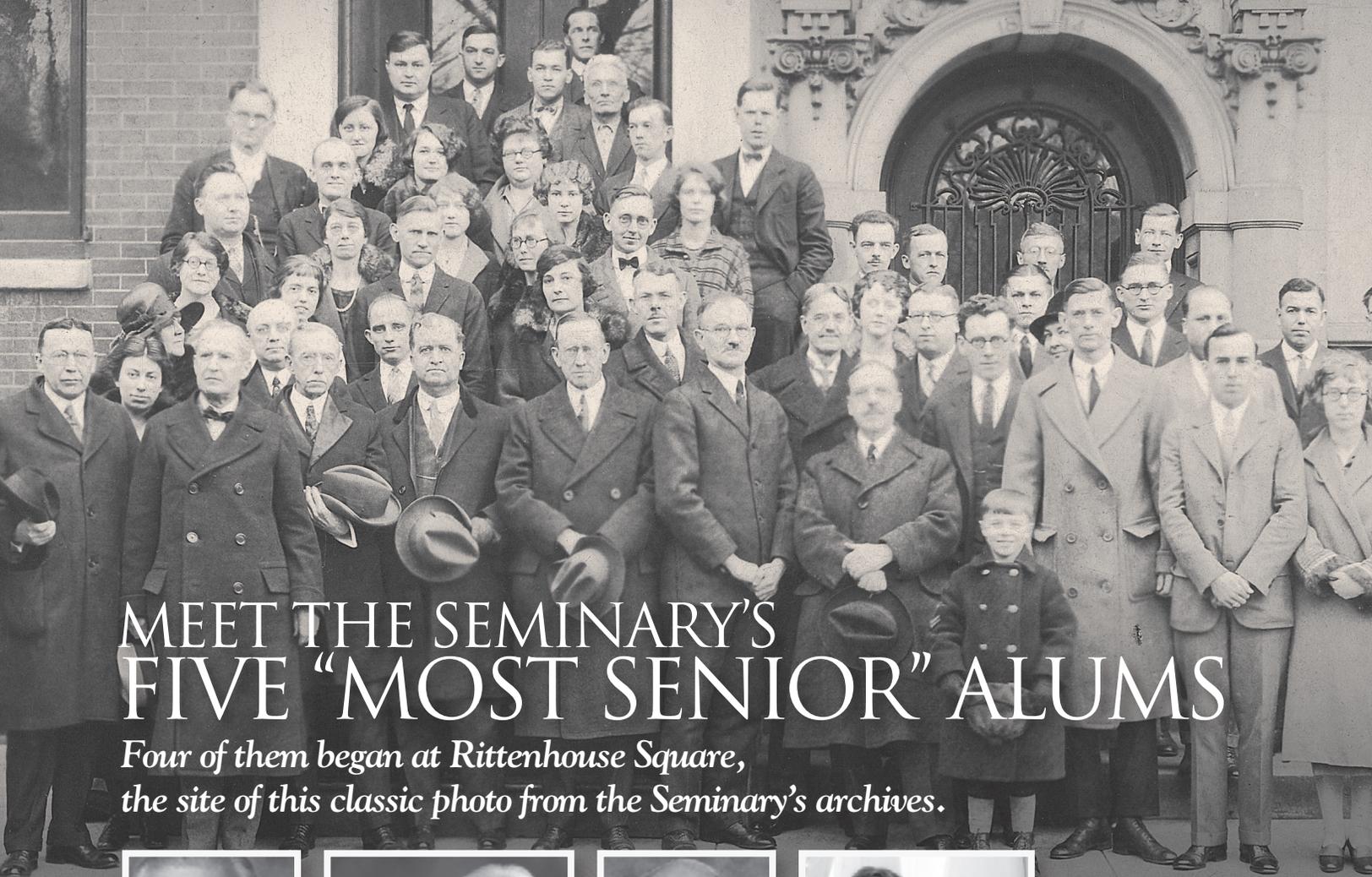


# *in* Ministry

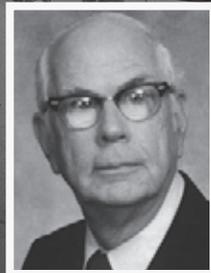
Spring 2011

The Magazine of PALMER Theological Seminary



## MEET THE SEMINARY'S FIVE "MOST SENIOR" ALUMS

*Four of them began at Rittenhouse Square,  
the site of this classic photo from the Seminary's archives.*





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from Dallas.

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## inMinistry

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# Will the World End on May 21?

I have worked on many issues of *inMinistry* over the years, but none more interesting than this one. It was a privilege and a joy to have the opportunity to speak with some of our oldest alums (pp. 4-6), men who attended the Seminary when it was still at its original location on Rittenhouse Square.

This issue also features a student (p. 14), who, as far as anyone around here can tell or recall, holds the record for commuting (each week!) from the longest distance: Dallas. Not Dallas, Pennsylvania, but Dallas, Texas.

Then there is the delightful story of Victoria (Vica) Shaffer and Kyle Jones, who met at a new student orientation a couple of years ago. Vica will be graduating with an MTS degree on Saturday morning, May 21, then getting married to Kyle later that same day. I'm told by longtime Seminary employee Ruth McFarland that this is not a first in the Seminary's history, but I'd venture to say it is the first time in our history that someone will graduate and get married on the same date that some Christians—as has been widely reported—are predicting the end of the world.

This brings me to the main point of this brief reflection. In recent decades, seminaries, including ours, have been careful to pay attention to students' spiritual and emotional growth, not just their intellectual development. While affirming the validity of this trend, we should also be clear that the acquisition of knowledge remains a critical component of the seminary experience. That's why we call it "theological education."

The church needs pastors who, instead of being tossed about by every wind of doctrine, will interpret the Bible responsibly, in ways that reflect their knowledge of biblical languages, Old and New Testament culture, theology, church history, and more. Pastors are able to do this because of what they learn at seminary.

I'm proud to say that I'm not aware of any PTS student who is so smart and so clued in with God that they are claiming the world will end on May 21, 2011. As for me, I'm overwhelmingly confident that this May 21 the weather will be wonderful, it will be a great day for new PTS graduates, a very special day for Vica and Kyle, and nothing more. If I'm wrong, we'll run a correction in the Fall issue. Or maybe not.

*Randall L. Frame*



In February, the Seminary received word that the University Senate of the United Methodist Church is keeping Palmer on its list of approved non-United Methodist schools of theology. We are grateful for the many, many students and alums who contacted the University Senate on Palmer's behalf. (Some excerpts appear below.) Feel free to follow up with e-mails of thanks to the University Senate: [jknox@gbhem](mailto:jknox@gbhem).

I am excited at what the Lord is doing here at Palmer. We are being prepared, as a united force for our Lord, to do God's work in a holistic way: announcing God's good news of love and salvation, accompanied by the call into action of removing all social evil, while "doing all the good that we can, by all the means we can."

Palmer is a microcosm of what the Church is meant to be. At Palmer, I have gained a better appreciation and understanding of Methodism. I cherish our rich history and our polity as it has been presented by our Methodist professors, who have a contagious enthusiasm for relaying to us what it means to be a United Methodist. Because of that enthusiasm, I intend to pursue further study in Methodist Church History when I finish at Palmer. In addition, because of the Methodist presence on campus, the encouragement by Methodist students, and the availability of professors, I know of three students formerly of other denominations who have started the process of becoming pastors in the United Methodist Church.

**Fred Marz (current student)**

At Palmer I took Methodist History from Dr. Ben Hartley and Methodist Doctrine and Polity from Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash. I can attest that getting to know students and teachers of other Christian traditions gave me an indispensable depth of understanding and experience. Palmer has a community of learners that looks like the whole kingdom of God. The age, race, gender, and theological diversity at the school, among teachers as well as students, provides a strong base for effectively learning both academic and contextual theology.

**Amy Durfee West (former student)**

I became aware of my strong Wesleyan beliefs only after I started at Palmer... It was the diversity of the discussions that

taught me that truly I do hear the other perspectives and choose to adopt Wesleyan theology. If I were only presented with Wesleyan theology, I question whether I'd be equipped adequately to defend it.

Wesley valued ecumenical pursuits. The nature of United Methodists is to be ecumenical. Especially in my role as a deacon, this aspect of Wesleyan heritage is hugely critical. I established relationships and networks at Palmer with United Methodists as well as with leaders in other denominations that will make my ministry within the UMC much more powerful and effective.

**Kymerly Kearns Hockman ('10), Ph.D.**

I chose Palmer Theological Seminary because of my conversations with current United Methodist ministers. Like them, I have found my education at Palmer to be challenging, engaging, and rewarding. I have found the staff and administration at Palmer to be encouraging and supportive of the works of the United Methodist Church. Palmer Theological Seminary remains a stronghold for United Methodist education and development.

**Dr. Vicki L. Scheetz, ACSW, Ph.D. (current student)**

As Conference Candidacy Registrar, I have found that the theological and practical knowledge base of candidates who graduated from Palmer exceeds that of graduates from other seminaries, including United Methodist seminaries. Palmer graduates also possess a better grasp of evangelism than do students of other institutions.

The education I received at this seminary has made me a better United Methodist, as well as a competent pastor, chaplain, and author. When God first called me into ministry, Palmer was my only seminary option due to its proximity

and course schedule. During the eight and a half years I worked on my MDiv, I also raised three children and served as pastor to two UM churches. I ask you to reconsider your decision so that future candidates for ministry within my conference will have the same option.

**Rev. Juliann Henry ('02)**

GNJAC CANDIDACY REGISTRAR;  
ACTING SUPERVISOR OF CHAPLAINCY SERVICES,  
ANCORA PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL;  
PASTOR, LEESBURG UMC; PASTOR, DELMONT UMC;  
AUTHOR: *The Little Shepherd Girl: A Christmas Story*

As a former District Superintendent advised me when I was looking for a seminary, he liked pastors from EBTS (Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary) because they were very "appointable"....

During my years at EBTS/Palmer, a large number of students were UM, and the seminary did all in its power to accommodate us. UM students had "Wesley Chapel," and the school even dedicated a room known as the "Wesley Room." Training in United Methodist History, Polity, and Doctrine was outstanding to the point where I was motivated to get involved in Archives and History on the Conference and Jurisdictional level, twice serving as chair of the Commission on Archives and History for the SNJ & GNJ Annual Conferences.

I always found the connection of EBTS/Palmer to the American Baptist Churches to be mostly compatible with United Methodism. Points of difference were clearly explained and fairly treated. Areas of agreement (which were most areas) were celebrated in a spirit of Christian unity and common mission to present "the whole Gospel for the whole world through whole persons."

**Walter Jesuncosky III (MDiv '80, DMin '90)**

PASTOR, AUDUBON (NEW JERSEY)  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# PALMER SEMINARY'S FIVE "MOST SENIOR" ALUMS

*InMinistry was able to interview directly three of its five "most senior" alums, four of whom began their studies at the Seminary's original location on Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia. Information on Gus Gabelman was provided by his daughter, Beth Thompson. Cortland R. Bryant was recently hospitalized for hip surgery, so his son Scott graciously provided information for this article.*



*This photo is a portrait of Dr. Gabelman, most likely created at his retirement in 1978.*



*Gus Gabelman and his wife Emma, who passed away last year. This photo was taken in 2000.*

## GUSTAVE GABELMAN

Gustave A. (Gus) Gabelman is the Seminary's most senior alum; he'll turn 98 in June. Dr. Gabelman earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1939, a Master of Theology in 1942, and a Doctor of Theology in 1946.

In his early years he served as pastor of the Brandywine Baptist Church and then the Phoenixville Baptist Church. He also served his denomination (American Baptist Churches) from 1945 to 1954 in a variety of positions, including Director of the World Mission Crusade and Executive Secretary of the Pennsylvania Baptist Convention.

In 1954, Dr. Gabelman accepted a call to become the pastor at the First Baptist Church of Santa Barbara, California. He served there until 1960, when he accepted the invitation to return to his seminary alma mater. Gus served as Director of Placement and, later, Field Education at Eastern/Palmer from 1960 till his retirement in 1978.

After retiring, he served a couple of Pennsylvania churches as interim pastor. In 1982, he and his wife, Lois, moved to the Penney Retirement Community in

Florida, joining many of their friends. Dr. Gabelman remained active, serving as secretary of the Association of Penney Retirement Community Residents. He took his turn with other ministers to bring the Sunday morning sermon at the community's church, which he also served for a time as moderator. He went on to serve the Penney Retirement Community as a member of the Executive Committee of the Residents' Association and as chaplain of a minimum care facility.

Lois passed away in 1986; Gus remarried the following year. He and his second wife, Emma, returned to the Seminary in 1989 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his (first) graduation. In the 1990s he continued to serve the Penney Retirement Community as he was able, always cherishing the fellowship there. Dr. Gabelman wrote in his autobiography that if he had his life to live over, "I would be very glad and grateful to go the same way, to meet the same people, and to witness to our Lord in the same fields of service." He now resides in the Pavilion at Penney Farms.

## DOUGLAS CLARK

Douglas Clark ('43), who turns 94 in August, has lived in Florida for the past 12 years with his wife, Betty. (His first wife, Ruth (MRE, '44) passed away in 1987.) Since moving to Florida from Arizona, Douglas has preached in several area Baptist churches. Today, his primary ministry is writing a column for his church paper, "The Binding Tie."

Rev. Clark's first pastorate was in West Virginia, where he served seven churches simultaneously. He also spoke monthly at a state school for the deaf and at another school for the blind. He went on to pastorates in Virginia, New York, and Illinois. Then, he says, "I felt led to combine higher education and a preaching ministry, which required further education."

After two years of study at the University of Illinois, he accepted a position at Wayland Baptist College (now University) in Plainview, Texas. During his seven years in Texas he had opportunities to serve as interim pastor at several churches and to preach in many different pulpits: "It was just what I hoped it would be." Then it was on to Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma, where he and Ruth enjoyed 16 fruitful years.

Retirement at age 65 did not slow the Clarks down. If anything, they speeded up by serving overseas for several years in English language churches under the auspices of the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board. They served on every continent except Antarctica. Among the locations where they ministered were Guam, Venezuela, Libya, Morocco, Belize, the Panama Canal zone, Spain, Singapore, and Australia.



*Douglas Clark and his wife, Betty.*

Says Rev. Clark, "As I look back, I realize that none of this would have been possible were it not for the training I received at Eastern Seminary. In those years I established lifelong friendships and was exposed to the finest of students. The faculty were open-minded and challenging. Professors such as Drs. (William) Adams, (James) Maxwell, (Robert) Torbet, (Carl) Morgan, (Jasper) Masee, (Cubby) Rutenber, and (W. Everett) Griffiths, as well as President Gordon Palmer, influenced my life in significant ways."

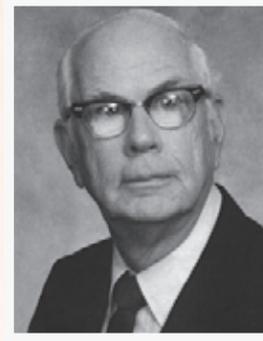
## HERBERT BROWNLEE

Herbert Brownlee, who turned 94 in March, began in pastoral ministry (at Mill Creek Baptist Church in Huntington, PA) as a college student at Juniata College. He recalls, "It paid a salary of \$3 per week plus Sunday dinner in one of the homes, particularly where there was a marriageable daughter."

While still in college, he was called to Lockport Baptist in Lewistown, PA, which he served during his final year of college and throughout his time at seminary. "I traveled back and forth every week on my thumb," Rev. Brownlee recalls, "325 miles round trip. My records tell me I thumbed over 48,000 miles traveling to serve that church. My salary was \$7 a week."

On one occasion, hitchhiking in the pouring rain, Herbert got picked up by a pastor who was on his way back to Altoona. Among the passengers in the car was an older woman whom Herbert had never met. This woman, however, would eventually become his mother-in-law, as several months later he met the woman's daughter, Peg, at a Baptist camp. Pastor Brownlee and Peg shared 25 years of marriage before she passed away. Two years later, he re-married. Herbert and Trevy Brownlee have been together now for more than 40 years.

After Lockport Baptist, Herbert moved on to a church in Smithfield, PA. He was the founding pastor at Baptist churches in Chambersburg and Gettysburg and would serve three more Baptist churches in Pennsylvania (including Overbrook, near



*Herbert Brownlee*

Philadelphia) before retiring (for the first time) in 1981 and moving to Florida.

After "retiring," he spent 15 years in the Minister-at-Large program, during which time he served a total of 9 churches as interim pastor before retiring for the second time. But the Mikesville Presbyterian Church in Lake City, Florida needed a "temporary" pastor, and, though well into his 80s, Herbert accepted the challenge. This temporary assignment lasted for 10 years. Pastor Brownlee retired for the third time in February of 2010. During his tenure at Mikesville, the church experienced a 30 percent increase in membership.

Pastor Brownlee still rides his bicycle and builds birdhouses as a hobby. "Trevy and I are enjoying our deeper involvement at our home church, First Baptist of Gainesville," he says, "and, as always, await God's leading in our lives. My life has been good, and God has been good, and I thank him."



*Herbert's brother Sherwood drew this illustration for Herbert on the occasion of his 90th birthday.*

## OMAR BARTH

It would be hard to overestimate the contribution that Eastern/Palmer Seminary made to the life of and ministry of Omar Barth ('41), who will turn 95 in September. "I had great appreciation for all the professors I had at the Seminary," he says, "but three stand out."

Each of the three who stood out had a three-word phrase that got right to the heart of what they believed was most important. For homiletics professor Jasper C. Masee, it was "Preach the Word." For New Testament professor William W. Adams, it was "Live the Life." And for Philosophy of Religion professor David Lee Jamison, it was "Love the People."

"I don't think I could count the number of times I used those three phrases at installation and ordination services over the years," says Pastor Barth, who can still vividly recall the day Professor Adams used an entire class to tell a powerful true story of forgiveness. It brought Omar to tears some 70 years ago and still does so when he tells it today.

As a seminary student, Omar coordinated an "idea clinic," at which dozens of students came together after lunch in the Seminary veranda to share ideas and offer practical advice on such topics as weddings, funerals, and dedication services.

After seminary, Pastor Barth went on to serve as pastor of three churches over a long ministry career. While he was pastor at Calvary Baptist in Salem, Oregon, the church was featured in the ABC's flagship publication as a result of accepting his challenge to donate a full 50 percent of its income to missions.



*Omar and wife, Margaret, on her 95th birthday earlier this year.*



*The Barths on their 70th anniversary in 2009.*

Pastor Barth's longest stint (24 years) was at Broadway Baptist in Patterson, New Jersey. During his time there, the church worked with the American Baptist Home Mission Society to construct two new churches, one in and one just outside Managua, Nicaragua.

After "retiring" in 1979, Omar served several churches as an interim pastor. He and his wife, Margaret, also delivered "meals on wheels" to persons in need for some 20 years. The Barths reside in Vero Beach, Florida.

## CORTLAND BRYANT

Cortland R. Bryant ('53), 94 years of age, had quite an amazing story even prior to coming to seminary. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1941. During an operation for a knee injury, the spinal anesthesia went to his brain, causing cardiac arrest and paralysis. He was thought to have died and was sent to the morgue, where, fortunately, the mortician noticed a twitch.

Eventually Cortland came under the care of a neurosurgeon whom Cortland credits for saving his life and, in time, restoring him to health. In 1943 he was one of ten graduates from Officers Candidate School to be given the opportunity to take (military-related) classes at Princeton, where in his down time he sat in on a couple of classes taught by Albert Einstein.

Not only did he survive a bout with malaria while in the Army, but, as a second lieutenant, on two occasions he was one of only a handful of men (in a company of over 200) to survive encounters with enemy soldiers in the South Pacific. During one bombing raid he lost all of the hearing in his left ear and much of it in his right ear.

In 1947, Cortland was granted medical leave from the service, after which he came to Eastern first to earn an undergraduate degree and then a seminary degree (in 1953). The seeds for future ministry had been planted much earlier. His boyhood pastor was Harold Jensen, who went on to earn national recognition as a voice for Japanese Americans unjustly interred during World War II. In 1937, young Cortland visited the Baptist Temple in Boston and was moved by the pastor's call for young persons not only to give their lives to Christ but to go into ministry. The preacher was C. Gordon Brownville, a 1930 alumnus of Eastern Baptist Seminary.

After graduating from seminary, Pastor Bryant went on to serve American Baptist Churches in Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut. Among the young men he mentored was Norman Evens, who went on to help found The Race Track Chaplaincy of America. Pastor Bryant's last church was in Pawling, New York, not far from Norman Vincent Peale's Foundation for Christian Living, where Pastor Bryant had the opportunity to speak several times.

After retiring in 1980, Cortland remained active with the Rotary Club and filling numerous pulpits. After tornadoes hit Northwestern Pennsylvania in 1985, he worked with then-Congressman Tom Ridge (who went on to be governor of Pennsylvania) on legislation designed to require insurance companies to meet their obligations to tornado victims.

Cortland met his wife, Peggy, while he was studying at the Seminary. They married in 1948, and between 1952 and 1963 had five children. The middle names of the Bryants' three sons were chosen very carefully: "Gordon" for Pastor C. Gordon Brownville, who planted the seeds of ministry; "Haynes" for Walter Haynes, the neurosurgeon who saved Cortland's life; and "Norman," for Norman W. Paullin, a greatly revered preacher who taught at the Seminary from 1952 till 1968.

# FodderforPastors



**Note:** The first excerpt is from the book *Just Courage* (IVP, 2008), by Gary A. Haugen, president and CEO of the human rights organization International Justice Mission (IJM). The author is addressing the difficulty parents sometimes have in responding to their sons' and daughters' commitment to go to the world's tough places in pursuit of IJM's mission to combat human trafficking.

## SAFE OR BRAVE?

*"For twenty-plus years these parents have been plowing the faith and love of Jesus into their children. And then shockingly, their sons and daughters turn around and start acting as if it's all actually true.*

*I believe there comes a time when our children rightly ask, 'Mom and dad, why are you giving me all this stuff?' After we have poured into our children all the good food and shelter and clothing, after we have provided them with great education, discipline, structure and love, after we have worked so hard to provide every good thing, they turn to us and ask, 'Why have you given all this to me?'*

*And the honest answer from me is, 'So you'll be safe.'*

*And my kid looks up at me and says, 'Really? That's it? You want me to be safe? Your grand ambition for me is that nothing bad happens?'*

*And I think something inside them dies. They either go away to perish in safety, or they go away looking for adventure in the wrong places. Jesus, on the other hand, affirms their sense of adventure and their yearning for larger glory. In fact, he is encouraging us to affirm this calling in our children and to raise them up to be brave, to be loving and to be significant."*

## ON FASTING

*"In a more tangible, visceral way than any other spiritual discipline, fasting reveals our excessive attachments and assumptions that lie behind them. Food is necessary to life, but we have made it more necessary than God. How often have we neglected to remember God's presence when we would never consider neglecting to eat! Fasting brings us face to face with how we put the material world ahead of its spiritual Source."*

— From *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*  
by Marjorie Thompson

## WHY BELIEFS MATTER

*"Beliefs shape our self-image and our view of our own worth and destiny. It matters whether we consider ourselves worthless creatures or children of God, unredeemed sinners or forgiven disciples, hopeless victims of sin and death or citizens of an eternal kingdom. There is a vast difference in believing that our identity and worth are determined by our appearance, knowledge, and productivity and believing that we have infinite worth and dignity as sons and daughters of God.*

*Beliefs affect our relationships with others. It matters whether we see another person as an enemy or as a brother or sister; as inferior or as an equal; as a means to our ends or as a person for whom Christ died; as a criminal deserving of retribution or as a fellow sinner in need of forgiveness and restoration; as an object of our gratification or as a partner in a covenant."*

— From *Living Our Beliefs: The United Methodist Way* by Kenneth L. Carder

## COVENANT PRAYER

*I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt,  
rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside  
for thee, exalted for thee  
or brought low by thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things,  
let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have  
made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen*

— From "A Covenant Prayer in the  
Wesleyan Tradition" in  
The United Methodist Hymnal

# FROM ORDINARY TO SACRED SPACE

## REFLECTIONS ON LUKE 5:1-11

BY DIANE CHEN

On October 22, 2010, the Immanuel Chapel of Virginia Theological Seminary caught fire. Within 40 minutes, the 129-year-old structure was declared a total loss. My friend, John, who teaches at VTS, shared how much the community mourned the loss of their beloved chapel: “We are Episcopalians. We have chapel service every day. I preached from that pulpit. My daughter played that organ.”

Gone is the altar rail, made from wood brought from Liberia, where John Payne, who graduated in 1836, served as the first bishop. Gone are the Tiffany windows depicting Paul testifying in front of King Agrippa, as recorded in Acts. Gone also is the window inscribed with the charge, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.”

This tragedy got me thinking about sacred spaces. To me, sacred spaces represent the presence of God. I think of the Israelites’ tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in Jerusalem with the Holy of Holies at its center. Even though God is not confined to structures made with human hands, having a designated sacred space helps us to be in tune with the transcendent. Whether it’s a small country church or one of those grand cathedrals in Europe, places of worship evoke in me a palpable sense of something spiritual: I speak softer, I walk slower, I

think God thoughts more, I feel more reverent all around.

Thus I affirm the importance of physical sacred spaces for God. David’s desire to build a house for God was noble. We are grateful for the sanctuaries in which we worship every Sunday. Some of us have spots at home—perhaps a room or a chair—where we read, pray, and meet with God. I believe that God honors us with his presence when we make room for him.

Instead of sacred spaces we build for God, however, what about sacred spaces that God marks out for himself by “invading”—in a good way—our ordinary settings and transforming them? What about God taking the initiative to turn our ordinary, vanilla, banal, generic, day-to-day space into a sacred space where he then reveals himself to us?

In Luke 5:1-11, Jesus had just come onto the public scene. Peter, James, and John were probably middle-class fishermen. They owned boats and worked as partners. They would let down a big net with weights at the bottom, and spread it out between two boats. By moving the boats they could round up the fish. This method of fishing was used at night, because during the day the fish would see the nets and swim away.

The night before, Peter had caught nothing, so in the morning he had

nothing to sell at the marketplace. He and his crew were just hanging out washing their nets when Jesus came by. Little did Peter know that his misfortune would turn out to be a life-changing experience for him and his friends.

Although Jesus was no stranger to Peter, neither was he yet a close friend. In the previous chapter, Peter was probably at the synagogue where Jesus taught and healed a demon-possessed man, for right after that Jesus went to Peter’s house and healed his mother-in-law of a fever. So far, Peter knew Jesus as a healer and a teacher. That was it. But it was enough for him to let Jesus use his boat as a teaching platform.

We don’t know what Jesus taught or if Peter paid attention. He might have been preoccupied, tired, or worried about striking out the night before. So when Jesus told him to lower the net again into deep water, he sounded less than enthusiastic. At least he didn’t come back with a rejoinder: “Who are you, a carpenter, to tell me, an experienced fisherman, how to fish? You may know how to rebuke demons and fevers, but do you know this lake and how to fish in it the way I do?”

Instead, Peter said, “Master, if you say so, we’ll let down the nets.” Peter the fisherman let the teacher-healer-carpenter make the call. Objectively, going out again

was a dumb and costly idea. He had to send two boats and the crew out to deep water again – in broad daylight, when the fish would see the net and swim the other way! If they caught nothing again, Peter would never hear the end of it.

And then it happened—two boatloads of fish. If I were Peter, my mental arithmetic would immediately hit overdrive: “What? How many fish? There’s more? Oh my, the boat is sinking! Quick! Get a fish count! What’s my share? Do I have time to sell the fish before they go bad? How much will I fetch? Can I ask Jesus to do this once a week? That wouldn’t seem too greedy, would it?”

As though struck by a 2 x 4, Peter fell to his knees instead and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” Jesus was no longer “Master” or “Sir,” but “Lord.” What did Peter see in Jesus? Jesus could teach, but there were good rabbis around. Jesus could heal, but there were prophets who could heal. But this? A seasoned fisherman would appreciate how impossible it was to pull up two boatloads of fish in broad daylight from a spot that he knew full well had no fish not long ago. Something supra-human was at work. The fishing boat had become sacred space, and Peter recognized it.

In trying to imagine Jesus’ otherness, I found this 13th century quote (from the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215) helpful: “Between Creator and creature no similarity can be expressed without including a greater dissimilarity.” Because God is totally Other, words we use to describe him are always inadequate. Any “like” must be qualified with a greater

“unlike.” For instance, we experience love and we say God is a loving God. But God’s love is more unlike than like what we can ever imagine love to be. We experience power and we say God is powerful. But God’s power is more unlike than like what we can ever imagine power to be.

In Jesus Peter caught a glimpse of God’s love and power. He saw more than an effective teacher and healer. Next to Jesus, he saw his glaring unworthiness, and he pulled back in fear. This was a theophany. Peter’s reaction reminds us of Isaiah upon seeing a vision of God’s throne: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” (Isaiah 6:5). Peter saw something numinous in Jesus that had God written all over it. He was drawn to Jesus, yet at the same time his self-awareness caused him to back off in fear. He was caught in a push and pull toward and away from Jesus. Talk about a visceral response to divine holiness!

The Gospel of Luke is full of stories of Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. Isn’t it fitting that the first sinner introduced in the narrative is none other than Jesus’ own disciple, the one who went from catching no fish to catching people?

What a transformation of ordinary space into sacred space. Peter did not create the sacred space. All he had was a boat. He was disappointed at the beginning of the story, but not so disappointed that

he would tell Jesus to go find another boat to borrow. He was uncertain about lowering the net again in broad daylight, but not too proud to let Jesus call the shots. He was blessed with a small fortune of fish, but not so taken by the gift that he failed to recognize the giver.

Jesus entered Peter’s ordinary space and made it sacred. Peter responded, and it changed his life forever.

Is Jesus looking for entry into our ordinary space so that he might transform it into sacred space? Not to scare us, nor to condemn us, but to restore us and make us whole. Jesus came near and entered Peter’s space, yet at the same time he was totally Other. It was not up to Peter to transcend his own unworthiness in the presence of the Holy One. God’s grace covers our inadequacies and bridges the gap between his holiness and our brokenness. In love God moves into our space. Do we recognize his presence and are we willing to listen?



*Diane Chen is Associate Professor of New Testament at Palmer.*

**JESUS ENTERED PETER'S  
ORDINARY SPACE AND  
MADE IT SACRED. PETER  
RESPONDED AND IT CHANGED  
HIS LIFE FOREVER.**



In January a group of PTS students traveled to Chiapas, Mexico to learn about the experiences of indigenous communities there. They spent a week hearing from various groups on topics such as immigration and spirituality. One of the students, Nichelle Frazier, wrote the following reflection.

## [NO TITLE]

**Note:** Just like this title, our walk is incomplete until we fight for justice for all people regardless of their race, nationality, social status, or circumstances.

This experience was profound in that all of us were able to see from the inside out the effects of injustice, poverty, classism, and colonialism. There were moments of rejoicing as well as mourning with members of the Mayan Intercultural Seminary community, as, upon arriving in Mexico, our team received word of the passing of Bishop Samuel Ruiz, an influential leader throughout the indigenous communities.

In spite of their sadness, our hosts welcomed us with open arms. At a memorial service for Bishop Ruiz, we were able to hear about his contributions. We were also able to hear about the struggles of the communities he represented and about their hopes and yearnings for justice. We became acutely aware of the issues plaguing the Chiapas indigenous communities and of what they want most: to be recognized as a people with human rights.



(l to r): Nichelle Frazier, Marilyn Abraham, Heather Biscoe, Stephen Dickson, Nicole Swinson, Justin Thomas, and Mayra Picos-Lee (instructor) traveled to Mexico for a January term class.

Virtually every day people are dying for peace, for justice, and for a chance to be seen as human beings with dignity. Corporations regularly invade these regions to exploit their resources and their people. The militia in this country has shown no mercy to Christians praying for change. We learned, for example, about the 1997 massacre in Actea and the events leading up to it, including the NAFTA agreement signed by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

In response to this policy, the Zapatista National Liberation Army [EZLN] arose to fight for the rights of the indigenous Mexicans. Since EZLN was viewed as a threat to policy makers, action was taken against any group or community trying to fight for justice. As a result, an entire community was attacked during a period of fasting and praying. The para-military killed 49 people: 9 men, 21 women, 15 children,

and 4 unborn babies, who were ripped from their mothers' bellies.

One might ask what Mexico has to do with America. The answer is "Everything!" The NAFTA agreement has led to the privatization of nearly all lands in Mexico, affecting the Chiapas community significantly, as 70% of its population is indigenous. Millions of indigenous groups are being expelled from their communities and victimized by deforestation. Entire communities are unemployed, and those who do have jobs do not make enough to support themselves or their families.

As millions are being displaced and losing jobs, the influx of immigrants into the U.S. will continue. The next time you consider the issue of immigration, I hope that regardless of your position you will be mindful of the conditions America has placed on other countries, and especially on Mexico's indigenous population.

As Christians, we must come together and join our brothers and sisters in their fight for justice. We must stop being spectators in the struggle and use our voices to bring change.

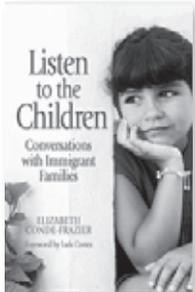
# Chiapas, Mexico

# BOOK NOTES

by Randy Frame

## **Listen to the Children: Conversations with Immigrant Families** (Judson Press, 2011) by Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, Dean of

Eastern University's Esperanza College  
Note: This "two-in-one" resource is published in both English and Spanish (approximately 80 pages per language).

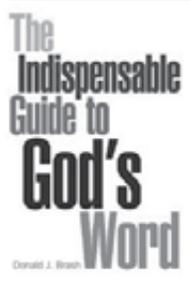


I've sometimes heard golf commentators talk about the tough decisions golfers have to make between going for the green in two and laying up. After all, it could make the difference between making \$175,000 for the weekend or a mere \$90,000. In *Listen to the Children: Conversations with*

*Immigrant Families*, PTS alumna ('82) Elizabeth Conde-Frazier provides a reality check with regard to decisions that are genuinely difficult, even excruciating. The hardest one? Leaving children behind out of love in order to provide a better life for them.

The author is most concerned about the needs of the children of immigrant families—18 million of them according to the Foreword writer, Esperanza President Luis Cortes Jr., if you include the children of families that have attained legal status. With the insight of a counselor and the sensitivity of a mother, the author covers a wide range of topics, including how parents should tell their children they're leaving; challenges associated with reuniting; and helping children cope with living in constant fear that their parents will be discovered and taken away. Her book is addressed, ostensibly, to immigrant families and their closest helpers. But it's really for all who care about the sojourners and aliens (cf. Leviticus 19:33-34) among us.

## **The Indispensable Guide to God's Word** (Pilgrim Press, 2010) by Donald J. Brash, PTS Associate Professor of Historical Theology



Most of us at one time or another have heard some very well-meaning and sincere believer proclaim something along the lines of, "The Bible says it, I believe it, end of debate." Such a person is an ideal candidate to read this book. An installment in the publisher's "Indispensable

Guide" series, *The Indispensable Guide to God's Word* introduces readers—in a logical,

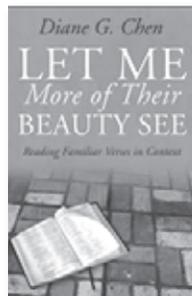
systematic way—to the complexities of Bible interpretation.

Among other things, Dr. Brash provides information and insight into how the Bible came to be. He also describes four competing positions on the inspiration and authority of Scripture. He makes no apologies for advocating what he calls the "Incarnational" view of biblical inspiration, perhaps best summarized by the following quote from the book: "We incarnationalists believe that all Scripture is inspired by God, but all Scripture is also human.... The Word spoke through human beings in a way that respected their humanity, just as the Incarnation respected the human being whom God the Eternally Begotten became."

Based on his experience as a pastor and reflecting his continuing concern for pastors, the author begins each section of the book with a case study illustrating how issues related to hermeneutics surface in ministry settings. In addition, he concludes each chapter with questions for discussion, making this relatively brief (130 pages) resource ideal for group use.

## **Let Me More of Their Beauty See: Reading Familiar Verses in Context** (Smyth & Helwys, 2011)

by Diane Chen, Associate Professor of New Testament at Palmer



In some ways, Diane Chen's book is a perfect complement to Donald Brash's (above), for it puts into practice the sound approach to Bible interpretation that Brash sets forth. In eight eminently readable chapters,

Dr. Chen addresses eight passages of Scripture, providing the historical and literary context needed to bring the meaning of these passages to light.

The book unfolds in accordance with the following chapter titles: Take Up the Cross (Mark 8:34); Worship in Spirit and Truth (John 4:23-24); The Vine and Its Branches (John 15:5); The Conflicted Person and All Things Work Together for Good (Romans 7:14-25; 8:28); Partaking of the Lord's Supper in an Unworthy Manner (1 Corinthians 11:27); Speaking the Truth in Love (Ephesians 4:15); Work Out Your Own Salvation (Philippians 2:12); and Lukewarm Christians and Jesus at the Door (Revelation 3:16, 20).

A fuller understanding of the context of Scripture accomplishes two goals. First, it guards against misinterpretation. Second, it helps old words find new life. As Brian Henderson ('99, DMin '09), Senior Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Denver puts it, "Diane Chen provides readers with insight and perspective that brings texts of Scripture to life in fresh and practical ways. [This book] is a resource for the pulpit and the pew."

Each chapter concludes with discussion questions focusing on application, making *Let Me More of Their Beauty See* ideal in study group or Sunday School settings.

## **The Historical Jesus of the Gospels**

(Eerdmans, 2009) and **Romans**

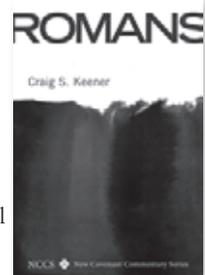
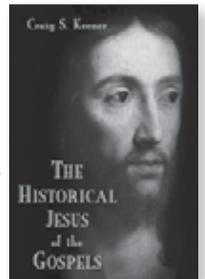
(Cascade Books, 2009)

both by PTS New Testament Professor  
**Craig Keener**

Surprisingly (to some) the high priest Annas appears in the Passion Narrative in John's gospel. This despite the fact that Annas was long "retired" from the priesthood, having held power from 6 to 15 CE. Some scholars have used this little factoid to challenge the historical authenticity of the gospel accounts. Enter Craig Keener. He points

out that, as the father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas, Annas very plausibly continued to exert influence among his family members and (given the lifelong character of the calling) within the high priesthood. This is just one of countless illustrations in *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* of how Dr. Keener—in some 400 highly detailed pages of text and an additional 200 pages of endnotes—makes a strong case for the gospels' historical reliability.

Dr. Keener brings this same attention to thoroughness and accuracy to his commentary *Romans*, an installment in the publisher's New Covenant Commentary series. He explores such topics as shared cultural assumptions and common rhetorical tools used by ancient orators and letter writers, including, of course, Paul. Readers of this commentary will gain a new (or renewed) appreciation for the Christian church's first great theologian's contention that the good news of the gospel is intended for all, Jew and Gentile alike.



# inCommunity

Faculty and alumni/ae news and notes of the Palmer Seminary community.



The annual Mitchell Lecture remains a highlight of the Seminary's year. Pictured here (l to r): Dean Chris Hall; Black Seminarian Fellowship Co-convenor Robin Hinton; Smith School Dean Wallace Charles Smith; Mitchell Lecturer H. Beecher Hicks; Carolyn Mitchell (wife of the late Frank B. Mitchell); and the Mitchells' three sons: Frank, John and Marshall.



Bishop Audrey Bronson spoke at the 2011 Mitchell Luncheon. Shown here (l to r): Black Seminarian Fellowship (BSF) advisor Marsha Brown Woodard; BSF Co-convenor Eileen Evans; Bishop Bronson; and BSF Co-convenor Robin Hinton.



At a family reunion last summer, Alex Houston ('09) Coordinator of Seminary Relations and Recruitment at the Seminary, discovered that he was related to Jim Caldwell, head coach of the National Football League's Indianapolis Colts. The coach invited Alex to do the team chapel on November 6, when the Colts visited the Philadelphia Eagles. Pictured here are Colts team chaplain Pastor Ken Johnson, Coach Caldwell, and Alex.



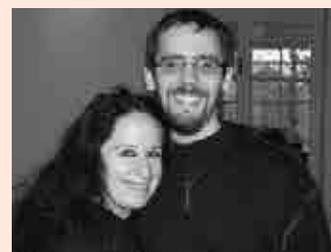
Several members of the international community at Palmer gathered in December to celebrate Christmas together.



(l to r): Agnes Smith Brown, Linda Moore, Christina Pena, Chantell Ellis and Barbara Satchell comprised the second cohort to come through the Seminary's Priscilla Institute and earn B.A. degrees (Organizational Leadership) from Eastern University. They graduated in December 2010 either cum laude or summa cum laude.



Palmer was honored to have longtime Eastern University professor, bestselling author, and Seminary alumnus Tony Campolo ('60) teach in January. He is pictured with students from the class "The Politics and Practices of Red Letter Christianity."



Victoria (Vica) Shaffer and Kyle Jones met at the new student orientation a couple of years ago. Vica will receive her MTS degree on May 21. She and Kyle will get married later in the day so long as the world does not end.

**M. Douglass Willey '59** recently began his fifth stint in interim ministry since his retirement in 2000.

**Robert F. Walk '68** and spouse, Kathy, recently celebrated 45 years of marriage. The two met at Eastern (Baptist College) in 1962. For the past decade, Robert has served as chaplain at Simpson House, a continuing care retirement facility in West Philadelphia. In this capacity, he has supervised many PTS students.

**Rev. Dr. Michael A. King '82** has been named vice president and dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, a graduate division of Eastern Mennonite University located in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

On November 21, 2010, **Richard A. Dent '85 (DMin '98)** and spouse, Beatrice, were honored at a service celebrating their 25 years of ministry at the First African Baptist Church in Sharon Hill, Pa. Former PTS president Wallace Charles Smith, now Dean of the Seminary's Smith School of Christian Ministries, delivered the sermon. Pastor Dent serves on the Seminary's Board of Governors and is also a member of the Alumni Task Force.

**David N. Knipel '96** and **Carla A. Romarate-Knipel (DMin '09)**, in September of last year began serving as co-interim pastors of Central Baptist Church of Woodbury in Woodbury, NJ. David continues to serve as legal counsel for the American Baptist Churches. Carla serves American Baptist International Ministries as Special Assistant for Philippine Missions.

**Rodney Ragwan '05 (DMin '09)** will soon have two articles related to the history of the church in his native South Africa published. One will appear in the May issue of *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, the journal of the Church History Society of Southern Africa. This journal publishes articles of academic excellence

on issues pertaining to church history, with a special focus on Southern Africa. Rodney's article is aimed at reclaiming a history of the Baptist Association of South Africa. It provides background on a community of indentured laborers; discusses the socio-political context; and examines the contributions of three Indian-born husband-and-wife missionary teams. One of those missionaries was John Rangiah. Rodney's article, "The Impact of the Bible and Bible Themes on John Rangiah's Ministry in South Africa," will be published (also in May) by *Verbum et Ecclesia*, an academic journal for ministerial development published by the University of Pretoria (South Africa). Says Rodney, "Some of the most exciting church history in the world is being made every day in Southern Africa, with the churches contributing actively to the political, economic, and social development of the area."

**Dan Meadows '09**, pastor of Goshen Baptist Church in Morgantown, West Virginia, received the Ward W. Hibbs Ministerial Award during the opening session of the West Virginia Baptist Convention Annual Meeting last October. The award is presented annually by Alderson-Broadus College. Dan has been pastor at Goshen for 10 years, during which time weekly attendance has grown from about 80 to an average of 125.

**Catherine E. Williams '10** has received a full merit tuition scholarship to attend Princeton Theological Seminary as a PhD student. She will study practical theology with a concentration in homiletics. Says Catherine, "I am pleased to add the Palmer flavor to Princeton. Or is it to fly the Palmer flag at Princeton? Whichever, I hope to represent well the faculty and colleagues who have shaped me theologically—and in so many other valuable ways—during my five years at Palmer."

### Inmemoriam

**Paul C. Kinzler, Jr. '46** died on March 1, 2011 at the age of 89. Among the churches he served as a lifelong pastor were Maytown Church of God and Newville Church of God, both in Lancaster County, Pa.

**Evelyn S. Hale '59** died on March 24, 2010, at the age of 86. She served for 25 years as the Minister of Educational Ministries for the American Baptist Churches of Maine, then continued in retirement to serve the churches of New Hampshire and Vermont. She continued to serve as a part-time pastor until she fully retired in her 80s.

**Jon Swenson '66** passed away on July 14, 2010 at the age of 68 of cardiac arrest. A United Methodist pastor, Rev. Swenson served several U.M. churches in Pennsylvania, including Cornwells U.M. in Bensalem and Bethlehem U.M. in Thornton, which he served from 1993 until his retirement in 2007. After retiring, he began working with recovering addicts for CityTeam Ministries, based in his native Chester, PA, a ministry for which he had already volunteered for 10 years. He led a discipleship program for men, many of whom never had a father figure in their lives. Also, as church planting coordinator for the ministry, he went house-to-house encouraging people to start a home Bible study group.

**John Leary '03** died on Nov. 4 of last year as a result of an apparent heart attack just four days shy of his 50th birthday. John was a Doctor of Ministry student who resided at the Seminary. He was deeply loved and is greatly missed by his fellow students and the Seminary community. John, whose family called him by his middle name, Derrick, served in the U.S. Navy from 1983 to 87. He served as an associate minister at several Philadelphia area churches. John cared deeply for the homeless and for other less fortunate members of society. He loved traveling, writing poetry, attending movies and concerts, and cooking for his friends.

Please keep your alum family up to date by sharing your news, including any publications, awards, recognitions, achievements, and new ministry positions. Photos are welcome. Send your news and photos to Randy Frame: [rframe@eastern.edu](mailto:rframe@eastern.edu). Thank you!

# WEEKLY COMMUTE: 1,300 MILES *(One-Way!)*



Palmer Seminary Admissions Director Steve Hutchison with MTS student and very frequent flyer Dawn Thames.

Early this year, when PTS Admissions Director Steve Hutchison received an inquiry from a prospective student from Dallas, Texas, it came as no big surprise. After all, over the years and still today, men and women have moved cross country (and from other countries) to attend the Seminary. But as his conversations with Dawn Thames progressed, Steve wasn't sure if he understood her correctly, for she indicated plans to commute each week all the way from Texas.

But that's exactly what Dawn is doing in pursuit of a Master of Theological Studies degree with a concentration in public policy. Each week, she boards a plane in Dallas in time to arrive in Philadelphia on Tuesday afternoon. She takes a class on Tuesday evening, three more on Wednesday, and another on Thursday morning before hopping back on a plane to Dallas. A Registered Nurse, she is able to maintain a full-time job by working two long weekend shifts in a Dallas hospital's labor and delivery unit.

The Seminary has done everything it can to accommodate Dawn, including providing the same guest room for her

*"People who've been to seminary know how foundational it is to personal formation. It goes way beyond taking classes and being able to say you have a degree."*

DAWN THAMES

to stay two nights a week. She also has her own special cabinet space in Palmer Hall's second-floor community kitchen. Says Dawn, "At first I had to choose whether to pack shampoo or peanut butter. Now I can have both."

Dawn has the full support of her husband, Mark, and their home church, which pays her PTS rent. Her loaded schedule has compelled her to carefully plan virtually every minute of every day. She photocopies reading assignments so

she doesn't have to lug large textbooks back and forth. She records class lectures and listens to them again while waiting in check-in lines at airports.

As a college student in the '80s, Dawn discovered the writings of PTS professor Ron Sider and became something of a long distance disciple. In the 1990s she added Seminary alumnus and Eastern University professor Tony Campolo to her list of people whose messages she found relevant and challenging. Later, she and Mark spent time in Africa, where they encountered people whom they considered models for Christian life and mission. When Dawn inquired as to where these folks had received their training, the answer came back: Eastern University (MBA program in economic development).

Ultimately Dawn's decision to come to Palmer was based on an internal sense of leading that she can't fully describe. But she does say this: "People who've been to seminary know how foundational it is to personal formation. It goes way beyond taking classes and being able to say you have a degree." In an age of sound bites and catchy slogans, Dawn prefers to quote Christian writer Dallas Willard: "I don't know what I need to know, and I must now devote all my attention to finding out what I need to know." And she considers Palmer the best place to pursue this goal.



# BEYOND TRAGEDY Toward Hope



Recently the Seminary hosted an awareness event featuring a film and discussion on the topic of human trafficking. The film was so disturbing that for several days afterwards, images of voiceless women and children being kidnapped and forced into slavery continued to push their way into my mind. In countries around the world, boys as young as ten are trained to become soldiers, desensitized to violence, and taught to shoot rifles. Girls and boys as young as five are purchased, confined, and coerced to repeatedly perform sexual acts. Meanwhile, the organizers of these atrocities are raking in hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

In the midst of the tragedy depicted in this film, I found myself deeply impressed with the Palmer student who envisioned and organized this event. Called to ministry and possessing a passion for raising awareness, this student challenged others—especially those who follow Christ—to get involved and do something, however large or small, to reduce human exploitation and suffering.

This exemplary student is not alone at Palmer Seminary, but is one of many who are here for more than an education and more than a credential. Students are here because they have been called to be ambassadors for Christ. They seek to represent God's love in the world by raising their voices for the voiceless, even when doing so entails sacrifice and risk. They seek to become healing agents for those who have been injured. And, though it is difficult, they seek to reach out to the oppressors, recognizing that no one is beyond the reach of God's saving grace. Amidst tragedy, Palmer students foster hope.

As Dean, I take seriously my role of raising financial support for the

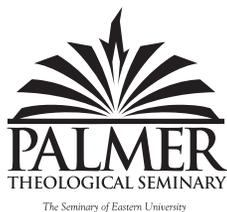
programs and services Palmer offers to these fine students. Without hesitation, I am asking for your support. I'm asking that you try to do your part, however large or small that part might be. As is true for almost all seminaries, this year has been a financially difficult one for Palmer. If you have not already done so, please consider a gift to the Seminary's Annual Fund. We need your help to support our students, faculty, and staff and to carry out our mission. Lives are being changed here. Please join with us as we move together into God's future for our school.

Beyond giving, if you know of someone I ought to be talking with about supporting the ministry of Palmer Seminary, please let me know. I am rarely more glad than I am when we add new ministry partners to our ranks. In fact, I crave opportunities to share our story, a story of highly motivated women and men who are striving to move beyond tragedy and toward hope.

Christopher A. Hall

STUDENTS ARE HERE BECAUSE  
THEY HAVE BEEN CALLED TO BE

# Ambassadors for Christ



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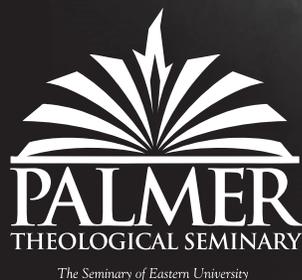
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