

# DENVER SEMINARY

M A G A Z I N E

CHRISTIANITY IN

# *America*



  
DENVER SEMINARY

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## Christianity in America

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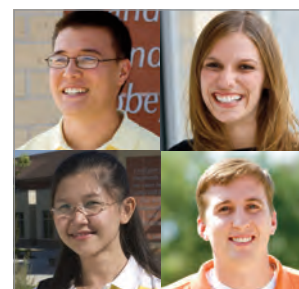
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Visit [www.denverseminary.edu/magazine](http://www.denverseminary.edu/magazine) for *In Your Church* thoughts, questions and suggestions and for the opportunity to discuss articles in this issue with others from the Denver Seminary community.

## in the next issue...

... We will begin a journey looking at the aspects of the Seminary's mission. The mission of Denver Seminary is to glorify God by equipping leaders to think biblically, live faithfully and lead wisely. This summer, we will explore what it means to *think biblically*. If you would like to interact with DSM, or if you'd like to send comments or thoughts to the editor, please visit [www.denverseminary.edu/magazine](http://www.denverseminary.edu/magazine).

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After focusing on the global Church in our last issue, we now hope to draw your attention to what God is doing through the mainstream evangelical Church in the U.S. Some suggest that the American evangelical Church is losing its influence and dying. They point to unstable growth rates, loss of evangelistic zeal, high divorce rates, scandals among some prominent leaders, and preoccupation with war, wealth, power and prosperity. Others suggest that the American evangelical Church has become marginalized in its impact on society due to its over-involvement in politics and under-involvement in fighting famine, war, climate change, pandemics and urbanization. All of these criticisms are important to consider; some are more valid than others. The Church must embrace the reality behind these negative viewpoints and make needed changes.

Yet I do not believe that these generalizations accurately portray the health of the American evangelical Church. I suggest that while some churches do indeed struggle, the Church in America is strong, growing in key areas, and refocusing its resources upon the Gospel and issues of justice, hunger and peace. In this issue, we present proof of the American evangelical Church as alive, growing and serving.

In a real sense, you find what you want to find as you look over the scope of the evangelical Church in the United States. Our search focused upon faithful, sacrificial service that honors God and furthers His Kingdom mission. We found many churches and ministries where the Church is making significant impact—centering on and sharing the

Gospel, serving the poor and honoring God in the work of improving their communities. We are thankful that our own graduates are leading many of these high impact churches and parachurch organizations.

I hope your heart will be excited and challenged by the stories in this magazine. I pray that the Holy Spirit will encourage you to pray more for the American evangelical Church, for our graduates, for Denver Seminary as we equip leaders for service and for God to be glorified. I pray that God will encourage you to participate in making a difference through your church or through parachurch ministries that connect with your passion and vision for God's Kingdom.

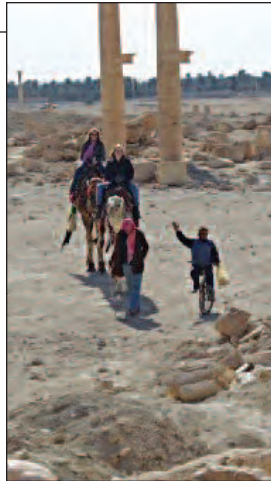
God entrusts each of us with His resources and asks that we be wise stewards and generous givers. Through these resources, many churches and parachurch organizations are making eternal, significant impact for the Kingdom. Please prayerfully consider how you can invest your God-given resources to help fund and serve through these ministries in order to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

With gratitude,

Craig

## Seminary Students and Faculty Travel to Syria and Cyprus

In January 2008, a class from Denver Seminary traveled to Syria and Cyprus to visit biblical and archaeological sites and to learn about the people and their culture. The idea came about with a desire to visit some of the important places that affect our understanding of the Old Testament and those that were visited by the apostle Paul in the New Testament. A trip report, including a photo gallery, can be found on our website at [www.denverseminary.edu/syria-trip](http://www.denverseminary.edu/syria-trip).



## AAR/SBL/ASOR Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regional Meeting Held at Denver Seminary

The American Academy of Religion (AAR), the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), and the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regional Meeting was held on the campus of Denver Seminary on March 28-29.

Co-chairing the conference were two of Denver Seminary's Old Testament professors, Dr. Hélène Dallaire and Dr. Richard S. Hess. More than 130 graduate students, seminarians and scholars attended and participated in 75 presentations of academic lectures and discussions on religion and the Bible. In addition to many presentations by Denver Seminary professors, graduates and current students, the conference included speakers from neighboring seminaries and universities across a region spanning Wyoming to New Mexico and Nebraska to Utah. Invited speakers included Dr. Theodore Lewis of Johns Hopkins University and Dr. Glen Stassen of Fuller Seminary.

## Denver Seminary Receives Outstanding Development Practice Award



Gary Hoag, Vice President of Advancement

Denver Seminary is the recipient of the "Outstanding Development Practice by a Ministry" award given by the Christian Stewardship Association (CSA). This recognition was awarded to Gary Hoag on behalf of Denver Seminary at the annual CSA Conference held in Albuquerque, N.M. Recipients of the award best exemplify commitment and dedication and model Biblical stewardship for the praise and honor of God.

Each year, organizations that best represent the Biblical model of stewardship are nominated by CSA members. Gary Hoag, Vice President of Advancement at Denver Seminary, teaches annually at the conference and was in attendance for the award presentation. He adds, "To receive an award for applying biblical principles in our development practices is a great honor. Our goal, put simply, is to help people grow in the grace of giving."

Denver Seminary teaches Biblical stewardship and resource development through Seminary classes, local and regional seminars, and individual meetings. Friends of Denver Seminary are encouraged to use their resources, time and spiritual gifts to invest in the lives of students through mentoring, volunteering or being a financial supporter. By teaching Biblical truths, modeling faithful stewardship and encouraging others to become involved, Denver Seminary seeks to continue to fulfill its mission of equipping leaders.



Dr. Rick Hess responds to a panel held to discuss his book *Israelite Religions*.

## International Conference on Mentoring Held at Denver Seminary

Denver Seminary, in partnership with the International Christian Mentoring Network, recently hosted the International Conference on Mentoring. This was the sixth mentoring conference held at Denver Seminary, attracting around 100 people from across the United States as well as Canada, Guatemala and Northern Ireland. This year's keynote speaker was Dr. Roberta Hestenes, who was honored at the conference with the Lifetime Achievement in Mentoring award. The conference provided workshops and other resources for those who are new to mentoring and those who are starting or leading mentoring ministries. The International Conference on Mentoring continues to be a powerful means by which God is using Denver Seminary to promote and strengthen the ministry of Christian mentoring around the globe.



Dr. Roberta Hestenes and Dr. Don Payne



## Wilmer Ramirez Named Director of Hispanic Initiatives

Denver Seminary is pleased to announce that Wilmer Ramirez has been appointed Director of Hispanic Initiatives starting January 2008. Within this capacity, Ramirez will continue to develop Denver Seminary's IDEAL (Instituto para el Desarrollo y Adiestramiento de Lideres) program to train local, Spanish-speaking pastors and lay leaders as well as form relationships with and serve as liaison to the local Hispanic community. Ramirez, a native Guatemalan, will continue to teach part time at SETECA (Seminario Teológico Centroamericano) in Guatemala and further develop relationships between SETECA and Denver Seminary. Denver Seminary is grateful for Wilmer Ramirez's leadership and the doors God has opened for the Seminary to continue to serve the Hispanic community.

*Revisa el nuevo video del Instituto IDEAL en nuestro sitio web: [www.denverseminary.edu/ideal](http://www.denverseminary.edu/ideal).*

## Official Partnership with PCTS of Seoul, South Korea

The Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (PCTS) sent a formal delegation to Denver Seminary in January 2008. On this official visit, PCTS President Joong-Eun Kim and his wife and Dr. Do-Il Kim and his wife came to formalize and sign an Agreement of Mutual Cooperation between The Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary in Seoul, Korea and Denver Seminary. The partnership highlights the following points and will formally commence on July 1, 2008:

- To exchange needed academic materials and educational curriculum
- To offer mutual support for various academic programs
- To participate in jointly-sponsored research projects and conferences
- To exchange faculty in reciprocal and mutually beneficial conditions
- To exchange students in reciprocal and mutually beneficial conditions

The discussion for this partnership began when President Craig Williford, Vice President of Advancement Gary Hoag and Associate Professor of Theology and Director of Korean Initiatives, Sung Wook Chung visited Seoul, Korea, along with their wives in May 2007. Vice President, Gary Hoag believes: "The Korean Church is leading the way in advancing the cause of Christ around the world today, in part thanks to PCTS as they have equipped leaders for the Church for more than a century. We have much to gain and much to give in this reciprocal partnership. Together, both schools will be able to serve God's global Church more effectively through this strategic pact." Visit [www.pcts.ac.kr/English](http://www.pcts.ac.kr/English) to learn more about this amazing school.



Presidents Joong-Eun Kim and Craig Williford.





# Christianity in America

by Scott Wenig, Ph.D. (M.Div. '83) *Associate Professor of Applied Theology*

A few years back, after surveying the moral and spiritual climate of contemporary American society, a prominent host of PBS asked, "Is the church relevant?" He then proceeded to focus on its obvious limitations and some of its more public and appalling failures. He's not alone in questioning the role of the Church in our contemporary culture. A friend of mine who pastors a large church in the Midwest and regularly speaks around the country was recently asked by a Christian woman, "If the Church is supposed to be so effective, why is everything in America so bad?" Functionally, she was saying that the Church and its message of the Gospel simply don't work right now – or at least work like they did at points in the past.

As a student of church history I know that the Church has always faced various challenges and certainly, at points, has not lived up to its divine calling. And yet, I'm not convinced that it's failing in its current mission to modern America. In fact, I'd argue the opposite. In many ways, the Church of Jesus and its work for God's Kingdom are more visible, varied and vibrant today than perhaps at any time in the past 100 years.

## THE RISE OF THE MEGA-CHURCH AND PARA-CHURCH

Since 1986 there has been a noticeable rise in the number of mega-churches throughout North America. These are churches averaging 2,000 or more in regular attendance and that have been used to reach thousands with the Gospel. Currently, somewhere between 1,400 and 1,600 of them dot the cultural landscape of our nation. And while they have their critics, there's no question that they effectively leverage their abundant resources to meet the spiritual and material needs of people both locally and globally.

Moreover, somewhere between 65-75 percent of Americans currently describe themselves as Christians. Churches where the Bible is taught, godliness is stressed, and ministry is promoted are growing throughout the country. If we were to survey many of the most effective churches in North America we would

discover that, almost without exception, they are committed to biblical truth and the proclamation of the Gospel.

In addition, since the end of World War II, there have been literally hundreds of parachurch ministries which God has raised up to minister to specific target groups in North America and beyond. One need only think of Focus on the Family, Young Life, Youth for Christ, MOPS International, Campus Crusade for Christ, Compassion International and Food for the Hungry as a few of the more prominent examples. And Denver Seminary, founded in 1950 to train men and women for Gospel ministry, is itself part and parcel of this amazing development.

## MINISTERING TO A BROKEN AND BLEEDING CULTURE

Sometimes the church in America is accused of consuming its resources on itself. Certainly, in some ways, there is truth in that critique. Yet as we survey the ministry of the Church and its members over the past few decades we see a different story.

I live about two miles from Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. I'll never forget the horror of that April day, nine years ago, when two students gunned down a number of their peers and a teacher before taking their own lives. Within hours of that terrible tragedy, youth workers, pastors, Christian counselors and dedicated lay people entered the fray and ministered to traumatized families and students for weeks on end. Just a few days later a major public event was held within walking distance of the school where the Gospel was proclaimed and numerous people gave their lives to Jesus Christ.

When Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans a few years back, hundreds of churches and thousands of Christians from all around the country sacrificed enormous amounts of time and millions of dollars to minister to those in need. Temporary shelters were constructed, houses were rebuilt, and the poor and needy given physical – as well as spiritual – aid. Students, professors and administrators from Denver Seminary were part of that outreach,

demonstrating that they know Christian education means using their hands as well as their heads to minister in the name of Christ.

But beyond crises, thousands of churches and innumerable Christians throughout the country are ministering outside their walls to their communities on a regular basis. Whether it's serving the urban poor, running divorce recovery workshops, reaching out to children through vacation Bible school or establishing medical and dental clinics, the Church continues to meet needs in the name of Jesus in the cities and the rural areas of North America.

### **RACIAL RECONCILIATION AND BIBLICAL ENVIRONMENTALISM**

While there's no question that our country continues to struggle with the issue of race, some significant steps towards reconciliation are being made. More minority students than ever before are attending Christian undergraduate institutions and seminaries. Notable minority leaders such as Tony Evans and James Meeks have had significant prominence in the evangelical sub-culture for some time. And in the spring of 2006, Condoleezza Rice addressed the delegates of the Southern Baptist Convention in Greensboro, N.C. While some in the national media focused on her appearance as another example of the close connections between the Bush administration and the religious right, more discerning observers noticed the incredibly poignant symbolism of her platform presence. Rice grew up in the segregated South and is the great-granddaughter of slaves. For her to speak to the largest institutional element in American Christianity – which was started in 1845 over the issue of slavery – indicates that progress is being achieved in this most painful and sensitive area of our national history.

Another positive development is the growing concern of the Church and its members with environmental issues. In the past two years, the National Association of Evangelicals has publicly articulated a vibrant ecological emphasis as part of its larger 'pro-life' agenda. At the private level, numerous believers have lived out a rigorous environmentalism for years. By eliminating wasteful consumerism and recycling paper and plastic they have helped to raise awareness of our need for the good stewardship of God's creation.

### **CHURCH PLANTING AND EMERGING CHURCHES**

Another positive and increasingly prominent development is the growing emphasis on church planting in America. Much of this is coming from the younger generation of Christians who want to

reach their own sub-cultures with the good news of Jesus. Like the apostle Paul did 2,000 years ago, they're utilizing innovative methodologies to contextualize the Gospel message in order to reach the lost of our society. Drawing on the work of church planters such as missiologist Ed Stetzer and Pastor Mark Driscoll of the Acts 29 Network, innumerable young leaders are leveraging their entrepreneurial gifts to create healthy congregations of brand new disciples.

In an effort to make the Gospel appealing to postmodern people, these emerging churches and their leaders are not afraid to rethink and reshape worship, preaching and church structure. In many ways, they reflect the most creative aspects of American Christianity as it seeks to engage the culture with the person of Christ.

### **GROWING THE WHEAT**

As I survey the landscape of contemporary American society I'm impressed by the large number of churches and church members who pray, worship, give and minister all in the name of Jesus. They know that He is the way, the truth and the life, and they're deeply devoted to serving Him and proclaiming His Gospel as the only hope of salvation for our lost and needy society. They take seriously the parable that our Lord told in Matthew 13 about the weeds and the wheat. In that story, Jesus said that a farmer had sown wheat in his field but an enemy had sown weeds. When his servants noticed both the wheat and the weeds growing together, they asked the farmer if he wanted them to pull out the weeds. "No," he answered, "because while you are pulling the weeds you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn." (Matthew 13:29-30).

This parable describes what's happening in our own day and setting. We cannot doubt that wheat and weeds are both growing together. But what we need to notice is what Jesus says. He notes that, on the Last Day, He'll pull up the weeds. As His disciples, our job is to go and grow the wheat.

As the leaders, teachers, workers and administrators of the 21st century Church may we focus our time, talents and treasures on the right tasks. Let us not worry too much about the weeds. Christ will take care of those. Instead, let us be men and women who are committed, by the grace and power of His Holy Spirit, to growing the wheat. **DSM**

“In many ways, the Church of Jesus Christ and her work for God's kingdom are more

**visible,**  
**varied** and  
**vibrant**

today than perhaps at any time in the past 100 years.”



*Dr. Scott Wenig currently serves as the Associate Professor of Applied Theology at Denver Seminary, holding the Haddon W. Robinson Chair of Biblical Preaching. He is also*

*senior teaching pastor of Aspen Grove Community Church in Littleton, Colo.*

*Discuss this and other DSM articles online at [www.denverseminary.edu/magazine](http://www.denverseminary.edu/magazine).*



# Banker gone

# MAD

by Brad Meuli, (M.A. '06)

It was 1987; I was vice president of commercial lending with the largest bank in Denver. I had just moved to this new position from another bank. I know I should have been happier, but I wasn't. I kept thinking God had something more for me to do. So I prayed about it. I remember telling God I would do whatever He wanted me to do, even if it meant staying in banking. The one thing I asked was, "Lord, will you please let me know I am making a difference for you?"

Almost immediately, I began to see how He was using me, and I began to look for ways I might make a difference for Him. I got connected with one of my customers, Hope Communities. I met Ray Stranske (M.Div., '74), the president of Hope Communities, and was impressed with the vision God had given him to provide affordable housing to the poor. I rallied people from the bank and from my church to go demolish the inside of some apartments in the Five Points area of Denver. These would be renovated later and used for low-income housing.

This was my introduction to urban ministry, and it was a great day. It was hard work, and I loved it. As you can imagine, it was an eclectic group of people who worked together, some from the suburbs and some from the city. At the end of the day, some reporters wanted to get a shot of us finishing up, and they filmed a group of us walking out of one of the gutted apartments. I was the last one to leave, and I was suppose to say something that sort of summarized the day, that made everyone feel good. I had volunteered to have the microphone on me, and here's what I said – my first day of urban ministry, for everyone to remember about that day . . . we all walked out, and I said these deeply prophetic and theological words, "It's Miller time."

As soon as I said it, I thought, "Maybe that was not the right thing to say." I was 30 years old, I had not yet been to Denver Seminary, and as Erwin McManus once described, I was a "Barbarian Christian." I know that Jesus started his ministry at 30 and ended at 33, but when God saw what I was doing, I knew that He knew He had some work to do. Is it any wonder that I had to wait another 12 years before God let me go into full-time ministry? When Ray Stranske called me the next morning to say thank you for coming and that he had seen the news clip, I felt even worse.

I tell that story for one reason: there are a lot of "Miller Time" Christians out there – definitely more today than 20 years ago. They want to be involved, they want to help, but they are not sure what to do or how to become engaged, and when they do, they need our help.

This past year the Denver Rescue Mission had over 108,000 volunteer hours from people who wanted to become involved. We could not do the things we do without these volunteers. Jesse Krohmer, the associate director of the Long Beach Rescue Mission said it this way, "Nothing is more refreshing for an organization that is undermanned, underfunded, underappreciated and overwhelmed than someone who comes along with time to share, skills to donate, energy to encourage and a willingness to help however needed."

There is a movement afoot to bring those in our cities together – to reach out to the poor and needy and change our communities from the inside out. We have a choice: to be at the table being a part of the solution, doing what we are called to do as Christians,



or to be an island focused on our own ministries, our own little worlds. I think we have to be *in* the world not *of* it. Why? Because that is what Christ did.

Urban ministry is tough, and it gets messy, but whether you have been in it for a short time or a long time, I believe if we join together, we have an opportunity to be known as "Repairer[s] of Broken Walls, Restorer[s] of Streets with Dwellings" (Isaiah 58:12) through the powerful name of Jesus Christ. **DSM**

*Brad Meuli is president and CEO of the Denver Rescue Mission, the oldest full-service Christian charity in the Rocky Mountain region. A former major in the U.S. Marine Corps, he served for 17 years in the banking industry before joining the Denver Rescue Mission in 2002.*

*For more information on the Denver Rescue Mission or for discussion questions and thoughts about this article, please visit our web site at [www.denverseminary.edu/magazine](http://www.denverseminary.edu/magazine).*

# Burning Art

by Sarah Lodwick, (M.A., Christian Studies)

*For centuries, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches have embraced the arts. In this article, Sarah Lodwick sheds light on the burgeoning art movement in American Protestant churches and what that means.*

When I began Seminary two-and-a-half years ago, I had a hunch this would happen. Now I can say with certainty that a fascination with the arts has become popular in Protestant spheres. In Ian Morgan Cron's novel, *Chasing Francis*, a chapter titled "Art is the Grandchild of God" uses a dialogue to point to burgeoning Protestant involvement in the arts. The conversation summits with this:

I lifted my glass. "To beauty!" I said.  
Liam and Carla replied, "To beauty!"<sup>1</sup>

Cron leaves off exactly where Protestants have left off: at *beauty*. How will we define that word theologically? The raw lump of mud is on the ceramicist's wheel; the North American Protestant Church has affirmed that beauty in artistic expression has much to say about our Creator. Our minds are like spinning clay – we anticipate the new shape of the *artistic* Protestant Church. Yet we don't know how to define beauty – or art – because we lack a tradition of Protestant art theory. Like willing hands physically able but paralyzed by lack of experience, the Protestant Church has not yet molded its art appreciation into biblical theory with well-formed definitions and concepts. This predicament makes the Church vulnerable in its current relationship with art. Protestants have the potential to settle on a comfortable and unchallenging definition of beauty that will influence future interaction with art and artists for years to come. In this impressionable time may there be Christians who courageously define beauty in art as truth – even when truth comes in a disturbing artistic package or leaves the prophetic burn of conviction on our hearts.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer." Perhaps a Christian who is truly brave in her appreciation of art is one who *observes* art for five minutes longer. Have you ever held a paper cup of coffee without the jacket? At first you don't have the sensation that it is extremely hot, but a nanosecond later you become more than aware of its heat. Art can be like that. Some artwork is beautiful because it disturbs and often helps direct our spirituality. Upon reflection, it convicts us. Consider these works of art: Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, U2's *War*, Picasso's



Illustration by Sarah Lodwick

"Guernica," and Nick Ut's "Vietnam Napalm." Are these few works not spiritually challenging for the Christian, urging her to yearn for justice and the reconciliation of creation with its Creator? Art can grasp the heart of an observer and tighten its squeeze as seconds pass. Some art is difficult to look at but beautiful: After it unmasks the sin in our world, our country, our community, our churches and our hearts, it implores us to live in Christian fidelity to the Gospel – it becomes burning art.

In this new era of Protestant art, will we have the courage to call disturbing art beautiful because – given to us providentially and creatively by the Holy Spirit – it presents an opportunity to change our lives? Protestants have reached a point where we support artistic expression as an occupation that, through the work of reconciliation described in Colossians 1:15-20, is being redeemed. Will we have the courage as Christian leaders to support artists who, despite how painful it may be to dwell on such convicting compositions, will help us along the path of sanctification by reaching out to grip our hearts with a message of truth and to edify us by breaking our hearts over social injustice and unrighteous stewardship, ultimately moving the Church to be the hands of Christ on earth? **DSM**



Sarah Lodwick is a student pursuing an M.A. in Christian Studies at Denver Seminary. She is an artist who painted two pieces that hang in the Simpson Leadership Center on campus. She is also the creator of the illustration used with this article.

To learn more about or to discuss the burgeoning renaissance in Christianity in America, visit our web site at [www.denverseminary.edu/magazine](http://www.denverseminary.edu/magazine).

<sup>1</sup> Ian Morgan Cron, *Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 111.

# a **PREMODERN SAINT** for a **POSTMODERN WORLD**

An interview with Ian Morgan Cron, by DJ Turner

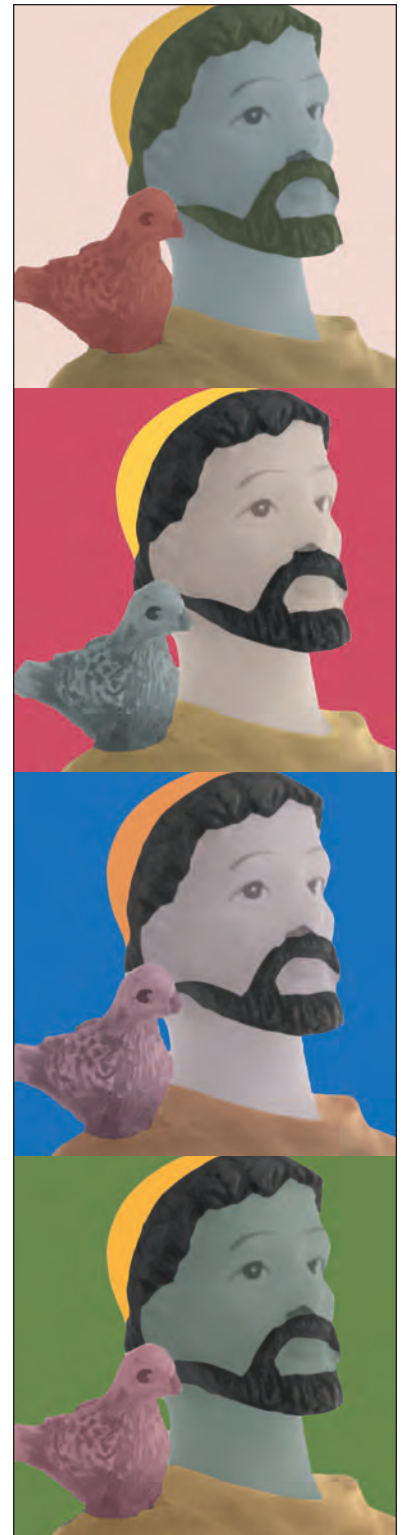
While many instances of encouragement for the Church in America can be found in this issue of *Denver Seminary Magazine*, there is no denying the critical perceptions that many, both outside and inside the Church, have about the state of Christianity in America. Scandals run the gamut from sexual immorality and financial improprieties among church leaders to criticisms of the “religious right” for its dangerous pursuit of political power and influence. But this is not the first time the Church has suffered from hemorrhaging credibility and critique.

Knee-deep in the politics of the Crusades, many of the struggles of the European Church in the 12th and 13th century resemble the struggles of the Church today. From sex to finances, scandals abounded, so much so that the street musicians, purveyors of the Middle Ages’ “Top 20,” wrote songs that ridiculed the church. The church and her leaders were embroiled in politics that some might say were suspiciously intended more for the power of church leaders than the good of the Gospel. And Jesus was packaged and sold for profit through pardons and indulgences, not, some critics might suggest, all that unlike the Christian marketing that pervades our culture today. It was into this world that Francis of Assisi appeared in the late 12th and early 13th centuries.

What significance might this premodern saint have for Christians in our postmodern world? One Denver Seminary alumnus is exploring the story of Francis and its relevance to the contemporary Church through his book *Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim’s Tale* (NavPress, 2006). Ian Morgan Cron (M.A., ’94) is author of this book which balances fiction and non-fiction – a little bit novel and a little bit wisdom literature. In this pilgrim’s tale, readers follow the journey of Chase Falson, a fictional senior pastor at a mega-church in New England. Through the story, Chase reveals his personal struggles with evangelical Christianity and the revelations of a pilgrimage to discover the life and teachings of Francis. In learning about Francis, Chase, along with the readers of the book, discover a Christian “we all want to believe it’s possible to become.”

Cron discovered Francis while reading *Saint Francis of Assisi* by G.K. Chesterton several years ago. Having struggled through his own discontent and disillusionment with evangelical Christianity, Cron found in Francis the inspiration to continue. “I got to the end of this book and I thought, ‘If that’s what it means to be a follower of Jesus, if that’s what it looks like, then I want to stay in the game as a Christian.’” This *awakening* was part of what prompted Cron to write the book. “Francis was the whole package.” He was a social activist in his commitment to the poor and peace-building (especially with Muslims) and an Evangelical in that he asked people to repent and follow Jesus; his zeal and spontaneity in worship reveal a Pentecostal impulse; he was called ‘the first Protestant’ for rejecting materialism and for calling the Church to again live a Gospel that brought good news to the marginalized; he was a Catholic in his sacramentalism; and he was a mystic to boot! He earthed the Gospel so powerfully that to this day he is a source of tremendous inspiration ... I recently read an article in the British newspaper The Telegraph about Gorbachev’s newfound faith and how it was awakened through his encounter with St. Francis. ... If you were to ask a person on the street to describe the type of Christian that they would respect and admire, I am convinced they would end up describing St. Francis. I think he is the unsurpassable prophetic exemplar for the postmodern Church. He’s been called ‘the last Christian’ for hundreds of years since no one else has earthed the Gospel with such incandescent clarity.

In speculating how Francis might react to the 21st century church in America, Cron first stresses that Francis did not tolerate criticism of the church or its clergy under any circumstances, either



from himself or from the thousands of Franciscans who followed him. "I think the reason he did that, and this is pure speculation," states Cron, "was because he believed that the quality of their lives would be an indictment of the institutional church far more effectively than simply talking about it and what kind of trouble it was in." This sentiment hearkens to Francis' Rule of 1221 in which he declares, "Let all the brothers . . . preach by their deeds."

"I think what Francis would observe about the American church is that it has a great opportunity in this moment to present a Gospel that would be life-giving to the culture," Cron continues. "A Gospel that is truer to its roots than the housebroken one that we've managed to cook up." And according to Cron there's not a better model for this type of Christianity than Francis of Assisi. Of Francis' many nicknames, Cron's favorite is *the last Christian*, because it embodies who Francis was. "Next to Jesus," Cron states, "nobody earthed the Gospel like he did."

"You know," Cron continued, "when I said that Francis is everything that we'd like to believe a Christian could become, he really is. Here's a guy who's an environmentalist – actually, he's the first Christian environmentalist; he's the patron saint of ecology in the Christian Church. He's a peacemaker, especially with Muslims – how relevant is that to us today? We as a church have been really good at being peace-lovers, but *peacemaking* is an entirely different dynamic; peacemaking is what Jesus prescribes in the Sermon on the Mount in the gospel of Matthew. So Francis is a peacemaker; he's an environmentalist; he's somebody who rejected the hyper-consumerism of his age. The middle ages saw the rise of a rapacious greed in the

culture and the rise of the middle class. There had been no middle class until the middle ages. St. Francis [had been] a wealthy playboy; his father was a rich guy. And Francis rejected this sort of hyper-consumerism and materialism which I think the church desperately needs to do; I think we've been completely sucked in to the American consumerist mentality. And the fact that he was an artist rather than a scholar – I think that's something that's more and more important in the post-modern world in which we live. I think coming in the backdoor of people's imaginations now is far more effective when we're trying to traffic with the Gospel than just simply appealing to discursive reason. And so there are all these parallels, and there is this great opportunity. I do think that when we look at his life, he embodies all these qualities and that if we were to manifest them in our own lives, in our own contexts, then we begin to change the culture's impression of what it means to be a follower of Jesus."

Cron admits that he is far from imitating the type of Christianity that Francis modeled. He describes many sleepless nights while writing the book in which he spent time in self-examination wondering about his own spiritual inadequacies. But Cron acknowledges that studying Francis has had a huge impact on him: "One practice that Francis has brought back to me is a re-awakening to contemplative spirituality. . . . I believe that the Church would do well to revisit the teaching of the contemplatives. [The contemplatives] were people who intensely believed that the universe was shot through, if you will, with the grandeur of God and that Christian formation was about waking up to God in the present moment. It was about living in the present moment with God all day long . . . It's about

having a direct encounter with Jesus – not just with *ideas* about Jesus."

But the changes Cron has experienced through his study are not just relegated to his personal journey. The church Cron pastors, Trinity Church in Greenwich, Conn., sits in the shadow of Wall Street in what might be the "wealthiest town in the wealthiest state in the wealthiest country in the history of the world." About his church, Cron avers, "I'm excited that our church in this very strange part of the world is trying to wrestle through the issues about what does it mean to have so much affluence and so much influence in the culture. How do we direct that in such a way that it advances the interests of Jesus into the world?"

While there are many who would criticize the American Church, Cron believes we have a great opportunity to effect change in our world: "I think that the Church needs to start, in the way that Francis did, to walk its preaching and to embody the Gospel in such a way that it stands as a wonderful alternative to what many people know as a hollow and vacuous existence in the postmodern America in which they live. And I think that's a really exciting opportunity. I think the culture is crying out and waiting for God to inject a Saint Francis into our midst. Now, what would happen if we all assumed it was us? What if we all assumed that the Saint Francis that God was waiting to bring into our world that desperately needs it is us? It would be quite a movement. It would indeed." **DSM**



*Ian Morgan Cron is senior pastor at Trinity Church in Greenwich, Conn. He resides in Old Greenwich with his wife, Anne, and three children, Cailey, Madeleine and Aidan.*

*If you would like to meet Ian, he will be speaking at the Spiritual Life Conference at Denver Seminary on Sept. 8-9, 2008.*

*For other resources about Francis of Assisi, for group discussion questions or to interact with others about this article, visit our website at [www.denverseminary.edu/magazine](http://www.denverseminary.edu/magazine).*

If you were to ask a person on the street to describe the type of Christian that they would respect and admire, I am convinced they would end up describing St. Francis. I think he is the unsurpassable prophetic exemplar for the postmodern Church. He's been called 'the last Christian' for hundreds of years since no one else has earthed the Gospel with such incandescent clarity.

*In this special section of Denver Seminary Magazine, we highlight stories of four individual students and alumni who are impacting their communities in very different ways.*

## **BREAKING THE SILENCE**

by Marisol Erlacher (M.A. '04)

As a student at Denver Seminary, one of my counseling internship placements was at Inner City Health Center working with Spanish-speaking clients. The first woman referred to me shared the on-going sexual abuse she had experienced as a child as well as being sexually assaulted as an adult. This story of sexual violence was repeated by numerous women who came into my office. It was then that my desire to work with survivors of sexual abuse was ignited. After graduating in 2004, I began working with the Rape Assistance and Awareness Program (RAAP) as a bilingual therapist. I was blessed with the opportunity to work with individuals who would not otherwise be able to receive services, due to their legal status or financial constraints. I also had the opportunity to provide education on sexual assault prevention in the Latino/a community.

Sexual abuse and assault is a form of violence that is used to exert power and control over an individual. This act devastates the core of the individual, commonly instilling unshakable terror in the victim and causing them to believe that they are worthless. Most individuals suffer their pain in silence, choosing not to disclose because of fear or deep shame. I believe that the ministry I have been charged with is to walk alongside those who bravely choose to break the silence. Sexual violence will continue to destroy individuals, families and communities if it is allowed to live in silence. Its end will be facilitated if we allow individuals to speak truth without judgment, and if we show the compassion and love that will facilitate healing that can only be found in Jesus Christ. **DSM**

*Editors Note: Marisol Erlacher graduated in 2004 with an M.A. in Counseling. While her work began with RAAP in 2004, she has been in private practice since September 2007. She continues to counsel victims of sexual abuse.*

## **PASSIONATE ABOUT CAMPUS MINISTRY**

by Chuck Hohnbaum (M.A., '86, current D.Min. student)

Colleges and universities are among the most influential institutions in this country. Almost every future leader of the U.S. will pass through the corridors of an American university and many future leaders of other nations will earn a degree from an American school. For more than 65 years InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA has been ministering among both American and international students on this nation's campuses.

For 27 years I've been passionate about reaching students and faculty for Christ and His Church. After 10 years of campus ministry through local churches, I began working with InterVarsity. Through my years of campus ministry, I've enjoyed introducing students and faculty to Christ, discipling them to our Savior, and helping them become leaders. For 16 years I trained other InterVarsity staff in evangelism and leadership development. Currently, I serve as the Interim Director of Strategic Ministries.

Because the secular university can be unwelcoming and sometimes hostile to biblical perspectives and values, we face significant challenges. Nevertheless, we are passionate about our ministry. Our calling is to bring light where darkness exists. We long to see people changed through a life-giving and transforming relationship with Jesus.

That's why thousands of InterVarsity staff, students and faculty at 580 American colleges and universities are actively presenting the Gospel through individual conversations, small groups and evangelistic events. Christian students and faculty are discipled through small group Bible studies, conferences and individual mentoring. They are encouraged to consider their various roles in ministry in the U.S. and around the world.

Today we're seeing an unprecedented evangelistic harvest. Much of this fruit has grown through our specialized ministries among unique groups within the university, such as students in fraternities and sororities, international groups, nursing, and the arts. Creative events in partnership with Christian relief and justice ministries have also been effective in reaching students. Still there is more that we are called to do.

American colleges and universities have a profound effect on our world, and we're grateful that the Lord has given us a calling and mission to the American campus. **DSM**



Marisol Erlacher



Chuck Hohnbaum and family



Robyn Carnes, as Sweet Tart



Felix and Kotane Gilbert

## IT'S MORE THAN FUN

by DJ Turner

One might wonder why a Seminary grad would don a purple-haired wig, sing songs and tell stories to children, but when speaking to Robyn Carnes (M.A. '06) one quickly learns that God is behind it all. Carnes is the person behind the character Sweet Tart, the personality of More Than Fun® in Denver, Colo.

Sweet Tart was born out of the need to make money while Carnes worked toward her Seminary degree. She never dreamed it would turn into a full-time ministry, but as Carnes says, "You can't put God in a box."

When asked about her passion for connecting children with Jesus, Carnes states, "I heard someone say that children are the message we will send to a generation we will not see. That is a huge part of the foundation of what we do at More Than Fun, because I think we need to be so much more intentional about not only *what* we're teaching children, but *how* we're teaching them. In this country, we put so much emphasis on the physical development of the child and the emotional and psychological development, but the spiritual development of the child is foundational. That is what everything else is built upon. Kids learn all the time, so why not teach them?"

More Than Fun's ministry is about more than just entertaining children. Carnes and her husband spend time planning and praying through lessons that will engage children, meeting them where they are without "dumbing" down the Bible, its stories or its truths. And the impact extends well beyond the children. Carnes divulges that many parents confide in her about how they learned from Sweet Tart's stories and lessons too.

So while a purple-haired, puppet-toting character may not fit your idea of a Seminary grad, don't let appearances fool you. "Don't put God in a box," Carnes says. "When you put God in a box, you put yourself in a box. As long as you are in His will, there are no boundaries to what He will have you do." **DSM**

## REBUILDING COMMUNITY

by Felix Gilbert (current M.Div. student)

I was born in Guyana, South America, and raised in St. Croix. I accepted Christ after losing my mother to a stroke. My father remarried, and our family jumped from five children to nine; living quarters were tight and sibling rivalries intense. I spent my senior year of high school homeless, living on the streets. Experiencing homelessness firsthand was challenging for a 17-year-old boy. I attended school every day pretending I had a home and a hot meal to go to.

After graduating high school, I joined the Air Force, obtained my bachelor's degree, married my wife Kotane, entered the corporate world and eventually moved to Denver. I now attend Denver Seminary where I am being equipped for ministry.

Since moving to Colorado, my wife and I planted Restoration Christian Fellowship in Aurora. Restoration is a church birthed out of pain my wife and I underwent in our marriage. Our philosophy is centered in the truth of God restoring our relationship and in God using us to join Him in restoring people to Himself. Restoration is a multicultural church where people from all walks of life are free to worship God.

God has used Restoration to come alongside struggling families and individuals, restoring them to their rightful position in Christ. One such individual is a man named Troy. I met Troy several years ago. He was living in a drug-infested motel on East Colfax wondering where the next day's rent would come from. Troy trusted no one, let alone me, a pastor who, in his opinion, could not relate to him. When Troy asked why I cared about him, I shared my background of homelessness and how my faith in Jesus brought me through.

Helping Troy took many years of hard work, but picking him up that Sunday morning for church paid off. Today Troy is married, has a family and a stable job, loves the Lord, and is one of the strongest and most faithful members of Restoration Christian Fellowship. He is actively involved in ministry and constantly shares his testimony of how God worked through Restoration Christian Fellowship to change his life and restored him to his rightful position in Christ. **DSM**

For more information about any of these ministries please visit our web site at [www.denverseminary.edu/magazine](http://www.denverseminary.edu/magazine).

When opportunity knocks, what is your response? Do you open the door? In America we tend to be bombarded with “opportunities” in various forms, such as advertisements, promotional pieces and various financial schemes. They invade our lives by every possible entryway: television, the Internet, the telephone and even the front door. This is one of the joys of living in the “land of opportunity.”

by Susan Hecht (M.A. '00) *Instructor of New Testament*

# when opportunity knocks



Not all “opportunities” are equal, however. Some are very worthwhile, while others can be detrimental. When an opportunity knocks, most of us react with considerable skepticism and a high concern for safety. My question is, have skepticism and caution become conditioned responses such that whenever we hear a knock, we respond in these ways even when it is God offering an opportunity? As Christians in America, do we distinguish adequately between our reaction to our cultural conditions and our response to the prompting of God’s Spirit to advance His Kingdom?

According to Acts 10:9-48, opportunity knocked at Peter’s door in an unexpected way. He had a chance to share the Gospel in the home of Cornelius, a Roman centurion. Even though Peter knew that “it is against our law for a Jew to associate with Gentiles or visit them” (v. 28a, TNIV), Peter met with Cornelius because he listened to what God told him (v. 28b), and he obeyed (v. 29). The result? Salvation came to the household of Cornelius. The Gospel was moving out from Jerusalem to the remotest parts of the Gentile world, just as Jesus intended (Acts 1:8), even though it meant that the predominantly Jewish-Christian Church had to adjust to a very different set of societal and cultural circumstances for it to do so.

Peter and the first century Church experienced the opportunity that the Church through the ages has faced: we are called to proclaim the never-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ in ever-changing circumstances. As in America today, the Roman Empire had

its share of moral decay, and the population among which the Church ministered was rich with diversity. Just as God spoke to His people then, He is speaking to us now. His most direct way of communicating with us is through His Word. It is “alive and active” (Hebrews 4:12 TNIV) and “is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Are we attuned to Him and His Word?

One reason I left a full-time ministry of evangelism and discipleship among college students for a full-time position of teaching New Testament was the realization that the growing challenges that are faced by the Church require, now more than ever, that we abide in God’s Word deeply and respond wisely. At Denver Seminary people certainly can develop skills and learn how to dig deeply into God’s Word. We also recognize, however, that in order to truly understand God’s Word, we must listen and obey. We need hearts that are receptive in

order to listen, and we need to depend on God’s Spirit in order to respond in obedience. If this is our posture before God, then we are ready to recognize the opportunities that God provides for ministry and act on them.

Taking opportunities that God provides may mean moving beyond our comfort zones. It may mean being open to doing ministry in new ways, going to new places and new people. It often means allowing God, through His Word, to challenge our assumptions and priorities. It may mean surrendering our skepticism and reaffirming our trust in our eternal rather than our temporal “security.” But it also means cooperating with God to see Him accomplish His purposes in us and through us for His glory and for the expansion of His Kingdom.

When opportunity knocks ... what will your response be? May we all respond with, “I am the Lord’s servant ... May it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38, TNIV) **DSM.**

*Susan Hecht is an alumna and Instructor of New Testament for Denver Seminary. She is currently completing a Ph.D. in Theological Studies with a concentration in New Testament from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. She was a full time staff member with the campus ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ for 20 years. She joined Denver Seminary’s faculty in 2007.*

# educational programs

## NEW MASTER OF ARTS WITH A MAJOR IN THEOLOGY AND MASTER OF DIVINITY WITH A CONCENTRATION IN THEOLOGY



Beginning this academic year, a concentration in Theology is now available in the Master of Divinity degree program. And, beginning in fall 2008, a Theology major within our Master of Arts (Academic) degree program will be added to Denver Seminary's degree offerings.

In support of these new degree program offerings, the curriculum

of Theology course offerings will be significantly broadened and deepened over the next three to four years.

The M.A. (Theology) bears the same distinctives of all Denver Seminary degree programs, including sound evangelical scholarship informed by globalizing and formational values. The program is well suited to students who intend to pursue doctoral level study in Theology (taking advantage, for example, of the thesis option) as well as students who wish to undertake specialized studies in Theology, with a view to a theologically-oriented ministry. For information about the M.A. with a major in Theology, please visit our website at [www.denverseminary.edu/ma-theology](http://www.denverseminary.edu/ma-theology).



## NEW MASTER OF DIVINITY WITH A CONCENTRATION IN MESSIANIC JUDAISM

In harmony with its emphases on globalization, diversity, intercultural leadership and contextualized ministry, Denver Seminary is initiating a partnership with the Messianic Jewish community and developing a new and exciting academic program that will serve to equip both Messianic and Protestant leaders in their service for the Kingdom of God. Courses in Messianic Judaism will be offered beginning May 2008 to be followed by additional semester and modular courses until the projected full implementation of the M.Div. with a concentration in Messianic Judaism in the Fall 2009.

Potential courses, as of spring 2008, include "Messianic Jewish Liturgy and Practices," "Introduction to Messianic Judaism," "Messianic Apologetics," and "Messianic Jewish Theology I: Covenants and Eschatology." For more information about the M.Div. with a concentration in Messianic Judaism, visit our website at [www.denverseminary.edu/messianic-judaism](http://www.denverseminary.edu/messianic-judaism).

## INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN MENTORING NETWORK (ICMN)

The *International Christian Mentoring Network* (ICMN) is now fully operational and inviting new members. Denver Seminary is host to this new, independent organization devoted to supporting Christians involved in the ministry of mentoring around the world. Denver Seminary Associate Dean Dr. Don Payne is serving as executive director of the ICMN. Visit the new website at [www.tri-mentoring.org](http://www.tri-mentoring.org) and look around. Annual membership is \$50, but a sliding scale is available for those from lower income countries.

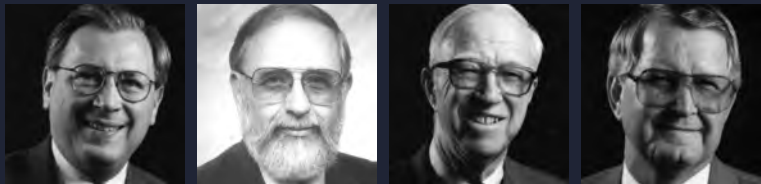
The vision of the ICMN is to encourage and resource the global community in the practice of Christ-centered, life-transforming mentoring. The mission of the ICMN is to pursue this vision by:

- Demonstrating the importance and potential of mentoring
- Encouraging mutual support and networking within the Christian mentoring community
- Identifying, developing and disseminating mentoring resources
- Providing training and learning opportunities for mentoring
- Promoting reflection, evaluation and research related to mentoring



Membership allows access to forums related to mentoring in church, parachurch and educational contexts. Resources currently available include a mentoring bibliography and links to a wide range of mentoring websites. Articles, mentoring-related research, mentoring models and other resources will be added continuously. The ICMN allows members to connect globally with Christians who are interested in mentoring, active in mentoring and studying mentoring.

The ICMN also serves with Denver Seminary as co-sponsor of the bi-annual International Conference on Mentoring. For more information or to offer input on how the International Christian Mentoring Network could be of service to you in your mentoring ministry, please visit the website ([www.tri-mentoring.org](http://www.tri-mentoring.org)) or send an e-mail to [info@tri-mentoring.org](mailto:info@tri-mentoring.org).



Dr. James Beck

Rev. Richard Bunger

Dr. Ralph Covell

Dr. Kermit Ecklebarger



Dr. Vernon Grounds

Dr. Gordon Lewis

Dr. Jim Means

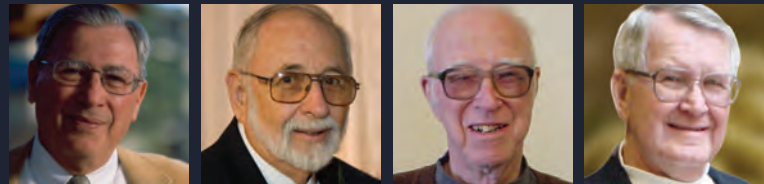
Mrs. Sarah Miller



Dr. Bruce Shelley

Dr. Harold Westing

## How our Senior Professors have changed **AND STAYED THE SAME**



Dr. James Beck

Rev. Richard Bunger

Dr. Ralph Covell

Dr. Kermit Ecklebarger



Dr. Vernon Grounds

Dr. Gordon Lewis

Dr. Jim Means

Mrs. Sarah Miller



Dr. Bruce Shelley

Dr. Harold Westing

*Just as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is unchanging, our ministry challenges in the Church in America have been ever-changing since Denver Seminary was founded in 1950. Since that time, our mission of equipping Christian leaders has been and continues to be accomplished with integrity, in large part, due to the sacrificial service of our senior faculty. We want to extend them double honor (cf. 1 Tim 5:17) in this issue as their leadership and scholarship has and continues to shape Christianity and the Church in America!*

### Dr. James Beck

Dr. Beck is living his dream in rural Kansas. He and his wife Ginny own 80 acres of land and enjoy hosting their children and grandchildren. Dr. Beck continues to edit D.Min. dissertations and edits articles for two journals. He is also researching and writing the local history of his small town.

### Rev. Richard Bunger

Rev. Bunger and his wife Laretta reside in Loveland, Colo., where he serves as an associate pastor at Calvary Church in Longmont. The couple spend their time gardening, working around the house and anticipating their bi-annual Christmas celebration with their family at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park.

### Dr. Ralph Covell

Dr. Covell works in the library archives at Denver Seminary and continues to edit D.Min. dissertations. He is involved in a variety of projects with Overseas Mission Fellowship and teaches English as a second language to immigrants at his Chinese church in Denver.

### Dr. Kermit Ecklebarger

Dr. Ecklebarger and his wife Shirley divide their time between Tucson and Seattle, where their children and grandchildren live. Dr. Ecklebarger teaches two online New Testament courses with Denver Seminary each year. He and Shirley attend churches pastored by Denver Seminary alumni, and he teaches Sunday school at both churches.

### Dr. Vernon Grounds

Dr. Grounds continues to come into his Seminary office every weekday, hosting early morning Bible studies and mentoring alumni and friends. He teaches a Sunday school class at Greenwood Community Church and maintains his 21-year tradition of leading a Vespers service at his Meridian Community home each Sunday

afternoon. His wife Ann has been struggling with health issues this past year, but she is currently doing well and is home with Vernon.

### Dr. Gordon Lewis

Dr. Lewis and his wife Willa are celebrating their seventh year of marriage. Dr. Lewis continues to write and serves as a mentor to church members and former students from Denver Seminary. He is also a senior elder in his church.

### Dr. Jim Means

Dr. Means and his wife Barbara are currently remodeling their home in Denver. He continues to teach Sunday school at Southern Gables Church and mentors a Denver Seminary student. Dr. Means, Barbara, and members of their family and church recently took a trip to Israel, and he would love to return in the future.

### Mrs. Sarah Miller

Mrs. Miller works in the Denver Seminary library archives twice per month and serves as the assistant pastor at Heather Gardens Chapel. She is also currently involved in two Bible studies.

### Dr. Bruce Shelley

Dr. Shelley continues to mentor four Denver Seminary students and meets weekly with Dr. Vernon Grounds for his Wednesday morning Bible study. He is working on writing the history of his family's genealogy. He and his wife Mary host a small group in their home on Thursdays.

### Dr. Harold Westing

Dr. Westing continues to teach D.Min. courses at Denver Seminary. He frequently opens his home to Denver Seminary graduates and stays in touch with many of the alumni. He spends four to five hours each day with his wife Betty at her assisted living facility.

Are you interested in helping **Support a Student?** The average amount of financial aid the **Seminary Fund** provides each Denver Seminary student is about \$450 annually or just **\$37 per month**. Without this financial aid, our students would not be able to receive the theological education they need to serve the Church in America and around the world. We invite you to prayerfully consider joining us to Support a Student by giving just \$37 per month.



support a student

If you'd like to make a monthly or one-time gift online, please visit our website at [www.denverseminary.edu/friends/giving](http://www.denverseminary.edu/friends/giving).

*He [God] gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives ...*  
 2 Corinthians 9-10, The Message

## ONLINE ALUMNI DIRECTORY



The alumni directory is now available! The alumni directory includes all the features of OurDenSem

(including photo galleries, blogs, messaging and more) PLUS many attributes only available to alumni, including the ability to search for other alumni and their contact information. Denver Seminary's new online alumni directory is the best way to stay in touch with old classmates, find out what they've been doing, keep others up to date on your life and ministry, reconnect with fellow alumni, and network with others who have graduated from Denver Seminary. Check out the online alumni directory today by visiting [www.denverseminary.edu/alumni/](http://www.denverseminary.edu/alumni/) and clicking on Alumni Online Directory.

## ESTATE PLANNING

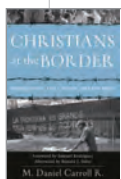
Seminary students can be deeply impacted with a simple designation. Did you know that you can change the beneficiary on your retirement account, term life insurance or whole life insurance policy to Denver Seminary? It is as simple as going online or calling the custodian of your account. Ask them for a "change of beneficiary" form. By making this simple change, your gift can greatly impact students and help them complete their theological education with little or no debt. In some cases it even eliminates tax consequences for you. If you decide to make a gift in this way, please let Denver Seminary know, then we can add you to the Legacy Society, a long list of others who are helping students through estate planning. If you have questions please contact Brian Fort at 303-762-6924 or [brian.fort@denverseminary.edu](mailto:brian.fort@denverseminary.edu).

*As with any decision involving your estate plans, we urge you to seek the advice of professional counsel when considering a gift to Denver Seminary.*



*Be generous with the different things God gave you ...*  
 1 Peter 4:10 (The Message)

## FACULTY RESOURCES



### **Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible** **M. Daniel Carroll R. (Baker Academic, 2008)**

*Christians at the Border* provides sound biblical and ethical guidance for readers who are looking for a Christian perspective on the immigration issue. As both a Guatemalan and an American, M. Daniel Carroll R. presents a uniquely qualified perspective on this topic. Drawing on key biblical concepts, he speaks to both the immigrant culture and the host culture, arguing that both sides have much to learn about this hot-button debate topic. In light of the 2008 elections, this timely, clear, accessible and compassionate resource will benefit all Christians who are wrestling with the immigration issue. *This book is set to release May, 2008.*



### **Names in the Study of Biblical History: David, YHWH Names, and the Role of Personal Names** **Francis I. Anderson and Richard S. Hess (Australia Institute of Archaeology, 2007)**

This study examines the use of personal names and their spellings in order to explore evidence for the dating of biblical books. It considers how the spelling of names changed through the centuries and concludes that there is a positive relationship between the manner in which names are spelled and the sequence in which the books of the Old Testament were written. This study may be purchased from: [https://www.eisenbrauns.com/ECOM/\\_2BP13DNC5.HTM](https://www.eisenbrauns.com/ECOM/_2BP13DNC5.HTM).



### **Revolution in Generosity: Transforming Stewards to be Rich Toward God** **Wesley K. Willmer, editor (Moody Press, 2008)**

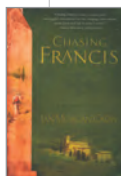
*Revolution in Generosity* provides biblical guidelines for funding Christian organizations by some of the best scholars and practitioners in the field. With a foreword by Charles Colson, this book features chapters by Denver Seminary professor **Craig Blomberg** and Denver Seminary's vice president of advancement, **Gary Hoag**. *Revolution in Generosity* is a timely resource for the Church in America.

## OTHER RESOURCES



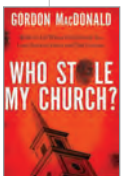
### **Saint Francis of Assisi** **G.K. Chesterton**

Francis of Assisi is one of the most influential men in the whole of human history. This biography by Chesterton is considered the best appreciation of Francis' life—the one that gets to the heart of the matter. For Chesterton, Francis is a great paradoxical figure, a man who loved women but vowed himself to chastity; an artist who loved the pleasures of the natural world as few have loved them, but vowed himself to the most austere poverty, stripping himself naked in the public square so all could see that he had renounced his worldly goods; a clown who stood on his head in order to see the world aright.



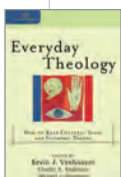
### **Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale** **Ian Morgan Cron (NavPress, 2006)**

Chase Falson has lost his faith—and he did it right in front of the congregation at his mega-church. Now the elders want him to take some time away: far away. So Chase crosses the Atlantic to visit his uncle, a Franciscan priest, where he encounters the teachings of Francis of Assisi and rediscovers his ancient faith. Follow Chase's spiritual journey in the footsteps of Francis, and begin one of your own through the pilgrim's guide included in this book. Come discover Francis, the first postmodern Christian.



### **Who Stole My Church?: What to do When the Church You Love Tries to Enter the 21st Century** **Gordon MacDonald (Thomas Nelson, 2008)**

Millions of people in their 50s, 60s and 70s feel their churches have been hijacked by church-growth movements characterized by loud praise bands, constant PowerPoint presentations and cavernous megachurches devoid of personal touch. In this fictional story, pastor and author Gordon MacDonald (M.Div., '66) uses topical examples and familiar characters to reassure readers that it is possible to embrace change and to demonstrate how that change can actually be a positive influence in their church.



### **Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends** **Edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Slesman (Baker Academic, 2007)**

Generally speaking, students, theologians, pastors and church leaders are well-trained in the task of biblical exegesis. Where many fall short is in the area of cultural exegesis—reading and interpreting the texts and trends produced by our culture. Anyone interested in the intersection of Christianity and culture needs to be able to do “everyday theology.” This innovative volume will help readers think theologically about our cultural environment and respond faithfully as Christian disciples.



by Dr. Vernon Grounds

# what's impossible with God?

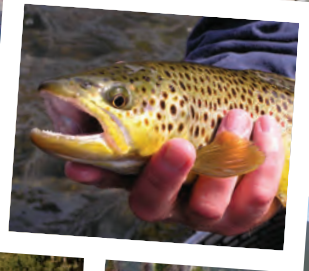
Our nation's Pilgrim founders had a shining vision. They dreamed that this new world settlement would become a beacon high on a hill shedding the light of Gospel truth and Christian righteousness over the whole world. But with the passing of time and the growth of secular diversity, that vision has grown dim. This nation with its diversified population and its melting-pot culture cannot claim any longer to be the fulfillment of that Pilgrim vision. Yes, our country is still religious with most of our population professing belief in God and giving lip service to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments. Yet Hollywood and television shape our lifestyle, while our government politicks to make decisions. Less and less is the USA a Christian country despite the lingering remnants of a once-dominant religiosity (for example, crowds on national holidays enthusiastically singing "God Bless America").

Is spiritual renewal, then, an impossibility? And by spiritual renewal we mean a wide-spread resurgence of evangelical faith and morality. Why should it be? The tremendous upsurge of the Gospel in 18th century Britain through the transforming ministry of George Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley, followed by the 19th century impact of William Wilberforce, and in our own era the astonishing worldwide crusades of Billy Graham demonstrate that of course God's power is still operative. So why not steadfastly pray for a Holy Spirit outpouring not only hopefully in our own country but in the continued spread of a vital Christianity in Asia, Africa and South America? Two of our Seminary graduates have recently published encouraging and challenging book-length studies of revival. One is by Fred Wright (M.Div., '68) entitled, *The World's Greatest Revivals*. The other by Bob Griffin (MRE, '69) bears the name *Firestorms of Revival*. So instead of succumbing to pessimistic defeatism, why not in steadfast faith pray, serve and witness? Let's not simply read these challenging histories of the Spirit's mighty movements, but let's be motivated to trust God that even yet, and even in our own secularized country, the Pilgrim vision may be more than a dream. Let's be like that burdened pastor who stood before a portrait of John Wesley and was heard prayerfully whispering, "Do it again, God! Do it again!"

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