Obituary for George Walter Harper Jr.  
(May 25, 1952–March 16, 2023)


As a child, George had been brought to church services, generally three times a week, by his mother, a devout member of the Churches of Christ. During his early years at MIT, a spiritual crisis led him to embrace an understanding of faith that put its stress on the idea of trusting commitment rather than legalistic obedience. Having made a commitment to Christ, he found his faith strengthened and his life transformed through his involvement in the college-age and young adult ministries of Park Street Church, in Boston. It was at Park Street that he met the love of his life, Anne Catherine Oakley. He and Anne were married on March 18, 1978.

Discerning a call to the ordained ministry, in 1979 George began work on his M.Div. at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, in South Hamilton, Mass. In 1983 he graduated magna cum laude and began work on his Ph.D. in Religious Studies at Boston University. In June 1986 he was ordained a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), and for 19 years he was a member of the PC (USA)'s Boston Presbytery, serving for six years on its New Church Development Subcommittee. He transferred to Mission Presbytery in South Texas in 2005, then in 2021 to Grace Presbytery in Metro Dallas.

In 1993 George and Anne joined Action International Ministries, a nondenominational faith mission, beginning their ministry as missionary academics the following year. George's first faculty appointment was at Alliance Biblical Seminary, in Manila, Philippines, where from 1994 to 2001 he was Assistant, then Associate, Professor of Christian History and Thought. From 2001 to 2005 he was Professor of Christian History and Thought with the Asia Graduate School of Theology-Philippines, a consortium of evangelical seminaries.
affiliated with the Asia Theological Association. He helped to establish and lead the AGST's Th.M./Ph.D. program in Theological Studies.

From 2005 to 2010 George and Anne served in Eastern Europe. He was Professor of Christian History and Theology at the Evangelical Theological Seminary, in Osijek, Croatia, again helping to establish and lead ETS's Ph.D. program in Theological Studies. In 2010 he and Anne returned to the Philippines, where he served as Program Director of the AGST’s Th.M./Ph.D. programs in Theological Studies and Church History. In 2011 he was appointed editor of the Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology, a publication of the Asia Theological Association. He also took a position on the faculty of the Biblical Seminary of the Philippines. In 2020 he resigned his position as Program Director, but he continued in his other positions until his death.


George is survived by his wife, Anne C. Harper; their daughters, Ruth Harper, of Mesquite, Tex., and Margaret Harper, of Dallas, Tex.; their son-in-law, Michael Gratkowski, of Dallas, Tex.; and his brothers, Ronald (Ron) Harper, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Robert Harper, of Manchester, Tenn. His funeral and the internment of his ashes was held on Friday 31 March 2023 at St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, 8011 Douglas Ave., Dallas, Tex.

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