Dear Friends,

On Wednesday of this week a new group of seminarians will gather for a few days of orientation as they begin their studies at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. They will come from across the country, and a few will come from around the world. They will spend a few days getting to know each other, meeting with their faculty advisors, deciding which classes to take, and come next Monday morning they will dive in to their theological studies.

This year in particular, we are acutely aware of the concerns that are carried by these new students. Admissions officers will often complain that their work becomes much more difficult during tough economic times. Prospective students, especially at the graduate school level, wonder whether they will be able to afford to make ends meet. Those who are married and those who have children will be especially concerned about the financial concerns that following God's call to seminary will create. As our students make out their schedules, even the price of gasoline is impacting decisions as commuter students try to reduce the number of trips that they will have to make to campus on a weekly basis.

Yes, these are challenging economic times for our students, and for all of us. Still, isn't it amazing in the face of all this that the call of God is so strong in the lives of these new students that they are willing to say, "Here I am, Lord," despite the struggles that may be ahead of them? Please keep the Seminary in your prayers as we begin this new academic year, especially these new students who are taking such a big step of faith to be here. I hope, too, that you will consider using the online gift button attached to this newsletter to make a gift to PTS. Your gift, no matter what the size, will provide support and encouragement for our students.

In Eugene Peterson's translation of the Bible called *The Message* (which by the way he partially wrote on the campus of PTS!) he translates Lake 9: 62 like this: "Jesus said, 'No procrastination. No backward looks. You can't put God's kingdom off till tomorrow. Seize the day.'"

May God give to all of us, especially our incoming class of students, the courage to be at peace as we live by these words.

In Christ,

Bill
The Rev. Dr. William J. Carl III  
President

P.S. On Tues., Sept. 9 our convocation service will take place in the Hicks Memorial Chapel at 11:30 a.m. This annual tradition includes a formal faculty procession with all of our colorful academic regalia, and Board Chair Jack Isherwood will be giving the convocation address. If you are in the Pittsburgh area, I hope that you will come to the service and then join us for the free community lunch that follows.

25th Annual Teacher Training Workshop Held Sept. 27

The annual Teacher Training Workshop will be held Sat., Sept. 27 from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Keynote speaker Cynthia L. Rigby, W.C. Brown professor of theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, will present "We Will Tell the Next Generation."

Workshop selections include four 80-minute sessions in the morning and eight 90-minute sessions in the afternoon. Some topics for discussion include "Great Ideas for Reaching, Nurturing, and Encouraging our Youth," "From Elementary to Middle School: From Renters to Owners of Their Faith," "Special Needs Children," "Please Don't Ask Me to Sing (with the Kids)," and "Media" among others.

Contact the Continuing Education Office at 412-441-3304 ext. 2196 or ConEd@pts.edu to register for this event. Before Sept. 17, the fee is $20 and includes lunch; after Sept. 17, the fee is $24 and does not include lunch.

Annual McClure Lectures Explore the Muslim World

Join us for the annual W. Don McClure Lectures Sept. 29-30. Dr. J. Dudley Woodberry, professor of Islamic studies and dean emeritus of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary will address "The Fullness of Time for the Muslim World."

Sept. 29 events include "The Hand of God in the Glove of Current Events," at 11:30 a.m.; "Surprising Bridges and Barriers," at 4:15 p.m.; World Mission Initiative Dinner at 6:00 p.m.; and "To the Muslim I became a Muslim?" at 7:30 p.m. Woodberry will present the chapel service "In the Footsteps of the Disciples" based on Acts 3:1-13a; 4:1-4, Sept. 30 at 11:30 a.m.

These lectures are free and open to the public. To attend the WMI dinner, guests must pre-register and cost is $10 per person. Contact the WMI Office at 412-441-3304 ext. 2252 for tickets. Contact the Office of Continuing Education at 412-441-3304 ext. 2196 or ConEd@pts.edu with questions about the lectures.

Lecture Asks "Must Faith End?"

The Series on Theology and Science kicks off Oct. 1-2 with "Must Faith End?: A
Conversation with Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and Friends." The Rev. Dr. James E. Davison, director of continuing education, will lead the discussion.

This workshop will consider the claims of the "new atheists." What are they saying? What do those who believe that "God was in Christ reconciling the world" need to hear in their arguments? Is their understanding of religious faith too limited? Are their claims for science itself too expansive?

Registration deadline is Sept. 15 and fee is $75. Continuing education credits (0.9) are available. Contact 412-441-3304 ext. 2196 or ConEd@pts.edu for more information.