

DEAN'S LETTER TO FRIENDS IN MINISTRY

WINTER 2011

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Grace and peace to you, our devoted friends of North Park Theological Seminary. It is my pleasure to greet you on behalf of our interim senior leadership team. Dean Deb Auger, Dean Linda Cannell and I have our own very distinct sets of responsibilities. Deb as Dean of Students and Community Life is our primary overseer of the community health and wellbeing of our students. Linda as Academic Dean watches over the quality of our academic life as well as the professional development of our faculty. As Director of Field Education, I cultivate relationships with our denomination and its ministries. One of my responsibilities is to represent North Park Theological Seminary at various denominational meetings and gatherings. Deb, Linda and I have the great privilege of working with wonderful students and gifted colleagues. You help make this possible because of your deep commitment to our mission.

This is an exciting time in the collective life and ministry of our institution. In January, denominational leaders and regional conference superintendents visit our campus and get to know students who are nearing graduation and anticipating entry into the call to ministry process. This year 24 students have been involved in these conversations. It is always our prayer that these meetings will aid discernment and help to advance the work of our various Covenant ministries.

Our relationship with the Evangelical Covenant Church is also demonstrated by our participation in the Midwinter Conference (January 31 to February 4). This year eight members of our seminary faculty and staff will be teaching Covenant Orientation classes or Midwinter Conference workshops at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago. It has been my pleasure these last three years to be on the teaching team for Covenant History in our Orientation program. My optimism regarding the future of the ECC strengthens every time I teach and learn from students in these classes. As a resource for describing Covenant identity a book titled *Living Faith: Reflections on Covenant Affirmations* will be our gift to the conferees. This gift is possible through the Lilly Foundation, Making Connections Initiative.

We are delighted to invite you to join us for the following upcoming events of scholarship and celebration:

- February 9–The Westerdahl Lectures with Peter Scazzero
- March 2–The Lund Lectures with Michael Gorman

- April 14–The Nyvall Lectures with Miroslav Volf
- July 31–In celebration of the fifth class of graduates with certificates in Spiritual Direction, we will host speakers Nicholas Wolterstorff, Noah, Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology at Yale University, and Senior Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia, and author of *Until Justice and Peace Embrace, Justice: Rights and Wrongs*, and the forthcoming *Justice in Love*; and Claire Kingma Wolterstorff, an Episcopal priest with a long history in the practice of Spiritual Direction, who founded the Elizabeth House of Grand Rapids, an interfaith house of prayer especially for women.
- September 29 to October 1–Ex Auditū, a symposium of biblical scholarship focusing on the theme of Wealth and Possessions. This event will feature many notable scholars including William Willimon.

We are pleased to host these events on campus and remain grateful for your willingness to host many of our students who are involved in Field Education.

In the past semester 47 of our students were registered in internships or Clinical Pastoral Education (chaplancy). Many of you and your faith communities have supplied the context for this pivotal part of our students' education. The majority of our students fulfill these requirements, concurrent with their academic work, in a congregational context close to our campus. We do, however, continue to encourage the immersion experience and many of our students have entered into the life of ministry in such places as Anchorage, Alaska; Harbert, Michigan; Ceresco, Nebraska; Rye, New Hampshire; Maple Valley, Washington. Some students engage in the field experience before their coursework is done while others choose to accomplish this during or after their academic experience. Other seminarians have chosen an international field experience in places like Columbia and Spain. In every case, we seek to discern a placement where students can flourish and clarify their gifts for ministry and the frameworks that are most suitable for them.

Whether it is the Call to Ministry process, the Midwinter Conference or special events on campus, our relationship with the Evangelical Covenant Church is very evident this season of the year.

We are profoundly grateful for partners like you and we wish you well in this new year.

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Dr. Timothy L. Johnson

NORTH PARK
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY