

DEAN'S LETTER TO FRIENDS IN MINISTRY

WINTER 2009

Dear Friends in Ministry,

Every January we eagerly anticipate the arrival of the Conference Superintendents of the Evangelical Covenant Church. They spend a week on our campus interviewing our graduating seniors and helping them assess their strengths, weaknesses, and possible avenues of ministry. This year 28 seniors were interviewed, and both students and superintendents were pleased. Many will meet again at the Midwinter Conference. The superintendents spend that week visiting with seminarians as well as with other pastors looking for new opportunities for service. After the Midwinter Conference the seniors will nervously wait for the phone to ring and hope the chairperson of a search committee is on the other end of the line. If your congregation is considering adding staff, please talk to your local superintendent and see if there is a seminary student who could work for you. They are well prepared, eager to serve God, and looking forward to the work of the church.

LISTENING TOUR

In a previous letter, I mentioned that I was undertaking a listening tour to talk with pastors and lay leaders about the leadership needs of their congregations. We are in the process of reviewing and renewing our program of theological education and are looking to hear from the church. This fall I travelled to Canada with two members of the Seminary faculty. We spoke with pastors and lay people from five Canadian churches. There were similar concerns expressed in each place. All wanted pastors who would care about them and be there for them, who are students of the Bible and good preachers and teachers, who have cross-cultural skills, and who have practical experience in the church.

During the spring we are visiting churches on the East Coast and in the Midwest, Northwest, Great Lakes, North Pacific, and Alaska conferences. In a later letter I will detail what I have learned during these trips, on which I will also take members of the faculty and staff. Our travels are being funded in part by the Making Connections Grant from the Lilly Endowment. If you are in one of these conferences and would like to have your church participate, please contact your superintendent. We need your input to be the best Seminary we can be.

To serve the church for the sake of the Kingdom is one of life's greatest privileges.

NORTH PARK
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

FACULTY NEWS

On the faculty front I am pleased to announce that Dr. Soong-Chan Rah's book *The Next Evangelicalism* will be published this spring by InterVarsity Press. It will examine the growing cultural diversity within the evangelical church and what it means for mission, theology, leadership and praxis. I am convinced this will be a book much discussed in the months and years to come. Dr. Rah is the Milton B. Engebretson Assistant Professor of Church Growth and Evangelism at North Park and is a popular speaker and workshop leader around the country. He also planted a church in the Boston area. Dr. Klyne R. Snodgrass' book *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* won the award for Biblical Studies from the 2009 Christianity Today Book Awards. A number of other books by faculty members are in the works including a commentary on the Book of Revelation by Dr. Max Lee.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The winter and spring seasons are key times for student recruitment. Eric Palmquist, our director of Seminary admissions, and Kerry Staurseth, our senior admissions counselor, are working hard to bring in the next class. Let me remind you that we have two excellent scholarship programs for students sensing God's call to ministry. The Kern Scholarships are for students 27 years of age or younger who are committed to parish ministry. They must agree to serve in a local church. They can have either an Evangelical Covenant or non-Covenant background. The scholarship covers all tuition expenses and provides for a collegial atmosphere with other Kern Scholars. More information is available through the admissions office or on our Web site, www.northpark.edu/sem. In addition, our very successful Presidential Scholarships Program and Covenant Diversity Scholarships Program continue to offer Covenant students tuition remission. All of these scholarship programs require an application. If you know someone interested in attending seminary, please encourage him or her to consider applying for admission to the North Park Theological Seminary, as well as for the appropriate scholarship program.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM

These are difficult and challenging times for all of us. The economic uncertainties can make us cautious in the face of personal and missional opportunities. I want to thank all of you who have supported us so generously in spite of the challenges and uncertainties. Our students, faculty, and staff thank you as well. Without your support we quite literally would not be able to carry out the task God has given us. I boldly ask you to continue your support for our effort to prepare women and men to serve the purposes of the mission of Christ: to bring all people to new life in Jesus Christ and to serve the poorest and most desperate of the world for His sake. There is no more important mission. There is no more glorious task. To serve the church for the sake of the Kingdom is one of life's greatest privileges. To serve those who serve the Kingdom is my great privilege. Thanks again for your support.

Sincerely,



John E. Phelan, Jr.
President and Dean