



# *inMinistry*

Spring 2009

The Magazine of PALMER Theological Seminary

## HOMECOMING 2009

REMEMBERING, RECONNECTING, REENVISIONING

NOVEMBER 6-8, 2009

*(Details on pages 6-7)*

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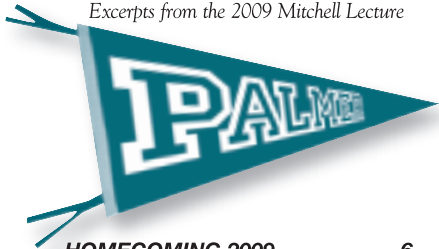


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# inMinistry

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### IN DEFENSE OF "SENIOR MOMENTS"

I SUSPECT THAT A HIGH PERCENTAGE of those who receive *inMinistry* and are reading these words have had their share of so-called senior moments. It seems these moments start to arrive at about the same time as the invitation to join the AARP. That invitation comes approximately 10 years *before* the average person considers the benefits of joining this organization to be a fair trade for admitting he or she is "old."

You know that senior moments have come to stay when a seemingly innocent conversation with one of your children goes something like this:

"Did I tell you that story about the guy who was driving the—"

"Yes, Dad. Ten times. At least."

"Oh."

Despite the title attached to this column, I can't actually defend senior moments. There's nothing really to defend anyway, since they are not the result of someone doing *anything*, let alone anything wrong. Nobody invited senior moments to the party, so there's nothing for which to apologize when they show up.

I will say, however, that, frustrating as senior moments can be, they are far preferable to what I refer to as "junior moments." This is to say that there are plenty of young people around who never tell the same story twice and never forget where they left their car keys. But unlike those seniors who have been around the proverbial block a few times, these youngsters are prone to such costly junior moments as "I can't believe I trusted that guy" or "What was I thinking when I invested in that time share?" or "Why I did I take this job?"

Whereas senior moments are defined primarily by lapses in short-term memory, junior moments are marked by CWD (Chronic Wisdom Deficiency), replete with tunnel-vision and impulsivity according to which "the future" means the next 20 minutes.

This November, Palmer Seminary is hosting a major homecoming event. Many of those who will be in attendance are people who are prone to numerous senior moments. But they are also folks who kissed Chronic Wisdom Deficiency goodbye a long time ago. Among our visitors will be men and women who for many years carried the torch for the Seminary and its values, helping it to become what it is today. I for one will consider it an honor to be in their presence. I hope you will, too.

So whether you are a senior, junior or "middler," please join us for Homecoming November 6-8. Detach the form on page 7, fill it out, and return it. Today. Right away. Before you forget.

*Randall L. Frame*





# partners *in* ministry

THE COMMON MISSION OF PALMER SEMINARY  
AND THE SIDER CENTER ON MINISTRY AND PUBLIC POLICY IS TO  
PROCLAIM THE WHOLE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE WORLD.

**F**OR MORE THAN 30 YEARS Palmer Seminary has been privileged to count among its faculty members theologian Ron Sider. Dr. Sider is, arguably, more than any other person associated with combining evangelical theology with a social consciousness that challenges followers of Christ to recognize the gospel's call to justice and compassion for the world's poor and marginalized people.

Ron organized the 1973 meeting that produced the Chicago Declaration, which challenged evangelicals to embrace social responsibilities as integral to the gospel's call. Some five years later, he founded Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA). ESA now operates under the auspices of the Sider Center on Ministry and Public Policy, which in turn functions under the umbrella of Palmer Seminary and Eastern University.

#### **Merging Activism and the Academy**

The presence of ESA/Sider Center on the Palmer campus has strengthened the ministry of both institutions. Says Jerry Clampet, Associate Director for Resources and Outreach at ESA/Sider Center, "It's a very

positive thing for the ministry of the Sider Center/ESA to be grounded in the academy, to be rooted in sound biblical theology that challenges believers to pursue peace and justice." Clampet notes that ESA/Sider Center has had the opportunity to create courses and to tweak the curriculum both at the Seminary and at Eastern University.

The establishment of a formal relationship between ESA/Sider Center and Palmer Seminary/Eastern University earlier this decade has also enabled the Seminary to expand its faculty as a result of a joint appointment. Assistant Professor Al Tizon spends 60 percent of his time teaching Holistic Ministry at the Seminary and the remaining 40 percent leading the ESA/Sider Center's Word & Deed Network. (See "Proclaiming the Gospel in Both Word and Deed.")

#### **Sider and Wallis Scholarships**

One of the most promising outcomes of the relationship between ESA/Sider Center and the Seminary has been the establish-

*continued on next page*

*You and your church can demonstrate and develop your commitment to holistic ministry in one or more of the following ways:*

#### **Join Evangelicals for Social Action.**

*You or your church can join for \$35 a year. Among other benefits, a supporting membership entitles you to receive PRISM magazine and significant book discounts (up to 50%). Churches can also order bulk quantities of PRISM.*

**Use PRISM for Sunday school classes or small group study.** (ESA will provide study questions.)

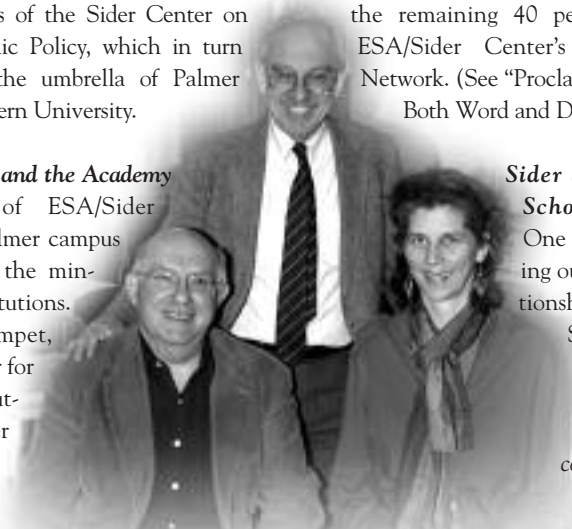
**Sign up to receive the weekly e-newsletter ePistle.** (Free of charge)

**Request information about the services offered by Word & Deed Network.**

**Purchase a Holistic Ministry Kit (\$50).**

**Add the Sider Center to your (and your church's) list of mission-supported programs.**

*For memberships and newsletter sign-up, you can easily use [www.esa-online.org](http://www.esa-online.org). Other inquiries may be made through [esanet@eastern.edu](mailto:esanet@eastern.edu).*



*The Sider Center's Jerry Clampet, Ron Sider, and PRISM editor Kristyn Komarnicki*



Sider Scholars left to right (front row) Anna Eckelbarger, Heather Biscoe, and Courtney Davis Olds (back row) Mark Reiff, Lori Baynard, and Dan Lebo

**PARTNERS IN MINISTRY** *continued*

ment of up to 20 half-tuition scholarships, awarded annually, 10 each named for Dr. Sider and for Jim Wallis, founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Sojourners community.

Sider and Wallis Scholars must demonstrate academic success (minimum 3.0 Grade Point Average) and must also be committed to the goals and mission of the Sider Center. During the school year, Sider and Wallis Scholars serve for an average of 10 hours a week working on behalf of the Sider Center, enabling them to get first-hand experience in holistic ministry and public policy advocacy. Depending on their skills and interests, they might do editorial work for ESA's *PRISM* magazine, conduct research for a book on some public policy issue, or work with churches that are looking for guidance in their efforts to create and develop holistic ministries.

**Disseminating Information**

Among the ministries of ESA/ Sider Center is providing information and Christian perspective (both in print and on-line) on various topics related to the ministry's goals. The specific mission of ESA's flagship publication, *PRISM* magazine, is to encourage whole-life disciple-

ship. In 2007, *PRISM*'s cutting-edge exposé of prostitution in the U.S. found its way into the hands of several movers and shakers in the nation's capitol, including almost all members of Congress and then-Acting Attorney General Paul Clement.

Meanwhile the electronic newsletter *ePistle* is e-mailed (at no charge) weekly to subscribers. *ePistle*'s content focuses on four primary areas: Public Policy, Creation Care, Holistic Ministry, and Christ and Culture.

As it has opportunity, ESA/Sider Center uses its resources to partner with other organizations to support various causes and public policy initiatives. *ePistle*, for example, has been used as a vehicle to garner support for a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. ESA/Sider Center has also used *ePistle* to express its pro-life position by collecting e-mail signatures of those who oppose the Freedom of Choice Act.

Thus it is not only through its graduates who go out into the world to serve, but also through ministries that have joined forces with the Seminary that Palmer carries out its founding mission to share the whole gospel with the whole world. **iM**

**Proclaiming the Gospel in Both Word and Deed**

The mission of Word & Deed Network (WDN), a ministry of Evangelicals for Social Action/Sider Center on Ministry and Public Policy is to help churches in any and all ways to develop ministries that combine evangelism and social action.

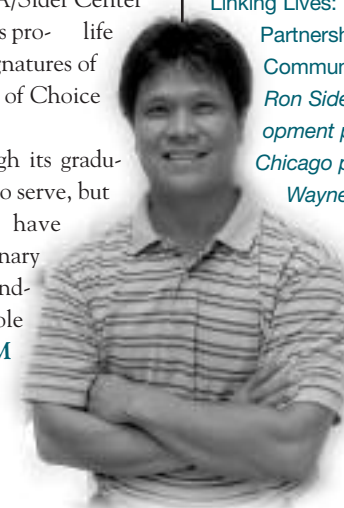
In pursuing this mission, WDN Director Al Tizon pretty much does whatever it takes. This includes preaching at churches in addition to providing them consultation services and various print and multimedia resources. WDN also seeks to put churches in touch with one another so they can benefit from the experience and knowledge of larger networks.

WDN has focused on four levels of networking. First, it brings together churches and other Christian organizations located in the same geographical area. Second, WDN functions at the denominational level, working to help Christian denominations to promote a vision for holistic ministry, including through Sunday School literature and various events and conferences. Director Tizon, for example, has worked with the Evangelical Covenant denomination's Department of Church Growth and Evangelism as well as its Department of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice, seeking to provide guidance for bringing together the missions of these two entities.

Third, WDN links urban and suburban churches. The mutual benefits of such partnerships are highlighted in the recent book (published by BakerBooks) *Linking Arms, Linking Lives: How Urban-Suburban*

*Partnerships Can Transform Communities*, co-authored by Al Tizon, Ron Sider, Christian community development pioneer John Perkins, and Chicago pastor and Palmer alumnus

Wayne Gordon ('01). The fourth level of networking entails linking arms (and lives) between U.S. churches and churches around the globe, particularly in the developing world.



WDN Director Al Tizon

# FodderforPastors

Below are edited excerpts from the February 16 Mitchell Lecture, titled “The Shape of Colored Preaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” delivered by Princeton Theological Seminary homiletics professor Cleophus J. LaRue.



Dr. LaRue began by observing that “colored preaching,” defined as preaching done by people of color, is the preaching of the future. He noted that Philip Jenkins in his book *The Next Christendom* predicts that by the year 2050 the majority of Christians will be people of color living primarily in the Southern Hemisphere.

—  
“The black church in its present state bears some resemblance to the church of the future. I am not arguing that blacks view the world in the same way as their African brothers and sisters. I am arguing, however, that the pared-down theology of the white Western academy that was cut and shaved to fit a small-scale universe was always a tight fit for the theological world of the black church. The spirit world is much more a part of our lives and our religious experience than many people in the majority culture realize.”

—  
“You cannot get all of your sermon from a commentary or life experiences. Some of it must come from those deep places of unseen reality. Those imaginative insights that come to you while preparing for

preaching, and even while you are up preaching, don’t always come from the usual places—your knowledge of Scripture or understanding of theology. Sometimes they come only from divine initiative, where you cross over into unseen reality.”

—  
“Blacks cross these boundaries all the time. You hear it in their call stories and in their confessional preaching....I hasten to add my own experience with unseen reality. Thirty-six years ago the Lord called me to preach as a nineteen-year-old boy in South Texas. I gathered my family in the living room to tell them of my call experience. As I started to talk, the phone rang. It was a woman who worked at the hospital with my mother. She said, ‘Mrs. LaRue, I hate to bother you, but I had a dream last night that won’t go away. I dreamed your son was called to preach, and I saw him standing in a room with all of you all gathered around him as he prepared to tell you what the Lord had done in his life.’ My mother said, ‘I will have to call you back because that is exactly what he is doing now.’”

“Two opposing theological worldviews shape our context. According to the Augustinian view, humanity has been completely corrupted by the Fall. Indeed, a human being may be accurately defined as a creature of God who is not able not to sin. Human beings require divine grace to live....A powerful opponent grew up in opposition to the Augustinian worldview: the Enlightenment worldview, according to which humanity is not depraved. The Christian doctrine of original sin is wrong. The good life is here on earth; there’s no need for talk of a world to come. Heaven and hell are outdated abstractions. Human beings are capable, by the light of reason and experience, of perfecting the good life on earth.”

—  
“The black church resembles the church of the future because the church of the future remains largely committed to the Augustinian view. Most of the healing of brokenness in black life has come through an Augustinian understanding of the human situation. We are a broken people. We live and minister among broken people. Our homes are broken, hearts are broken, relationships are broken, lives are broken, promises are broken, friendships are broken, bonds of trust (even in the church) are broken. But that is why Jesus came. Something was wrong, broken at the very center of our existence. And we had not within us the means to fix it.”

—  
“In our day there has been such a cheapening of the gospel, such a shallow pronouncing of the unsearchable riches of His grace, that if one were to give full ear to the popular preaching of our day you could come away thinking that Christ died just so that we could get a job, a car, and a house. But Jesus did not die for our material success, worldly gain, or creature comforts. He died because there was something seriously wrong at the center of our existence and we had not within us the means or the resources to fix what was broken. Thus, God sent Jesus into the world to bring us back into a right relationship with God.” iM



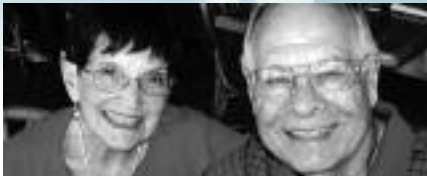
# HOMECOMING 2009

REMEMBERING . . . *re*CONNECTING . . . *re*ENVISIONING

*Friday, November 6 - Sunday, November 8, 2009*



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



**Harold Blatt '53** and his wife, Jean, live in The Villages, Florida, a retirement community of 75,000. They recently celebrated 54 years of marriage. Harold teaches Sunday School, leads a neighborhood Bible study group, and chairs his church's missions committee.

sands of young people. Since 1983, he has also served as founding pastor of Come Alive New Testament Church in Medford, New Jersey.

**Elizabeth Conde-Frazier '82**, after several years of teaching at Claremont School of Theology in California, recently returned to the East Coast to serve as Dean of Eastern University's Esperanza College.



**Adalia Gutierrez '92** and **Ray Schellinger '93** minister in Tijuana, Mexico, heading up Deborah's House, a ministry to victims of domestic violence.



**Attorney Natasha Miller '07** resides in North Carolina where she practices elder justice law.



**Harry Thomas '70** founded Come Alive! Ministries (now International) in 1972. In 1979, Come Alive! began sponsoring the popular Creation Festival, attended annually by tens of thou-



**Kristy Arnesen Pullen '83** is the associate director of publishing for the Alban Institute in Herndon, Virginia, outside of Washington, D.C.

**Lee Butler '86** is professor of theology and psychology at Chicago Theological Seminary.



*Come to Homecoming 2009 to renew friendships and find out more about what seminary graduates have done and are doing!*



# HOMECOMING 2009 : SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Prior to the registration period, which begins at 5pm, alumni/ae and their guests will have the opportunity to attend an all day (9am to 4pm on Friday) seminar, led by Professor Peter Schreck, on the Prepare/Enrich assessment tool for use in premarital counseling. This seminar will certify participants to administer the new Customized Version of Prepare/Enrich, released in January of 2009.

The cost to alums is \$150, half of which is for the Prepare/Enrich materials you will need when using this instrument. The registration deadline is October 9. If you are interested, please check the appropriate box on the Homecoming Advance Registration Form.

## FRIDAY

- 5:00 - 7:00pm** Arrival/ Registration for Saturday morning classes
- 7:15 - 7:45pm** Welcome and Introductions
- 8:00** Musical concert featuring Eastern University's Turning Point choir
- 9:15pm till ????** (You decide!) Icebreaking activities/Refreshments

## SATURDAY

- 7:00 - 8:00am** Breakfast
- 8:15 - 8:45am** Worship, led by former Seminary Chaplain Dr. Horace O. Russell
- 9:00 - 11:45am** Return to the Classroom!  
Below is a sampling of former (or longtime) professors and their class topics:  
**Manfred Brauch:** The Abuse of Scripture and Its Consequences  
**Vince deGregoris:** Why is Forgiveness So Difficult for Families?  
**Leah Gaskin Fitchue** (topic to come)

- Elouise Renich Fraser:** Living with Death
- Nancy Lammers Gross** (topic to come)
- Edward B. Jones:** Psalms: Presbyterian Battleground.
- Rev. John G. McElhenny:** Reflections on Methodist History: Prosperity, Cryogenics, Expediency.
- Doug Miller:** Jesus' Spiritual Politics: Bringing out the Best in Christianity and America.
- Horace Russell** (topic to come)
- Peter and Carol Schreck:** PAIRS (Practical Application of Intimate Relationship Skills), a course for enriching marriage relationships
- William Thompson:** Preaching in Tough Times [Professors and topics are subject to change.]
- 9:00 - 9:45am** Class Session One
- 10:00 - 10:45am** Class Session Two
- 11:00 - 11:45am** Class Session Three
- 12 Noon - 1:30pm** "Meet and Greet" Lunch  
Over lunch, get to know some of the Seminary's newer professors.

**1:30 - 2:00pm** Booksigning  
Attendees will be able to purchase books written by current and former Seminary professors and by Seminary alums. (If you have written a book, will be in attendance, and want to be included in this event, please let us know when you return your registration form.)

**2:00 - 2:30pm** Campus Tour

**2:30 - 6:30pm** FREE TIME  
We will provide suggestions for afternoon activities. Or you can just get some good ole R & R!  
**6:30pm** Evening Banquet (semi-formal attire) featuring Seminary President Wallace Charles Smith as the main speaker.

## SUNDAY

**7:00 - 9:00am** Continental Breakfast/Departure

## PLEASE NOTE

Do you want to know if one or more of your former classmates is planning to attend, but are having trouble contacting them? We can help! Call 800-220-3287, ext. 2978.

The Seminary has made arrangements with area hotels to offer discounts for those traveling from out of town. However, you must make your reservations by early October. If you would like information on your best lodging options, please check the appropriate box on your advance registration form.

[ please detach here ]

## PALMER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY HOMECOMING 2009 REGISTRATION FORM

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to **Palmer Theological Seminary** and mail it, along with this form, to:  
Homecoming 2009  
Palmer Theological Seminary  
6 E. Lancaster Avenue  
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania 19096

Please check this box if you would like more information on or want to register for the Prepare/Enrich Seminar on Friday, November 6. The registration deadline for the seminar is October 9. Alums who are not able to attend homecoming may still take part in the P/E seminar.

Please check this box if you would like information on area hotels/motels.

Number of people attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Event	Cost	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday evening reception (complimentary)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Breakfast	\$10 per person	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Lunch	\$10 per person	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Banquet	\$25 per person	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday Breakfast (continental)	\$5 per person	\$ _____

Total Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Pulpithumor

## TRIPPED UP

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran, she prayed, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!" While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress.

She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again. As she ran she once again began to pray, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late. But please don't shove me either!"

## SHIPWRECKED CHURCHGOER

One balmy evening in the South Pacific, a Navy ship spotted smoke coming from one of three huts on an uncharted island.

Upon arriving at the shore, the crew was met by a survivor of a shipwreck who'd been living on the island. "I'm glad you're here," said the man. "I've been alone on this island for more than five years."

The captain of the ship replied, "If you're all alone, why do I see three huts?"

The survivor responded, "Well, I live in one and I go to church in the other."

Asked the captain, "What about the third hut?"

Said the man, "Oh, that's where I used to go to church."

## BRAGGIN' ABOUT DAD

Three boys were in the school yard bragging about their fathers. The first one said, "My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a poem, and they give him \$50."

The second boy said, "That's nothing. My dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, calls it a song, and they give him \$100."

The third boy chimed in, "Well I got you both beat. My dad scribbles a few words on a

piece of paper, calls it a sermon, and it takes eight people to collect all the money!"

## PASTORAL ADVICE

A previously successful layperson found himself in a great deal of trouble with his business. By all measures, his enterprise was failing.

He'd put every penny he had and everything the bank would give him into his business, and as a result he owed a lot of people a lot of money.

Everything he did to turn things around seemed to fail, so as a last resort he went, in tears, to a pastor and asked for help.

After hearing the man's story, the pastor said to him, "Here's what I want you to do: Take a beach chair and your Bible and head down to the beach. When you get there, sit at the water's edge. Next, you shall open your Bible. The wind will ruffle all the pages, but finally the breeze will die down. Look down at the page and read the first thing you see. From that you will know what to do."

Though it sounded kind of strange, the man was desperate, so he followed the pastor's advice. Lo and behold, a year later, the man went back to the pastor. He brought his wife and children with him. The man was dressed in a brand new, custom-tailored suit. His wife was wearing a mink coat, and the kids looked like fashion plates. The businessman pulled out an envelope stuffed with money, and gave it to the pastor as a thank-you gift.

The pastor recognized the businessman and was curious. He asked, "So you did what I suggested?"

"Absolutely," replied the businessman.

"You went to the beach?"

"Sure did."

"You sat in the beach chair with the Bible in your lap?"

"I did indeed."

"Let the pages ruffle till they stopped?"

"Just like you told me to do."

"And what were the first words you saw on the page?"

The businessman replied, "Chapter 11."

## COMMANDMENT FOR SIBLINGS

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five- and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to "honor thy father and thy mother," she asked, "Now is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" One little girl answered, "Thou shall not kill."

Some of the entries above were adapted from the book *World's Greatest Collection of Church Jokes*, published by Barbour.



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# THE TRUTH MY PALM PILOT CALENDAR TELLS

by Professor Diane G. Chen

**O**UR CULTURE IS OBSESSED WITH TIME. A search of “time management” on Amazon.com yields 94,487 results, including *The 25 Best Time Management Tools & Techniques: How To Get More Done Without Driving Yourself Crazy* and *Time Management From the Inside Out: The Foolproof System for Taking Control of Your Schedule*. Despite the plethora of self-help materials that promise orderliness in our daily grind, the more fundamental issues of self-awareness and self-care behind the entries in our Palm Pilot calendars are not necessarily addressed.

The term “time management” is somewhat of a philosophical impossibility. Nothing I do can stop time. When life is good, time does not stretch to lengthen enjoyment. Neither does the tick, tick, ticking slow down to drag out the torture in times of distress. The passage of time is unrelenting.

Yet our idioms reflect the desire to control time. We claim that we make time, take time, spend time, find time, buy time, lose time, keep time, tell time, kill time, or even do time or serve time. We find ourselves racing against time, being pressed for time, running out of time, having a hard time, and living on borrowed time. Do we really manage time the way we seem to think we can?

The verbs we place before the noun *time* are revealing. Whereas telling and keeping time are neutral activities, the fact that we feel compelled to make time, find time, buy time—or are concerned about losing time and running out of time—says something about our sense of well-being.

It’s been said that our check-books reveal both who we are and our priorities. Can we not say the same about our calendars, the numbers we set on speed dial, and the bookmarks on our internet browsers? Our check-books, calendars, and

address books don’t just organize our lives. They are windows to self-perception and awareness.

Because time is limited, we attempt to use it on important people and things. Important by whose assessment? What do we do when that which we value as important is not viewed likewise by our spouse, children, dean or colleague? We cannot say to them, “The heck with you; I am going to spend my time this way. End of story.” To what extent, then, is *our* time on *our* calendar for *us* to use? How do we make these determinations without becoming stressed and resentful?

Every time I declare that “I am busy,” what am I saying to myself and others? Am I implying that I am indispensable, productive, compulsive, or all of the above? Are these descriptors an accurate reflection of me? Or are they perceptions I have of myself (or that others have of me) that I choose to believe?

As I analyze the entries on my calendar, patterns emerge. There are things I want to do and things I feel obligated to do. Both the tightness of my schedule and the nature of the activities contribute to my sense of well being. What criteria lie behind my allocation and use of time? What is the interplay between emotion and pragmatism? Am I so afraid of what others think of me and my choices that I would rather be

present in body but insincere in spirit? These are hard questions,

because my calendar exposes my insecurity. The entries reveal that people-pleasing gets the better of me when I confuse a well-packed schedule with quality living.

But not all is lost. My schedule, while sufficiently full, is not constantly ridiculous. Even during crunch

times there are interday and intraday spaces. These empty slots provide the necessary protection against “total commitment,” literally, down to the very last minute of the day.

We must ask ourselves if by doing more we are really accomplishing more. Even if some of the slots are designated for leisure, exercise, family and friends, the fact that every moment of our lives is prearranged leaves little room for spontaneity and exigency.

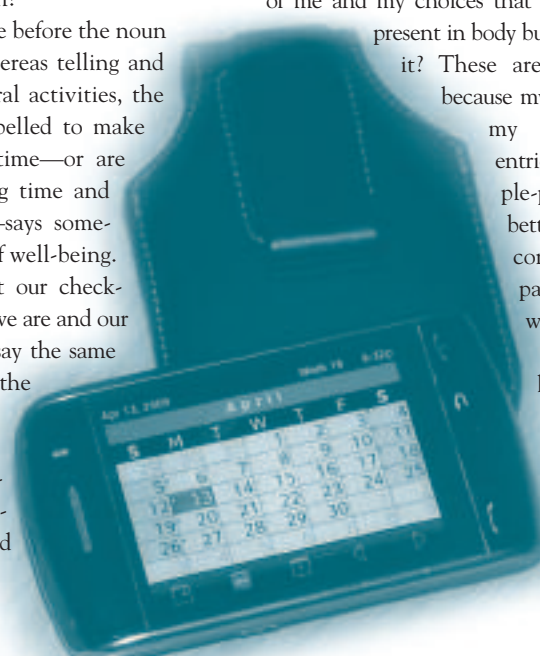
Consider a picture in a frame. The matted board creates a margin around the picture so that it does not crowd the edges of the frame. The margin enables us to focus better on the photograph or painting. Likewise, having a margin of time labeled “blank” inserts a breather from the tyranny of my Palm Pilot calendar. I can play or work without guilt. Sometimes I tell my calendar that I am not relinquishing control to its orderly little boxes. When I do return to living my “managed time,” I am less resentful. Besides, creating a margin in our schedule is like taking out an insurance policy or opening a savings account. In times of emergency, we will be glad to have it already in place.

I have learned that taking on less does not result in mediocrity. When I concentrate on fewer things, I perform better. I acknowledge my limitations and admit I cannot do it all. Intentional inactivity forces me to reflect on why I choose to do the things that I do. It checks if my priorities are clouded by ambition, fear, or insecurity. Less can be more if the right “decrease” results in the right “increase.”

I am learning not to fight my calendar. Some days are packed with back-to-back engagements. But whenever possible, I try to leave some real space between me and my Palm Pilot. Then, much to my pleasant surprise, sometimes I find God waiting in that new nothingness. At other times, I simply choose to take a nap. *iM*



Dr. Diane G. Chen is Associate Professor of New Testament at Palmer Seminary and a frequent contributor to *inMinistry* magazine.



## WEST VIRGINIA ALUMNUS TRENT EASTMAN OVERSEES CHURCH REUNION

IT WAS “THE USUAL SUSPECTS” that more than 20 years ago caused a large group from the 20th St. Baptist Church in Huntington, West Virginia to split and join the Beverly Hills Baptist Church, also in Huntington: control issues, personality conflicts, and the like. But a few years ago, some people began talking about the possibility that the two churches could accomplish greater things together than the sum of what each could accomplish alone. Lay leaders in both congregations, as well as area minister Mike Derry '70, encouraged the conversations. Among the key persons urging renewal was Seminary alumna Lois Merritt '04.

Seminary alumnus Trent Eastman '02 began to apply principles he learned from the organization Peacemaker Ministries. The end result? On February 1, 2008, both Beverly Hills and 20th Street Baptist Churches ceased to exist so that New Baptist Church, with Trent as its lead pastor, could be born. (He was previously pastor at Beverly Hills.) The following interview with “Pastor Trent” offers perspectives from which all churches struggling with conflict can benefit.

### What were the biggest obstacles standing in the way of this reunion and how were they overcome?

Even though over 20 years had gone by, there was still pain—grudges and hurt feelings—in both congregations. It took purposeful peace-making activities and confronting the sin of unforgiveness to overcome this. And we designed church governance in such a way as to alleviate the problems that caused the split.

We also had to address the question of who would get to do what, because there were two pastors, two choir directors, two piano players, two Sunday school superintendents, two lead sopranos—you get the idea. At the board/committee level we did a straight merge of all boards and committees for 2008, allowing each to have two chairs. In the nomination process for 2009 we scaled down the size of the boards and committees, asking them to nominate their own chairs. This worked.

Staffing was a different issue. Those leading the merger discussions felt from the beginning that I should serve as lead pastor. Being clear early on and having full agreement on the pastoral staff structure was key to working through staffing issues. We made the commitment that all staff would keep their jobs, though responsibilities could change. We are a

bit overstaffed, but we've not had any divisive conflict. It helps that all staff are caring people who are willing to serve.

### What is the greatest continuing struggle?

An “us versus them” mentality continues to be the lens through which actions are viewed. This affects questions ranging from what format to use for baby dedications and believers baptisms to how we order the service. The only way to overcome this is to continue remembering that the merger is not about oneself, but about God's kingdom, and that we advance God's kingdom through our own surrender. We have succeeded because people have said, “It is not about me.” They have let go of control in order to build the community of faith.

### What have been the greatest benefits/rewards?

There have been many. The merger enabled us to move into a 3.65 acre lot on flat land (a big deal in West Virginia) that has plenty of parking, a grass lot, and a nearly 40,000 square-foot building. Already, due to

our location there are many new faces in our congregation.

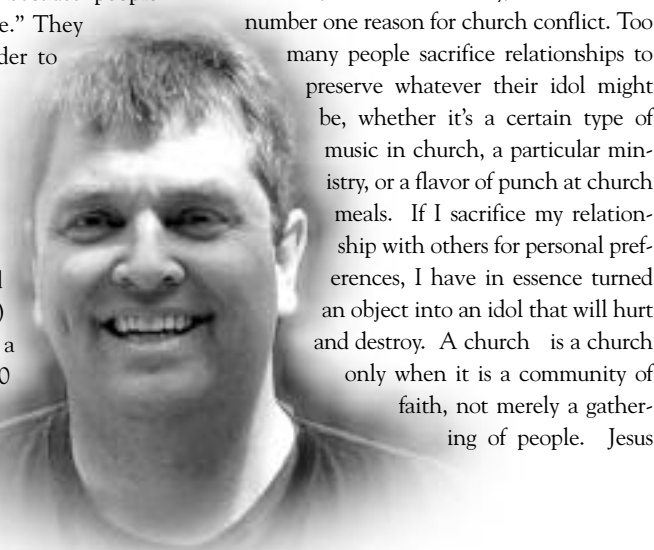
New Baptist is running 300 in attendance on Sunday mornings and over 200 at evening services. We are discovering that our combined mass is giving us greater ability to accomplish things without wearing out the usual doers of the church. In fact, we have more than 200 people serving in various ministry capacities.

On a personal level, I have fallen in love with the people who were a part of the former 20th Street Church. The joy of new fellowship is sweet. Some people are at the church every day doing things like working in the food/clothing pantry that serves the community, running a small group study, or laying carpet. People are excited about doing something new. The merger has been an adventure of faith.

### What lessons can be applied to all churches, especially those struggling with conflict?

Churches seeking to be healthy and holy should focus on the following three things. First, communicate hope. Six months ago no one would have dreamed that New Baptist would be where it is today. But ours is a God who does new things. Even in the most desperate of situations, the glory of God can be revealed.

Second, confront idolatry, which is the number one reason for church conflict. Too many people sacrifice relationships to preserve whatever their idol might be, whether it's a certain type of music in church, a particular ministry, or a flavor of punch at church meals. If I sacrifice my relationship with others for personal preferences, I have in essence turned an object into an idol that will hurt and destroy. A church is a church only when it is a community of faith, not merely a gathering of people. Jesus



tells us that it is by our being one that the world may know the Father has sent Him.

Third, be faithful to God's Word. Too often, churches rely on an advertised program or study as a miracle cure for what ails them. This

takes the place of people committing themselves, heart and mind, to the faithful study of the Word. I have found that sick churches are populated by those who think they know what the Bible says but who never seem to have time

to embrace God's Word. Both Beverly Hills and 20th Street Baptist were able to let go of more than 100 combined years of tradition and culture because of a hunger for God's purposes fueled by faithfulness to God's Word. **iM**

## SEMINARY ALUMS ACTIVE IN THE WORLD OF BOOK PUBLISHING

PUBLISHING A BOOK ENABLES people to extend their ideas, perspectives, knowledge, and influence beyond their immediate circle of relationships and contacts. No fewer than three graduates of the Seminary have had this opportunity in 2009, having written books that have been published or will be published soon.



In February, Xulon Press released Dr. Robert S. Miller's *Survival Handbook for Young Pastors*, subtitled *Keys to Overcoming Seven Imposing Battlefields of Pastoral Ministry*. Bob graduated from the Seminary with an M.Div. in 1988 and a D.Min. in 1996. He serves as pastor of Cornerstone Christian Fellowship in West Chester, PA, a church he helped establish in 1989.

Bob's motivation for writing the book was his disappointment with hearing statistics regarding the high number of men and women who leave pastoral ministry due to burnout. His book is the ultimate in straight-shooting, candid advice intended to help pastors avoid the snares and pitfalls that lead to burnout.

He identifies and elaborates on seven keys to survival: Know Your God, Know Yourself, Know Your Enemy, Know the Terrain, Know Your Boundaries, Know

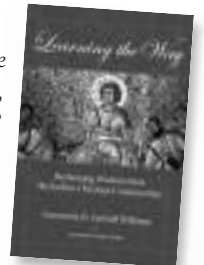


Cassandra "Casey" Carkuff Williams '84 is the author of *Learning the Way*, which offers advice on how to approach modern-day issues of Christian education and the nurturing of Christian disciples.

How to Lead, and Know Your Mission. Former Seminary president and New Testament Professor Manfred Brauch, in his cover blurb, writes that the book is "biblically grounded, theologically perceptive, experientially authentic, and practically engaged."

In March, the Washington, D.C.-based Alban Institute released *Learning the Way*:

*Reclaiming Wisdom from the Earliest Christian Communities*, written by Cassandra "Casey" Carkuff Williams '84. Casey has developed an expertise in the area of discipleship, reflected in her role as National Coordinator for Discipleship



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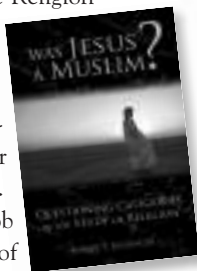
ALUMS PUBLISHING *continued*

Resource Development with National Ministries, American Baptist Churches (USA).

Her Alban book explores early Christian communities and their practices, focusing on what they have to contribute with regard to principles for discipleship formation in the 21st century church. Following this examination, she offers expert advice on how to approach modern-day issues of Christian education and the nurturing of disciples based on the examples of our earliest forebearers in the faith. Thus, *Learning the Way* is a very practical resource for pastors and other church leaders.

In May, Augsburg Fortress Press will release the provocatively titled book *Was Jesus a Muslim? Questioning Categories in the Study of Religion*, by Robert F. Shedinger '94, Associate Professor and Chair of the Religion

Department at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. The book builds on a piece on Christian-Muslim dialogue that Bob wrote for *inMinistry* a few years back.



In his new book, Bob poses the question of whether Muslims in some ways understand Jesus more accurately than Christians do, especially as this understanding relates to the topic of whether religion can or should be isolated from social and cultural questions and issues.

The book has significant implications for, among other things, how to approach Christian-Muslim dialogue; the relationship between religion and politics; and the relationship between religion and social justice movements. In the final chapter, the author engages the work of PTS professor Ron Sider and longtime Eastern University professor Tony Campolo '60.

Bob says he hopes the book can contribute to "a movement of Christian-Muslim solidarity against injustice with Jesus at the center." **im**



David King is the Provost of Eastern University.

## BOOK REVIEW

unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity . . . and Why It Matters by David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons

Published by Baker Books

Reviewed by Dr. David A. King



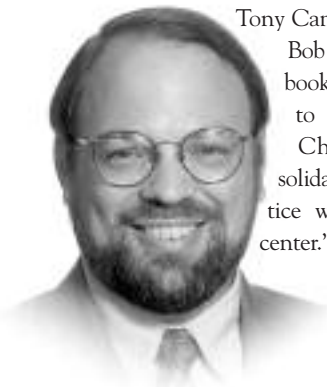
LET IT BE STATED RIGHT OFF THE BAT that unChristian is not a fun read for Christians. The discomfort begins on page one when Kinnaman and Lyons state, "Our research shows that many of those outside Christianity, especially younger adults, have little trust in the Christian faith. . . . They reject Jesus because they feel rejected by Christians."

Based on three years of research by the Barna Group, unChristian paints an unredeeming picture of Christianity. This picture materializes through stories culled from over a dozen national surveys of those whose experience is largely outside the faith. Using scientific research, the authors invite the reader to see what Christianity looks like from the outside. At the same time, they caution the reader that it's not a pretty picture. The title of the book reflects the most common reaction to the faith of "outsiders" (i.e. atheists and agnostics, those affiliated with a faith other than Christianity, other unchurched adults who are not born again Christians): "[that] Christians no longer represent what Jesus had in mind."

The authors dedicate a chapter to each of six themes that reflect the most common points of skepticism and the objections raised by outsiders. Those themes are: [Christians] are hypocritical, too focused on getting converts, antihomosexual, sheltered, too political, and judgmental.

While the results of the research are daunting, Kinnaman and Lyons leave the reader with hope. They suggest that a clear implication of the research is "that the negative image of Christians can be overcome, and that this almost always happens in the context of meaningful, trusting relationships." They further suggest that the goal of overcoming this "negative baggage" is not to make outsiders think pleasant things about Christians, but to point them to a life in Christ.

Additionally, for all who serve in the organized church (i.e. congregations, faith based non-profits, seminaries, colleges and universities, etc.) the authors highlight the importance of remembering that Jesus said we would be known by our love for fellow believers: "The reality is that if we do not demonstrate loving relationships within the church, it does not matter how much we display Jesus to outsiders."





VIRGINIA F. PALMER, the daughter-in-law of the Seminary's third (and longest serving) president, Gordon Palmer, died March 13 of natural causes at the age of 86. Mrs. Palmer was an ardent advocate of women in ministry and a strong supporter of the Seminary, which was renamed in 2005 in honor of her father-in-law.

# inCommunity

Faculty and alumni/ae news and notes of the Palmer Seminary community.



A group of evangelical and Catholic Christians met for three days in March at Eastern University. Those participating in the dialogue believe the time is right for serious exploration of how they can work together to advance public policy that will serve the common good of the nation. The dialogue group seeks to advance policies that respect the sanctity of human life, promote economic justice, strengthen marriage and family, care for creation, and promote racial justice, peacemaking and human rights. PTS professor Ron Sider co-chairs the evangelical delegation. Bestselling author Rick Warren is one of the senior co-conveners of the dialogue.

## FACULTYnotes

After seven years as Dean and four years prior to that as Associate Dean, VPI/Dean of the Seminary **Dr. Elouise Renich Fraser** will step out of the Dean's office at the end of July. Following a sabbatical leave, Elouise plans to return to Palmer as Senior Professor of Systematic Theology. She will also assist in the areas of program and faculty development.



In February, Assistant Professor of Holistic Ministry **Al Tizon** traveled to Chantabury, Thailand to attend

a retreat for missionaries of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC), the denomination in which he formerly served as pastor. Attendees focused on the theme "Transformational Community Development."

In March, Al delivered the Westerdahl Lectures at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago. His theme was "The Missional Imperative: Preaching as if the World Matters."

In January, New Testament professor **Craig Keener** delivered the annual William Menzies Lectures at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in

Baguio, Philippines. He gave four lectures on the theme "For All Peoples: A Biblical Theology of Mission." Late last year at a gathering of the Institute for Biblical Research, Craig offered a plenary response to a paper on a New Testament perspective on the environment.

Sales of Craig's IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament have now eclipsed the half-million mark. His recent writings include the Introduction for 1-3 John in The People's Bible (Fortress) and the article "Between Asia and Europe: Postcolonial Mission in Acts 16:8-10" for the Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies.

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COMMUNITYnotes



Palmer Seminary, in close cooperation with the office of Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter and Philadelphia area religious leaders representing the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities, is advancing a dialogue on race. Some 60 participants in the dialogue met at City Hall on February 17, focusing on President Obama's landmark speech on the topic of race, delivered in Philadelphia in March of 2008. A steering committee is in the process of planning next steps. The goal, according to PTS President Smith, is to adopt and demonstrate principles that can set a positive example for other municipalities.



Former PTS Professor **Manfred T. Brauch's** latest book, *Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible*, has been released by InterVarsity Press.

The book is targeted for non-specialists. That is, it's not just for scholars but for pastors, small Bible study leaders and Sunday School teachers as well.

In the book, Dr. Brauch identifies and corrects a number of basic errors in the use of the Bible, errors that interpret and apply biblical texts in ways that distort their meaning and message. The book explores issues of context, selectivity, consistency, and author intent. Beyond principles for interpreting the Bible, the author addresses the attitudes behind the ways people apply Scripture. Manfred will be among those teaching a class (and signing his new book) at the November homecoming.



ALUMnotes



**William John Holmes, Jr. '55** and his wife, Barbara Ann, on June 25 will celebrate 60 years of marriage. The couple resides in White Lake, Michigan. They have four children and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. After serving as a pastor for several years, William switched careers and worked for the state of Michigan (Department of Civil Rights) until his retirement.

Please plan to join us in Pasadena this June at the American Baptist Church Biennial. Sing up for the Eastern University/Palmer Seminary Breakfast, scheduled for Saturday, June 27, 2009 at 7:00am.

IN MEMORIAM

**Thomas Jefferson Ritter**, who served for many years as a Seminary board member and for some 50 years as pastor of Second Macedonia Baptist Church in Philadelphia, died on January 17 of heart failure at the age of 86.

A veteran of World War II, Dr. Ritter manned a supply craft that was hit by an enemy shell during the Normandy invasion. After his discharge (as a sergeant) in 1945, he enrolled at Temple University to study pharmacy. But responding to a call to ministry, he left Temple to attend Eastern Baptist College (now Eastern University), which many years later would award him an honorary doctorate.

Dr. Ritter helped the late Rev. Leon Sullivan found Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC) in Philadelphia and served as OIC's first Executive Director. The OIC provided job training programs and services for thousands upon thousands of minority persons. The organization eventually found a home in many other U.S. cities and elsewhere, including the African nations of Ghana, Liberia, and Gabon.

A mentor to young ministers, Dr. Ritter served on several boards, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Association for Nonviolence and both the Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commissions. He also founded Giving of Self Partnership, Inc., an organization that aids troubled youth.

Dr. Ritter was known for being accessible day and night to those who needed him. "It was nothing for some-one to call him at 2 o'clock in the morning," his wife, Elizabeth, told the Philadelphia Daily News. "It was never an imposition. He was always available."



# I STILL REMEMBER . . .

By Wallace Charles Smith

I HAVE HAD SOME MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES during my nearly 35-year association with our school. I began as a student in 1970 and served as a professor in the 1980s and as a member of the Board of Directors during the '80s and '90s. I'm honored now to serve as president. It's been a great ride.

While I was a student here, I worked as one of the night watchmen. One of our principal assignments was chasing neighborhood teenagers out of the swimming pool after hours. (As some of you will remember, we did have a swimming pool in those days.) Sometimes these young scofflaws chose to swim without their bathing suits, presenting a challenge to our watchmen's sartorial sensibilities. Needless to say it is no easy thing to chase people with one's hands over one's eyes. But we gave it our best.

As a professor, one of my assignments was the required course in worship. As a part of that experience we practiced baptisms at a nearby Baptist church. One day, with much bravado and little sense, I offered to be baptized by anyone who had no experience or who felt a little uncertain or nervous about the exercise. That day I was baptized 35 times, as 35 of my 37 students claimed to have little experience and said they were nervous. One gets a whole new perspective on believers baptism when one wonders if the class goal might have been to drown the professor.

Over the years there have been many tears to go along with the laughter. Tears came mightily in 2004 with the passing of Dr. William Hand, my professor of pastoral counseling. Dr. Hand was not only a professor, but my mentor and my dearest friend. While I was a student and was going through some personal challenges, on my 23rd birthday he gave me a concordance in which he wrote the words from Proverbs 21:21: "A brother is born for adversity." To this day, that concordance is one of my most cherished possessions.

These are just a few of my memories of the ways in which over the years this space and place have for me become sacred ground. I know that many of you have similar memories, some of them perhaps difficult, most of them joyous, but all of them important.

I hope you will plan to be with us later this year to

share some of your memories and experiences here. We at Palmer are already very excited about the homecoming we have planned for November 6-8. Several of our retired professors will return to teach classes and to join in the fun and festivities. It will be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with those we know, meet some of those we don't know, and reaffirm our common commitment to share with others the light of Christ.



Placement Officer Joan Wooters, Field Ed. Director Gene Wright, and Professor Smith in the 1980s.



YOU CAN MAKE A

*difference*

What's the main reason people don't contribute to charitable causes? Is it because they stopped caring? Do they feel they can't afford it?

Actually, some research suggests that the number one reason is that people think their gift, because it's not a "major" gift, won't matter.

Don't believe it for a second. Yes, it's nice to have a few people who can do a lot. But we also need a lot of people who are able and willing to do a little.

Last year, gifts to the PTS annual fund were averaging close to \$30,000 a month. In recent months they have averaged under \$5,000.

**If just one-fourth of alumni/ae would give just \$5 or \$10 a month, it would make a huge difference for Palmer Seminary.**

Please be counted among those who are willing to do a little, knowing that, together, we can do a lot.

*Note: Remember that you can give on-line via credit card at [www.palmerseminary.edu](http://www.palmerseminary.edu).*

#### JOIN US FOR COMMENCEMENT 2009

*Seminary alums are welcome to attend Palmer's 2009 Commencement on Saturday, May 16, at 10 a.m. at the beautiful Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church. This year's speaker is Luran Bethell, known for her missionary work among girls and women exploited by the sex industry. Luran serves as global consultant for International Ministries of the American Baptist Churches. To request tickets, call 484-384-2980 or e-mail [rframe@eastern.edu](mailto:rframe@eastern.edu).*



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