Equipping the Saints

Alumnae/i Days 2008
Graduation
The Ministry of Spiritual Direction
On a dynamic and challenging global stage
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary plays its part in
God’s redemption of the world through Jesus Christ
By preparing leaders who proclaim with great joy
God’s message of good news in both word and deed!

Perceptive spiritual directors who “equip the saints” for ministry
by helping people discern their gifts through worship and education,
and helping them see that true joy is no stranger to pain, so
that, moved by the Holy Spirit, they can say with confidence, “I care
therefore I am”

To view the full mission and vision statements,
visit www.pts.edu, “About Us”, “Mission”.

Throughout this issue of Panorama you’ll
notice the arrow symbol at the end of various
articles. This symbol indicates that more
information is available online regarding the
topic. Please visit the Seminary’s website at
www.pts.edu to learn more.
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One of the special opportunities that I have as president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is giving a charge each year to the graduating class at commencement. It is a fun but challenging assignment to figure out what to say as these new graduates celebrate this milestone in their lives. In this year’s charge, I shared the following:

“...when Jesus is saying good-bye to his disciples, he calls the Spirit the Paraclete from that great Greek word parakaleo, which as you know means ‘the one who calls alongside you.’ This One will call alongside you in the ups and downs of ministry, when you are facing frustration and controversy, when elders and deacons get in your face, the Spirit will ‘call alongside you.’ When you’re holding the hands of parishioners who are in the valley of the shadow of death, or perhaps praying them right into heaven, the Spirit will be ‘calling alongside you’ lifting you up when all you seem to be is down.”

Thanks be to God for this Spirit that walks alongside each of us. It is this Spirit that equips the saints and allows our graduates to respond with a resounding “yes” to God’s call to the difficult challenges of ministry.

Just as the Spirit walks along side of us, we are grateful to all of you who walk along side of our mission at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. You walk along side by sending us students, participating in our events, encouraging our faculty, providing financial support, and with your prayers. These partnerships make this critical work of “equipping the saints for ministry” possible. For this, we are always grateful.

May God’s blessings be with all of us!

Many blessings and thanks,

The Rev. Dr. William J. Carl III
President and Professor of Homiletics
In his book *The Wounded Healer*, Henri Nouwen wrote that a minister’s service “will not be perceived as authentic unless it comes from a heart wounded by the suffering about which he (sic) speaks… The great illusion of leadership is to think that others can be led out of the desert by someone who has never been there.”

It is out of our own brokenness that we learn to care, and ironically, it is often in pain that we experience true joy, especially when we recognize Christ’s presence in those times. So as we “pack our toolboxes for ministry” we take along our own brokenness, trusting that God will use it and us for God’s purposes.

The Rev. Lisa M. Dormire ’86  
Vice President for Seminary Relations
THE MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION
As a people we seemed to be starved for a sense of mystery, for some kind of transcendent power and meaning that somehow intersects with and enlivens our rather mundane lives. We gobble up books and videos that promise to reveal the secret for obtaining the truth, love, and life for which we so yearn. Another Indiana Jones epic film lures us into a dangerous, yet thrilling search for the hidden treasure of *The Crystal Skull of Akator*. The hauntingly beautiful Crystal Skull, according to ancient legend, contains mystical powers of knowledge, wisdom, and healing. Once found, one must discover the key to unlock its secrets. So too, it appears that the purpose of the letter written to the Church at Colossae was to counteract false teachings perhaps influenced by Platonic philosophy and ascetic practices for reaching communion with the Divine. Paul prays for them “asking God to fill [them] with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Colossians 1:9). He then reminds them that “the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, your hope of glory” (Colossians 1:26-28). The secret in which all the jewels of wisdom and knowledge of God are hidden has been revealed: it is Christ in us! Said another way by Eugene Peterson in *The Message*:

I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God. Then you will have minds confident and at rest, focused on Christ, God’s great mystery. All the richest treasures of wisdom and knowledge are embedded in that mystery and nowhere else. And we’ve been shown the mystery! I’m telling you this because I don’t want anyone leading you off on some wild-goose chase, after other so-called mysteries, or “the Secret” (Colossians 2:2).

The fact is, however, many persons who have heard of Christ, including clergy, are searching for spiritual wisdom and understanding; some leaving the Church to look elsewhere; some exploring other congregations or denominations; and some staying put—yearning to experience the reality of Christ’s love for them, in them, and flowing through them in the particular ministries to which they are called. Likewise, the soul of congregations, wearied by internal conflicts, confusing messages, and wrenching separations, long for a renewed clarity of vision, sense of purpose, and vitality of spirit within their communal life and mission in the world. For many persons today, it is not enough to know about God or about Christ. Rather, many desire “to taste and see the goodness of the Lord” (Psalms 34:8; 1 Peter 2:3), and to experience “the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, (they) are filled with the utter fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:16-19).
THE MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND SPIRITUAL REVITALIZATION OF CONGREGATIONS continued

While this inner illumination of mind and quickening of heart is surely the work of the Holy Spirit as Paul and Calvin remind us, the ministry of spiritual direction assists persons in becoming more aware of, attentive to, and responsive to the presence and action of Christ’s Spirit in the midst of the everyday realities of their lives and communities of faith. Indeed, theologians, ministers, and laity within the Reformed tradition are reclaiming the guidance of the Holy Spirit found within their rich heritage and in various practices by which they engaged in spiritual guidance. Just as Christian asks Hopeful in Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress “How stands it between God and your soul now” so a spiritual director similarly wonders with individuals, small groups, a congregation: “What is God up to with you, in your committee, in this congregation?” Trouble is, people have a very difficult time knowing how to listen to what the Spirit is saying amidst the frantic pace of family, work, and community responsibilities as well as the constant demands filtering in from being technologically “wired.” Furthermore, I have noticed that many people have not a clue as to how to even articulate to themselves, much less reflect on their experience of God’s grace or “how stands it between God and their soul.” (They are able, however, to articulate somewhat better about some of the doctrines and creeds of their faith, but not how such intersect and inform their living.) How then do they learn to develop an interior life, develop a capacity to listen to the voice of Christ’s Spirit, and to discern how it differs from other voices claiming their loyalty and obedience, if someone does not assist them in connecting gospel grace to their own questions, hungers, joys, fears arising out of their lived experience? Those called by God, guided by the Spirit, and validated by others for the ministry of spiritual guidance can assist others in bridging the Word and their inner and outer worlds.

Spiritual directors as well as spiritual leaders listen for and seek with others the direction of Christ’s Spirit for their lives, their ministries, and the congregation’s mission. They help build bridges among a persons’ experience of Christ in faith, discerning vocation and gifts, and engaging the Church and world in service. Consequently, spiritual directors bring spiritual revitalization to congregations by assisting individuals, small groups, committees, and entire congregations to listen for, reflect upon, and wisely discern what God is already doing in their midst, noticing what diminishes their responsiveness to God, and what gives them greater energy in doing the work God calls them to do together. They become congregational spiritual companions able to assist others in a variety of formats, or as Celia Allison Hahn puts it, in “layers of discernment.” Congregational spiritual companions work with:

1. Spiritual formation groups and individuals in helping persons and groups deepen their relationship and discipleship with Christ through engaging in various ways of praying with the Bible, spiritual disciplines, and learning how to pay attention to “the mighty gifts with which we are endowed,” to notice that “indeed, our very being is nothing but subsistence in the one God” and to reflect on “these benefits shed like dew from heaven upon us, (so that) we are lead as by rivulets to the spring itself,” that is, to God who “is the fountain of every good.” Then too, how much more are we to be aware of and grateful for the benefits given to us through the gift of faith that engraves us in Christ. Such awareness provides a foundation for “equipping the saints to discern their particular gifts for ministry.”

2. Church committees in learning how to listen to what God is doing in their midst and what kind of response to make through the creation of structures and programs that arise out of this discernment.

3. The Session or Pastor-Parish Committee in assuming their roles as deacons and elders, spiritual leaders, and models within the congregation. Spiritual directors can coach pastors (if so invited) in ways of conducting session meetings that incorporate elements of discernment, such as biblical and theological reflection, silent and vocal prayer, ways of helping members to focus upon their Christian identity and purpose as Session members responsible for making decisions that affect the well-being of the whole congregation.

4. The pastor as spiritual leader facilitating the whole congregation in discernment of its mission, vision, and core values or regarding an important matter facing the congregation. Spiritual leaders, according to Henry and Richard Blackaby, “seek to lead God’s way” and “to move people from where they are to where God wants them to be.” Those engaged in spiritual leadership as well as spiritual direction are obligated by their calling: (a) to be aware of abiding in and with God, (b) to seek guidance in the Word and from other believers, (c) to pay attention to how God is moving in the life of persons and the congregation, and, (d) to let go of one’s ego and agenda in order to be courageously obedient to God in order that both they and others they accompany including the congregation can accomplish together the work to which God calls them, thereby participating in Christ’s redemptive work in the world. And, because a spiritual leader cannot guide members of a congregation deeper than where they themselves have gone in the Christian life, it is their responsibility to seek out ways in which to nourish their own spiritual growth and be willingly held accountable for their own spiritual practices and leadership, most likely by someone whom they trust to be a Spirit-led person and a capable spiritual guide or mentor in addition to accountability structures laid down in the denomination’s polity.

As persons, groups, and congregations commit themselves to listen to, discern, and respond to the Word as it addresses them in the concrete realities of their lives and faith communities, they begin to notice a growing inner vitality of spirit within them activated by the Holy Spirit. According to Marjorie Thompson, growth in the spiritual life “is simply
the increasing vitality and sway of God’s Spirit in us. It is a magnificent choreography of the Holy Spirit in the human spirit, moving us toward communion with both Creator and creation.” Indeed, the dynamism of Christ’s Spirit at work in us and through us energizes and revitalizes our lives and congregations drawing us “Into another intensity/ For a further union, a deeper communion… Requiring a condition of complete simplicity/ Costing not less than everything.” At some point in our Christian journey, the sanctifying power of Christ’s Spirit at work in us may empower us to sincerely say with Paul, “All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share in his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death” (Philippines 3:10). This power, given to us, the gift of the Holy Spirit illuminating our minds and enflaming our hearts—the gift of faith—is the key that unlocks the treasure we have in Christ. “Glory be to God whose power, working is us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to God from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus, forever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Endnotes
3 Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, the Movie. LucasFilms, Ltd., 2008.
7 “Now we shall possess a right definition of faith if we call it a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.”
12 Ibid., 1.2.1.
13 Ibid., 3.1.1.
16 Many Doctor of Ministry students have found Graham Standish’s discernment model for leading Session meetings to be very adaptable to various denominational polities. Similarly they attest to the spiritual vitality that arises out of making important decisions grounded in spiritual discernment.
Her name was April. Nearly a quarter century ago, April and her campus minister Rebecca Cole-Turner would meet weekly. During those hour-long sessions April, a former foster-child, told of being sexually abused in her youth. Now a college student she was a self-mutilator with a personality disorder.

“It was during my time with April that I first sensed my call to spiritual direction. Although as her counselor I was supportive and therapeutic, there was more I wished I could do for her,” said Cole-Turner.

Since then Cole-Turner has been discerning her call to spiritual direction. “It’s been a long and rambling road,” she said. A former high school social studies teacher, counselor, and clinical psychologist, she is now a spiritual director and retreat leader operating HeartSpace Ministries.

A native Californian born into families of strong faith, Cole-Turner attended Wheaton College earning her teaching degree. After graduation she worked at an all girls’ boarding school. There, students needed more than just help with their class lessons. Many needed therapy and guidance.

Wanting more training in counseling, Cole-Turner earned her master’s from SUNY Oswego and doctorate from Syracuse University. While continuing her education and raising a family, she changed jobs and moved across the country several times with her husband Ron Cole-Turner, H. Parker Sharp professor of theology and ethics at the Seminary.

Then in 1993, Rebecca Cole-Turner developed an erratic heart beat. The hereditary disease was debilitating—shortness of breath, difficulty walking. Although a procedure was available to correct the problem, it was newly created and only performed on a few patients. “As I laid flat on my back for five days in the hospital with my heart problem, I continued to discern my call to spiritual direction. I prayed about my procedure, I prayed about everything.” After some time Cole-Turner was ready to explore the possibility of permanently corrected the heart problem. Although anticipated to take much longer, the procedure took a mere 20 minutes. “In one day I had the miracle cure,” she said.

Knowing that she was being called to something other than her psychology practice, Cole-Turner searched the Internet. “I don’t even remember now what I typed in. But, up popped the words ‘spiritual director,’” she said. “I now knew what I wanted to be, I just had to figure out how to get there.”
In 1998, Cole-Turner enrolled in the Seminary’s Spiritual Formation Certification Program. Offered through the Office of Continuing Education, the program is a cooperative venture between Pittsburgh, Columbia, and Austin Seminaries. This certification program is designed for both ministers and lay leaders who want to encourage others in their spiritual growth. “It’s flexible, contains elements that prepared me for my future spiritual direction program, and allowed me to ask questions and do interior work before helping direct others.”

Along with the required class work and immersion week, Spiritual Formation Certification students must complete a spiritual pilgrimage. With fellow students and director of the certificate program the Rev. Dr. Jim Davison, Cole-Turner visited Rome and surrounding areas.

Her certification from PTS was a launch point to complete her Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction from San Francisco Theological Seminary. “I applied to the program and was accepted on the terms of delaying my admission one year,” said Cole-Turner. Although not pleased with the decision, she soon saw the wisdom in the suggestion.

Instructed to gain more spiritual direction experience and spend time alone on a spiritual retreat, Cole-Turner turned to a close friend for guidance. “It was laid on my heart that she should pick the place for my journey,” explained Cole-Turner. Following the friend’s suggestion, she set off for Tuscany where she spent three days at a hermit-run retreat house large enough for two guests. Three mass services were held daily of which Cole-Turner took part. “They offered me communion. It was a wonderful act of sister/brotherhood,” she recalls. Reflecting on her experience, she said, “It was like a time out of space—a liminal space in my own spiritual growth.”

To gain further experience as a spiritual director, Cole-Turner explored the possibility of interning with the Institute for Spiritual Leadership in Chicago, Ill. Instead of an internship, the Institute offered her a lecturer position. Wondering how to make the commute from Pittsburgh to Chicago feasible, she realized that her husband was on sabbatical from the Seminary, the suggested subject matter was her specialty, and the dates fit in to her already busy calendar. “This decision was a really short discernment. I instantly said ‘yes,’” she explains.

Having completing the further recommendations for admission, Cole-Turner began the program at San Francisco Theological Seminary taking two courses for three weeks each January for three years. During her time in the program, Cole-Turner continued to discern her call. One day while listening to a Scripture passage being read during a chapel service, she received the answer to her question of “what to do next.” “In that passage I heard ‘...and Lydia’s heart was open to all.’ It immediately hit me. I could see a picture of a heart with open space surrounding it. I then knew what I was supposed to do.” Later that night, excited and reviewing the passage, Cole-Turner realized the Scripture actually reads “…and Lydia’s heart was open to Paul.”

“I heard what I was supposed to hear that day.”

Taking inspiration from that experience, Cole-Turner went on to establish HeartSpace Ministries. As a spiritual director and retreat leader, she meets monthly with individual directees and often presents workshops on spiritual formation.

In May, Cole-Turner began a new part of her spiritual direction adventure when she became the therapist at the Women’s Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, an organization once housed in the basement of Long Hall at PTS. “It feels as if God has led me into a new ministry, one that I had never thought about before,” said Cole-Turner.

“It’s a wonderful thing to know that God has plans for us that encourage us to continue to grow and expand our notion of service even after we become grandparents!”

Since beginning Cole-Turner has kept a journal of her thoughts regarding her work at the shelter and she uses these entries as part of her spiritual discipline.

A published poet, Cole-Turner has future plans to again join the Seminary’s Continuing Education programs—this time as a leader. She’ll instruct a Celtic Spirituality course next spring and lead the pilgrimage in 2010.

“Unlike therapy, in spiritual direction you’re not trying to fix someone. The goal is one’s spiritual growth.”

Cole-Turner continues to spiritually grow also. She meets with her own director monthly and spends time alone on retreat a few times per year. In the last four years she’s also become more physically active—exercising, doing Pilates, and attending yoga classes. “My spiritual direction is grounded in my physical foundation.”

An ordained elder in the PCUSA, Cole-Turner is a member of East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. She is also the mother of two grown daughters and the grandmother of one grandson, Ben.

To learn more about the Spiritual Formation Certification Program at PTS, visit www.pts.edu/spiritual.html.
Growing up with parents who modeled caring for others, Nancy Chambers ’85 was not surprised at her decision to become a chaplain. “We were forever concerned about a sick relative, neighbor, or church member,” said Chambers. “We visited people in the hospital and attended funerals.”

As a caregiver to her own ailing relatives, Chambers was the family member most comfortable with going to hospitals. “It was meaningful for me to be able to talk to people in crisis,” she said.

During seminary Chambers completed two Clinical Pastoral Education units at the Veterans Administration Medical Center, Pittsburgh. “I realized during my CPE training this was a perfect fit for me,” said Chambers.

Following graduation she worked in the parish, as a pastoral counselor, and for the past 11 years has been the associate director of the department of spiritual care at the Harborview Medical Center and University of Washington Medical Center, Seattle, Wash. There she has supervised more than 300 CPE students. With 80,000 translated visits each year (including Spanish, Ethiopian, Somali, Japanese, and Vietnamese rounding out the top five languages), Harborview and the University of Washington is the largest trauma center in the area serving Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming. “This trauma center covers a huge area of land. Therefore family is not around in times of crisis and we visit with the patients until the family can make it there,” Chambers explained.

In her years as a supervisor Chambers has served as mentor to countless residents. One of her best students is a Unitarian-Universalist woman from Iran. “She’s just smiling all the time,” said Chambers. “I told her that her smile was interfering with her caring. People couldn’t respond to her smile with their pain.” Suggesting that the resident’s outward sign of happiness was covering up inward pain, Chambers had reservations about accepting the student into the resident program following her first CPE unit. “After therapy and dealing with her own issues, she’s now one of the best residents I’ve ever had. “

In her efforts to equip the saints for ministry, Chambers calculates, “I have a broad view of what’s needed to equip the saints.” Harborview trainees often come there for the social justice ministry. A county hospital, there are programs for the homeless, soup kitchens, and street ministries.

Reflecting on the best part of her ministry, Chambers helps saints of all traditions figure out when they need to stop caring for others and come back tomorrow. “It’s a hard learning. Jesus cared for people all the time and he died in 33 years.” A married mother of two with four grandchildren, Chambers believes she has good boundaries—not getting too involved, but able to guide people to healing and meaning.

Using the hood of a military Jeep as his altar, Capt. Wilbur Douglass III ’81 has served as a military chaplain in the United States Navy for nearly 25 years.

He has ministered during Marine exercises, offered the Easter message at sunrise on the dock of a ship in the waters outside Africa, assisted those recovering from the embassy bombing in Albania, and provided comfort to mourners and caregivers alike following the attack of the World Trade Center. “You can’t get these experiences in the church,” Douglass said.

A native of East Liberty, Pa., Douglass attended the University of Pittsburgh and studied biology. Considering his career options, Douglass discussed his future with his parents. Although neither knew the other’s suggestion, both steered him toward ministry. A career interest test likewise suggested ministry. After hearing about an Army friend’s experience as a chaplain traveling and dealing with the troops, Douglass had decided.

During Seminary Douglass was in the Reserves. Following graduation he served three years as an associate minister in Washington, DC before enlisting full time.

“Being a chaplain calls on all of your faculty. It’s more than just providing comfort and care to others,” Douglass explained. “You have to support yourself—physically, spiritually, and mentally.”

To this end Douglass is enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry Transformational Leadership Program at Ashland Theological Seminary and expects to complete his final project by 2011. In his dissertation, Douglass will evaluate self care for those who provide comfort in critical incidents—before, during, and after the event.

Within the service Douglass has completed numerous courses in disaster management, psychological first aid, combat stress control, and others.
As an instructor, he’s led retreats in spiritual formation for all U.S. military chaplains (54 at present). “During these retreats you realize this is what you should be doing all the time. You have to prepare yourself to minister to others.”

A “GO bachelor” for the past six years (splitting his weeks between Washington, DC and weekends with his wife and children in Virginia) Douglass plans to return to parish ministry. “I’m increasing my own spiritual awareness and through my Doctor of Ministry program am honing some skills.”

Wentroble completed his undergraduate from Penn State University before his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry from PTS. Following seminary he completed an extended unit of CPE at Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and a residency at Presbyterian Hospital in Philadelphia. “CPE doesn’t teach you new things,” explained Wentroble. “It teaches you about you.”

Through his current position as director of spiritual care at the Silvercrest Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation in Brianwood, N.Y., Wentroble is able to continue his ministry to the often forgotten segment of the body of Christ. “I’m glad it hasn’t. We have a whole share of people who we can’t ignore, who also have their needs.”
In our broken world, it is sadly possible to spend ample time (three or four years) studying God, but never knowing God. As a result, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary requires all M.Div. students to take a course in spiritual formation that seeks the link between studying God and knowing God as part of the school’s vision of equipping spiritual leaders for the Church.

“I want students to understand that what they will be studying the next three years was never intended to be knowledge about God, but knowledge of God,” said the Rev. Dr. M. Craig Barnes, Robert Meneilly professor of leadership and ministry and pastor of Shadyside Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh.

The course has been a requirement since 1975.

“Students take Spiritual Formation in their first term at the Seminary,” said Barnes. “My goal in teaching the class is to ground the student’s experience of theological education in the historical tradition of spirituality.”

This historical tradition includes readings across theological, spatial, and temporal lines, casting a wide net to fish for the best that past saints’ own attempts at deeper communion with God has yielded. This wide net resonated well with James Estes, middler M. Div. student, when he took the class last fall.

“You can’t read Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis Assisi, Madame Guyon, Bonhoeffer, or Julian of Norwich and not feel the heat of their burning hearts for God,” said Estes.

Yet, the course isn’t just a space for whimsical flights of spiritual fancy, but a place of seeking the interconnection between the other courses at the Seminary and a life lived in the presence of God.

“The historical scholars of our faith expected souls to be shaped by theology,” said Barnes. “I teach the class in such a way as to encourage the students to discover this soul shaping character of theological studies.”

Estes reflects this objective in his own thoughts on the class. “Ministry training is about knowing what it means to connect to the source. It’s really all about Jesus and since He died for direct access, we should make a point about it.”

Stephen Wutz, middler M. Div. student, found the class challenging in other ways. “For me, Spiritual Formation was all about submission and obedience.”

Part of the requirements for the course includes daily lectionary readings, prayer, meditation, and journaling. “Like most people my time is precious to me and my private time with God is very personal,” said Wutz. “To allow someone else to tell me how to spend that time was very challenging because it caused me to have to submit and obey. Yet, I learned not in spite of but because of submission and obedience. I cannot say that either of these Christian attributes come any easier even after my experience, however, I can no longer say that I don’t know the way to intimacy and knowledge of God—the way is the way of Jesus—submission and obedience to an ever-loving heavenly Father.”

The class serves as a quiet corrective to a strictly academic-oriented knowledge of God to personal-being-known-by-God.

“The thing that sustains one in ministry is hearing the voice of God and learning to rest in and commune with God,” said Estes.

Ultimately, the need for Spiritual Formation exists because certain aspects and attributes of God cannot be found through reason, history, or even the best exegetical commentary, but must be experienced.

“The times that I spent in thoughtful meditation and journaling yielded deep insights about both God and myself,” said Wutz. “I am not sure I would have learned any other way.”

By Jeff Schooley
M. Div. student
I was diagnosed with stage 3 colon cancer at the end of January 2003. I had surgery on Feb. 6, which was followed by six months of chemotherapy. I have received bi-annual, then annual CAT scans, frequent blood work, and much poking of my belly. I am no stranger to colonoscopies. In February 2008, I was ‘signed off’ by my oncologist with the glorious word, ‘cured.’ “You don’t have to make an appointment as you leave the hospital.”

That is the bare bones of the story. The feelings and faith side of the matter is another story altogether.

Briefly, the range of feelings I experienced, and still experience to some extent, for I cannot pretend it never happened, are complex and powerful: shock, vulnerability, fear, sadness, pain, intimidation—the list could go on. I should also say that gratitude is very high on the list of feelings: for my wife, Cathy, and her love and support and strength, for my PTS colleagues, faculty and staff (what a terrific group of people!), and for hundreds of congregations and thousands of people around the country who pestered Heaven on my behalf.

My illness has led to permanent changes in my life. Everywhere I go I have to know where the toilets are. If diarrhea is the price of life, so be it! I still find it hard to get over the days of darkness and heaviness that come upon me. And I have lost trust in my body. I feel, odd as it may sound, that my body let me down.

Of course, there are faith stories to tell. Of huge significance was the prayer experience I had, led by my colleague Dr. Martha Robbins a couple of days before my surgery. She guided me through an imaginative experience that culminated in a vision of the Lord Jesus in the Abbey on Iona. He said to me that my cancer was the attempt by the Evil One to destroy me, but He had the victory. That assurance has framed my life ever since.

In the hospital, on the evening following a pulmonary embolism—a very serious event!—the Spirit of God broke upon me with the awareness that whether I lived or died, I belonged to the Lord. That gave me an amazing peace in the midst of near death.

Cathy’s morning and evening prayers at my bedside were a profound strength, and always she ended with Ephesians 3:20-21. As she read this I would place my hands on my belly and think about God’s power working in me doing infinitely more than I can ask or imagining.

I discovered too the power of support—many hundreds of cards and letters, lots of flowers, and endless prayers. One story sums it up. At the First Presbyterian Church of Darlington, S.C., there is a men’s prayer breakfast once a month. I had never been there and did not know anyone in the congregation. But, at some point someone had heard me speak or read something I had published, and they decided to make me their prayer concern. Every month I received a card signed by about ten to 12 shaky signatures telling me they had prayer for me. A couple of years ago I was able to preach there and thank these men personally.

Some theological questions remain unanswered. Why cancer? Why was I healed when others with my condition die? The mystery of suffering is still unresolved. There is the awareness that life has a tragic dimension that is not explainable. Nevertheless, through it all some things have changed. I feel a bit more fragile. However, many people tell me I have a new strength, or at least my teaching, preaching, and writing have changed. I am told there is an edginess now, a clarity, a sense of urgency in my work. Maybe so. This much at least is clear to me: I feel I have been laid hold of by the Lord Jesus in some new way. I know with utter assurance of God’s love and companionship. And, I am convinced I have a purpose, and perhaps a gift, to preach the gospel in unambiguous terms: Jesus is Lord!

I close with this: even as I write I can feel again the emotions of gratitude and affection for all those who loved and prayed me through this. I received terrific medical care—my surgeon Dr. Timothy Jacob, my oncologist Dr. Jennifer Osborn, my GP Dr. David Morris, and the wonderful nurses at UPMC Passavant Cancer Unit. Thank you! And praise God from whom all blessings flow.

“Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20–21
Excerpts from Harris’ journal that was kept during her trip to Israel and Palestine. Visit www.pts.edu/trips to read her daily journal entries.

Thurs., Feb. 28

We left the hotel this morning at 8:30 and headed for the Church of the Nativity—the church built over the sight where Jesus was supposedly born. Actually, the site is three or four churches all built on top of and smashed against each other. As we approached the church(es), we walked past a police station featuring Palestinian soldiers with machine guns on the sidewalk. We had to walk into the road with oncoming traffic to avoid them. Once we passed the police, we continued up the hill to the church, making me wonder why, if Mary and Joseph had already been traveling by donkey for several days or even weeks, why they went up to one of the highest peaks in Bethlehem looking for lodging.
We entered the church at a place designated for Greek Orthodox worship. You could walk two feet without passing a thurible—there were hundreds of them in the space. Although there was no worship service going on at the time, we walked through other areas of the building (and the caves below it) to find three other worship services in different languages. Hearing all of the different groups singing familiar songs in different languages at the same time highlighted the universality of the place. Eventually our group found our way to the cave and tomb of St. Jerome (the place where he lived for 13 years and translated the Bible from its original Greek and Hebrew into Latin) where we too sang. I felt rather humbled worshiping in my native English while standing in the same room that Jerome first translated the Bible into a language other than its first language—almost as if Jerome had pioneered this idea of encountering God in a language that we encounter the world in.

Before leaving, we waited in a very long line to see the place where they actually believe Jesus was born. On the floor was a 14-point star with a bowl of holy water in the middle. However, the star was located under a low mantle so even to see it required bowing or kneeling. Other visitors to the site (not from our group) had brought the baby Jesus from their nativity sets at home because they believed that having it in the holy place would make it a blessed object. They would approach the star, kneel, put the nativity Jesus on top and say a prayer before the priests at the church would clap their hands loudly and hurry everyone along.

According to our tour guide Rula, the strongest evidence for this site being the actual site of the birthplace of Jesus was when archaeologists found massive graves for young children (under the age of two) and a few mothers that dated back to the early first century there. They believe these are the bodies of the children (and a few mothers protecting their children) that King Herod had slaughtered when he was trying to murder Jesus. Apparently, the presence of these bodies near the birthplace of Jesus would’ve been an intentional effort to mock those who believed in the birth of this holy child at this place. It almost seems as if everywhere over here that is a good and holy place is somehow also a horrible and tainted place. This wonderful place where Jesus was born and Christians have gathered to pray and worship for centuries also contains the bodies of hundreds of children murdered at the hands of an angry tyrant—just like the city of Jerusalem is surrounded with military vehicles or the city of Bethlehem has armed guards standing on the sidewalk.

As we left the city of Bethlehem on our way to Jericho, we had to cross back through the separation wall that split areas of Palestinian and Israeli rule. The bus became absolutely quiet as two guards boarded the bus with machine guns. Although Rula had warned us that the guards might do this, nothing quite prepares you to sit a few feet from an assault weapon as the guards look up and down each aisle. Nothing prepares you to realize that one of the guards couldn’t have been any older than 15 or 16. At 15, I was learning to drive, not how to operate a machine gun. I was sitting in high school diagramming sentences, and auditioning for our school’s spring show of Doblé Gillis—not walking on buses of foreign people checking for Palestinian stow-aways. In fact, I’m not sure I breathed for the whole two minutes they were on the bus.

Attached to Temptation Restaurant was a series of stores for shopping and a courtyard area where you could ride a camel. After realizing that I had no idea when I’d ever have the opportunity in my life to ride a camel again, I paid my money and got in line (photographic evidence is available). The first camel I tried was having a rather rough day and chose to grunt, gurgle, and eventually spit while I was on its back. In fact, he spit upward into the air, showering the man driving the camel with a rather disgusting spray of whatever gross things come out of a camel’s mouth. Half-way through the trip around the courtyard, the camel stopped and sat down and refused to get up again. Thinking my camel ride was over (and really a little relieved), I started to walk back to my friends. However, the camel owners brought out a second camel and insisted (despite my objections) that I try again. Let us simply say that by the end of the ride, my knuckles were white from gripping the saddle so tightly, my shoes were smelly from stepping in camel dung, my legs were a little shaky from the awkward way one must ride a camel, and my brain thinks that riding a camel twice in one’s life is more than adequate.

Next, we drove through another series of military checkpoints on our way to Bethany (according to Rula, this country has more than 500 military checkpoints!). Bethany is the hometown of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Once we arrived, Dr. Barnes [trip advisor] explained to us why he specifically was interested in us visiting this site. Twenty-seven years ago, when he first visited the Holy Land, he saw the tomb of Lazarus. He walked down 20 steep stairs and then crawled the four or five feet to stand for a few moments in the six feet by six feet poorly lit tomb where Lazarus was laid. When Jesus decided to raise Lazarus (according to John’s account), Jesus didn’t go inside the tomb to remove Lazarus; instead, Jesus stayed outside and beckoned Lazarus to raise and come out. Dr. Barnes saw this theologically as Jesus calling Lazarus (and all of us) into a new creation. When each of us experiences the times in our lives when we are in a deep, dark place because of death or loss or personal tragedy, Jesus doesn’t come into the tomb with us like he didn’t go into Lazarus’ tomb. Instead, Jesus calls us into a new creation into a new life with Jesus.
MY PRAYER FOR HAITI

An excerpt taken from M.Div. student Carrie Hanson’s journal detailing her mission trip to Haiti.

Feb. 29, 2008

We got up around 4:30 this morning to get ready for a long day in the mountains. The ride up the mountain was beautiful as the sun was just beginning to rise. Everything just seemed to come to life. April Leese, a former PTS graduate who now works with the Comprehensive Development Project in Haiti, said that everything looks greener than it really is this early in the morning. God, your creation is beautiful. I tried to prepare for the hiking today by doing some mental visualization last night. I knew it was going to be difficult. The plan was to hike to two different family homes and then out in a 7.5 mile loop, the end of which would be straight up and fluctuating between 30-50 degree grade.

We hiked a couple of miles to the first work site. Most of the team had to entertain themselves while Rick Land (one of the CODEP directors), April, and the four animators installed the cistern. Some of us got a chance to sift out rocks from the dirt. Fellow PTS student Helen Darsie gave it a try and found the practice quite a bit different from sifting through dirt at an excavation site. Some of us handed hammers, wood, or other tools to the workers every now and then as needed. Some of us prayed for the family and for rain to come and fill the cistern. I played with a little girl named Kednya. She was so shy. Lord, I pray that the hard work of Kednya’s parents will pay off for her and her brother Ramon’s generation.

The land here is dry, but there’s quite a bit of promise. Some of the trees these folks have planted look like they might fill in nicely over the next five to 10 years. Compared to what this area used to look like, this is amazing work. It’s all due to the Haitian workers in the CODEP project. Rick said he was so impressed and excited to see all the progress. Lord, I pray that no poachers will catch wind of the good work these people have done, that these trees would be allowed to continue growing and not be cut down and stolen. Put your hedge of protection around these families, just as they plant protective hedgerows throughout this land, collecting the soil so that it may begin to be restored and later to bear witness to you by producing good fruit in due season.

Each family in CODEP is able to earn a cistern by planting thousands of trees and caring for them. The cisterns will collect the rain water to be used for cooking, cleaning, and whatever else the family needs. This is going to save so much time. Here in the mountains there is no running water. Two to three times a day people, usually women and children, have to climb down the mountainside to the creek, gather water in five-gallon buckets, and then hike back up the mountain. This process takes many hours, especially for people who live far away from any water source.

Once the first cistern was installed the family invited us inside a small room for finger bread and sweet Haitian coffee. It was so wonderful! I am always overwhelmed at the thoughtfulness and hospitality of the Haitian people, and I love their coffee. After sharing bread, breaking it, and dipping it into the coffee, it hit me that we were sharing in a sort of communion. Coffee is grown here and shared often as a common meal with bread. As we broke off pieces of bread and dipped them in the sweet coffee I was remembering Christ’s death and celebrating the Resurrection with new brothers and sisters. Once we were all finished we met together and prayed with the family. Rick thanked them for all their hard work in CODEP, encouraging them, saying that not only did they earn the cistern, but they are also participating with God in the restoration of creation.

It took us another hour to hike further in to the next site. When we arrived we realized we were in for a bit more work. The house was built on hard mountain rock. The workers had to use pick axes to dig their way through it in order to place the cistern. Though the process took a little bit longer, it was such an amazing experience. While we were there one of the members of our group had an unusual encounter with the local wildlife. As she was squatting down in a very compromising position she noticed a bit of movement about an arm’s length away to her right. What emerged was a very large tarantula, perhaps wondering what all the commotion was so near her hovel. Needless to say, she scrambled her way back up the mountain and a bunch of us hustled down to take pictures.

When we returned to the CODEP compound later that afternoon most of us went immediately into the refreshing ocean water to cool off. Then we played with all the kids who live around the beach area. It was our last night and even though we were all exhausted from the hike, we wanted to spend time with them, loving them, and being loved in return. Lord, protect these children. Draw them deeper into your living Word, Jesus Christ, and into your will for them. Help them to know your love and to seek your face. Nurture the older kids who are becoming leaders in this small community. May they grow to serve you in any way they can. Thank you for their love and for the blessing they have been in my life. In the name of Jesus, Amen.
OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

Little did we know that we would experience the phenomenon of hope during our five day assignment.

The 12-member group was in route to the Olive Tree Volunteer Village where we were immediately on a first name basis with Chuck the director. When we arrived we did not know what to expect; we were all just willing to serve the community. Chuck strongly encouraged us to drop our tools and listen to the stories of the people who had survived the chaos of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the resultant levee break. He made sure that we knew that our ultimate goal was to repair lives.

On Monday morning we were all oriented, assigned a home and a site manager. Our group would be serving the Martin family. Mr. Martin had a reputation for stopping by and encouraging workers. Our group was responsible for three projects, hanging drywall, installing insulation, and inserting windows. Inside we found a spacious one story home with beams and studs in place without any distinguishable rooms. Broken into groups, we were oriented to the intended floor plan and began transforming the open space.

Mrs. Martin was not enthused about moving back to the disconnected transplanted neighborhood. The house to the right of their home was abandoned and the house to the left had a FEMA trailer on the front lawn. The once friendly neighborhood had begun to resemble a ghost town. Fortunately, a home owner across the street came by everyday and unlocked the doors of her renovated house so that we could freely use the bathroom facilities. Unfortunately, the owner was not a former member of the neighborhood, but had purchased and renovated the house to be used as rental property.

By the time Mrs. Martin visited the house the bedrooms were completely dry-walled with the windows installed. The hallways and bathrooms were also visible. When she walked in and saw the progress, her eyes filled with tears and her hope was restored. She was overjoyed and could see the potential of a home. I was thankful to be a part of a group of people who would forsake a week of reprieve from grueling classes to travel for two days to restore hope out of chaos.

Later that day, our group toured the devastated Ninth Ward, St Bernard Parish, Musician’s Row, Super Dome, and French Quarter. Even though it was only a glimpse of the destruction, it was very devastating and disturbing. We started in the elite neighborhoods noticing the watermarks circling the mansions. Then we moved to the poorer sections of town. At times we were observing rows of cinder blocks. The homes had been washed away. The view resembled a cemetery of tombstones—symbolic of a dead neighborhood.

How could those rebuilding return to a ghostly town?

It was on Thursday that we met Walter. He was a transplant to the neighborhood. His family home was located in the lower Ninth Ward and had been destroyed when the levee was breached. He had decided to ride the storm out at home—then the levee broke. His initial thought at the onset of disaster was that the levee had been deliberately destroyed as in times past to save the high lands. After the breach in the levee, Walter spent three days in his attic in waist-high water sleeping on his roof at night until he was rescued by boat. He was reunited with some friends who were on their way to the Super Dome. Walter was determined not to go to the stadium. He was eight years old when he experienced his first intentional levee breach. He did not want to relive the same hysterical crowd of his youth, so he wandered away from his friends.

He set out on his own walking along the hill side to avoid the submerged parked cars in pitch dark. A boater offered him a ride to the location of his choice for his help navigating the waters. Walter found refuge at a school where they regularly dropped water and food from helicopters until the floods receded. From the school he was taken to Mississippi by bus and then flown to Florida. Because of his love for the city of New Orleans, he returned. As of our visit in late February Walter had not been reunited with his family. He knows that they are alive because he has talked with people who have seen them since the disaster.

We later met Annette. She opened her house daily for the relief of strangers. Annette is a nurse who was caring for other people when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. Her shift had been long over but she was unwilling to leave her distressed patients. She finally left and rushed to the Super Dome in order to locate her family. Upon arrival she searched and could not find them. When she had given up she returned to her car. As she was preparing to leave a bus arrived and her family disembarked. After finding her family and sending them to a safer place, she returned to the hospital.

Many months following our return when I shared these stories with others, I found it difficult to recover the joy of the Martins’, the hospitality of Annette, and the contentment of Walter. Often I found myself so deep in sorrow for those who were still estranged from their families, returning to ghostly neighborhoods, and homeless that it was hard to lift the mood of my presentation. I realize that we could not help everyone but I am thankful for the opportunities afforded us to help a few.
Our team was standing outside on the porch of the hotel room when Eileen finished reading Psalm 121. Our vigil was over. The dawn had just started to edge its way over the horizon, and our group had gathered together after a long night.

We hadn’t gone to sleep. Our team decided to hold a vigil that night in Southeast Asia. We started at Psalm 1 and read the Psalms aloud, one after another; taking turns while sitting on a bench outside. We read the Psalms, sang, and prayed for God’s protection over us and the missionaries who currently live and work there. We prayed for those who have never heard the Gospel. We prayed for Southeast Asia.

Darren Belajac, Chris and Eileen Brown, Tara Goodin, Amanda Hoover, myself, and Don Dawson, director of World Mission Initiative, traveled to Southeast Asia. We went to visit missionaries, strengthen our partnership with the Presbyterian Church there, and, at least in my case, learn about the importance and power of prayer. I say that because prayer has always been a part of my Christian faith. But now, thanks to my trip with WMI, I look at prayer in a whole new way. The trip to Southeast Asia showed me first-hand that prayer is a powerful tool, and an absolutely vital element in the task of the Great Commission.

Since 2003, a group at PTS has been praying for the church in Southeast Asia and for an Unreached People Group whom we have adopted there. Eighty-one percent of this minority group has never heard the gospel or the name of Jesus Christ. But, thanks to the Christians’ willingness to stand up to government persecution, and our prayerful support of their ministry, more and more villagers are learning about Jesus. The church is growing outside of the villages, too.

One night, we visited a house church in the city. The pastor told us that the church was growing so fast that they couldn’t meet upstairs anymore. They now had so many people coming to the worship services that meeting on the second floor was unsafe, as the floor could easily give out. Now that is what I call church growth! It’s also what I call an answered prayer.

During the service that same evening, an elderly woman raised her hand. She asked everyone to pray for her strength and health. She also asked that God would provide her with a motorbike. She had, in one year, helped 60 people in her small town turn their lives over to Christ, and now, she believed God was calling her to tell even more people about Jesus in other towns. She smiled, looked around the room, and humbly thanked everyone for their prayers.

At that moment, Don walked over to her and knelt down, placing his hands over her bare feet. Don prayed aloud, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news…” (Isaiah 52:7). Our entire team joined in, praying for this woman, the church, the pastors, and the country. I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in the room with us that night, and I know, without a doubt, that God’s hand was on that woman as we prayed for her.

I truly believe that our partnership and our constant prayer for the church in Southeast Asia is making a difference. In 2003, Don and a group of students and faculty members started the Great Commission Team at the Seminary. This group meets every Friday over lunch to pray for the partnership in Southeast Asia, the missionaries, and for the Unreached People Group. I had been going to the prayer meetings before the trip, but once I was actually there in Southeast Asia, I realized I was seeing our prayer requests in action. On our way home, I told Don that I felt called to lead the Great Commission Team at PTS next year.

Thanks to the WMI trip to Southeast Asia, my prayer life will never be the same. I set aside time each and every day to pray specifically for the Seminary’s partnership there. And I pray differently now, with a new sense of faith and hope that one day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! I look forward to leading the prayer meetings and to helping more and more people learn more about how they can, through prayer, join in the Great Commission by praying not only for Southeast Asia but for the world.

Endnotes

1 Asia Harvest, The Peoples of Vietnam (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Darawan Printing, 2001), 11.
Dr. Belden Lane, theology professor at St. Louis University, presented a three-part talk on “Ravished by Beauty: Nature, Desire, and Ecology in the Reformed Tradition” during the annual Schaff Lectures held in March.

Lane took on difficult theological and biblical issues around the nature and purpose of desire. Pejoratively speaking, believers in Reformed dogma are portrayed as being anti-sensual, but Lane’s lectures focused on many Reformed and Puritan (two strong strains of belief and cultural formation in America) sermons, letters, and the like that display a deep passion for God and creation.

During these lectures, Lane also addressed why such Puritanical stereotypes have arisen as they have. He believes that these stereotypes are what they are because these past believers had such inward/spiritual passion that they needed strong outward rules.

The Rev. Dr. Steven Tuell, associate professor of Old Testament, said, “I was taken by his notion of relational theology, and of the natural world as an arena in which God can be encountered.” Tuell also thought that the lectures were an encouragement to students who attended as well. “If students came away open to a sense of God’s presence in the wonder and beauty of creation, they will have been well served,” Tuell said.

After the lectures, Lane attended a luncheon in his honor and fielded questions from eager PTS faculty. President Carl asked about a strategic plan for what ministers need to know and do as they go into the parish ministry.

“Ministers must maintain the best intellectual integrity possible, but also need the heart,” Lane said.

The Rev. Dr. John Burgess, the James Henry Snowden professor of systematic theology, asked about the privilege of hearing over the other senses in the Reformed tradition.

“Image could be idolatry for Calvin so he privileges hearing the word,” Lane said. “What he’s trying to do is marry his Presbyterian convictions with his Catholic context, which creates a small backlash against visual culture.”

After his lectures and the faculty luncheon, Lane sat down with Panorama to field a few more questions.

P: What can the Church do to regain the sensual in a Reformed manner?

BL: There is no part of the church year dedicated to God as Creator. I would propose a season from late August through October 4th, Feast Day of St. Assissi, that would focus on God as Creator. We could also include more Psalmic worship, which is multi-species in its design. In the Psalms, the mountains, sea, birds, everything all praise God. The question becomes, how can we think about how we widen the communion of the saints? Finally, just put more windows in the church, make the sanctuary a place that is more than cerebral.

P: Explain more what “Psalmic worship” is.

BL: Psalmic worship is embodied worship. Eighty parts of the body are mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures—and the brain is not one of them! God does not disdain to attend to every part of our bodies, as well as our minds and souls.

P: I know you mentioned this some in your lectures, but how did the Church come to the place it finds itself today?

BL: After Calvin and Edwards there was a tendency to tighten things up. In the initial days of the Reformation there’s a great vitality. However, the fighting between the Catholic counter-Reformation and the newly-created Reformed Orthodoxy ends this vitality. It was just too hard to maintain lively dialogue and tension between awe and beauty.
LOVE GOD, LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR...

Held in April, the Metro-Urban Institute’s Urban Intensive weekend focused on “Race, Religion, and Reconciliation: A Conversation About Saving Our Communities.” During the three-day conference, lectures and discussions highlighted societal and theological issues arising from privilege based on race, ethnicity, or socio-economic class.

The Rev. Dr. Randy Bush, pastor of East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh began opening the doors of awareness at the pre-conference luncheon by offering “Insights from the Cross and the Lynching Tree” (a research focus and conversation initiated by author James Cone). At the opening session the Rev. Dr. Ronald E. Peters, Henry L. Hillman associate professor of urban ministry and director of the Metro-Urban Institute explored racial intolerances and conversations highlighted in secular media. Discrimination based on religious beliefs and biases were brought to the forefront during the interfaith conversation of Rabbi James Gibson (Temple Sinai), Syed Farooq Hussaini (Islamic Center), and the Rev. Dr. Susan Kendall (PTS). The Rev. DeNeice Welch ’04 preached the evening worship service. She challenged those present with her exhortation of Hagar and Sarai (Genesis 16:1)—the slave master’s wife: reconciliation with historic anger.

The second day of the UIW conference offered the more than 150 in attendance a series of morning workshops and panel discussions. The Rev. Dr. John Wallace (School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh), Minister Franki L. Williams (Diversity Affairs, University of Pittsburgh), and the Rev. Dr. Miquel A. De La Torre (Iliff School of Theology) drew attention to statistical evidence of systemic disparities, from their perspectives (working in the academy and the church) and how faith beliefs inform sociological realities. Professor Olali David Omunukuma (University of Ibadan, Nigeria) presented a workshop dealing with discrimination, prejudices, and religious conflicts based on tribal ethnicity and language. He revealed that in Nigeria, difference in skin color was not the cause of discrimination; rather it was religion, language, and socio-economic class distinctions. The Rev. Dr. Rockwell Dillaman (Allegheny Center Alliance Church) and the Rev. Thelma Mitchell (Dunamis Baptist Church) shared viewpoints on cross-cultural ministry during their workshop. Individuals gained insights on challenges and rewards associated with ministering to the community in the shadow of the church. Conference participants interested in the process of intentionally seeking to build an interracial church were provided practical advice in the workshop offered by the Rev. Paul Roberts (Eastminster Presbyterian Church) and the Rev. Dr. Rodger Woodworth (New Hope Evangelical Presbyterian Church). The discussions suggested a theological certainty that reconciliation of humanity-to-humanity is a process of mutual understanding of oneness in the sight of God.

In the first plenary session, De La Torre asked conference attendees to rethink reconciliation. He suggested application of Christian biblical ethics should challenge us to work toward liberating society of systemic racism, prejudice, and intolerance. Challenges continued in the plenary presentation of Dr. Vincent Wimbush (Claremont Graduate University). Wimbush discussed the use of Scriptures in society and culture and the mythological understandings...

Galatians 3:28 reveals that God is no respecter of person—There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Giving Makes an Eternal Difference

By Tom Pappalardo
Vice President for Strategic Advancement and Marketing

A few weeks ago a couple who have been modest donors to the Seminary called and scheduled an appointment to visit with President Carl and myself. They indicated that they wanted to make a special gift to the Seminary.

We were surprised to learn during our meeting with them that they had been moved by God after reading a letter from President Carl in a previous issue of Panorama regarding the importance of scholarship aid for our students. They said that they wanted to be a part of “equipping the saints,” our students, by establishing a very generous endowment to support those who will bring the good news of Jesus Christ to children, women, and men. What greater privilege, they said than to be a part of that through a gift to the Seminary.

Endowments for scholarship can be established with a gift of as little as $25,000. Once established, $1250 annually is awarded to students as a named scholarship to ensure that these funds are available in the future. This aid to our students helps them confirm that God has called them to ministry. It provides them with the confidence that God will open the doors and provide the resources necessary to draw people to God not only as they prepare for ministry but also once they serve in ministry.

If you would also like to establish a scholarship endowment to honor someone important to you and to further the work that God is doing through the ministry of Pittsburgh Seminary graduates, please call the Advancement Office at 412-441-3304 ext. 2107. Your gift will make an eternal difference in the lives of those touched by a Pittsburgh Seminary graduate!

held. The preacher for the evening, the Rev. Dr. Christopher Alan Bullock (Canaan Baptist Church), issued a challenge for the church to live out its post-benediction life of service. Bullock declared human reconciliation, justice, and systemic change can only come about when we take to heart the gospel engaging in actions that provide substance and meaning to religious rhetoric.

The last day featured a series of small group meetings geared for reflection and strategy. Leading up to the meeting was a spirit-filled and unifying closing worship service. When the Rev. Dr. Johnnie Monroe (Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church) spoke, the spiritual presence of God was acknowledged. Monroe preached a power-filled word of reconciliation. Only the hardest of hearts could depart without understanding God’s call to be reconciled—humanity-to-humanity and humanity-to-God. How can we say we love God and not love one another?

This year’s conference highlighted how the ability to reconcile humanity-to-humanity and humanity-to-God is enhanced by an understanding of theology and recognition of realities. The ultimate theological impact and importance and perspective on systemic issues associated with race, religion, and reconciliation will be revealed as expectations of “privilege” diminish, whether based on religion or birth, race, ethnicity, gender, class, or other factors.

The Metro-Urban Institute wishes to acknowledge the passing of Syed Farooq Hussaini, director of interfaith relations for the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, May 18, 2008 after a long battle with kidney disease. He was a well-respected frequent lecturer on Islam and advocate of interfaith understanding and reconciliation. His voice will be missed!
ALUMNAE/I DAYS 2008

Come and See What God has Done!

Nearly 200 alums of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary flooded the halls, exchanged memories of years past, and reflected on their faith journeys since leaving campus during the annual 2008 Alumnae/i Days, “Come and See What God has Done!” Held April 23-25, alums enjoyed presentations and worship services by Distinguished Alumnae/i. The Rev. Dr. Leon Denius Pamphile ‘74 presented “Thoughts on Being Sent”; the Rev. Dr. Richard Eyster Sigler ’52 preached in chapel; the Rev. Albert Schartner ’56/’61 spoke on “The Mission of the Church to the Elderly”; and the Rev. Dr. Joseph D. Small ’66 discussed “Theology in, with, and for the Church.” In conjunction with Alumnae/i Days, the Seminary also hosted the annual Albright-Deering Methodist Lectureship with Dr. Marjorie Suchocki, the J. Hubert Henderson Conference on Church and Ministry with Dr. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, and archaeology lecture “Excavating the Galilean House: Jesus, Judaism, and Roman Rule” with Dr. Jonathan Reed. In addition to a number of presentations, alums also enjoyed the PTS Choir Spring Concert, reunion luncheons, a Pittsburgh city tour, and reunion banquet. See you again April 29–May 1 for the 2009 Alumnae/i Days!
The Rev. Dr. Leon D. Pamphile ’74
Distinguished Alumnus in Academia

A native of Haiti, Leon D. Pamphile ’74, educator and independent scholar, has dedicated his ministry to promoting education and health care in his national country. Pamphile’s research focuses on the relations between Haiti and the United States with emphasis on the ties linking Haitians and African Americans. In his book *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope* (2001), he highlights the common struggle of these two peoples to conquer slavery, racism, discrimination, and the socioeconomic sequels stemming from this historical predicament.

In 1983, Pamphile founded the Functional Literacy Ministry of Haiti Inc., (known as Alliance d’Action Chrétienne (AAC) in Haiti) a 501(c3) organization. FLM Haiti operates 40 literacy centers currently serving 1100 participants and a primary school that is attended by 500 students. Pamphile continues to serve as the executive director of FLM Haiti and is the pastor of the First Church of God of New Kensington, Pa.

The Rev. Albert Schartner ’56/’61
Distinguished Alumnus in Specialized Ministry

In 1964, the Rev. Albert Schartner ’56/’61 accepted a call from Carlisle Presbytery that would lead to an extensive career focused on housing for the aging. With the growing number of elderly, the rapidly increasing life span, and the expanding medical care programs, the church-related Presbyterian Home of Central Pennsylvania (PHI) was booming. Schartner, then CEO of these “Homelike Homes,” oversaw it all.

He served at Clen-Moore Presbyterian Church, New Castle, Pa.; Dormont Presbyterian Church, Dormont, Pa.; and Bethel Presbyterian Church, Bethel Park, Pa. On a scholarship, Schartner studied for one year at the Reformed University Seminary in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

In the 10 years since his retirement, Schartner has enjoyed playing the violin with the Pittsburgh Philharmonic Orchestra and spending time with his family.

The Rev. Dr. Richard E. Sigler ’52
Distinguished Alumnus in Pastoral Ministry

The Rev. Dr. Richard E. Sigler ’52 served pastorates at Centre (Loysville, Pa.) and New Bloomfield (New Bloomfield, Pa.) Presbyterian Churches; Trinity Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh; and Wayne Presbyterian Church, Wayne, Pa. Between his first and second pastorates Sigler served Western Seminary as its first director of admissions and later became director of development, public relations, and alumnae/i relations in the merged PTS.

For 13 years Sigler served as Executive Presbyter of Kiskiminetas Presbytery. During that time he was elected to a one year term as Moderator of the Synod of the Trinity, followed by a year as Chair of Synod Council.

Since retirement in 1995, Sigler has served interim pastorates and he continues to lead worship and preach throughout the state, often consulting with congregations about stewardship.

The Rev. Dr. Joseph D. Small ’66
Distinguished Alumnus in Specialized Ministry

For 20 years Joseph D. Small ’66 has worked for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in one capacity or another. He now serves as director of theology worship and education for the General Assembly Council. In this capacity, he directs the work of the offices of Theology and Worship, Theological Education, Christian Formation, and Christian Education, as well as Congregational Ministries Publishing.


Additional information can be found online at www.pts.edu/alumnidays. Read full bios, view photo galleries, and listen to presentation excerpts.
ANNUAL LECTURESHIPS DRAW CROWD TO CAMPUS

alum candid from top to bottom
The Rev. Albert Schartner ‘56/’61
Distinguished Alumnus in Specialized Ministry

The Rev. Dr. Leon D. Pamphile ’74
Distinguished Alumnus in Academia

The Rev. Dr. Richard E. Sigler ’52
Distinguished Alumnus in Pastoral ministry

The Rev. Dr. Joseph D. Small ’66
Distinguished Alumnus in Specialized Ministry
“It’s a dangerous thing to participate in the love of God,” said Dr. Marjorie Suchocki as she delivered the 2008 Albright-Deering Lectures in Methodist Studies April 24. If we seek to be part of God’s love, Wesley believed, we will have—as God does—to love the whole world. Quoting regularly from Wesley’s A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Suchocki reminded her listeners that his understanding of divine love is in fact the deepest meaning of Christian perfection. Rather than a moralistic meaning, “perfection” indicated for Wesley a dynamic orientation of loving God with the whole heart. This central concern accepts that grace is the core of a Christian life, and that without grace, “there is nothing at all.” Nevertheless, Suchocki stressed with a wry smile—aimed undoubtedly at the Presbyterian audience where she formerly taught—Wesley believed strongly that grace is not irresistible. It is, however, persistent.

Suchocki taught at the Seminary from 1977-1983 and directed the Doctor of Ministry Program. Then she served as academic dean and professor of theology at Wesley Theological Seminary, before moving to Claremont School of Theology, where she held an endowed chair in theology and joint appointment at Claremont Graduate School until her retirement in 2002. She is an ordained United Methodist pastor, dating from her time at Wesley Seminary, where she says she first encountered John Wesley’s writings seriously and found that “she had come home.”

Among her other comments, Suchocki pointed out that Wesley stressed especially God’s omnipresence, that is, the reality that God is intimately present in all settings—in our lives, as well as in the lives of our neighbors and our enemies. This would even apply to the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, she noted, to laughs from the audience.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE

What is the nature of human uniqueness? This question is a major concern for both theology and science. A further question is whether these two seemingly so different disciplines simply speak past each other, or whether they can complement and enrich each other as they describe the uniqueness of human beings in our world. These questions formed the theme for three presentations by Dr. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, professor of theology and science at Princeton Theological Seminary, as he presented the annual Henderson Conference on Church and Ministry April 25.

Referring to conclusions that are emerging in two scientific disciples, evolutionary epistemology and paleoarchaeology, van Huyssteen noted that both point to a “naturalness” of religion. At the point some 40,000 years ago when homo sapiens first arrived on the scene, religious awareness appeared along with reasoning, symbolic, and ethical capacities. Van Huyssteen hastened to point out that this does not “prove” the truth of any given religious belief. Nevertheless, he asserted, this finding does indicate that science itself supports religious experience as an integral and valid part of human expression.

What about ethics? Van Huyssteen commented that scientific studies suggest that social interactions among apes display a kind of “proto-morality,” but only homo sapiens are capable of being morally good in the full sense. Evolution can explain how morality developed, he argued, by employing the concept of cultural embeddedness. However, this does not justify the truth of our moral positions or provide a basis for maintaining that ethics are binding on human beings. Only revelation, van Huyssteen concluded, can provide a sufficient justification for morality.
Kimberly Tillotson Fleming, CFA

After completing a summer internship at her family’s Pittsburgh-based investment firm, Kimberly Tillotson Fleming soon decided that she would follow her father’s and grandfather’s lead and work in the business world. Fleming attended Northwestern University originally planning to pursue the physical therapy program and later changed her major to business and economics.

After college she worked as a research analyst and institutional money manager in Chicago and San Francisco for seven years before heading back to her hometown in 1987 to become president of the family’s company, Hefren-Tillotson Inc.

In 2001, Hefron-Tilloston was honored as the “#1 Best Place to Work in Pennsylvania.” Fleming explains, “We believe it is through our ‘family-oriented culture’ of teamwork, integrity, and mutual respect that we create an environment in which our employees grow and develop as both financial services professionals and, most importantly, as people.”

The company has not been the only award-winner. Fleming received the 2005 YMCA “A Tribute to Women Leadership” Award and the 2003 Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development “Pennsylvania’s 50 Best Women in Business” Award.

Fleming is a Chartered Financial Analyst charter holder and has completed the Center for Fiduciary Studies Certification program at the University of Pittsburgh to become an accredited investment fiduciary auditor. In addition, Fleming is a session member at Hiland Presbyterian Church and a youth leader. She is married with two teenage sons.

The Rev. Dr. James D. Miller

As Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Rev. Dr. James Miller has served five congregations since his ordination in 1983. Currently at First Presbyterian Church, Tulsa, Okla., Miller is head of staff of the 2,700-member congregation.

Miller earned his degrees from Wheaton College (bachelor’s), Princeton Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and the University of Edinburgh, Scotland (doctorate). For four years following seminary, he served as an adjunct professor of Greek at Wheaton.

After completing his dissertation focusing on the compositional questions relating the Pastoral Letters (I and II Timothy and Titus), the Cambridge University Press published his work was as part of the Cambridge New Testament Monograph.

In service to the larger church, Miller was the moderator of the Presbytery Council, Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery in 2006; moderator of the presbytery in 2005; commissioner to the 209th General Assembly, PC(USA); and has served on a number of committees.

“When in conversation with you he has the gift of making you feel you are the most interesting and important person he could find to spend time with,” said the Rev. Andrew Purves, Hugh Thomson Kerr professor of pastoral theology. “He will bring warm piety, theological acuity, and depth of pastoral wisdom to his service on the Board. Also, I get to spend a little time twice a year with a colleague I delight to call my friend."

Miller is married with three children.
Stephanie K. Simmons

The youngest daughter of seven, Stephanie Simmons has been spiritually grounded in the church since an early age. An ordained deacon at Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Simmons is active in the Music and Worship, Evangelism, and Presbyterian Women ministries, past co-chair of the anniversary committee, and editor of the church newsletter.

Simmons earned her associate’s from ICM School of Business, bachelor’s from the University of Phoenix, master’s certificate from Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business, and master’s from Robert Morris University. She is the project director in the information services department of Giant Eagle Inc. Simmons has worked there for nearly 25 years and was honored with the company’s highest award last year.

A godmother of seven, an aunt to 14, and most recently a step mother to two sons, Simmons lives by the old adage “To whom much is given, much is expected.” She spends her time with youth—specifically young women—encouraging, coaching, and mentoring them.

A happy newlywed following her marriage one year ago, Simmons is married to William Simmons, director of the Allegheny County Shuman Juvenile Detention Center.

“Stephanie brings exuberantly joyful faith and time-honored gifts for technology and human resources to share with us in her service at the Seminary,” said the Rev. Lisa Dormire ’86, vice president for seminary relations.

The Rev. Dr. Robert L. Kelley Jr. ’51

Known for his outstanding abilities in pastoral care, Bob Kelley served PTS in an instructional capacity from 1951-1997. Upon his retirement, Kelley became the emeritus G. Albert Shoemaker professor of Bible and archaeology, the chair that he held while teaching.

More than a decade since his retirement, Kelley continues to stay in touch with hundreds of former students, literally keeping a file on each. “From the day he met you, he knew your name and never forgot it,” said the Rev. Carolyn Cranston ’99, director of alumnae/i and church relations and Kelley’s former student. “As a student Bob Kelley exemplified to me what it meant to have a pastor’s heart.”

 Kelley earned his bachelor’s from the University of Pittsburgh, M.Div. from PTS, Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and doctorate from Princeton University. He was also awarded the D.Min. degree from Tarkio College, Mo.

Kelley served on the PTS Alumnae/i Council for six years and as chair of the Nominating Committee. In 2000, he was honored with the Distinguished Alumnus Award for outstanding service in academia. An honorably retired ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Kelley stays active by teaching and preaching in many congregations. He serves on the Pastors Encouraging and Listening (PEAL) team of the Pittsburgh Presbytery.

Kelley is married with two adult children.

William Allen Hogge, M.D. ’08

For more than 30 years Dr. Allen Hogge ’08 has been caring for patients, publishing research, and specializing in clinical genetics. Hogge spends his time at Magee-Women’s Research Institute as senior investigator and the University of Pittsburgh as the Milton Lawrence McCall professor and chair of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences. At the university, Hogge teaches human genetics and is the director of the Center for Medical Genetics.

Most recently he chaired a key bioethics panel, the Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee, which routinely hears complex proposals for politically and ethically sensitive research.

“Dr. Hogge is an outstanding clinician and researcher who has been particularly adept at mentoring medical genetics fellows and residents,” said Arthur S. Levine, M.D., senior vice chancellor, health sciences, and dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. “For years now he has been a steady force for promoting women’s health in the region, and I have no doubt he will make great contributions in the future.”

Hogge is a graduate of the University of Virginia, completed his residency at the University of Virginia Hospital, and postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California. He is a member of numerous professional and scientific societies and the recipient of various awards.

An ordained elder of Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Hogge is married with two daughters and four grandchildren.
You are a Mist

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.” Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that” (James 4:13–15).

This is probably not the most felicitous text to be read at a commencement. As one who has devoted many years to the study of Paul’s letters, I in fact had various, more cheerful passages from Paul in mind as I prepared for today. But, risking Martin Luther’s scorn, I kept leaning toward James. This is a rich text with many sermon possibilities, from among which I would like to highlight a few themes. The first is the contrast between ordinary human life and the Christian life. The second is the common feature of both, the unpredictability, brevity, and apparent meaninglessness of all human life.

They say—whoever they are—“Life is short.” We believe this and pass this wisdom along to others. I have said it many times myself, despite the fact that, as a comedian once pointed out, life is actually the longest thing we will experience. Everything, even the longest lasting thing we experience, happens within life. But, we understand the spirit of what is meant, as also the spirit of the prudent advice “Life is uncertain; eat dessert first.” This I have done many times. It is a happy and delicious philosophy of life. If you see me at the reception heading for the sweets, you will understand and forgive my bumper-sticker ethics.

Of course, the text from James involves something much more serious than reversing the order of a proper meal. James does not give us a catchy philosophy of life, but rather bids us ask the all-important question “What is your life?” so that we may examine carefully how we ought to live. As much as some find it morbid to do, I have visited Deathclock.com on the Web, which calculates one’s expected death date and conveniently provides a clock that counts down to it in seconds. According to Deathclock.com, I am expected to die Wed., June 16, 2038—so, I am leaving that date open in my calendar. Also according to that website, I have about 948,700,000 seconds left to live.

O would that we knew exactly when we are to die! O would that we could plan our life accordingly! Human beings are the only animals conscious of their own mortality and life’s unpredictability. But, we live as if unaware of our condition. Without knowing “what tomorrow will bring,” we routinely say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making
money." However we fill in the blanks James has left for us in his Mad Libs description of the mundane life, the worldview expressed here mistakes the vast, dark, cold, silent universe as all that there is and as the ultimately meaningless stage on which we play all of our ultimately meaningless parts.

Into that common, secular worldview, James poses his short but devastating question and sobering insight: "What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." Ladies and gentlemen, you will all die. (You already know when I am expected to die.) This is neither good news nor bad news, but it is one fundamental, universal fact of human life that no one can avoid and that James would have us consider.

"What is your life?"

I delight in nagging questions like this. As a professor dedicated to the gadfly-pedagogy of Socrates, I like my students both shaken and stirred. I typically begin each semester at Westminster College by reminding my students, especially the first-year students that they will all die. After family and friends have indoctrinated them into thinking that the college years would be the best four years of their life, what better way to shake and stir them to deeper thinking than to serve up their mortality with a smile?

I myself thrived in college and sucked the marrow out of everyday, lamenting at graduation that I had to leave after only four brief years. I enjoyed a similarly fantastic three years of seminary, discovering the joys of theology, meeting my wife, wanting not to graduate. No one had told me—and I never would have guessed—that seminary would be three of the best years of my life. But, like college, seminary was "a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."

"What is your life?"

Every day that we live draws us one day closer to death, with or without reminders from our friends at Deathclock.com. This fact is a seeming tragedy because it is so true and unavoidable. But, according to James the tragedy is not that between now and 90 years from now most or all of us will die; rather, the real tragedy is that we live as if we can plan and determine our destinies. It is we Christians, who ought to know better, who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." It is we who strive for degrees, apply for jobs, compete for promotions, save for vacations, publish articles and books, and so on without "even know[ing] what tomorrow will bring," as James points out.

"What is your life?"

Like a Socratic sage, James insists that the unexamined life is not worth living. This quintessential question has been the driving engine behind a myriad philosophies and religions. It is the question form of the ancient Greek aphorism attributed to Thales (624–546 B.C.) and inscribed on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, γνῶθι σεαυτόν, know yourself, know yourself. Whether as a command or a question, the quest for the meaning of human life has been the centerpiece of all academic inquiry. It is not merely the question for mid-life; it is the relevant question at every stage of life, especially when we face desperate conditions.

Even though all the Y2K fears have come and gone with a mere whimper, the new millennium has certainly provided much material for the apocalyptic imagination and the millenarian industry. The earthquake in China 10 days ago has left an estimated 50,000 people dead, about 33,000 missing, nearly 300,000 injured, and about five million homeless. Ten days before that, a cyclone devastated Myanmar leaving 216,000 dead, about 220,000 missing, and around two million homeless. Last fall's wildfires in Southern California took only 14 lives and injured 70, but blazed for three weeks consuming 500,000 acres. And, we still remember the tsunami in 2004 that killed at least 231,000 people across coastal Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India. Such awesome disasters of earth, wind, fire, and water have left indelible reminders of human mortality and fragility that dwarf the loss of 1,800 lives in 2005 to Hurricane Katrina.

Conspiring with nature is also a lengthy list of human causes of suffering and death. While we have led mostly comfortable lives, the ongoing conflict in Darfur has caused about 300,000 deaths, and the violence in Iraq since March 2003, has claimed perhaps up to 600,000. But, in the shadows of the last century, even these gargantuan numbers seem insignificant: 15 million people died during the First World War (1914-18); nine million died during the Russian Civil War (1917-22) and an additional 20 million in Stalin's Soviet Union (1924-53); the Second World War (1937-45) took 55 million lives; and Mao Zedong's regime in the People's Republic of China (1949-75) killed 40 million. These mind-boggling, heart-numbing numbers do not include the numerically less significant atrocities and wars of the 20th century that would add some 50 million more.

Of course, we cannot ignore the more everyday fact that in just one year the cost of cereals has increased 89 percent along with many other food prices. Gasoline in my neighborhood is now $3.95 per gallon, and like people in Times Square waiting for the ball to drop on New Year's Eve, we keep watching the gas station sign every time we pass it. But, surely these immediate worries in our life seem so trivial in the larger picture that I briefly painted.

In the course of human history, every realm of knowledge, technology, and standards of living seem to have seen improvements; human beings now know more, can do more, and live longer and more comfortably than ever before. But, the one constant that has not seen improvements is human morality and ethics. The Augustinians and Calvinists among us have reasons to think, "We told you so." Human sin and depravity have not decreased, and there is no sign that that human condition will change any time soon—even if Pelagius was right.
It is no wonder that the current election campaign of hope and change has inspired especially the young people in our country. Perhaps they are responding instinctively to what resonates through the bleak picture of human life depicted in James, “you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (James 4:14), a truth expressed so powerfully in Shakespeare’s Macbeth:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

“What is your life?”

James knows this question can guide us, inspire us, stimulate us, annoy us, or even upset us because it is the religious question that wields the power to unmask the absurdity of human life devoid of God. And, it is this question from James that I wish to impress on you as you deservedly celebrate your accomplishments and commence living a life worthy of the degree you have earned.

A Little Lower Than God

James is correct, of course: we “do not even know what tomorrow will bring” (4:14). His Christian response is not only to ask his penetrating question about life but also to insist on the Christian stance in such an uncertain, fragile world: “If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that.” In this theocentric worldview, James appears pretty Presbyterian.

Consider Calvin’s comments on our James text: “Many, who ought to have depended on God’s providence, confidently settled what they were to do, and arranged their plans for a long time, as though they had many years at their own disposal.” Calvin agrees with James’ rebuke of “the arrogance of mind, that people should forget their own weakness, and speak thus presumptuously; for even the godly, who think humbly of themselves and acknowledge that their steps are guided by the will of God, may yet sometimes say … that they will do this or that.” Calvin applauds how “James shows the stupidity of those who disregard God’s providence and claim for themselves a whole year, though they had not a single moment in their own power.” Indeed, we forget that we are mortal and that we are not in control. Every form of insurance we buy reminds us of this truth.

In the light of the human condition, the maturity of faith is signaled by our assuming a humble position before God and recognizing with the Psalms that God has made us “a little lower than God” (Psalm 8:5). We do not and cannot know as God knows. No amount of theological education or number of degrees will exempt us from this truth—not even if the degrees are from Pittsburgh Seminary.

And, there is nothing like the Word of God to shake our confidence and hubris. All who enter seminary with high confidence in their knowledge of the Bible usually find themselves quickly overwhelmed by the discovery that all their biblical knowledge is barely the tip of the iceberg. And all who were sure about God’s will and eternal decrees learn quickly how right Augustine was to say, “Si enim comprehendis non est Deus” (If you understand it, it is not God.). As in all realms of knowledge, the more we learn, the more we become embarrassingly aware of what we do not know, the more degrees we pursue, the more profoundly we confess our learned ignorance.

Just as the mystery of God is not ours to possess or know fully, neither is the Word of God that bears witness to the mystery of God. Here, I am not talking about the Bible as a historical artifact of human culture. As you undoubtedly learned, the Bible is certainly that, and we should resist our Docetic impulses to make the Bible less than fully human, fully circumscribed by time and space, as all “facts” and artifacts are. But, we are convinced, and so we confess, even when beset by reasonable doubt, that the Bible points to and utters eternal truth that created space and time. As such, the Word of God can never be our possession; we are captive to it.

Just as it was true for the prophetic word to Israel, the Bible is the church’s greatest critic, not secularizing society or the “new atheists.” It is not the “four horsemen” of Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens who provide the greatest challenge to Christians—although certainly we should listen and learn from them. No, the most stinging words against us come from the likes of Moses, Elijah, Hosea, Paul, and, of course, Jesus. We must first hear them.

Yes, Jesus loves us—this we know, for the Bible tells us so. But, let us not forget that it is the very Lord we worship and the very Bible that tells us about him that should continue to be our harshest critic. To those who have been called and equipped to be public interpreters of God’s Word, I give this advice: may it read you as much as you read it.

If the Lord Wishes…

To counterbalance the near-depressing gravitas of James, let us happily remember the truths of Psalm 8, which celebrates not only God’s majesty but also our undeniable significance before God. The Psalmist
reaffirms the privileged position of human beings that the creation narratives of Genesis establish. That truth notwithstanding, it would be a mistake to let our heads become too big; there is wisdom in James, Calvin, and Barth, who want to make sure we know that we are not gods. We should pray Psalm 8 joyfully and gratefully, but we must do so with bended knees of humble trust in God and God’s immeasurable grace. The maturity of our trust in God must be tested against the bold imperative of the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy will be done.” For, as James says, we “do not even know what tomorrow will bring,” and we “are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.”

“What is your life?”

If our Christian approach to this most important of human questions takes seriously James’ claims, then we must think just as seriously about renewing the way we think and the way we live. The Christian approach to life does not necessarily change a hostile world or our circumstances in it. But, according to James, we should be changed, our eyes must learn to see differently and more clearly, our ears must be trained to hear the ever muted voice of God, and our hearts must learn to beat to the rhythms of God’s love song to all humanity.

As Christians, with degrees or not, we must let our life bear witness to the truth of faith as it is delivered through James:

“If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that.”

“If the Lord wishes, we will live ….”

“If the Lord wishes ….”

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Endnotes

2 Augustine, Sermo 117; PL 38, 663.
3 Cf. J. A. Bengel’s dictum in the Vorrede zur Handausgabe des Griechischen Neuen Testaments (1734): Te totum applica ad textum; rem totam applica ad te. (Apply yourself totally to the text; apply the thing totally to yourself. [more literally: Join your whole self to the text; join the whole text to you.])
GRADUATES

Master's Graduates

Dual Degree Grads Jill Terpstra and Andrew Weber

Inside East Liberty Presbyterian Church

M.Div. Graduate Karie Jarvis
MASTER OF DIVINITY

Michael Eric Beckstrom
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Karlin Lorne Bilcher
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Randall Vantine Boyer
McMurray, Pa.

William George Branning
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Christopher A. Brown
Delta, Colo.

Michael Daniel Casey Jr.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Aaron Matthew Christy
Sharon, Pa.

Brian David Diebold
Ottumwa, Iowa

Jeffrey Wayne Eddings
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Damiko Fredrick Faulkner
Charlotte, N.C.

Jamie Leah Fowler
Seneca, Pa.

Michael Charles Gehrling
Gibsonia, Pa.

Barry D. Givner Sr
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Janice E. Good
Sandy Lake, Pa.

Paul Michael Gruesu
Cranberry Township, Pa.

Thomas McIntyre Hall II
Ashland, Ky.

Carrie Ann Hanson
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Lynda Diane Harris
Moultrie, Ga.

Katelyn Jean Hendrickson
Reynoldsville, Pa.

Janice Lynn Holmes
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Joseph Blake Hudson
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Karie Ann Jarvis
Coraopolis, Pa.

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Pittsburgh, Pa.

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Ann Carol Miner
Indiana, Pa.

Douglas B. Myers Jr.
Cranberry Township, Pa.

Lauren Christina Myers
Natrona Heights, Pa.

Rachel Hope Nicholson
Canonsburg, Pa.

Henry A. Pearce
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James Abraham Riggins*
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Susan Maxwell Rothenberg
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Janet Leigh Scott
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Adam Joseph Stump
West Mifflin, Pa.

John Grantham Sutphin
Leawood, Kan.

Vanessa H. Syvertsen
Canton, N.Y.

Jill Noel Terpstra*
Rochester, N.Y.

Daniel Steven Thayer
Newberry, Fla.

Allen McCall Thompson
Lenoir, N.C.

Elizabeth Joanne Glaser Troyer
Clarkeburg, W.Va.

Andrew Laban Weber*
Wayne, Pa.

* Dual Degree/Master of Social Work

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Sunil Jayantha
Singapore

Georgette G. John
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Matthew Wade Peterson
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Hyeon Gu Lee
Seoul, Korea

Guang Yu Lou
Beijing, China

James Poliziani
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Lynda Diane Harris
Moultrie, Ga.

Katelyn Jean Hendrickson
Reynoldsville, Pa.

Janice Lynn Holmes
McKeesport, Pa.

Joseph Blake Hudson
Lawrenceville, Ga.

Karie Ann Jarvis
Coraopolis, Pa.

Justin R. Judy
Pittsburgh, Pa.

James W. Kirk
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Janice L. Krouskop
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Benjamin F. Libert
McDonald, Pa.

Ann Carol Miner
Indiana, Pa.

Douglas B. Myers Jr.
Cranberry Township, Pa.

Lauren Christina Myers
Natrona Heights, Pa.

Rachel Hope Nicholson
Canonsburg, Pa.

Henry A. Pearce
Poland, Ohio

Abraham Joseph Peterson
Willmar, Minn.

Linda J. Pokrajac
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dylan D. Potter
New Kensington, Pa.

James Abraham Riggins*
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Susan Maxwell Rothenberg
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Janet Leigh Scott
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Adam Joseph Stump
West Mifflin, Pa.

John Grantham Sutphin
Leawood, Kan.

Vanessa H. Syvertsen
Canton, N.Y.

Jill Noel Terpstra*
Rochester, N.Y.

Daniel Steven Thayer
Newberry, Fla.

Allen McCall Thompson
Lenoir, N.C.

Elizabeth Joanne Glaser Troyer
Clarkeburg, W.Va.

Andrew Laban Weber*
Wayne, Pa.

* Dual Degree/Master of Social Work

MASTERS OF ARTS

Martha Helen Darsie
Slippery Rock, Pa.

Daniel F. Frayer-Griggs
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Maxine E. Garrett
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Victor J. Grigsby
New Brighton, Pa.

W. Allen Hogge
Pittsburgh, Pa.
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Raymond Acker
Harleysville, Pa.
The Perennial Significance of the Old Testament in the Life of the Church

Karen B. Anderson
Corry, Pa.
God’s Family Table: An Application of the Theology of Table Fellowship

David Alexander Atty
Louisville, Ky.
Orthodox Christian Parish Administration: An Historical Overview and Practical Implementation Strategy

Stewart E. Bair Sr.
Pittsburgh, Pa.
The Interim: Agent of Change

Yvonne Young Best
Burlington Township, N.J.
Mission Immersion and Theological Reflection: Deepening Missional Insight and Mission Engagement

Roderick Duncan
MacKenzie Campbell
Edinburgh, Scotland
Four Pillars

Doy L. Daniels Jr.
Union City, Tenn.
Discipleship in Marriage as a Means of Bridging the Chasm Between the Church, Congregants, and Community

Eugene M. Downing Jr.
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Guiding Transition in Local Church Leadership From Conflict Resolution to Ascertaining and Articulating Vision

Paul M. Fahnestock
Bonita Springs, Fla.
Ideas in a Time of Transition: A Case Study of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Partnership

Michael James Fitzsimmons
Carroll, Iowa
The Christian Practice of Hospitality: A Model for Interfaith Dialogue for Presbyterian & Roman Catholic Youth

Terry L. Greenlee
Stoneboro, Pa.
A Study on Infant Baptism

Mattie P. Pinkney
An After School Program Model for High School Students in the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Matthew Arthur Rich
Lumberton, N.C.
The Joyful People of God: Young Adults, Joy, and Sabbath Practices

Debra Rogosky
Sykesville, Pa.
Using the Wesleyan Quadrilateral in Christian Education

Samuel W. Ware
Pittsburgh, Pa.
Decreasing the Black White Wealth Disparity by Increasing African American Homeownership

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATES, METRO-URBAN INSTITUTE

Albert C. Garrett
Denise Lewis
Angela Marsh
Betty Ann Tate

SPIRITUAL FORMATION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

Elizabeth W. Baker
Ann Miller Smith
John C. Park
During the graduation exercises, the Seminary honored a number of students for their outstanding accomplishments. The awards and honorees include:

THE JENNIE RIGG BARBOUR MEMORIAL PRIZE
Christopher A. Brown, M.Div., Delta, Colo.
Brian David Diebold, M.Div., Ottumwa, Iowa

THE WATSON SAMUEL BOYCE MUSIC PRIZE
Brian David Diebold, M.Div., Ottumwa, Iowa
Lynda Diane Harris, Moultrie, Ga.

THE BROOKS FOUNDATION COMMENCEMENT PRIZE

THE ROBERT M. EZZELL HOMILETICAL PRIZE

THE PAUL T. GERRARD PRIZE IN HOMILETICS AND PASTORAL CARE

JACKSON HALE PRIZE IN POLITY

THE THOMAS JAMISON SCHOLARSHIP

THE MICHAEL WILSON KEITH MEMORIAL PRIZE IN HOMILETICS
Henry A. Pearce, Poland, Ohio

THE ROBERT A. LEE CHURCH HISTORY PRIZE

THE SYLVESTER S. MARVIN FELLOWSHIP

THE EDWIN DWIGHT MCKUNE AWARD FOR AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
Guang Yu Lou, M.A., Beijing, China

THE JOHN W. MEISTER AWARD IN PASTORAL MINISTRY
Lynda Diane Harris, Moultrie, Ga.

MIDDLESEX UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U.S.A.) MEMORIAL PRIZE IN BIBLICAL STUDIES
Brian David Diebold, M.Div., Ottumwa, Iowa

THE CLARA EDNA MILLER PRIZE IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY
Ann Carol Miner, M.Div., Indiana, Pa.

THE HENRY A. RIDDLE AWARD FOR GRADUATE STUDY

THE JAMES AND CLARA TERRY AWARD, MADE POSSIBLE BY A GIFT FROM DESERT MINISTRIES INC.

THE JOHN WATSON PRIZE IN NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

THE WILLIAM B. WATSON PRIZE IN HEBREW
Christopher A. Brown, M.Div., Delta, Colo.
After 60 years in the work force, Paul W. Schaughency is retiring from retirement. Having been the volunteer personnel consultant at the Seminary since 1987, Schaughency is finally ready to enjoy this retirement full-time at the age of 87.

“The good Lord had something for me to do, so I kept doing it,” said Schaughency reflecting on his volunteer work.

In honor of his years of faithful service, the PTS Board of Directors honored him with the John Anderson Award of Merit, the Seminary’s highest honor. This award, named after one of the Seminary’s founders, recognizes the unique service and contributions of special friends of the Seminary and was given at commencement.

Schaughency is a 1939 graduate of Beaver High School. On scholarship he attended the University of Pittsburgh, earning his bachelor’s in business administration. During this time, he married his college sweetheart Catherine and enrolled in the ROTC and later the Advanced ROTC.

During World War II, Lt. Schaughency’s unit was sent to Adak, one of the Aleutian Islands. This was a supply base for the American forces that had, a few months earlier, driven the Japanese from the islands of Attu and Kiska, the only American territories held by Japan, Schaughency recalls, “What I fought was not the Japanese; it was the weather.” While on Adak, his duties changed from Artillery Officer to Battalion Personnel Officer and later he was promoted to Post Personnel Office at the Island Headquarters. He had found a new career.

Following his years in the service, Schaughency returned to the University of Pittsburgh where he earned his master’s in industrial relations. Upon graduation, PPG Industries hired him in its industrial relations program. He was sent to the Mt. Vernon, Ohio Glass Plant and later to Crystal City, Mo. serving in various positions. In 1970, Schaughency, along with his wife and three children, moved back to his home area. Promoted to manager of management development and later to director of personnel services, he retired from PPG in 1987, after 39 years of service.

“I remember sitting around on a coffee break and asking a department supervisor what he planned to do after his retirement. His whole life was work and he didn’t have any plans. That stuck with me,” recalls Schaughency. “I didn’t want to get to that point. I wanted to know how I’d spend my retirement.”

A fellow congregant of Southminster Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, encouraged Schaughency to inquire about the Seminary’s open volunteer personnel consultant position.

Reflecting on his time at the Seminary, Schaughency said, “For more than 20 years I’ve been able to bring some of my past knowledge and experience to problem-solving with faculty and staff.”

An ordained elder and church choir member, Schaugheny stays active in his church community and is an actor at Little Lake Theater, Canonsburg, Pa. His favorite role was one with his grandson Paul. “Working with those kids has just been great.”

Now fully retired, Schaughency plans to continue traveling to Europe to visit with former business colleagues and New Zealand to spend time with his daughter. With many stories to tell, Schaughency also plans to record his memories of life and family to be enjoyed by future generations. Behind on his genealogical work, he hopes to continue researching his heritage.

Schaugheny has been proudly married to Cathy for 64 years and is the father of Katherine (Kitty), Ed, and Elizabeth (Libby); grandfather of seven; and great grandfather of four.

Having seen many changes in the industrial relations/human resources field over the years, Schaughency considers two most notable. The business world has become much more integrated. “I’ve spent years pushing for better integration of women and minorities,” said Schaughency. In high school he worked to include women on his all-men cheerleading squad. Then at PPG he encouraged management to seek out and hire qualified minorities. Also of significant change has been the decline in need for face-to-face conversation because of technology. “We’re able today to do things we couldn’t have imagined years ago.”
All too often I’d sit silently at my desk during religion class listening to my peers discuss the latest Rambo movie or the Pats game, their small talk stifling the Spirit inside me. And this was at a Jesuit high school.

SYI was different. The Spirit overflowed at SYI, moving all of us to deep discussions during classes that carried on into the hallway, often lasting well into the night with a roommate. Dialogue abounded, and I learned more about what it is to believe during those two weeks than my four years of Catholic religious education. My friends at SYI were my role models, my guides. In awe I listened to their conversations that teemed with knowledge and with experience, listened to them grapple with predestination, listened to them wonder why the Pope released those changes to Dominus Iesus, listened to them wrestle with the Trinity. I was shocked to find myself understanding their words, shocked to find myself contemplating these issues, shocked to find myself joining in the dialogue, shocked to find them listening.

SYI gave me the language and the confidence to wrestle with faith, spirituality, and God with my friends, questioning them and disagreeing with them. SYI was the incubator for my spiritual life, the forge in which my faith was recast. At SYI the base of my belief moved further and further away from my parents and pastor, and closer and closer toward my beliefs and the nameless stirrings of my spirit.

SYI rekindled a long forgotten fire in the depths of my being, reawakening a hibernating vitality within me. I remember the Taizé service, remember being overtaken by the stillness of the moment, as if distilled in time. It was there that I was sure I felt the Spirit move for the first time in ages. SYI, from its secluded meditations to its dizzying dances, celebrated the Spirit in its every aspect.

SYI was about relationships. We got so close so fast. The friendships developed at SYI will no doubt last a lifetime, a testament to God’s love and the Spirit’s unitive power. We helped each other grow, showed each other our strengths, raised each other up, celebrated each other. It was with these people that I committed myself to becoming a true Christian, confident in purpose and true to the Way. With them I found the strength I need to stand tall in an age of quiet resignation, to speak out in an age of silence, to worship God in an age of proud indifference.

SYI was my upper room. The Spirit came upon me and illuminated my abilities and bestowed more upon me. Since then, I have done my best to welcome greater responsibility from something as small as a concluding prayer at youth group, to a role as youth advisory delegate to the Synod and possibly General Assembly. More importantly, I have engaged my friends at school in the same sort of dialogue I found at SYI, trying to spark something similar. This sort of behavior will no doubt continue into my college years.

I once told my Dad, “I don’t feel like I’ve ever really come back.” He replied, “No, you’re just carrying it with you.” God has given me an amazing memory to carry with me, forever reminding me of Christian love and the way to bring it into the world.
Many of these scholars argue that religious teaching can support human germline modification implemented for therapeutic reasons, although they offer certain moral conditions that must be met. The essays offer a surprising variety of opinions, including a discussion of Judaism’s traditional presumption in favor of medicine, an argument that Catholic doctrine could accept germline modification if it is therapeutic for the embryo, an argument implying that “traditional” Christian teaching permits germline modification whether for therapy or enhancement, and a “classical” Protestant view that germline modification should be categorically opposed.

“This book will appeal to scholars and religious readers, and moreover, help lay people understand the history and shortcomings of secular notions like ‘human dignity’, which are rooted in religious traditions but don’t survive secular culture,” said Guido Van Steendam of Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

Cole-Turner is the H. Parker Sharp professor of theology and ethics. He is active in various science and religion organizations, having played a central role in organizing the International Society for Science and Religion, an honorary society of about 130 scholars that was chartered in 2002. He has served on the advisory board of the Metanexus Institute and recently completed a second term of service on the advisory board of the John Templeton Foundation.


Cole-Turner is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ and has served various pastorates, including a time in campus ministry. He is a graduate of Wheaton College and Princeton Theological Seminary.
Robert Clyde Johnson, who taught theology first at Western and then at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary from 1955-63, remains a powerful presence in the lives of his former students. In Johnson Speaks to Us, those of us not privileged to know him personally, have the opportunity to join his former students in hearing him lecture on four figures of immense importance to Protestant and Reformed theology: Martin Luther, John Calvin, Søren Kierkegaard, and Karl Barth. Although Johnson was not a prolific scholar by today’s academic standards (he authored two books, one of which appeared in the Layman’s Theological Library of Westminster Press), he knew the Christian theological traditions inside out and skillfully drew his students into each figure’s world of thought. He helped his students to see God as Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, and Barth saw God.

Three factors that made Johnson a powerful teacher struck me as I read. First, he drew from pastoral experience. Before coming to Pittsburgh, he had introduced Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, and Barth to the congregation that he served for eight years in Greeneville, Tenn. He knew what it was like to be a pastor-theologian, and he taught theology to seminary students in such a way that they could imagine themselves teaching theology to their congregations someday. For Johnson, figures like Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, and Barth had not written first of all for academics but for the church. They were trying to make every Christian a better Bible reader and a better disciple. Members of churches should have basic familiarity with them.

Second, Johnson challenged his students to get into the text itself. His lectures are not littered with personal anecdotes or references to secondary scholarly literature. He knew how to make effective use of both, but his focus never wandered from what Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, or Barth had written. Johnson is always telling his students to turn to a particular page in the Institutes or a particular sentence in the Church Dogmatics. He wanted his students to read deeply. He exuded a confidence that they could find a home in the thought world of each of these figures. Perhaps Johnson knew that unless students learn to read difficult theological texts in seminary, where a teacher and fellow students can offer encouragement and insight, they are not likely to pick them up on their own later on.

Third, Johnson understood that thinking theologically asks us to develop a comprehensive vision of life before God. Johnson respected the historical context of each figure that he treated, but did not want his students to get lost in historical detail. He benefited from scholarly interpretations of each figure but avoided the disputes that so often fill academic journals. Johnson wanted his students to glimpse the grand theological vision of Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, or Barth, for he truly believed that they themselves had glimpsed something of God with us. Today we might say that he knew theology and spirituality to be inseparable, and that if you are really thinking theologically, you are opening yourself to dwell in the ultimate mysteries of life and death before God.

Johnson clearly enjoyed being in the classroom. In one lecture, he patiently explains how correctly to pronounce “Suren KierkekAARD” (and then with a twinkle in his eye adds, “don’t worry about it!”); in others, he good-naturedly teases his Baptist and Methodist students that they don’t have things quite right. Editors Kelso, Mase, and Davis have succeeded amazingly well in turning Johnson’s lecture notes into flowing prose that allow us to hear his own voice. But, this is not the sort of book that one reads in one sitting from cover to cover. Each section offers food for thought; each chapter, an opportunity to refresh and continue one’s seminary education by picking up Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, or Barth anew. The volume’s one distraction is a fair number of misspellings either not corrected by the editors or inadvertently introduced by them. Although he died in 2002, and more than 40 years have now passed since he left Pittsburgh to become dean of Yale Divinity School, Johnson does still speak to us. Whether you knew him or not, he will remind you of the best of your seminary teachers. A glossary of theological terms enhances the volume’s usefulness, and tributes from such people as David Noel Freedman and William Willimon, as well as a brief selection of Johnson’s sermons, further testify to what a remarkable man he truly was.
FACULTY NEWS

All churches in News Sections are in Pittsburgh and Presbyterian unless otherwise indicated.

Pat Beam, manager of technical services, retired from the Seminary after 33 academic years of service. In her retirement Beam plans to travel with her husband Steve and identify wildflowers while he fishes for trout. They will be taking everyone up on that offer ‘if you are ever in the neighborhood be sure to stop by’. The Beams will be enjoying their nine grandchildren and spending more time at their Luke Centennial Farm.

John P. Burgess, James Henry Snowden professor of systematic theology, participated in the annual meeting of the American Theological Society at Princeton, N.J., the Presbyteries’ Cooperative Committee on Examinations in San Diego, Calif. and the Core Cluster of the Re-Forming Ministry Program of the Office of Theology and Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Louisville, Ky. He taught adult Sunday school class at East Liberty Church on “The Fear of Beggars.” Burgess participated as one of the preachers in the Good Friday service at Shadyside Church and preached at Eastminster Church. Throughout May, he taught adult Sunday school class at Bower Hill Church on “Biblical and Theological Foundations f or Social Justice.” Burgess’ eldest daughter Hannah graduated from high school with honors and will be attending the United States Military Academy (West Point).

William J. Carl III, president and professor of homiletics, preached at Kirk In The Hills, Bloomfield Hills, Mich. and Beulah Church where Laurie Milligan ’92 is the interim pastor. Carl preached the baccalaureate service at Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pa. and gave the keynote address for Pittsburgh Pastoral Care Conference, Sewickley, Pa. He was the luncheon speaker for Women’s Social Club at the Twentieth Century Club, Pittsburgh, along with preacher and speaker at Shenango Presbytery Pastors’ Retreat where David Dawson ’72 is executive presbyter. Carl represented the Seminary at the inauguration service of President Brian Blount at Union-PSCE, Richmond, Va. He attended the General Assembly meeting in San Jose, Calif. and reunion gathering of Harvard Seminar for New Presidents in Las Vegas, Nev.

Ronald Cole-Turner is the H. Parker Sharp professor of theology and ethics. His most recent book was published in March by MIT Press with the title Design and Destiny: Jewish and Christian Perspectives on Human Germline Modification (See page 36.). That same month he attended a conference at Hofstra Law School on “Embryonic Stem Cells, Clones and Genes: Science, Law, Politics and Values,” where he made a presentation on Protestant perspectives on embryonic stem cell research. Later in March, he addressed a class and gave an evening public lecture at Mary Baldwin College, Staunton Va., on “Transhumanism and Transcendence: Remaking Ourselves, Technologically and Spiritually.” Cole-Turner led a group of 30 Henderson Scholars at the Seminary in a discussion of theology and science themes raised by this year’s Henderson lectures (See page 23.). He gave the 2008 Swander Lecture at Lancaster Theological Seminary on “The Stem Cell Debates: Faith at the Frontiers of Science.” In April, he spoke at the adult education class at Crossroads and the Smithfield United Church. Cole-Turner was at the national office of the United Church of Christ in Cleveland for a gathering on “Faith Engaging Science and Technology,” where he gave a keynote address on “Presence and Futures.” He also appeared on a panel with the president of the UCC, the Rev. John Thomas. In June he spoke at an adult forum at Westminster, Upper St. Clair, Pa. He and his wife, Rebecca and daughter, Rachel, were present for the baptism of their grandson, Bernard James “Ben” Vincent, at Palma Ceia, Tampa, Fla. with Ben’s parents, Hal and Sarah Vincent.

James E. Davison ’69, director of continuing education and special events, preached at Fox Chapel Church. Davison served as the keynote speaker and resource leader for the “Early Ministry Institute” sponsored by the Synod of the Northeast at Stony Point Center. Working from the theme “Baptism as Belonging,” he engaged the group of young pastors in developing the understanding of baptism in their congregation’s life and liturgy. Davison also taught the Builders adult church school class at Westminster Church, where he served from 1984-2001 as minister of education.

Michael Kelly, executive chef/food service director for Metz and Associates, enrolled at Penn State to finish his degree in marketing. He also became an uncle to niece Allison.

Nancy Lapp, curator emerita, was in Amman, Jordan, on a two month fellowship working on archaeological materials that are in Amman. The finds are from Tell er-Rumeith and Araq el-Emir, two sites in Jordan where Seminary representatives excavated many years ago. Lapp prepared the material for final publication. She also attended Easter Vigil and Easter services with the Christians in Jordan. They celebrate Easter according to the Orthodox calendar (and Christmas with the Western). Lapp’s son Daniel is in Ecuador with his family, where he is serving a six-month term as the only resident physician for some of the villages of the mountain region.

Anne Malone, the Seminary’s registrar, facilitated two theological schools workshops and a roundtable discussion for the Association of Theological Schools colleagues who attended the annual American Association of Registrars and Admissions Officers conference in Orlando, Fla. Also in attendance at the conference from PTS were Sherry Sparks ‘96, director of admissions and vocations; Ursula Sumic, administrative assistant to the director of admissions and financial aid; Cheryl De Paolis, director of financial aid; and John Welch, dean of students. Her first grandchild, Adam Paul Pheister Jr., was born in January.
The Seminary is pleased to announce the hire of two new employees. The Rev. Jen Haddox ’06 is the associate director of World Mission Initiative. For the previous five years, Haddox served with the U.S. Center for World Mission as a regional mission mobilizer. She continues to serve as the regional coordinator in Western Pennsylvania for Perspectives on the World Christian Movement and coordinates cross-cultural experiences for students at PTS.

Tim Browning will start his duties in August as head of technical services/lead cataloger in the Barbour Library. Over the years he has worked as head of technical services in the libraries of College of Mount St. Joseph and Lexington Seminary. He served as director of the library at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. for more than 10 years and, since 2005, has been the director of the library at Lexington Theological Seminary.
Former Western Seminary Professor Dies

Dr. David Noel Freedman, respected biblical scholar and beloved former professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary died Tues., April 8.

Freedman will long be remembered for his biblical scholarship, his work as an archaeologist, and for his commitment to interfaith cooperation. Ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1944, he served at Western Theological Seminary (an antecedent institution to Pittsburgh Theological Seminary) from 1948-1959 and at the newly consolidated Pittsburgh Theological Seminary from 1959-1964. From 1961-1964 he was the James A. Kelso professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at PTS. Following his tenure in Pittsburgh, he served at San Francisco Theological Seminary, the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., the University of Michigan, and then held an endowed chair in Hebrew and biblical studies at the University of California, San Diego from 1986 until the time of his death. His archaeological work included serving as annual director at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research (American Schools of Oriental Research) in Jerusalem from 1969-1970 and 1976-1977 and as director of the Ashdod Excavation Project from 1962-1964.

At the 2007 Alumnae/i Days celebration, Freedman returned to campus to present the annual Archeology Lecture. During that time he also joined his former Western Seminary students for an evening of reminiscing. Since 1983, Western alumnae/i have met once a year in retreat, joined by Freedman. William Orr organized the first gathering with eight members of the class of 1954, and over the years the “remnant retreat” has drawn alums from other Western classes. The 25th Western PTS retreat will be held at the Seminary this fall.

Although Freedman is perhaps best known for his work on the Anchor Bible Dictionary, he left a legacy of more than 330 scholarly books. His most recent works included The Nine Commandments (2000), Psalm 119: The Exaltation of Torah (1999), and The Unity of the Hebrew Bible (1991). Freedman also served as editor of Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition (1998), making the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible in the world available to synagogues, churches, libraries, and individuals.

Former Dean of PTS Dies at 74

Former dean of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, the Rev. Dr. David T. Shannon, died March 22 in Atlanta, Ga. after a period of declining health. He was 74. Perhaps best known as the first African American president of Andover Newton Theological School, Shannon was an American Baptist pastor, educator, representative, and author.

Building bridges was a cornerstone of Shannon’s life and ministry. He led an international Baptist task force on dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and won numerous awards for his work in furthering dialogue between African American and Jewish communities in Atlanta.

A graduate of American Baptist related Virginia Union University, where he went on to later serve as president in 1979, Shannon received his D.Min. from Vanderbilt University and his doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh.

Shannon served pastorates in Fair Oaks and Richmond, Va. He also held positions with the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the Baptist World Alliance. In addition to his other positions in academia, Shannon also served as the dean of PTS, the dean of faculty for the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Ga., and the president of Allen University in Columbia, S.C.

As an author, Shannon penned several books including The Old Testament Experience of Faith (Judson Press).

Shannon is survived by his wife, Averett Powell Shannon, their children Vernitia Shannon, Dr. Davine Sparks, and David Thomas Shannon Jr.; and six grandchildren.
Professor Accepts Position with Denomination

The Rev. Dr. Teresa Stricklin, assistant professor of homiletics, has been named associate for worship in the Theology Worship and Education ministries area of the General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

While at the Seminary, Sticklen taught homiletics and liturgics. She has been at PTS since 2000. Before that time she taught at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and served several pastorates in Tennessee.

Her research interests are in the areas of homiletic theology, revelation, hermeneutics, phenomenology, ritual-symbolic thought and action, and arts and culture. She is a graduate of Marshall University, Middle Tennessee State University, and Vanderbilt University. Stricklen has published articles and reviews in numerous journals, and is the author of entries in the forthcoming New Interpreters’ Bible Handbook of Preaching.

In her new position, Stricklin will take major responsibility for the initiative, “Academies for Missional Preaching.” This initiative is designed to help ministers deal with the worship and preaching challenges that emerge from the reality that North America is a mission field.

“The problem that ‘Missional Preaching Academies’ is designed to address is a crucial one,” said Stricklen. “Many clergy did not learn how to think theologically about the issues involved in preaching within today’s thoroughly secular culture. The work of proclaiming a missional gospel requires thinking theologically about the post-establishment cultural situation that confronts preachers.”

The Seminary wishes Teresa well in her new endeavors.

Seminary Featured in Technology Case Study

Surfing the web at PTS just got easier. Students and visitors are now able to access wireless Internet service from all points on campus. Following this improvement, the Seminary was featured by the technology supplier in a product case study. Read more about the Seminary’s wireless solution at www.dlink.com, click “Products and Solutions,” “Case Studies.”

Patricia Beam Retires; Earns Calian Prize

After 33 years as head of technical services at Barbour Library, Patricia Beam is hanging up her hat. Known for her creative hats, Beam has been a dedicated employee, cheerful colleague, and friendly and gracious spirit to students, faculty, and staff in her years at the Seminary. During her employment, she has experienced personal adversity, including a battle with breast cancer. Following this personal battle, she became a friend, supporter, and companion to others on the campus who would later join her in the journey as cancer survivors.

In honor of her outstanding commitment to the PTS community, Beam was awarded the Calian Prize during commencement. This award is given to an exemplary member of the Pittsburgh Seminary community who demonstrates excellence in carrying out responsibilities and volunteer assignments and also expresses a caring spirit of good will and hope essential in life together as a community. President emeritus of PTS the Rev. Dr. Carnegie Samuel Calian and his wife Doris established this award in recognition that all members of the community are an important part of the success of the Seminary.

We wish Pat the best in her retirement. God bless you!
## UPCOMING PTS EVENTS

### August

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<td>D.Min. Reformed Focus</td>
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<td>22–23</td>
<td>PC(USA) Ordination Exams</td>
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### September

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<td>New Student Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Convocation</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Continuing Education “Beyond the Yellow Ribbons” Series on Pastoral Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>21–26</td>
<td>Continuing Education Spiritual Formation Elective</td>
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### October

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Continuing Education “Must Faith End?” Series on Theology and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PTS Bible Content Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>8, 15, 22, 29</td>
<td>Continuing Education “Beginnings” Series on Theology and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Continuing Education Training for Interim Ministers</td>
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### November

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Continuing Education Journey Inward; Journey Outward</td>
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<td>WMI Discerning Your Call</td>
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<td>5–6</td>
<td>Continuing Education Board of Pensions Retirement Planning Seminar</td>
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<td>Continuing Education Financial Planning Seminar</td>
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<td>Semi-Annual Board Meetings</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>17–21</td>
<td>Reading/Exam Week</td>
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<td>24–28</td>
<td>One Week Break</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving, Seminary Closed</td>
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### December

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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Festival of Lessons and Carols</td>
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<td>20–4 Jan.</td>
<td>Student Christmas Break</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Christmas Eve, Seminary Closed</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Christmas, Seminary Closed</td>
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1940s

Evlyn W. Fulton '49, recipient of the Distinguished Alumnae/i Award in 1987, served as the executive presbyter of Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery from 1979 until 1989. The Presbytery recently named her executive presbyter emeritus.

1950s

L. Gordon Tait '51 recently completed a team-taught three month adult Sunday school course, “Particularly Presbyterian” (history, beliefs, etc.) at First in Wooster, Ohio. He also finished reading and evaluating a book length manuscript for the University of Notre Dame Press. “No big deal,” he said, “but it took a lot of my precious retired time, and used up big hunks of my aging gray matter, which the stipend only partially covered.”

Robert L. Kelley Jr. '51 is currently serving as a member of the newly formed PEAL Team (Pastors Encouraging and Listening Team) of Pittsburgh Presbytery. Post-Easter, he conducted a three-week Sunday morning seminar on Philippians at Southminster Church. In November, Kelley will join the PTS Board of Directors for a three-year term as the 2008 Alumnae/i representative.

Vernon Elgin '52 and his wife Marjorie '53 were honored during the regular Session of the Friday, Washington State Legislature meeting. Their honor, along with a group of Western Washington Presbyterians, was for assistance to the Synod of Livingstonia of the Church Central Africa Presbyterian in establishing the University of Livingstonia in Livingstonia, Malawi, Africa. Vernon taught in the religious studies department of the College of Education of the University in 2005. UNILIA is the first private university in Malawi and the first Christian university in the nation. The first class graduated in September 2007.

Wayne H. Keller '55 has co-hosted a call-in counseling program and has appeared on a variety of TV and radio programs. He has conducted numerous workshops and seminars for social agencies, educational institutions, businesses, industries, and service organizations. Presently retired, Keller continues to share his five decades of learning, teaching, and experiences with various communities. He has authored several books including: Achieving and Receiving Intimacy, Lectionary Workshop Workbooks: Cycles A, B, C (Two Series), Zapped by the Spirit: No Post-Easter Slump, and Book of Original Sayings. For more information about his workshops or books, e-mail him at kellerw1955@aol.com.

Joann Griffith '59, a 2007 PTS Distinguished Alumna for Excellence in Mission and retired PC(USA) mission worker who served for about 40 years in Ethiopia as a teacher at Bethel Evangelical Secondary School, received an honorary doctorate degree from Erskine College in Due West, S.C., in May.

1960s

Joseph Gasper '62 has completed his 46th year of ministry since his ordination. In April, he preached a sermon entitled “5,000” in honor of his 5,000th sermon. Gasper is retired but has continued serving the last four years as Stated Supply at Westminster Church of DeLand, Fla. Next year he will be coordinating his 20th trip to the Holy Land where he will celebrate, in Jerusalem, his 74th birthday.

James Camp '65 is serving as interim pastor at Sterling Church in Sterling, Ill.

1970s

M. Bruce Irwin '70 was installed at Emmanuel United Church of Christ in Allentown, Pa. in May. The Rev. Robert Chase was the guest speaker. Irwin, a Pittsburgh native, is a graduate of Allegheny High School, Westminster College, and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Becky, have three grown children, Anne, Paul, and Andrew.

Andrew Gerhart '75 is serving as the designated pastor for First Church in Ashland, Ohio.

Marwood “Woody” Meredith '75 was appointed the vice president for advancement at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kan. Meredith will provide leadership and supervision in the areas of advancement, special events, and communications at Bethany.

Ronald Lynn Miller '75 is the founder-director of The Center for Global Studies International Interdisciplinary, an independent nonprofit center incorporated in 1998-1999 in Pennsylvania and New York for the purposes of education, research, and networking of global studies for facilitating the evolution of global intelligence.

Edward T. “Terry” Wimberley ’75 has a book coming out next spring with Johns Hopkins University Press entitled Nested Ecology: The Place of Humans in the Ecological Hierarchy. This book articulates a pragmatic philosophical approach based upon the assumption that the entire creation consists of a set of nested ecological communities or “households” that are intimately interrelated to one another. The book articulates a worldview or “cosmology” that also includes what Wimberley refers to “cosmic ecology” which incorporates both scientific and spiritual perspectives. While this is not a theology book or a book about religion per se, it is a philosophy book that addresses one of our generation’s most important issues and does so by in part describing how religious faith and values can help in preserving and protecting the resources of the planet.

L. Jalik Petty '76 received his certification in addiction counseling from the University of Maine. Petty is still serving as the pastor of Imani Congregational Church. He lectured for a month in Maine at the Bangor Theological Seminary on pastoral practice and substance abuse counseling.

This comprehensive volume features a collection of interpretive essays on the work of missions in the Presbyterian Church for more than 60 years. Contributors discuss events and challenges to the church’s mission activities and to its missionaries and examine the ways in which changes in denominational structures impacted mission work. Reflections from Presbyterian mission leaders, firsthand accounts from missionaries, and an overview of the work in specific mission areas from Latin America to East Asia make this an ideal resource for those involved in Presbyterian missions, scholars, and all those who seek to understand the breadth and depth of Presbyterian missions during this period.

1980s

Darlene Makin ’80 wrote a book, III Chronicles which tells her life story as she becomes the Chronicler. She published the book using her maiden name to honor her father who was a good influence on her life: Darlene Makin-Klingensmith. If anyone is interested in purchasing a copy of the book, please contact Makin at daystar28@juno.com.

Glenn McQuown ’82 was recently deployed to Afghanistan.

Lisa Grant ’82, pastor of Christ Community United Methodist Church, Butler, Pa., was appointed by Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton as the new conference director of connectional ministries. She looks forward to becoming a part of the transformation of United Methodist ministry in Western Pennsylvania through the “Believe Again Plan for Ministry” program. Grant is trained as an NCD coach, has led spiritual life retreats, and is a graduate of the two-year Academy of Stewardship operated by the UM Foundation.

Larry C. Menyweather-Woods ’85 was awarded a doctorate in human sciences with a specialization in gerontology from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Neb.

Bronc Radak ’86 is the interim pastor at Roxborough Church, Philadelphia, Pa., where his wife, Jeanne ’85 (Bragdon), is the associate executive for congregational ministries.

1990s

Harry Covert ’92, D. Min., is the author of four books. They are: Discovering the Parables: An Inspirational Guide for Everyday Life (Greenwood/Praeger Publishing); Ministry to the Incarcerated (Loyola Press), a book that began as his D. Min. project with John Mehl ’62 as his mentor; Prayers That God Hears (Publish America); and Spiritual Reflections: A Journey Through the Scriptures (Greenwood/Praeger Publishing). Covert is an ordained minister with the United Church of Christ. After a tour of duty in the military he was a police officer on the Philadelphia mainline and a Chester County detective. He has served in several parishes, worked in the therapeutic communities, was a state prison chaplain, and adjunct faculty member at Penn State University. Questions regarding any of Covert’s publications may be directed to him at 814-364-9372 or through e-mail: hgc7@verizon.net.

John Dalles ’94, D. Min., is pastor of Wekiva Church in Longwood, Fla. and has coauthored an educational resource on the Beatitudes with Phyllis Wezeman, DCE at FPC South Bend and Anna Liechty. It is being published by Leader Resources of Leeds, Mass. Dalles’ hymn, “May God’s Love be Fixed Above You,” which appears in several denominational hymnals, was sung at the Toronto School of Theology commencement exercise in May.

Annie Kampenya ’97 was granted the Privilege of Call in January by the Ordination and Ministerial Standing Committee of the United Church of Christ. The privilege is for one year, renewable upon her request.

Kristen Barner ’97 and her husband, David Loar, are moving to Phoenix, Ariz. She has been called as the new associate pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Congregational United Church of Christ. The church is located at the foot of Camelback Mountain. Barner is transferring membership from the PC(USA) to UCC and will be ordained next year.

Chris Weichman ’98 accepted a call as the pastor of Clen Moore Church, New Castle, Pa., where he began his service in January.

Lisa Heckman ’98 accepted a call as the pastor of Northminster Church, Endwell, N.Y. She was installed by the Susquehanna Valley Presbytery in March. Carolyn Cranston ’99 preached the installation sermon, “The Presents.”

Clark Kerr ’99 portrayed Jesus during Holy Week in “The Last Supper” performance at Latrobe Church, Latrobe, Pa.
2000s

Carletta Curley ’02 accepted a call to serve as the pastor of Slate Ridge Church in Cardiff, Md.

Patty Comini-Miller ’02 was part of a successful mission team to Alaska where they finished a roofing project on a church.

Carey Jo Johnston ’03 sent news from her latest trip to Peru for the Aguaruna primer construction workshop. “Thanks for your prayers, please keep them up! The weather has cooled off here since my arrival. The team has completed 20 lessons so far of the literacy materials. I’m very pleased with their progress. While the Aguaruna are writing their stories we have four consultants in training working behind the scenes to learn the details of developing this basic literacy material. They are all progressing very well. We hope to complete the first 32 lessons by the end of Saturday. Then we still have 11 health lessons and 26 Bible stories to edit.”

Connie Garlick ’03 and her husband Hal Garlick ’04 have both received ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). They recently accepted a full-time call to serve St. Luke’s United Church of Christ, Columbus, Neb.

Lois Swestyn ’03 serves full-time at Amity and Liberty United Methodist Churches in Washington County, Pa. She retired from teaching last year after 30 years of service. Swestyn is the grandmother of three.

Connie Garlick ’03 and her husband Hal Garlick ’04 have both received ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). They recently accepted a full-time call to serve St. Luke’s United Church of Christ, Columbus, Neb.

Dorothy “Dot” Densmore ’04 was installed by the Presbytery of Northumberland as the pastor of Parkhurst Memorial Church in May.

Jim Steiner ’04 accepted a call as the interim pastor of Calvin Church in Amelia, Ohio.

Kristin Beckstrom ’04 accepted a new call as the associate pastor of the First, Moncks Corner, S.C.

In the busyness of parish and ministry life, continuing with scholarly pursuits usually takes the backseat to more urgent matters. Alums now have a fast and convenient way to keep up with current scholarship.

ATLASerials®, an online collection of more than 100 major religion and theology journals selected by leading religion scholars and theologians is available free to PTS alums. Through this platform, alumnae/i can research the history of a topic from as early as 1924 to the present through more than 211,000 articles and book. Users can find research on Scripture passages for upcoming sermon series, discover how others have organized worship services to nursing homes, or wrestle with the ethical issues surrounding designer gene therapy.

This tool allows users to search for journal articles by subject, author, title, and even Scripture passages. There is a browse list of the journals that are included so users can review the table of contents and even entire back issues of popular Christian magazines.

For example, to keep up with Professor Dale Allison’s latest scholarship, type Dale Allison in the author line and get a list of articles he has written and reviews of his books (59 citations as of press time). Or see what others say about him by typing Dale Allison in the subject line.

“ATLA online permits me to quickly hone in on the exegetical issues,” said the Rev. Clint Cottrell ’00, pastor of Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, Fla. “Furthermore, ATLA offers a number of manuscripts via PDF, thereby enabling pastors that are some distance from the library to the latest scholarly research on a wide variety of issues. ATLA online has provided me with all of the details necessary to acquire books through our local library via interlibrary loan including dissertations, articles, and even conference or symposiums notes.”

If you are interested in registering for the service, visit www.ptsalums.org. For those alums with a username and password (used to log into your PTS e-mail account) click “Database,” “ATLA Directory.” For those without a username and password, click “Database,” “PTS account signup,” complete the form, and click “Submit.” The Seminary will mail your login information and more details about the service. Contact the Rev. Carolyn Cranston ’99, director of alumnae/i and church relations, at 412-441-3304 ext. 2109 or ccranston@pts.edu with questions.
Allison Bauer ’05, pastor of the Frankfort Church, Hanover Township, Pa., watched with members of her congregation as firefighters tried to put out the fire caused when lightning struck the steeple of the church in July 2007. On April 26-27 the congregation celebrated the return to the newly restored structure, a $400,000 project. Bauer said some have asked why God allowed the fire. She says it was a blessing. Several underlying problems, such as a plumbing issue, might have gone unnoticed if the fire had not happened. “I think God is always trying to bless us, and sometimes he does it in unexpected ways,” Bauer said. The church now has a new aluminum steeple and a carillon system that plays hymns and chimes twice daily. Other fixes include a new roof and sound system and reupholstered pews.

Seminary’s First Ordained Woman Dies

As a young woman and a Presbyterian minister, Gail Buchwalter King was unusual enough to appear on the What’s My Line? television show.

By the time she retired last year as an associate pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Upper St. Clair, King was known for her record of service to the local community.

The second woman to be ordained by the Pittsburgh Presbytery and the first from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, King died Feb. 16 from complications related to cancer. She was 66.

King earned a bachelor’s from the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. She graduated from PTS, earning her master of religious education degree in 1966 and her master of divinity degree in 1974. King went on to earn her doctorate in 1983 from Carnegie Mellon University.

During her ministry King served various churches in the Pittsburgh area including Bower Hill Community Church from 1966-1969; Mount Pisgah Presbyterian Church from 1969-971; and Community of Reconciliation (an interracial church in Oakland affiliated with five different denominations) from 1974-1989.

In addition to her church service, King was executive director of Ecumenical Urban Ministries, which provided resources to religious and community groups, and as an associate director of the Association of Theological Schools, a local agency that provided accreditation and program services to more than 200 seminaries.
From 1996 until her retirement, she was at Westminster Presbyterian, where her duties included supervision of deacons and a lay ministry program, and support for people in hospitals and nursing homes and families in crisis.

King served on the boards of the Urban League of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Presbytery, the Pittsburgh Presbyterian Foundation, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and Housing Ministries Inc. From 1989 to 1999, she also appeared on a weekly television show about religion and public life.

Necrology Report

James S. Seaman ’38
Lafferty, Ohio
Jan. 18, 2008

Donald F. Shaw ’49
Newville, Pa.
March 31, 2008

Thomas R. Thomas ’50
Carnegie, Pa.
April 10, 2008

Edwin D. Emmel ’52
Erie, Pa.
March 1, 2008

Ralph S. Illingworth ’52
San Antonio, Texas
April 21, 2008

George H. Wright ’53
Newville, Pa.
March 16, 2007

Charles F. Brewer ’55
St. Clairsville, Ohio
March 3, 2008

Leonard O. Knox ’55
Springfield, Mo.
March 14, 2008

Gene H. Mast ’55
Columbus, Ohio
March 24, 2008

John P. Borter ’59
Ellwood City, Pa.
April 20, 2008

Willis Armand Hacker ’60
Phoenix, Ariz.
Dec. 9, 2007

John R. Rankin ’60
Brownsville, Pa.
Feb. 24, 2008

Gail Buchwalter King ’66
Pittsburgh, Pa.
March 24, 2008

Ruth E. Caldwell ’68
Whitehall, Pa.
Oct. 28, 2006

Philip E. Perkins ’77
Osprey, Fla.
Sept. 14, 2007

Survey Winner

And the winner was… Thomas J. McLaren ’57. In the last issue, readers were asked to offer their opinions on the Panorama theme development, layout, and the like. Thank you to all who completed the survey. A special congrats to McLaren who completed the survey and was randomly selected to receive a copy of both faculty publications—Dr. Andrew Purves’ *The Crucifixion of Ministry* and Dr. Edith Humphrey’s *And I Turned to See the Voice*—highlighted in the Spring 2008 issue.
Dr. J. Dudley Woodberry
Professor of Islamic Studies and
Dean Emeritus of the
School of World Mission
Fuller Theological Seminary

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FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD”

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