

SEMINARY NEWS

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“Faith Matters” Series Continues in 2009

“Faith Matters,” a set of free presentations, is scheduled for February 16-March 23, 2009. PTS faculty members will offer lectures on a variety of topics ranging from “Religion of the USA” to “Biblical Spirituality for Today.” These sessions will be held at the Tabbernee Conference Center, 901 North Mingo Road. For more information, visit the PTS web site at www.ptstulsa.edu. See the report on the fall series on page 15.

Catch a Lecture in Norman

“Christianity in the United States,” a course taught by Professor John Imbler, is being offered in Norman, OK this fall. One evening is open to the public and will include a light supper.

- December 12, “Ecumenism and Interfaith Engagements”

This session will be held at First Christian Church, 220 S. Webster in Norman. RSVP deadline for the December 12 supper is Monday, December 8. To RSVP, please contact Linda Ford at 800.843.4675 or by email at linda.ford@ptstulsa.edu. Please indicate when you RSVP if childcare is needed.

Ministers’ Week 2009: Grace, Justice, Peace and Compassion - Here & Now

How should contemporary Christians think about paradise? Ministers’ Week 2009, January 13-15, will feature a present-day take on this ancient topic by the Rev. Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock. Joining her in leadership will be the Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., who will be the preacher.

Dr. Brock’s most recent book is *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Beacon Press, 2006). In it, she investigates early Christian ideas of paradise, the development of the theologies of holy war and holy violence in Western Europe during the Crusades, the resulting invention of racism and genocide, the colonization of the Americas, and the contemporary need for a new understanding of paradise.

Brock is the founding co-director of Faith Voices for the Common Good. She is a visiting scholar at the Starr King School for the Ministry, Graduate Theological Union, in Berkeley, California. She served as a fellow at Harvard Divinity School Center for Values in Public Life and directed the Fellowship Program at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. She has



taught religion and women’s studies for 20 years at numerous colleges and universities.

Also joining us at Ministers’ Week 2009 is the Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr. Dr. Forbes is president and founder of the Healing of the Nations Foundation of New York, a national and global ministry for spiritual renewal and holistic health. He is well known nationally for his 18 years of service at Riverside Church in New York City, which granted him the status of Senior Minister Emeritus.

In national and international religious circles, Dr. Forbes is known as the *preacher’s preacher* because of his extensive preaching career and his charismatic style. A 1996 survey named him one of the 12 most effective preachers in the English-speaking world and has been twice designated by *Ebony Magazine* as one of the greatest Black preachers in the U.S.

Cost for this three-day event is \$110 per person. To register, contact Connie English or Melanie Kruse at 918.610.8303. Online registration at www.ptstulsa.edu will be available beginning November 3. The registration deadline is January 5, 2009.



President's Column

In September, we held our annual Board/Faculty Retreat. It was a wonderful event. Post Oak Lodge, just outside of



Tulsa, provided the perfect setting in which faculty, staff, trustees, and spouses could get to know each other better through informal conversation and a variety of recreational activities.

The retreat also enabled us to devote quality time, away from the pressures of our normal routine, to three crucial, interrelated topics.

The first topic, "Reclaiming our Mission," generated a lot of discussion about the purpose of Phillips Theological Seminary. We reaffirmed that we exist primarily to

provide effective, well-educated ordained ministers but also emphasized that we have a much wider mission in that we prepare lay leaders for their particular ministries in church and society.

The second session was titled "Discerning the Call." It identified the various groups of people whom PTS serves and explored how, given the current economic and geographic pressures on many prospective students, we may be able to expand our online and other distance education courses to better meet their needs-and that of the churches.

The third theme discussed at depth was "Vocation and Theology." Trustees were delighted to learn about the ways in which the seminary has revised its curriculum significantly over the past few years.

These revisions help students transition into and then (later) transition out of seminary having integrated their learnings in the so-called "classical disciplines" (e.g., Bible, History, Theology) with what they have learned in the courses which teach the art and practices of ministry (e.g., preaching, worship, education, pastoral care and counseling).

We came away from the retreat enthused and excited about the future of the seminary and its vitally important role in the life of the churches in this part of the country. I wish you could have been there!



William Tabbernee, President

PTS in Self-Study; Public Comment Invited

Phillips Theological Seminary is in the midst of an institutional self-study, a preparatory period of approximately eighteen months leading up to a comprehensive visit by the seminary's peer accrediting associations, March 30-April 2, 2009.

PTS is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (see www.ats.edu) and by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (see www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org).

Both accrediting associations conduct a joint comprehensive evaluation visit at the seminary every ten years. The self-study addresses the standards of

each association to demonstrate that PTS is offering the education we claim to offer and that we meet peer-approved standards. The outcome of our work will be a document of over 200 single-spaced pages that will be read by the visiting teams in advance of the visit and will provide the basis for conversations and questions during the visit. At the conclusion of the visit, the joint team will notify PTS regarding the recommendations it will make to the accrediting commission of each association.

The Higher Learning Commission invites public comment regarding the seminary. Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of PTS or its academic programs.

Comments must be in writing and signed or submitted through the official form on the Commission's website by February 27, 2009. Comments should include the name, address, and telephone number of the person responding. Comments will not be treated as confidential. Please submit to:

Public Comment on Phillips Theological Seminary
The Higher Learning Commission
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602

or online by going to the Commission's website and following the link in the menu on the left hand side of the home page.

Spotlight on a Bridge Builder

In the song, “You’ve Got to Be Carefully Taught,” from the musical *South Pacific*, one verse reads: “You’ve got to be taught before it’s too late, Before you are six or seven or eight, To hate all the people your relatives hate, You’ve got to be carefully taught!” Well, what if the church decided to carefully teach another way of living based on Christ’s messages of the worth of every person, the value of diversity in God’s world, and the ministry of reconciliation? The Rev. Terrye Williams (M.Div. 1997) accepted that “what if” this summer in creating and organizing *Reconciliation Camp* in Craig Springs, VA.

Terrye, who pastors the Hilton Christian Church in Newport News, VA, took an idea, overcame her own interior doubts about whether the idea would work, and moved forward.



Twenty-six middle-schoolers, representing multiple racial and ethnic groups, who did not previously know each other, gathered at a Disciple camp in Craig Springs, VA, to learn to listen to each other. In the August 19 issue, the *Disciples World* (www.disciplesworld.org) published an article on Reconciliation Camp.

PTS asked Terrye what role her PTS education might have played in the idea for the camp. Terrye responded:

PTS has almost everything to do with fueling the idea for this camp! PTS planted the seed. The issue of inclusion for all within the body of Christ has long been my passion, and that passion was strengthened through the outstanding education and encouragement to stand for justice that I received at PTS. If I could thank anyone in particular for influencing my road it would be Dr. Brandon Scott and Dr. Joe Bessler. Dr. Scott’s classes demanded I understand the “why” of “what” I believed and be able to articulate my passion, and Dr. Bessler taught me about contextual theology - what it is to live within the context of another’s understanding.

Because you’ve got to teach them to love before they are...

SEMINARY NEWS

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Bridges of Faith Update

The Bridges of Faith Campaign has been moving forward! The drive to increase permanent endowments for scholarships and for the Fred B. Craddock Chair in Preaching has been successful to date. Thus far, nearly 400 donors have begun to fund:

- 34 new scholarships, including 7 new full scholarships
- 3 new academic chairs

More than \$7.6 million in gifts and pledges has been received. The total goal is \$10 million. And, remember, all gifts are being matched, dollar for dollar, by Chester and Debbie Cadieux.

Being a Good Steward in Today’s Financial Climate

At PTS we are:

- Adjusting thermostats and turning lights off to further our recycling program. In the first month of our increased attention to energy use, we reduced the seminary’s electric bill by over \$1,000 and kilowatt hour usage by 15,000.
- Following an investment policy for the endowment based on “prudent person” principles. As is the case with everyone whose investments are in stocks and bonds these days, the markets have not been kind to our portfolio. However, the investment policies have functioned very well for PTS in recent years, with gains outpacing the average for a school of our size.

What's New at the PTS Library?

Several improvements in the library will help students, faculty, alums, and the community access and find information.

- We received a grant from the Theodore and Beulah Beasley Foundation for the purpose of renovating the Beasley Archives and Rare Book Room. Plans for the two-year project include new shelving for the collection, plus furniture and decorations to make the space a pleasant research area for students, faculty, and visiting scholars.
- We have established a special room for our Discipliana Collection. All Disciples materials except those requiring the special environment of the Beasley Archives and Rare

Book Room are available in this one room.

- Spring 2008 saw the creation of an informal partnership between the PTS Library and the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice and Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry. The library will provide for the research and information needs of these agencies.
- During the 2007-2008 academic year the library initiated its information literacy class "Orientation to Theological Research." Technical Services/ Instruction Librarian Clair Powers and Professor Dennis Smith co-teach this course.

We welcome your visit to our library and our web pages at www.ptstulsa.edu/Library.

Jim Wilson

The Rev. Jim Wilson, a retired United Methodist who served in campus ministry for about three decades, received the Richard Ross Hicks Award at the National Campus Ministry Association (NCMA) gathering held in July, 2008 in Kansas City. The award is based on a lifetime contribution to the field of campus ministry and recognizes outstanding multi-ethnic ministry. Jim is the second recipient of the award.

While not a seminary alumnus, Jim is very much a member of the PTS community (and not only as the spouse of Professor Ellen Blue). We are glad to recognize this honor given to him by NCMA.

Convocation 2008



PTS opened the 2008-2009 school year by welcoming 33 new students to the community through our fall orientation. The incoming 2008 class comes to us from Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Texas. About one-third of the students are between 21-30 years old, with almost equal numbers of men and women.