

# NORTHEASTERN SEMINARY

NES eNewsletter Vol. 6, No. 3 — May 2009

## Outside These Four Walls and Steeple, There are Many Hurting People

### The Chaplain's Call to Ministry

Church buildings are on nearly every major street corner in America, yet no one within a four-mile radius of your home attends religious services of any kind. What sounds like an implausible speculation is quite close to the truth. With only 44 percent of Americans regularly attending some form of religious service, and only 61 percent of that total considered "Christian" students and alumni of Northeastern Seminary respond by bringing God's love to people's everyday lives.



Chaplaincy is a specialized form of ministry where the chaplain interacts with the public in an institutionalized setting outside the church. Although chaplains come in many forms, the common link is ministry. Lida Merrill (NES '06) serves at Heritage Christian Services in East Rochester, N.Y. She believes her ministry is relevant and necessary amid political and economic uncertainty, citing that, "the ministry of chaplain can be a bridge for the unchurched society to test out the truths of the Gospel."

Chaplaincies offer a unique opportunity to reach hurting people who may never enter a church, including the military, hospitals and human services, hospice care, and correctional facilities. They ease the struggles faced by members of today's society. In Merrill's experience, "Many people have questions and deep spiritual hunger, but they will not return or go to a church because of past wounds. However, a chaplain is a safe person because he or she is usually not working at a church, but in a community or care-giving setting. Chaplains are in a unique position to listen to people's concerns, discern where God is at work within their lives, and be an ambassador of the Kingdom of God."

Merrill expressed her amazement at how people share their story with anyone who will listen — a valuable discipline practiced by seminary students engaged in faith sharing groups. "When God shows me how He is at work in the person's story, [it is] very rewarding to show them God's loving presence in their life."

A similar experience is shared by Michael Cerula (NES '09), a member of this year's graduating class who is training to be an ordained chaplain for the U.S. Army. Cerula expressed that the most gratifying part about serving with the military for the past four years of Army ROTC has been how soldiers openly ask for prayer and willingly share their stories with him even though he is not an official chaplain.

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“The need was so great, they said I was ‘close enough’ and soldiers haven’t stopped telling me their problems since.” Like others, Cerula had been challenged and invigorated through the seminary’s focus on intentional personal and spiritual formation. “What used to be a boring discipline of morning devotions has turned into a joyful time of thanksgiving with our Creator God.”

Becoming a chaplain is a response to God’s to ministry. Merrill notes the motivations of chaplains go beyond church membership or conversion head counts. “They are motivated to serve by their love for Jesus.” NES current D.Min. student and Master’s graduate Bruce Swingle (NES ’01) is the lead chaplain at Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany. For him, “Chaplaincy is a mix of routine and surprises. It is about relationships and about competencies. If someone wants to be a chaplain they must be firm in their own beliefs and values while respecting those of others. You must love learning from formal courses, from other disciplines, and especially from the patients and families we serve. Chaplaincy is part of God’s kingdom work in unique settings and communities. I would encourage others to prayerfully consider this type of ministry. From my understanding of I Thessalonians 4:8, I see chaplaincy as allowing people to become so dear and important to us that we are willing to share with them not only the Gospel of God, but our own lives as well.”

## Alumni Banquet features Alumnus of the Year

A newly established Alumnus of the Year Award will annually recognize a graduate of Northeastern Seminary who exemplifies faithful service in ministry. The award will be given to a graduate who reflects innovative approaches to ministry, engagement of their cultural context, perseverance in the face of challenges, excellence in Biblical preaching and worship, equipping others to serve, and transformation of self and others through spiritual formation. Presentation of this year’s Alumnus of the Year Award will occur at an alumni banquet on June 16—held concurrently with the Conference on Ministry, June 16 and 17.

The alumni banquet is a time for you to reconnect with each other and with seminary leadership, and to celebrate alumni accomplishments. Please join us at 5:30 in the Friendship Center at Pearce Memorial Church. If you are an alumnus and would like to attend, please RSVP to Jennifer Catalano at 585.594.6420 or [catalano\\_jennifer@nes.edu](mailto:catalano_jennifer@nes.edu). Be sure to note your specific dietary needs.

## Welcome

### Doctor of Ministry Students

#### Cohort 2009

The 13 members of this cohort bring 160-plus years of combined ministry experience in African Methodist Episcopal, Assembly of God, Baptist, Catholic, Covenant, Free Methodist, and Wesleyan traditions. They serve in parish, college, and social service ministries and come from urban, suburban, and rural contexts in N.Y., Fla., N.J., and Ontario. Two are NES graduates.

Now in the midst of their coursework that started in April they will come together for two weeks in June, first for their spiritual retreat and then to campus for the Conversion and Transformation course taught by Dr. Gordon Smith and Bishop William Wilimon.

## Registering for Summer and Fall Courses

Online registration for summer courses is no longer available. If you are interested in registering for summer courses, you can obtain a hard copy of the registration form from Faith Sharp at Academic Services or by visiting <http://eboard.nes.edu/Registration.asp>.

**The deadline for hard copy registration forms for summer courses is May 20. Deadline for online registration for fall courses is August 10. Deadline for hard copy registration forms for fall courses is August 14.**

To obtain syllabi for fall courses visit [http://eboard.nes.edu/Course\\_syllabus.asp](http://eboard.nes.edu/Course_syllabus.asp). Syllabi for fall courses will be available in mid-July.

## Alumni News

**Bill Rabjohn (C10)** was appointed as pastoral administrator of Saint Pius the Tenth Roman Catholic Church. His responsibilities include leadership in coordinating sacramental and other needs of the parish and assuring their daily spiritual and temporal welfare. Of his NES experience, Bill reflects, "My education and spiritual formation continues to serve God and his people. It has been an interesting pilgrimage for me since my first steps into NES."

Westside International Soccer is a refugee soccer program on Buffalo N.Y.'s Westside. **David Baker (C13)** administers the program that provides supervised programs for inner city youth and develops house soccer programs. His desire is to impact his community by developing competent youth leaders and providing Westside youth with opportunities for positive change.

**Tom Worth (D.Min. C1)**, and his team from Grace and Truth Missions are in Bulgaria this May ministering to churches, planning for future conferences and seminars, and helping leaders with prison-focused outreach and evangelistic work.

As part of his life-long learning, **Chris Kelley (C6)** will be in Israel for a month studying the "Geographical and Historical Settings of the Bible" at Jerusalem University College. His "classroom" will be the community, in and among the people.

## Faculty News

**Dr. Doug Cullum**, academic dean and professor of historical and pastoral theology, lectured at Pittsford Community Church's 2009 Bible Conference: *Colossians: Knowing Christ in All His Fullness* on May 17-19, 2009.

**Dr. Beth Gerhardt**, professor of theology and social ethics, is among 20 scholars chosen to participate in the seminar, "Christianity and the Holocaust: History, Analysis, Implications," June 15-19, 2009 at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Dr. Gerhardt will hear from Holocaust scholars on the Christian response prior to and during the Holocaust and then discuss the implications for the church today. Dr. Gerhardt will be deepening her work in the area of Bonhoeffer studies, the application of Luther's theology to social problems, and participating with international experts on the Holocaust.

## Summer Part-Time Classes

**Tuesday nights  
May 26 – June 23**

Biblical Greek (3 Credits, GRK 510NE)  
I & II Kings (3 Credits, BIB 670NE)  
Use of Scripture in Meditation & Prayer (2 credits, PSF 620NE)

**Thursday nights  
May 28 – June 25**

Biblical Greek (3 credits, GRK 510 NE)

Course syllabi available at [ww.nes.edu/syllabus](http://ww.nes.edu/syllabus)

### Tuition

Credit: \$380 per credit  
Audit: \$150 per course

**NES Alumni Discount**  
\$50 per course to Audit



## Upcoming Events

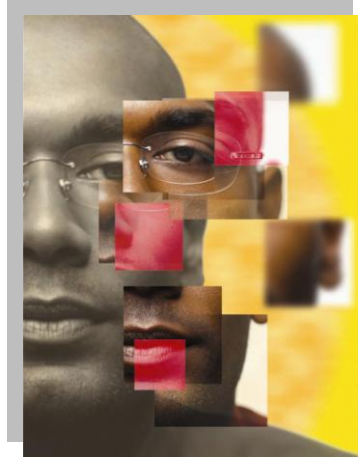
### Conference on Ministry

Rethinking Conversion and Transformation:  
*Ancient Wisdom and New Perspectives for  
Contemporary Congregations*

**June 16 – 17**

*Pearce Memorial Church*

The Conference on Ministry is quickly approaching so you have just **a couple of weeks** to register. Visit our website at [www.nes.edu/COM/2009](http://www.nes.edu/COM/2009) and register online or contact Jennifer Catalano at 585.594.6420 or [catalano\\_jennifer@nes.edu](mailto:catalano_jennifer@nes.edu).



**Dr. William Willimon**, Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church ([www.northalabamaumc.org/](http://www.northalabamaumc.org/)) and **Gordon T. Smith**, president of reSource Leadership International, come together to address the topic of conversion and transformation for this year's two day event. Special workshops include Pastoring and Church Planting in a Postmodern Context, Conversion and Transformation in the Context of Children's and Youth Ministry, Formative Events in Narratives of Life-long Conversion, and Preaching and the Call of God.

*Would you like to help promote this event at your local church?* If so, contact Jen Catalano for resources: [catalano\\_jennifer@nes.edu](mailto:catalano_jennifer@nes.edu) or 585.594.6420.

### Art Exhibit

When the Gods Prayed Back: Contemporary Ex Votos

**April 25-June 26**

*Roberts Hall Art Gallery*

Heather Layton's border-crossing art will be on display at B.T. Roberts Memorial Hall Art Gallery from April 25 through June 26, 2009. Admission to the gallery is free and open to the public.

### Pastor's Forum with Tony Campolo

**October 5, 2009**

*Northeastern Seminary*

We are pleased to announce our fall "Pastor's Forum" will feature Dr. Tony Campolo. He will speak at 11 a.m. in the Hale Auditorium at the Roberts Hall Cultural Life Center and a roundtable luncheon will follow for pastors and church leaders in which Dr. Campolo will address the role of the church in social justice today, including time for Q & A. The luncheon will be held in the Ellen Stowe Roberts Dining Room of the Garlock Dining Commons. Guests may sign up by calling 585.594.6800 or emailing [catalano\\_jennifer@nes.edu](mailto:catalano_jennifer@nes.edu).

## A Most Valuable Resource

For the people you know who want to deepen their theological understanding, develop their cultural literacy, and equip themselves to better serve in ministry, please share with them about Northeastern Seminary. Let them know they are invited to investigate a seminary degree at one of the information meetings listed below.

Your endorsement is invaluable.

### Information Meetings

Thursdays  
4:30 – 6:00 p.m.  
Roberts Hall 213

### Summer Dates

June 11

July 9

August 6

## McCown Symposium

*How to Have a Happy Afterlife*

**October 19, 2009**

*Northeastern Seminary*

Bible scholar Ben Witherington is the Amos Professor of New Testament for Doctoral Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary and doctoral faculty at St. Andrews University in Scotland. He is considered one of the top evangelical thinkers in the world, and is an elected member of the prestigious SNTS, a society dedicated to New Testament studies. Witherington has written over 30 books, including *The Jesus Quest* and *The Paul Quest*, both of which were selected as top biblical studies works by Christianity Today. He also writes for many church and scholarly publications, and is a frequent contributor to the Beliefnet website.

We are honored to have Dr. Witherington present 3 lectures at this year's McCown Symposium. Watch for upcoming details on our website at [www.nes.edu](http://www.nes.edu).



Ben Witherington

**NEW DATES  
for 2009!!**

## All Seminary Retreat

*Intimacy with God, led by Jim Krisher*

**November 13-14**

*Long Point Camp and Conference Center, Penn Yan, NY*

**Jim Krisher** is the founder and full-time director of the Spiritual Renewal Center in NY. He received his undergraduate degree in religion from Syracuse University, and his M.A. degree in theology from Boston College. He also pursued further graduate studies in Christian spirituality and spiritual direction at Creighton University. Krisher has published numerous articles, and is the author of *Spiritual Surrender: Yielding Yourself to a Loving God*, and *The Ongoing Work of Jesus: His Mission In Our Lives*, both published by Twenty-Third Publications. He also serves as adjunct instructor of New Testament and Christian spirituality at LeMoyne College. For more information: <http://www.spiritualrenewalcenter.com/>



Jim Krisher

Costs for students, alumni and faculty/staff are covered by Personal and Spiritual Formation (PSF) program. Spouses are welcome and can attend for nominal cost; scholarships for spouses are available.

Registration information will be mailed to you in September. For information and registration contact Jennifer Catalano at 585.594.6420 or [catalano\\_jennifer@nes.edu](mailto:catalano_jennifer@nes.edu),