Centennial Celebration Begins
“From Prairie to Present — Proclaiming God’s Promise”

Details Inside on page 3:
Unveiling and Dedication of the Centennial Mural, May 11, 2007 • Centennial Dinner and Program
Eugene Boring Commencement 2007 speaker, May 12, 2007
Special meals and celebrations at DOC General Assembly, July 2007
Fred Craddock and Barbara Brown Taylor lead preaching workshop, September 2007
The President’s Column

1907 was a good year for theological education, and 2007 is a great year to celebrate!

I have just returned from Melbourne, Australia, celebrating the centennial of an institution once called the “College of the Bible” but now named Churches of Christ Theological College. Churches of Christ in Australia are the equivalent of the Disciples of Christ in North America, and, in Australian English, a “theological college” is a “seminary.” I was “principal” (read “president”) of the Australian “College of the Bible/Churches of Christ Theological College” from 1981 until 1991, on its faculty from 1970, and a student there before that. It was a personal joy to be part of the celebrations “down under.”

The Australian academic year starts in February whereas in North America the academic year starts in August/September. The first classes taught in the Australian “College of the Bible,” therefore, preceded by about seven months the first classes taught at a theological institution, also called the “College of the Bible,” in Enid, Oklahoma. That institution, known at various times as the Graduate Seminary of Phillips University, Phillips Graduate Seminary, and, since 1995, as Phillips Theological Seminary is celebrating in September of this year the centennial of the start of its first classes. In fact, 2007/8 is a year-long centennial celebration, starting with Commencement 2007 and concluding with Commencement 2008. Details of the main celebratory events are given on page three in this edition of Seminary News. Please join us as we celebrate 100 years of educating ministers and lay leaders.

William Tabbernee, President

Dennis Smith Named to Endowed Chair

William Tabbernee announced recently that Dennis Smith will become the LaDonna Kramer Meinders Professor of New Testament, July 1, 2007. Smith, who joined our faculty in 1986, has the longest tenure of anyone currently teaching at PTS.

Two New Faculty Appointments

Don A. Pittman, vice president and academic dean, has announced two appointments to the full-time faculty, beginning July 1, 2007.

Duane Bidwell, Ph.D., currently director of the Pastoral Care and Training Center of Brite Divinity School and an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA), will become assistant professor of Pastoral Theology, Care, and Counseling.

Sandra Costen Kunz, a Ph.D. candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary and a lay leader in the Episcopal Church, will join the faculty as assistant professor of Educational Ministries.

Pittman said, “Promising scholars and teachers in their own fields of expertise, Duane Bidwell and Sandra Kunz are gifted individuals who are dedicated to the church and to graduate theological education for ministry. Each will make outstanding contributions to the PTS community.”
Centennial Celebration Highlights

This photograph, taken in 1908, shows the class in Hebrew studies at the fledgling College of the Bible in Enid, Oklahoma. Please join us for any or all of the centennial events planned for 2007-2008.

Celebrating our Past

2007 Centennial Celebration and Commencement Weekend

- May 11, 2007
  4:00 p.m. Unveiling and Dedication of the Centennial Mural on the PTS campus
  6:00 p.m. Centennial Dinner and Program featuring “A Stroll Down Memory Lane” by the Not-Ready-For-Prime-Time PTS Faculty Players, at the Radisson Hotel, 10918 East 41st Street, Tulsa (reservation required; contact Julia Chastain, 918-270-6405; names of those planning to attend will be posted and updated regularly on the Seminary’s website www.ptstulsa.edu)
- May 12, 2007
  11:00 a.m. Commencement Service with Dr. Eugene Boring, featured speaker, at First Christian Church, Tulsa

Confirming our Presence

Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in Oklahoma

- May 31, 2007
  12:00 noon PTS Luncheon Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma City

General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

- July 21, 2007
  6:00 p.m. Centennial Celebration Dinner for PTS and Phillips University at the Renaissance Worthington Hotel, 200 Main Street, Fort Worth, Texas
- July 23, 2007
  12:15 p.m. Gala PTS Luncheon in the Crystal A & B ballroom at the Hilton Hotel across from the Convention Center in Fort Worth, Texas

Centennial Convocation in Meinders Chapel on our campus

- August 28, 2007, a service remembering 100 years of theological education since the first class of the College of the Bible in Enid, Oklahoma.

Stacey Pastors’ Workshop, September 13-15, 2007

Fred Craddock and Barbara Brown Taylor will present a preaching workshop, “Preaching Your Heart Out.” It will be held at First Christian Church, Tulsa.
Our Sympathy

We offer prayers of comfort and sympathy to:

Leslie Dotson (’02) at the death of her husband, Junior, March 4, 2007; and

Gladys (Betty) Stanke (’87) at the death of her husband, Irvin, January 25, 2007.

We have also been notified of the death of Hanna Kawai (’30) in Japan, December 27, 2005.

Share Your E-mail Address

Please take a minute now to send us your e-mail address. We have developed a brief, attractive e-mail newsletter that can be sent more frequently than Seminary News. You’ll enjoy keeping more current with what is happening at PTS.

We also are updating our alumni/ae listings so we can offer them on a CD. It’s important that your listing is current.

Send your address and other contact information to Judy Krase, 901 North Mingo Road, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74116-5612, or judy.krase@ptstulsa.edu.

A Library at Your Finger Tips

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ouldn’t it be great to have a whole library of resources available in your office without taking up any shelf space? Now as a PTS alum, it’s yours with a phone call or e-mail to the PTS library. You may access ATLAS from any online computer and have a wealth of information literally at your finger tips.

ATLAS is a large database that includes an online collection of major religion and theology journals, book reviews, and collections of essays. Users can read articles or research the history of a topic from writings as early as 1924 to the present. It is possible to retrieve images of the pages of more than eighty different journals.

James Graham recently used his alumni access to the ATLAS Religion Database at PTS. He said, “This information really enhanced my sermon in which I was talking about the movie, One Night with the King. Thank you, PTS for continuing to support our alumni/ae in our ministries.”

To obtain access to ATLAS:
call 918-270-6437, or e-mail ptslibrary@ptstulsa.edu.

Linda Harker and Mike Chaffin Help in Ministerial Formation

Linda Harker (’97), left, and Mike Chaffin (’79), center, are United Methodist District Superintendents who meet with UMC students as part of their ministerial formation program. Ellen Blue, seated next to Chaffin, is assistant professor of the History of Christianity and United Methodist Studies. She directs the United Methodist ministerial formation program at PTS. That program assures that UMC students receive the preparation their denomination considers essential. Other denominations with ministerial formation programs at PTS are the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, the Cooperating Baptist Fellowship, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
**Roy Griggs Leaves a Legacy**

The Seminary community grieves the death of Roy Griggs, a valuable member of our staff since 1998. He lost his battle with cancer, February 3, 2007.

As our director of church relations, Roy was a welcome visitor to churches and pastors. His duties expanded to include working in our Stewardship Department where he was an effective fundraiser.

He came to PTS after retiring as senior minister of First Christian Church, Tulsa, where he had served for nearly 19 years.

He was highly regarded throughout the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), especially for his devotion to ecumenical and interfaith relationships. For many years he was vice chair of the Council on Christian Unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

At one time he was one of three finalists to be General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

We valued Roy’s gentle spirit, his winsome humor, and his deep faith. Memorial contributions are being made to the Roy L. Griggs Scholarship Fund at PTS, or the Griggs Lectureship Fund at First Christian Church, Tulsa.

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**Generation to Generation**

This Booneville, Arkansas, girl, Willia Ingram, whose family was very involved in the church, was known for being open and receptive to different points of view. She studied to become a teacher at Ouachita College, Oklahoma A&M, and Columbia University. She served as a Spanish/English translator in Laredo, Texas, during the Second World War. She taught school in Tuskahoma, Talahina, Okmulgee, and Panama, Oklahoma, before recruiters from California caught her fancy. There she met her husband, Doug Adams, also a teacher.

Willia was active in the Hollywood Presbyterian Church where her Oklahoma nieces, Ann and Lu, enjoyed seeing movie stars during their visits with her.

When she was eighty years old, Willia moved to Edmond, Oklahoma. Since there was no appropriate senior living center there, Ann helped her settle in Edmond. Willia joined First Christian Church at that time.

It was very much in character that she made well-organized estate plans that she shared with her nieces, nephews and great nephews before her death. After Ann and Lu declined much of what Willia would have left to them, generous provisions were made for PTS and other charities. “I think our concern that we are running out of ministers in Disciples churches motivated us a lot,” said Ann. “Aunt Willia always wanted to do her part. Family and education were certainly two of the important things in her life.”

We are very grateful to Willia’s nieces, Ann Mathies Maxwell and Lucretia Mathies McCoy. They declined over $700,000 from their aunt’s estate so it could be given to PTS to establish an endowment.

For information about gift planning, contact Ginny Walker, director of planned giving, at 918-270-6417 or virginia.walker@ptstulsa.edu.

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**Religion Writer Is Guest Lecturer**

Bill Sherman (left), religion writer for the Tulsa World, was a guest lecturer in John Imbler’s Christianity in the U.S. class last fall.

A veteran writer and editor with the newspaper, Bill shared his journey of vocation and faith up to his current position. He also talked about the trends he sees in North American and world religions.

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Have you made a gift this year to help PTS educate women and men for ministry?
Faculty Notes

Gary Peluso-Verdend is one of four authors of New Proclamation: Year C, 2007: Easter through Christ the King. This resource for lectionary preaching is published by Fortress Press.

Dennis Smith is the primary editor of a new volume of The Storyteller’s Companion to the Bible published by Abingdon Press. Volume 11 is titled The Parables of Jesus. Dennis is also the author of the articles on “Banquet,” “Banquet Hall,” and “Communion” in The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible by Abingdon.

Anne Joh has been lecturing at Princeton Theological Seminary, the University of Chicago, Fordham University, the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, and Chicago Theological Seminary on her recent book Heart of the Cross: A Post-colonial Christology.

Joe Bessler-Northcutt has an article in the American Journal of Philosophy and Theology titled “Langdon Talking: A Conversation with Langdon Gilkey on the Writing of Shantung Compound.” Joe also continues his work with The Lexington Seminar, funded by the Lilly Endowment.

Ellen Blue was a featured panelist in February at the Oklahoma Conference for Community and Justice Trialogue series on immigration. The topic was “Welcoming the Stranger.” She also spoke at a conference titled “Struggle, Faith and Vision: Celebrating Women in the United Methodist Tradition-1788 to Today,” at Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

William Tabbernee has published “Recognizing the Spirit: Second-generation Montanist Oracles” in Studia Patristica; and Review of

At Jesus Seminar

Sandy Shadley (left) director of the library, secures an autographed copy of Madeleine Albright’s new book, The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs, for our library. Albright (right), former U.S. Secretary of State, was a speaker at the fall meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Washington, D.C.

Vera-Elisabeth Hirschmann, Horrenda Secta: Untersuchungen zum frühchristlichen Montanismus und seinen Verbindungen zur paganen Religion Phrygiens in the Journal of Early Christian Studies. He also delivered the Robison Lecture at Culver-Stockton College on “Why a Lost Ancient City Matters to Indiana Jones and All of Us.”

Kay Bessler Northcutt delivered the Oreon E. Scott Clergy Lectures at Christmount, North Carolina, recently. She also gave the

Madeleine Albright Autographs Books

Thompson Lectures at First Christian Church, Oklahoma City, and presented a paper titled “More Mobile Than Any Motion: Operative Theologies of Disciple Preaching” at the Academy of Homiletics in West Palm Beach, Florida. She was also the keynote speaker for the Capital Area Regional Women’s Retreat in Hagerstown, Maryland, and a co-keynote speaker for the “Totally Excited About Ministry” conference at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky.

Rick Lowery lectured at the ecumenical seminary in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in February. While there he and his wife, Sharon Watkins, general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), were thrilled to participate in the ordination service of 110 new Haitian pastors.

Nancy Claire Pittman continues to publish sermons in the lectionary source Proclaim. She was keynote at the Association of Disciples in Outdoor Ministries in January and at the CYF Spring Retreat of the Christian Church in Kansas.

Brandon Scott, on sabbatical this semester, has accepted a three-year term on the board of Westar, the umbrella organization for the Jesus Seminar in Christian Origins.
Bartlesville, Tulsa, and Jenks arriving to help us. Two men from Camp Christian came with special equipment to cut the dangerous limbs high in the trees and to remove limbs from people's roofs. These Good Samaritans worked countless hours during several days, braving frigid cold and treacherous ice. How can we adequately thank such good-hearted people?

The ice storm of 2007 will be remembered as historic, but day-to-day emergencies are not unusual to PTS students. Along with the reading and writing assignments of seminary come funerals, surgeries, and other "ordinary events" that call for a pastor's care in the lives of the congregation.

Seminary students often are pulled in many directions, but I thank God for a school that, while maintaining rigorous standards of scholarship, also encourages students during stressful times to be a pastor first.

I was aware of many prayers and phone calls of concern last January. They helped sustain me and allowed me, in turn, to minister to those in need in my congregation.

By Janice Hill, PTS student and pastor of South Grand Lake Christian Church, Langley, Oklahoma

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Surviving the Ice Storm of ’07

I have never seen anything like it, and I have lived around Grand Lake for thirty years! ”We were one of the hardest hit areas of Oklahoma in a huge ice storm in January.” “How long were you without electricity?” “Did you know generators can be dangerous if not used correctly?” “Listen to all those chain saws!”

Those were a few of the comments I heard in the aftermath of the storm. There are even T-shirts proudly stating “I survived the ice storm of 2007.”

Recovering from the devastation of the storm was one thing, but being a full-time seminary student while pastoring a congregation brought more challenges than there were hours in the day. Something had to give. In my case, it was my classes at PTS. I’m grateful that the Seminary was so understanding.

Many of my classmates were in similar situations. Serving a congregation while going to seminary is more than a full-time agenda. Then, add a disaster of major proportions, and you wonder how you’re going to cope.

As we began to clean up our devastated community, we saw church members, pastors, and other PTS students from nearby Claremore, Bartlesville, Tulsa, and Jenks arriving to help us.

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Seminarians who are called or appointed to a local church during seminary or upon graduation are usually asked to do one of two jobs, immediately: help develop a new congregation or revitalize an existing congregation.

Kevass Harding (’99) was appointed to a congregation sorely in need of revitalization. The amazing story of his work at Dellrose United Methodist Church in Wichita, Kansas, where he has served since 1998, caught the attention of Abingdon Press. The story has become a book, which has just been published: Can These Bones Live?: Bringing New Life to a Dying Church.

In the book, Kevass tells of being appointed to the challenging Dellrose congregation while still a student at PTS in Enid. He takes the reader on a journey through the reaction of the congregation to the changes that re-connecting to the community brought, and the leadership Kevass has given to building a renewed, ministry-driven congregation.

During a recent visit, Kevass expressed his gratitude for the biblical and theological preparation he received at PTS. He credits those courses and teachers with laying the foundation for his ministry, which now emphasizes teaching and disciple-making in the congregation.

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Ezekial 37 Comes Alive in Wichita

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Janice Hill (right) is joined by fellow pastors Gary Mitchell and Paul Rangle as they pile tree branches that were ravaged in January by the worst ice storm to hit northeast Oklahoma in recent memory. (Mary Claiborne, photo; Vinita Daily Journal)
Memories from Ministers’ Week 2007

Nearly a full house on the first night at East Side Christian Church

The Gemstar Caribbean Steel Band played to our delight at the Wednesday night banquet

John Dominic Crossan

Pablo Jiménez

Ministers’ Week 2008
January 22-24, 2008

Brandon Scott
Rick Lowery

A conga line dancing to the music of the Gemstar Caribbean Steel Band

Good friends enjoying fellowship at the banquet