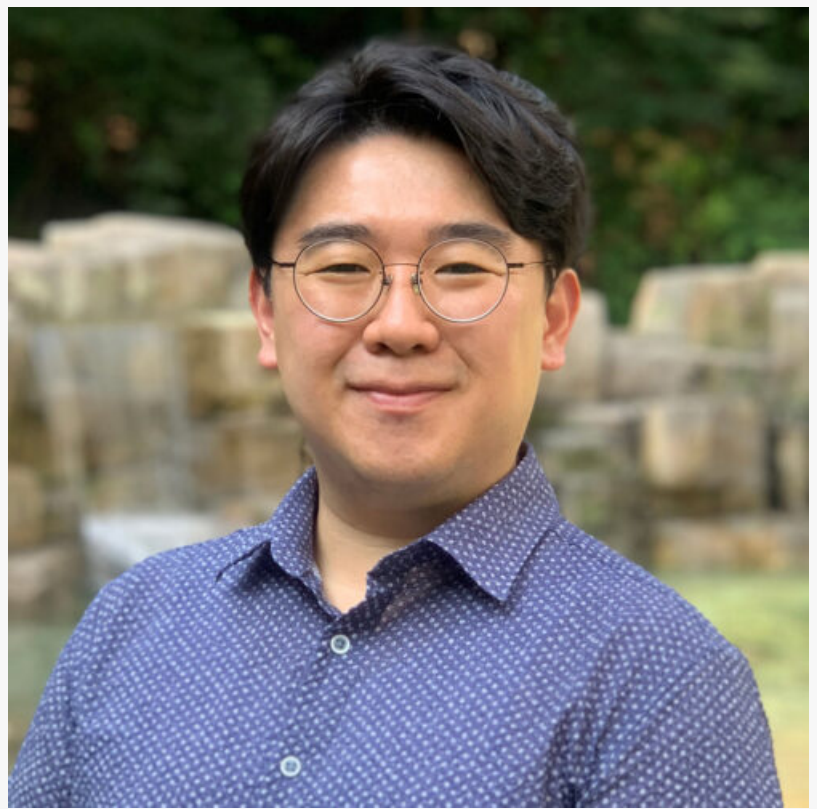
meaningful affirmation that my scholarship matters in its significance and relevance. Just as importantly, this fellowship encourages me to pursue my vocation as a pastoral theologian and theological educator whose work serves both the academy and communities."

Han is only the fourth Princeton Seminary student to be named a Newcombe Fellow. The award is particularly meaningful for the Seminary community as philanthropist Charlotte W. Newcombe was a fervent supporter of higher education and Princeton Theological Seminary. Newcombe donated generously to the Seminary in her lifetime, and through her estate. Serendipitously, Han's dissertation chair, Dr. Robert C. Dykstra, MDiv '82, PhD '90, is the current Charlotte W. Newcombe Professor of Pastoral Theology.

"Dongho Han is not only a person of enormously gifted intellect and penetrating decency of heart but an ideal representative of the Newcombe Fellowship program's concern for spiritual and ethical scholarship and life," said Dykstra. "Throughout his time with us here, I have been impressed by the expansive workings of an agile mind as he reads across disciplines of theology,

ethics, psychoanalysis, gender studies, and pastoral theology. I feel honored to have become a part of his own educational journey."

"The faculty here at Princeton Seminary are delighted to celebrate this remarkable accomplishment," said Director of PhD Studies Dr. Eric D. Barreto, MDiv '04, Frederick and Margaret L. Weyerhaeuser Associate Professor of New Testament. "This award recognizes Dongho Han's current work as well as his rich future potential to contribute significantly in the academy and ecclesial contexts alike. Moreover, the Newcombe Fellowship underscores the strengths of the doctoral program at Princeton Seminary, where we strive to bridge the best of scholarship and the thriving of the church, and academic rigor alongside innovative insight."



PhD student Dongho Han, 2026 Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellow.

[Princeton Seminary's PhD program](#) admits only 10 students each year to pursue rigorous scholarship and groundbreaking research alongside interdisciplinary faculty within the Seminary and at Princeton University. A testament to the program's transformative and enduring impact on its students and the field of theological education, Princeton Seminary has the highest number of PhD graduates serving on faculties at ATS (Association of Theological Schools) institutions.

Han's dissertation, "The Transgressive Self: A Pastoral Theological Path to Healthy Narcissism among Young Korean Men," delves into his longstanding scholarly interests and pastoral concerns for justice and care for marginalized South Korean young people. Han seeks to understand why a portion of young Korean men are turning toward performative masculine tropes and expressions of anti-feminist bias in reaction to economic insecurity and feelings of shame and isolation. Through his research, he is developing a constructive, pastoral and theological model to help them acknowledge their pain and guide them toward self-compassion and increased empathy for others.

"As a minister and scholar, I have long sought to bring pastoral theology into dialogue with people's lived experiences of alienation, shame, and moral struggle," said Han. "In doing so, my doctoral work has emerged from this commitment as I seek to understand how pastoral

theology and moral imagination can contribute to healing within fractured realities of the self and of communities.”

Originally from Seoul, South Korea, Han is an ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea and currently serves as a pastoral affiliate for the Princeton Korean Presbyterian Church (PCUSA). Prior to pursuing his PhD at Princeton Seminary, Han earned his bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Korea University, his MDiv from The Graduate School of Theology at Hanshin University, and his MTS and ThM degrees from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He has published and presented more than a dozen works, including multiple presentations for the American Academy of Religion and publications for the international, peer-reviewed journal Pastoral Psychology.

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Founded in 1812, Princeton Theological Seminary equips women and men for faithful, compassionate, and competent leadership in ministry, academia, and public life — preparing them to serve Christ with integrity, scholarship and joy.

Linda Romano

Princeton Theological Seminary

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