

DEAN'S LETTER TO FRIENDS IN MINISTRY

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FALL 2008

Dear Friends in Ministry,

As I write this letter, it is a beautiful autumn day here in Chicago: warm, breezy, with a perfectly blue sky. It is hard to believe that we experienced a deluge in mid-September, when the North Branch of the Chicago River overflowed its banks. The basement of Magnuson Campus Center filled with eight feet of water. Students were evacuated from Anderson Hall and the newly renovated Burgh Hall. Although students are now back in their dorm rooms, Magnuson still cannot be used for food service or classes, and may remain inaccessible for weeks. A number of college classes have shifted to Nyvall Hall. Fortunately the Seminary building received no water damage. Changes made in the drainage system on campus years ago solved our perennial water problem. Dean of Students Deb Auger and her family were forced out of their home by the floodwaters, and are still cleaning up a waterlogged basement. Much work remains to be done on campus, but we are thankful it was not any worse.

A NEW YEAR

We welcomed our new Dean of Seminary Academic Life, Linda Cannell, in August. Linda is energetic, engaged, and full of ideas. She is going to do a wonderful job leading our faculty and academic program. Her creativity, connections, and experience will serve us well during this crucial time in our institutional development. Dr. Paul Koptak's role at the Seminary also changed this fall. Paul has assumed the role of associate dean in addition to teaching. He will oversee the SemConnect distance learning program. As North Park moves to the next level in distance learning, Paul, along with Dean Allyson Dickie, will help with that process. Paul will also oversee the Center for Spiritual Direction and work to develop Seminary programs for persons with inadequate undergraduate training. Please keep both Linda and Paul in your prayers. Also pray for the 274 students studying at the Seminary this fall, on campus and online. We have some wonderful students—bright, godly, and gifted. We are thankful to God for them.

LECTURES

By the time you receive this letter, the Lund Lectures and the Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture will have passed. Videotapes of these and all of our lectures are available to you through the library. Papers from the Symposium are currently available through the journal *Ex Auditu*.

NORTH PARK
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Dr. John Barclay's paper for the Lund Lectures was "Grace as Threat and Promise," while Dr. R. W. L. Moberly's was "Uncomfortable Truths: the Value of the Old Testament for Christian Ministry." In addition, the topic of the Symposium was "The Idolatry of Security."

We indeed featured a dynamic lineup of presenters. Please visit our web site to learn more about their presentations.

LISTENING TOUR

During this year I am engaging in a listening tour across the country. I have asked each superintendent to gather three or four churches to meet with me, share what God is doing in their congregations, and tell me how the Seminary can help them to accomplish their respective missions. Several have already set up times for me to visit. If you would like to have your church participate in this conversation, please contact your superintendent. I have also prepared what I am calling a "President's Paper" outlining what I believe are significant issues and challenges for theological education and the church. As an outcome to this conversation, I want to develop a program for theological education that meets the impending challenges of the 21st century. I am looking forward to speaking with many of you about this.

SCHOLARSHIPS

As the year goes on, please encourage gifted women and men to contact Eric Palmquist regarding an application to North Park Theological Seminary. The scholarship opportunities have never been better. In addition to the Presidential Scholarships, we now have Kern Foundation scholarships. Both of these programs cover the full cost of tuition. Please contact Eric at (773) 244-5532 for more information. The Presidential Scholarships program has been one of the most successful initiatives we have done. Your generosity in supporting this program will enable it to continue for future generations of students. As an individual and a church, please give generously to our annual fund to support this and other scholarship programs.

FACULTY NEWS

Klyne Snodgrass, Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom, and I just returned from the theological conference of the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches. Held every four years, this conference brings together scholars and church leaders from the Free Church tradition. This year's topic was the nature of the church, and the meeting was held at our sister seminary in Ewersbach, Germany. Klyne presented a well-received paper on women in ordained ministry, while Michelle was responsible for summarizing our discussion on the nature of the church, and I conducted a workshop on the theological curriculum. Donn Engebretson and Curt Peterson from the Evangelical Covenant Church headquarters also attended the conference.

Thank you for your support and encouragement of North Park Theological Seminary. We want to serve your ministries both now and in the future. Please let us know how to do so even better. Thanks again for your financial support and your prayers. We could not advance our mission without them both. I look forward to seeing many of you throughout this year.

Sincerely,



John E. Phelan, Jr.
President and Dean