

DENVER SEMINARY

M A G A Z I N E

THINK

Biblically




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DSM Online

Visit www.denverseminary.edu/magazine/ for group discussion questions from this issue; for application suggestions in your church or ministry; for the opportunity to discuss articles in this issue with others in the Denver Seminary community; or to send thoughts or comments to the editor.

In the next issue...

The spring issue of Denver Seminary Magazine continues our journey through Denver Seminary's mission: to glorify God by equipping leaders to think biblically, live faithfully and lead wisely. Spring '09 will examine what it means to live faithfully.



TURN IN YOUR BIBLES, PLEASE



How many Bibles have I owned since childhood? Oodles! The first of them (white, imitation leather) was probably a gift from my parents or a Sunday school teacher and came as a payoff for memorizing Scripture verses. People sank to remarkable lows in those days to “bribe” kids like me to *get into the Word*.

In the years that followed, my Bible collection grew to include black, red and navy blue leather-bound (as well as imitation leather) Bibles (and New Testaments). My prized possession? A most-memorable wartime military-brown Bible produced by some Bible publisher for soldiers.

My inventory included pocket Testaments, red-letter Bibles (the sayings of Jesus in red ink), Scofield Reference Bibles, Thompson Chain-reference Bibles, KJVs, RSVs, TEVs, NIVs, ASVs, Phillips, Living Bibles and Amplifieds. Oh, and I must not forget the study Bibles for youth, athletes, business-people, women, contemplatives and (I think) truck-drivers. I have been waiting for a kayaker's Bible. I've owned big Bibles that might put me over the luggage

weight limit were I to fly with them and small Bibles that cannot be read without 3.00-rated glasses.

In my teen years I was offered a special flaming-red evangelism Bible designed to be carried to public school and ostentatiously positioned on the top of one's text-books so that other kids would notice and ask how to get saved (as a matter of record, I was never asked).

Today there are software products available that offer Scripture in more translations than one ever knew existed. Every word, every phrase of Scripture can now be

It's not the Bibles you own, but what you do with them that matters.

searched, compared and matched in milliseconds. It's scary to think of what Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther or John Calvin could have accomplished with such computer tools. It often makes me wonder if Paul had any idea that his words would one day be cut and diced, analyzed and stretched, debated, and defined as they have.

Bibles make great gifts. My wife, Gail, and I were given seven on our wedding day, not including the one my father, who officiated the ceremony, presented to us after he pronounced us man and wife. When I unloaded our car at the motel where we spent our wedding night, I discovered all eight new Bibles (plus the two we'd packed prior to the wedding) were in our luggage.

Perhaps you won't be surprised if I confessed that we never cracked any of these Bibles during the honeymoon. There were other more pressing activities on our priority list...

In this edition of *Denver Seminary Magazine*, we asked members of our Seminary community to think out loud about a significant piece of our mission: thinking biblically. After all, it's not the Bibles you own, but what you do with them that matters.

So what does *thinking biblically* mean? Several members of our community, including faculty, students and alumni all help us reflect upon the answer. They

speak from experience, scholarship and personal commitment to Jesus Christ, who is the “centerpiece” of Scripture.

Our hope is that this magazine will add to the depth and direction of your own walk with Jesus. It's one of the ways we acquaint you with the rich life that is happening in the Denver Seminary community. And it's one of our ways of saying *thank you* for your generous support to this wonderful school.

Sincerely,

Gordon MacDonald

Editor's note: portions of these comments were published in Leadership Journal for an article written by Pastor MacDonald.

Denver Seminary Hosts Zero TB Delegation

Dr. Yoon Goo Lee, president of the World Headquarters for the Zero Tuberculosis Movement, and Rev. San Hwan Kim, who serves as general secretary for the movement, visited Denver Seminary from Nov. 5-11, 2008. Dr. Lee is the former president of Red Cross Korea, former president of World Vision Korea, and former president of InJe University in Korea. He is one of the most influential Christian leaders in Korea, and Dr. Lee spoke to the Denver Seminary community on Monday, Nov. 10, 2008. The vision of the Zero Tuberculosis Movement is to eliminate tuberculosis from the world. Currently the organization focuses on helping children who suffer from TB in North Korea where there are an estimated 300,000 children and 900,000 adults who suffer from the disease. If you would like to learn more about the Zero Tuberculosis Movement, or if you'd like to hear Dr. Lee's presentation, visit our website at www.denverseminary.edu/tb/.

"Once in 25 Year Opportunity" for Chaplains

In 1954, President Eisenhower called for the formation of a Veterans Day National Committee (VDNC) to oversee national planning and coordination of the Veterans Day observance. A member of the VDNC, the Military Chaplains Association (MCA) hosted the national ceremony at Arlington

National Cemetery on Nov. 11, 2008. As an officer of the MCA, Denver Seminary's Dr. Jan McCormack (chaplain, Lt. Col. USAF, retired), who serves as Assistant Professor of Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling and a Mentoring Director, helped plan and lead

these 2008 Veterans Events which were overseen by Vice President Dick Cheney. For more about the event, visit www.denverseminary.edu/mca/.



TURKEY and GREECE

The dates for an unforgettable trip to Greece and Turkey (and London) are Saturday, May 16, through Monday, June 1, 2009. The traveling seminar, "In the Path of Paul" (OT/NT 290) will culminate in a visit to the British Museum in London to witness many artifacts from several of the sites we visit. Dr. Bill Klein will be the tour guide and instructor. Highlights will include Antioch in Roman Syria, Paul's hometown of Tarsus, the journey west through modern Turkey, including Cappadocia, other key sites Paul visited, and several of the seven cities of the book of Revelation. At Istanbul, we will cross the Dardanelles by ferry into Europe and Greece visiting key sites in the North and then fly to Southern Greece to visit such places as Corinth and Athens. Pertinent to the study of the OT, we will see such sites at Alalakh, Taiyanat, Karatepe, Troy and Mycenae. We will learn about Neo-Hittite and Israelite material in the Istanbul museum. The course will offer two semester-hours credit through Denver Seminary for those who wish to earn it, though the trip is open to those who do not want to take it for credit. All people interested in a serious study tour are welcome. For more information, email Dr. Klein at bill.klein@denverseminary.edu to register your possible participation.

Robert Woolfolk Named Director of African American Initiatives

Denver Seminary is pleased to announce that Robert Woolfolk has been appointed Director of African American Initiatives. Within this capacity, Woolfolk will develop programs and events for local African American pastors and leaders as well as form relationships with and serve as liaison to the African American community – both in the Denver Metro area and within Denver Seminary. Woolfolk will also continue to serve as a mentoring director for Denver Seminary students. Denver Seminary is grateful for Robert Woolfolk's leadership and the doors that God has opened for the Seminary to serve the African American community.





Denver Seminary's Presidential Search

Denver Seminary's board of trustees has formed a presidential search advisory committee to prayerfully and diligently work to discern God's plan for Denver Seminary's next president. To help keep you updated on important developments and information regarding the search, the Seminary has created a presidential transition web page. For the latest information, to give feedback or make suggestions, or to view the "Opportunity Profile for the Position of President" document, please visit our website at www.denverseminary.edu/presidential-transition/.

International Conference on Historic Premillennialism: A Biblical Alternative to "Left Behind" Eschatology

Denver Seminary is pleased to host the International Conference on Historic Premillennialism, April 23-25, 2009. The plenary speaker for the conference will be Dr. Craig Blomberg, the distinguished professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary. Other speakers include Dr. Sung Wook Chung, associate professor of theology, Dr. Bruce Demarest, professor of spiritual formation, Dr. Rick Hess, professor of Old Testament, and Dr. David Sang Bok Kim, president of the Asian Association of Evangelicals and senior pastor of Hallelujah Community Church in Seoul, Korea. For more information, or to register, please visit www.denverseminary.edu/ichp/.



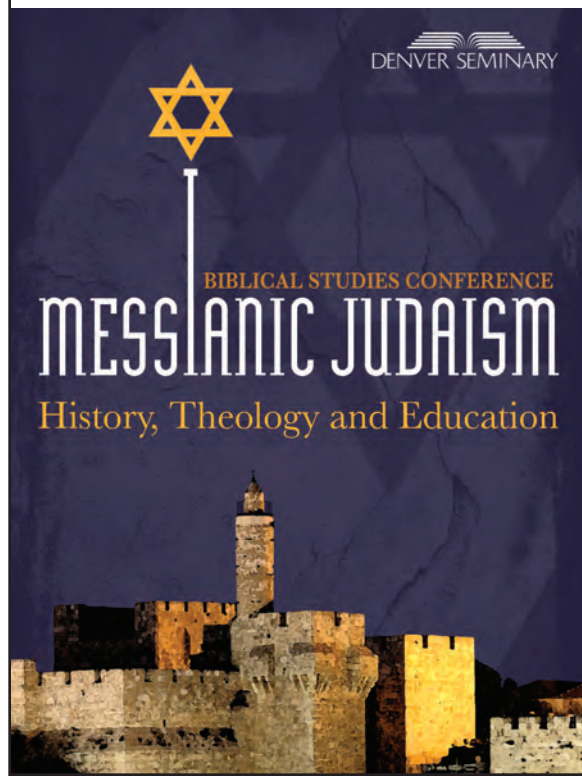
2009 Biblical Studies Conference

On Thursday, Feb. 12 and Friday, Feb. 13, 2009, Denver Seminary will host the 2009 Biblical Studies Conference. This year's theme will be "Messianic Judaism: History, Theology and Education." Speakers for the conference include Dr. Craig Blomberg, Dr. Hélène Dallaire, Dr. Jeffrey Feinberg, Dr. John Fischer, Dr. Michael Rydelnik and Rabbi Chaim Urbach. For details about the speakers and their presentations, or to register, please visit our website at www.denverseminary.edu/bibstudies/.

Alumnus Named President and Director of the U.S. Navigators

Denver Seminary alumnus, Dr. Doug Nuenke (D.Min., '08), has stepped into his role as the president and director of the U.S. Navigators. The Navigators staff numbers over 4500 people, working to fulfill the Navigators mission: to "advance the Gospel of Jesus and His Kingdom into the nations through spiritual generations

of laborers living and discipling among the lost." Dr. Nuenke says, "This is an exciting year for the Navigators as we celebrate our 75th anniversary. It isn't merely a marking of time but a celebration of God's amazing grace through 75 years of ministry and our amazing hope for the future."



The B-I-B-L-E:

Is that the book for me?



Recently, walking in the hallway outside one of the Sunday school classrooms at our church, I heard the children singing an old song. It goes like this:

Oh! The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that's the book for me.

I stand alone on the Word of God. The B-I-B-L-E.

by William Klein, Ph.D.

It's a catchy ditty. Is it just a kid's song? What does it mean to *stand* on the Word of God, much less *alone*? Or perhaps more importantly, why would anyone want to stand on the Bible? The answer to that question is crucial. I think we need to take our stand on Scripture because it is God's fundamental means for transforming our lives.

The apostle Paul appeals to the Christians in Rome: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2, TNIV). Paul makes a profound point for any follower of Christ.

Since God is God, His will is always good, pleasing and perfect, but often we think and act otherwise. God's will may appeal to us if we are convinced God approves of what *we* desire—that better job, the house we hope to buy, the person we'd like to marry—but we're skeptical, even fearful, when we think God's will might counter our preferences. Paul is aware of that dilemma and addresses it in this verse.

Our obstacle, he says, is the "world." The Greek word Paul uses, *aiōn*, can refer to a span of time (often rendered "age") or to the foolish ways people in this age think or conduct themselves (see 1 Corinthians 3:18). *Worldly* people do not pursue God or God's ways; they follow their own agendas. If people act on the basis of what the "world" considers wise or prudent, they risk missing God's will, which Paul thinks is tragic.

Paul's solution appears straightforward: resist the seductions of this world by being transformed. The means to transformation is a renewed mind. By allowing God to *renew* our minds, Paul argues, we will find the good, perfect and pleasing divine course. In the only other time Paul uses this rare word "renew" (Titus 3:5), it describes the process of salvation, and the agent of renewal is the Holy Spirit.

The Bible—the Divine Means of

TRANSFORMATION

This leads me to make two assertions. First, the Holy Spirit, the much misunderstood and often neglected member of the Trinity, has the daunting task of transforming worldly people like us into godly people. Second, the primary means the Spirit uses to effect that renewal is the Scriptures. After all, the Spirit inspired the Scriptures so that God's people may be transformed. Paul explains its value: "... useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17, TNIV). The Bible is the primary means the Spirit employs to renew and transform us.

How much input do the Scriptures have in your life? It may make you uncomfortable if your honest answer is, "Not enough," but for followers of Christ, it's not only a fair question, it's a crucial one. Imagine trying to build a birdhouse with wood but no tools; knit a sweater with no needles; dig a large

hole with no shovel; or send an email without access to a computer or a Blackberry®. Can the Spirit transform us if we deny Him the primary tool to renew our minds so we can follow His good, pleasing and perfect will?

I want to suggest some avenues for inputting the Bible into your life. Most of us don't need novelty; we need a commitment and a method. Consider the following suggestions.

HEARING the Word

Listening is one obvious way to allow God's Word to speak to us. The apostle Paul instructed Timothy: "... devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13, TNIV). Paul knew how crucial it is for God's people to hear God's Word. Merely hearing it is not enough, however. Jesus said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:28, TNIV). As with all our encounters with God's Word, God expects that we put into practice what we hear (recall James 1:22). Hearing and responding to Scripture should be a disciplined priority for us. Don't neglect church attendance in a congregation where the Bible is read, taught and applied to life. God can transform us through hearing someone explain what Scripture means and how we ought to respond.

READING the Word

Another discipline for engaging Scripture is a program of regular reading. While you can listen to others teach or preach from the Bible, you also need to engage God's

Word yourself. Reading means going over a verse or passage slowly enough so that you can absorb its message. The point is not to “get through” a certain amount of material; the point is to connect with God by reflecting on His Word so it transforms your thinking. Here are a few encouragements for your Bible reading:

Make Time. You need a strategy. Whether first thing in the morning or at some other time, set aside a specific slot in your schedule.

Follow a Bible-Reading Plan. We all need some structure to make our reading as productive as possible. There are numerous options, or you can develop your own schedule. Here’s one followed by Christians of various denominations: www.crivoice.org/daily.html. It selects different parts of the Scripture each day, emphasizing the Psalms, while covering the entire Bible over the span of several years.

Find a Focus for Meditation. Don’t merely read, but meditate on what God has brought to your attention in your reading. If you don’t personally engage with what you read, you might close your Bible and have little to take away. Your mind won’t experience renewal. You reading can become a dreary chore instead of a discipline of joy.

When you read God’s Word, pay close attention to at least one thought or idea, and think deeply about it for a few moments. Ask God to show you its implications for your life. Try to return to that thought as often as you can during the day. You’ll deepen your insight into Scripture, and you’ll understand better how God’s Word applies to your life.

STUDYING the Word

The basic difference between Bible reading and Bible study might be as simple as getting a pencil and a piece of paper. The easiest way to begin studying is to write observations about the text as you read and to record questions that come to mind.

If your Bible has footnotes or cross-references in the margins, look up other passages that relate to the verses that prompt your questions. Then record your insights, reflections or additional questions based on those verses. Find a key word in your reading and use a concordance to review other passages that use that word. See if the word occurs with a similar meaning in other passages, and again record your insights. Word study tools will enrich your findings. Check out a commentary on the book you’re studying for further insights.¹

Another simple way to study is to outline a chapter, a paragraph at a time. Isolate the main assertions or themes in each paragraph and any sub-points that support it. If you don’t like traditional outline form, simply use main statements for key ideas and bulleted sub-points that support each key idea. When you finish a chapter, move on to the next, until you’ve outlined an entire book. Start with small books, such as one of the epistles or minor prophets, before you tackle larger ones. Before long, you’ll have a far stronger grasp on a section of Scripture than you’d gain by just reading it. Make sure you apply the step of meditation as part of your study. Bible study can be varied—from these very simple approaches to

more complex and rewarding strategies. I’ve listed 22 different ones in the book, *Handbook for Personal Bible Study*, chapter 6.

MEMORIZING the Word

Memorization has gotten a bad rap—we think of multiplication tables or dates in a history class. Why memorize Scripture? Because if you’ve stored it away, you can recall it when you need it. The Holy Spirit can bring it to your attention at crucial times. Wisely the psalmist wrote, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11, TNIV). For example, most of us know when we are watching or thinking about something that’s spiritually harmful or sinful. But we add muscle against these temptations when we recall a specific verse such as, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8, TNIV).



When the Holy Spirit brings to mind a definite verse like this, we gain spiritual power, and our faith is strengthened. What’s more, we can also meditate on Scripture when we have no Bible at our disposal. But be sure you don’t simply memorize isolated verses and apply them out of context. Go for paragraphs or meaningful sections.

But you say, “I can’t memorize.” Memorizing Scripture is a matter of motivation—like the suggestions above. If you can remember your birthday, social security number, snail mail and email addresses, your own and others’ phone numbers, and the names of your friends, then you can memorize Scripture. The real question is whether you will give yourself the opportunity. Try it and see whether the rewards of placing God’s Word in your heart are worth the effort.

CONCLUSION

Do we want spiritual transformation? Are we eager for a life that really matters and fulfills God’s purposes for us? Or will we settle for the world’s trinkets or a merely superficial walk with Christ? A sure way to find God’s good, pleasing and perfect will is to stand on the B-I-B-L-E. **DSM**



Dr. Bill Klein joined the faculty of Denver Seminary in 1978. He is professor of New Testament and chairs the division of biblical studies. Dr. Klein has served at Calvary Baptist Church in California as associate pastor and has served as an elder at Pathways Church in Denver.

To discuss this article or to learn more about Dr. Klein’s Handbook for Personal Bible Study, please visit www.denverseminary.edu/magazine.

¹ Consult the “Denver Journal” Old Testament and New Testament bibliographies for suggestions for the best resources to aid your study: www.denverseminary.edu/dj.



BIBLICALLY- THINKING intentionally



An interview with Dave (M.A., Leadership) and Jen (Certificate in Christian Formation and Soul Care) Ortega
by DJ Turner

DSM recently sat down with students and newlyweds Dave and Jen Ortega to learn more about how thinking biblically fits into their lives as students and as a newly married couple (May '08).

What has God called you to do after graduation?

Dave: My original plan was to jump into full-time ministry; it would've required full-time support-raising, so it probably wouldn't have been the best thing—especially having debt from seminary. My plan now is to get a “regular” job, start working off debt and begin pouring into our marriage, and really, that's what I feel like God's calling us to do.

Jen: Part of where we are, too, is just trying to be attentive to God's call in both of our lives—putting off what maybe isn't appropriate to pursue any more and enjoying what He's got for us as a couple.

Are you planning to pursue ministry together?

Dave: We view ministry as being a lifestyle and not a compartmentalized thing. We feel like both of us together will have a stronger ministry than we'd have individually, so for us, it's more of a holistic lifestyle thing than a job.

What does it mean to each of you to “think biblically”?

Dave: For me, this means I truly view God's Word as living and active, and I invite Scriptures to inform my mind in how I view the world and make decisions. This also means I place greater value on what the Bible says than on what the world says. It goes beyond just knowing or memorizing Scripture, but it affects the way that we live our lives.

Jen: It's about being immersed in the Bible. It used to be about what Christ said, what He taught, what stories He told; I'm realizing that I haven't spent as much time looking at what Christ *did*. What was His intention behind doing things and how should His lifestyle inform how I do or do not do things? It's having a consistent awareness that there's more to learn *and* surrendering how I am right now to continue to become more like Him.

What about in your new marriage?

Dave: We know that the Bible is an important aspect, and not in the sense of just us studying or reading it individually, but in interacting with it together—seeking how each of us interacts with the Bible uniquely and talking about the implications for us. How does it inform the way that we live our lives, and what are the implications on who we are becoming? As a student, I'm being intentional about not getting caught up in the academics but really trying to wrestle with it to take the time to let it permeate. It's been a challenge in seminary, because it *is* very academic and there are incredible work loads, which can make it difficult to actually chew on stuff.

Jen: One of the things that we've been really working on is self-care—just taking care of ourselves and making sure that we're being good stewards of our bodies, our time and ourselves. There's a place and time for academic growth, but there's also

a place and time for solitude, rest, reflection, exercise and all those other good things, too.

Dave: Thinking biblically is the framework for our relationship. For example, “loving each other as Christ loved the church.” If that's in our minds, we need to be attentive to what the implications are. What does that look like for me to actually love Jen as Christ loved the church? And then there's the idea of stewardship—really taking to heart that what we have is not ours, that we don't own it; we are stewards of what God gives us. We feel a conviction that God wants us to live differently than we have been. A big piece for me is understanding that my identity is in Christ and our citizenship is in heaven; it has implications for how we conduct ourselves. It helps us to have a loose grip on the things of this world.

Jen: One of the words that has become a theme for our relationship is *intentionality*. Thinking biblically, I think, is not something that happens just out of habit; it happens out of discipline and intentionality.

Dave: I hope that as I get older, thinking biblically will become more natural. Though intentionality will still be important, I hope I will have gained enough life experience with that mind frame that it will become more natural. I know it won't happen perfectly, but I want to build that foundation so that it will become natural to not live according to the standards of the world. **DSM**

Light in the midst of darkness

by DJ Turner

“You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14,16



Pedro A. Martínez

Pedro A. Martínez is the founder and pastor of Iglesia Cristiana Amor, located in Miami, Fla. and is the founder and president of H.O.P.E. in Miami Beach, a nonprofit, faith-based organization that has worked to reduce homelessness in the City of Miami Beach. Pastor Martínez and his wife, Maria, have three adult children and reside in Miami, Fla.

For more information about Pedro and his ministries, please visit our website at www.denverseminary.edu/magazine.

Pedro Martínez (M.A. diploma, '89) is a light in the midst of darkness. Everything he does—from leading his Miami, Fla. congregation to reducing homelessness in Miami Beach to co-starring on a secular TV show—works to reveal the Gospel to a world of darkness. While his approach seems unconventional, Pedro, a native of Cuba, believes that his calling is to be a light shining before people. “I may not be much light,” he admits, “but at least I am some light.”

Church

Martínez launched *Iglesia Cristiana Amor* (Love Christian Church) on Easter, 1990. With Sundays drawing 100 members, *Amor* offers simultaneous services in Spanish and English. The congregation sings praises together then separates into two sanctuaries where the same message is preached in Spanish by Pedro and in English by his son Isaac. “Our mission is to evangelize,” Martínez says, “to disciple or equip believers, and to allow them to serve within their gifts and talents wherever they feel God wants them to serve.” For everything the church does, “the Bible is the foundation. It is the truth of God ... the Bible [is] the final authority in whatever we do or decide not to do.”

Reducing Homelessness

H.O.P.E. in Miami Beach, founded in 2002, exists to reduce personal homelessness in that area. Pedro’s call to help the homeless came as he and his wife walked on the beach. As he saw a homeless man bathing in a public shower, Martínez thought, “Somebody ought to do something.” This statement was quickly followed by a command that he knows was from the Lord: “*You* do something!” So Martínez decided to throw an event. Receiving donations of clothing and shoes from congregants, pizza from a neighbor who managed several Papa John’s® restaurants, soda from Pepsi®, and use of a historic church that sits on the busiest avenue in South Beach, Pedro’s first event was a success, attracting more than 200 homeless people.

Today, H.O.P.E. hosts bi-monthly events that include food, clothing, hygiene products, eyeglasses, haircuts, Bibles and more, along with opportunities to connect the homeless with organizations that provide other services, and the opportunity to receive free, replacement IDs through a grant from the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust. There are no

sermons at these events, as Martínez wants them to be welcoming. In keeping with his evangelistic tendencies, the Gospel *is* shared, but rather than giving a sermon, Martínez finds that having a team of people available to talk with and pray for their homeless visitors is more effective.

H.O.P.E.’s events have been so effective that they draw homeless men and women from the greater Miami area. Through the Homeless Trust grant, the organization also provides ID replacements in Homestead, an hour south of Miami Beach, and in Miami.

Television

The final bit of light that shines from Pedro’s ministry is the most controversial. Martínez is one of the co-hosts of a Jerry Springer-esque (sans brawling) nightly, live TV show on a Spanish channel in south Florida. Broadcasting even into Cuba, *La Cosa Nostra* is perhaps the most irreverent show on TV. While some criticize Martínez for his role on the show, its general appeal is undeniable. In southern Florida, *La Cosa Nostra* enjoys high ratings, and the show recently aired its 1200th episode.

Martínez describes his TV role as bringing some of God’s truth to people who would not otherwise hear it. “I think many times we as Christians complain that secular media has denied us the microphone, but in reality we have denied ourselves, because we’re not willing to step out and debate on the same playing field.” The show covers many topics ranging from sex to the paranormal and other outrageous and morbid topics. Guests on the show have included an array of personalities like the president of the Gay and Lesbian Association, voodoo priests, psychologists, doctors, and others. Each episode gives hosts and guests the opportunity to express their opinions and debate. Martínez states that while the shows are designed to be entertaining, this platform gives him the chance to be a small light in the midst of darkness. He has been stopped on the streets by people wanting to learn more, and while some have left his church because of this controversial show, others have begun attending because of it. “At least they get to hear the other side of the story,” he says. “[Amid the darkness], if you have a lighter with you and you flick the light, it’s not much light, but it is a little bit of light.” **DSM**

FROM THE PULPIT TO THE PEW: *Thinking Biblically*

by Larry Lindquist, Ed.D.



As I walked down the steps of the platform after preaching early in my first pastorate, I noticed a teenager from our youth ministry in the front pew with his face buried in his hands. He was weeping.

I sat next to him and slipped my arm around his shoulders. He turned his face to me and asked me a question that burned into my soul. “Larry, how do I plug it in? How do I make what you just preached about fit into my world?” We talked for a while and prayed together. His questions and that conversation permanently changed my ministry. I never step into the pulpit or podium without Aaron’s words ringing in my head: “Plug it in, Larry. Make it fit in their world.” Biblical intellect and the ability to score 100% on a Jesus pop quiz is not the same as thinking biblically.

As part of the faculty at Denver Seminary, I share the incredible joy and responsibility of training pastors. It is our deep desire that graduates think biblically *and* effectively move those they lead to think biblically. As I am invited to preach, and as our graduates move into the pulpits opened to them, I believe there are three roles to be embraced if we are to effectively call people to think biblically.

Preacher

The first role is preacher. “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2, TNIV). Read it again— *careful instruction*. This is the role and responsibility of handling the Word of God with care and accuracy. Precise exegesis of Scripture, making sure there is a “big idea” and speaking articulately are all part of this role. We dedicate a great deal of the curriculum at Denver

Seminary to the development of these important homiletic and exegetical skills in our students.

To think biblically, the people must know the Bible! You and I have read the statistics that speak of the biblical illiteracy that seems to be growing within the church. Preach the Word! I have listened to some very gifted communicators, and I’ve walked away better able to recall the great video clips, anecdotes and jokes than any biblical text cited.

Using technology in a way that deepens understanding without distraction is unfortunately rare. As preachers, you and I need to push against what Henri Nouwen identifies as the temptation to be spectacular. Preach the Word. However, if the focus on this role is too strong it can lead to intellectual sterility. Thinking biblically is not only a matter of knowing how. Knowledge without conviction produces well-informed pew-potatoes.

Prophet

The second role is that of a prophet. I anticipate some of you just recoiled a bit. For our purpose, I will define a prophet as one who declares the Word of God with power and passion. "... our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake" (1 Thessalonians 1:5, TNIV). Power through the Holy Spirit and deep conviction are characteristics of the role of prophet. Politically correct paralysis has invaded the pastorate.

The role of prophet can be very unpopular, politically incorrect and culturally out of step. Calling people to think biblically requires the voice of conviction and passion to encourage thinking outside the boundaries of culture and popularity. Thinking biblically and speaking with conviction about God's view of marriage, immigration, homosexuality and abortion can be unpopular—even dangerous. If the pastor is not passionate, how can those in the pew be expected to hold biblical conviction in the face of increasing opposition? However, if the pastor focuses too much on this role, it can lead to emotional idiocy. Simply amping up people in the pew with emotion about something can create ignorance on fire! Romans describes a congregation led by a pastor who presides over a pep rally. "... they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge" (10:2, TNIV).

Practitioner

The last role is practitioner. "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9, TNIV). This role focuses on action. Biblical thinking is a dead end without thinking of ways to make it active. Left alone, action can be nothing more than aimless activity at best.

Currently there seems to be a wonderful surge of social justice activity in the evangelical parts of the Body of Christ. For too long, the Body has been socially inactive. Concerned about speaking the message, we have neglected the needs of the people to whom we speak. I recall the title of a missionary film I saw years ago, "Empty Bellies Have No Ears." That title

says it well, doesn't it? For too long we have been so concerned about making sure the message (Gospel) is clearly spoken, that we have ignored the practical needs of those we seek to reach. Is that not also a part of the Gospel?

Too many Christians have slipped into a decaffeinated Christianity. Nothing keeps us awake at night. Nothing seems to disturb our sleep. In the face of starvation, human trafficking, environmental abuse, orphans, widows, sickness, political corruption, AIDS, homelessness, poverty, racism and profiling, we roll over, pulling the covers over our heads. The church needs a bit of spiritual caffeine! Pastors need to pick up the role of practitioner and provide venues for social activity.

A few years ago, I attended a conference in Boston. During a little free time, a group of us walked downtown where we found a Holocaust memorial. It is a powerful experience walking through the glass cubicles etched with the identification numbers of the Jewish people who were killed in the gas chambers. At the end of the walk, as one exits the chambers, there is a granite plaque inscribed with the words of a German pastor serving during the very time of the Holocaust. It speaks to the importance of action.

In Germany they first came for the Communists,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist.

Then they came for the Jews,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Catholics,
and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.

Then they came for me—
and by then no one was left to speak up.

Pastor Martin Niemoeller

However, the flipside is also a danger. If our role as practitioner gets too much attention, our people will build homes, dig wells and feed the hungry, but the result will be healthy people with homes, food and water



destined for Hell. There are many altruistic agencies doing the work of Christ with no message.

I appreciate the words accredited to Saint Francis of Assisi: "Preach the Gospel at all times—If necessary, use words." For too long the evangelical definition of the Gospel has been limited to words. In our fear of slipping into a theology of works, we have lost the part of the Gospel that is action. So we must regain a broader definition of the Gospel without losing the words. I recoil when I hear the words of Saint Francis used to excuse silence. As pastors and leaders in the Body of Christ, this role of practitioner must be filled. Without it, our message is hypocritical at best. If it is our only role, our world will be filled with well-fed and healthy people destined for eternity without Christ.

Conclusion

Which role is your gravitation? Which role has been most neglected? Rather than hierarchical or sequential, picture these roles as a Venn diagram—three spheres intersecting creating a common space. When pastors balance these three roles, those sitting in the pew will begin to think biblically. Pastors who lead from this intersection will be far less likely to hear, "Pastor, how do I plug it in? How do I make it fit into my world?" **DSM**



Dr. Larry Lindquist joined the faculty as assistant professor of youth and family ministries and leadership development in 1998. He was appointed assistant professor of pastoral ministry and evangelism in 2005, and assumed the position of the director of the

M.A. Christian Studies program in 2007. He has served as pastor of Christian education, worship and student ministries for churches in New Jersey, Wisconsin and Illinois.

To discuss this or other articles in this issue, visit www.denverseminary.edu/magazine.

APPLYING SCRIPTURE in the 21ST CENTURY

by Kermit Ecklebarger, Ph.D.



Biblical readers in the 21st century face a serious problem of biblical near-sightedness. Wanting to receive a message from God, they read the Bible from the perspective of their own personal circumstances. One woman excitedly reported to her marriage counselor that God told her to divorce her husband and marry her new love interest. She got this insight by reading “put off...the old man...and put on the new man...” (Ephesians 4:22-24 KJV). While her use of this passage may seem humorous to us, she was dead serious!

Biblical bifocals are needed to overcome this near-sighted perspective in Bible reading. We need two lenses. The first is for focusing on our initial goal: the intended meaning for the original readers. Our starting point should not be, “What does it mean to me?” but “What was it supposed to mean to the original recipients?” Now we are ready to use our biblical bifocal lens to find our ultimate aim: its significance for us today. We must always keep in mind that the Bible can never mean for us what it could not have originally meant for the initial readers. We must take every precaution to not read our own ideas into the Bible.

Clearly our ultimate purpose in reading the Bible is to determine its meaning and then to incorporate those truths into our daily lives. James underscores this truth in 1:22 when he instructs believers, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” To achieve this obedience, James advises believers to use the Bible as a mirror (1:23-25). Like looking in a mirror, we must first pay careful attention to what it reflects about our character, then give acceptance to what it discloses. After all, we don’t argue with what the mirror reflects about our physical appearance—but quickly find ways to make ourselves presentable. So too, lifestyle adjustments must be made after looking into the biblical mirror.

Practical Steps for Applying Scripture to One’s Personal Life

1. Determine what the biblical author expected the original readers to do. Watch for commands that the author states. Clearly, some commands were personal and do not apply to us. No one today would personally apply Paul’s command to Timothy to come quickly, bring the coat that he had left at Troas, and make every effort to arrive before winter (2 Timothy 4:9, 13, 21). It is important to ask, are the original readers told to do something because this is what is expected of all Christians? If so, it applies today.

2. Discover any timeless principles. Sometimes passages do not have explicitly stated commands. In such cases one needs to discover what principle of Christian living is taught in the passage. Even where there is a precise commandment, it is helpful to discover the underlying principle that made the specific instructions necessary. Few 21st century believers face the problem of eating meat offered to idols that Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 8. However, this text gives clear guidelines for handling questionable activities that are not specifically forbidden in Scripture.

3. Discover truth relevant for current issues not discussed by the biblical authors. There are many issues that we face today that were not discussed by biblical authors. Yet, in the Bible we discover clear teaching that

has moral implication for our lives today. An outstanding example is that nowhere in the Bible is abortion clearly forbidden. However, biblical passages stress the value of life, even the value of an unborn child (Exodus 21:25).

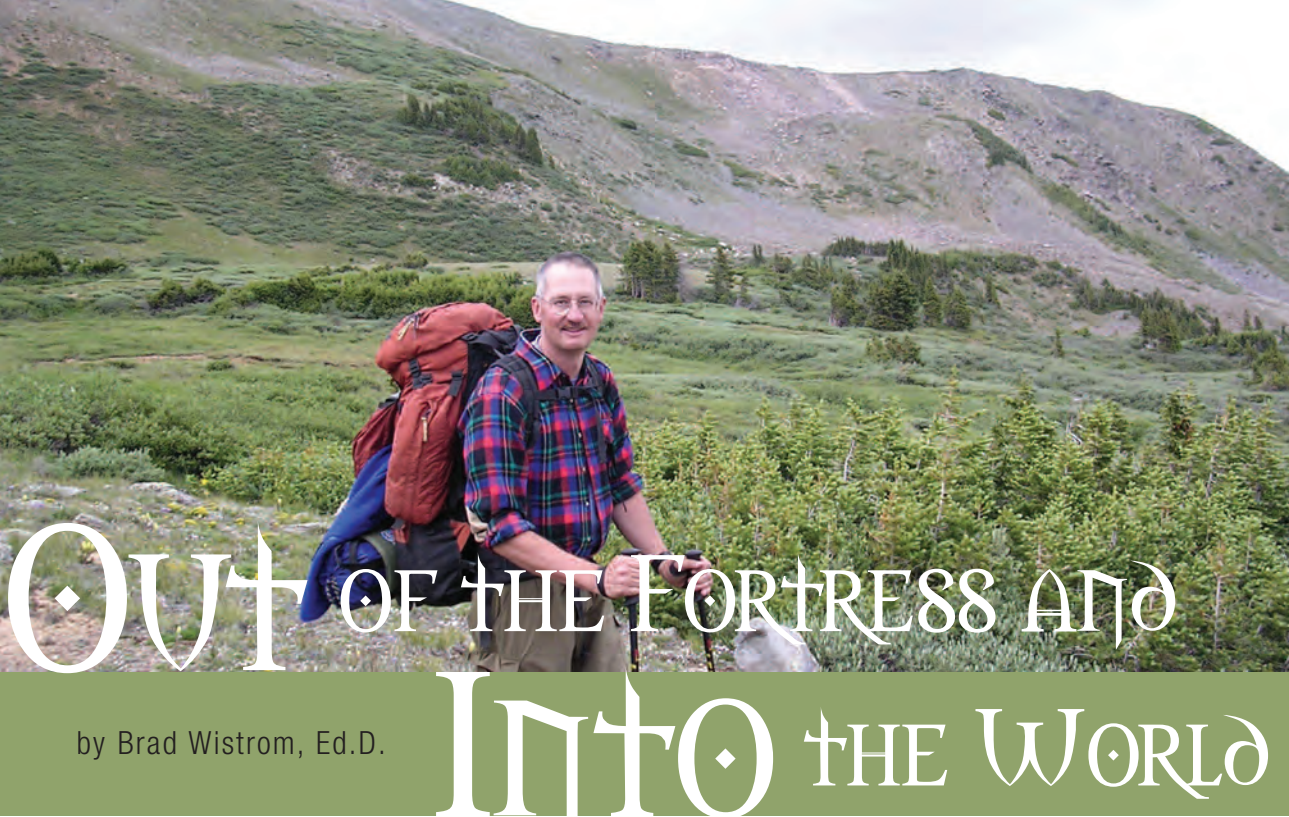
4. Identify the corresponding situation in your life and take the appropriate action. In an age in which Christians are becoming increasingly indistinguishable from non-Christians, it is urgent that we live in our homes, the workplace and our communities by the standards and guidelines of our Christian faith. James makes it clear that a profession of faith that does not manifest itself in Christian deeds of compassion and care is not a real faith. Even to believe correct doctrine is not adequate unless our behavior incarnates those beliefs (James 2:14-20).

James’ penetrating challenge confronts all 21st century believers, “Show me your faith...” **DSM**



Dr. Kermit Ecklebarger was the vice president and academic dean of Denver Seminary from 1993 to 2001 and is currently senior professor of New Testament, teaching two online courses each year. Dr. Ecklebarger and his wife Shirley divide their time between Tucson and Seattle where their children and grandchildren live.

Discuss this and other DSM articles online at www.denverseminary.edu/magazine.



by Brad Wistrom, Ed.D.

It seems as if it were yesterday. One of those pivotal moments where the clock stands still. Where God chooses to reveal Himself and His will in such a way that there is no question as to the necessary response. Life for me would never again be the same.

It was the mid '90s and I was a pastor in Washington. While leading a workshop on Christians living their lives as salt and light in a hurting, needy world, I had the participants create an *Oikos Web*¹. They were each given a piece of paper on which was drawn a spider web. Their task was to then think through their web of relationships—those with whom their daily lives intersected (e.g., family members, neighbors, church friends, work friends and parents from their kids' sports teams). These names were then written on the web, thus creating a visual representation of the relational sphere in which they lived; their personal social system composed of those connected to them through common kinship, common community and common interest.

The purpose of this task was to figure out where the workshop participants already had connections and relationships with individuals outside of the Body of Christ. These would then be the beginning points for developing redemptive relationships where the power of the Cross and the healing work of the Holy Spirit could be introduced.

After giving the assignment, I began to think through my own world. Imagine my shock when I could not list even one person from outside of my Christian sphere of relationships. I had become so enmeshed in the "Christian bubble" that my entire web was made up of people of like worldview and faith. Mostly from within my own congregation! I was speechless and could almost not continue with the workshop. Here I was, a Christian leader who was supposed to be modeling a redeemed life that was engaging culture, and I had now discovered myself to be locked behind the walls of the "evangelical fortress." My theology of cultural engagement was a farce.

From that point I have sought to intentionally engage the world around me. God's challenge to me is that I must do more than preach and teach the text of Scripture, I need to also live it out in daily life. I need to be a doer of the Word, not merely a hearer². What this has come to look like is that I choose to seek out opportunities to build relationships and to serve outside of my local church. A specific example is that I have decided to continue my involvement in my daughters' high school, even though the youngest graduated in 2005. I build sets and help manage the stage crew for the musicals. I volunteer at events like after-prom. I have assisted one of the teachers as he conducts mock job

interviews with his students. I have even had the privilege of joining a group of faculty and coaches for an early morning Bible study. And I'm excited to say that my pastor has encouraged me in this direction.

So, what is my challenge to you, the reader? *Thinking biblically* means much more than understanding Scripture and developing a theological mind. Yes, your theology is the most important thing about you. These core beliefs determine your worldview and your philosophy of life. Yet it should not merely be head knowledge or some catchy, ancient creed that you blindly repeat on Sunday morning. More importantly, thinking biblically should lead to action. To life change. Your critical life choices and the decisions you make daily should grow out of and be undergirded by your theology. Thinking biblically should lead to practical engagement in a world that desperately needs our presence.

For me this means that I need to get out of the comfortable fortress of evangelicalism and step out into a world that needs and even welcomes my involvement. I don't go as a flaming, Bible-thumping evangelist. I go instead as one who has been given and accepted the call to engage a culture in whatever way possible to meet the felt needs. What does this mean to you? **DSM**

¹ The Greek word *Oikos* is usually translated "house" or "household." (e.g., Acts 16:31)

² James 1:22

Dr. Brad Widstrom joined the faculty of Denver Seminary in 1999 as associate professor of youth and family ministries and has since assumed the role of chair of the youth and family ministries department. Dr. Widstrom has served on the ministerial staff of churches in Illinois and Washington. He has been involved in public school education in New Jersey and Washington teaching junior high language arts and social studies.

To create your own Oikos Web or to discuss this article with others, visit www.denverseminary.edu/magazine.

FINDING GOD *in a time of crisis*

by Cynthia Long Westfall, Ph.D. (M.Div. '93)

With the technology of the 21st century, we are no strangers to the concepts of disaster and crisis. In 2008, the horrible aftermaths and death tolls of the Myanmar cyclone, the earthquake in China, the terrorism in India and the meltdown of the monetary markets have filled the news. These catastrophes raise many questions about how to think biblically in these contexts – whether we are directly affected or merely remote observers in our living rooms. We must think of issues like the social concern of how to respond and the theological problem of pain and suffering, but we must also identify with the victims and consider the personal and pastoral concerns of how faith weathers a cyclone.

The church in the book of Hebrews is in a state of crisis. The readers are compared to the generation of Israelites in the wilderness, and the author shows that they are in danger of hardening their hearts to what Jesus is saying to them in their time of crisis just like the Israelites did with Moses (3:1-17). There are many kinds of crises that churches face that can involve this kind of behavior. While Hebrews may offer help in a variety of challenges, certain features in the text suggest that the original readers are facing a life-threatening situation, and they are scared to death.

The message of Hebrews tells the community how, as a group under pressure, they must hang on to the confession (2:4; 4:14; 10:23), move forward spiritually (4:1, 11; 6:1; 10:25; 12:1) and draw near to God in their time of need (4:16; 10:22; 12:28; 13:12). The theological teaching about Jesus supports that message and equips them to do all three activities.

Maintaining the doctrinal confession of the faith is essential, especially during a time of crisis or change. It is a group effort and determines the identification of the community – you

can't walk away from the confession and the community and claim a relationship with Christ (Hebrews 6).

Furthermore, blessing from God in the form of teaching and resources must produce growth in terms of maturity, righteousness and the enhanced spiritual capacity to serve the church community. This is a solemn charge for students, academics and scholars in biblical studies. One theme that continually reoccurs with this theme is mutual concern. We are all called to pastoral care in the faith community, particularly in difficult circumstances, crises or times of change. We need to be attentive to each other's spiritual state and needs in a way that is healthy, healing and nurturing.

The heart of the book involves finding the face of God in order to receive comfort and mercy in times of need (4:16), which is probably our deepest longing when our backs are to the wall. The author of Hebrews uses what were familiar icons to the Jewish Christian readers, priesthood, tabernacle, covenant and Law, as vehicles to carry the readers from their heritage and the familiar physical, material objects and events of Scripture to the unseen realities about Jesus Christ and ultimately into the presence of God. Jesus' priesthood, the heavenly tabernacle, the new covenant and the internal law are therefore the means by which readers approach God. The author takes five and a half chapters (5-10:25) to convincingly recreate the way so that we can follow Jesus as our great High Priest and "literally" walk into the Holy of Holies and meet God face to face (10:19-22).

Thinking biblically about drawing near to God can involve two trajectories: (1) personally, we need to build an intimate understanding of the Old Testament, because this is indeed the vehicle that God has given us to understand and process what He has done for us in Christ. All Scripture prepares and softens our heart to recognize God's voice and hear Him call our name over the thunder of the storm. (2) Pastorally, we would do well to pay attention to comparable cultural icons that have seized the hearts and imagination of this generation in a similar way to the place that the Jewish institutions held for Jews in the first century. Even pop culture can provide effective metaphors that can carry people into the presence of God today in a way that we can biblically help people find comfort and mercy in the frontlines of a crisis. **DSM**



Dr. Cynthia Westfall is Assistant Professor at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. She earned a B.A. from Biola University, an M.A. from Northern Arizona University, an M.Div. from Denver Seminary, and a Ph.D. from the University of Surrey at Roehampton. She also serves as founder, director and acting chair of the board of Providence Network Canada which offers transitional housing for the homeless and those at risk and is associated with Providence Network in Denver.

For discussion questions regarding this article, please visit www.denverseminary.edu/magazine.

complementing the bible

by Keith P. Wells, D.Min.



“A text without a context is a pretext for a proof text.” This oft-quoted adage all too often describes Bible study and interpretation in our churches and in our public discourse. And while at some level it may be true that, “everyone has his or her own interpretation,” it is certainly NOT true that every interpretation is of equal strength or probability in focusing on the meaning intended by the original biblical authors.

So in a world of stunning biblical illiteracy, clergy and lay persons alike who wish to *think biblically* using the English Bible should invest in a basic library of English Bible study tools which are available for a reasonable cost. Competency in Greek and Hebrew enables the student of the Bible to employ far more reference works, and access to a theological library, such as the Carey S. Thomas Library at Denver Seminary¹, enables the students of the Bible to glean from the rich treasures of men and women who have grappled with the biblical text throughout the centuries.

Bible Survey

For brief surveys of Bible books, a study Bible is a good place to start. One can find basic subject matter and support material easily accessible in the introductory sections,

footnotes and indexes. Most of the major English translations have corresponding study Bibles connected with the specific translation. Having access to several English translations, and comparing them carefully, is a helpful way to engage a specific text.

Bible Background

Students of the Bible need to have access to substantive background information to explore the literary, cultural, historical, religious and geographical context of a book or passage. Answering questions related to authorship, date, original audience, genre, historical setting, cultural practices, intertextuality, religious milieu, geographical situation and development of the author's overall argument are paramount to homing in on the meaning the author intends. A one-volume Bible handbook, Bible dictionary, Bible atlas or Bible encyclopedia may prove invaluable to realize an understanding of important background information.

Bible Commentary

Access to both grammatical and expository commentaries provide additional help in understanding a biblical text. The Biblical Studies division of Denver Seminary has provided a guide to recommended commentaries for each Bible book as well as other recommended Bible Study Resources

online in *The Denver Journal*, which can be found on the Denver Seminary website (www.denverseminary.edu/dj.)

Conclusion

In summary, the tools which form the foundation of a good English Bible study library would include:

- English Bibles (several variations)
- Study Bible
- Exhaustive Concordance
- One Volume Bible Handbook or Dictionary
- Bible Atlas
- One Volume Bible Commentary
- Theological Dictionary (Old and New Testament)
- Commentaries (Exegetical and Expositional)

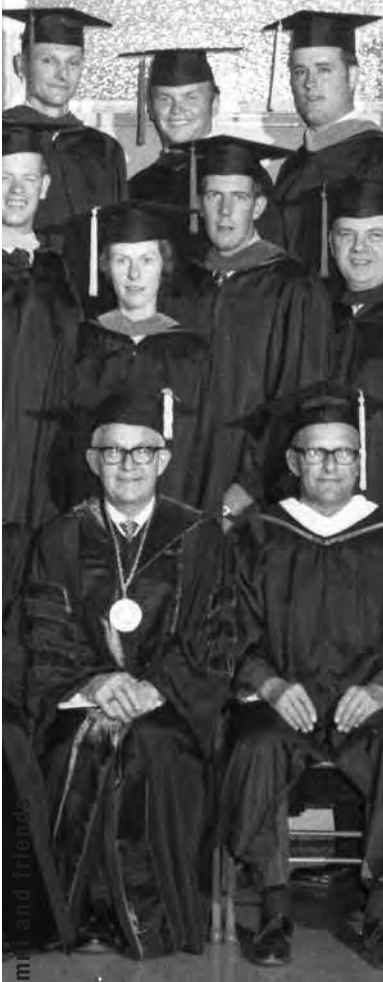
Bible software packages usually include most if not all of these and are an economical way to begin building a personal library of Bible study.

The challenge to “rightly divide the word of truth” is paramount for the church to realize her calling. Thankfully, basic English Bible study tools are readily available to complement the Bible and equip leaders to think biblically, live faithfully and lead wisely for a lifetime. **DSM**

Dr. Keith Wells was appointed to the position of library director and associate professor of theological bibliography and research in 2001. He has also previously served as pastor at churches in Pennsylvania and Illinois.

¹*Named after the Seminary's first president, the Carey S. Thomas Library is located in the Paul and Marjorie Lewan Learning Resource Center. The library is comprised of volumes carefully selected to provide the best in theological and scholarly literature as an undergirding for the school's curriculum. The present collection of books totals nearly 170,000 volumes. The library offers online bibliographic searching through a variety of academic databases, made available to students through licensing fees paid by the Seminary. Nearly 500 periodicals are received regularly, the majority of which are bound or otherwise preserved for permanent use. For more information about Denver Seminary's library, including the ability to search its extensive holdings, visit www.denverseminary.edu/library.*





Alumni Email Survey Results Talled

Denver Seminary recently sent out an online survey in which alumni were asked about the ministry in which in which they serve, about their overall satisfaction with their experiences at Denver Seminary, and for feedback on services they would like to see the Seminary offer or continue to offer. Results of the survey are as follows.

97% are satisfied (43%) or extremely satisfied (54%) with the educational experience they received at Denver Seminary in preparation for service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Current Occupations

- 38% of our alumni are in church ministry
- 18% serve as counselors, chaplains or spiritual directors
- 15% serve in missions, relief and development, or urban ministry
- 13% serve in academia
- 6% are in marketplace ministry
- 10% serve in a variety of vocational and volunteer capacities or are retired.

Alumni also requested resources from Denver Seminary to help them in their ministries. The top three requests included faculty recommendations and reviews on books and commentaries, continuing education courses, and podcasts or downloadable messages from chapels and lectures. Denver Seminary is providing these resources through the *Denver Journal* (www.denverseminary.edu/dj/) for reviews of books and commentaries; free audits of courses for alumni (www.denverseminary.edu/alumni/ for info); and free audio files for podcasts and audio of chapel services, lectures and special presentations (www.denverseminary.edu/chapel/).

Thanks to all of the alumni who participated in the survey. We appreciate your feedback on how we can better serve you. To learn more about the current opportunities that Denver Seminary offers for alumni, please visit www.denverseminary.edu/alumni.

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Alumni Giving in Challenging Economic Times

by Gary Hoag

Paul directed the Corinthians to take up a collection in 1 Cor. 16 because the saints in Jerusalem were in dire need. Some time later, he penned a second letter to them urging them again to give (2 Cor. 8-9) and cited the example of the Macedonians who provided unexpected, sacrificial support despite being economically challenged. His instruction to the Corinthians was clear: they should give, and their giving decisions were to be based on what they *had*, not on what they did *not have*.

How may all this apply today? During times of financial crisis, God's people help each other over and above their normal giving, especially caring for those who have contributed to their spiritual growth. This Christmas, give to your church first and support ministries, like Denver Seminary, that have made a significant impact in your life and ministry. Give based on what you *have*.

Even a small gift can have a big impact. Recently a foundation director shared with me that he'd like to see more of our alumni giving, stating plainly, "Encourage everyone to send a dollar!" If more of our alumni were to make even a small gift, that would express to him that Denver Seminary has their support, which provides him the incentive to also give generously. Please pray about giving more than ever this Christmas and including Denver Seminary on your list.

Evangelicalism and Social Responsibility by Vernon Grounds

This timeless work by Dr. Grounds, originally published in 1969, was reprinted in 2008 to celebrate the launching of the Vernon Grounds Institute of Public Ethics.

"*Evangelicalism and Social Responsibility* is ... an historical document in the development of evangelical social conscience in this country. It is a pointer in the right direction, so that others too might continue down the trail blazed in part by this generous and wise saint," says Dr. Danny Carroll R., editor. Dr. Dieumeme Noelliste, Director of the Grounds Institute, adds, "It is fitting that the reissue of this booklet coincided with the launch of the Institute founded in his name, as it is to continue his legacy of evangelicalism and social responsibility that the Vernon Grounds Institute of Public Ethics was launched." Visit www.denverseminary.edu/grounds-book/ to download your complimentary copy of this .pdf file today.



Invest in future Christian leaders by leaving Denver Seminary in your will. For more information, visit www.denverseminary.edu/estateplan.

Annual Report is Now Available



The 2008 annual report, which provides information on the '07/'08 fiscal year, is now available to those who want to learn more about

the progress of Denver Seminary through finances and statistical data, individual student stories, and highlights from the year. Denver Seminary's annual report can be downloaded from our website at www.denverseminary.edu/friends/.



New Generosity Book for Givers

Pastor Gordon MacDonald's newest book was penned to encourage people to grow in the grace of giving (2 Cor. 8:7), and in so doing, grasp the life that is truly life (1 Tim. 6:17-19). Produced with assistance from Patrick Johnson of the National Christian Foundation, this 30-day devotional is a must read for every steward who

desires to be found faithful. Because MacDonald and our advancement team believe this is such a transformational book, we want to send a complimentary copy to everyone who supports Denver Seminary in 2008 to express our gratitude and encourage their growth in their understanding and practice of biblical generosity. If you have not made a gift this year, please do so today to ensure you get your free copy. You may give online at www.denverseminary.edu/friends/giving/.

Spring Training in Tucson, Arizona



Denver Seminary invites you to Tucson, Ariz., in March 2008 to enjoy spring training with the Colorado Rockies. Enjoy the sunshine with family and friends. Get autographs and meet your favorite Rockies. Take in a few games and play golf with alumni and friends. Details are to be determined. For more information, go to www.denverseminary.edu/rockies/ or contact Gary Hoag at 303-762-6941 or gary.hoag@denverseminary.edu.

IRA Charitable Rollover Extension Signed into Law

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 includes an extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover. The extension is retroactive, applying to distributions made in both the '08 and '09 tax years. The extension provides incentives for individuals 70½ years of age and older to make gifts of up to \$100,000 directly to ministries like Denver Seminary from their potentially taxable Traditional and Roth Individual Retirement Account (IRA) funds. These gifts are excluded from the giver's gross income for the taxable year. For example, John and Jane have a \$100,000 IRA from which they do not need the income for their current needs. They decide to direct \$10,000 of their respective IRAs to benefit Denver Seminary students. By having their IRA custodian direct their gifts to the Seminary, they have stewarded their giving to avoid it being counted as taxable income. Understanding laws like this can help you maximize your ability to support ministry efforts through sound financial planning. To learn more about making an IRA contribution, contact Brian Fort at 303-762-6924 or brian.fort@denverseminary.edu.

This summary was prepared as an educational service and is not intended as legal or tax advice. Consult your legal or tax advisor before making any decision based on this information.

Share from your Storehouse

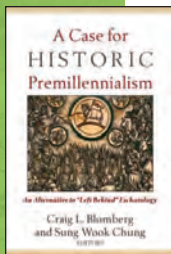
by Gary Hoag, Vice President of Advancement

If you have resources such as an IRA, a tract of land (Acts 4:36-37) or a stock portfolio, you have a great opportunity to share more generously than ever. In 2 Cor. 9, Paul refers to such resources as "seed," and you may be among the few who have it. If you do, don't leave it in the barn; take joy in scattering it abroad. Sow bountifully and you will reap bountifully. Support your church and as many ministries as you can.

For those who have a family foundation, did you know that if you give more than the minimum 5%, you can carry forward the extra for up to five years? If the market turns around you can give less in future years when others may have the capacity to help. Now is not the time to store, it is the season to share from your storehouse!

Through your giving you can provide vital funding for your church and ministries like Denver Seminary, just like Joseph, whose storehouses in Egypt helped save God's people from starvation. Remember, the purpose of the barn is not to try to secure one's future (cf. the rich fool of Luke 12) but to have resources to give back to God, share with others and care for one's family and personal needs (cf. Deut. 28:8, 1 Tim. 6:17-19). As God is able to make all grace abound to you, there's no better time than now to give generously.





A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to “Left Behind” Eschatology

Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung, editors (Baker, 2009)

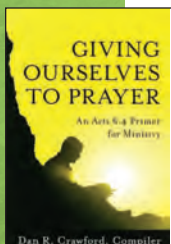
Many evangelical readers who learned the basics of eschatology from popular authors and novelists assume that dispensational premillennialism, with its distinctive teachings about the pre-tribulation rapture of the church, is the only reliable view of end times and the return of Christ. This volume offers a compelling case for an alternative perspective—one that was widely prevalent throughout church history. The contributors suggest that classic premillennialism offers believers a more coherent and viable approach to understanding eschatology. Their studies, which examine eschatology from biblical, theological, historical and missiological approaches, provide a broadly accessible argument for returning to the perspectives of historic premillennial eschatology. *This book is set to release early 2009.*



Critical Issues in Early Israelite History

Richard S. Hess, Gerald A. Klingbeil, and Paul J. Ray Jr., editors (Eisenbrauns, 2008)

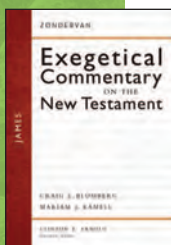
For three days in March 2004, a group of scholars met to consider the question of the origin of the Israelites and to provide a response to predominant academic skepticism, a response that considers the biblical text to be an important datum in the construction of the history of the people of Israel. To do so, the authors of the papers read at the conference take into account both biblical and extrabiblical literary evidence, as well as the contributions of archaeology, to describe as completely as possible what may be known about the early history of Israel. *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History* publishes the papers read at this conference in the hope that the result will be a balanced portrayal of this watershed event based on all of the currently available evidence.



Giving Ourselves to Prayer: An Acts 6:4 Primer for Ministry

Dan R. Crawford, compiler (Prayershop Publishing, 2008)

In the busy-ness of ministry today, it is easy to spend more time doing the tasks of ministry rather than spend the necessary time communing with the Father, getting instruction and direction and power for ministry. A pastor needs to have a vibrant prayer life to do ministry. He also needs to model prayer for his congregation. *Giving Ourselves to Prayer* is designed to help a pastoral student or pastor better understand the importance of prayer in his life and the life of the church. Denver Seminary’s chaplain, Howard Baker, wrote chapter 23 of this powerful prayer text book: “Jesus as a Role Model of Personal Passion in Prayer.”



Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: James

Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell (Zondervan, 2008)

In their study of James, Blomberg and Kamell introduce readers to three key themes that dominate the letter: (1) trials and temptations; (2) wisdom and speech, particularly with a view to obedience; and (3) wealth and poverty. Readers may be surprised to see how the famous passage on faith vs. works actually emerges from the more central topic of wealth and poverty. Replete with insights and timely theological applications, this commentary provides pastors, church leaders and those in the academy with a complete, “one-stop” resource they need.



Generosity: Moving Toward Life that is Truly Life

Gordon MacDonald with Patrick Johnson (The National Christian Foundation, 2008)

Inside the soul of every Christian is a God-inspired desire for the generous life – a life tailored around His example of selflessness and sacrifice. But this generosity is often dormant for us. How do we shake ourselves from complacency to experience the joy of giving? This four-week devotional by acclaimed Christian author Gordon MacDonald with Patrick Johnson of The National Christian Foundation explores how generosity is fundamentally intertwined with our Christian DNA. Perfect for individual reflection or small-group study, generosity is a powerful tool for anyone who desires to move toward the life that is truly life (1 Timothy 6:19). To order copies for your church or group (sold in cases of 42), visit generositybook.com.



THINKING BIBLICALLY



Are you a philosopher? Put that question to a friend who isn't in academia and the answer predictably will be "no." Most of us are thankful if we manage to read a chapter of the Bible daily let alone the works of Plato or Immanuel Kant. Yet everybody has a philosophy of life, a worldview, even if we have never thought about it like that. Everyone has some guidelines which he is following, some values he clings to (that, for example, is why we talk about honor among thieves). And that's why in the Bible we find God-given truths which tell us what to believe, what to do, what to hope for in this world and the next, what reality is all about. And that's also why we need to learn how to think biblically, letting God's truth control not only what goes on in our minds but also what we're doing in our lives.

Let's be thankful that we're known as biblicists, remembering that the Bible gives us a worldview which encompasses all history, all eternity, all reality. If a touch of pedantry is required to give our convictions an aura of scholarship, we can resort to a ponderous German term, *weltanschauung*, which means an all-inclusive perspective taking in everything—all history, all creation, all reality, reaching backward in time to God's own beginningless existence and forward into the endless ages yet to dawn, on and on, forever and ever. Scripture provides the very antithesis to a constricted 6,000 years stretch of time.

That's why the Bible with its all-inclusive inexhaustibility is the center of our learning. Think of the breath-taking vision Paul gives us in Ephesians 3:8-11:

Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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DENVER SEMINARY

Women's Forum

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|-----------------|---------------|--|
| Feb. 10 | 7 p.m. | Gail MacDonald
<i>The Stouthearted Woman - Now and Then</i> |
| March 18 | 7 p.m. | Danny Carroll
<i>An Old Testament Perspective on Politics</i> |
| April 16 | 7 p.m. | Hélène Dallaire
<i>Jewish Roots of our Christian Faith</i> |

Join us for stimulating lectures and discussions designed for women in our community to wrestle with relevant issues of today, cultivate their own worldview and pursue a deeper relationship with Christ. To register or listen to past lectures, visit our website at www.denverseminary.edu/friends/womens-forum.

PRESIDENT'S LUNCH

February 9
March 9

April 6

Enjoy a complimentary lunch with Interim President Gordon MacDonald and his wife Gail, along with members of our staff, current students and faculty. Find out how you can partner with us in equipping leaders by becoming a prayer partner, volunteer or financial supporter. Come hungry for fellowship and food, leave satisfied and inspired by the work of the Lord on this campus and in our students, faculty and staff. RSVP one week prior to each luncheon you plan to attend at www.denverseminary.edu/president-lunch or 303-762-6949.

GENEROSITY FORUM

Sponsored by The Charitable Fund and hosted by Denver Seminary, the Generosity Forums are designed to encourage generosity that honors the life and work of Jesus. Each event is free of charge, and coffee and pastries are served. Everyone who attends will receive a free copy of the book, *Generosity: Moving Toward Life that is Truly Life*. Register online or listen to past forum presentations at www.denverseminary.edu/generosity/.

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|----------|-------------|--|
| Jan. 12 | 7-8:15 a.m. | Gordon MacDonald, interim president of Denver Seminary |
| Feb. 16 | 7-8:15 a.m. | To Be Determined |
| March 16 | 7-8:15 a.m. | To Be Determined |



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|------------|---|
| Jan. 26-27 | Welcome |
| Feb. 2-3 | New Faculty Life Journey: Dr. Alex Mekonnen |
| Feb. 9-10 | Black History Month Services |
| Feb. 16-17 | Conference for World Christians |
| Feb. 23-24 | Concert of Prayer for the Nations |
| Mar. 2-3 | Student Preaching Series |
| Mar. 9-10 | Student Preaching Series |
| Mar. 16-17 | Student Preaching Series |
| Mar. 23-24 | No services (spring break) |

Common Ground chapel services are held at 11 a.m. in the Simpson Chapel Monday and Tuesday during the school year and are open to the public. A complete schedule and recordings of past services are available at www.denverseminary.edu/chapel.

Check the website for updates



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