

DEAN'S LETTER TO FRIENDS IN MINISTRY

SPRING 2009

Dear Friends in Ministry,

It is warmer in Chicago; spring is definitely on the way. Spring means graduation, students moving into new roles, potential students awaiting acceptance letters, and the whole round of end-of-the-year activities. It is a time to reflect on the blessings and challenges of the school year. It is a time to anticipate what God will do through the ministry of well prepared, godly women and men. It is a time to consider summer research projects, the Covenant Annual meeting, and time with family and friends. Of course, it is also a time to think about how the year will end financially and to contemplate the challenges of next year's budget! With the economic challenges facing the country these latter concerns weigh on us as they do on all of you in your churches, homes, and institutions.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Before the end of the academic year there are some special events for you to consider. On Wednesday, April 29, Grant Wacker, professor of Christian history at Duke Divinity School will deliver two lectures: "Billy Graham's America" and "Billy Graham's Legacy for Christian Living." If you are in the Chicago area or particularly interested in the topic, I encourage you to come by to hear Dr. Wacker. The lectures begin at 9 a.m. They will be recorded for those of you who might want to hear them at a later date. We also invite you to take part in our graduation service on Saturday, May 23, at 10 a.m. The speaker and honorary degree recipient will be Bishop Mark Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. A Chicago native, Bishop Hanson is a friend and former neighbor of the Evangelical Covenant Church's immediate past president, Glenn Palmberg. While serving as a pastor in Minneapolis, he also became good friends with Jim Sundholm, Covenant pastor and head of Covenant World Relief. We are looking forward to having Bishop Hanson with us.

FACULTY NEWS

On the faculty front we are proud to announce that Dr. Jim Bruckner received a Lilly Theological Scholars grant to work on his project "Human Health and Ancient Narrative: The Old Testament as a Shaping Resource for Health Care Vocations." Jim has taught a course on the Bible and health for years. This book promises to be an exciting and significant addition to the conversation between scholars, healers, and ordinary strugglers. Our congratulations to Jim.

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THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY**

UPDATE ON THE LISTENING TOUR

I continue on the road making visits to churches and listening to their concerns about the nature of ministry. Just recently I was in Kansas with Stephen Chester and Velda Love. We had excellent visits with a suburban congregation, an urban congregation, a town and country congregation, and a large multi-staffed congregation. The input we received from these pastors and lay leaders was extremely valuable. We want the next generation of pastors prepared at North Park to be ready to face the challenges of the church that is, and the church that is coming. We need your help to meet this challenge. Your feedback and encouragement are extremely important to us. We still have a number of conferences yet to visit. At some point I will make an interim report of our findings.

CLASS OF 2009

As the year draws to an end our graduating seniors are anxiously contemplating their futures. These are difficult times for churches as well as for schools. We appreciate your considering this strong group of graduates. If you are seeking staff positions please contact your superintendent and ask for the name of a Seminary grad. They would be thrilled to hear from you and are ready to serve you.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Currently, charitable giving to North Park Theological Seminary (including Presidential Scholarships and Covenant Diversity Scholarships), is some \$20,000 below our total at this point last year. We want to be ahead at the end of the fiscal and academic year in order to provide much needed scholarship support to our new and returning students. Some of you have given and given sacrificially. I am deeply grateful for your generosity. If you have not given or if you could give again before the end of our fiscal year (June 30), it would make an enormous difference to us in the difficult decisions we face for the coming academic year.

May the blessings of the resurrected Lord Jesus be with each of you during the Easter and Pentecost seasons. Thank you again for your prayers and support.

Sincerely,



John E. Phelan, Jr.
President and Dean